

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

March 10, 2024

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

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<u>Lectionary for today</u>	<u>Lectionary for next Sunday</u>
Numbers 21:4-9	Jeremiah 31:31-34
Psalms 107:1-3, 17-22	Psalms 51:1-12
Ephesians 2:1-10	Hebrews 5:5-10
John 3:14-21	John 12:20-33

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 (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 (responsively)

(As we follow the path of Jesus, we light one additional candle for each Sunday of Lent.)

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.**

Four Lenten Candles are lit.

CENTERING FOR WORSHIP –

MV #115

"Behold, Behold, I Make All Things New"

**Behold, behold, I make all things new, beginning with you and starting from today. Behold, behold, I make all things new, my promise is true, for I am Christ the way.**

CALL TO WORSHIP

GATHERING PRAYER

\*GATHERING HYMN – "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" VU #333

Love divine, all loves excelling,  
 joy of heaven to earth come down,  
 fix in us thy humble dwelling,  
 all thy faithful mercies crown.  
 Jesus, thou art all compassion,  
 pure, unbounded love thou art;  
 visit us with thy salvation,  
 enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver;  
 let us all thy grace receive;  
 suddenly return, and never,  
 nevermore thy temples leave.

Thou we would be always blessing,  
serve thee as thy hosts above,  
pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,  
glory in thy perfect love.

Finish, then, thy new creation;  
pure and spotless let us be;  
let us see thy great salvation  
perfectly restored in thee,  
changed from glory into glory,  
till in heaven we take our place,  
till we cast our crowns before thee,  
lost in wonder, love, and praise.

**LENTEN TENEBRAE** *Margaret Payne Chenard & Mike Kierstead*

*...Three Candles are lit, as well as the Christ Candle...*

One: Though we yearn for great vision, many of our visions are limited.

Two: Yet, we do not know just how limited we are spiritually.

One: We do not know that we do not know.

Two: Content to live with illusions and self-delusions, the people of this world do not even want to know wisdom and truth.

One: As the prophet Joel said, when the leaders lack vision, it is the people who suffer.

Two: We suffer from narrow leadership, compromised integrity, and self-centered values.

One: We experience the suffering of God's people on our streets, in shantytowns, in refugee camps, and in every neighbourhood.

*The fourth 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.***

Two: Let us pray.

**Holy One,  
we long for enlightened leaders to emerge  
who have the audacity to hope  
and declare the truth we long to receive.  
How long must we wait?  
How long must we suffer?  
Or—are we the ones  
who are to embrace the visions and possibilities?  
Open our minds, then, to receive your wisdom.  
Open our hearts to love widely, generously, and deeply.  
May our faith shine through us  
and may we experience  
your *kingdom* on earth as in heaven.  
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*)

**\*SINGING A SONG** – “Look Beyond”

Look beyond the corner ahead;  
see the world that calls you instead.  
Like the fruitful branches joined by the vine,  
so we see our lives intertwine.  
Put aside the tranquil and sweet;  
find the light in people you greet.  
For the lives we lead aren't solely our own;  
what we plant will some day have grown.

Leave behind the inward concern;  
there is so much more to discern.  
When we cling too long to days that have gone,  
can we grasp the work to be done?  
When our children call from the streets,  
will we join their dancing and beat?  
Or like sleeping servants tending the gate,  
will we slumber 'till it's too late?

Rise above the worry of loss;  
when we love, we take up our cross.  
So return with kindness even the hurt;  
let a flower bloom from the dirt.  
Reach across the boundries and walls,  
and extend your welcome to all.  
In our neighbour's face, God's image is found;  
and the living Spirit abounds.

*ENGAGING*

## **PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

### **SCRIPTURE READINGS**

Numbers 21:4-9

[Based on] Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22

### **REFLECTION**

### **MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION**

**GIFT OF MUSIC** - "Almond Blossom – Sign of Life"

*RESPONDING*

### **YOUR GENEROSITY MATTERS**

*Ronalds family*

### **INVITATION TO MAKE AN OFFERING**

### **THE OFFERING IS GATHERED**

## **\*OFFERING RESPONSE –**

VU #541

"Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow"

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
praise God, all creatures high and low;  
give thanks to God in love made known:  
Creator, Word and Spirit, One.***

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

**Gracious One,  
we choose to give,  
as a way of giving thanks  
for the gifts we have received,  
for the love we have shared,  
for the healing we have felt.  
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**

O Jesus, I have promised  
to serve you to the end;  
remain forever near me,  
my Saviour and my friend:  
I shall not fear the journey  
if you are by my side,  
nor wander from the pathway  
if you will be my guide.

O let me feel you near me,  
the world is ever near;  
I see the sights that dazzle,  
the tempting sounds I hear;  
my foes are ever near me,  
around me and within;  
but, Jesus, then draw nearer,  
and shield my soul from sin.

O let me hear you speaking  
in accents clear and still,  
above the storms of passion,  
the murmurs of self-will;  
O speak to reassure me,  
to hasten or control;  
now speak, and make me listen,  
O guardian of my soul.

O Jesus, you have promised  
to all who follow you,  
that where you are in glory  
your servant shall be too.  
And Jesus, I have promised  
to serve you to the end;  
O give me grace to follow,  
my Saviour and my friend.

**\*CHORAL CLOSING** – “An Old Irish Blessing”

***May the road rise up to meet you.  
May the wind be ever at your back.  
May sun shine warm upon your face  
and the rains fall soft upon your fields.  
And until we meet again, and until we meet again,  
May you be held in the hollow of God's hand.***

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

**POSTLUDE**

# Church News

This Week at First United – March 11 <sup>th</sup> to March 16 <sup>th</sup>		
Monday	9:00-11:00 AM	Badminton – DEMH GYM
Tuesday	7:00 PM	Property Mgmt Team - RMR
Wednesday	9:00-11:00 AM	Badminton – DEMH GYM
Thursday	1:00 – 3:00 PM	Treble Makers - Sanctuary
	4:15 PM	Choir Practice
Saturday	8:00 AM–1:00 PM	Bathurst Community Market

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

**Peanut Butter** – Once again this year we have set a goal of **900 jars** of peanut butter to donate to the Bathurst Volunteer Center. Up to March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024 we have collected 145 jars.

**The Annual General Meeting** of Bathurst Pastoral Charge/First United Church will be held following the church service on Sunday, March 17, 2024.

**The 2023 Annual Report** is now printed and ready for pick up. If you take a report home please remember to bring it with you to the annual meeting as there have been a limited number of copies printed.

**Confirmation Classes:** If anyone is interested in attending confirmation classes, please contact Rev. Neal or the church office at 506-546-3532.

**Update on Sunrise Breakfast** that was held on February 25<sup>th</sup> Again thanks to all the patrons, volunteers, suppliers and donors who make these events possible. A special thanks to **Jean Coutu (Beresford) & Websolutions.ca** whose sponsorship allowed the Ways & Means Team to generate a profit of \$2,151.16.

Our next Ways and Means event will be the **Roast Pork Supper** (sit down or take out) to be held on **Thursday, March 28, 2024**. Tickets are available from members of the Ways & Means Team or from the church office. Adults \$18 and Children under 12 \$6.

# Church News

**A Saint Patrick's Gathering** sponsored by the Pastoral Care Team will be held at First United Church, 309 Saint Patrick Street, Bathurst, on **Thursday, March 14<sup>th</sup> from 1 PM to 3 PM**. (Snow date Friday, March 15<sup>th</sup>)

Music will be provided by The Treble Makers. There is no admission fee. A voluntary donation towards the life and work of First United Church or a non-perishable item for the church pantry would be appreciated. Everyone is welcome!

Members of the group include: Linda Knowles MacPherson - Piano; Donald Eddy- Clarinet & Guitar; Ann Marie Hocquard - Voice & Percussion; Julia Henry - Trumpet & Voice; Charles Ramsey - Voice; Karen McCrea - Violin & Voice; Hazen McCrea - Bass Guitar

**Property Management Team** will meet on Tuesday, March 12<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM in the Ruth Morrison Room.

As part of our **Stewardship Program** here at First United, information on Planned Giving through Wills and Bequests is 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 available from the church office.

Below you will find a stewardship quote relating to the same.

"You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you."

~ John Bunyan

**Upcoming special services:**

**Palm Sunday – March 24<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM**

**Good Friday – March 29<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM**

**Easter Sunday – March 31<sup>st</sup> at 10 AM with**

**Holy Communion**

# Church News

## First United Church will begin Live Streaming our Sunday services soon

As you know, we already video tape our services each Sunday for broadcast on our website and our Facebook site later in the week and as well we record the services on CDs for those unable to attend in person. Live Streaming, however, will allow almost instant transmission to Facebook and our website. For the most part, cameras will be focused on the front of the church and the congregation will be seen only from behind for the most part, similar to what you see on Facebook or our website currently.

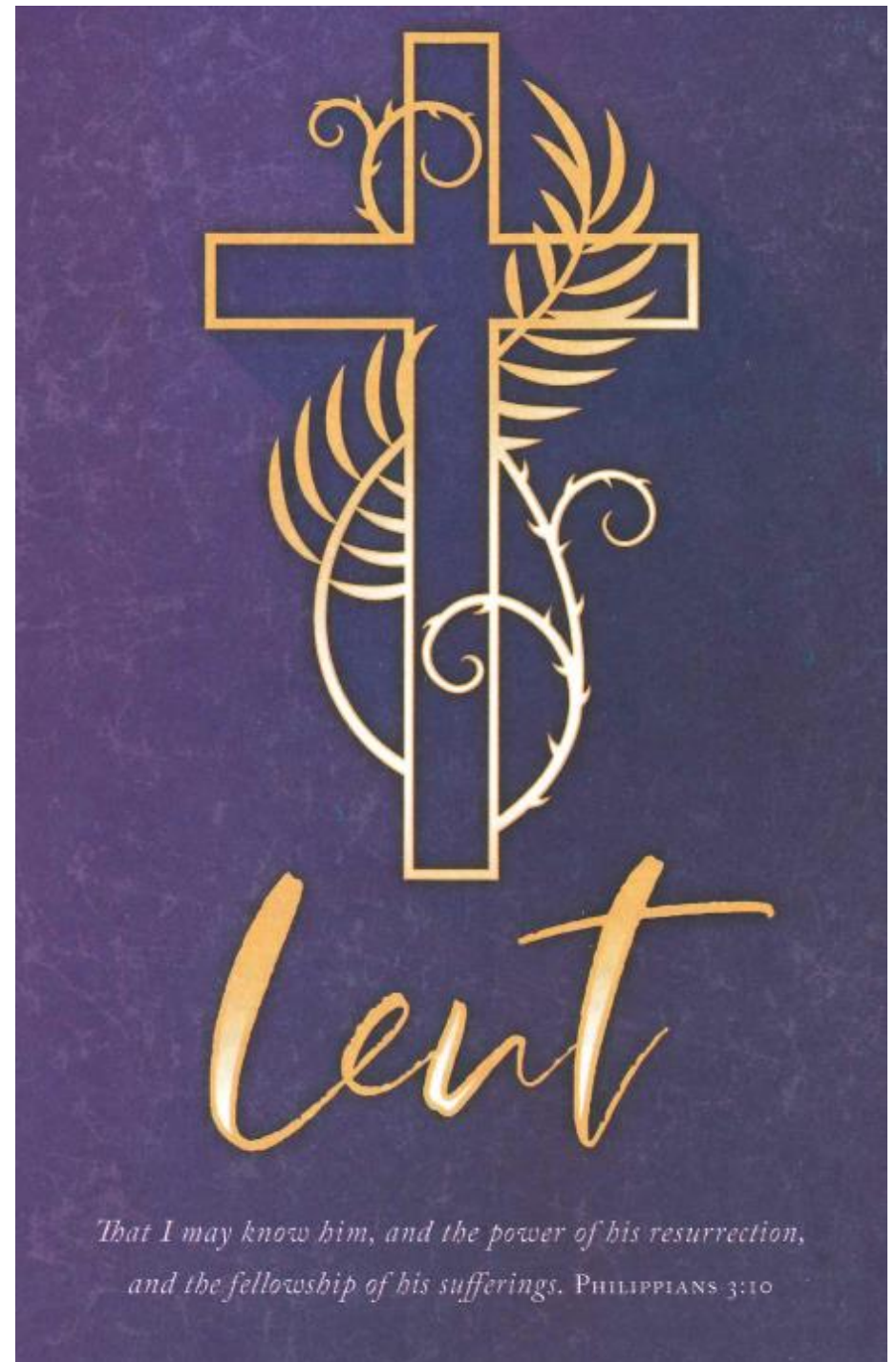
Our technical team will do everything possible to ensure the best quality of the live-stream service. Unfortunately there are times when the internet connection at the venue or where you are viewing from may cause interference and buffering.

Once we receive the link for live stream access we will provide it to you both via bulletin announcement and an email message.

## Community News

**Melodies for Missions** featuring the *Bathurst Jazz Band* and *Alysa Collins*, **Sunday March 17<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 p.m.** at Evangel Pentecostal Church, 150 Basin Street. Tickets \$10.00. Children 12 and under free. In support of the Evangel Mission Team. Contact Glen or Joyce Daley 506 546 3764

There will be a **Seniors Card Game** held on **Wednesday, March 13<sup>th</sup> at 1 PM** at Central United Church Hall, Clifton. Refreshments will be provided. Bring a friend and your favourite card game. (There will be playing cards available.) It will be cancelled if there is inclement weather.



***Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters***  
***Regional News***

The Council of First United Church has voted in favour of **Remit 1, Establishing an Autonomous National Indigenous Organization within the United Church of Canada.**

***Background Information*** (based on information from Michael Blair, General Secretary, General Council):

The 44<sup>th</sup> General Council met virtually between February 2022 and August 2022.

At that meeting, the General Council approved an amendment to the Basis of Union in *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada to establish an autonomous National Indigenous Organization. It also authorized a Category 3 Remit to test the will of the church with respect to this change.

The General Council's decision was in response to proposal **NIC-01: Restructuring of the Indigenous Church** from the National Indigenous Council, which named its vision of the two parts of the church (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) working side-by-side, and recommending the identification and removal of "all the structural barriers to developing and sustaining an autonomous Indigenous Church within The United Church of Canada". The way to remove these "structural barriers" is named in a proposal from the General Secretary, **GS-10: Living into Reconciliation**, which asks the church to give pre-emptive remit approval for whatever the Indigenous Church determines in the future as the place it will have in the United Church, guided by the *Calls to the Church*—and without the need for further remit approvals.

*(See next page)*

*(Continued from page 1)*

This is a Category 3 Remit, and so requires a vote by every regional council and each pastoral charge's governing body. If a regional council or a pastoral charge does not register a vote that is considered a vote against the proposal.

There is one question to be voted on, as follows.

Does the regional council/pastoral charge agree to amend the Basis of Union to reflect:

1. That The United Church of Canada will be organized as follows: (1) a three-council structure, consisting of communities of faith, regional councils and a Denominational Council [also known as General Council]; and (2) an autonomous National Indigenous Organization; and
2. That once the new autonomous National Indigenous Organization is established within The United Church of Canada, it will have its own mechanisms to make any future changes to its structure and processes, and, therefore will not be subject to the remit process under section 7.4.1 of the Basis of Union; and
3. The changes required for the establishment of the autonomous National Indigenous Organization.

For further background information and videos regarding this Remit, please click on the following link. If you have questions or are seeking clarification, please speak to Rev. Neal or one of our two First United FSLDW Regional Representatives: Martha Vickers and Jini Palmer.

<https://generalcouncil44.ca/council/remit-1-establishing-autonomous-national-indigenous-organization#msdynttrid=NR4WXydfBNYoJJZU1bGT1fKgtz94P13HSIwEKPgYVKg>

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

Isabel MacLaggan

### NUMBERS 21:4-9

4 From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom, but the people became discouraged on the way.

5 The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food."

6 Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died.

7 The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

8 And the Lord said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live."

9 So Moses made a serpent of bronze and put it upon a pole, and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

### [BASED ON] PSALM 107:1-3, 17-22

#### With a Song

The child sat, poking at everything, but not eating. The child had been fidgeting and clearly uncomfortable since coming home from school.

"Is everything okay?" asked the adult. The child shrugged silently. The adult thought for a moment before asking, "Can you tell me how you feel?" The child looked at the adult and said, "I don't know. Kind of sad, I guess." The adult nodded and then asked, "Did something happen to make you feel this way?" The child looked back down at the uneaten food and whispered, "I had a fight with a friend at school." The adult sighed. Fights with friends are hard. Feelings can be hurt. "Were there some mean words said in the fight?" asked the adult. The child shrugged again but didn't look up. "Maybe." The child still didn't eat and was clearly upset. The adult asked, "Do you

remember what you told me about what you learned in Sunday school? What did you read?"

The child looked up, surprised by the change of topic. "We were reading a Psalm," said the child. The adult nodded. "Right. And what did the Psalm say?" The child thought for a minute and said, "Well, people were thanking God." "And what else?" said the adult. The child said, "Someone was sick. So sick, they almost died. And—they were healed."

The adult nodded. "We don't know what happened to that person. We don't know why they were sick or whether they were hurt in their mind, in their body, or in their heart. But you know what? It doesn't matter. No matter what kind of hurt there is, God loves you and wants to help you get better. Can you remember how that reading ended?"

The child nodded, "With a song."

The adult nodded, opened the family Bible, and read: "Then they cried to God in their trouble, and God saved them from their distress; Let them give thanks for God's never-ending love... and tell of God's deeds with songs of joy."

The adult paused for a moment and said, "No matter what, God loves you, and wants you to be happy and healthy. When you feel bad, or when you are hurt, God is with you. So, Child, you can *always* tell God what has happened and know that God loves you no matter what. *No matter what.*

The adult and the child continued to talk. Eventually, they talked about the fight with the friend at school. And both felt God-with-them as they talked. They made a plan for the child to talk with the friend.

Afterwards, the adult and the child gave thanks for God's healing love.

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