

JOINT NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

August 17, 2018

Westminster United Church
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Medicine Hat, AB
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Members of Joint Needs Assessment Committee	2
<i>Pastoral Charge Members</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>South Alberta Presbytery Members</i>	<i>2</i>
The Community of the Pastoral Charge.....	4
<i>Southeast Alberta</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>City of Medicine Hat – “Sunshine State of Mind”</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>SE/SW Hill Community</i>	<i>7</i>
The Ministry of the Pastoral Charge	8
<i>Faith and Values.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Worship</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Music Ministry.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Ministry with Families, Children, Youth</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Ministry with Seniors</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Outreach Ministry.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Commun-I-Care.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>UCW.....</i>	<i>10</i>
Resources of the Pastoral Charge	11
<i>Church Building and Furnishings</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Financial Resources.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Comments on Financial Resources.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Human Resources – Staff to July 31, 2018.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Human Resources – Staff from August 1, 2018.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Human Resources – Volunteers</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Transitional Governance Model</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Work with other Churches.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>The Community Organizations in our Church</i>	<i>15</i>
Ministry Personnel Job Description.....	16
Recommendations.....	18
Declaration of Vacancy.....	18

The Community of the Pastoral Charge

Southeast Alberta

Southeast Alberta is the heart of the dry mixed grassland. This is native prairie ranching country. There is a real ranching culture surrounding the city where you can meet cowboys on ranches or at local annual rodeos. The remaining natural landscape is also a hot spot for species-at-risk such as Ord's Kangaroo Rat, Sage Grouse, Burrowing Owl, Ferruginous Hawk, etc.

Tourism is huge in this area known for the rivers, native grassland, badlands, coulees and sand hills. Some of the interesting sites within South East Alberta include:

- Echo Dale Regional Park, just outside of Medicine Hat, located along the South Saskatchewan River Valley, includes a manmade swimming lake and adjacent fishing lake. Amenities include a beach, walking trails, picnic areas, fire pits, canoe rentals, paddle boats, snack bar, washrooms and historic ranch.
- Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park which is the same elevation and climate as the town of Banff. It is a lush oasis within the heart of the Canadian prairies.
- Dinosaur Provincial Park encompasses a huge swath of badlands along the Red Deer River and is one of the most important dinosaur fossil hot spots in the world.
- Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park has the world's largest natural collection of pre-contact indigenous rock art along the Milk River, and is surrounded by sandstone cliffs and hoodoos.
- Red Rock Coulee has huge natural red concretions (the size of cars) sprawled throughout the badlands.
- Kinbrook Island Provincial Park lies along Lake Newell, a large reservoir near Brooks. This is a lovely place to relax during the hot summer months along the wonderful sand beaches. If you are there in mid-August you can also attend the nearby annual Medieval Fair at Brooks.

City of Medicine Hat – “Sunshine State of Mind”

Medicine Hat is a vibrant, spacious mid-sized city, located in southeast Alberta along the Trans-Canada Highway, about 300 km from Calgary and 170 km from Lethbridge. Medicine Hat was the sixth-largest city in Alberta in 2016 with a population of approximately 64,000. It is widely known as “the sunniest city in Canada”. There are two nearby (almost adjacent) communities that feed into the city, these being Redcliff and Dunmore. Redcliff is known as the “greenhouse capital of the prairies”. Medicine Hat and area boasts three school divisions, four high schools and numerous elementary and middle schools; thus providing varied educational programs including French language education.

The city straddles both sides of the South Saskatchewan River Valley and is buffeted by stately native Plains Cottonwood trees. Wildlife thrives throughout the numerous natural areas, environmental reserves and city parks. Police Point Interpretive Centre is a favourite among local naturalists. This semi-arid environment of the area has maximum sun, shorter winters, longer summers and less rain than other areas in Canada. As such the city is a favorite among retirees, but also among working families.

Recreational opportunities abound including: five golf courses, walking and biking trails, outdoor skateboard park, BMX park, various clubs and venues: chess, curling, pickle ball, tennis, badminton, swimming, running, mountain biking, rugby, soccer, baseball, slow pitch, volleyball, basketball, yoga, drag racing and stock car racing. The newly reconstructed Veiner Centre is beautifully nestled along the South Saskatchewan River and is a recreation and leisure hub for those 55 and over.

Numerous private gyms and training centres exist, plus the YMCA and Family Leisure Centre with its world class pools and full size indoor track.

The Medicine Hat College is a beloved institution within the City. It provides diploma, degree and technical/trade programs plus university transfer and adult extension opportunities. The “Rattlers” college teams compete in soccer, futsal, golf, volleyball and basketball within the Alberta Colleges Athletic Conference (ACAC).

The Medicine Hat Tigers hockey team competes in the Western Hockey League (WHL), while the Medicine Hat Mavericks baseball team competes in the Western Major Baseball League (WMBL).

The city hosts a vibrant arts, music and cultural scene. There is a higher than average per capita of artists, musicians and drama/musical theatre participants. This has led to Rotary Music Festival, Art Walks, Medicine Hat Jazz Fest, Tongue on the Post Folk Festival, Spectrum, multiple drama and musical theatre companies, Esplanade performance centre/art gallery/museum, Medalta National Historic Clay District, numerous private art galleries, boutique coffee shops/roasteries, three new craft breweries and a public library. There are two adult concert bands and numerous small performing combos. The Conservatory of Music and Dance is a hub for music, dance and art at the Medicine Hat College. The Medicine Hat College's Visual Arts program is extremely popular and nationally recognized. The new large arena, the Canalta Centre, hosts large popular performances and events and is the home to the Medicine Hat Tigers.

Other interesting events or activities in the City are:

- World Professional Chuckwagon Association races
- Medicine Hat Exhibition and Stampede
- Historic Downtown area
- Saamis Teepee – the world's tallest teepee
- Food Trucks
- Comedy Club
- Restaurants
- Pubs/bars/music venues/summer patios

The city has a relatively low cost of living. The cost of housing is reasonable and utilities are among the lowest in the province.

The economy of the city and area has traditionally been fueled by agriculture (dryland, irrigation, cattle and greenhouses) and oil/natural gas. It is also an important service, distribution and small manufacturing centre. Some of the larger industries or employers include: CP Rail, Weddingstar, Canadian Forces Base Suffield, Defence Research and Development Canada-Suffield, Cancarb, Canadian Fertilizer, Methanex, Goodyear and Alberta Health Services. Two new large businesses are currently establishing within the city including: Hut8 (block chain mining) and Aurora (cannabis greenhouse) which will be hiring 400+ full time employees.

The city is served by a regional airport, currently served by Air Canada and West Jet.

SE/SW Hill Community

This is the neighborhood of the church.

The SE Hill and SW Hill areas are located south of the South Saskatchewan River and downtown. This is a scenic and safe older/developed area of the city with large lots, lush urban forest and with a population of young families to seniors.

The area is home to seven elementary or middle schools and one high school. The City's hospital is located on the western end of the SW Hill.

The area boasts an indoor ice arena, outdoor pool, large Safeway, small strip malls, restaurants, pubs, pharmacies, doctors' offices, health food stores, automotive/mechanic shop, etc. There is even the locally famous Swirls Ice Cream parlour which is always in demand during the summer months and is located across the street from the Medicine Hat Lawn Bowling Club.

Green space is also important. SE Hill and SW Hill are sandwiched between the South Saskatchewan River Valley to the north and Kin Coulee Park to the south located within the scenic Seven Persons Creek valley.

Within SE Hill is one of the oldest and most stately of the city's parks – Central Park. The park is fringed by a wall of cedar trees. Within the park are imposing canopy trees of native plains cottonwood along with green ash, elm and spruce. The open areas provide landscape for playgrounds, water park, basketball court and disk golf.

The Ministry of the Pastoral Charge

Faith and Values

Our Vision Statement is:

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

Our Mission Statements are:

1. *Foster understanding of the divine through the ministry of Jesus Christ.*
2. *Work for justice, peace, love and wholeness for all.*
3. *Encourage ecologically sustainable lives.*

Worship

Our church includes 196 households under Pastoral Care. Sunday worship attendance averages approximately 70. Children have been included regularly in intergenerational service. There is a parent staffed nursery available.

Music Ministry

We have a Music Director who jointly plans worship in consultation with the Minister and the Music and Worship Committee. The choir consists of approximately 20 members who participate in the music ministry. A Junior Choir has also been a part of our music ministry and includes youth from 4-14 years of age.

Ministry with Families, Children, Youth

A member of the congregation has organized family, children and youth activities over and above the regular Sunday service. These activities include Messy Church, Bowling, Pumpkin Carving and Swimming.

Ministry with Seniors

Westminster has a visitation team which provides visits to people in hospital and some senior residences. We have provided services at several seniors residences and long term care facilities.

Outreach Ministry

The church congregation is invited to attend coffee time following each Sunday service. The first Sunday of each month is Food Bank Sunday where the congregation is encouraged to bring a food bank donation.

Vacation Bible School is held for a week during the summer in co-operation with the other local United Churches.

Groups that we support are:

- Medicine Hat Food Bank
- Phoenix Safe House Women's Shelter
- Camp Shagabec
- Chaplaincy at Medicine Hat College
- Crisis Assistance Network
- Champion Centre
- Homeless Shelter
- MHSD #76 Young Mom's Program
- Campus Cares
- Salvation Army Christmas Kettles

Other groups within the church congregation include:

- Sunday School
- Choir
- Junior Choir
- UCW
- Bible Study
- Lenten Study
- Prayer Shawl Ministry



Commun-I-Care

The purpose of the Commun-I-Care Ministries is to maintain a strong, informed, caring and supportive congregation. Westminster publishes and distributes a Newsletter and makes call-outs three times a year to keep the congregation informed of the church's activities.

UCW

The UCW group holds fund raising events throughout the year including soup days and chili days.

Resources of the Pastoral Charge

Church Building and Furnishings

Our church consists of a large sanctuary (built in 1957) and a large hall, both located on the upper level. The hall was rebuilt in 1981 after a fire destroyed the original church hall. The church office includes a secretarial area and adjoining office/meeting room. There are also two other office areas and a church lounge on the upper level. Office areas and the lounge are air conditioned. A nursery is located adjacent to the upper level hall and there is a well equipped kitchen with a gas range and commercial dishwasher. Office areas, the lounge, nursery and kitchen were rebuilt in 1981 when the hall was rebuilt.

On the lower level there is a large area for Sunday School classes, a smaller hall and additional meeting room spaces. One large area of the lower level is presently rented to a daycare centre called Cypress Montessori Bilingual Academy, a bilingual English/Spanish daycare.

The sanctuary seats 175 with an organ and grand piano located at the front of the sanctuary near the choir area and pulpit.

Technology aids include an upgraded sound system with three free standing microphones and one hand held microphone. The order of worship is projected onto screens located at the front and rear of the sanctuary. All services are recorded on a compact disc and are available upon request. Our website www.westminsteruc.com provides a variety of information including service bulletins, an event calendar, copies of recent newsletters and additional information about the church and church activities.

The building has an electronic security system.

There are four entrances to the church building: one entrance is equipped with a wheelchair lift that can access all levels of the building. It can be used by walker and wheelchair users as well as people who have difficulty with stairs since the lift is equipped with a fold down seat. There is also a wheelchair ramp adjacent to the main hall which provides access to the upper level.

A rental property is located next to the church and is rented to a Syrian family that the church helped to sponsor through a coalition of local Baptist, Lutheran, Presbyterian and United Churches.

Financial Resources

**2017 Actual Income and Expenses
Revised 2018 Budget and Proposed 2019 Budget**

Description	2017 Actual	2018 Revised Budget	2019 Proposed Budget
Income			
Income	260,361.00	228,850.00	219,550.00
Income on investments		22,800.00	20,000.00
TOTAL INCOME	260,361.00	251,650.00	239,550.00

Expenses			
Christian Development	7,027.00	6,935.00	6,935.00
Pastoral Care	2,483.00	2,375.00	2,375.00
Finance	11,895.00	12,035.00	12,035.00
Ministry & Personnel	205,233.00	170,250.00	148,775.00
Mission and Outreach	29,924.00	31,100.00	31,100.00
Music & Worship	6,308.00	11,275.00	8,800.00
Property	41,599.00	44,700.00	44,700.00
Recruitment costs		5,000.00	5,000.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	304,469.00	283,670.00	259,720.00

	2017 Actual	2018 Revised Budget	2019 Proposed Budget
TOTAL INCOME	260,361.00	251,650.00	239,550.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	304,469.00	283,670.00	259,720.00
DIFFERENCE	(44,108.00)	(32,020.00)	(20,170.00)
TRANSFER FROM INVESTMENTS	10,000.00	35,000.00	20,000.00
TRANSFER FROM SAVINGS	44,904.00	0	0
BALANCE	10,796.00	2,980.00	(170)

Comments on Financial Resources

Ministry Personnel compensation exceeds Category F minimum.

In 2017, we have had to access our investment funds and savings to cover our expenses. In 2018, we continue to use our investment funds which will be exhausted within 12 months.

In 2017 140 households contributed to the General Operating Fund and Mission and Service. Of those, 132 contributed over \$50 per year.

We have had some success with two fall stewardship campaigns, however we have experienced a decline in weekly attendance and contributions. We will be conducting another stewardship campaign this fall and we continue to encourage people to sign up for PAR.

Human Resources – Staff to July 31, 2018

2.0 full time Ministers of which 0.5 FTE has been shared and financed with 2 other United Church congregations

1 Secretary (24 hrs/week)

1 Music/Choir Director (part time)

1 Junior Choir Director (part time)

1 Bookkeeper (contract position)

1 Custodian (14 hrs/week)

1 Security Personnel (part time)

Human Resources – Staff from August 1, 2018

1 full time Minister, with current incumbent retiring effective September 30, 2018 with all other positions continuing.

Human Resources – Volunteers

We have a dedicated group of volunteers.

Transitional Governance Model

The Church Board works under a model of governance which focuses on accomplishing tasks rather than filling positions on committees. The board has 12 elected members which meets 6 times per year and an executive which meets on alternate months.

There are seven committees: Christian Development, Pastoral Care, Finance, Ministry & Personnel, Mission & Outreach, Music & Worship and Property.

Work with other Churches

From the fall of 2015 to the summer of 2018 there was a shared ministry arrangement among Westminster United, Peace United (Irvine) and Gordon Memorial United (Redcliff).

We have been involved in working with the three other United Churches in the area on several projects. These have included coordinating a joint Vacation Bible School, joint meetings of the four church boards and some joint visioning work. For many years Westminster and Fifth Avenue Memorial United Church have alternated hosting services in July and August. As already mentioned Westminster, Peace and Gordon Memorial United Churches have recently shared clergy and held joint outdoor services and picnics in a local park.

For the last 3 years we have participated with Fifth Avenue Memorial United Church and local Lutheran, Presbyterian and Anglican congregations in evening Lenten worship services. We have also participated in MHART (Medicine Hat Area Refugee Team). This group of churches including Fifth Avenue Memorial United, Westminster United, Unity Lutheran, Victory Lutheran, Temple Baptist and St. John's Presbyterian worked together to sponsor a Syrian family. The family arrived in June, 2016 and we continue to support the family. We continue to participate with MHART in a cooperative arrangement of churches to support Saamis Immigration Services Association.

The Community Organizations in our Church

Several community organizations use our church on a regular basis:

- 12 Step Groups
- Hill Seniors
- Girl Guides
- Sparks
- Brownies
- Pathfinders
- Community Kitchens
- Philanthropic Educational Organization (PEO) group
- Rentals

Ministry Personnel Job Description

We are recommending one full time position for Westminster United Church.

Minister of Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care:

The successful applicant will possess skills for transitional ministry encouraging congregational renewal and development.

We invite applications from ministry personnel who are ordained or commissioned as ministry personnel of The United Church of Canada, The United Church of Christ USA, or another ecumenical partner church.

Experience, Special Skills and Knowledge:

The applicant must be well grounded in his/her journey of personal faith and spirituality and have experience in a ministerial position with an emphasis on Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care.

The applicant should have:

- skills and experience in transitional ministry encouraging congregational renewal and development.
- experience with primary day to day church administration and management, including giving support and oversight to an office administrator and elected Board members, as well as leadership and development of programs for spiritual formation for children, youth, adults and seniors.
- sensitivity to the needs of and able to work with various age groups within the congregation.
- a flexible leadership style that is sensitive to the expressed worship needs of the congregation and experience and willingness to provide general personal counselling for the congregation.
- the ability to work collaboratively with others
- computer literacy including using a slide program.

Personal Attributes:

The applicant must have excellent communication and interpersonal skills, be enthusiastic, warm and caring, be self-confident and have a sense of humour.

Responsibilities:

The main focus will be transitional leadership encouraging congregational renewal and development:

- Worship and Sacraments
- Pastoral Care
- Administration and Governance
- Wider church and ecumenical relationships
- Outreach

Time Allotment:

Proposed time allocation:

- Worship Planning (preparation and delivery): 14 hours
- Pastoral Care: 8 hours
- Administration and Committee Meetings: 4 hours
- Community and Regional Council: 4 hours
- Christian Education: 2 hours
- Transitional Focus: 8 hours

Total time allocation: based on 40 hours/week

Recommendations

We request South Alberta Presbytery to:

1. declare a vacancy for one ministry personnel position, full time.
2. appoint a Joint Search Committee
3. fill this position by call or appointment.

Declaration of Vacancy

Westminster United Church
Medicine Hat, Alberta, South Alberta Presbytery,
Alberta and Northwest Conference

Seeking a Minister who possesses skills for transitional ministry encouraging congregational renewal and development.