

## **Westminster United Church**

### **November 3rd, 2024**

✝ You are invited to stand as you are able

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS/LIFE AND WORK OF THE CHURCH**

### **CELEBRATIONS**

#### **✝ 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 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."

### ✝ **CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: May we bless the Lord at all times and may God's praise always be on our lips.

**All: For great is the Name of God. We will lift up God's holy Name together.**

One: Together let us worship God, as we gather in the Name of our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. 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 PRAYER

✠ **OPENING HYMN:** “Give to the Winds Thy Fears” (tune Festal Song) Lyrics on PP

### **Prayer of Confession**

One: God of promise and purpose, in You we live and move and have our being. You are the Fountain of life, and You refresh us.

**All: God of goodness and mercy, we have heard Your call to put our faith into action, but fear holds us back. We stay silent rather than speak up when things go wrong. There is work to be done in Jesus’ name, but we often seek an easier way.**

One: And I invite each of us now to enter into a moment of silence for self-reflection and private confession . . .

### **Words of Assurance**

One: The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Know that you are forgiven by God’s great mercy, and have the grace to forgive each other, just as you have been forgiven in Christ.

**All: Amen.**

### **Prayers of the People**

#### **THE LORD’S PRAYER**

### **PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

### **SCRIPTURE READINGS (Read by Debi Hoefling)**

### **OLD TESTAMENT**

**Deuteronomy 6: 5-9**

Good News Translation

<sup>5</sup> Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. <sup>6</sup> Never forget these commands that I am giving you today. <sup>7</sup> Teach them to your children. Repeat them when you are at home and when you are away, when you are resting and when you are working. <sup>8</sup> Tie them on your arms and wear them on your foreheads as a reminder. <sup>9</sup> Write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates.

One: This is the witness of Israel.

**All: Thanks be to God for the Word.**

**EPISTLE****Hebrews 9: 11-12**

Good News Translation

<sup>11</sup> But Christ has already come as the High Priest of the good things that are already here. The tent in which he serves is greater and more perfect; it is not a tent made by human hands, that is, it is not a part of this created world. <sup>12</sup> When Christ went through the tent and entered once and for all into the Most Holy Place, he did not take the blood of goats and bulls to offer as a sacrifice; rather, he took his own blood and obtained eternal salvation for us.

One: This is the witness of the Church.

**All: Thanks be to God for the Word.**

**GOSPEL:****Mark 12:28-34**

Good News Translation

<sup>28</sup> A teacher of the Law was there who heard the discussion. He saw that Jesus had given the Sadducees a good answer, so he came to him with a

question: “Which commandment is the most important of all?”

<sup>29</sup> Jesus replied, “The most important one is this: ‘Listen, Israel! The Lord our God is the only Lord. <sup>30</sup> Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ <sup>31</sup> The second most important commandment is this: ‘Love your neighbor as you love yourself.’ There is no other commandment more important than these two.”

<sup>32</sup> The teacher of the Law said to Jesus, “Well done, Teacher! It is true, as you say, that only the Lord is God and that there is no other god but he. <sup>33</sup> And you must love God with all your heart and with all your mind and with all your strength; and you must love your neighbor as you love yourself. It is more important to obey these two commandments than to offer on the altar animals and other sacrifices to God.”

<sup>34</sup> Jesus noticed how wise his answer was, and so he told him, “You are not far from the Kingdom of God.” After this nobody dared to ask Jesus any more questions.

One: This is the Good News of Jesus Christ.

**All: Praise to Christ, the Living Word.**

**SERMON: “What Matters the Most in My Religion?”**

**✠HYMN: “Draw the Circle Wide” (MV 145)**

**MINUTES FOR MISSION “Accompanying Young Adults During Transformative Years” (Read by Anna Marie Hancock)**

*We would like to share a wonderful thank-you letter we received from the Ecumenical Campus Ministry (ECM) at the University of Guelph, a Mission and*

*Service partner located in Guelph, ON. We're sharing it with you with deep gratitude for your generosity.*

“Thanks to support from United Church Mission and Service, the Ecumenical Campus Ministry at the University of Guelph has been able to support the UofG community and accompany young adults during some of the most transformative years of their lives.

The Ecumenical Campus Ministry has been a partnership of the Anglican, Presbyterian, and United Church at UofG since 1968. The chaplaincy is fully supported by alumni, parents, and grants from partner churches—the university does not fund faith programming.

Over the 2023/24 academic year, ECM was able to serve 25 free meals to university students, provide weekly worship services right on campus, conduct field trips to 10 local churches, hold 3 public presentations on issues of faith and inclusivity, mentor 5 student leaders, host 2 different weekend retreats, and coordinate the Queer Christian Community for 2SLGBTQIA+ students at UofG. This just scratches the surface!

This kind of ministry presence is made possible because of ECM’s vision of having a full-time chaplain, something that would be unthinkable without support from United Church Mission and Service.

So from all the students at UofG, thank you for your gifts to United Church [Mission and Service](#)! Your support is making a difference in the lives of young adults at the University of Guelph.”

To see our Mission and Service in action, watch the [2023/24 Ecumenical Campus Ministry highlight video](#).

## **INVITATION TO THE OFFERING**

**✝ DOXOLOGY: (VU 538)**

**✝ OFFERTORY PRAYER**

**✝ A NEW CREED (VU 918)**

✠Closing Hymn: “We Are Pilgrims” (VU 595)

✠BENEDICTION/COMMISSIONING

✠CHORAL AMEN (VU 969)

✠SENDING FORTH HYMN: “Halle, Halle, Halle” (VU 958)

POSTLUDE: