

Westminster United Church

February 2nd, 2025

✝ You are invited to stand as you are able

ANNOUNCEMENTS/LIFE AND WORK OF THE CHURCH

CELEBRATIONS

INTROIT (VU 258 VS 1) 'O World of God'

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: God has called us to share the good news of God's love.

P: But who am I, that God should call me?

L: You are a beloved child of God.

P: But I am weak I'm not a great speaker or preacher.

L: God is with you; don't be afraid.

P: Lord, help me to trust in your presence with me. Help me to serve you. 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 MV 1** ‘Let Us Build a House’ (Lyrics on powerpoint)

✝ **OPENING PRAYER**

Gracious God, we come to you with day, seeking your guidance and strength. You have called us to ministries for which we feel inadequate. Help us to understand that it is your love that will support and sustain our efforts. Give us the courage to place our trust in your abiding presence. We ask this in Jesus' Name. **AMEN.**

Prayer of Confession

God of great expectations, you know how easy it is for us to make excuses for inactivity. We love to run and hide when a task is set before us. We look at the expectation and think that we don't have the abilities, strength, or wisdom to accomplish this task. We think, too often, that we are doing these things all by ourselves. And we feel sorry for ourselves and angry that you expect so much from us. Forgive our ignorance, our stubbornness, and our stupidity, O Lord. Help us to understand that the opportunities for service that you offer to us also come with your abiding presence, love and support. It is your love which makes the impossible possible. Turn us around and place us back on the path of joyful service. Let our work be part of the fulfillment of the mandate of Jesus Christ when he made his proclamation in the synagogue so long ago. For it is in His Name that we pray. **AMEN.**

Words of Assurance

Even before we were born, God knew us. God has always been with us. Place your trust in God's presence and forgiving love. Rejoice! In the name of Jesus Christ, we all are forgiven! **AMEN.**

Prayers of the People

THE LORD'S PRAYER

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Saving God, your Word is full of power and glory. We pray that you will pour out your Holy Spirit upon us so that we may receive your grace and live as your beloved children; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Psalm 71:1-6 VU Page 789 Part 1:1-6

Refrain: A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing.

In you, O God, I seek refuge; may I never be disappointed.

In your righteousness, save and rescue me;
incline your ear and deliver me.

Be a sheltering rock for me,
a fortress where I may find safety;

for you are my rock and my stronghold.

Rescue me, O God, from the hand of the wicked,
from the grasp of the unjust and cruel.

For you are my hope, my trust from my youth;
from the time of my birth I have leaned on you.

Refrain: A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing.

One: These are the words of the ancient songwriters.

All: Thanks be to God for the word.

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised

The Gift of Love

13 If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast,^[a] but do not have love, I gain nothing.

⁴ Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. ⁷ It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸ Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. ⁹ For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; ¹⁰ but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. ¹² For now we see in a mirror, dimly,^[b] but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. ¹³ And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

One: This is the Good News of Jesus Christ.

All: Praise to Christ, the Living Word.

Luke 4:21-30

New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised

²¹ Then he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.' ²² All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, 'Is not this

Joseph's son?' ²³ He said to them, 'Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, "Doctor, cure yourself!" And you will say, "Do here also in your home town the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum."' ²⁴ And he said, 'Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's home town. ²⁵ But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up for three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; ²⁶ yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. ²⁷ There were also many lepers^[a] in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.' ²⁸ When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. ²⁹ They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. ³⁰ But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

One: This is the witness of the Church.

All: Thanks be to God for the Word.

SERMON:

✠**HYMN: VU 509** 'Here I Am, Lord' (lyrics on powerpoint)

MINUTES FOR MISSION "A Classroom of Care"

Signing up for a course is both exciting and nerve-wracking. We wonder what skills we'll learn and how quickly we'll see improvement, and worry about how naturally "talented" we may be.

In Sambir, Ukraine, English teacher Ilona is encouraging her learners to challenge that way of thinking and enjoy the aspect of social time with one another while learning English. This class, supported by Mission and Service partner ACT Alliance, is part of a psychosocial support program for Ukrainians displaced by war. Ilona and her family were also

displaced by the conflict in Ukraine, and she is now actively contributing to the well-being of others in similar situations. In-person learning expands opportunities and access while also providing crucial social engagement and human interaction. As Ilona says “When we come together and get to know each other, we have a community. We can open up and share our thoughts, feelings, and experiences.” In a low-pressure learning environment, students can feel comfortable as they learn skills and learn about each other. Thank you for the support you show to through [Mission and Service](#) as our neighbours endure the ongoing impacts of war and conflict.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

The Lord of all has given us all that we have. In order to share that abundance let us give with the same generosity that has been bestowed on us.

✠**DOXOLOGY: VU 537 Vs 2** ‘Your Work, O God, Needs Many Hands’
(lyrics on power point)

✠**OFFERTORY PRAYER**

Lord God in love we return to you a portion of that which you have given to us so that your abundant love can be spread throughout the community and the world. **Amen.**

✠**A NEW CREED (VU 918)**

✠**Closing Hymn VU 575** I’m Gonna Live So God Can Use Me’ (Lyrics on powerpoint)

✠**BENEDICTION/COMMISSIONING**

God did not say that it would be easy to bring the good news to all people, but God did say that God would be with you. So go now in

peace, walking humbly with God. Bring the good news of hope to all the people. **AMEN.**

✠CHORAL AMEN (VU 974)

✠SENDING FORTH HYMN: VU 424 vs 1 'May the God of Hope Go with Us' (Lyrics on powerpoint)