

Westminster United Church
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Sunday, March 3, 2024 – The Third Sunday in Lent

Pianist/Accompanist: Michael Oddy
Song Leader & Soloist: Brian Stocks
Singing Bowl: Wilma Stewart/Sandi McDonald
Reader: Kathleen Paterson
Audio-Visual: Norm Barnoff, Jeanne Stocks
YouTube Editor: Harold Barnoff
Property: Garry Derbowka
Bulletin: Rose Barkhouse
Minister: Rev. Del Stewart

Worship and Celebration: In-person, Zoom-church and YouTube

*indicates please stand, if able

Gathering Music

Acknowledgement of Territory

Westminster United Church sits on the traditional territory of the Three Fires Confederacy of First Nations, which includes the Ojibwa, the Odawa, and the Potawatomie. We respect the longstanding relationships with First Nations people in this place in the 100-mile Windsor-Essex Peninsula and the straits – *les detroits* – of Detroit.

Welcome and Announcements

Westminster's Mission Statement

Westminster United Church is an inclusive church for Progressive Christians...
creating something beautiful for God.

ENTRY INTO WORSHIP AND CELEBRATION –(Bruce Prewer,
<https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2012/02/> - adapted) -
Responsive

Min: Lent is not a time for being miserable, but for taking stock
and resetting our aims for following Jesus.

People: Loving God, in you we trust,
let us never fool ourselves.

Min: Lent is a time for healthy repentance –
repentance for our indifference in face of the permeating evil of
the world, -
repentance for our personal sins which we have glossed over as
“mere foibles”.

People: According to your loving kindness, remember me, God of
goodness and saving grace.

Min: Lent is a time for joy; the exhilaration that comes –
from defying temptations,
from turning our faces to the light that shines on the narrow path
of Jesus,
from walking into adverse winds and enjoying small victories day
by day.

People: Make me know your ways, O God.

Teach me your paths for you are the God of my salvation and my true happiness

Choral Response: VU 701, What Does the Lord Require of You

Words of Awareness (Liturgy Bits, <https://liturgybits.com> – adapted)

Min: We gather to hear God.

People: Oh God, speak to us.

Min: We gather to grow into God's ways.

People: Oh Jesus, teach us.

Min: We gather to find peace.

People: Oh Spirit of Life, surround us in your love

The singing bowl is sounded three times

Opening Prayer (based Bruce Prewer, Lectionary Resources, Lent 2B) - **Min**

Most loving and gracious God, we give thanks for the opportunities offered during this sacred and in this sacred space – opportunities to be loving and compassionate - opportunities created by your grace – opportunities shown to us by Jesus of Nazareth. During this time of worship do not allow us to be mere spectators but drawn into the music, hymns, prayers, affirmations and readings.

May we be ready to hear within, yet beyond, that Living Word which surpasses all human sentences as the sunrise surpasses a candle.

In Jesus name. Amen.

***Opening Hymn:** VU 315, Holy, Holy, Holy

Meditation

Ours Is a Faith (Liturgy Bits, <https://liturgybits.com> – adapted) –
Responsive

Min: Ours is a faith focussed on loving compassion.

People: The One we call God is the very definition of loving compassion.

Min: Ours is a faith of spiritual growth,

People: The One we call God is an ever-creating, ever-evolving breath of love.

Min: Ours is a faith of action.

People: The One we call God provokes us to speak, demand, and create justice for all people especially the poor, oppressed and marginalized.

Min: We are the imperfect who have gathered to learn and grow into a people more in-tune with the One we call God.

People: We have gathered to love, grow and act.

Min: Amen.

Quiet reflection

A Hymn from Our Childhood & Youth: VU 316, Praise Our Maker

An Affirmation of Faith

“Credo for Christians” by Jim Burklo (May 24, 2013,
<http://progressivechr.wpengine.com> – adapted) – **Responsive**

Min: We worship and adore God, source, essence, and aim of all things, spirit that enlivens all beings.

People: We follow the way of Jesus, who found God in himself and shared a way for others to find God in themselves.

Min: Jesus was born through love,

People: He lived for love,

Min: He suffered for love,

People: He died for love.

Min: But love never dies.

Quiet reflection

Min: We submit ourselves to the leading of that love,

People: so that we may be compassionate toward all beings,

Min: so that we may live and serve in community with others,

People: so that we may ask for and offer forgiveness,

Min: so that we may praise and enjoy God forever,

People: Amen....

Quiet reflection

The Peace (D. Galston, adapted)

Min: May a heart of peace rest with you,

People: and also with you.

Solo: “The Lord’s Prayer” (Brian Stocks)

READINGS (Kathleen Paterson)

From the Hebrew Scriptures

Psalms 19, VU pp. 740-741, Refrain 1 – Responsive

Exodus 20: 1-7 *The Ten Commandments* (NRSVUE, adapted for inclusivity)

Then God spoke all these words,

“I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.

“You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above or that is on the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I, Yahweh your God, am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents to the third and fourth

generation of those who reject me but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

“You shall not make wrongful use of the name of Yahweh your God, for Yahweh will not acquit anyone who misuses the Divine Name.

“Remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do your all work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to Yahweh your God; you shall not do any work – you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days God made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested on the seventh day; therefore God blessed the seventh day and consecrated it.

“Honour your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that Yahweh your God is giving you.

“You shall not murder.

“You shall not commit adultery.

“You shall not steal.

“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

“You shall not covet your neighbour’s house; you shall not covet your neighbour’s wife, male or female slave, ox, donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbour.”

From the New Testament

John 2:13-22 (SV) *Jesus Disrupts the Temple Marketplace*

It was almost time for the Jewish Passover celebration, so Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple precincts he came upon people selling oxen and sheep and doves, and bankers were doing business there too. He made a whip out of rope and drove them all out of the temple area, sheep, oxen, and all; then he knocked over the bankers' tables, and set their coins flying. And to the dove merchants he said, "Get these birds out of here! How dare you use my father's house as a public market!"

(His disciples were reminded of the words of Scripture: "Zeal for your house is eating me alive,"

A Contemporary Reading

An excerpt from "Clearing the Temple Courts: What Jesus Did about Systemic Injustice" by Corey Farr (May 30, 2020, <https://www.coreyfarr.com>)

Jesus' disruption of the temple market wasn't about people selling things in a house of worship. It was an act of resistance against a corrupt and exploitative system which [in Mark 11:17] he called "a den of thieves".

The clearing of the temple was also much more than just a simple protest. If it were only a protest, how do we explain that this one provocative (but relatively minor) act set in motion the plot to kill him once and for all? How do we explain that he was crucified that very week?

The reason was that his demonstration was actually a prophetic declaration against the whole system, echoing back to Hebrew prophets from centuries earlier....

Reflections on Today's Readings

May these words bless us,
and may our words be a blessing to others.

Centering

Let us now prayerfully center our hearts, our minds and our lives
as we listen to this musical meditation played by Westminster's
pianist, Michael Oddy...

Musical Meditation (Michael Oddy)

Sermon: "Jesus Shuts Down the Temple " (Rev. Del Stewart)

***Hymn:** VU 117, Jesus Christ is Waiting

A Lenten Prayer (John van der Laar, *Sacredise*, Lent 3B,
<https://sacredise.com>, adapted)

God of Jesus and our God, money talks and power makes the
world go around,
or so they would have us believe:
And we, forgetting that other voice, join the march in the hopes
that we may find a place
among the rich and strong.
But you, O God, feel no shame,
fear no harm,
as you walk among the poorest and weakest
feeling completely at home.
Thank you for the voice of your love
that keeps singing of the power in weakness,
the wealth in simplicity,
and the freedom and safety that is found

in walking your humble, serving way...

Silent prayers for ourselves and others

Amen.

THE OFFERING

Invitation (based on Heather Christensen, <https://www.uua.org>, adapted)

Since its formation in 1925, the United Church of Canada has had a grand vision of a world filled with peace and justice, love and joy.

That vision is embodied in this denomination's congregations large, small and in-between.

No matter its size, every local church depends on the generosity of its members.

Each one of you, by your commitment of time, energy and money helps to make that vision a reality.

Individually and together we are followers of Jesus working together to build a world filled with peace and justice, love and joy

***Offertory Hymn:** MV 191, What Can I Do (please feel free to clap along)

***Presentation of the Offering**

***Offertory Prayer:** (Carol Penner, <https://carolpenner.typepad.com>, adapted)

O God, we worship you with our words and our songs, and we praise you with our money. Everything we have is yours, and these gifts and offerings are signs of your kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

***Closing Hymn:** MV 209, Go Make a Difference

***Parting Words** –(John O'Donohue,
<https://pilgrimwr.unitingchurch.org.au/> - adapted) - **Min**

The time has come to leave this place made sacred by our presence.

May you live this day and throughout the coming week
Compassionate of heart,
Gentle in word,
Gracious in awareness,
Courageous in thought,
And generous in love...

The singing bowl is sounded three times

***Blessing** (<https://pilgrimwr.unitingchurch.org.au/>, adapted) – **Min**

May the love of God embrace you,
the Way of Jesus challenge you,
and the wisdom of the Spirit renew you...

***Choral Response:** VU 967, Amen