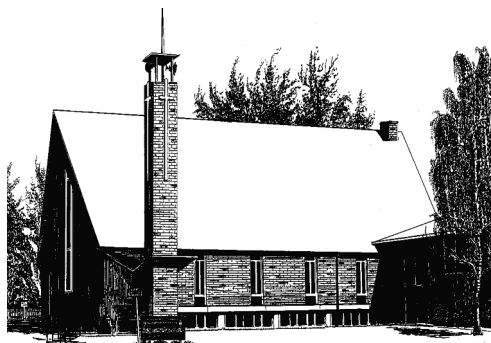


# Westminster United Church



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

**November 27, 2011**  
**Advent I—Communion**

Welcome to the *Tartones*, our guest musicians this morning.

Advent invites us to acknowledge times of deep belief, but also times of doubt. It calls us to remember when we have experienced God's presence most clearly, and when we have felt deserted by God. It reminds us that our relationship with the One who creates is ongoing and we are not alone.

*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.*

*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.*

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**Prelude / Sharing Announcements / A Time of Greeting**

**A Time of Silent Preparation—Lighting the Christ Candle**

**Call to Worship** (*Responsive*)

**One:** A child's eyes light up as she imagines a dancing, laughing time, far, far in the future.

**All:** **An older person dreams of a day when infirmity and anxiety will cease.**

**One:** A wise person reflects on the untapped potential within humanity's potential to build a world where joy and sharing prevail.

**All:** **And we, gathered as people of faith, catch a glimpse of Advent hope.**

**Opening Prayer** (*Unison*)

**May we be blessed during this season of Advent. May we recognize Holy presentness, rather than merely scuttle to and fro, in a frenzy of cooking and shopping, parties and glitter. For this season is precious time...of waiting, of hoping. Amen.**

**Advent I Candle Lighting: *The Candle of Hope***

**One:** As we begin our Advent journey, we gather around the traditional Advent wreath.

**Two:** A wreath is an object that is made circular in shape through turning and bending material. Advent wreaths are often made from branches or other live material, and have become a beloved part of our Advent and Christmas celebrations. In certain periods of history this kind of wreath was used as a crown, such as the Olympic victory crown or the crown of thorns that adorned Jesus' head when he was crucified.

**One:** The circular shape symbolizes the totality of Holy love and grace. There is no beginning and no ending. Like our church year, it is a continuous never-ending reality.

**Two:** As we light this first candle of Advent, we are reminded of the beginning and the ending, the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last. That is the source of our hope, the reason we are filled with hopeful anticipation on this first Sunday of the church year.

**Hymn #7 "Hope is A Star"** (v. 1)

*Conversation Time*

*The Sunday School leaves for their classes.*

**Prayer for Transformation** (*Unison*)

**Where brokenness and blessing collide, where pain and promise tangle together, where longing and love run into each other, we seek healing. May we learn to reshape all things making our Advent a longing of renewal...(time for silent reflection)**

**Words of Assurance** (*One*)

May we work patiently for new attitudes, fresh vision, and a change of heart. Peace and a new determination are ours. Amen.

**Biblical Notes / Prayer of Illumination**

**Psalm 80:1-7** Pg. 583

*Other lessons for your personal consideration from today's lections are:  
Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:17-19; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9.*

**Guest Musicians: *Tartones***

**Mark 13:24-37** from the Christian Scriptures Pg. 65 (*NRSV*)

**Reflection**

**Hymn #55 “In the Bleak Midwinter”** (vv. 1-3)

**Our Church Tithes and Offerings / Offertory**

**Dedication Hymn #55 “In the Bleak Midwinter”** (v. 4)

**Prayer of Dedication** (*One*)

We give thanks for life and the courage to live it. Let our gratitude for life be expressed in our generosity. Let our faith be expressed in good causes. Let our belief in the future find full expression in our daily attitude of mind. Amen.

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## Advent I – Sacrament of Communion

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**One:** Source and Sustainer of life we name God, present and active from the beginning of time, we are gathered in your ever presentness.

**All:** **And it is right that we give thanks and praise, and tell our stories of celebration and connectedness.**

**Thanksgiving**

**One:** In time beyond our dreaming Creativity God hovered over the water, and was revealed in fire and storm and precious law. Likewise, humanity in this creative likeness evolved on this earth, along with earth's minerals and waters, flowers and fruits, living creatures of grace and beauty!

**All:** **We offer this our thanks and praise.**

**One:** Our stories go on to say: Noah was shown a rainbow, Moses gained courage to free his people, in the face of danger Miriam would sing, Esther found new strength, and Ruth stayed loyal.

**All:** **We give thanks for women and men in many different cultures and times who spoke about our connectedness with each other, and with all the universe.**

**One:** In this age and season, with its TV and shopping and cold winter days, we wait again with expectant hearts and hopeful spirits, as we seek to discern Holy presentness among us. So we join our celebration to the adoration of all people:

**All:** **Holy, holy, holy, compassionate God, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.**

**One:** Blessed is the one who comes in the name of God.

**All:** **Hosanna in the highest.**

**Bread and Wine**

**One:** Long ago our tradition says, Jesus came in the humble birth of a child, a child of amazing and divine love, a child of Mary's 'yes', a child of Joseph's acceptance, a child of our humanity.

**All:** **We pledge ourselves to be embodiments of the dream he dreamed.**

**One:** Long ago our tradition says Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and said: 'This bread is broken, as my body will be'. And he handed it to his friends inviting them to eat: 'Remember all that I have been to you'.

Long ago our tradition says Jesus poured a cup of wine, offered thanks for it, and gave it to his friends: 'This wine is poured out as my life will be poured out. As you drink give thanks for all I have given'.

It is through the goodness and effort of others, that we have this bread and wine to offer...**bread** that was once scattered as grain in a field and gathered together and baked into a loaf; **wine** that was once grapes grown on a hillside and gathered together and pressed into juice.

May this gathering of this community of faith be comforted and challenged during this Advent season.

**All:** **May people see in us the courage and the generosity that characterised Jesus' life.**

**Communion**

Come, for all is now ready.

**Prayer after Communion** (*Unison*)

**We are one with the mystery and Source and Sustainer of all that exists. We rejoice in our human capacity to wonder and marvel, to appreciate, to rejoice, and to give thanks. Amen.**

**Hymn #1 “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”** (vv. 1, 3, 5)

**Commissioning** (*One*)

Go now in joy, building, living in, and enjoying a community full of welcome and equality.

**Choral Amen**

**Hymn #424 “May the God of Hope Go with Us”** (v.1)

**Postlude**

*Welcome to Westminster this morning.*

*Please gather for coffee in Memorial Hall, following worship.*

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[www.westminsteruc.com/calendars](http://www.westminsteruc.com/calendars)

**This Week at Westminster** (November 27<sup>th</sup> – December 3<sup>rd</sup>)

<b>Sun.</b>	Christian Development	9:30 a.m.	Nursery
	Local Food Needs	10:00 a.m.	Narthex
	Worship: Advent I Communion	10:25 a.m.	Sanctuary
	Jr. Choir Practice	11:45 a.m.	Lounge
<b>Tue.</b>	Prayer Shawl	1:30 p.m.	Lounge
<b>Wed.</b>	Bible Study	9:30 a.m.	Nursery
<b>Thu.</b>	Senior Choir Practice	7:00 p.m.	Sanctuary

**Next Week at Westminster** (December 4<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>)

<b>Sun.</b>	Music & Worship	9:00 a.m.	Lounge
	Local Food Needs	10:00 a.m.	Narthex
	Worship: Advent II	10:25 a.m.	Sanctuary
	Jr. Choir Practice	11:45 a.m.	Lounge
	Blue Christmas Service	2:00 p.m.	Sanctuary
<b>Mon.</b>	Property	7:00 p.m.	Westminster Room
<b>Tue.</b>	Prayer Shawl	1:30 p.m.	Lounge
<b>Wed.</b>	Bible Study	9:30 a.m.	Nursery
<b>Thu.</b>	UCW Annual Meeting	11:30 p.m.	Sanctuary
	Senior Choir Practice	7:00 p.m.	Sanctuary

**A BIG Thank you to all who helped decorate** the Sanctuary and Memorial Hall for this new season. The joy we all share is made possible by your gift.

Upon the slip of paper from the **Music & Worship Committee**, please write down the number of your favourite hymns from Voices United and place the slip in the offering plate. **These suggestions will be used to compile a list for a pre-worship hymn sing, next Sunday.**

**Attention all Groups:** As we move into the Christmas season, many groups shut down early or cancel meetings during the month of December. Please contact the office, so this info can be reflected in the calendar and bulletins.

**WUC Christmas Outreach projects for this Advent Season** are: Birthday Bags for the Food Bank; cash donations for the Elm Street School snack program; and cash donations for purchasing Medical Supplies for underprivileged countries. Please place your items under the Christmas tree on the Chancel. **Deadline for all Outreach projects—Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup>.**

The **2012 Canadian Church Calendars**, featuring stained glass windows, are available in the office for \$5 each.

**Reminder:** You can bring in your **Canadian Tire \$\$\$** anytime to be collected for Camp Sunday. **United Church Camps** use them to purchase and replenish camping supplies.

**PAR—Pre-Authorized Remittance:**

*Myth:* I can't find how to sign up, so can't be bothered.

*Fact:* Sign up forms are located in the back of the pews. They are printed on salmon or yellow sheets. Fill it out and place it with a voided cheque in the offering plate or hand it in to the office or to Donna Scharf.

*Myth:* It is just as easy to put your donation in an envelope each week.

*Fact:* You sometimes miss Sundays or go away on holidays and you fall behind. With PAR the church knows the exact amount coming in each month and can budget accordingly. The church has to buy the envelopes and counters are needed every Sunday.

**On December 1<sup>st</sup>** at Canadian Tire, we still need volunteers from **Westminster to help with the Salvation Army Christmas Kettles**. Please check your calendars and **sign up after church with Donna Scharf**. Thanks to the helping nature of our congregation all the other days are filled. People still wanting to help at different times or places should call *The Salvation Army* at 403-527-2474.

**UCW annual Cookie Sale—after Worship next Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup>.** Homemade cookies, marked "Cookie Sale" may be brought in advance and stored in the freezer, but no later than 10:00 a.m. on Friday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Westminster's Blue Christmas Service will be held next Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m.** You may be approaching this season of hope without the company of loved family members or friends who have recently passed away. The anguish of broken relationships, the insecurity of unemployment, the weariness of ill health, the pain of isolation ó all can make us feel very alone in the midst of the celebrating and shopping. We need the space and time to acknowledge our sadness and concern. Our

hope is that this service will provide an opportunity for such reflection.

**UCW Annual Meeting** will be held on **Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup>** beginning with Worship at 11:30 in the Sanctuary with a potluck luncheon to follow in Memorial Hall. **All women of the Congregation are cordially invited.**

**Attention all Families (including those of you with grandchildren):** The Child/Youth/Family Group will be hosting our **2nd Annual Swim & Pizza Party on December 10<sup>th</sup> at the Family Leisure Centre**. We will meet in the pool at 3:00 p.m. and then reconvene in the Board Room at 4:30 for pizza and sweets. The children's swim fees will be paid for from our fund and adults will receive 20% off your fee when you mention you are with our Westminster group.

**The Medicine Hat Concert Band Society**, under the direction of Bill Wahl presents **"A Gala Christmas"** with a full complement of players to perform on **Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 p.m. at the Esplanade**. Tickets (Adults \$12, Children & Students \$6) are available at the Esplanade Box Office during business hours.

**"A Tuba Christmas"** presented **Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. at Fifth Avenue Memorial United Church**. "A Tuba Christmas" is the tuba and euphonium/baritone sections (That's a lot of brass!) from the adult bands combining to present Christmas Carols in a very new and interesting way. Admission is a non-perishable food item for the Medicine Hat Food Bank.

**Celebrations This Week**

**Birthdays:** *Bob Herring, Fran Cove, Patty McFarlane, Marg Laing, and Linda Kinvig.*

**Flowers are placed in the Sanctuary this morning in loving memory of parents, in-laws, daughter Sherry Carstensen, husband Hank, by Lil Iwanicki.** *We never part with those we love—they're with us everywhere.*

**South Alberta Presbytery:** *Our prayers this week are requested for Naramata & Calling Lakes Centres.*

**Our Order of Ministry This Morning**

Sunday School Co-ordinator	Jackie Carlson
Greeters & Ushers	Irene Fekete, Doreen Lyon, Albina Jackson, Edna Silverthorne
Coffee Hosts	UCW
Scripture Reader	Marilynn Piotrowski
Elder-in-Charge	Al Olson

**Next Week's Readings:** *Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; Mark 1:1-8; 2 Peter 3:8-15a.*

**Stewardship Thought for Today**

*The gifts of this world will not last past our lifetimes, but God's gifts to us—and our gifts to God—will last through this life and beyond.* by Kathie Murphy (General Council Office)

**Christmas Eve Service—7:00 p.m.**