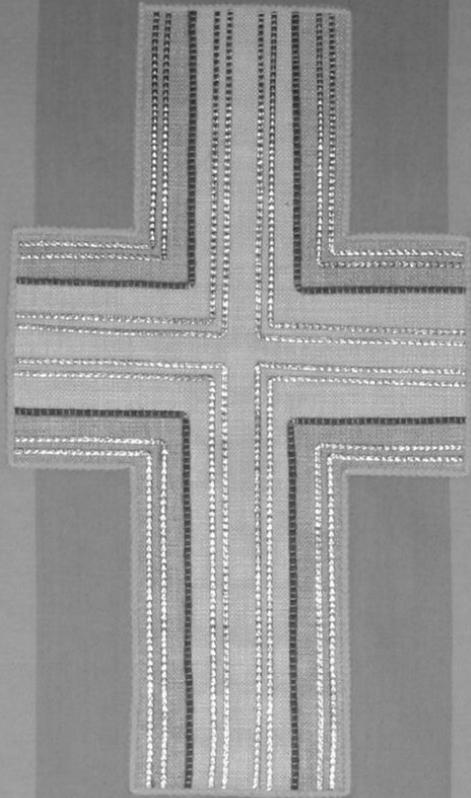


# *Covenanting Service*



*Westminster United Church  
Sunday, March 3, 2019*

# *Westminster United Church*

**Covenanting Service**

**March 3, 2019**

**Gathering**



**Welcome**

This afternoon we welcome all who have joyfully gathered to mark a new ministry relationship in Antler River Watershed Regional Council between the Rev. Del Stewart, Westminster United Church and the wider church. Today, let us once again commit to being the church together.

(★ invites people to stand as they are able; **people's part in bold type**)

**Acknowledgement of Territory**

**Entry Into Celebration**

As we gather together in this sacred time and place, let us recognize and affirm the pieces of possibility, the bits of good we bring, allowing our individual gifts to weave a patchwork of celebration and justice. So, let us worship and celebrate in the presence of God...

*The singing bowl is sounded three times*

**Opening Prayer**

Spirit of Life and Love, we gather grateful for the companionship of hearts and minds seeking to speak the truth in love.

We gather grateful for our United Church heritage: for the faithful women and men before us whose prophetic words and compassionate deeds make possible our hopes and dreams,

our re-imagining and new insights.  
 And we gather grateful for the gift of life itself,  
 mindful that to respect life means to both celebrate  
 what life is, and to insist on what it can become.  
 In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

★**Opening Hymn MV 1** “*Let Us Build a House*”

**An Affirmation and Celebration of Faith**

“*Light of the World*” (by Rebecca A. Edmiston-Lange)

One: Our tradition says that Jesus is  
 the light of the world...  
 We can all be the light of the world  
 if we seek to act in ways that enlarge the  
 realms of loving compassion and justice.  
 When we share another's pain or offer a  
 comforting ear to a friend in need,  
 All: **We are the light of the world.**  
 One: When we give bread to the hungry  
 or support ways to house the homeless,  
 All: **We are the light of the world.**  
 One: When we fight temptation to wrongdoing within  
 ourselves, and treat our neighbours with respect,  
 All: **We are the light of the world.**  
 One: When we try to overcome differences  
 with understanding,  
 and solve conflict with peaceful means,  
 All: **We are the light of the world.**  
 One: When we look for good in other people  
 and in ourselves,

All: **We are the light of the world.**

One: When we do not stay quiet in the face of  
 prejudice, but speak our minds firmly but gently,

All: **We are the light of the world.**

One: When we fight despair within ourselves  
 and side with hope,

All: **We are the light of the world.**

One: When we use our powers justly  
 and in the service and love for humanity,

All: **We are the light of the world.**

*Silent Reflection*

**The Peace**

One: May a heart of peace rest with you.

All: **And also with you.**

**Choral Response VU 579**

“*The Church Is Wherever God's People*”

**Scripture Reading** Luke 6:27-38

**Solo** “*Voice of Westminster*” (Brian Stocks)

**Message** (The Rev. Colin Swan)

★**Hymn VU 375** “*Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness*”

**Offering** (This will be donated to the  
 Welcome Centre Shelter for Women)

**Offertory Hymn VU 537**

“*Your Work, O God, Needs Many Hands*”

## Offertory Prayer

One: The gifts of God's gracious love  
have been entrusted to us.

All: **May we share the beauty and wonder  
of our Loving and Compassionate God  
with all who walk with us in caring service.**

One: Amen.

## Covenanting Action

### Statement of Living Faith Story

Jeanne Stocks

After thoughtful and prayerful discernment, the approval of the congregation of Westminster United Church and the wider United Church, we present the Rev. Del Stewart, who has been appointed to a Ministry of Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care in the Westminster Community of Faith. We believe that Del's faith, theology, extensive experience in professional ministry, as well as his skills and talents, complement our faithful witness, ministry needs, and community context.

### Statement of This New Ministry

*(The new minister comes forward at the invitation of  
the Regional Council Liaison)*

*Regional Council Liaison:* We are here to join into a covenantal relationship with God and between Del Stewart, Westminster United Church, Windsor, and the wider United Church as represented by Antler River Watershed Regional Council. Although God's covenant with us never changes, our covenants with

one another evolve as we seek ways to faithfully deepen our commitment to Jesus and live into our call to embody God's love in the world.

Del Stewart, you are here in response to the recommendation and approval of Westminster United Church and your appointment by Essex Presbytery and London Conference, now part of the Antler River Watershed Regional Council. We come together to mark this new relationship within our regional council for the sake of our shared ministry.

Del, you are about to undertake the ministry of Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care in this place.

You, the members of this community of faith, are called to join Del in worship, study, prayer and action.

We, Antler River Watershed Regional Council, will be responsible for supporting this ministry.

Let us pray for God's grace as we covenant together:

### Prayer of Faith (Unison)

**Uniting God, you call us into your church  
to accept the cost and joy of discipleship:  
to celebrate your presence,  
to live with respect in creation,  
to be your servants in the service of others,  
to seek justice and resist evil,  
to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table,  
to proclaim Jesus crucified and risen,  
our judge and our hope.  
Send your Holy Spirit to bind us in full  
communion so that we may be a uniting church,  
embodying your love for the world.**

**As one, we proclaim,  
In life, in death, in life beyond death,  
You are with us,  
We are not alone,  
All glory and power be unto you,  
Amen.**

### **Promises Of The New Minister**

*Regional Council Liaison:* Del Stewart, do you, in the presence of this community of faith, take on the new trust and responsibility of ministering with Westminster United Church, Windsor?

*New Minister:* Yes, I do.

*Regional Council Liaison:* Will you accept the guidance of Antler River Watershed Regional Council, and together with its other members, be responsible for the health of Westminster United Church?

*New Minister:* I will.

*Regional Council Liaison:* Will you share in the ministry goals and faith story of this community of faith?

*New Minister:* I will.

*Regional Council Liaison:* Will you accept the support and encouragement of this community of faith and this regional council?

*New Minister:* I will.

*Regional Council Liaison:* Will you work co-operatively with the wider church and wider community to embody God's love in the world?

*New Minister:* I will.

### **Promises Of The Community Of Faith**

*Members and adherents of the Westminster congregation stand*  
*Regional Council Liaison:* Will you join with Del Stewart in a ministry of worship, study, prayer and action within Westminster United Church, Antler River Watershed Regional Council and within the wider church?

*Members of the Community of Faith: We will.*

*Regional Council Liaison:* Will you support them as they serve among you in this ministry?

*Members of the Community of Faith: We will.*

### **Promises Of The Regional Council, Wider Church And Community**

*Members of the wider church and community come forward. [this includes community partners, members of other faith traditions, United Church of Canada members, affiliated partners, as well as members of the Antler River Watershed Region and any other United Church body]*

*Regional Council Liaison:* Will you as members of Antler River Watershed Region and members of the wider community join with Del and this community of faith in this ministry that is both theirs and ours?

*Wider Community Members: We will.*

*Regional Council Liaison:* Will you support and encourage them in this ministry?

*Wider Community Members: We will.*

### **Song of Celebration VU 958** (sung 5 times)

*“ Halle, Halle, Halle ”*

**Halle, halle, hallelujah! Halle, halle, hallelujah!  
Halle, halle, hallelujah! Hallelujah, Hallelujah!**

## Presentation of the Symbols

### THE BIBLE

Fred Barkhouse

Take this Bible. Be with us as one who teaches and proclaims the Word.

*The minister receives the Bible.*



Doug Burt

### WATER

Be with us as one who baptizes.

*The minister pours the water into the font.*



Jeanne Stocks

### BREAD AND WINE

Be with us as one who follows the meal practices of Jesus of Nazareth.

*The minister places the bread and wine on the communion table.*



Rose Barkhouse

### HYMN BOOK

Be with us as one who knows that singing and music is heaven's gift to earth, and lifts our souls to heaven.

*The minister receives the hymn book.*



### A BOUQUET of MULTI-COLOURED BALLOONS

Janet Brown

Be with us as one who recognizes and celebrates the diversity of God's Creation, and stands strong for human and civil rights.

*The minister receives the balloon.*



## A MICROPHONE

Marion Overholt

Be with us as one who is a voice for the disempowered and voiceless, a voice of loving compassion, peace and justice.



“Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of the destitute. Speak out...defend the rights of the poor and needy”.

(Proverbs 31:8-9, NRSV)

## We Pray...

*New Minister:* God of eternity

**All: We trust in your compassionate love.**

**Our PAST is part of sacred history.**

**We share in the heritage of your faithful people.**

**We are thankful for centuries of tradition.**

**We look back in gratitude and faith.**

*New Minister:* God of eternity,

**All: Our PRESENT is part of this sacred history.**

**We are a faithful people too.**

**We are thankful for the chance to serve.**

**We look around with concern, but also with confidence and imagination.**

*New Minister:* God of eternity,

**All: We trust in your compassionate love.**

**Our FUTURE will be part of sacred history.**

**Whatever happens, we will strive to be a faithful people.**

**We look forward in hope.**

*New Minister:* So may it be. Amen.

## Response to Covenant VU 646

*Regional Council Liaison:* Let us rejoice in the covenant we have made as we sing together

*“ We Are Marching ”*

## Prayers of the People

Let us pray together, with all who have gathered here concluding each petition:

Uniting God, receive our prayers:

***And in your love answer.***

For the ministries of Westminster United Church, the Antler River Watershed Regional Council, The United Church of Canada, and our ministry partners around the world who work toward our common vision of a united and uniting church...

Uniting God, receive our prayers:

***And in your love answer.***

For faithful disciples in our communities of faith who work towards our common purpose of extravagant welcome, proclaiming the gospel, and mending God’s world...

Uniting God, receive our prayers:

***And in your love answer.***

For dreamers, teachers and prophets who share our common longing to be one in Christ, with Creation, and with each other...

Uniting God, receive our prayers:

***And in your love answer.***

For those around the world who work towards our sacred message of justice, peace and harmony...

Uniting God, receive our prayers:

***And in your love answer.***

For the prayers we name to you now in the silence of our hearts [*moments of silence*]...

Uniting God, receive our prayers:

***And in your love answer.***

We join these prayers together as we pray together the Lord’s Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.**

**Thy kingdom come,**

**Thy will be done**

**on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;**

**and forgive us our trespasses,**

**as we forgive those**

**who trespass against us;**

**and lead us not into temptation,**

**but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,**

**and the power, and the glory,**

**for ever and ever. Amen**

## Announcements

### ★Closing Hymn VU 575

*“ I’m Gonna Live So God Can Use Me ”*

## Parting Words (New Min)

The time has come for us to prepare to leave this sacred place where we have worshipped and celebrated together. Let us depart from this time of covenanting together with our lives renewed and enlivened – thankful for the life that sustains us, and open to the grace that surrounds and surprises...

*The singing bowl is sounded three times*

**Words of Blessing** (by David Stewart, *adapted*)

As the snowflake gently settles upon Mother Earth,  
receive the gift of Peace.  
As the winter's sun rises with light and warmth,  
receive the gift of Life.  
As the wind moves and dances all around the world,  
receive the gracious gift of the Spirit...

**Choral Response VU 298**

*" When You Walk From Here "*

**When you walk from here,  
when you walk from here,  
walk with justice, walk with mercy,  
and with God's humble care.**

**Postlude**



*Thanks to Jean Lowden for sharing her gift of music  
and thank you to all who participated here today.*

*Following the service please join us in the Hearth  
Room for a time of fellowship and refreshments  
hosted by Sandi McDonald and her helpers.*



*Join Us on a Journey through Lent  
worship services shared with other  
United Churches in Windsor*

**We start the Journey**

**Wednesday, March 6** – *Ash Wednesday*, 7 pm,  
hosted by Westminster United Church, 1680 Dougall.

**We each continue the journey at our regular  
worship times, through the five Sundays of Lent,  
March 10 – April 7 and we will shout our Hosannas  
and wave our palm branches on Palm / Passion  
Sunday April 14.**

**HOLY WEEK**



**WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

**Thursday, April 18** – *Maundy Thursday*, 6 pm, hosted  
by Bedford United Church, 3340 Sandwich St.

**Friday, April 19** – *Good Friday Worship*, 10:30 am,  
hosted by Emmanuel United Church, 1728 Lincoln Rd.

**Saturday, April 20** – *Tenebrae Worship*, 7 pm, hosted  
by Riverside United Church, 881 Glidden Ave.

**Sunday, April 21** – *Early Easter Worship*, 8:30 am,  
hosted by Central United Church, 660 Ouellette Ave.

**Sunday, April 21** – *Easter Celebrations* at all of the  
churches at their usual worship time.