

Westminster United Church

September 15th, 2024

✝ You are invited to stand as you are able

Announcements/Life and Work of the Church

✝ Passing the Peace of Christ (James 3)

As forgiven and reconciled people of God, let us greet one another with words of peace and love.

✝ Introit: “Come Let Us Sing” (VU 222 vs.2)

✝ Opening Prayer (Proverbs 1, Psalm 19, Mark 8)

God of wisdom and truth, speak to us now. Inspire us with your word. Speak clearly to our hearts, that we may walk in your ways and live to demonstrate your love in the world. In the name of Christ, our Messiah, we pray. Amen.

✝ Procession of Christ Candle

“Long, long, long ago, before there was anything, before there was a world, before there was light, before there was darkness, there was God: Creator and Source of Life. God moved and God breathed the world into being, and God said, “Let there be light.” We present this worship candle as a visible reminder of the Creator’s great light and love.”

Land Acknowledgement

“Today as we gather to worship let us remember that we worship God on the historic and unceded territory of nations of Treaty 7. As Christ’s people, let us be people of Love, of Truth, and Reconciliation. May we live with respect on this land, and peace and friendship with its people.”

Affirming Statement

“As a community church that gathers from many smaller communities in the Medicine Hat area, Westminster United Church publicly declares our commitment to creating a space where people are welcome, safe, and encouraged to participate in the life of the church inclusive of: Sexual orientation, gender identity, two spirited people, differing abilities, age, ethnic background, race, marital status, or economic circumstance.

Participation in the life of the church includes leadership, membership, sacraments, marriage, and celebrating milestones of life’s journey.

We celebrate the richness of diversity, and we commit ourselves to openness, growth, education and to influencing the community for social justice.

In our dedication to living our God’s word and with God’s help, we devote ourselves to proactive learning and inclusion.”

Lighting of the Affirming Candle

“Not quite as long but still very long ago, One was born who embodied the light of the Creator in a way that sparked a movement and a new understanding God. We light this rainbow candle as a

visible reminder of the radical inclusivity shown to us by Jesus, who calls us to follow him.”

Lighting of Peace Candle

“We light the candle of Peace to remind ourselves that Christ is the Prince of Peace. We pray for peace for ourselves and for the world.”

✠Call to Worship

L: We are called to follow Jesus.

P: But following Jesus isn't easy.

L: No. It will demand our dedication and our energy.

P: It will change our whole lives.

L: Come, all of you. Come and learn of the Lord Jesus.

P: Lord, we come, seeking your wisdom and your guidance. AMEN.

✠Opening Hymn: “Guide My Feet, Lord” (Lyrics on PP)

Prayer of Confession (Proverbs 1, Psalm 19, James 3)

Wise, knowing God, you see our hearts so clearly.

You speak to our lives so profoundly. And yet, we are often unable or unwilling to hear your truth and go where you lead. Even as we praise you with our mouths, we disgrace ourselves in words spoken to others with tongues of vicious fire. Forgive us for our hard hearts and stubborn ears. Forgive us for our hateful words and cruel gossip. Forgive us for our willful ignorance of the joy and gift you offer in your law of love. Help us live in your love and walk in your truth, that we might be your people, and you might be our God. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

Words of Assurance (Proverbs 1)

Those who listen to God's wisdom live secure and at peace, without dread of disaster. Christ is our wisdom and our way. In Christ, we are forgiven!

Prayers of the People

THE LORD'S PRAYER

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (Proverbs 1)

Wisdom cries out in God's holy word.

**Speak to us, O Truth, that we may know
your teachings.**

Wisdom raises her voice and calls to us now.

**Pour out your thoughts, God of love and life,
that we may walk in your ways.**

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Psalm 19 VU pp.740 refrain 2.

Glory and praise to God whose word brings life!

The heavens declare the glory of God;
and the vault of the sky reveals God's handiwork.

**One day speaks to another,
and night shares its knowledge with night,**
and this without speech or language;
their voices are not heard.

But their sound goes out to all the lands,

their words to the ends of the earth. R

Glory and praise to god whose word brings life!

In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun
which comes out like a bridegroom from under the canopy,
like an athlete eager to run the race.

**Its rising is at one end of the sky,
it runs its course to the other,
and there is nothing that is hidden from its heat. R**

Glory and praise to God whose word brings life!

God's law is perfect, refreshing the soul;

**God's instruction is sure,
giving wisdom to the simple;**

God's precepts are right, rejoicing the heart;

**God's commandment is pure
giving light to the eyes;**

God's fear is clean, enduring forever;

**God's judgements are true,
every one of them righteous;**

more desirable than gold, even much fine gold;

**sweeter also than honey,
pure honey from the comb. R**

Glory and praise to God whose word brings life!

By them is your servant warned;

for in keeping them there is great reward.

But who can discern unwitting sins?

O cleanse me from my secret faults.

Keep your servant also from presumptuous sins,
lest they get the better of me.

Then shall I be clean and innocent of great offence. R

**All Let the words of my mouth
and the thoughts of my heart
be acceptable in your sight, O God,
my strength and my redeemer.**

One: This is the witness of the ancient song-writers.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

James 3:1-12

Taming the Tongue

3 Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters,^[a] for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. **2** For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. **3** If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. **4** Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. **5** So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits.

How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! ⁶ And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature,^[b] and is itself set on fire by hell.^[c] ⁷ For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, ⁸ but no one can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹ With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. ¹⁰ From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters,^[d] this ought not to be so. ¹¹ Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? ¹² Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters,^[e] yield olives, or a grapevine yield figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.

Mark 8:27-38

Peter's Declaration about Jesus

²⁷ Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that I am?' ²⁸ And they answered him, 'John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.' ²⁹ He asked them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered him, 'You are the Messiah.'^[a] ³⁰ And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

³¹ Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³² He said

all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³ But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

³⁴ He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, ^[b] will save it. ³⁶ For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷ Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸ Those who are ashamed of me and of my words ^[c] in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'

One: This is the Good News of Jesus Christ.

All: Praise to Christ, the Living Word.

Guest Speaker Ms. Kim Large Director of the Prairie Pride Guild of Medicine Hat and District

✝HYMN: "Take My Life and Let it Be" (VU 506)

Minutes for Mission "A Journey of Faith and Peace"

Sophie Fitzgerald was one of two United Church young adults selected to attend the Minority Youth Forum in Japan, hosted by the Center for Minority Issues and Mission.

Sophie writes about her experience:

“As a young woman in my 20s who has lived and grown up in the United Church, I have always felt God’s call to spread God’s love and peace in any way that I can. Being involved with many organizations and missions with the church, I’ve had the privilege to do this many times in many provinces across Canada but never internationally, until this past March where God called me to travel to Miyakojima island.

“On a tour of the island, we saw exactly what the Japanese military is doing to Miyakojima. We saw how they are taking the beautiful beaches and using them as training camps, putting up missile bunkers in the middle of town next to peoples’ homes and so much more. We sat and talked about how our generation can help the people of Miyakojima have peace once again, and how peace cannot be created with military and military weapons. Throughout these conversations and visits to these sites you could feel an overwhelming presence of our Creator, and was saddened when coming to the terms that everything beautiful that God created was being destroyed and will be destroyed if war does occur.

“We all need to come together to be a community, a community of God’s children striving to seek peace in the world. All people of compassion, wisdom, and belief need to come together in order to take care of one another, and to take care of our beautiful world that the Creator made. Systems of injustice can only be resolved with community and partnership with one another. I am blessed that I get to bring the partnership and stories of the people of Miyakojima island back to my island of Newfoundland.”

The Youth Forum is an ecumenical initiative of churches in Japan, supported by The United Church of Canada and Mission and Service.

Your generosity through [Mission and Service](#) helps programs like this one that inspire peace and learning. Thank you.

Invitation to the Offering (Psalm 19)

Let us now share a portion of God's gifts to us. Let our gifts be God's praise. As we are fed by God's mercy and grace, let us share from our abundance, that others may be fed and nourished by our love and our care.

✠Doxology: (VU 538) "For the Gift of Creation"

✠Offertory Prayer (Psalm 19)

Glorious God, your teachings are more to be desired than gold or silver. May these gifts be transformed into your gifts for all the world. May our lives drip with the honesty of your truth. May our love flow with the blessing of your grace. Bless these gifts and bless our lives, that all may glorify you. In trust, we pray. Amen.

✠A NEW CREED (VU 918)

✠Closing Hymn: "Will You Come and Follow Me" (VU 567)

✠BENEDICTION/COMMISSIONING (Psalm 19, Mark 8)

May the words of our mouths be acceptable and true.
May the meditations of our hearts be loving and pure.

May the actions of our lives be grace-filled and kind.
May we go where Christ leads and walk in God's truth.

✠CHORAL AMEN (VU 971)

✠SENDING FORTH HYMN: (VU 224 vs 4) "Sing a Happy Hallelujah"

POSTLUDE: