

Westminster United Church
October 20, 2024

✝ You are invited to stand as you are able

Announcements/Life and Work of the Church

✝ **Passing the Peace of Christ**

Land Acknowledgement

Today as we gather to worship let us remember that we worship God on the historic and unceded lands of Treaty 7 and neighbouring treaty 4. Traditional lands of the Metis, Siksika, Kainai, Piikani, Stoney Nakoda and the T'suut'ina as well as the Cree and Ojibwa people. As Christ's people, let us be people of love, truth and reconciliation. May we live with respect on this land, and peace and friendship with its people.

Affirming Vision 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.”

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

† **Procession of Christ Candle**

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.” Not quite so long but still very long ago, One was born who embodied the light of the Creator. We present this candle to remind ourselves and to celebrate Christ’s constant presence. May we always seek His guiding light in our lives, as we are called to carry that light into the world.

Lighting of the Rainbow Candle

Jesus taught us to love one another in a way that sparked a movement and a new understanding of 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**

One: Bless the LORD, O my soul, for the Lord our God is very great.

All: God is clothed with honour and majesty, wrapped in brightness like a garment.

One: God stretches out the heavens like a tent, riding on wings of the wind.

All: O Lord, in wisdom you have made each unique creature.

With all of them, we come to praise you.

One: Let us praise God’s holy name together!

† **OPENING HYMN: “Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise” (VU 264)**

Prayer of Adoration and Confession

One: Praise be to you, O God, for the wonders of your creation.

All: You spin the galaxies and stretch out the seas to the furthest horizon.

One: You lift the curtain of dawn to end the night.

All: You give the earth its seasons and each creature its lifespan, breathing life into each precious soul.

One: And so we come to praise you, knowing human greatness is a mere shadow of yours.

All: Breathe your Spirit into us once again, and inspire us to serve you with creativity and commitment, and the honesty and humility we meet in Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.

One: Lord Jesus Christ, you call us to walk your way in the world, serving our neighbours and loving our enemies.

All: We confess we so often fall short. We seek status for our achievements, look for opportunities to be served, and harbour resentments. Forgive us for seeking our own way rather than your way.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE THE LORD'S PRAYER

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READING

Hebrew Scriptures: Isaiah 53:4-12

⁴ Surely he has borne our infirmities
and carried our diseases;
yet we accounted him stricken,
struck down by God, and afflicted.

⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions,

crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the punishment that made us whole,
and by his bruises we are healed.

⁶All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have all turned to our own way,
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

⁷He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

⁸By a perversion of justice he was taken away.
Who could have imagined his future?
For he was cut off from the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people.

⁹They made his grave with the wicked
and his tomb^[a] with the rich,^[b]
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.

¹⁰Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him with pain.^[c]
When you make his life an offering for sin,^[d]
he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days;
through him the will of the LORD shall prosper.

¹¹ Out of his anguish he shall see light,^[e]
he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge.
The righteous one,^[f] my servant, shall make many righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.

¹²Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong;
because he poured out himself to death,
and was numbered with the transgressors;

yet he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.

One: This is the witness of Israel.

All: Thanks be to God for the Word.

Psalm: Ps 104 (pts 1&2 VU 826 & 827 Refrain 1)

Bless, o my soul, the Almighty, who rules all creation
Praise God, O my soul.

Eternal God, you are great indeed.

You clothe yourself with light like a garment.

**You spread the heavens like a tent;
you lay out the beams of your dwelling
on the waters above.**

You make the clouds your chariot,
and ride on the wings of the wind.

**You make the winds your messengers,
and flames of fire your servants.**

You fix the earth on its foundations,
so that it can never tremble.

You cover the earth with the ocean as with a cloak. R

Bless, o my soul, the Almighty, who rules all creation

When the waters covered the mountains,
they fled at your rebuke;

at the sound of your thunder, they took flight.

They flowed over the mountains, ran down the valleys
to the place you had appointed for them.

**There you set limits not to be passed,
that they might not again cover the earth. R**

Bless, o my soul, the Almighty, who rules all creation

Part Two (24-35)

O God, how manifold are your works!

**With Wisdom at your side you made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures. R**

Bless, o my soul, the Almighty, who rules all creation

There lies the great and mighty Sea,
teeming with living things both great and small.

**Upon it sail the ships, and there is Leviathan,
the monster you made to play in it.**

All these look to you,
to give them their food in due season.

**What you give them they gather up.
When you open your hand,
you fill them with good things.**

But when you hide your face they despair.
When you take away their breath, they die,
and return to dust.

**But when you send out your spirit, they live again,
and you renew the face of the earth. R**

Bless, o my soul, the Almighty, who rules all creation

May your glory, O God, endure forever.

May you rejoice, O God, in your works.

When you look at the earth it trembles,

when you touch the mountains they smoke.

I will sing to God as long as I live.

I will praise my God while I have being. R

Bless, o my soul, the Almighty, who rules all creation

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

ALL: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading: Mark 10:35-45

The Request of James and John

³⁵ James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, 'Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.' ³⁶ And he said to them, 'What is it you want me to do for you?' ³⁷ And they said to him, 'Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.' ³⁸ But Jesus said to them, 'You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?' ³⁹ They replied, 'We are able.' Then Jesus said to them, 'The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; ⁴⁰ but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.'

⁴¹ When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. ⁴² So Jesus called them and said to them, 'You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. ⁴³ But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.'

One: This is the Good News of Jesus Christ.

All: Praise to Christ, the Living Christ.

SERMON:

✝️ Hymn: “Called By Earth and Sky” (MV 135)

MINUTES FOR MISSION “An Abundance of Blessings in a Time of Need”

With your generous support, many Canadian seniors who might otherwise face empty plates this season are able to enjoy nutritious meals and maintain their dignity throughout the year.

The Food Security for Elders program relies on your support to provide grocery cards to Indigenous Elders in the Morley First Nation and Lethbridge, AB area, where access to healthy food is limited. Without your support, these seniors face the harsh reality of choosing between essential needs and nourishing meals. They need your help to ensure their tables are filled with the food they deserve.

In a time of rising grocery prices and economic challenges, your kindness ensures that our most vulnerable neighbours are not left to struggle with food insecurity. Your gifts help transform their experience from one of worry and scarcity to one of comfort and nourishment.

With your support, Elders can enjoy healthier meals and maintain their well-being.

Your generosity through [Mission and Service](#) gives more than just food; it offers hope and a sense of community. As we continue through our seasons of gratitude, we extend our heartfelt thanks to you for making such a significant impact. Thank you.

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory

✝️ Doxology: (VU 538) “For the Gift of Creation”

† Offertory Prayer

One: Gracious God, we offer you these gifts, small tokens of our love for you.

All: Bless them with the power of your Holy Spirit so they may accomplish more than we can even imagine, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and our Friend. Amen.

† A New Creed

† CLOSING HYMN “You Servants of God” (VU 342)

† BENEDICTION/COMMISSIONING

† CHORAL AMEN (VU 971)

† SENDING FORTH HYMN: (VU 224 vs 1) “Sing a Happy Hallelujah”

POSTLUDE: