

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

December 3, 2023

Minister Rev. Neal Palmer **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>
Isaiah 64:1-9 Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 I Corinthians 1:3-9 Mark 13:34-37	Isaiah 40:1-11 Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13 2 Peter 3:8-15a Mark 1:1-8
The bulletins today have been placed in loving memory of all individuals who have passed so all their souls can Rest in Peace <i>Helené Brown</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 *(responsively)*

...Please join me in our Territory Acknowledgement...

Ancient and modern people have inhabited and continue to inhabit this land on which we worship. This is the traditional land of the Mi'kmaq people, and we are deeply grateful to be here and to ground ourselves in the land which has been a place where people have lived for thousands of years.

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING – “We Light This Candle”

*We light a candle for Hope.
Await the new life within.
May our hearts now live each day,
so hope can find a way,
so hope can find a way.*

BOLD DISCIPLESHIP – Hope *(responsively)*

What do we hope for in the new world?

I hope for a future that is more amazing than anything I could ever imagine. I hope for the healing of creation. I hope for good mental health and wellness. I hope for a world where everyone seeks the good.

Advent is the beginning of this new world, a better world, where we can dare to hope boldly.

May it be so.

Amen.

The first Advent candle is lit.

“Hope Shines as the Solitary Star” –

MV #220

*Hope shines as the solitary star.
Faith is the inner light.
You and I together mirror the Light of Lights,
and illumine the pathway home.*

CALL TO WORSHIP *(Based on Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19) (responsively)*

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth.

Restore us, O God; let your face shine.

God of hosts, stir up your might!

Reshape us, O God; let your face shine.

We bring all we have and all we are to this space and time.

Our tears, our laughter, our hope, our anxieties.

We bring it all to you this day.

Reclaim us, O God; let your face shine.

Restore us, O God; let your light shine,

that we may remember you and worship you this day.

GATHERING PRAYER

***GATHERING HYMN** – “All Earth Is Waiting”

VU #5

All earth is waiting to see the Promised One,
and open furrows await the seed of God.

All the world, bound and struggling, seeks true liberty;
it cries out for justice and searches for the truth.

Thus says the prophet to those of Israel,
“A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel.”

One whose name is “God with us,” our Saviour shall be,
Through whom hope will blossom once more within our hearts.

Mountains and valleys will have to be made plain,
open new highways, new highways for our God,
who is now coming closer, so come all and see,
and open the doorways as wide as wide can be.

In lowly stable the Promised One appeared.
Yet, feel that presence throughout the earth today,
for Christ lives in all Christians and is with us now;
again, on arriving, Christ brings liberty.

PRAYER OF HUMILITY *(Based on Isaiah 64:1-9) (responsively)*

...Holy One, how we wish you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence.

We feel as if we are fading like a leaf,

that our wrongs, like the wind, take us away.

There are many days when it feels as if you have hidden your face from us,

that we have all become unclean, and that the good we do does not matter.

But today you remind us that you are our God.

We are the clay, and you are our potter.

We are all the work of your hands.

Forgive us, we pray. Reshape us, reclaim us.

Help us to remember you. Help us remember that we are all your people. *(Time of Silence)*

CHORAL RESPONSE – “The Advent Prayer Song”

***Breathe into this moment of peace
with courage to let go, daring to dream.
For the days are surely coming
when we'll rise strong together once again in peace.***

***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** – “O Come, Little Children”

O come, little children, O come one and all,
to Bethlehem haste, to the manger so small,
God’s son for a gift has been sent you this night
to be your redeemer, your joy and delight.

He’s born in a stable for you and for me,
draw near by the bright gleaming starlight to see,
in swaddling clothes lying so meek and so mild,
and purer than angels the heavenly Child.

See Mary and Joseph, with love beaming eyes,
are gazing upon the rude bed where He lies,
the Shepherds are kneeling, with hearts full of love
while angels sing loud hallelujahs above.

ENGAGING

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Cheryl Brewster

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

Rev. Neal has a reading.....

*...When we cry, what do we hear, what do we see, what do we taste,
how do our bodies feel?*

What is something you recently heard that brought you to tears?

When have you cried happy tears?

What might bring God to tears?

Isaiah 64:1-9

REFLECTION

MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

GIFT OF MUSIC - “O Come, O Come Emmanuel”

(For 2023, some lyrics for a hymn that’s shifted and changed for 1200 years. The first two verses and the refrain are mine and the third is much older and often sung.)

O Come, O come Emmanuel
make true the stories prophets tell –
so all those chained by fear find release,
and, war forgotten, bring a world of peace.

*Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel
is come to birth when all God’s children dwell.*

O Come, Love’s-season, to our lonely days,
and guide us in our words and ways
to be the ones whose Advent begins
with healing earth and all that live within.

*Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel
is come to birth when all God’s children dwell.*

O Come, Desire of Nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind;
Make envy, strife, and quarrels cease;
fill the whole world with heaven’s peace. *(Original)*

*Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel
is come to birth when all God’s children dwell.*

*Credit: Rev. Maren C. Tirabassi, United Church of Christ.
Blog: Gifts in Open Hands.
Posted on November 27, 2023.*

RESPONDING

YOUR GENEROSITY MATTERS *(Minute for Mission)*

Martha Vickers

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

THE OFFERING IS BROUGHT FORWARD

***OFFERING RESPONSE** (*Tune Old 100th*)

*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.*

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

**God of restoration and remembrance,
we have brought our pain and our hopes,
our hurts and our tears.
We are reminded that these things
we have handed over
don't mean we lack gifts
as we wait in hope.
We are strengthened in so many ways,
and give thanks for receiving all we have.
We ask that our gifts be moulded, crafted, and shaped
into those things that bring hope
to all the world.
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.**

GOING OUT (as Spirit people)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***CLOSING HYMN** – “Hark the Glad Sound” VU #29

Hark, the glad sound! The Saviour comes, the Saviour promised long:
let every heart prepare a throne, and every voice a song.

He come the prisoners to release in Satan's bondage held;
the gates of brass before him burst, the iron fetters yield.

He comes, the broken heart to bind, the bleeding soul to cure,
and with the treasures of his grace to bless the humble poor.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace, your welcome shall proclaim;
and heaven's eternal arches ring with your beloved name.

***BLESSING**

***CHORAL SENDING FORTH** – 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, I am home.*

(The Advent Candle is extinguished.)

POSTLUDE

Church News

This Week at First United –December 4 th to December 9 th		
Monday	9:00 AM	Badminton – DEMH Gym
Wednesday	9:00 AM	Badminton – DEMH Gym
	6:30 PM	Christmas Recital
Saturday	8 AM to 1 PM	Bathurst Community Market – DEMH

Church Office Hours - Monday to Friday – 9 AM to 3 PM.

Peanut Butter – Our pledge this year to the Bathurst Volunteer Center is **900 jars**. As of November 29th **816** jars have been donated.

Thank you to our volunteers in November - Counters – Shirley Sealy and Jini Palmer & Bev Murphy and Wayne Cormier; **Greeters** – Charles Ramsey and Linda Knowles MacPherson; **Your Generosity Matters** – Martha Vickers, Sally Ronalds, Pat MacIntosh and Anne Wilson; **Scripture Readers** – Wayne Lord, Cheryl Brewster, Gary Branch and Judy Losier; **Sharing a Story** – Mya Brewster, Weston Brewster, Brooke Knowles, Sandra Boone, Jini Palmer and Helen Knowles; **Hospitality & Friendship** – Debrah Watling; **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.

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 and yes, COVID-19 is still affecting lives. 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 you generosity
– **Community Outreach Sub-Team**

Church News

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 \$5,186.97. The next event is tentatively planned for February, the **Sunrise Breakfast!**

The Community Outreach Sub-Team has been made aware that cards can be sent to any of the members of the Armed Forces who are not able to be home for Christmas. If you are interested in sending greetings please mail your cards to:

Canadian Forces Member
P O Box 5140, Stn Forces
Belleville, Ontario K8N 5W6

As part of our **Stewardship Program** here at First United, information on Planned Giving through Wills and Bequests will be made available to our congregational membership this fall. All members are encouraged to review this information and take the appropriate steps pertaining to your wishes. The information will be available later this year from the church office. Below you will find a stewardship scripture verse and quote relating to the same.

"And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work."

2 Corinthians 9:8

If you are going to sit under the shade of a tree someone else planted and drink from a well someone else dug, you should plant a tree and dig a well. When we are talking about financial stewardship, it's not about the money—it's about our attitude to faith, generosity, and money.

Author unknown

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 13, 2023.*

Welcome to Gifts with Vision for 2023–2024!



[Image credit: The United Church of Canada]

[Gifts with Vision](#) are opportunities for you to make a difference in someone's life—during Advent and Christmas, or at any time of year—by giving gifts from the comfort of home, with no packaging or wrapping needed.

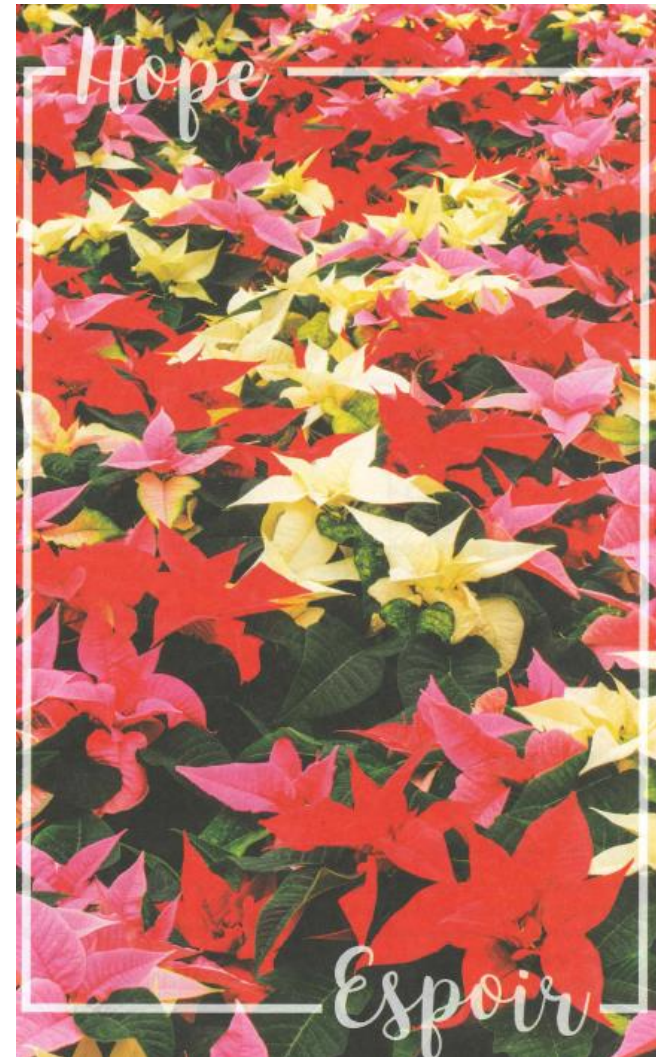
This year's new gifts include [solar power](#) for the United Theological College in Zimbabwe, [backpacks full of school supplies](#) for children who live under the poverty line, a [biofuel pilot project](#) run by women in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and making the United Church camp experience possible for children in underserved communities in the Maritimes—along with many others. You'll also recognize lots of returning gifts, like [Operation Backpack](#), [Return of the Buffalo](#), and [A Kindergarten in a Refugee Camp](#).

See all the Gifts available and find out more by visiting the [Gifts with Vision website](#), and pick up a catalogue in the narthex.

Community News

A FAMILY AND COMMUNITY BREAKFAST will be held at St. George's Anglican Church, 432 King Avenue, on **Saturday, December 9th from 8 AM to 10 AM.** Come and enjoy fellowship and great food.

The North Shore Shrine Club is raising funds to help sick children by the sale of calendars and fruit cakes. The funds are used to pay for the transportation of sick children to the Shriners Children's Hospital in Montreal. The calendars are \$20 each and you have the chance to win a prize each day of the year. The fruit cakes - 3 cakes per box - are \$23 per box. To order a calendar or cakes please contact Harvey Spence at 506-546-2742. Thank you!



SCRIPTURE READINGS

PSALM 80:1-7, 17-19

Prayer for Israel's Restoration

1 Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock!
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth

2 before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh. Stir up your might,
and come to save us!

3 Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

4 O Lord God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's
prayers?

5 You have fed them with the bread of tears and given them tears to
drink in full measure.

6 You make us the scorn of our neighbors; our enemies laugh among
themselves.

7 Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be
saved.

17 But let your hand be upon the one at your right hand, the one
whom you made strong for yourself.

18 Then we will never turn back from you; give us life, and we will
call on your name.

19 Restore us, O Lord God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may
be saved.

Rev. Neal leads a short exercise...

ISAIAH 64:1-9

1 O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that
the mountains would quake at your presence—

2 as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil—
to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations
might tremble at your presence!

3 When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came
down; the mountains quaked at your presence.

4 From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has
seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him.

5 You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in
your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid
yourself we transgressed.

6 We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous
deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities,
like the wind, take us away.

7 There is no one who calls on your name or attempts to take hold of
you, for you have hidden your face from us and have delivered us
into the hand of our iniquity.

8 Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our
potter; we are all the work of your hand.

9 Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord, and do not remember iniquity
forever. Now consider, we are all your people.

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