

WELCOME TO WESTMINSTER

December 7th, 2025

Advent I & II



Worship Leader: Marg McCulley

Music: Cheryl Finnie

“We are a faith community building relationships with God, all people, and our world.”

✝ You are invited to stand as you are able

ANNOUNCEMENTS/LIFE AND WORK OF THE CHURCH

CELEBRATIONS

INTROIT (VU 6 Vs. 1) ‘A Candle is Burning’

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

"Come people of God, let us wait patiently together.

Let us await the coming of Messiah

Let us listen to God's word,

Seeking God's promise, opening ourselves to it.

Let us bless and worship God!

Let us bless and worship God!

Advent I Candle Lighting "Hope"

"Hope is a star."

"Winter stars shine for us, pointing the way to something new, something true."

"A way of trust."

"Hope is a star of possibility."

(First Candle is Lit)

All: Hope is a star.

Advent II Candle Lighting "Peace"

"Peace is a star"

"Shining, brilliant even in the midst of war, uncertainty, and turmoil."

"Peace is a state of mind, a lighter perspective, a starry view on life. We are invited to turn upward, outward, beyond ourselves."

"Peace is an inviting star."

(Second Candle is Lit)

All: Peace is a star.

† 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 2 ‘Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus’

† OPENING PRAYER (George Allan, Gathering)

Loving and merciful God, we have come together awaiting the birth of peace on earth, goodwill to all people.

This we seek and pray for, time and time again.

Bless us with your love and grace on this day and forever more we pray.

Help us to open our hearts to others: family, friends, strangers—neighbours all, even as you welcome us into your loving presence.

Help us to give of ourselves, we pray, in new relationships and in old, that we may reflect your love and peace and grace.

Help us to love, cherish and share, and to be both loving and loved, today, tomorrow, and forever.

O come, O come Emmanuel. Amen

Prayer of Confession (Elaine Bidgood Sweet, Gathering)

Forgiving God, we confess that we sin, we confess that Our actions break our relationship with you and with others. Some sin we are aware of, all sin you

know. So, we pray sincerely, forgive us for the ways we have failed to be instruments of peace. Forgive our short-sightedness and selfishness. Fill us with love for peaceful conclusions and a longing for a world where peace rules. Come, O come, Emmanuel, for although we believe God is with us, we still have room to learn how to live with you in ways that enrich our souls. Amen
(adapted)

Words of Assurance

As we look inward to our transgressions, we can be assured that God came to earth to save us. In this time of Advent let us look hopefully to God for our forgiveness and for God's love in our lives. **Amen**

Prayers of the People

THE LORD'S PRAYER

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (George Allan, Gathering)

Guiding God, help us to sense your message as we receive the words of scripture and carry your love and guidance forward with us throughout our daily lives. (adapted)

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Isaiah 11:1-10

New International Version

The Branch From Jesse

11 A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

²The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of might,
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD—

³and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.

He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,
or decide by what he hears with his ears;

⁴but with righteousness he will judge the needy,
with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.

He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth;
with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.

⁵ Righteousness will be his belt
and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

⁶ The wolf will live with the lamb,
the leopard will lie down with the goat,
the calf and the lion and the yearling^[a] together;
and a little child will lead them.

⁷ The cow will feed with the bear,
their young will lie down together,
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.

⁸ The infant will play near the cobra's den,
and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest.

⁹ They will neither harm nor destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

¹⁰ In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the
nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious.

One: This is the good news of Jesus Christ.

All: Praise to Christ, the living word.

Romans 15:4-13

New International Version

⁴ For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that
through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they
provide we might have hope.

⁵ May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same
attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, ⁶ so that with one mind
and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷ Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to
God. ⁸ For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews^[a] on behalf of
God's truth, so that the promises made to the patriarchs might be
confirmed ⁹ and, moreover, that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it
is written:

“Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles;
I will sing the praises of your name.”^[b]

¹⁰ Again, it says,

“Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people.”^[c]

¹¹ And again,

“Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles;
let all the peoples extol him.”^[d]

¹² And again, Isaiah says,

“The Root of Jesse will spring up,
one who will arise to rule over the nations;
in him the Gentiles will hope.”^[e]

¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

One: This is the witness of the Church.

All: Thanks be to God for the Word.

Matthew 3:1-12

New International Version

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

3 In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea ² and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” ³ This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

“A voice of one calling in the wilderness,
‘Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.’”^[a]

⁴ John’s clothes were made of camel’s hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. ⁶ Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. ⁹ And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. ¹⁰ The ax is already at the

root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ “I baptize you with^[b] water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with^[c] the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

One: This is the good news of Jesus Christ.

All: Praise to Christ, the living word.

SERMON: Jesus Christ is the One. What does that mean to me?

✠**HYMN: VU 20** ‘On Jordan’s Bank’

MINUTES FOR MISSION “Gifts with Joy, Gifts with Hope, Gifts with Vision”

December always seems to arrive in a blink, doesn’t it? Some are already checking off shopping lists, and others are thinking about starting. Wherever you fall, [Gifts with Vision](#) can make your Christmas giving simple and meaningful.

With Gifts with Vision, there’s no wrapping, no shipping deadlines, and no frantic mall searches. Instead, you can choose a gift that truly matters. Every gift supports communities across Canada and around the world—addressing poverty and hunger, strengthening education, supporting healing and reconciliation, and more. There’s something thoughtful for everyone on your list.

Each Gift with Vision connects directly to a Mission and Service project that relies on the generosity of people like you. Your gift becomes part of real change and real hope for people who need it.

As you settle into the season, whether you’re a planner or a last-minute shopper, consider a gift that gives back. [Gifts with Vision](#) is just a click away.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING (Laura J. Turnbull, Gathering)

God of Great Expectations, we are so blessed! You have endowed us with a myriad of ways to respond in life. The friends of faith with whom we break bread and those we touch through the sharing of our offerings bring special blessings to our lives. Thank you for making generosity and gift-giving part of our Advent Journey. **Amen** (adapted)

✠ **DOXOLOGY: VU 544** 'In Gratitude and Humble Trust'

✠ **OFFERTORY PRAYER** (Laura Turnbull, Gathering)

God, our strength and salvation, we glorify your name. With acts of joyous delight, we show others your timeless grace. Our offerings are presented, knowing that those who are hopeful will be served. May all that we are and all that we give reflect your great love. Amen. (adapted)

OFFERTORY HYMN

What can I give him? Poor as I am.

If I were a Shephard I would bring him a lamb.

If I were a wise man I would do my part.

Yet what can I him, give my heart.

✠ **A NEW CREED (VU 918)**

✠ **CLOSING HYMN VU 29** 'Hark The Glad Sound'

✠ **BENEDICTION/COMMISSIONING** (Bill Steadman, Gathering)

One word we have been given this day is hope.

May we carry hope one our journey throughout this week, the hope we have encountered and experienced in this place.

May we offer the vision of hope to all we meet.

May we share the blessing that we have received, this day and always. Amen (adapted)

✠ **CHORAL AMEN (VU 974)**

✠ **SENDING FORTH HYMN MV 161 Vs. 1** 'I Have Called You by Your Name'