

Westminster United Church



Ministers: All the people
Clergy: Rev. James Farrell
Director of Music: Chris White
Treasurer: Murray Bell
Custodian: James Karpeh
Secretary: Kim Sherring
Jr Choir: Anna Marie Hancock
101-6th Street SE
Medicine Hat, AB T1A 1G7
Tel: 403-526-5247
Fax: 403- 526-5983
E-mail: westminsteruc@gmail.com
Website: www.westminsteruc.com

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

September 25, 2011
Wilderness/Outback Sunday

Wilderness is a place that lies beyond human control. In the Hebrew Scriptures, it is called *midbar*; in Australia, *outback*. Here, humans experience a challenge to their capacity for survival and turn to a power beyond themselves. In Jesus' relationship with God and in Paul's teaching, wilderness is the place of desolation, barrenness, isolation and becomes the place where hope is alive and comfort is a gift of God.

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 wilderness to worship with us:

All: thickets and rugged terrain, deep gorges and mountain ranges.

One: We invite the hot sands to celebrate life:

All: to lift their voices to the Creator at the sound of rain on the dust.

One: We invite the flora to sing in the sun:

All: cactus and tumbleweed; brush and bristle.

One: We join with the fauna of the wilderness in praising:

All: lizards and gila monsters, rattlesnakes and hovering hawks.

One: We invite the spirits of the wilderness to join us in praise:

All: songs of ancient custodians deep in the rock, spirits of life deep in the sand and the hills.

One: We celebrate the song of the wilderness!

All: Sing, wilderness, sing!

Opening Prayer *(Unison)*

Universal Holy Energy, whose rugged beauty fills our planet, may we discern that vibrant energy among us, especially in the wonders of our wilderness. May our spirits be lifted to rejoice with the sand and the wind and the wild of the wilderness. Amen.

Hymn #357 "Tell Me the Stories of Jesus" (vv. 1-4)

Conversation Time

The Sunday School leaves for their classes.

Prayer for Transformation *(Unison)*

We remember the wilderness, the wild places on Earth, the worlds of wonder and mystery, the spirit of the wilderness. We remember the wild worlds and the hiding places of our childhood, places where we played, where we felt the mystery of caves, fantasy, and strange creatures. We regret that we have become alienated from Earth, and have treated this garden as a beast to be tamed, as a domain to be dominated, and as a place to be ruled for our gain. We are sorry. We have polluted deserts with radioactive waste. We have torn holes in the ozone layer. We have desecrated sacred sites in the mountains. We have destroyed the homes of wild creatures. We are sorry...*(time for silent reflection)*

Words of Assurance *(One)*

We are invited to come home to Earth, and called to care for this planet with love, to nurture the wilderness as we have been nurtured, and to join in healing creation. Amen.

Biblical Notes / Prayer of Illumination

Psalm 18:6-19 (Pg. 545)

Other lessons for your personal consideration from today's lections are:

Joel 1:8-10, 17-20; Matthew 3:13—4:2 or Mark 1:9-13; Romans 8:18-27.

Senior Choir *Anthem*

Matthew 20:1-15 from the Christian Scriptures Pg. 29 (NRSV)

Reflection “In the Wilderness”

More Voices Hymn #41 “O Beautiful Gaia”

Mission Momentô Sharon Clay

Our Church Tithes and Offerings / Offertory

Dedication Hymn #544 “In Gratitude and Humble Trust”

Prayer of Dedication (One)

We have gifts to share. May our offerings be accepted as an expression of our thanksgiving and as a sign of our concern for those in need, including all our fellow creatures on planet Earth. Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving, Intercession & Lord’s Prayer

Hymn #229 “God of the Sparrow”

Commissioning (One)

Let us go in peace. May the earth be warm under your feet, the rains bring new life around us, and may the wind blow as the breath of the Spirit before us.

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 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

Next Week at Westminster (October 2nd – 8th)

Sun.	Music & Worship	9:00 a.m.	Lounge
Sun.	Local Food Needs	10:00 a.m.	Narthex
	Worship: Worldwide Communion	10:25 a.m.	Sanctuary
	Jr. Choir Practice	11:45 a.m.	Lounge
	Ministry & Personnel	11:45 a.m.	Side Office
Mon.	Property	7:00 p.m.	Westminster Room
Tue.	Prayer Shawl	1:30 p.m.	Lounge
Wed.	Bible Study	9:30 a.m.	Nursery

Thu.	UCW Meeting	1:30 p.m.	Lounge
	Senior Choir Practice	7:00 p.m.	Sanctuary
Fri.	Thanksgiving Decorating	10:00 a.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 ôFor Sunday Coffeeô and include the current date before storing in the auxiliary kitchen freezer.

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

To assist **Project Connect**, the **Mission & Outreach** committee is collecting **NEW** warm socks, men’s underwear (all sizes), toques, warm mittens, and bath towels to share with our most vulnerable neighbours in Medicine Hat. **Donations are needed by October 19th** and can be dropped off in the large green box on the Chancel.

Qi Gong instructed by Deanna Ries has begun on Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary and will run for 7 weeks. An honorarium will accompany this program. Please contact the office to register.

2011 Pictorial Directory: Photo sessions take place this week. Call Gord Wallsmith at 403-488-5921 for last minute bookings of appointments.

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

“Songs from the Heart” ô 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 ô 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 ô 4 St SE during office hours.

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

Celebrations This Week

Birthdays: Al Olson, Sean Wilkinson, Jane Clarke, and Angela Irvine.

South Alberta Presbytery: *Our prayers this week are requested for Rolling Hills Pastoral Charge & Pastoral Charge Supervisor, Yvonne Terry.*

Our Order of Ministry This Morning

Sunday School Co-ordinator	Jackie Carlson
Greeters & Ushers	Gladys Schlenker, Jean Pfeifer Florence Leech, Janice Neigum
Coffee Hosts	Barb Grozell, Velma Pearson, Sharon Clay, Betty Sidlick
Scripture Reader	Linda Kinvig
Elder-in-Charge	Doug Pearson

Next Week's Readings for *World Wide Communion*: *Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20; Psalm 19 or Isaiah 5:1-7 or Psalm 80:7-15; Matthew 21:33-46; Philippians 3:4b-14.*

Stewardship Thought for Today

Ministry is the art of creating a sacred and, therefore, safe space wherein people are invited and encouraged to explore Mystery and Awe and Wonder.

by Sally Boyle, President of Alberta/Northwest Conference

Board Summary from September 13, 2011 Meeting: The Board requests an update from the Joint Search Committee at our next meeting. The Fall Supper will be held Saturday, October 22nd. Waiting for drawings on elevator installation and will pursue tenders once drawings are received. Coffee will be purchased from Haiti Lifeline and will be utilized at various coffee times after church. Space will be rented to the Bantam AA for instructional classes at our current rates. Requests were received for Baptism for Holly Renee Biggar and Jordyn Audra Staseson. *Respectfully submitted by, Ron McEwen, Secretary.*