

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

Dec. 17, 2017
Third Sunday of Advent

Minister Rev. Blair Lewis **Organist** Martha Vickers
Office Adm. Isabel Clouston **Greeters** Nancy & Allen Jagoe
Custodian Alan Wilcox

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<u>Lectionary for today</u>	<u>Lectionary for next Sunday</u>
<i>Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11</i> <i>Psalm 126</i> <i>I Thessalonians 5:16-24</i> <i>John 1:6-8, 19-28</i>	<i>II Samuel 7:1-11,16</i> <i>Psalm 89</i> <i>Romans 16:25-27</i> <i>Luke 1:26-38</i>

*The asterisk * identifies those times in the service where the congregation is invited to stand as able.*

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS

Musical Prelude:

***Choral Opening:** *'Oh, How Joyfully'*
Oh, how joyfully,
Oh, how hopefully,
Waits the world on Christmas Eve!
Love comes healing,
God revealing
Friends, be joyful and believe!



Welcoming:

One: O come, Emmanuel, come to us,
for we are lonely for God.
All: Come, bring the peace of God-with-us.
One: O come, Wisdom from on high,
All: lead us in the ways of knowledge,
and show us the paths of peace.
One: Glorious Shoot from the Jesse tree,

All: come and bring life,
fresh and green and lovely, to our spirits.
One: O Rose which blooms in the snow of winter,
All: come and grant to us the blessed gift of hope.
One: O Bright Morning Star of the darkened world,
All: come and be for us the Light,
the Truth, and the Way.
One: Jesus our Christ, we welcome you.
All: Come and be known among us,
for we want to be your people.

Welcoming Friends Worshipping by CD: Announcements:

Lighting the Advent Candles: (Grace & Jennifer Lavigne)
(One blue candle is relit)

The Second Advent Candle: Angels – Peace

All: Angels, what are you doing?
Can we join you?
One: We have been given an important task.
We are taking a message to the shepherds.
It will be a message of peace for the whole world.
We are so excited that we can't hold our wings still.
We get to tell the world that Jesus has been born.
Please come with us and join in our song of peace.

All Thank you, angels, for your faith
and your gift of peace.
We will join you on this Advent adventure.
(The second blue candle of Advent is lit.)

The Third Advent Candle: Mary and Joseph – Joy

All: Mary and Joseph, where are you going?
Can we go, too?
One: We are walking to Bethlehem.
We have been asked
to be earthly parents to God's child.
This will be the hardest thing we have ever done.
It is scary. It has been hard to believe.
Some of our family and friends still don't believe us.
But that's okay.

What an amazing, joyful opportunity we have.
We get to be the first to welcome God's son to the world.
We get to love him and care for him.
Yes, please come with us and help us
Welcome our son,

**All: Thank you, Mary and Joseph,
for your faith and your gift of joy.
We will join you on this Advent adventure.**

(The pink candle of Advent is lit.)

Choral Response: 'Hope Is a Star' #7 VU

*Hope is a star that shines in the night,
leading us on till the morning is bright.*

Refrain:

*When God is a child there's joy in our song,
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,
And none shall be afraid.*

*Peace is a ribbon that circles the earth,
Giving a promise of safety and worth.*

Refrain:

*Joy is a song that welcomes the dawn,
Telling the world that the Saviour is born.*

Refrain:

Call to Worship: (in unison)

**Wonderful Counsellor,
Mighty God, O Promised One,
we come to this second Sunday of Advent,
our white gift service
awaiting your presence.
Give us the wisdom
to see meaning in these busy days.
Give us the courage
to wait in times of pain and trouble.
Give us the compassion to wait for one another.
Give us the faith to wait for the Messiah
when we are threatened by the Herods of this world.
Give us the hope to wait for the Saviour
even when we cannot hear the angels singing.
Give us the love that does not wait
when it meets Christ in our neighbour. Amen.**

Prayer of Approach:

O God our Creator,
in you alone are the riches of life.
We come from the East and we come from the West
knowing we follow, on our different roads,
the same star to the same place.
May we share what we know of its light,
learn from each other the way to the stable,
worship you, our only wealth,
and serve the world with Gospel gold.
We make our prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***Opening Hymn: 'A Journey Just Begun' #51 AGCS**

Come and join us on a journey just begun
As we celebrate the life of God's own son.
The stories of his life become our stories, too,
In the choices that we make, In ev'rything we do.
Come and join us on a journey just begun.

Refrain

*Preparing the way, preparing the way,
We're preparing the way of our God.*

We will walk from the darkness to the light,
Led by the shining star so bright.
Once more with hope we wait for a baby's birth
When the love of God shall bring Peace to all the earth,
As we walk from the darkness to the light.

Refrain

We will walk in the light of all the world,
Shining for the nations to be healed.
Jesus is our friend, companion on the way,
We want to spread his love In all we do and say,
As we walk in the light of all the world.

Refrain

We will walk up the mountain of our God
With the children of the whole wide world abroad.
The hungry shall be fed, Yes, ev'ry girl and boy,
The captives shall go free, The lame shall leap for joy,
As we walk up the mountain of our God.

Refrain

Anthem: 'Away in a Manger' Children of the Sunday School

Decorating of the Christmas tree:

**The presentation of our White Gifts,
Our Benevolent Gifts and our Morning Offering:**

Choral Response:

(Tune Praise God from whom all blessings flow.)

**Joyful is how we seek to live,
Joyful in what we each can give,
Joyful in what we speak and hear,
And joy in what we offer here.**

(from Gathering A/C/E 2010 pg .84).

Dedication of the gift of love:

THE SERVICE OF THE WORD

Prayer for Understanding:

**O God, beginning and end,
by whose command time runs its course.
Bless our impatience,
perfect our faith,
and while we await
the fulfillment of your promises,
grant us hope in your Word. Amen.**

Scripture Readings:

Carter Lavigne

Old Testament Lesson:

Isaiah 40:1-11

Responsive Psalm:

Psalm 85 #802 VU

Gospel Lesson:

Mark 1 :1-8

***Hymn:** 'We are Waiting Lord' #76 AGCS
(tune Kum ba Yah)

We are waiting Lord, come by here,
We are waiting Lord, come by here,
We are waiting Lord, come by here,
O Lord, come by here.

We're preparing Lord, come by here,
We're preparing Lord, come by here,
We're preparing Lord, come by here,
O Lord, come by here.

We will praise you Lord, come by here,
We will praise you Lord, come by here,
We will praise you Lord, come by here,
O Lord, come by here.

Message: "The White Gift of John the Baptist"

Special Music:

'Calypso Carol'

Linda Knowles MacPherson and Friends

THE COMMUNITY RESPONDS

Prayer of Confession: (in unison)

**Faithful God, we confess that we often lose our way.
We suffer from impatience, apathy, and greed;
we have not been in peace.
We repent of these offenses and turn to you in love.
Forgive our iniquity and pardon our sins,
that we may walk in righteousness
on the path to your advent. Amen**

Choral Response: 'Kindle a Flame to Lighten the Dark' #19 VU

**Kindle a flame
to lighten the dark
And take all fear away.**

Assurance of Pardon:

Brothers and sisters,
by the mercy of Christ, your sins are forgiven,
for new life is at hand for all who turn to God!

Silent Prayer:

Reflective Music:

Pastoral Prayer:

**Spirit of Hope,
in a time of busyness
that threatens to overpower the sound of your voice,
and blind us to the needs of those around us.
We pray for ourselves:
that we might not become so preoccupied
with our own schedules,
that we forget we live within your time;
that we might not be anxious about tomorrow,
that we may trust you to bring about
your love and peace.
May we work together
to share Good News with those around and beyond us.**

(silence)

**Creator of joy,
we wait with excitement and impatience.
Surround us with your stillness,
quiet us with your Spirit,
that we might be ready to receive
the light of the world. Amen.**

THE COMMUNITY GOES FORTH

***Closing Hymn:** *'He is Born'* **#50 VU**

Commissioning:

**God who leads by a star,
show us the direction to Bethlehem.
Lead us to the place where love is to be born in our lives.
Give us signs along the road as we make our journey,
that we may follow in your way.**

Blessing:

May faithfulness spring up from the ground.
And righteousness look down from heaven
as you walk in the way of peace.
May the blessing of God, Eternal Majesty,
Living word, and Holy Comforter,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be with you now and always.

***Choral Closing:** *'Hope Shines as the Solitary Star'* **#220MV**
***Joy shines as the solitary star,
Faith is the inner light.
You and I together mirror the Light of Lights,
And illumine the pathway home.***

Organ Postlude:

*And, so, Christmas comes to bless us!
Comes to teach us how to find
The joy of giving happiness
And the joy of being kind.
~Gertrude Tooley Buckingham~*

Church News


This Week at First United –Dec.18 - Dec.23

Monday	9am – 11 am	Badminton
	6:15pm	Beavers – Rms 1,2 & 3
	6:30pm	Choir Practice
Tuesday	6:15pm	Cubs-Scouts- DEMH Gym
Wednesday	9:00-11:00	Badminton – DEMH GYM
	7 pm	Concert
Friday	12:00	Office Closed

The red and white carnations placed in sanctuary are in loving memory of
Carrie & Harold Watling, Connie Boucher & Lola Branch
 from Christine & Stewart MacPherson and family



The annual Christmas Hymn Sing will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 20th, (storm date Dec. 21th), 7pm at First United. Come join with us as we celebrate the Christmas season with familiar carols as well as new selections you are sure to enjoy. The choir will be joined by Emma Vickers, Amanda Godin, Suzanne Cyr (cello), Leslie Wilbur (violin), Linda Knowles MacPherson (piano), as well as Take Note, and the BHS Choir. Cost \$10 Adults \$5 Youth. Tickets are available from choir members and the church office 546-3532.



*Christmas Eve
Worship*

10:00am
4:00pm
7:00pm

Peanut Butter for Volunteer Centre

Commitment December 31, 2017 **900**
 Total to Date **940**
 The Volunteer Center supplies, on average, **500** households monthly.



This number increases over the Christmas Season. Because of your generous donations and continued support, we will be able to give extra Peanut Butter this year.

A new CD, **"Melodies on the Bay"** is now available. It contains a variety of music recorded recently at First United Church by Linda Knowles MacPherson and Donald Eddy. A copy may be obtained at the church office with a donation to the Ministry of Music.

The Upper Room for Jan. and Feb. are in the Narthex. Please feel free to take one. A container for donations is located with the publication.

Notice from the Property Management Team For security reasons, all doors to the sanctuary will be kept locked except the one closest to the office. To enter the church during business hours, please use the St. Patrick Street entrance.

2018 Envelopes: The Contribution Envelopes for 2018 are located in the Narthex. Please insure that envelopes for the correct year are used as individual contribution #'s have changed.

Community Outreach is requesting a donation of hot or cold cereal to be used for the Breakfast program or the Community Kitchen. Need is increasing as the weather gets colder and contributions of soup and canned vegetables would be appreciated.



The Christian Development team would like to thank Marie Oliver, Debrah & Rick Watling, Colette & Wayne Clowater and Alan Wilcox for decorating the church for the Christmas Season. Their talent is much appreciated.

Christmas Newsletters are ready for pick up in the Narthex. Please help with postage costs by delivering to your family, friends and neighbors. Special envelopes for Christmas contributions can be found in the Narthex.

Community Events

Into the December Darkness "Blue Christmas"

In the context of the festive season, the darkness may heighten feelings of grief or sadness, pain or loneliness that may be associated with past experiences or present circumstances. Thus, "Blue Christmas" services are offered as pastoral response to this reality. The emphasis in such services is on quiet carols, scripture and silence to allow space, recognizing that it is not necessarily or always a season of joy for everyone. This service provides a place to acknowledge the fact that Christmas is difficult for many of us, and it offers a time to reflect and deal with some of the less festive feelings. On Thursday, December 21st, 2017, on the longest night at 7:00 p.m., Central United Church, Clifton, will be holding an Ecumenical "Blue Christmas" Service. All are welcome.

Isaiah 40:1-11 New International Version (NIV)

Comfort for God's People

40 Comfort, comfort my people,
says your God.

² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and proclaim to her
that her hard service has been completed,
that her sin has been paid for,
that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.

³ A voice of one calling:
"In the wilderness prepare
the way for the LORD^[a];
make straight in the desert
a highway for our God.^[b]

⁴ Every valley shall be raised up,
every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level,
the rugged places a plain.

⁵ And the glory of the LORD will be revealed,
and all people will see it together.
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

⁶ A voice says, "Cry out."
And I said, "What shall I cry?"

"All people are like grass,
and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field.

⁷ The grass withers and the flowers fall,
because the breath of the LORD blows on them.
Surely the people are grass.

⁸ The grass withers and the flowers fall,
but the word of our God endures forever."

⁹ You who bring good news to Zion,
go up on a high mountain.
You who bring good news to Jerusalem,^[c]
lift up your voice with a shout,
lift it up, do not be afraid;
say to the towns of Judah,
"Here is your God!"

¹⁰ See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power,
and he rules with a mighty arm.
See, his reward is with him,
and his recompense accompanies him.

¹¹ He tends his flock like a shepherd:
He gathers the lambs in his arms
and carries them close to his heart;
he gently leads those that have young.

Mark 1:1-8 New International Version (NIV)

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

1 The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah,^[a] the Son of God,^[b]

² as it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

“I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way”^[c]—

³ “a voice of one calling in the wilderness,

‘Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.’”^[d]

⁴ And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

⁵ The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

⁶ John wore clothing made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.

⁷ And this was his message: “After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie.

⁸ I baptize you with^[e] water, but he will baptize you with^[f] the Holy Spirit.”