

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

December 9, 2018
Second Sunday of Advent
White Gift Service

Minister	Rev. Jean Herman	Organist	Martha Vickers
Office Adm.	Isabel Clouston	Greeters	Margaret Payne-Chénard
Custodian	Steve White		Mike Kierstead

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<u>Lectionary for today</u>	<u>Lectionary for next Sunday</u>
<i>Malachi 3:1-4</i>	<i>Zephaniah 3:14-20</i>
<i>Luke 1:68-79</i>	<i>Isaiah 12:2-6</i>
<i>Philippians 1:3-11</i>	<i>Philippians 4:4-7</i>
<i>Luke 3:1-6</i>	<i>Luke 3:7-18</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:

*Emmanuel, Emmanuel,
 His name is called Emmanuel;
 God with us, revealed in us;
 His name is called Emmanuel.*



Welcoming:

Give our greetings to our friends in the faith.
 God's grace be with you all.
 (Titus 3:15)

Welcoming Friends Worshipping by CD:

Announcements:

Lighting the Second Advent Candle: (Chamberlain Family)

(One blue candle is relit)

One: In the early hours of every morning,
 the inky blue of the sky slowly begins to purple,
 heralding that the night is passing and morning comes.
 As the flame begins to burn,
 we are reminded of the gentle wind
 that each dawn brings,
 pushing us closer to your promised reign

**All: As we wait through the time of Advent
 for the celebration of Jesus' birth,
 may we be drawn together in the spirit's peace.**
Amen

(The second blue candle of Advent is lit.)

Choral Response: 'Candle Light, Sacred Light '
 (Tune – Silent Night)

***Candle light, sacred light.
 Mystery flames, burning bright
 We are waiting for Jesus' new birth.
 Shine his peace over all of the earth
 Thanks for the gift of peace, thanks for the gift of peace.***

Call to Worship:

One: A voice in the wilderness cries out:
All: Prepare the way of the Lord
 One: Every valley shall be filled and every mountain
 and hill be made low.
**All: the crooked shall be made straight,
 and the rough ways made smooth.**
 One: A voice in the wilderness cries out:
All: All people shall see the salvation of God!

Prayer of Approach: (in unison)

**Blessed is the Lord, and blessed are God's people
 to whom God sends a savior,
 the messiah, who is Christ the Lord.
 Blessed is our God, and blessed are God's gifts,
 that grace us with forgiveness and every good gift.
 Lord, you have come to dwell within us.
 Build your temple within our hearts. Amen.**

***Opening Hymn:** 'A Journey Just Begun' #51 AGCS

Come and join us on a journey just begun
As we celebrate the life of God's own son.
The stories of his life become our stories, too,
In the choices that we make, In ev'rything we do.
Come and join us on a journey just begun.

Refrain

*Preparing the way, preparing the way,
We're preparing the way of our God.*

We will walk from the darkness to the light,
Led by the shining star so bright.
Once more with hope we wait for a baby's birth
When the love of God shall bring Peace to all the earth,
As we walk from the darkness to the light.

Refrain

We will walk in the light of all the world,
Shining for the nations to be healed.
Jesus is our friend, companion on the way,
We want to spread his love In all we do and say,
As we walk in the light of all the world.

Refrain

Children of all ages: Jennifer Lavigne
Story of Huckleberry
Puppet Show

THE SERVICE OF THE WORD

Prayer for Understanding:

Holy God, through your scriptures,
you revealed your Word to your people.
In the fullness of time,
you continued your revelation to the world
through Jesus Christ.
Now, by the power of your Holy Spirit,
help us to interpret scripture,
so that we might hear your living Word
freshly in our time and place.

Scripture Readings:

Old Testament Lesson: Malachi 3:1-4 Grace Ronalds
Responsive: Luke 1:68-79 (VU p.900) Catherine Eddy
Gospel Lesson: Luke 3 :1-6 Carter Lavigne

***Hymn:** 'Hope Is a Star' #7 VU vs 1&2

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.

Peace is a ribbon that circles the earth,
Giving a promise of safety and worth.

Refrain:

White Gift Celebration:

The meaning of our decorations
Presented by members of the Sunday School
Decorate the Children's Christmas Tree
Collect White Gifts
Sunday School Selections:
'This Little Light of Mine'
'We Wish You a Merry Christmas'



THE COMMUNITY RESPONDS

Invitation to the offering:

Presentation of Gifts and Self to God:

Choral Response: *'In the Bleak Midwinter'*#55VU vs.4
***What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part,
Yet what I can, I give him, give my heart.***

Dedication of the gift of love: (in unison)
**Holy God, you are the giver of all gifts;
you know each need and hear each prayer.
We come today with these gifts
that we give in Christ's spirit of love and justice.
Use these gifts and use our lives
for the building of your kingdom in your world .
These things we pray in the name of Jesus. Amen**

Prayer of Confession: (in unison)
**O Lord, darkness surrounds us
like a cold stone tomb,
until your light bursts into our lives
like a clear, bright dawn.
We cover our eyes,
we're so unprepared for your coming.
Your light blazes forth like a white-hot fire,
consuming all that it touches.
How can we stand before you, Lord?
The road that we thought was straight and wide
is now exposed as a twisted, crooked path,
blocked by a mountain of sin.
Where can we turn?
Who will guide us back to the way of peace—
the way that leads to you?**

Choral Response:
***O holy Child of Bethlehem!
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in;
be born in us today.***

Assurance of Pardon:

There is assurance in knowing that the living God
has eternal purposes to achieve through us.
God will bring to completion the work of grace begun in us.
Know, then, that you have been forgiven,
and are given a new start,
for God has things to do through you.
Do not be afraid but find peace in the God who comes.

Silent Prayer / Reflective Music:

Pastoral Prayer:

Emmanuel, God with us,
we thank you for your constant presence
and transforming love.
Though today we celebrate peace,
there are many among us and in the world
who know no peace.
Here us now as we pray for those
who need your dayspring, your healing, and your peace ...
We pray for places in this world
that marked by violence and war
and for people that are unfairly treated.
We pray for people
who are in need of healing and wholeness,
for those who face illness,
treatment for cancer or uncertain diagnosis,
and for those who are battling with mental illness or anxiety.

We pray for families that are in turmoil,
for relationships that are falling apart
and for people who feel lonely and excluded.
We pray for your gathered community.
Transform our hearts and minds in your service.
Make us mindful of those in this city,
this country and this world,
who have little peace.
May their lives be touched by something we do,
as individuals or as a church, this Advent season.
O God that hears our prayers,
hear us as we pray the prayer that your son taught us;
Our Father... Amen

THE COMMUNITY GOES FORTH

*Closing Hymn: 'A Candle Is Burning' #6 VU vs.1&2

A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,
A candle of hope in Decembers's dark night.
While angels sing blessings from heaven's starry sky,
Our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh.

A candle is burning, a candle of peace,
A candle to signal that conflict must cease;
For Jesus is coming to show us the way,
A message of peace humbly laid in the hay.

Blessing:

May faithfulness spring up from the ground.
And righteousness look down from heaven
as you walk in the way of peace.
May the blessing of God, Eternal Majesty,
Living word, and Holy Comforter,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be with you now and always.

*Choral Closing: 'I Am Walking a Path of Peace' #221MV

I am walking a path of peace
I am walking a path of peace
I am walking a path of peace
Lead me home, lead me home.

Organ Postlude:

*Remember
This December,
That love weighs more than gold!*
~Josephine Dodge Daskam Bacon

Church News

This Week at First United –Dec. 10 – Dec. 15

Monday		Choir Practice
	6:15	Beavers – Rms 1,2&3
Tuesday	6:15	Cubs & Scouts – DEMH Gym
		Choir Practice
Wednesday	9am – 12pm	TAB - Rms 1,2 & 3
	9am -11am	Badminton
	3pm	Office Closed
	7pm	Christmas Concert

Peanut Butter for Volunteer Centre

Commitment December 31, 2018 **900**
Total to Date **782**

To meet our obligation, we will need to collect
39-40 jars of peanut butter per week.

The Volunteer Center supplies, on average,
500 households monthly. This amount increases
over the Christmas Season.



Christmas Hymn Sing ***What Can I Give to the Holy Child?***

The annual Christmas Hymn Sing will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 12th, (storm date Dec. 13th), 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 Alysa Collins, Amanda Godin, Linda Knowles - MacPherson with The Treble Makers, Catalyst 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.

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

2019 Envelopes: The Contribution Envelopes for 2019 are located in the Narthex. Please insure that envelopes for the correct year are used as individual contribution #'s may have changed.

Missing Dishes? There are a number of baking dishes and other containers in the Donald Eddy Memorial Hall kitchen that have been left after suppers. If you are missing yours, it could be here.

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.

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 17, 2018.

Thank You. The Ways and Means team would like to thank everyone for their support of the Turkey Supper. Because of all who donated to, worked at and bought tickets, a profit of approximately \$6750.00 was realized. A special thank you to our sponsors for the turkey supper Kenny's Trucking LTD and Shine House (A Division of Stothart Automotive) Our next event will be the Roast Pork Dinner which is scheduled for January 31, 2019.

Christmas Newsletters are ready for pick up in the Narthex. Please help with postage costs by delivering to your family, friends and neighbors. Special envelopes for Christmas contributions can be found in the Narthex.



The Christian Development team would like to thank Marie Oliver, Debrah & Rick Watling, Colette & Wayne Clowater, Sara Ernst, Beth Sullivan and Steve White for decorating the church for the Christmas Season. Their talent is much appreciated.

White Gift Sunday – Dec. 9, 2018

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.

*If we have no peace,
it is because we have forgotten
that we belong to each other.*

~Mother Teresa~

The True Meaning Of Christmas

*Jesus Christ was born this day
So many years before
He came a servant to the lost,
Though he was Lord of Lords*

*We celebrate this joyous time,
Reflecting on His birth
Not born in a mansion, but a stable
As if He had no worth*

*He came so He could identify
With the human heart of man
And gave His life as a sacrifice,
Offering a better plan*

*A plan that reconciles us back
To our loving Father God,
Bringing hope and redemption from
Sins ruling, iron rod*

*For this is the only reason that we
Should celebrate this day,
To become focused on anything else,
Would take the meaning away*

*So let's arise with joy in our hearts
And share it with everyone
The meaning of Christmas will always be
The birth of Jesus - God's son*

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Malachi 3:1-4 Easy-to-Read Version (ERV)

³ The LORD All-Powerful says, "I am sending my messenger to prepare the way for me. Then suddenly, the Lord you are looking for will come to his temple.^[a] Yes, the messenger you are waiting for, the one who will tell about my agreement, is really coming!

² "No one can prepare for that time or stand against him when he comes. He will be like a burning fire. He will be like the strong soap people use to make things clean.

³ He will make the Levites clean. He will make them pure, like silver is made pure with fire! He will make them pure like gold and silver. Then they will bring gifts to the LORD, and they will do things the right way.

⁴ Then the LORD will accept the gifts from Judah and Jerusalem. It will be as it was in the past—as the time long ago.

Luke 3:1-6 Easy-to-Read Version (ERV)

John Prepares the Way for Jesus

³ It was the 15th year of the rule of Tiberius Caesar.

These men were under Caesar:

Pontius Pilate, the governor of Judea;

Herod, the ruler of Galilee;

Philip, Herod's brother, the ruler of Iturea and Trachonitis;

Lysanias, the ruler of Abilene.

² Annas and Caiaphas were the high priests. During this time, John, the son of Zechariah, was living in the desert, and he received a message from God.

³ So he went through the whole area around the Jordan River and told the people God's message. He told them to be baptized to show that they wanted to change their lives, and then their sins would be forgiven.

⁴ This is like the words written in the book of Isaiah the prophet:

"There is someone shouting in the desert:

'Prepare the way for the Lord.

Make the road straight for him.

⁵ Every valley will be filled,

and every mountain and hill will be made flat.

Crooked roads will be made straight,

and rough roads will be made smooth.

⁶ Then everyone will see

how God will save his people!"