

Westminster United Church

January 12th, 2025

✝ You are invited to stand as you are able

ANNOUNCEMENTS/LIFE AND WORK OF THE CHURCH

INTROIT (VU 87 vs 1) "I Am the Light of the World"

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

As you greet those around you, look at each person and offer these words from Isaiah: “You are precious in God’s sight.”

✠ CALL TO WORSHIP (Isaiah 43, Psalm 29)

Our God is a God of power and strength!

God has created each of us with tender care.

Our God is a God of majesty and awe!

God walks with each of us every step of the way.

Our God is a God of glory and wonder!

God loves each of us with tenderness and passion.

Our God calls us each by name.

God calls each of us to unite in worship together!

✠ 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 MV 161** ‘I Have Called You by Your Name’ (Lyrics on powerpoint)

✠ **OPENING PRAYER (Psalm 29, Luke 3)**

Holy God of glory and majesty, you have called us by name. We pray in this moment for the courage and the strength to answer your call. As we open our ears to hear the story of your Son’s baptism, open our hearts also, that we may experience again the renewing power of rebirth in the Holy Spirit. Inspire us in this time of worship, that we may claim our own identity as your beloved children. We pray in the name of our brother, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Prayer of Confession (Isaiah 43, Psalm 29, Luke 3)

Creator of the universe, we stand amazed at your power and glory. We are eager to worship you and offer our praise, but we are often reluctant to answer when we hear you calling our name. We sing our songs of tribute in the sanctuary, but shy away from the river, lest we be baptized with the fire of the Holy Spirit. Forgive us when we forget your promise to be with us always, O God. Renew us with the power of your ever-present love, and strengthen us to proclaim your justice throughout the world. **Amen.**

Words of Assurance (Isaiah 43)

Hear the words of our creator, spoken through the prophet Isaiah: “I have called you by name. You are mine. Do not fear, for I have redeemed you.”

Prayers of the People

THE LORD’S PRAYER

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

We thank you Lord of learning for the scriptures and the lessons. We each need something from the words for our lives. We pray that you will give us the message we need today. **Amen**

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Isaiah 43:1-7

New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised

Restoration and Protection Promised

43 But now thus says the LORD,

he who created you, O Jacob,

he who formed you, O Israel:

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by name, you are mine.

² When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;

and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;

when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,

and the flame shall not consume you.

³ For I am the LORD your God,

the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.

I give Egypt as your ransom,

Ethiopia^[a] and Seba in exchange for you.

⁴ Because you are precious in my sight,

and honoured, and I love you,

I give people in return for you,

nations in exchange for your life.

⁵ Do not fear, for I am with you;

I will bring your offspring from the east,

and from the west I will gather you;

⁶ I will say to the north, 'Give them up',

and to the south, 'Do not withhold;
bring my sons from far away
and my daughters from the end of the earth—
7 everyone who is called by my name,
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed and made.

One: This is the witness of the Church.

All: Thanks be to God for the Word.

Psalm 29 VU Page 756

Ascribe to God, you powers of the heaven,
ascribe to God all glory and strength!

**Ascribe due honour to God's holy name,
and worship in the beauty of holiness.**

Glory, glory, glory to our God!

God's voice is over the waters -

God's glory thundering across the great waters.

God's voice is power, God's voice is full of majesty.

God's voice shatters the cedars,
splinters the cedars of Lebanon.

**God's voice makes Lebanon skip like a calf,
Mount Hermon stampede like a wild young bull.**

God's voice forks into tongues of fire,
God's voice shakes the wilderness,
sets trembling the wilderness of Kadesh.

**God's voice causes the oaks to whirl,
stripping the forest bare;
and in the temple all cry: Glory!**

Glory, glory, glory to our God!

God sits enthroned above the waters,

God is enthroned as sovereign forever.

You give strength to your people, O God.

Now give to your people the blessing of peace.

Glory, glory, glory to our God!

ANTHEM: Be Not Afraid

Acts 8:14-17

New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised

¹⁴ Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. ¹⁵ The two went down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit ¹⁶ (for as yet the Spirit had not come^[a] upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). ¹⁷ Then Peter and John^[b] laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

One: This is the Good News of Jesus Christ.

All: Praise to Christ, the Living Word.

✠**HYMN: VU 380** 'She Comes Sailing on the Wind' (lyrics on powerpoint)

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Last week we learned again that the first gifts to Jesus came from the Magi. Let us replicate that action with our gifts to God.

✠**DOXOLOGY: (VU 540)** 'Grant Us, God, the Grace' (lyrics on power point)

✠OFFERTORY PRAYER (Psalm 29, Acts 8)

Gracious God, we come today with joy for your birth and your baptism; we come with praise for your glory; we come with gratitude for your love. As we offer these gifts to you, send your Spirit upon us, that our hands and our hearts may do your work in the world.

As we offer our lives to you, bless us with your strength, that we may join with you to work for the blessing of peace throughout the world.

Amen.

✠A NEW CREED (VU 918)

✠Closing Hymn: VU 378 'Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart' (Lyrics on powerpoint)

✠BENEDICTION/COMMISSIONING (Isaiah 43)

You are each precious in God's sight.

We go from this place, claiming our identity as children of God.

God has called you by name.

We go into the world to answer God's call. Alleluia! Amen

✠CHORAL AMEN (VU 974)

✠SENDING FORTH HYMN: VU 43 vs 1 'Go, Tell It on the Mountain'