

*The United Church of Canada*  
*Bathurst Pastoral Charge*  
**First United Church, Bathurst**  
[www.firstunited-bathurst.ca](http://www.firstunited-bathurst.ca)

**Second Sunday in Lent - March 16, 2025**

**Clergy** Rev. David Allan     **Music Director** Martha Vickers  
**Office Adm.** Margaret Daniels     **Custodian** Lester Scott  
**Greeters** Nancy & Allen Jagoe  
**Audio & Visual Technicians** Lester Scott & Donald Eddy

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<u>Lectionary for today</u>	<u>Lectionary for next Sunday</u>
Genesis 15:1-12	Isiah 55:1-9
Psalm 27	Psalm 63:1-8
Philippians 3:17-4:1	1 Corinthians 10:1-13
Luke 13:31-35	Luke 13:1-9

*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*

**MUSIC FOR GATHERING**

**WELCOME**

**TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** *(in unison)*

**...As we gather to worship, let's respectfully pause to remember we live and love, 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.**

**CENTERING FOR WORSHIP:** "Spirit Open My Heart" MV #79  
*(refrain only)*

***Spirit, open my heart to the joy and pain of living.  
As you love may I love, in receiving and in giving,  
Spirit, open my heart.***

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

God calls us in light and calls in beauty;

**God calls us in strength and calls in mercy.**

God, who dwells in our hearts, invites us to dwell in God's house;

**in the shelter of God's wings, we have our home.**

We come seeking God, our spirits call out.

**We come to worship, we come unafraid.**

We come in the name of the Lord.

**For God is with us, we are not alone.**

**GATHERING PRAYER:**

God of the Way, your Spirit accompanied Jesus through the Jordan and into the wilderness and beyond. In all beginnings your Spirit broods over your new creation. Eternal God of this sacred moment, may your Spirit descend upon and fill us as we gather here and at home for worship. You are Holy Mystery and Sacred Presence, All Being and Always Love. Bless us in this time as we pause to rest; bless us now as we remember Jesus making his way to Jerusalem. Bless us all as we learn again to walk the Lenten road and the way of your love. Amen

**\*GATHERING HYMN:**

"God, We Praise You for the Morning" VU #415  
*(verses 1-5 only)*

God, we praise you for the morning;  
hope springs forth with each new day,  
new beginning, prayer, and promise,  
joy in work and in play.

God, we praise you for creation,  
mountains, seas, and prairie land.  
Waking souls find joy and healing  
in your bountiful hand.

God, we praise you for compassion,  
all the loving that you show;  
human touching, tears, and laughter,  
help your children to grow.

God, we praise you for your Spirit,  
Comforter and daily friend,  
restless searcher, gentle teacher,  
strength and courage you send.

God, we praise you for the Saviour,  
come that we may know your ways.  
In his loving, drying, rising,  
Christ is Lord of our days.

#### **LENTEN CANDLE LITURGY:**

*Joanne & John Wiseman*

During the season of Lent, we remember and retell the story of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. He came bringing light and love, assurance and amazing grace. But there were those who were shut down by the shadows of fear, or reshaped by a desire for power, with hearts that were shrunken and shrivelled up. They sought to extinguish the light and exclude the love that brings life.

We remember the story from Matthew's Gospel, where Jesus enters a synagogue on the Sabbath and encounters a man with a shrivelled hand. The Pharisees there are looking for an excuse to accuse Jesus of breaking the Law. So they test him, asking, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" Jesus answers like a good rabbi, asking them a question in return. "If one of you had a sheep that fell into a pit on the Sabbath, wouldn't you embrace it and lift it up and out of the pit?" The Good Shepherd continues, saying, "And isn't this child of God as valuable as one of your sheep? So then it absolutely is lawful to heal on the Sabbath." He then asks the man to stretch out

his hand, and all can see that it has been restored. But the stiff-necked Pharisees are not restored; they leave to plot darkness, destruction and death.

We know that the lovelight will always be raised up, it will rise over every new horizon, and we know that it will never be overcome. And yet, in such places, in too many places still, the presence of the light within and among all was dimmed for a while...

*A candle is extinguished*

#### **CHORALE RESPONSE:**

MV #18

"Lord, Prepare Me to be a Sanctuary"

***Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,  
pure and holy tried and true;  
with thanksgiving, I'll be a living  
sanctuary for you.***

#### **ASSURANCE:**

How often does following the letter of a law get in the way of the spirit of it, or worse, is contrary to the supreme value of unconditional love? How often do we stumble and get stuck between the comfort of tradition and a radical hope, between easy assumptions and the true peace that comes with justice? Fear not my friends! God has made a covenant with you, a covenant of freedom and purpose, a vow, a promise of merciful compassion, and the intimate bond of love. So freed, we can move, we can journey together. So bonded, we can love with passion, as we are loved. In the sanctuary of our hearts, we are called by Love.

#### **CHORALE RESPONSE: "And When You Call for Me"**

MV #96

***And when you call for me,  
I have already answered.  
And when you call for me,  
I am already there.***

#### **SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

"God is our light and salvation"

*Refrain:*

*God is my light and saving health,  
I shall not be afraid.*

God is my light and my salvation, whom then shall I fear?

**God is the stronghold of my life,  
of whom shall I be afraid?**

When the wicked close in to devour me,

**it is they, my enemies and my foes, who stumble and**

**fall.**

If an army should encamp against me,

My heart shall not be afraid;

**if war should arise against me,  
even then I will not be dismayed.**

*Refrain:*

One thing I have asked of God, for which I long:

that I may dwell in God's house all the days of my life,

**to gaze on your beauty, O God,  
and to seek you in your temple.**

For in the time of trouble you will give me shelter;

**you will hide me under the cover of your tent,  
you will set me high upon a rock.**

And now you have raised my head  
above my enemies round about me.

**Therefore I will offer in your dwelling  
a sacrifice with great gladness.**

*Refrain:*

Hear my voice, O God, when I call; have mercy and answer me.

Your face, O God, I seek.

**Do not hide your face from me;  
do not reject your servant in anger,  
you who have been my helper.**

Do not cast me off, or forsake me, O God my saviour.

**Though my father and mother forsake me,  
my God will take me up.**

*Refrain:*

Teach me your way, O God,

**lead me on a level path,**

**safe from those who lie in wait for me.**

Do not give me up to the will of my enemies,

**for liars and false witnesses arise against me.**

I believe that I shall see God's goodness

in the land of the living.

**Wait for God; be strong, and take courage;  
yes, wait for God!**

*Refrain:*

*God is my light and saving health,  
I shall not be afraid*

### SHARING OUR STORIES *(with those of all ages)*

\*HYMN: "We Will Bring You Peace"

*(Seasons of the Spirit, volume 3)*

*Refrain:*

*We will bring your peace into the world.*

*We will bring your peace into the world.*

*With a loving hand, do the best we can,*

*we will bring your peace to the world.*

Jesus, you ask us to be gentle.

Jesus, you ask us to be kind,

to take good care of each other,

then your peace will be here for all to find.

*Refrain:*

Jesus, you ask us to be friendly.

Jesus, you ask us to be fair,

to take good care of each other,

then your peace will be here for all to share.

*Refrain:*

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION: *(in unison)*

**We are tied together by your Word, O God, by the Gospel  
and your love. Even as the light dims bit by bit as we make  
our Lenten way, shed your light upon us now, for  
understanding, for hope, and for living out a sure and  
strengthened faith. Amen**

## READINGS and REFLECTIONS:

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18 *Joanne Wiseman*  
God seals the covenant with Abram and Sarai

**REFLECTION:** *Rev. David Allan*

**SPIRIT SONG:** "Spirit of Life" VU #381

*Spirit of Life, come unto me.  
Sing in my heart all the stirrings of compassion.  
Blow in the wind, rise in the sea;  
move in the hand, giving life the shape of justice.  
Roots hold me close; wings set me free;  
Spirit of Life, come to me, come to me.*

Luke 13:31-35 *Joanne Wiseman*  
Jesus cries over Jerusalem as a hen over her chicks

**REFLECTION:** *Rev. David Allan*

**GIFT OF MUSIC:** "I Have Called You by Your Name"

**YOUR GENEROSITY MATTERS** *Joanne Wiseman*

## INVITATION TO MAKE AN OFFERING:

When we lament the state of the world and the foolishness and the suffering of humanity, we can feel helpless. But love isn't without power; it is the sacred and eternal means of life and of hope. It is generosity and grace. So we give in the name of Love, we give in the name of Christ...

## THE OFFERING IS GATHERED

### \*OFFERING RESPONSE:

"Give What You Can, Take What You Need"

***Give what you can, take what you need.  
For the body of Christ, is enough to feed.  
The hungry for Spirit and the thirsty for love.  
Give thanks when you can to our God up above.***

*Gathering L/E 2017 pg. 53  
Words & Music: Bryan Cook*

### \*OFFERING PRAYER: *(in unison)*

**As you have blessed us, Creator God, as you have changed us, bless and transform our offerings into signs of your loving presence, your comfort and your peace. May all that we do with you have prophetic power. Amen**

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

### THE PRAYER OF JESUS

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

\***CLOSING HYMN:** "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah" VU #651

Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,  
pilgrim through this barren land.  
I am weak, but thou art mighty,  
hold me with thy powerful hand.  
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,  
feed me till I want no more;  
feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain,  
whence the healing stream doth flow;  
let the fire and cloudy pillar  
lead me all my journey through.  
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer,  
be thou still my strength and shield,  
be thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,  
bid my anxious fears subside;  
death of death and hell's destruction,  
land me safe on Canaan's side:  
songs of praises, songs of praises,  
I will ever give to thee,  
I will ever give to thee.

**\*COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION; SHARING THE LIGHT**

*Christ Candle is extinguished*

**\*Choral Sending Forth: "An Old Irish Blessing"**

***May the road rise up to meet you.  
May the wind be ever at your back.  
May the sun shine warm upon your face  
and the rains fall soft upon your fields.  
And until we meet again, and until we meet again,  
may you be held in the hollow of God's hand.***

**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
Tuesday	1:00 – 3:00 PM	Knitters - RMR
Wednesday	9:00-11:00 AM	Badminton – DEMH GYM
	7:00 PM	Highland View Cem. - RMR
Thursday	4:15 PM	Choir Practice
Saturday	8:00 AM–1:00 PM	Bathurst Community Market

**The Annual General Meeting** of Bathurst Pastoral Charge/First United Church will be held following the church service on Sunday, March 23, 2025. Communion will also be served during this worship service.

**The 2024 Annual Reports** are printed and ready for pick up. A limited number have been printed therefore *please remember to bring your copy back with you* for the annual meeting next Sunday.

**Peanut Butter** – We have increased our quota for 2025 to collect 1,000 jars of peanut butter. Up to March 13<sup>th</sup> we have received 178 jars and have funds on hand to purchase another 90+ jars.

**Please Note** – In an effort to assist the Bathurst Volunteer Center, should you wish to make a monetary donation you may now do so by **issuing your cheque to First United Church**, indicating it is to be used for the purchase of Peanut Butter. Your donation will be marked as such and will be included on your annual tax receipt. Your cheques can be dropped off at the church office, put in the offering plate or mailed. Periodically the office will purchase the peanut butter while on sale and have it delivered directly to the Volunteer Center.

**On behalf of our Pastoral Care Team**, a most sincere "Thank You" is extended to those who attended and generously donated to our church at the St. Patrick's concert on Friday March 14. A very energizing and entertaining time was enjoyed by all who attended!

A genuine "**Thank You**" is extended to the members of *The Treble Makers* whose ongoing donation of their valuable talents and their time is sincerely appreciated by all in our church family as well as in our community!

# Church News

**Ways & Means Team** are planning a **Sunrise Breakfast** on Sunday, March 30<sup>th</sup> taking place in the Donald Eddy Memorial Hall from 8:30 AM – 12:00 noon. The menu consists of pancakes, sausages, baked beans, scrambled eggs, hash browns, toast, juice, coffee & tea – all for \$12 Adults and \$5 Children (under 12).

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.

As part of our **Stewardship Program** here at First United, information on Planned Giving through Wills and Bequests is available to our congregational membership. All members are encouraged to review this information and take the appropriate steps pertaining to your wishes. The information is available from the church office.

Below you will find a stewardship quote relating to the same.

It is not easy to be generous, to care for creation, and to love your neighbour when everything around you teaches greed and individualism, but stand firm.

## Community News

**JAM** at Central United Church Hall, Clifton on Sunday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, at 2 PM. Bring your instruments, your voice and your friends. Come and play, sing or just listen. Tea and coffee will be available. Join us for a fun, musical afternoon.

**Free Tax Clinics** for those with a modest income and a simple tax situation will be held at the KC Irving Regional Center (Paul Ouelette Room) March 31<sup>st</sup> - April 4<sup>th</sup> and April 7<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> from 9 AM to 3 PM.



The United Church of Canada  
L'Eglise Unie du Canada

First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council

Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council

Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council

March 10, 2025

Dear Ministry Personnel and Regional Council Members in Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters, Bermuda-Nova Scotia and First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Councils,

This is a very difficult letter to write. It is with great sadness that I inform you of the passing of our beloved colleague and friend, Rev. Kendall Harrison. Kendall passed away earlier today. Kendall was the Regional Minister of Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council and the Conference Personnel Minister of the former Maritime Conference.

Many of you will have special memories of your relationship with Kendall. At this tender time, we encourage you to think on those things with gratitude for the gift of his life.

There are no words to make this loss feel any better, and I am sure our minds turn to Kendall's partner Carmen, his son Isaac, and all his beloved family members. I know you will hold them all in your prayers. Kendall will be missed by so many but none more deeply than his family.

This is a reminder to our Pastoral Charges and Ministry Personnel to care for yourself and each other in this time of grief. To our Ministry Personnel, a reminder that you have access to the EFAP program.

Once the family has some time to plan, we will reach out with further information in the weekly announcements.

With deep appreciation for all of you in this community we call church.

Faith March-MacCuish  
Executive Minister

**GENESIS 15:1-12, 17-18**

**The Lord's Covenant With Abram**

**1** After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision:

"Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward."

**2** But Abram said, "Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?"

**3** And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir."

**4** Then the word of the Lord came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir."

**5** He took him outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

**6** Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

**7** He also said to him, "I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it."

**8** But Abram said, "Sovereign Lord, how can I know that I will gain possession of it?"

**9** So the Lord said to him, "Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon."

**10** Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other; the birds, however, he did not cut in half.

**11** Then birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away.

**12** As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him.

**17** When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces.

**18** On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates—

**LUKE 13:31-35**

**Jesus' Sorrow for Jerusalem**

**31** At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, "Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you."

**32** He replied, "Go tell that fox, 'I will keep on driving out demons and healing people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal.'"

**33** In any case, I must press on today and tomorrow and the next day—for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!

**34** "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing.

**35** Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"