

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

**January 7, 2024**

**Minister** Rev. Neal Palmer    **Music Director** Martha Vickers  
**Office Adm.** Margaret Daniels    **Custodian** Lester Scott  
**Greeters** Edie & Peter Gammon  
**Audio & Visual Technicians** Brenda Parrott & Donald Eddy

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<u>Lectionary for today</u>	<u>Lectionary for next Sunday</u>
Genesis 1:1-5	1 Samuel 3:1-20
Psalms 29	Psalms 139:1-6m 13-18
Acts 19:1-7	1 Corinthians 6:12-20
Mark 1:4-11	John 1:43-51
<i>Today's bulletins are placed in loving memory of <b>Manford Sealy</b> by Shirley, Harley Hadley &amp; families</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 AND 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.**

**LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE**

As we pause at the door of a new year and cross its threshold, let's carry the peace of Christ's love in our hearts and our lives, so we may make peace possible in our time.

*The Christ candle is lit...*

Let this candlelight shine throughout our daily lives that all may know we follow in Christ's way.

May the light of peace shine through us to Creation.

**CENTERING FOR WORSHIP**                      VU #82 (*Refrain Only*)  
*"A Light is Gleaming"*

***A light is gleaming, spreading its arms  
throughout the night, living in the light.  
Come share its gladness, God's radiant love  
is burning bright, living in the light.***

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

**GATHERING PRAYER**

**\*GATHERING HYMN** – "Carol at the Manger" (*Tune Afron VU #244*)

Holy Child within the manger,  
long ago yet ever near;  
come as friend to every stranger,  
come as hope for every fear.  
As you lived to heal the broken,  
greet the outcast, free the bound,  
as you taught us love unspoken,  
teach us now where you are found.

Once again we tell the story--  
how your love for us was shown,  
when the image of your glory  
wore an image like our own.

Come, enlighten with your wisdom,  
come and fill us with your grace.  
May the fire of your compassion  
kindle every land and race.

Holy Child within the manger,  
lead us ever in your way,  
so we see in every stranger  
how you come to us today.  
In our lives and in our living  
give us strength to live as you,  
that our hearts might be forgiving  
and our spirits strong and true.

**PRAYER OF HUMILITY** (*responsively*)

...We accept you into the depths of our bodies to awaken our desire  
for change and to displace our selfish impulses.

**Spirit God, you are all around and within us now. Let us  
exhale and release whatever we hold within that will prevent  
us from filling our lungs and lives with your love.**

*(Moment of Silence)*

**CHORAL RESPONSE** – “How Deep the Peace” MV #95

***How deep the peace, the confidence,  
of those whose wrongs are forgiven.  
How deep the peace, the confidence,  
of those whose hearts are healed.***

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

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

**And also with you.**

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

*Baptism*

**\*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 READINGS**

*Stephen Maisey*

Genesis 1:1-5

Mark 1:4-11

**REFLECTION**

**MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION**

**GIFT OF MUSIC** - “Will You Come and See the Light”

*RESPONDING*

**YOUR GENEROSITY MATTERS** (*Minute for Mission*)

*Martha Vickers*

**INVITATION TO MAKE AN OFFERING**

**THE OFFERING IS BROUGHT FORWARD**

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

***Hope in our God so filled with love.  
Peace in the symbol of a dove.  
Joy in the coming of the Son.  
Love fills us up and makes us one.***

*Catherine MacDonald 2007*

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

**Holy One,  
who moves in, around, and through the waters,  
we remember you are near  
and dedicate a gift of gratitude for your use.  
We have worked to collect and recollect abundance.  
We have toiled and felt the weight of futility.  
But we come now in earnest hope and faith  
to offer what we have, do what we can,  
and let go of the outcome.  
Amen**

**SHARING OUR CONCERNS**

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

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

**Eternal Spirit,  
Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,  
Source of all that is and that shall be.  
Father and Mother of us all,  
Loving God, in whom is heaven:**

**The hallowing of your name echo  
through the universe!  
The way of your justice be followed  
by peoples of the world!  
Your heavenly will be done  
by all created beings!  
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom  
sustain our hope and come on earth.**

**With the bread we need for today, feed us.  
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.  
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.  
From trials too great to endure, spare us.  
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.**

**For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,  
now and for ever.**

**Amen**

*GOING OUT (as Spirit people)*

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**\*CLOSING HYMN** – “I Am the Light of the World”

VU #87

*Refrain*

*"I am the light of the world!*

*You people come and follow me!"*

*If you follow and love you'll learn the mystery  
of what you were meant to do and be.*

When the song of the angels is stilled,  
when the star in the sky is gone,  
when the kings and the shepherds have found their way home,  
the work of Christmas is begun:

*Refrain:*

To find the lost and lonely one,  
to heal the broken soul with love,  
to feed the hungry children with warmth and good food,  
to feel the earth below, the sky above!

*Refrain:*

To free the prisoner from all chains,  
to make the powerful care,  
to rebuild the nations with strength of good will,  
to see God's children everywhere!

*Refrain:*

To bring hope to every task you do,  
to dance at a baby's new birth,  
to make music in an old person's heart,  
and sing to the colours of the earth!

*Refrain:*

# Church News

## \*BLESSING (in unison)

*(The Blessing for the Season of Epiphany will be a common thread from week to week. Rather than one leader issuing the blessing to the Community of Faith, the blessing comes from each person to the congregation.)*

**We may fail; the Spirit does not.  
We may end; the Spirit does not.  
Bless and be blessed.  
Amen.**

\*CHORAL SENDING FORTH – MV #221  
"Go Now in Peace, Guided by the Light"

***Go now in peace,  
guided by the light of Christ,  
so you may be  
nourished by the Word of Life.***

*(The Christ candle is extinguished.)*

## POSTLUDE

This Week at First United – Jan 8 <sup>th</sup> to Jan 13 <sup>th</sup>		
Monday	9:00-11:00 AM	Badminton – DEMH GYM
Wednesday	9:00-11:00 AM	Badminton – DEMH GYM
Thursday	4:15 PM	Choir Practice
	7:00 PM	CD Team Meeting - RMR
Saturday	8:00 AM–1:00 PM	Bathurst Community Market

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

**Thank you to everyone who so generously donated** to the fundraisers during the Advent Season. We raised \$1,680 for the Benevolence/White Gift Fund, the majority of which will go directly to the Bathurst Volunteer Center and \$2,985 for the Poinsettia Fundraiser (less costs of the plants). And ***thank you to Brenda Parrott*** for attending at the church every few days to care for the plants.

**Peanut Butter** - Thanks to a last minute donation we reached our goal of **900 jars** of Peanut Butter being donated to the Bathurst Volunteer Center. Great job everyone!!

**Thank you to our volunteers in December - Counters** – Margaret Payne Chenard and Mike Kierstead; **Greeters** – Julie and Harvey Spence; **Your Generosity Matters** – Martha Vickers, Sally Ronalds, Anne Wilson and Judy Losier; **Scripture Readers** – Cheryl Brewster, Anne Brooks, Helen Knowles, Jini Palmer and Wayne Lord; **Hospitality & Friendship** – Jini Palmer and Beth Sullivan; **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.

***A special thank you to the Advent Readers & Candle Lighters especially all of Sunday School children and teachers who make each and every service so enjoyable!***

# Church News

**2024 Church Envelopes are available in the narthex.** If you haven't had contribution envelopes in the past and wish to have them, please advise the church office. **Please note the 2024 envelopes are not dated for each week.**

The envelope numbering/tax receipt system currently in place means we need to order 160 boxes of envelopes each year. However we only require about 80 boxes in total. By not having the envelopes dated, anyone who combines weekly donations in a monthly lump sum single donation will be able to use this new box of envelopes for 2 years (or longer). For those who remit weekly, I will assign a new number to you for 2025 and provide you with a new box of envelopes.

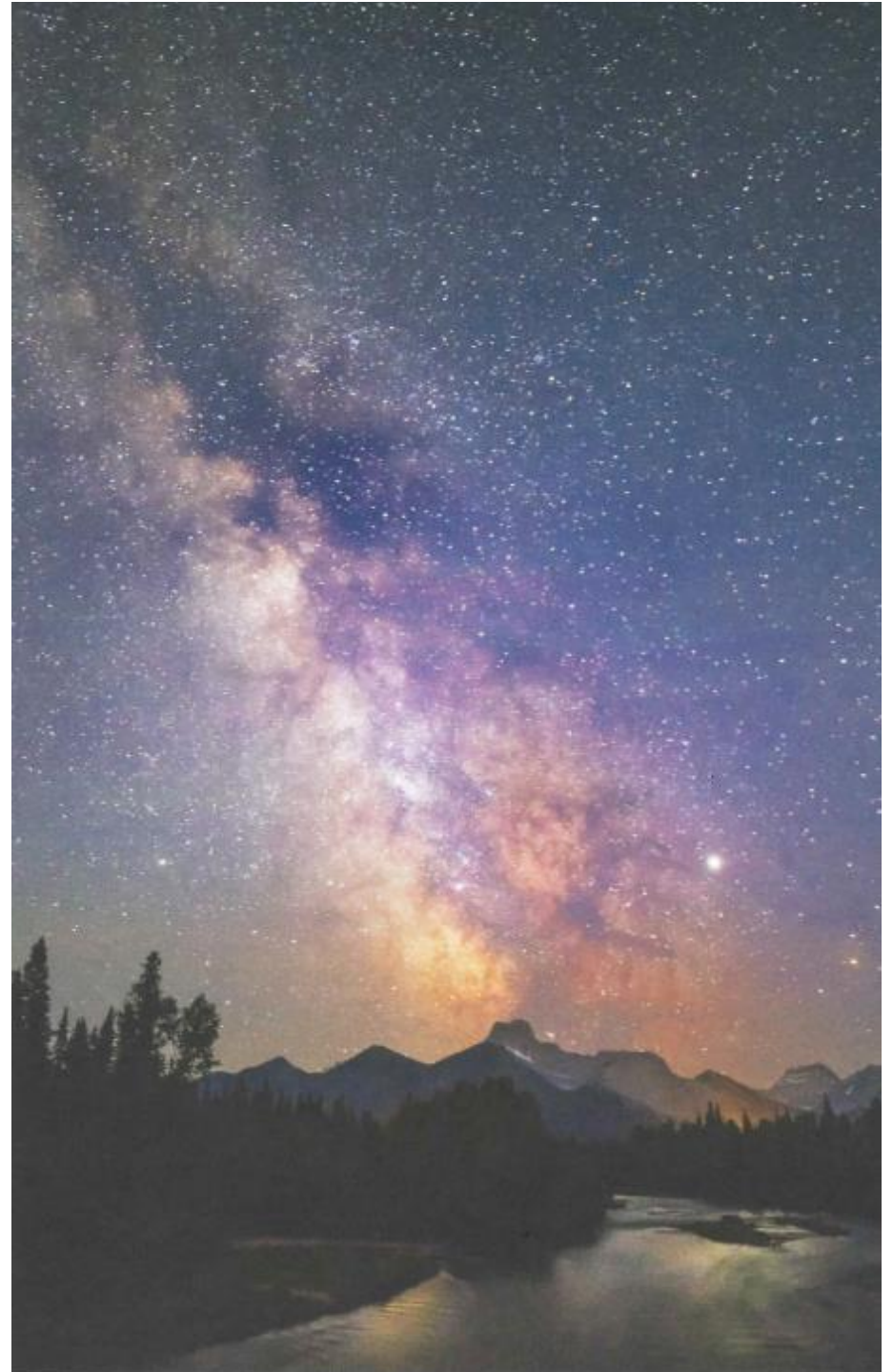
As part of our **Stewardship Program** here at First United, information on Planned Giving through Wills and Bequests will be made available to our congregational membership. All members are encouraged to review this information and take the appropriate steps pertaining to your wishes. The information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

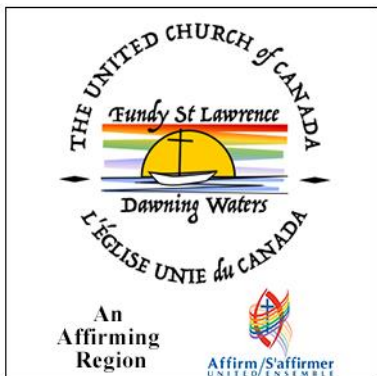
**"We make a living by what we get;  
we make a life by what we give."**

*-Winston Churchill*

## Community News

**A FAMILY AND COMMUNITY BREAKFAST** will be held at St. George's Anglican Church, 432 King Avenue, on **Saturday, January 13<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 – 10:00 am.** Come and enjoy fellowship and great food.





## **Affirm Committee Workshop Mental Health and Resiliency**

Many of us are thinking and talking about our mental health; this next webinar in our series will address some of our questions and concerns.

It will be presented by Dawn O'Dell of Mental Health New Brunswick, on Wednesday, January 17th at 2:00 and will be 90 minutes long.

Please note this webinar will not be recorded for the website.

For registration please use the following link:

<https://ucceast.ca/82237-fsldw-affirm-webinar-mental-health-and-resiliency>

## **Hello from FSLDW President Elizabeth**

Here we go - welcome 2024!

I may be one of the few people who still hang a wall calendar... specifically a UCC calendar in my office. I scan the monthly pictures and enjoy the sight of the empty pages waiting to be filled.

As I leaf through the calendar, which features a different church building each month, I look for familiar places and connections across the country.

If you have the UCC calendar you will see that January features St. Andrew's UC in New Richmond, Quebec. The photo brings a smile as I was there in October (along with Faith March-MacCuish, Andrew Richardson and other members of the Region) to welcome Rev. Pierre Momberg into the United Church of Canada.

Tomorrow January 4, St. Andrew's UC will welcome people for another reason - to celebrate the life of Rev. Lynda Harrison who died Dec 22, 2023. Lynda was ordained in 1994 by Maritime Conference and served her ministry in Saskatchewan, Quebec and Ontario. Representatives of our Region will share words of condolence along with words of gratitude for Lynda's ministry and friendship. Please hold Lynda's family and friends in prayer.

While I use an electronic calendar for daily schedules, the wall calendar still seems more tangible. I like the look of the daily squares - empty - waiting to be filled. And I wonder... What sadness will engulf our days? What Spirit-led opportunities lie ahead of us this year? What Epiphanies?

As you prepare to pack away your Advent - Christmas calendars and welcome Epiphany I want to say thank you for the many, many worship experiences you shared over the season. After the Silent Night I hope you found time to renew your Spirit to welcome whatever Epiphanies await. May 2024 be filled with peace, courage and kindness.

In Peace, Elizabeth  
Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Stevenson  
President FSLDW Region An Affirming Region  
[elizstevenson@gmail.com](mailto:elizstevenson@gmail.com) 506-650-4812

## **SCRIPTURE READINGS**

### **GENESIS 1:1-5**

- 1 When God began to create the heavens and the earth,
- 2 the earth was complete chaos, and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.
- 3 Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.
- 4 And God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness.
- 5 God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

### **MARK 1:4-11**

- 4 so John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.
- 5 And the whole Judean region and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him and were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins.
- 6 Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.
- 7 He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the strap of his sandals.
- 8 I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."
- 9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.
- 10 And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove upon him.
- 11 And a voice came from the heavens, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

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