

Westminster United Church



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

September 18, 2011

Baptism Sunday / Season of Creation – Water

On this River Sunday we explore the ways God renews creation through the healing gift of Spirit as expressed in waters and rivers. River people of all times have had to discover the place of their creative engagement with Creator. Today's scripture readings assert that the reign of God is promised for all creation. The renewal, restoration, and interdependence of all creation are the culmination of God's loving vision.

If you would like to stay seated for any or all of the "standing" parts of the service, please feel free to do so.

Need a refuge? Our Nursery is located off Memorial Hall, has a speaker system through which to hear the service, and exists for all who may need this space. Memorial Hall approach is via the pulpit side exit.

Prelude / Sharing Announcements / A Time of Greeting A Time of Silent Preparation—Lighting the Christ Candle

Call to Worship (Responsive)

One: We invite the rivers to worship with us:

All: the Elk, the Bow and all the streams that flow to the sea.

One: We invite the country creeks to sing:

All: perch, trout, salmon, trout streams, and gleaming fountains.

One: We invite the fauna to praise with us:

All: ducks, heron, swans, dragonflies and sleepy turtles.

One: We join with the waters in praising:

All: waterfalls singing upstream and waves dancing at the river mouth.

One: We celebrate the song of the river!

All: Sing, river, sing!

Opening Prayer (Unison)

Creating Holy, we celebrate your refreshing presence among us and our kin in creation, especially in the rivers, the creeks, and the wetlands of Earth. May our spirits be lifted to rejoice with the vibrant world of the rivers. Amen.

Hymn #644 "I Was There to Hear Your Borne Cry" (vv. 1-3)

*(During the hymn, those sharing in the baptism gather on the chancel.)
(All the children are welcome to gather on the chancel steps.)*

Sacrament of Baptism

Elder: On behalf of the Board of Westminster United Church, I present the following children for initiation into the body of Christ through Baptism:

Holly Renee Biggar, daughter of Dustin & Erynn Biggar

and

Jordyn Audra Staseson, daughter of Jeffrey & Richele Staseson

Baptism Vows

You come to this place bringing your daughters, Holly & Jordyn. You, their parents, speak for them. Their care and nurture are entrusted to you. You bring Holly & Jordyn here to commit them and yourselves to a life of faith, a journey with ever new experiences and challenges.

Do you see the act of baptism as a symbol of our celebration of the life of your daughter, filled as she already is with the spirit of the Divine? If so, please say, ðI do.ö

I do.

Do you believe that as we share the stories of life, yours, ours, those of our children and those of people of wisdom and faith who have gone before us, that we come to know the Divine more fully? If so, please say, ðI do.ö

I do.

Do you commit yourself and your daughter to a journey of the spirit within the faith community, seeking to find and nurture wholeness within yourself, your daughter, and the world? If so, please say, ðI do.ö

I do.

Baptismal Promises of the Congregation (Please stand.)

One: We gather at this font to celebrate the Spirit of Life that connects us all and through which we come to love ourselves, one another, and the whole of creation.

All: This font and the water in it are our symbols of community and symbols of our common need for the refreshing waters of the Spirit.

One: Through water we are born, of water we are made, by water we are sustained. Each of you, whole and loved knows the need for support and care upon the spiritual journey. As these individuals gather to commit to this journey through baptism, let us pledge our care to them.

All: We stand as witnesses to the commitment these people make to the journey of faith and pledge ourselves, through the symbol of this water, to their love, support, and care as they discover the ways that the Spirit unfolds for them. (Please be seated.)

Let us pray. *(One)*

May we be thankful for the gift of life and within it, the gift of water. Over its unshaped promise, the Spirit hovered at creation; by water comes the growth of the earth. Through water, the children of Israel were led to freedom; in the waters of the Jordan, Jesus was baptised. May this water be a sign for all of new life. Amen.

The water is poured.

The Baptism

(All relatives and friends of Holly are asked to stand where they are seated in the pew as she is being baptised.)

James: òHolly, I baptise you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. You are baptised in the name of love: its beginning and its end, its commitment and its challenge, its peace and its power.ö

People Respond: “Amen.”

Laying on of Hands

(The family, Elder, and James place their hands on Holly, to indicate the action of the Holy Spirit.)

James: òHolly, may the Spirit work within you, that being born of water and Spirit; you may be a faithful witness of Jesus.ö

People Respond: “Amen.”

The Declaration

In the name of Jesus, who was baptised as you are now, you are welcomed into the household of faith with joy and thanksgiving.

The Baptism

(All relatives and friends of Jordyn are asked to stand where they are seated in the pew as she is being baptised.)

James: òJordyn, I baptise you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. You are baptised in the name of love: its beginning and its end, its commitment and its challenge, its peace and its power.ö

People Respond: “Amen.”

Laying on of Hands

(The family, Elder, and James place their hands on Jordyn, to indicate the action of the Holy Spirit.)

James: òJordyn, may the Spirit work within you, that being born of water and Spirit; you may be a faithful witness of Jesus.ö

People Respond: “Amen.”

The Declaration

In the name of Jesus, who was baptised as you are now, you are welcomed into the household of faith with joy and thanksgiving.

Holly and Jordyn are greeted by the children.

The Baptismal certificates are shared.

(The families return to their seats during the following hymn and the children leave for their Sunday School classes.)

Hymn #644 “I Was There to Hear Your Borne Cry” (vv. 4-7)

Prayer for Transformation *(Unison)*

We remember how the rivers in our garden planet have been poisoned and polluted. We have forgotten Earth and treated this garden planet as a beast to be tamed and a place to be ruled. Our rivers have been polluted with poisons, our streams have been treated as waste dumps, our wetlands drained of life, living waters have been turned into deathtraps and wasted precious waters in luxury living...*(time for silent reflection)*

Words of Assurance *(One)*

Our words have been heard and forgiveness and our wrong doings against the rivers have been forgiven. May peace be ours as we continue to heal the water. Amen.

Biblical Notes / Prayer of Illumination

Genesis 8:20-22; 9:12-17 from the Hebrews Pgs. 11 & 12 (NRSV)

Other lessons for your personal consideration from today’s lections are: Psalm 104:27-33;; Matthew 28:1-10.

Anthem for Baptism Sunday

Revelation 22:1-5 from the Epistles Pg. 322 (NRSV)

Reflection for Baptism and Water Creation Sunday

Hymn #307 “Touch the Earth Lightly”

Our Church Tithes and Offerings / Offertory

Dedication Hymn #544 “In Gratitude and Humble Trust”

Prayer of Dedication *(One)*

May these gifts we have presented be blessed. May all our gifts of time, talent, and money be blessed.

Prayer of Thanksgiving, Intercession & Lord’s Prayer

Hymn #647 “Travel On, Travel On”

Commissioning *(One)*

Let us go from here in peace, serving each other with the love of Jesusø example and loving Earth!

Choral Amen

Hymn #964 “Go Now in Peace”

Postlude

Welcome to Westminster this morning.

Please gather for coffee in Memorial Hall, following worship.

This Week at Westminster (September 18th – 24th)

Sun.	Trustees	9:00 a.m.	Shalom Room
	Christian Development	9:30 a.m.	Nursery
	Worship	10:25 a.m.	Sanctuary
	Sunday School Classes Begin	10:40 a.m.	Westminster Room
	Jr. Choir Practice	11:45 a.m.	Lounge
Tue.	Prayer Shawl	1:30 p.m.	Lounge
Wed.	Bible Study	9:30 a.m.	Nursery
Thu.	Senior Choir Practice	7:00 p.m.	Sanctuary

Next Week at Westminster (September 25th – October 1st)

Sun.	Worship	10:25 a.m.	Sanctuary
	Jr. Choir Practice	11:45 a.m.	Lounge
Tue – Sat: Pictorial Directory Photo Session Appointments			
Tue.	Prayer Shawl	1:30 p.m.	Lounge
Wed.	Bible Study	9:30 a.m.	Nursery
Thu.	Senior Choir Practice	7:00 p.m.	Sanctuary

Friendship Rosters: Please sign the Friendship Roster this morning. It is a helpful record of your worship presence and a way to share special concerns.

Congregational Life Committee is appealing to the congregation for goodies for Sunday morning coffee time. Please mark your items for Sunday Coffee and include the current date before storing in the auxiliary kitchen freezer.

The Visitation & Membership committee are appealing for volunteers to step forward and assist with Hospital Visitation, an important ministry of pastoral care. Please contact the office for further information.

Qi Gong instructed by Deanna Ries will begin on Wednesday, September 21st at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary and will run for eight weeks. An honorarium will accompany this program. Please contact the office to register.

2011 Pictorial Directory: Our Directory is an important way to keep in touch with each other within our Church Community, while creating an historical document for Westminster United. We have a new company contracted for the Directory and Photos. **Booking of appointments** (September 27th to October 1st) will occur following worship each Sunday in September. Or you can call Donna Scharf at 403-526-1555. Or you can book your own appointment on line through the link on Westminster's website homepage, located in the Calendar box.

The United Church of Canada continues an emergency appeal for the Horn of Africa and the East Africa Drought Relief Fund. Please join the church in providing financial support for this humanitarian crisis. Donations can be made **electronically** through the UCC website at www.united-church.ca or **Toll Free** at 1-800-268-3781 Ext #2026 using a credit card. **All gifts received by the General Council Office by September 26th will be matched by CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency).**

The **Medicine Hat College Ecumenical Chaplaincy Ministry Board** cordially invites everyone to their **Commissioning Service on Thursday, September 22nd** at the College to share their vision with congregations and the college community.

Peace United Church at Irvine is holding their **Annual Fall Turkey Supper** on Sunday, **September 25th** at 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. Adults \$12, Children (5-12 yrs) \$5, and under 5 yrs no charge. Everyone is welcome!!!

“Songs from the Heart” to Carol Whaley in concert (*accompanied by Nancy Dick*). Sunday, September 25th at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary of Fifth Avenue Memorial United Church, 476 to 4 Street S.E. Admission is by donation with the **proceeds** being split equally between the ALS Society and the FAM Stained Glass Window restoration fund.

Fifth Avenue Memorial United Church is pleased to present a **Fall Turkey Supper on October 2nd**. There will be two settings: 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Adults - \$12, Children 6-12 - \$6. For more information or for tickets call 403-526-2237 or visit 476 to 4 St SE during office hours.

“Here I Am” is the theme for **2011 Banff Men’s Conference, October 21-23.** **New location: The Banff Park Lodge.** To register or obtain more information, check out www.banffmen.org.

Celebrations This Week

Ministry was extended into the community this past week as James & Taylor Croissant officiated at the marriage ceremony of Stephanie Thomas and Evan Ramage.

Birthdays: Joy Biko, Steve Rattai, Rob Gardner, Marian Bauer, Myra Gerhardt, and Darlene O’Reilly.

South Alberta Presbytery: Our prayers this week are requested for Coaldale-Raymond Pastoral Charge & the Rev. Bob Wallace.

Our Order of Ministry This Morning

Sunday School Co-ordinator	Jackie Carlson
Greeters & Ushers	Doreen Lyon, Jean Riggins, Joyce Shannon, Lenora Stein
Coffee Hosts	Charlene Andreas, Bev Empey, Brenda Wallsmith, Sharon Clay
Scripture Reader	Mina Carlson
Elder-in-Charge	Maureen Oster

Next Week’s Readings: Joel 1:8-10, 17-20; Psalm 18:6-19; Matthew 3:13—4:2 or Mark 1:9-13; Romans 8:18-27.

Stewardship Thought for Today

Jealousy and grumbling over what we don’t have, and what we think we need, can never satisfy us. But as we share what we have with others, God will continue to give us what we need.

by Kathie Murphy (General Council Office)