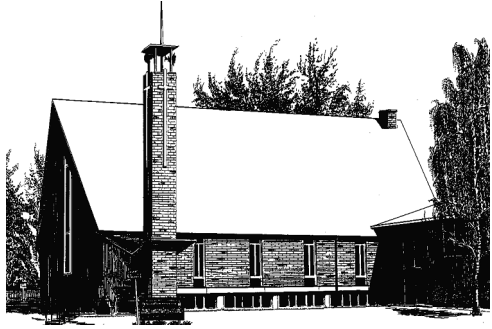


# Westminster United Church



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Treasurer: Murray Bell  
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*“We are a faith community building relationships  
with God, all people, and our world.”*

**December 11, 2011**

**Advent III — Joy**

**Christmas Pageant**

*We welcome Anna Marie Hancock  
and Rae Wahl as our Worship Leaders this morning.*

The Season of Advent tends to be one of growing anxiety generated by demands for time, energy, and resources that may be limited. The readings for this third Sunday of Advent encourage us to remember the abundant grace of God. In reflecting on ways in which we have experienced God's abundance when all we could see was scarcity, hope is restored.

In some traditions, this third Sunday of Advent is known as Rejoice Sunday. To rejoice is to affirm our confidence that God is present in our lives, even when we do not see evidence of God's presence. Today's scripture readings call us to rejoice all the time and to come home with shouts of joy.

*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.*

*Colouring packets for the children are available in the first pew on the pulpit side of the church.*

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

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

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

One: Let us be about our preparations for a new advent of love among us.

**All: The wastelands of life around us cannot shut out the promise of life-giving water.**

One: Hatred and warfare, injustice and suffering, are not the last word, for they are not of Holy love.

**All: We hear again the promise of peace, coming in the one who lived Shalom among all people.**

One: We see again the light promised in the midst of our darkness.

**All: We join together to embrace the new advent, to be renewed in faith, hope and love.**

**Opening Prayer** (*Unison*)

**May we give thanks for the opportunity we have to worship and celebrate this day. May we be surrounded with a very real sense of the presentness of Creativity God as we spend this time together. Amen.**

**Advent III: The Candle of Joy**

*(light two blue candles)*

One: Our sanctuary is adorned with a Christmas tree under which we will place many gifts.

Two: In the ancient world, evergreens were seen to have magical powers because they never lost their needles. Their green colour amid leafless and brown trees became a symbol of life. Legend tells us that the Christmas tree originated in Germany when a man, walking home one Christmas eve, looked up through an evergreen tree and saw hundreds of stars twinkling like diamonds. He was so enthralled that he cut down the tree, took it home, and adorned it with lights in an effort to recreate this beauty and mystery for his sick child, who could not go outdoors to see it for herself. The Christmas tree came to North America in the 1800s with German immigrants and soon found itself at the centre of most Christmas celebrations.

One: It is under the Christmas tree that we place our gifts. We give gifts to those we love as a sign of joy, the joy that comes from knowing that we are loved and accepted simply because we were created in love.

Two: We give gifts to a family in need. These gifts are given out of love for others, who are not known to us. We know that these gifts of love will be received with joy. May it give us great joy to give.

One: We light this third candle to speak of our joy, a joy that comes from being a people of faith.

*(light the third candle)*

**Hymn #7 “Hope Is a Star”** (vv. 1, 2, 3)

**Prayer for Transformation and Words of Assurance** (*Unison*)

Each morning brings a newness that we need but step into. It can wash us, lift us, heal us, hold us—just as each of us has need. May we be open to the power that lies dormant within us. May we be full with a confidence in our own strength that we might see the hope in this day. May we move from the routines that we follow to the fullness of life that we might live...(*time for silent reflection*)...Amen.

**Christmas Pageant** – Narrated by Rae Wahl

**Junior Choir Sings “Baby Jesus, We Love You”**

**Hymn #69 “Away in a Manger”**

**Mission Moment** ó Grace Alcock

**Our Church Tithes and Offerings / Offertory**

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

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

May these gifts be blessed and shared with love and compassion. Amen.

**Prayer of Thanksgiving, Intercession & Lord’s Prayer**

**Hymn #44 “It Came Upon a Midnight Clear”**

**Commissioning** (*One*)

Let us go from here seeking peace in all that we do.

**Choral Amen**

**Hymn #884 “You Shall Go Out with Joy”** (x2)

**Postlude**

*Welcome to Westminster this morning.*

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

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

**This Week at Westminster** (*December 11<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>*)

<b>Sun.</b>	Advent III (Joy) ó Pageant	10:25 a.m.	Sanctuary
	Jr. Choir Sings	10:25 a.m.	Sanctuary
<b>Wed.</b>	Bible Study	9:30 a.m.	Nursery
<b>Thurs.</b>	Senior Choir Practice	7:00 p.m.	Sanctuary

**Next Week at Westminster** (*December 18<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup>*)

<b>Sun.</b>	Advent IV (Love) ó Cantata	10:25 a.m.	Sanctuary
<b>Tues</b>	Board of Elders	7:00 p.m.	Lounge
<b>Wed.</b>	Bible Study	9:30 a.m.	Nursery
<b>Thurs.</b>	Senior Choir Practice	7:00 p.m.	Sanctuary
<b>Sat.</b>	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service	7:00 p.m.	Sanctuary

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

The UCW thanks everyone who contributed to the cookie sale.

**Events Calendar Corrections: Neighbourhood Christmas Carolling has been cancelled. There will only be one Christmas Eve Service at 7:00 p.m.**

The January/February 2012 issue of *The Upper Room* is now available for \$2.00 each. The **2012 Canadian Church Calendars**, featuring stained glass windows, are available for \$5 each. Both of these will be for sale in Memorial Hall, after worship today or in the office during the week.

**Ho, Ho, Ho!** It’s the perfect time to get busy and sign up for **PAR**. Applications are right in the pews.

Your **2012 offering envelopes** are available in the Narthex. When you pick up your envelopes you may notice that the number is different from the one you had for 2011. This is because we have reduced the number of envelopes ordered as more people are using PAR. All numbers are below 150. If you have any questions regarding the correctness of your number, please contact Murray via the church office. The cost of the Observer is \$20.00 (subject to 2012 increase). Please do not use these envelopes, including the Observer envelope until January 1, 2012. Destroy your old unused 2011 envelopes in the New Year. People on PAR are not issued envelopes. Thanks for your cooperation ó *Murray Bell, Treasurer.*

**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. **Deadline for all Outreach projects—Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup>.**

**Thank you to those who support our Medicine Hat Coop Ltd receipts campaign** to be used for special projects. Drop off locations for receipts are located in the Narthex and by the Ramp.

You are cordially invited to attend “**A Tuba Christmas**” by the Medicine Hat Concert Band Society, under the direction of Bill Wahl, this afternoon in Fifth Avenue Memorial United Church at 2:00. Admission is a non-perishable food item for the Medicine Hat Food Bank. A Tuba Christmas is a tuba and euphonium/baritone sections (that’s a lot of brass) from the adult bands combining together to present Christmas Carols in a very new and interesting way.

**Unisphere News**’ winter bird count! December 18! call 403-529-06225 to get a route or to register your bird feeder.

**The Kiwanis Christmas Dinner** for anyone alone at Christmas is on December 25 at the Veiner Centre at 1:00 p.m. Applications are mandatory and may be picked up in the office. The deadline is December 17.

### ***Celebrations This Week***

**Birthdays:** Sharon Clay, Dale Stein, Yvonne Hole, Gladys Schlenker, Jeff Gunn, Darlene Widmer, Bev Empey, Karli Schnell, and Sabrina Henderson

**Flowers** are placed in the Sanctuary by Wilton & Pat Thorsteinson.

**South Alberta Presbytery:** Our prayers this week are requested for people who live in Poverty.

### ***Our Order of Ministry This Morning***

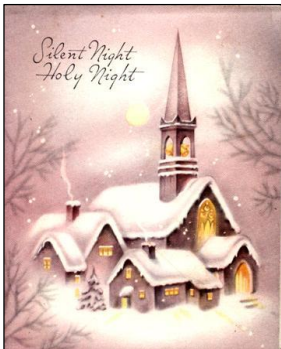
Sunday School Co-ordinator	Jackie Carlson
Greeters & Ushers	Pat & Wilton Thorsteinson Wally & Vivian Bergstreser
Coffee Hosts	Lenora & Dale Stein, Donna Scharf, Sharon Clay
Elder-in-Charge	Al Olson

**Next Week's Readings:** 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:47-55 or Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26; Romans 16:25-27 and Luke 1:26-38.

### ***Stewardship Thought for Today***

*Let us remember the gifts we have received from  
God and, in our turn, become God's giving  
hands in this world.*

*by Sheila Campbell*



## ***Christmas Eve Candlelight Service***

***7:00 p.m.***

*(Events Calendar is incorrect.)*

### ***Christmas Gift Suggestions:***

To your enemy, forgiveness.

To an opponent, tolerance.

To a friend, your heart.

To a customer, service.

To all, charity.

To every child, a good example.

To yourself, respect.