

Westminster United Church November 24th, 2024

✝ You are invited to stand as you are able

ANNOUNCEMENTS/LIFE AND WORK OF THE CHURCH

INTROIT (235 vs 1&2) “O Worship the King”

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 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.”

✠ PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

✠ CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Come, let us celebrate the goodness of God.

P: God has blessed us with God's great love.

L: Let us come to this time, letting go of our worries.

P: Let us come to this time praising God.

L: Come, now is the time to worship.

P: We come rejoicing, for God is so good to us. AMEN.

✠ 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."

✠OPENING HYMN: (VU 213) “Rejoice the Lord is King “

✠OPENING PRAYER

We come this day, rejoicing, in the presence of the King of Kings, Jesus Christ. At his birth the angels proclaimed his name to be Emmanuel, God with us. Today in this place, in this time of worship, may we truly feel the power and presence of Jesus Christ in our lives. May our hearts and spirits be warmed and challenged to proclaim with our lives, "Christ is Lord!". AMEN.

Prayer of Confession

We have trouble believing in a King in our lives. Early in our nation's history, we rejected monarchy as something undesirable. Yet, this day we are called to recognize Jesus Christ as the King of our lives, our sovereign ruler. His kingdom is based on the laws of love; loving God as God has truly loved us and loving our neighbor as we ourselves want to be loved. That love extends beyond the borders of our lives, into a world in which there is fear and alienation, hunger and disease, hopelessness and darkness. Jesus, our sovereign ruler, our friend, our Master and guide has asked us to reach out to feed the hungry; give drink to the thirsty; clothe the naked, visit the sick and those imprisoned; welcome the stranger. These words are not unfamiliar to us, yet somehow we have treated them as nice words but not an active part of our life of faith. Forgive us, Lord, for the meagerness of our faith and the weakness of our witness. Rule our lives again with your powerful love, that we might truly be worthy disciples of yours. Help us to find the forgiveness which you have given to us and to do your will. AMEN.

Words of Assurance

Even though we have often failed to do as our Lord Jesus has asked, yet there is eternal forgiveness and a chance to again follow his ways. Be assured, dear friends, that the love of Jesus Christ will never leave you. Be his witnesses throughout the world. AMEN.

Prayers of the People

THE LORD'S PRAYER

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God of All as we prepare to hear your word let us open our minds and hearts to your message for us this day. Help us to incorporate your love and learning to our hearts and actions. Amen

SCRIPTURE READINGS (Anna-Marie Hancock)

2 Samuel 23:1-7

The Last Words of David

23 Now these are the last words of David:

The oracle of David, son of Jesse,
the oracle of the man whom God exalted,^[a]

the anointed of the God of Jacob,
the favourite of the Strong One of Israel:

²The spirit of the LORD speaks through me,
his word is upon my tongue.

³The God of Israel has spoken,
the Rock of Israel has said to me:

One who rules over people justly,
ruling in the fear of God,

⁴is like the light of morning,
like the sun rising on a cloudless morning,
gleaming from the rain on the grassy land.

⁵Is not my house like this with God?

For he has made with me an everlasting covenant,
ordered in all things and secure.

Will he not cause to prosper

all my help and my desire?
6 But the godless are^[b] all like thorns that are thrown away;
for they cannot be picked up with the hand;
7 to touch them one uses an iron bar
or the shaft of a spear.
And they are entirely consumed in fire on the spot.^[c]

One: This is the witness of Israel.

All: Thanks be to God for the Word.

Psalm 132:VU 855 Part One 1-12

Arise, O God, make this the place where in your name shall dwell

O God, remember David and all the hardships he endured,

how he swore an oath to you,

a promise to the Mighty One of Jacob.

'I will not enter my house, nor will I climb into my bed,

I will not give sleep to my eyes, not even let my eyelids droop

until I find a place for God,

a dwelling for the Mighty One of Jacob.' R

Arise, O God, make this the place where in your name shall dwell

At Ephrathah we heard God's ark was there;

we found it in the region of Jaar.

'Let us approach the place where the Most High rests,

let us kneel in worship at God's footstool.'

Arise, O God, and enter your resting-place,

you and your mighty ark.

Let your priests be clothed with righteousness;

let your faithful people shout for joy. R

Arise, O God, make this the place where in your name shall dwell

For your servant David's sake, do not reject your Anointed.

You made a sure promise to David,

a promise that will never be revoked:

'One of your own children I will set upon your throne.

And if they in turn keep my covenant,

the teaching that I give them,

their descendants too shall sit on your throne

in succession for ever.' R

Arise, O God, make this the place where in your name shall dwell

One: This is the witness of the ancient song writers

All: Thanks be to God

Anthem: "Of the Father's Love Begotten"

John 18:33-37

³³ Then Pilate entered the headquarters^[a] again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, ‘Are you the King of the Jews?’ ³⁴ Jesus answered, ‘Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?’ ³⁵ Pilate replied, ‘I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?’ ³⁶ Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.’ ³⁷ Pilate asked him, ‘So you are a king?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.’

One: This is the Good News of Jesus Christ.

All: Praise to Christ, the Living Word.

SERMON:**✠HYMN: (MV 162) “Christ Within Us Hidden”****Minutes for Mission (Debi Hoefling)****“Gifts With Vision: Gifts for All”**

“I have everything I need.”

“I can’t think of anything I want.”

“No gifts for me this year.”

This is something many of us have heard, and maybe something we’ve found ourselves saying. And while it may be true, despite not wanting or needing anything, we know gifts are going to happen anyway. Instead of searching “gifts for someone who is hard to buy for,” why not give Gifts With Vision? [Gifts with Vision](#) is a way to give gifts from the comfort of home, with no packaging or wrapping needed. Instead of gadgets and fleeting trends, [Gifts with Vision](#) is full of gifts that will help transform lives throughout Canada

and around the world. When placing your order, you'll be able to add an e-card, including a delivery date, for each gift.

Every Gift with Vision provides support for a specific Mission and Service partner offering a unique project. Without Mission and Service, [Gifts with Vision](#) projects would not be possible. Thank you for supporting both.

When Christmas rolls around, remember that a meaningful gift is a simple click away. If madly dashing around the mall on Christmas Eve has been your gift-buying style, kick back and relax. Gifts with Vision has you covered!

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Rock of Israel, you bless us with the light of morning,
the sun dawning on a new day; you grace us with dew on the grass, the
glistening promise of new possibilities. Open our eyes to your splendor,
and open our hearts to our call to give of ourselves
each and every day.

✠DOXOLOGY: (VU 538)

✠OFFERTORY PRAYER

With gratitude for all the blessings you have poured into our lives, Lord Jesus, we come bringing these our gifts that they may be used in service to those in need. Bless these gifts and those who have given them, that they may truly be a blessing in your holy name. AMEN.

✠A NEW CREED (VU 918)

✠Closing Hymn: (VU 211) "Crown Him With Many Crowns"

✠BENEDICTION/COMMISSIONING

The mighty one of Jacob sends us forth.

We go with God's blessing.

The rock of Israel sends us forth.

We go with God's blessing.
The Alpha and Omega sends us forth.
We go with God's blessing.

✠**CHORAL AMEN (VU 959)**

✠**SENDING FORTH HYMN: (VU 586) "We Are Marching"**