

Westminster United Church



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*“We are journeying together in God’s love . . .
to discover, nurture, and share our gifts.”*

December 18, 2011

Advent IV ô Love

Cantata

In this last week before Christmas, we read of the angel Gabriel’s announcement to Mary that she will give birth to a special baby. Surprised by this announcement, Mary finds comfort in the knowledge that her relative Elizabeth, thought to be barren, is also pregnant. Gabriel’s admonition not to be afraid reminds us that God is with us in all circumstances. God’s steadfast, faithful, ever present love is expressed in all lections today. The message of God’s presence to Mary, to David, and to the apostle Paul provides evidence that God is steadfastly present with us.

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: First-born of Mary and Joseph from Nazareth, born lowly, yet born to be a great teacher.

All: **May all nations see his face, the face that loves us into justice and sharing.**

One: May we who are disciples see Jesus; face, the face that loves us into community.

All: **May each of us see Jesus’ face, the face that loves us into compassion.**

Opening Prayer *(Unison)*

Our hearts are filled with praise. Our lives are filled with blessing. Our dreams are filled with hope, and our world with promise. May we know these things as seeds of what may be and turn our lives into nurturing such promise. As those who know a common joy, we pray. Amen.

Advent IV: The Candle of Love

(light 3 blue candles)

One: Poinsettias decorate our sanctuary as they do so many of our homes.

Two: From its humble beginning in Mexico, where it grows wild, the poinsettia has become a cherished part of our Christmas tradition.

One: Legend tells us that when poor children were invited to come to a Christmas celebration to see the Christ child, they wanted to bring a gift. In their poverty, the only gifts they could offer were the wild, red flowers.

Two: Mary was a poor peasant girl when she was told that she was chosen to bear a son whose name would be Jesus. Mary had already been promised in marriage to a good man named Joseph. Instead of being fearful, she accepted this news with the trust and innocence of a child. In her poverty she offered herself and her love as she sang her song of praise.

One: We light this fourth candle in our Advent wreath to symbolize the great love that burns in our hearts as we realize that Jesus will arrive.

(light the fourth blue candle)

Hymn #7 “Hope Is a Star”

Prayer for Transformation *(Unison)*

Advent should admonish us to discover in each brother or sister that we greet, in each friend whose hand we shake, in each beggar who asks for bread, in each worker who wants to use the right to join a union, in each peasant who looks for work in the coffee groves, the face of Jesus. Then it will not be possible to rob them, to cheat them, to deny them their rights. They are Jesus. And whatever is done to them Jesus will take as done to him. That is what Advent is: Jesus living among us...*(time for silent reflection)*.

One: Amen.

Choir Cantata “And Glory Shone Around”

Mission Moment Video

Our Church Tithes and Offerings / Offertory

Dedication Hymn #55 "In the Bleak Midwinter" (v. 4)

Prayer of Dedication (One)

Love shone from the stable at Bethlehem; love will come clear from these offerings. A Jesus-type love. May these offerings be blessed. Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving, Intercession & Lord's Prayer

Hymn #71 "Twas in the Moon of Wintertime"

Commissioning (One)

One: Let us go with joy!

All: We are ready to welcome Jesus.

One: Let us go with peace!

All: We are prepared to welcome the one who teaches how to live in peace.

One: Let us go with Hope!

All: We understand that from darkness, light will shine forth.

One: Above all, let us go with love!

All: We realise that the love Jesus taught is for all human kind.

Choral Amen

Hymn #298 "When You Walk from Here"

Postlude

Welcome to Westminster this morning.

Please gather for coffee in Memorial Hall, following worship.

www.westminsteruc.com/calendar

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

Sun.	Advent IV (Love) ó Cantata	10:25 a.m.	Sanctuary
Tue.	Staff Meeting	9:00 a.m.	Lounge
	Board of Elders	7:00 p.m.	Lounge
Thu.	Senior Choir Practice	7:00 p.m.	Sanctuary
Sat.	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service	7:00 p.m.	Sanctuary

Next Week at Westminster (December 25th – 31st)

Sun.	Christmas Service at Fifth Avenue Memorial
Tue-Fri	Office closed.
	<i>Regular events continue in the new year.</i>

Next Year at Westminster (January 1st – 7th)

Sun.	Worship Service ó Sr. Choir	10:25 a.m.	Sanctuary
Wed.	Bible Study	9:30 a.m.	Nursery
Thu.	Senior Choir Practice	7:00 p.m.	Sanctuary

www.westminsteruc.com/bulletins

While you are waiting for your turkey to cook Christmas morning, please join us for an informal time of worship in the Memorial Salem Room at Fifth Avenue Memorial UC. If you are comfortable, feel free to come in your "jammies" too! And if you wish, bring a special memory or significant/meaningful gift you have from years past.

Deadline for all Christmas Outreach projects is TODAY! Thank you for your participation in adding joy in the lives of those we've blessed.

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.

If you are interested in adult or infant Baptism, Transfer of Membership, or Reaffirmation of Faith, please contact James or the office immediately.

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 - 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.*

2011 Contributions: The deadline to contribute funds in the 2011 tax year is NOON on Friday, December 30th. The office will be closed at this time. However, a mail slot is located to the left of the burgundy doors (office entrance) where you may deposit your contributions. This slot will be emptied at noon on December 30th. Contributions received in person, by mail, or left in the church mailbox after this time, will be credited to the 2012 tax year.

Commune-I-Care will be making their next ócall-outó from January 8th to January 14, 2012. These calls provide each family with regular opportunities to receive information; notices of coming activities or events; and to allow families to give information regarding celebrations in their lives and provide information regarding possible needs they may have.

Celebrations

Ministry was extended into the community this past week as the Rev. Kevin Johnston conducted the funeral service for Wilbur Lemon. Our condolences go out to Grace and the family.

Birthdays: Jim Cunnings, Doug Henderson, Dawn Knowles, Florence Leech, Jim Hayward, Ken Widmer, Bette Frisch, Noel Schnell, Jeannette Zollner, Dave Gerhardt, Barb Grozell, Norma Gaffney, and Gordon Oster.

Anniversaries: Wayne & Arlea Harper and Dave & Myra Gerhardt.

Flowers are placed in the Sanctuary this morning in loving memory of Stella & Raymond Clark by Sandra, Brenda & families.

South Alberta Presbytery: Our prayers this week are requested for Bethlehem – Palestinians and Israelis

Our Order of Ministry This Morning

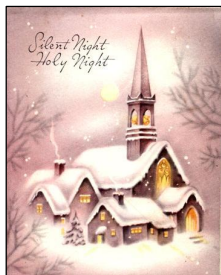
Greeters & Ushers	Larry & Verna Henderson, Dub & Gwen Henderson
Coffee Hosts	Willing Gardeners: Al Olson, Boyd & Grace Alcock, Sharon Clay
Elder-in-Charge	Dawn Skogen

Next Week's Readings: Isaiah 9: 2-7; Psalm 96, Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)

Stewardship Thought for Today

Stewards trust that God will replenish what has been given freely, and so dare to be wellsprings for others.

by Sheila Campbell



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

7:00 p.m.

(Events Calendar is incorrect.)

Our hope for you is joy, love, and peace
for Christmas and throughout the coming year.

Anna Marie

Charlie

Chris

James

Karen

Kim

Lynne

Murray

Pat

(Staff of WUC)