

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

December 23, 2018
Fourth Sunday of Advent

Minister Rev. Jean Herman **Organist** Martha Vickers
Office Adm. Isabel Clouston **Greeters** Nancy & Allen Jagoe
Custodian Steve White

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<u>Lectionary for today</u>	<u>Lectionary for next Sunday</u>
<i>Micah 5:2-5a</i>	<i>I Samuel 2:18-20, 26</i>
<i>Psalm 80:1-7</i>	<i>Psalm 148</i>
<i>Hebrews 10:5-10</i>	<i>Colossians 3:12-17</i>
<i>Luke 1:39-45</i>	<i>Luke 2:41-52</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:

The angel came to her and said,
 "Peace be with you!
 The Lord is with you and has greatly blessed you!"
 Luke 1:28



Welcoming Friends Worshipping by CD:

Announcements:

Lighting the Fourth Advent Candle: 'The Candle of Love'
(First three candles are relit) (The Ronalds Family)

One: In a few short days,
 we will rejoice in the birth of the holy Child
 Like children waiting for Christmas morning,
 we lie awake in our beds

All: **Christmas is nearly upon us
 and God's love will shine.
 Soon we will open the curtains
 to welcome the light of day.
 We receive the light of love.**

(The fourth candle 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 love over all of the earth.
 Thanks for the gift of love, thanks for the gift of love.***

Call to Worship:

One: God who spoke to Mary and Elizabeth,
All: speak to us now.
One: God who blessed them with new life and hope,
All: bless us now.
One: God who caused them to sing songs of praise,
All: cause us to sing.
One: God who loves beyond measure,
All: we are here to worship you.

Prayer of Approach: (in unison)

**God of the new day,
 we rejoice that the time of celebration is near.
 As the time of our waiting draws to an end,
 let the flame of your love warm our hearts.
 Keep us focused on the reason for our joy
 and lead us to the places
 where the Christ would be born today.
 We pray in the names of the One who comes. Amen.**

***Opening Hymn:** *'Angels, From the Realms of Glory'* #36 VU

Children of all ages:

THE SERVICE OF THE WORD

Prayer for Understanding: (in unison)

Open our ears, O God,
to hear the whispering voice of your angels,
who come to us with glad tidings.
Open our hearts
to know your presence and your direction.
Open our mouths
to say the words of Mary,
"Let it be with me according to your word." Amen

Scripture Readings: Helen Knowles
Old Testament: Micah 5:2-5a
Responsive Reading: Luke 1:46b-55 #898 VU
Gospel Lesson: Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)

***Hymn:** *'Go, Tell It on the Mountain'* #43 VU

Meditation:

Solo: *'In the Bleak Midwinter'* Emma Vickers

THE COMMUNITY RESPONDS

Invitation to the offering:

Presentation of Gifts and Self to God:

Anthem: *'Let the Christ Child In'*

Choral Response:

(Tune: 'Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow' #541 VU)

***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.***

Prayer of Dedication: (in unison)

God of Glory,
we eagerly anticipate the joy-filled celebration
of Jesus' birthday .
We recall now in the quiet recesses of our minds
the thrill of receiving your message of salvation.
As we open ourselves again
to this holy wonder,
accept these generous gifts.
May the ministries that these gifts support
invite others to receive the saving message
of the Christ Child. In His name, we pray. Amen.
(Luke 1:46b-55)

Prayer of Confession: (in unison)

God of the incarnation,
you offer us gifts that are far greater
than we deserve or can imagine.
In you we receive love,
freedom and forgiveness, yet we turn away.
We become so absorbed with ourselves
and those closest to us
that we neglect to show your love in the world.
We get so caught up in the lies of our culture,
that we fail to accept the freedom you give us.
We become so focused on our need to be right,
that we miss opportunities offer your forgiveness.
Pardon us for the ways we have fallen short
and renew in us a spirit of new life.

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:

In the midst of our sinfulness,
God reaches out to heal and forgive us.
Receive the forgiveness which God has offered to you.
Live in God's love. AMEN.

Solo: 'Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming' Emma Vickers

Pastoral Prayer: (in unison)
**On this final Sunday of Advent,
we remember your love
and give you thanks for the many places
we find it in the world:**

**with our brothers and sisters in Christ,
with our families and loved ones,
with our neighbours and friends ,
In your son, Jesus Christ**

**Help us to always recognize
your love and to share it with others.
Today we pray for:
those who do not feel loved or lovable;
those who are sick in spirit, mind, or body;
those who are worried about loved ones;
those who are lonely;
those who are facing unemployment this season.**

**We pray for love in homes
where there is bitterness,
anger or despair.
We pray for places around the world
where there is hatred and violence.
Remind us that you loved
the world – and us – so much
that you gave your only son.
Through him,
we are empowered to accomplish
all of what you ask us to do.**

**We pray all this in the name of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is our love, our hope,
our peace, and our joy. Amen.**

Our Father...

THE COMMUNITY GOES FORTH

***Closing Hymn:** 'Joy to the World' #59 VU

***Blessing:**
You have been called
to serve the Lord with gladness.
Go from this place
knowing that God's blessings
have been poured on you
so that you may be a blessing to others.
Be at peace and bring the good news
of God's love and peace to all whom you meet. **AMEN**

***Choral Closing:** 'I Am Walking a Path of Peace' #221MV
***I am walking a path of love
I am walking a path of love
I am walking a path of love
Lead me home, lead me home.***

Organ Postlude:

*Blessed is the season
which engages the whole world
in a conspiracy of love!
~Hamilton Wright Mabie~*

Church News

This Week at First United –Dec. 24 – Dec. 29

Monday	12:00	Office Closed
	4pm	Christmas Eve Service
	7pm	Christmas Eve Service
Tuesday	Closed	Christmas Day
Wednesday	Closed	Boxing Day

The bulletin today has been placed
in loving memory of Sara Ruth Knowles
by Bill, Joyce and family

Peanut Butter for Volunteer Centre

Commitment December 31, 2018 **900**

Total to Date **846**

To meet our obligation, we will need to collect
54 jars of peanut butter this week.

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



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.

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.

Thank You: Thank you to all the participants as well as those who
attended our Christmas concert, 'What Can I Give to the Holy Child'.
\$2200.00 was raised to support the ongoing life and work of our
church.



Poinsettia Memorial booklets are available in the Narthex.

*Love one another and you will be happy.
It's as simple and as difficult as that.
~Michael Leunig~*

Recipe for Christmas All Year Long

*Take a heap of child-like wonder
That opens up our eyes
To the unexpected gifts in life—
Each day a sweet surprise.*

*Mix in fond appreciation
For the people whom we know;
Like festive Christmas candles,
Each one has a special glow.*

*Add some giggles and some laughter,
A dash of Christmas food,
(Amazing how a piece of pie
Improves our attitude!)*

*Stir it all with human kindness;
Wrap it up in love and peace,
Decorate with optimism, and
Our joy will never cease.*

*If we use this healthy recipe,
We know we will remember
To be in the Christmas spirit,
Even when it's not December.*

By Joanna Fuchs

Micah 5:2-5 New International Version (NIV)

²“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans^[a] of Judah,
out of you will come for me
one who will be ruler over Israel,
whose origins are from of old,
from ancient times.”

³Therefore Israel will be abandoned
until the time when she who is in labor bears a son,
and the rest of his brothers return
to join the Israelites.

⁴He will stand and shepherd his flock
in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
And they will live securely, for then his greatness
will reach to the ends of the earth.

⁵And he will be our peace
when the Assyrians invade our land
and march through our fortresses.
We will raise against them seven shepherds,
even eight commanders,

Luke 1:39-45 New International Version (NIV)

Mary Visits Elizabeth

³⁹At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill
country of Judea,

⁴⁰where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth.

⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her
womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

⁴²In a loud voice she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women,
and blessed is the child you will bear!

⁴³But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should
come to me?

⁴⁴As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the
baby in my womb leaped for joy.

⁴⁵Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his
promises to her!”

Luke 1:46-55 New International Version (NIV)

Mary’s Song

⁴⁶And Mary said:
My soul glorifies the Lord

⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸for he has been mindful
of the humble state of his servant.
From now on all generations will call me blessed,

⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me—
holy is his name.

⁵⁰His mercy extends to those who fear him,
from generation to generation.

⁵¹He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

⁵²He has brought down rulers from their thrones
but has lifted up the humble.

⁵³He has filled the hungry with good things
but has sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering to be merciful

⁵⁵to Abraham and his descendants forever,
just as he promised our ancestors.”