

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

July 9, 2023

Minister Rev. Neal Palmer **Music Director** Martha Vickers
Office Adm. Margaret Daniels **Custodian** Lester Scott
Audio & Visual Technicians Shirley Allain & Lester Scott
Greeters Harvey & Julie Spence

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

<u>Lectionary for today</u>	<u>Lectionary for next Sunday</u>
Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67 Psalm 45:10-17 Romans 7:15-25a Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30	Genesis 25:19-34 Psalm 119:105-112 Romans 8:1-11 Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23
<i>The potted flowers at the front and back entrance of the church are in loving memory of Fran, John & Nancy Barbery from Bob & Beth Sullivan</i> <i>(Special thank you to Gary Branch for setting up the outdoor flowers)</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 & 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.

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

As we light this candle, may we be ever mindful of the light of Christ in both our personal and collective lives.

The Christ Candle is lit...

CENTERING FOR WORSHIP – “Wind is Moving”

Seasons of the Spirit vol. 1 pg. 39

***Wind is moving over water,
patterns shifting out across the bay.
Grass is bending on the hillside;
clouds are drifting right across the sky.
O Holy Spirit, move over all our lives.
O Holy Spirit, move over all our lives.***

CALL TO WORSHIP *(responsively)*

From the whirlwind of the week,

we come to find rest.

For all that feels unknown and uncertain,

we come to remember what matters.

We come to worship from generation to generation,

to find our place among the ancestors, choosing to know more about God's love.

GATHERING PRAYER *(responsively)*

Holy One, who strengthens the faint of heart, call us into a community of faith—

where we find courage to befriend our enemies and practice reconciliation.

Christ, who makes the broken whole, call us into the communities where we live—

to touch grief with comfort and to speak hope to despair.

Spirit, we gather in your embrace—

to be blessed and a blessing, whole and healing.

Amen

***GATHERING HYMN – “O Joy of God”**

VU #407

(Tune – O Perfect Love VU #491)

O joy of God, we seek you in the morning
and long to see the glory of your face:
rise on our darkness with your sun’s new dawning.
Flood all our being in this feast of grace.

O life of God, for you our spirits hunger;
unless we feed on you we surely die:
with love and faith renewed and hope grown younger,
send us from here to serve you, God most high.

O peace of God, you pass our understanding;
safe through each moment keep us every day:
with you divine and mercy never ending,
direct our path and prosper all our way.

PRAYER OF HUMILITY

CHORAL RESPONSE – “Take, O Take Me as I Am”

MV #85

***Take, O take me as I am;
summon out what I shall be;
set your seal upon my heart
and live in me.***

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

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

And also with you.

SHARING A STORY *(with those of all ages)*

***SINGING A SONG – “Jesus’ Hands Were Kind Hands”** VU #570

Jesus’ hands were kind hands, doing good to all,
healing pain and sickness, blessing children small,
washing tired feet, and saving those who fall;
Jesus’ hands were kind hands, doing good to all.

Take my hands, O Jesus, let them work for you,
make them strong and gentle, kind in all I do;
let me watch you, Jesus, till I’m gentle too,
till my hands are kind hands, quick to work for you.

ENGAGING

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READING

Anne Brooks & Gary Branch

Genesis 24:34-49, 58-67

REFLECTION

MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

GIFT OF MUSIC

RESPONDING

MINUTE FOR MISSION/YOUR GENEROSITY MATTERS

Ronalds family

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.***

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

**Holy One,
with these offerings,
we choose humble and extravagant ways
to open our hands
so gifts may be entrusted.
And entrusted, may our gifts be used
to translate our faith
into celebrations of women and great storytelling
that changes hearts and minds.
Amen**

SHARING OUR CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER – VU #916 (A Translation) *(in unison)*

**Our Father-Mother, who is in the heavens,
may your name be made holy,
may your dominion come,
may your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today the bread we need;
and forgive us our debts,
as we have forgiven our debtors;
and do not put us to the test,
but rescue us from evil.
For yours is the dominion, and the power,
and the glory forever.
Amen**

GOING OUT (as Spirit people)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***CLOSING HYMN** – “Will You Come and Follow Me” VU #567

Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown, will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean, and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean in you and you in me?

Will you love the “you” you hide if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found to re-shape the world around,
through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?

Christ, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.
In your company I'll go where your love and foot-steps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

***BLESSING**

***CHORAL SENDING FORTH** – “I Wish You the Blessing”

***We wish you the blessing of faith to sustain you,
friends to support you, challenge to stir you,
songs to empower you, peace to refresh you,
tears to release you, laughter to heal you,
love to nurture your soul.***

The Christ Candle is extinguished.

POSTLUDE

Church News

The summer church office hours are now in effect – open Monday to Thursday – 9 AM to 3 PM. The office will be closed on Fridays until after the Labour Day weekend.

Peanut Butter – Our pledge this year to the Bathurst Volunteer Center is **900 jars**. As of July 6th **401** jars have been donated.

Community News

The Anglican Parish of New Bandon will be holding their annual **Strawberry Social and Bake Sale** on *Wednesday, July 19* from 6:00 – 7:30 pm at Christ Church Hall in Clifton. This will be a sit down or take out event. Cost is \$8 per person. We hope to see you there.

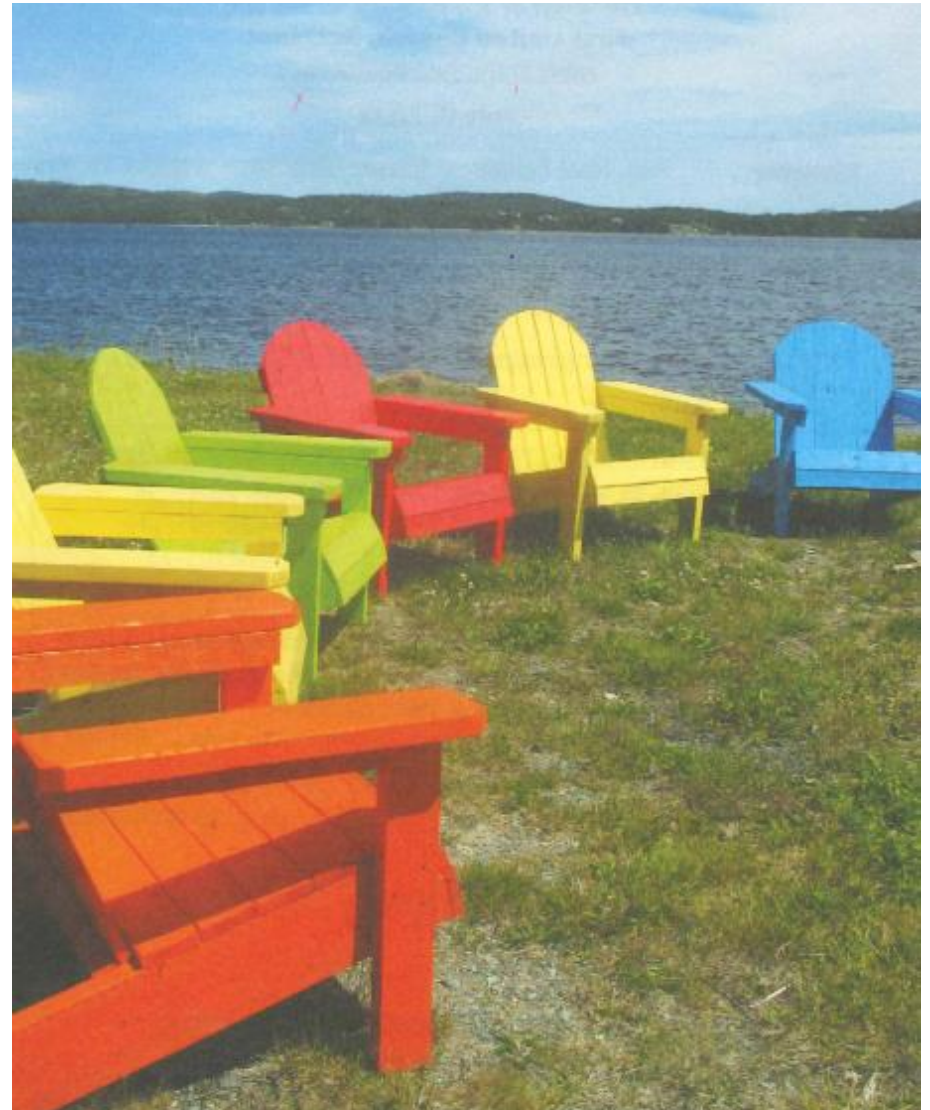
New Bandon Stonehaven Union Cemetery Annual Meeting will be held on Monday July 10th, 7 PM at the Community Chapel in Stonehaven. Community members, family members and anyone with an interest in the maintenance and care of the cemetery is encouraged to attend.

St. Lukes Invites Children to Stellar VBS: Shine Jesus' Light!

A summer kids' event called Stellar VBS will be hosted at St. Luke's Presbyterian Church from July 31st to August 4th. At Stellar, kids discover how they can shine Jesus' love and hope in everyday life! Kids participate in memorable Bible-learning activities, sing catchy songs, play teamwork-building games, experience one-of-a-kind Bible Adventures and test out Sciency-Fun Gizmos they'll take home and play with all summer long. Plus, kids will learn to look for evidence of God all around them through something called God Sightings. Each day concludes with a Cosmic Closing that gets everyone involved in living what they've learned. Family members and friends are encouraged to join in daily for this special time at 11:30 AM. Kids at Stellar VBS will join a missions' effort to provide school supplies and bed kits through "Sleeping Children Around the World" for families in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Stellar is for kids from 4-12. Youth 13 and up can volunteer as crew leaders. It will run from **9:00 AM to 12:00 PM each day and it's Free!** For more information, call 506-546-4645 or via email stluke@bellaliant.com.

Community News

St. George's Anglican Church will be hosting the **Hospitality Days Breakfast** on **Saturday, July 22nd** from 8:00 to 10:00 AM. Tickets to be sold in advance by dropping into the Church Office or calling 506-546-3225. Adults – \$ 10.00 and Children under 12 - \$ 5.00



SCRIPTURE READING

GENESIS 24:34-49, 58-67

34 So he said, 'I am Abraham's servant.

35 The Lord has greatly blessed my master, and he has become wealthy; he has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female slaves, camels and donkeys.

36 And Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master when she was old; and he has given him all that he has.

37 My master made me swear, saying, "You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live;

38 but you shall go to my father's house, to my kindred, and get a wife for my son."

39 I said to my master, 'Perhaps the woman will not follow me.'

40 But he said to me, 'The Lord, before whom I walk, will send his angel with you and make your way successful. You shall get a wife for my son from my kindred, from my father's house.

41 Then you will be free from my oath, when you come to my kindred; even if they will not give her to you, you will be free from my oath.'

42 'I came today to the spring, and said, "O Lord, the God of my master Abraham, if now you will only make successful the way I am going!

43 I am standing here by the spring of water; let the young woman who comes out to draw, to whom I shall say, 'Please give me a little water from your jar to drink,'

44 and who will say to me, 'Drink, and I will draw for your camels also'—let her be the woman whom the Lord has appointed for my master's son."

45 'Before I had finished speaking in my heart, there was Rebekah coming out with her water-jar on her shoulder; and she went down to the spring, and drew. I said to her, "Please let me drink."

Rebekah: I had no idea this man was anyone's servant, much less that the one who sent him was kin. All I saw was a man standing by the spring from which we always drew water. He

looked as though he had been travelling long, and the sun had borne down on him. All I heard was the simple request of a drink. He didn't order me to provide it, he asked. Is not the water free? Is hospitality a gift, not a burden?

46 She quickly let down her jar from her shoulder, and said, "Drink, and I will also water your camels." So I drank, and she also watered the camels.

Rebekah: Some wondered later why I, not he, watered his animals. My family has often said that the animals who bear the burden of the day need water as much as any of us. And as long as he had journeyed, I felt he should have some time to rest as he enjoyed the water quenching his thirst. That is, after all, the hospitable thing to do.

47 Then I asked her, "Whose daughter are you?" She said, "The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him." So I put the ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her arms.

Rebekah: Dear me, you must be wondering why I let a stranger put all that jewellery upon me. But please remember, the words of the story you are hearing are this servant's later recounting to my father and brother, and thus do not tell the whole of our encounter. It was not just that he learned who I was – he told me he was the servant of Abraham, who was kin to me. And I trusted the gifts he brought since the jewellery was a sign of God's blessing on this servant.

48 Then I bowed my head and worshipped the Lord, and blessed the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me by the right way to obtain the daughter of my master's kinsman for his son.

49 Now then, if you will deal loyally and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so that I may turn either to the right hand or to the left.'

58 And they called Rebekah, and said to her, 'Will you go with this man?' She said, 'I will.'

Rebekah: What I most respected in that moment was the choice afforded me. Abraham's servant did not command me to return with him to Isaac. My father and brother did not make the decision for me. They asked if it would be my will, and I said, "I will." Two paths were placed before me that

day: go with the servant or remain with my family. Both paths offered me the opportunity to live in faithfulness to God; I was left to choose my own path.

59 So they sent away their sister Rebekah and her nurse along with Abraham's servant and his men.

60 And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, 'May you, our sister, become thousands of myriads; may your offspring gain possession of the gates of their foes.'

61 Then Rebekah and her maids rose up, mounted the camels, and followed the man; thus the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

Rebekah: Farewells, even when chosen, even when full of hope, bring parting. So, like Sarah and Abraham, whose servant came to me, I chose to leave. I left, trusting in the God who invites not only our welcoming of others but our welcoming of the journey before us, regardless of the path we choose.

62 Now Isaac had come from Beer-lahai-roi, and was settled in the Negeb.

63 Isaac went out in the evening to walk in the field; and looking up, he saw camels coming.

64 And Rebekah looked up, and when she saw Isaac, she slipped quickly from the camel,

65 and said to the servant, 'Who is the man over there, walking in the field to meet us?' The servant said, 'It is my master.' So she took her veil and covered herself.

66 And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done.

67 Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent. He took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

May God bless to our understanding this significant part of our Christian story...