

Westminster United Church

March 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

Passing the Peace of Christ (Luke 9)

In the face of a stranger, in the greeting of a friend, we see our Lord, Jesus Christ. In the love of Christ, welcome those around you today.

✠ CALL TO WORSHIP

(Psalm 99)

Will you come to the highest mountain?

We come to worship the Lord.

Jesus is waiting, waiting to greet you.

Jesus, we come. Jesus, we're here.

Come!

We come to worship the Lord.

✠ 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 376** ‘Spirit of The Living God’ (Lyrics on powerpoint)

✠ **OPENING PRAYER**

(2 Corinthians 3, Luke 9)

Radiant Lord,
you shine with purity, power, and truth.
Your mercy reflects your compassion,
your care, and your love.
Transform us into your image
as we seek to follow you.
Use us to make your presence known
throughout the world.
In your strong name we pray. **Amen.**

Prayer of Confession

(Luke 9)

Lord, you call us to draw near, yet we fail to hear your voice. We sleepwalk through life, ignoring the needs of people all around us and worrying about our own desires. Forgive us: when we shut out the call to climb into your presence; when we make excuses to put off that journey. Have mercy on us, O Lord, as we silently open our hearts and confess our sins:

(Time of silence)

Hear our pleas, O God, and lift us to newness of life. **Amen.**

Words of Assurance

(2 Corinthians 3, Psalm 99, Luke 9)

We worship a forgiving God, whose mercy is never ending, whose heart abounds in steadfast love. Because of the love of Jesus Christ, nothing can separate us from the love of God.

Prayers of the People

THE LORD'S PRAYER

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Response to the Word (Luke 9)

Lord, it is good to be here—to hear your word, to share your story. Help us see your Son for who he really is. Help us listen to him, receive his forgiveness, and walk in his light.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Psalm 99 VU Page 818

Refrain: You rule with justice in delight, and faithfulness maintain.

You reign, O God, and the peoples tremble,
you sit enthroned upon the cherubim, and the earth is quaking.

**You, O God, are great in Zion,
you are exalted over all the nations.**

Let them praise your great and awesome name:
holy are you and mighty, a ruler who delights in justice.

**You have determined what is fair,
you have done in Jacob what is just and right.**

Refrain: You rule with justice in delight, and faithfulness maintain.

Moses and Aaron were among your priests,
Miriam* among those who called on your name;
they called to you, God, and you answered.

**In the pillar of cloud you spoke to them,
they kept your teachings and the law that you gave them.**

O God, our God, you answered them;
**to them you were a forgiving God,
though you punished their offences.**

Proclaim the greatness of God
and worship on God's holy hill;
for God, our God, is the Holy One.

Refrain: You rule with justice in delight, and faithfulness maintain.

One: These are the words of the ancient songwriters.

All: Thanks be to God for the word.

2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2

New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised

¹² Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness, ¹³ not like Moses, who put a veil over his face to keep the people of Israel from gazing at the end of the glory that^[a] was being set aside. ¹⁴ But their minds were hardened. Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, that same veil is still there, since only in Christ is it set aside. ¹⁵ Indeed, to this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds; ¹⁶ but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

Treasure in Clay Jars

4 Therefore, since it is by God’s mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. ² We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practice cunning or to falsify God’s word; but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God.

One: This is the Good News of Jesus Christ.

All: Praise to Christ, the Living Word.

ANTHEM: O Love That Will Not Let Me Go

Luke 9:28-36

New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised

The Transfiguration

²⁸ Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus^[a] took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹ And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. ³⁰ Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. ³¹ They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. ³² Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake,^[b] they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. ³³ Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, ‘Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings,^[c] one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah’—not knowing what he said. ³⁴ While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. ³⁵ Then from the cloud came a voice that said, ‘This is my Son, my Chosen;^[d] listen to him!’ ³⁶ When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

One: This is the witness of the Church.

All: Thanks be to God for the Word.

SERMON:

✠ **HYMN: VU 333** ‘Love Divine, All Loves Excelling’ (lyrics on powerpoint)

MINUTES FOR MISSION “Hope for Mothers, Strength for Families”

In the Eastern Carpathian Mountains, far from the chaos of war, a retreat in Tukhlya, Ukraine offers rest and renewal to mothers who have given everything for their families. Supported by Mission and Service partner ACT Alliance, ACT member Hungarian Interchurch Aid has welcomed 135 mothers and their children in the “Happy Family” initiative, providing space for healing and resilience.

In early January 2025, 18 mothers and their little ones arrived. All had either been displaced by war or lived near the frontlines. Many are exhausted, burdened by grief and overwhelming responsibilities. “I always thought only about my children—their clothes, food, education,” shares Yulia, a mother of five who lost her husband a year ago. “Here, I was able to stop and think about myself.”

With psychological support, hiking, art therapy, and group sessions, the retreat helps women regain their inner strength. While the women focus on healing, their children participate in creative activities, allowing everyone time for self-care. Many women hesitated before they left home, worried about stepping away from their duties and earnings. “How could I leave everything?” Yulia recalled. “But now I see how much I needed this time to regain my strength and return home with love and energy.”

For many, this is their first experience receiving psychological support. “These exercises helped me understand myself better,” says Nataliya,

who fled to Lviv after losing her home. “I learned techniques I can use every day to cope.”

This retreat is made possible with help from your gifts to [Mission and Service](#). While it cannot erase hardship, it offers strength for the journey ahead. Your support provides a space for healing, restoring hope, and empowering those in need. Thank you for making a difference.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

(Exodus 34, 2 Corinthians 3)

In days of old, God was seen as far from the people.
But we know Christ, and in him we know God.
When we share what we have out of love,
our hearts grow closer to God,
and we shine with Christ’s glory.
Let us offer our gifts to God today.

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

✠**OFFERTORY PRAYER**

(2 Corinthians 4)

Generous God,
it is through your mercy
that we have this ministry—
the ministry of our talents and treasure,
the ministry of our passion and purpose.
Strengthen our hearts for your service,
and accept the grateful offerings
we lay before you. **Amen.**

✠**A NEW CREED (VU 918)**

✠ **Closing Hymn** Shine, Jesus, Shine' (Lyrics on powerpoint)

✠ **BENEDICTION/COMMISSIONING**

(Luke 9)

Led by the Spirit, go forth in God's love. Illumined by the Spirit, shine with Christ's light. **Amen.**

✠ **CHORAL AMEN (VU 974)**

✠ **SENDING FORTH HYMN** 'This Little Light of Mine' (Lyrics on powerpoint)