

Westminster United Church

April 20th, 2025

Easter Sunday

✝ You are invited to stand as you are able

ANNOUNCEMENTS/LIFE AND WORK OF THE CHURCH

INTROIT (VU 186 VS 1) 'Now the Green Blade Rises'

Easter

Proclamation

The light which the world tried to extinguish cannot be put out. Today we light the candles again, proclaiming the transforming power of God. As the light returns, we give thanks that God's transforming love has been, is now, and will ever be at work within us. Today we celebrate: new life, new joy, new possibilities. Christ is alive and living among us! As we light the candles, we acknowledge that there is still pain and suffering in the world, but we place our trust in God and in the way shown by Jesus Christ. In the midst of darkness, there is light. In the pain of death, there is life. In the face of what appear to us to be overwhelming odds, God is at work in us and in the world, working for justice and peace, compassion and love, and life abundant. Christ is risen; Christ is risen in us, for wherever we gather in his name, he is there.

(All candles are re-lit.)

All: Alleluia, Christ is risen; Christ is risen indeed!

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: Welcome today! Look where our Lenten journey has brought us!

P: We walked the seashore and the hills with Jesus; we went to the upper room and to the Garden of Sorrows, we stood at the cross and hid in a room out of our fear.

L: Now we are here, in the splendor and beauty of this place!

P: Everything is bursting with life. Jesus is alive! He is risen!

L: Hallelujah!

P: Hallelujah! 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 179 ‘Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Give Thanks’ (Lyrics on powerpoint)

✠OPENING PRAYER

Christ the Lord is Risen today! Alleluia! Our hopes and dreams have come true. We do not have to fear death, for Christ goes before us. Praise be to God who has raised Christ from the dead and given to us new life. Open our hearts to receive your wondrous words of love, O God. Help prepare us for the opportunities to serve you by serving others. In Christ’s Name, we pray. **AMEN.**

Prayer of Confession

We have to admit it, Lord, that we had our doubts. We have heard the Resurrection story and for so many years it has remained just a nice story. But this time it is different. This time we have walked the path with Christ. We have journeyed through the wilderness and valleys, to the mountaintops to the courtyard, the garden and the cross. Now you bring us to the empty tomb and to the joyous news of the truth of Christ. Forgive us when we so easily doubt the truth of his resurrection. Forgive us when we feel we have to have absolute proof of everything. Your love in Jesus Christ is all the proof we need. You conquered death and sin, you brought us to new life. We praise your holy name and sing our unending song of hope and thanksgiving. Christ the Lord is risen today. Alleluia. **AMEN.**

Words of Assurance

Come into the light of God's love! Christ is risen! Death has been swallowed up in victory! Know beyond all doubt that God's love is always with you, surrounding you, leading you, comforting you. Be at peace. **AMEN.**

Prayers of the People

THE LORD'S PRAYER

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

On this glorious day we rejoice with God in Heaven for the wisdom to hear and the courage to believe that Christ is indeed risen as we hear the story of his triumph over death.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

John 20:1-9

New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised

The Resurrection of Jesus

20 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. ² So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.' ³ Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. ⁴ The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷ and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. ⁸ Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹ for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

One: This is the good news of Jesus Christ.

All: Praise to Christ, the living word.

Luke 24:13-35

New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised

The Walk to Emmaus

¹³ Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles ^[a] from Jerusalem, ¹⁴ and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, ¹⁶ but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷ And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. ^[b] ¹⁸ Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in

Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?’ ¹⁹ He asked them, ‘What things?’ They replied, ‘The things about Jesus of Nazareth,^[c] who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰ and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. ²¹ But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.^[d] Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. ²² Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, ²³ and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.’ ²⁵ Then he said to them, ‘Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Messiah^[e] should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?’ ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

²⁸ As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. ²⁹ But they urged him strongly, saying, ‘Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.’ So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. ³² They said to each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us^[f] while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?’ ³³ That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. ³⁴ They were saying, ‘The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!’ ³⁵ Then they told what had

happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

One: This is the witness of the Church.

All: Thanks be to God for the Word.

ANTHEM:

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised
Gentiles Hear the Good News

³⁴ Then Peter began to speak to them: 'I truly understand that God shows no partiality

³⁷ That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹ We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; ⁴⁰ but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, ⁴¹ not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.'

One: This is the good news of Jesus Christ.

All: Praise to Christ, the living word.

MEDITATION: No Greater Love

✠HYMN: VU 155 'Jesus Christ is Risen Today' (lyrics on powerpoint)

MINUTES FOR MISSION

“Renewing Hope and Growing Love”

Easter is a time of renewal and reflection—a reminder of the boundless grace and love that flow through the world. It is also a time to celebrate the ways that you put love into action through Mission and Service.

For 100 years, the faithful generosity of compassionate people like you has helped The United Church of Canada answer Jesus' call to love and serve. Across Canada and around the world, this support has empowered, and continues to empower, life-changing work. In El Salvador, rural farmers are getting the resources to grow enough food for their families. In Zimbabwe, women are learning skills to build sustainable livelihoods. And these are just two of the countless stories of transformation made possible by Mission and Service partners.

As the church looks toward the next century, this legacy of compassion and justice continues. The impact of every gift, every prayer, and every act of service will echo far into the future, ensuring the church remains a source of love and hope for generations to come.

Thank you for the love you show through [Mission and Service](#). With your help, we will move together with compassion into the next 100 years.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

When we come to a party we bring a gift..an offering to say thank you for the invitation. What greater time is there to offer thanks to God for the invitation to walk with Jesus to eternal life.

✠DOXOLOGY: VU 823 (lyrics on power point)

✠OFFERTORY PRAYER

Gracious and generous God we thank you for the gift of love and hope that you gave us in the gift of Jesus Christ. We ask now that you bless

our gifts of acknowledgement for the invitation and the gift. Make our gifts and us useful for your purpose in the world. **Amen.**

✠A NEW CREED (VU 918)

✠CLOSING HYMN VU 169 'Good Christians All, Rejoice and Sing' (Lyrics on powerpoint)

✠BENEDICTION/COMMISSIONING

Go forth in joy! Let your voices ring with victory; for Christ is Risen!
Happy Easter!

✠CHORAL AMEN (VU 974)

✠SENDING FORTH HYMN VU 158 Vs. 1 'Christ Is Alive' (Lyrics on powerpoint)