

The United Church of Canada
Bathurst Pastoral Charge
First United Church, Bathurst
www.firstunited-bathurst.ca

December 1, 2024

1st Sunday of Advent

Interim Minister Rev. Ivan Gregan **Music Director** Martha Vickers

Office Adm. Margaret Daniels **Custodian** Lester Scott

Greeters Julie & Harvey Spence

Audio & Visual Technicians Brenda Parrott & Donald Eddy

All musical selections reprinted under license #4-606499, One License for Churches

<u>Lectionary for today</u>	<u>Lectionary for next Sunday</u>
Jeremiah 33:14-16 Psalm 25:1-10 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13 Luke 3:1-6	Malachi 3:1-4 Luke 1:68-79 Philippians 1:3-11 Luke 3:1-6
<i>The bulletins today have been placed in loving memory of Cletus Lavigne by Judy, Macky and Jennifer</i>	

*The asterisk * identifies those times in the service where you are invited to present yourselves, body, mind, and spirit, as is comfortable for you today...*

GATHERING

MUSIC AS WE GATHER

WELCOME

TERRITORY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT *(in unison)*

As we gather to worship, let's respectfully pause to remember we live and work and worship on lands that are, by law, the unceded territory of the original peoples, the Mi'kmaq. May we live with respect on this land, and live in peace and in friendship with its people.

***CALL TO WORSHIP** *(responsively)*

Christ is the Light for our journey.

A light shining in the darkness.

The Spirit fans the flame of faith so that it becomes,

A light shining in the darkness.

Let us ask God to fill our lives that we may be

A light shining in the darkness.

*** CENTERING FOR WORSHIP** "Gloria" VU #37

Gloria! Gloria! In excelsis Deo!

Gloria! Gloria! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Glory to God! Glory to God! Glory in the highest!

Glory to God! Glory to God! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

***LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE** *(in unison)*

This candle reminds us of God's Eternal Presence.

God's Light is present even if we are blind to it.

We light this candle to remember that,

God is always bringing light in Jesus

who is our pathway home to God.

The Christ Candle is lit.

GATHERING PRAYER *(responsively)*

Light for the shadows, beacon in the darkness,
and ray of hope for the weary,

Walk with us on your journey,

show us the pathway home,

and disperse all clouds of confusion.

Send your Holy Spirit into our midst,

That we may be filled with your Breath of Life,

Impregnate your people once again, with a vision of new life.

This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

***GATHERING HYMN** – “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” VU #2

Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free:
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.

Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art,
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver;
born a child and yet a King;
born to reign in us forever;
now thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.

PRAYER OF HUMILITY (*responsively*)

Almighty and Ever-Present God,
we confess the brokenness that is in our world
**between the vaccinated and unvaccinated,
between the hopeful and fearful,
between the churched and the unchurched.**

We confess the brokenness in which we live,
**Arising from what was said and cannot be unsaid,
Arising from what has been done and cannot be
undone,
Arising from what was intended and cannot be taken
back.**

We confess the brokenness within ourselves,
**Thoughts, words, and deeds that haunt us, torture us,
and imprison us in the land of shame and regret.**

Eternal God, You sent your son to redeem us, restore us,
and refresh us,

**Hear now our silent confession that we make in the
Presence of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND FORGIVENESS

CHORAL RESPONSE – “Hope Is a Star”

VU #7

***Hope is a star that shines in the night
Leading us on' til the morning is bright.
When God is a child there's hope in our song
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong
And none shall be afraid!***

LIGHTING OF THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE – HOPE

Glenda Smith

Hope admits that we are not there yet.
We are pilgrims on the journey to our destination.

**Hope means that something good is within our reach
but we are not there yet.**

Hope calls out to us, encouraging us onward,
envisioning a future that is not here yet.

**Hope is found in surprising places,
foretastes of the future in the present moment,
inspiring us on a journey to a place and a time,
and even though we are not there yet,
we have seen and know hope.**

God is our hope and fills us with hope.

**In the future lies a baby, found in a manger.
God calls out to us from the past and from the future,
and God lies within our reach
but we are not there yet but we are on the way.**

We are a people of hope.

**We are pregnant with possibilities,
dreaming of what can be,
preparing for what is not here yet.**

We are God's People – we are a people of Hope.

The Advent Candle is lit

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

**We have hope in the midst of fear.
We have hope in the midst of sorrow.
We have hope in the midst of hopelessness.
God offers us hope in the mist of life!
God is with us. We are not alone.**

CHORAL RESPONSE – “A Candle is Burning”

VU #6

***A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,
a candle of hope in December’s dark night.
While angels sing blessings from heaven’s starry sky,
our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh.***



SHARING A STORY (with those of all ages)

**In peace, dear God, I come to you
through Jesus Christ who makes me new.
And while I run or play or rest,
be with those whom I love best,
Guide me in your Holy Way,
as You walk with me each day, Amen.**

*SINGING A SONG – “Look to the Light”

Look to the light it’s shining.
Open your eyes and see,
that there’s love enough for the whole wide world,
enough for you and me.
Open your eyes and see.

Listen to the voices singing.
Open your heart you’ll see,
that the Spirit sings with the whole wide world,
a song for you and me.
Open your heart and see.

Reach to the earth with loving.
Open our hands and see,
that there’s food enough for the whole wide world,
enough for you and me
Open your hands and see.

Let’s join our hands together.
Stretch `cross the earth and seas.
For there’s room enough for the whole wide world,
enough for you and me.
Open up your eyes and see.
Oh open up your eyes and see.

*Words and music: Pat Mayberry © 2000
Arrangement: David Kai © 2018*

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Gary Branch

Jeremiah 33:14-16

*Psalm 25 (responsively)

In You, O LORD, my God, I put my trust each day.

I trust in you; O LORD, my God,
**do not let me be put to shame,
do not let my enemies triumph over me.**

I know that anyone who hopes in you
will never be put to shame,

**I also know that shame will come on those
who are treacherous without cause.**

Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths.

**Guide me in understanding your truth and teach me
your will for you are the LORD, my God, my Saviour,
and my hope is in you all day long.**

In You, O LORD, my God, I put my trust each day.

Remember, LORD, your great mercy and love, from the very
beginning you have shown us love and mercy.

Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways as a teenager; remember me according to your love,
for you, LORD, are good.

In You, O LORD, my God, I put my trust each day.

Yes, good and upright is the LORD;

**God instructs sinners in the ways of holiness.
God guides the humble in what is right
and teaches us the way.**

All the ways of the LORD are loving and faithful
toward all those who keep the demands of the Divine Covenant.

**For the sake of your name, O LORD,
forgive my iniquity.**

Yes, forgive my iniquity, O LORD.

In You, O LORD, my God, I put my trust each day.

Who, then, are those who honour the LORD?

**They are the ones who seek our God's path
and God instructs them in the ways they should
choose. They spend their days doing good,
seeking the welfare of the people,
and their descendants will inherit the Kingdom of God.**

The LORD confides in all who love God;

**and makes the covenant of love known to them.
My eyes are ever on the LORD,**

for only God will release my feet from the snare.

In You, O LORD, my God, I put my trust each day.

Turn to me and be gracious to me,
for I am lonely and afflicted.

**Relieve the troubles of my heart
and free me from my anguish.
Look on my affliction and my distress
and take away all my sins.**

See how numerous are my enemies and how fiercely they hate me! Guard my life and rescue me; do not let me be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.

**May integrity and uprightness protect me,
because my hope, O LORD, is in you.**

Deliver your children, O God,

Yes, deliver your people from all our troubles!

Deliver us, O God.

In You, O LORD, my God, I put my trust each day.

Luke 21:25-36

REFLECTION

MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

GIFT OF MUSIC – “Wait for the Promise”

YOUR GENEROSITY MATTERS *(formerly Minute for Mission)*

Martha Vickers

INVITATION TO MAKE AN OFFERING

THE OFFERING IS GATHERED

***ADVENT OFFERING HYMN**

(Tune: Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow)

Hope in our faith so filled with awe.

Hope in the promise of our God.

Hope for these gifts we offer here.

Use them and us throughout the year.

THE OFFERING IS BROUGHT FORWARD

***OFFERING PRAYER** *(in unison)*

All Imaginative God, You give us the gift of hope.

May our gifts become signs of hope to the world, to the church, and to each other, in Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

COMMUNAL PRAYERS

Pastoral Prayers for each other, for our city, for our world,
for the Church Universal and for our own needs and concerns.

THE LORD'S PRAYER – NOTRE PÈRE

GOING OUT

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*CLOSING HYMN - "I Have Called You By Your Name" MV #161

I have called you by your name, you are mine;
I have gifted you and ask you now to shine.
I will not abandon you; all my promises are true.
You are gifted, called, and chosen; you are mine.

I will help you learn my name as you go;
read it written in my people, help them grow.
Pour the water in my name, speak the word your soul can claim,
offer Jesus' body given long ago.

I know you will need my touch as you go;
feel it pulsing in creation's ebb and flow.
Like the woman reaching out, choosing faith in spite of doubt,
hold the hem of Jesus' robe, then let it go.

I have given you a name, it is mine;
I have given you my Spirit as a sign.
With my wonder in your soul, make my wounded children whole;
go and tell my precious people they are mine.

*COMMISSIONING AND BLESSING

The Christ Candle is extinguished.

*ADVENT CHORAL CLOSING

MV #221

"I am Walking a Path of Peace"

*I am walking a path of hope,
I am walking a path of hope,
I am walking a path of hope,
lead me home, lead me home.*

POSTLUDE

Church News

This Week at First United Church		
Office Hours: 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM Monday to Friday		
Monday	9:00 – 11:00 AM	Badminton – DEMH Gym
	4:00 pm	Bathurst Pastoral Council - RMR
Tuesday	1:00 – 3:00 PM	Knitting Group - RMR
Wednesday	9:00 – 11:00 AM	Badminton – DEMH Gym
	6:30 PM	Choir Practice
Saturday	8:00 AM–1:00 PM	Bathurst Community Market

Peanut Butter – Once again this year we have set a goal of 900 jars of peanut butter to donate to the Bathurst Volunteer Center. Up to November 28th, 2024 we have collected 863 jars. We will be purchasing an additional 110+ jars with the next sale.

Thank you to our volunteers in November - Counters – Margaret Payne Chenard & Mike Kierstead; **Greeters** – Dave & Cheryl Brewster, Charles Ramsey & Linda Knowles MacPherson, Gayle Ferron, Margaret Payne Chenard & Mike Kierstead; **Your Generosity Matters** – Martha Vickers, Sally Ronalds, Grace Ronalds, and Anne Wilson; **Scripture Readers** – Isabel MacLaggan, Linda Young, Weston Brewster, Autumn Ronalds, Lia McLellan and Judy Losier; **Prayer** – Lane Dempsey; **Hospitality & Friendship** – Debrah Watling, Shirley Sealy & Wilma Dempsey; **Sound System** – Brenda Parrott, Shirley Allain, and Ralph Jamieson; and **Videographer** – Don Eddy as well as to Josh Gammon for uploading our services to the website and Facebook.

Church News

Time for Fellowship - The 2025 Hosting Sheets are in the Ruth Morrison Room. Would you like to assist the members of the Hospitality & Friendship Team to provide/serve refreshments following our church services? We are looking for families, individuals and youth interested in contributing to this enjoyable fellowship opportunity. Please feel free to add your name to the sign-up sheet in the Ruth Morrison Room and talk with a member of the Fellowship Team.

Many thanks to everyone who has volunteered already.

Your Hospitality & Friendship Team,
Bill Stack, Nancy Jagoe, Shirley Sealy, Gayle Ferron

Church News



Once again this year we are hoping to have the beauty of our sanctuary enhanced with poinsettias for the Christmas season. Those wishing to contribute to the **Annual Poinsettia**

Fundraiser may place an envelope in the offering plate on Sunday morning. Please mark clearly on the face of the envelope – Poinsettia Fundraiser with your name, PAR or envelope number. List the names that you wish to have printed in the Christmas bulletin insert. Donations will also be received in the church office – *deadline is Wednesday, December 11, 2024.*

Annual Christmas Benevolence Fund: - It's that time of year! Giving to this fund is even more important than ever. The costs relating to feeding families, and having a warm place to live has become very prevalent in our area. Should you wish to give you will find an envelope on the tree which is set up in the narthex. Then you may drop the envelope in the offering plate or drop it off at the church office during the week. Make your cheques payable to First United Church. Please mark clearly that this donation is for the Benevolence Fund. The proceeds from this fund support the Bathurst Volunteer Center and people in our congregation who need assistance.

We thank-you for your generosity
– **Community Outreach Sub-Team**

Church News

If you are aware of **anyone in the hospital or needing a visit**, please let the office know (506-546-3532) and the message will be forwarded to the Pastoral Care Team.

Bathurst Pastoral Council will be meeting on Monday, December 2nd at 4 PM in the Ruth Morrison Room. A copy of the agenda and other pertinent information will be emailed during the coming week.

Ways & Means Team would like to thank everyone who assisted, either by working in the kitchen, baking, serving the food, buying and/or selling tickets, with the recent Turkey Take-Out Supper. Thanks to the generous sponsorship of Kenny's Trucking Ltd. and The Shine House the team realized a profit of \$6,942.62. The next event is tentatively planned for February, the **Roast Pork Supper!**

Community News



SHRINERS - Give help and hope for kids

Shriners are a brotherhood of men committed to family, engaged into ongoing personal growth, and dedicated to providing care for children and families in need. Our backgrounds and interests are diverse, but we are bound together by our shared values and a desire to have fun, do good and build relationships that can last a lifetime.

Once again, this year you can help the Shriners with their fundraiser. Purchase a calendar for \$20 and have a chance to win prizes every day of the year. The fruitcakes are delicious and you can get a box of three for \$25. All the money from this fundraiser goes to help the children in our area. Contact Harvey Spence at 506-546-2742 for reservation.

A FAMILY AND COMMUNITY BREAKFAST will be held at St. George's Anglican Church, 432 King Avenue, on Saturday, December 14th from 8:00 – 10:00 AM. As this community event serves to fund our local mission projects, we rely on donations and ask that you consider a minimum donation of \$ 8.00 to help defray costs. We appreciate your kindness and support. Come and enjoy fellowship and great food.

Community News

STATUS OF "HELP LESOTHO" CALENDAR CAMPAIGN – 2024

With the support of the congregation of First United Church, 198 "Help Lesotho" Calendars for 2025 were sold. That raises \$2,940.00 for this initiative with your support. The order was sent in on October 16, 2024. On November 12, 2024, the order was sent from Ottawa by Canada Post with the assurance that it would be delivered by Friday, November 15. Unfortunately, that did not happen, so ***the calendar order will not be delivered until after the postal strike is settled.*** As soon as the order arrives, the delivery process will begin.

St. George's Choir and Friends invite you to join us on ***Thursday, December 12th at 7:00 pm*** for an evening of Christmas Carol singing, refreshments and fellowship.

White Gift Sunday

December 8th

The tradition of White Gift Sunday has its roots in a small Methodist church in Ohio in 1904. What began as a humble way to reflect on the love and devotion of the giver and not the value of the gift has grown into today's white gift services in many churches across several denominations. The story is told that a minister's wife initiated the idea to solve the problem of inequity of gifts given at the Sunday school Christmas party. Instead of focusing on receiving gifts, the focus shifted to bringing gifts to Jesus that could in turn be shared with people around the world who did not have much. All the gifts would come wrapped in plain white paper, so that no one would know which was an expensive gift and which was a more modest one. No one would feel ashamed of their gift and everyone would share in the joy of giving to others.

In keeping with the spirit of the first White Gift service all those attending bring a gift wrapped in white paper to be given to someone in need.

Some suggestions from the Volunteer Center are pastas and sauces, cereal, canned meat, canned milk, canned fruits and canned vegetables. It is also suggested that \$5 gift cards from places such as Burger King or McDonalds could be placed in small boxes and gift wrapped for children. They love to unwrap something at Christmas.

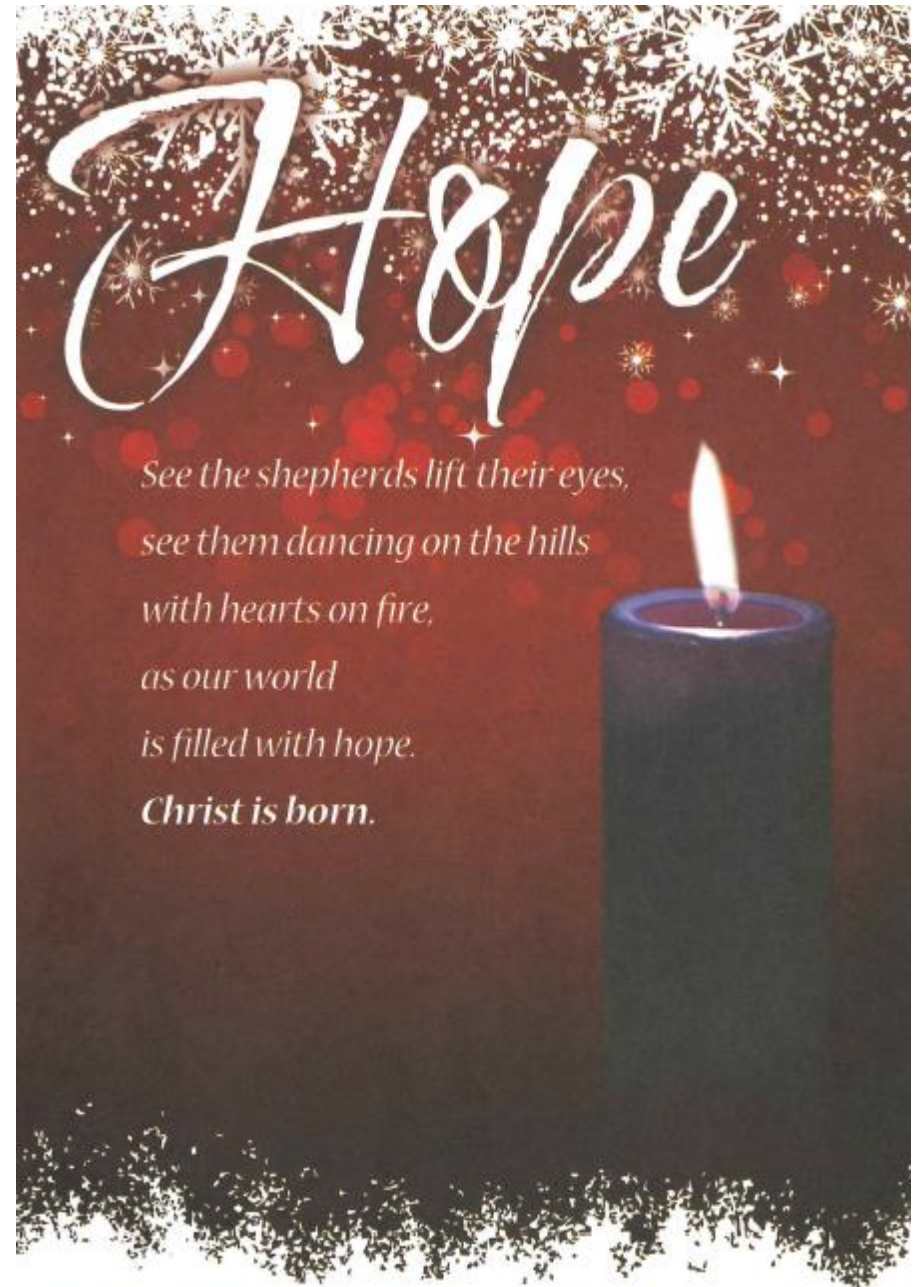
White Gift Sunday

December 8th

The tradition of White Gift Sunday has its roots in a small Methodist church in Ohio in 1904. What began as a humble way to reflect on the love and devotion of the giver and not the value of the gift has grown into today's white gift services in many churches across several denominations. The story is told that a minister's wife initiated the idea to solve the problem of inequity of gifts given at the Sunday school Christmas party. Instead of focusing on receiving gifts, the focus shifted to bringing gifts to Jesus that could in turn be shared with people around the world who did not have much. All the gifts would come wrapped in plain white paper, so that no one would know which was an expensive gift and which was a more modest one. No one would feel ashamed of their gift and everyone would share in the joy of giving to others.

In keeping with the spirit of the first White Gift service all those attending bring a gift wrapped in white paper to be given to someone in need.

Some suggestions from the Volunteer Center are pastas and sauces, cereal, canned meat, canned milk, canned fruits and canned vegetables. It is also suggested that \$5 gift cards from places such as Burger King or McDonalds could be placed in small boxes and gift wrapped for children. They love to unwrap something at Christmas.



*I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation:
my God will hear me. Micah 7:7*

SCRIPTURE READINGS

JEREMIAH 33:14-16

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

The Righteous Branch and the Covenant with David

14 The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

15 In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

16 In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The Lord is our righteousness."

PSALM 25 – Printed in the body of the bulletin

LUKE 21:25-36

The Coming of the Son of Man

25 "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves.

26 People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

27 Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory.

28 Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

The Lesson of the Fig Tree

29 Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees;

30 as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near.

31 So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near.

32 Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place.

33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

Exhortation to Watch

34 "Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life and that day does not catch you unexpectedly,

35 like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth.

36 Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place and to stand before the Son of Man."