

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

March 5, 2023

Minister Rev. Neal Palmer **Music Director** Martha Vickers
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<u>Lectionary for today</u>	<u>Lectionary for next Sunday</u>
Genesis 12:1-4a Psalm 121 Romans 4:1-5, 13-17 John 3:1-17	Exodus 17:1-7 Psalm 95 Romans 5:1-11 John 4:5-42

*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 & LAND 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.

LENTEN CANDLE-LIGHTING PRAYER *(responsively)*

...Today we take one step further on our Lenten journey, travelling in the shadow of our teacher, hoping to follow faithfully in his Way.

We keep our senses attuned, attentive to God's Child, the Beloved. Even when what we experience makes us uncomfortable or afraid, we don't turn away.

Two Lenten Candles are lit.

CENTERING FOR WORSHIP – "Hold us in your grace"

***Hold us in your grace, O God,
hold us in your grace.
Hold us in your grace, O God,
hold us in your grace.***

***Hold us,
hold us in your grace.
Hold us,
hold us in your grace.***

CALL TO WORSHIP *(responsively)*

...Step into the unknown possibility that's here in this place with all our questions.

The sun may be shining, but it still feels bleak.

We step into the wilderness because we have questions and it's here it feels safe to ask what we long to know.

We come together to find a deeper understanding of God's love.

GATHERING PRAYER

***GATHERING HYMN** –"Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise" VU#264

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

Immortal, invisible, God only wise;
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes;
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
thy justice like mountains high soaring above
thy clouds, which are fountains of goodness and love.

To all, life thou givest, to both great and small;
in all life thou livest, the true life of all;
we blossom and flourish like leaves on the tree,
then wither and perish; but naught changeth thee.

Thou reignest in glory, thou rulest in light;
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
all praise we would render, O help us to see
'tis only the splendour of light hideth thee!

LENTEN TENEBRAE (*responsively*)

Five Candles are lit, as well as the Christ Candle...

One: We live unaware of the spiritual realities around us.

Two: We fail to grasp the reality of God's presence in our world.

One: Like Nicodemus, we can't grasp the *kingdom* of God.

Two: Thus, we muddle through life, suffering the consequences of our lack of attentiveness.

One: Thus, we bear the impact of climate change in the pursuit of economic gains.

Two: We live with enormous amounts of plastic waste in the name of convenience.

One: We live with micro-aggressions and systemic racism.

Two: We mourn our ignorance and under-developed religious beliefs.

The second candle is extinguished...

CHORAL RESPONSE – "Don't Be Afraid" – MV #90

***Don't be afraid. My love is stronger,
my love is stronger than your fear.
Don't be afraid. My love is stronger
and I have promised,
promised to be always near.***

One: Let us pray.

**Holy One, we pray to be born anew,
in order to grasp the meaning of *kingdom*.
We long to discover our authentic selves
as we shed our false selves
in this Lenten season.**

**May truth set us free.
May we abide in the Spirit of truth
so we can live lives worthy of eternity.
Amen**

***GREETING ONE ANOTHER** (*responsively*)

...The Peace of Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

SHARING A STORY (*with those of all ages*)
Margaret Payne-Chenard and Mike Kierstead

John 3:14-15

***SINGING A SONG** – "Jesus Loves Me" – VU #365

Jesus loves me, this I know,
for the Bible tells me so;
little ones to him belong,
in his love we shall be strong.

Refrain

*Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
The Bible tells me so.*

Jesus loves me, this I know,
as he loved so long ago,
taking children on his knee,
saying, "Let them come to me."

Refrain

Jesus loves me still today,
walking with me on my way,
wanting as a friend to give
light and love to all who live.

Refrain

ENGAGING

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Genesis 12:1-4a

John 3:1-17

REFLECTION

MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

GIFT OF MUSIC - "Stay With Us through the Night"

RESPONDING

MINUTE FOR MISSION

Martha Vickers

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

THE OFFERING IS BROUGHT FORWARD

***OFFERING HYMN** – "These Gifts We Bring"

***These gifts we bring with grateful hearts,
to reconcile, make new.
Gather us in grace, show us the way,
to live our lives in Truth
to share Your love in all we do.***

*Words & Music: Pat Mayberry ©2016
Arrangement: David Kai ©2016*

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

**Holy One,
we bring gifts
with all our questions.
We trust wonders will be worked
with all we offer
to renew all hopelessness
with new sensations.
Amen**

SHARING OUR CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER – VU #921 (Ecumenical Version) (*in unison*)

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your *kingdom* come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the *kingdom*, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***CLOSING HYMN** – “Blessed Assurance” – VU #337

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God
born of the spirit, washed in Christ’s blood.

Refrain:

*This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long;
this is my story, this is my song
praising my Savior all the day long.*

Perfect submission, perfect delight!
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
angels descending bring from above
echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

Refrain:

*This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long;
this is my story, this is my song
praising my Savior all the day long.*

Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Savior am happy and blessed;
watching and waiting, looking above,
filled with God’s goodness, lost in his love.

Refrain:

*This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long;
this is my story, this is my song
praising my Savior all the day long.*

***BLESSING**

***CHORAL CLOSING** – “When You Walk from Here” – VU #298

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

(The Christ Candle, Lenten Tenebrae & Lenten candles are extinguished.)

POSTLUDE

Church

Church is a place to go and see
Our other loving family,
People who know the Lord, and who
With their love and care our strength renew.

That is why I think, each Monday:
“I’m looking forward to church on Sunday.”

By Joanna Fuchs

Church News

This Week at First United – March 6 th to March 10 th		
Monday	9:00-11:00 AM	Badminton – DEMH GYM
Wednesday	9:00-11:00 AM	Badminton – DEMH GYM
Thursday	4:15 PM	Choir practice
Friday	1:00 PM	Community Outreach – RMR

Church office hours – Monday to Friday 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

Peanut Butter – Once again this year we are setting a goal of **900 jars** of peanut butter to donate to the Bathurst Volunteer Center. Up to March 2nd we have collected 77 jars.

TAKE OUT Roast Pork Supper will be held on Thursday, March 23rd from 3:30 PM to 5:30 PM. Tickets will be available starting February 21st - \$17 for adults and \$6 for children. As there are a limited number of tickets they will be sold on a first come-first served basis. Please contact a member of the *Ways & Means Committee* or drop by the church office.

Sponsored by



HELP!!! – The Community Outreach Sub Team will be re-establishing & coordinating a pantry of non-perishables to help the needy & welcomes contributions from the congregation. Keep in mind that some recipients may be homeless, so items that are not canned will be required. Preferred contributions include: reusable grocery bags, granola bars, pasta, crackers, cereal, along with cans of soup, diced tomatoes and tomato sauce, sandwich fillings as well as tea, coffee and/or hot chocolate. *For more information, contact Helen M Knowles at 506-546-9563. Please note that if your pantry contributions total \$20 or more, provide receipt & same will be credited to your 2023 givings.*

The Pastoral Care Team has acquired some **Energy Efficiency Kits**, which are funded by the Government of Canada, supported by the Government of NB and administered by NB Power. These kits contain energy efficient products which can help save on energy costs and improve home comfort! And can be a way to help curb power bills as the rates are about to rise! As you can see from the sample boxes in the narthex included are long-life LED light bulbs, night light, kitchen and bathroom tap aerators, shower head, and a smart power bar. The boxes are available for members of our church family. If you are interested in having one for your home, please pick one up on your departure and be sure to sign your name and email address on the sheet available there!

Annual General Meeting is scheduled to be held on Sunday, March 19th after the Sunday worship service. The Annual Report will “hopefully” be ready for pick up no later than March 12th. If you wish to receive an electronic copy, please email the office at firstadmin@nb.aibn.com.

Please join the Treble Makers to hear some Irish tunes on Saturday, **March 18th at First United Church at 2 PM** (Snow date March 24th) There is no admission fee. However, donations of peanut butter for the volunteer center and/or non perishable items for the church pantry are most welcome.

Community News

Central United Church Hall in Clifton is having an afternoon of Irish entertainment featuring "Talented Locals" - **Sunday, March 12 at 2 PM**. You won't be disappointed. Bring a friend....You are encouraged to wear *green*....Refreshments will be available following the concert. A free will offering would be appreciated.

A FAMILY AND COMMUNITY BREAKFAST will be held at St. George's Anglican Church, 432 King Avenue, on **Saturday, March 11th from 8:00 – 10:00 am**. Come and enjoy fellowship and great food. Free will offering at the door.

SCRIPTURE READINGS (*New Revised Standard Version*)

Genesis 12:1-4a

12 Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.

2 I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.

3 I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

4 So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

John 3:1-17

3 Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews.

2 He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with that person."

3 Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above."

4 Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?"

5 Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.

6 What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.'

8 The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

9 Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?"

10 Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?"

11 "Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen, yet you do not receive our testimony.

12 If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things?"

13 No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.

14 And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

17 "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.

May God bless to our understanding these significant parts of our Christian story...