

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

**Dec. 3, 2017**  
**First Sunday of Advent**

**Minister** Rev. Blair Lewis      **Organist** Martha Vickers  
**Office Adm.** Isabel Clouston      **Greeters** Nancy & Allen Jagoe  
**Custodian** Alan Wilcox

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<u>Lectionary for today</u>	<u>Lectionary for next Sunday</u>
<i>Isaiah 64:1-9</i> <i>Psalm 80</i> <i>I Corinthians 1:3-9</i> <i>Mark 13:24-37</i>	<i>Isaiah 40:1-11</i> <i>Psalm 85</i> <i>II Peter 3:8-15a</i> <i>Mark 1:1-8</i>

*The asterisk \* identifies those times in the service where the congregation is invited to stand as able.*

### THE COMMUNITY GATHERS

**Musical Prelude:**

**\*Choral Opening:** *'Oh, How Joyfully'*  
*Oh, how joyfully,*  
*Oh, how hopefully,*  
*Waits the world on Christmas Eve!*  
*Love comes healing,*  
*God revealing*  
*Friends, be joyful and believe!*



**Welcoming:**

One: Jesus Christ, we welcome you.  
**All: Come and be known among us,**  
**for we want to be your people.**

**Welcoming Friends Worshipping by CD:**  
**Announcements:**

**Lighting the First Advent Candle:** Wise Ones – Hope  
 (The Branch/ Larsen family)

**All: Wise Ones from the East,**  
**Where are you going?**  
**Can we go, too?**

One: We have seen an amazing star.  
 It shines brighter than any other star.  
 We are going to follow this star and see where it takes us.  
 We think it will lead us to a child who will soon be born,  
 a child of God who will change the world.  
 We have faith that God will show us the way.  
 We have great hope that our quest will be successful.  
 And, yes, you can come with us.

**All: Thank You, Wise Ones,**  
**for your faith and your gift of hope.**  
**We will join you on this Advent adventure.**

*(The first blue candle of Advent is lit)*

**Choral Response:** *'Hope Is a Star'*      **#7 VU**

*Hope is a star that shines in the night,*  
*leading us on till the morning is bright.*

**Refrain:**

*When God is a child there's joy in our song.*  
*The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,*  
*And none shall be afraid.*

**Call to Worship:**

Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, O Promised One,  
 we come to this time of Advent  
 awaiting your presence.  
 Give us the wisdom to see meaning in these busy days.  
 Give us the courage to wait in times of pain and trouble.  
 Give us the compassion to wait for one another.  
 Give us the faith to wait for the Messiah  
 when we are threatened by the Herods of this world.  
 Give us the hope to wait for the Saviour  
 even when we cannot hear the angels singing.  
 Give us the love that does not wait  
 when it meets Christ in our neighbour. Amen.

**Prayer of Approach:** (in unison)  
**God of hope and encouragement,  
we come in the midst of this season  
of busyness and preparations:  
to find a time and the space to slow down,  
to reflect and to find hope and encouragement.  
We search to find peace and joy.  
May we do so now, in our time of worship. Amen.**

**\*Opening Hymn:** *'God of All Places'* #4 VU

**Children of All Ages:**

**\*The Lord's Prayer:**

### THE SERVICE OF THE WORD

**Prayer for Understanding:**

O God, beginning and end,  
by whose command time runs its course.  
Bless our impatience,  
perfect our faith,  
and while we await  
the fulfillment of your promises,  
grant us hope in your word. Amen.

**Scripture Readings:**

Wayne Lord

**Old Testament Lesson:** Isaiah 64: 1-9

**Responsive Psalm:** Psalm 80 Part 1 #794 VU

**Gospel Lesson:** Mark 13 :24-37

**\*Hymn:**

*'O Come, O Come, Emmanuel'* #1 VU vs. 1,2,4&7

**Meditation:** "What are our Expectations?"

**Duet:** *'Mary's Boy Child'*

### THE COMMUNITY RESPONDS

**Presentation of Gifts and Self to God:**

**Duet:** *'O Little Town of Bethlehem'*

**Choral Response:**

*(Tune Praise God from whom all blessings flow.)*

**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.**

*(from Gathering A/C/E 2010 pg .84).*

**\*Prayer of Dedication:**

**Prayer Of Confession:** (in unison)

**O God, the stories of our faith have lost their power.**

**We have heard the prophecy spoken so many times,**

**the promises retold again and again,**

**the call to prepare ourselves for your coming**

**repeated so often,**

**we don't really hear or heed them anymore.**

**We have replaced these messages of life**

**with guessing what presents we are getting;**

**preparing for parties**

**and the social obligations of Christmas.**

**Bring us back to a sense of ministry:**

**a sense of awe, a sense of wonder,**

**a sense of excitement, a sense of anticipation,**

**a sense that something special is about to break into**

**our everyday world.**

**Help us prepare our hearts, souls, and minds**

**for the coming of the Messiah. Amen.**

**Choral Response:** *'Kindle a Flame to Lighten the Dark'* #19 VU

**Kindle a flame**

**to lighten the dark**

**And take all fear away.**

**Assurance of Pardon:**

God's promises are sure –  
promises of steadfast love and forgiveness.  
God deals with God's people with righteousness and justice.  
Rejoice and be glad!

**Silent Prayer:**

**Reflective Music:**

**Pastoral Prayer:**

One: God of Love,  
in this time of waiting for your Spirit,  
we pray for those who have trouble catching the vision;  
for those who find this family season difficult  
because they are without loved ones  
or they are going through a time of illness or hardship.  
We pray for those who are left out of the celebrations  
because they are without food or shelter;  
for those who need to be reminded of the wideness  
of your love and mercy.

**All: God of power and glory,  
we remember your awesome deeds across the ages –  
the times you saved us and brought us home.  
Yet we also remember times  
when we felt alone and afraid.  
O God, we are your people, the work of your hands;  
look upon us with your shining face,  
especially in this time of preparation  
for the birth of your Son.**

One: Spirit of Hope,  
in a time of busyness  
that threatens to overpower the sound of your voice,  
and blind us to the needs of those around us.  
We pray for ourselves:  
that we might not become so preoccupied  
with our own schedules,  
that we forget we live within your time.

May we not be anxious about tomorrow:  
that we may trust you to bring about your love and peace,  
and that we might work together  
to share Good News with those around and beyond us.

*(silence)*

Creator of Joy,  
we wait with excitement and impatience.  
Surround us with your stillness;  
quiet us with your Spirit,  
that we might be ready to receive the light of the world.  
Amen.

**THE COMMUNITY GOES FORTH**

**\*Closing Hymn:**        *'Hark the Glad Sound'*        **#29 VU**

**Commissioning:**

**God who leads by a Star,  
show us the direction to Bethlehem.  
Lead us to the place where love is to be born in our lives.  
Give us signs along the road as we make our journey,  
that we may follow in your way.**

**Blessing:**

May God bless you and keep you.  
May God's face shine upon you  
and be gracious to you.  
May God look upon you with kindness and give you peace.  
*Numbers 6:24-26*

**\*Choral Closing:**    *'Hope Shines as the Solitary Star'* **#220MV**  
***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.***

**Organ Postlude:**

# Church News

## This Week at First United –Dec.4 - Dec. 9

Monday	9am	Ways & Means – Eddy Rm
	9am – 11 am	Badminton
	UCW	Christmas Meeting
	6:15pm	Beavers – Rms 1,2 & 3
Tuesday	6:15pm	Cubs-Scouts- DEMH Gym
Wednesday	9:00 am	TAB – DEMH Rms 1,2 & 3
	9:00-11:00	Badminton – DEMH GYM
	6:30 pm	Choir Practice
Thursday	1:30 pm	Pastoral Care team - RMR

The bulletin today has been placed  
*in loving memory of Betty Scott*  
by Haines and families.



### Christmas Hymn Sing *Silent Night, Holy Night*

The annual Christmas Hymn Sing will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 20th, (storm date Dec. 21<sup>th</sup>), 7pm at First United. Come join with us as we celebrate the Christmas season with familiar carols as well as new selections you are sure to enjoy. The choir will be joined by Emma Vickers, Amanda Godin, Suzanne Cyr (cello), Leslie Wilbur (violin), Linda Knowles MacPherson (piano), as well as Take Note, and the BHS Choir. Cost \$10 Adults \$5 Youth. Tickets are available from choir members and the church office 546-3532.

### Peanut Butter for Volunteer Centre

Commitment December 31, 2017 **900**  
Total to Date **906**



The Volunteer Center supplies, on average, **500** households monthly.

This number increases over the Christmas Season. Because of your generous donations and continued support, we will be able to give extra Peanut Butter this year.

A new CD, "Melodies on the Bay" is now available. It contains a variety of music recorded recently at First United Church by Linda Knowles MacPherson and Donald Eddy. A copy may be obtained at the church office with a donation to the Ministry of Music.

The Upper Room for Jan. and Feb. are in the Narthex. Please feel free to take one. A container for donations is located with the publication.

Poinsettia Fund: 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 fund may place an envelope in the offering plate on Sunday morning. Please mark clearly on the face of the envelope – Poinsettia Fund 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 December 14, 2017.

2018 Envelopes: The Contribution Envelopes for 2018 are located in the Narthex. Please insure that envelopes for the correct year are used as individual contribution #'s have changed.

Notice from the Property Management Team For security reasons, all doors to the sanctuary will be kept locked except the one closest to the office. To enter the church during business hours, please use the St. Patrick Street entrance.

Community Outreach is requesting a donation of hot or cold cereal to be used for the Breakfast program or the Community Kitchen. Need is increasing as the weather gets colder and contributions of soup and canned vegetables would be appreciated.

**Annual Christmas Benevolence Program:** For those interested in supporting this benevolence program, donation envelopes are available today, on the Christmas tree to be located at the entrance to the sanctuary. The White gift service will be on Sunday, December 10, and the envelopes can be returned at that time. Any personal cheque may be made payable to First United Church. Donations to this fund will be used to support the volunteer center as well as those people in our congregation who find it difficult, financially, throughout the year.

**Thank You:** The organizers of the Luncheon, that was held on Friday Nov. 17<sup>th</sup>, would like to thank all who attended as well as baked for the sale table. Because of your generous support the "Friends of First" raised approximately \$1300.00 to go towards the life and work of First United.

**Thank You** to Madison Brown, Autumn & Grace Ronalds and Chloe & Lia McLellan for lighting the Christ Candle, Beth & Bob Sullivan, Dorothy McCallum and Mike Kierstead for being our greeters and Gayle Ferron and Margaret Payne-Chénard for being the counters for the month of November.

*Once you choose hope,  
anything's possible.  
~Christopher Reeve~*

## Community Events

**Desks Available.** There are a number of Student Desks available and are located in the DEMH basement. Wood composit & metal combination 35 ½in. x 19 ½in.

### **The Ladies Auxiliary to Herman J. Good VC Branch 18,**

Royal Canadian Legion

Turkey Supper & Entertainment

Includes coffee, tea, and dessert

Sunday, December 3, 2017 Served at 5:00pm Cost: \$15.00

Take-outs Available Tickets are on sale at the Legion.

### **Family & Community Breakfast**

Saturday, December 9, 2017 8:00 – 10:00 am

Saint George's Church Hall 432 King Avenue

**RSVP Ministries** invites you to our Luncheon at Gowen Brae, 150 Youhall Dr, Bathurst on Wednesday, December 13, 2017 \$17 from 11:30am - 1:00pm, doors open at 11:00am. We will have our traditional carol singing, led by talented pianist Helen Hachey, and Hazel McMullin of Moncton will bring her message of "How to Find Peace in a World Full of Turmoil". **Reservations are required before Saturday, December 9.** Please contact Joanne at 542-1118 or [ejgodin@rogers.com](mailto:ejgodin@rogers.com) or contact Connie at 546-2127.

*It is Christmas in the heart  
that puts Christmas in the air.  
~W.T. Ellis~*

## **White Gift Sunday – Dec. 10, 2017**

The tradition of White Gift Sunday has its roots in a small Methodist church in Ohio in 1904. What began as a humble way to reflect on the love and devotion of the giver and not the value of the gift has grown into today's white gift services in many churches across several denominations. The story is told that a minister's wife initiated the idea to solve the problem of inequity of gifts given at the Sunday school Christmas party. Instead of focusing on receiving gifts, the focus shifted to bringing gifts to Jesus that could in turn be shared with people around the world who did not have much. All the gifts would come wrapped in plain white paper, so that no one would know which was an expensive gift and which was a more modest one. No one would feel ashamed of their gift and everyone would share in the joy of giving to others.

In keeping with the spirit of the first White Gift service all those attending bring a gift wrapped in white paper to be given to someone in need.

### Isaiah 64:1-9 New International Version (NIV)

64 <sup>[a]</sup>Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down,  
that the mountains would tremble before you!

<sup>2</sup> As when fire sets twigs ablaze  
and causes water to boil,  
come down to make your name known to your enemies  
and cause the nations to quake before you!

<sup>3</sup> For when you did awesome things that we did not expect,  
you came down, and the mountains trembled before you.

<sup>4</sup> Since ancient times no one has heard,  
no ear has perceived,  
no eye has seen any God besides you,  
who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.

<sup>5</sup> You come to the help of those who gladly do right,  
who remember your ways.  
But when we continued to sin against them,  
you were angry.  
How then can we be saved?

<sup>6</sup> All of us have become like one who is unclean,  
and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags;  
we all shrivel up like a leaf,  
and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

<sup>7</sup> No one calls on your name  
or strives to lay hold of you;  
for you have hidden your face from us  
and have given us over to <sup>[b]</sup>our sins.

<sup>8</sup> Yet you, LORD, are our Father.  
We are the clay, you are the potter;  
we are all the work of your hand.

<sup>9</sup> Do not be angry beyond measure, LORD;  
do not remember our sins forever.  
Oh, look on us, we pray,  
for we are all your people.

### Mark 13:24-37 New International Version (NIV)

<sup>24</sup> "But in those days, following that distress,

"the sun will be darkened,  
and the moon will not give its light;

<sup>25</sup> the stars will fall from the sky,  
and the heavenly bodies will be shaken."<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>26</sup> "At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds  
with great power and glory.

<sup>27</sup> And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four  
winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.

<sup>28</sup> "Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get  
tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near.

<sup>29</sup> Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that  
it <sup>[b]</sup>is near, right at the door.

<sup>30</sup> Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until  
all these things have happened.

<sup>31</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass  
away.

### The Day and Hour Unknown

<sup>32</sup> "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels  
in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

<sup>33</sup> Be on guard! Be alert!<sup>[c]</sup> You do not know when that time will  
come.

<sup>34</sup> It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his  
servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the  
one at the door to keep watch.

<sup>35</sup> "Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the  
owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at  
midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn.

<sup>36</sup> If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping.

<sup>37</sup> What I say to you, I say to everyone: "Watch!"