

***A Covenanting Service Celebrating the Ministry of  
Rev. Neal Palmer, Bathurst Pastoral Charge and  
Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Region***

***Presider & Preacher: Rev. Sue White,  
Pastoral Relations Liaison***

***Act of Covenanting: Region President, Rev. Audrey Lounder  
Music Ministry: Martha Vickers & First United Church Choir***

**We Gather in Community**

**Words of Welcome**

*A service of Covenanting celebrates the new relationship involving a local church, the region, and the ministry personnel newly appointed to serve. Like in any other rite of passage, the United Church of Canada formally celebrates this new relationship by making promises to one another. Let us worship God together.*

**\*Lighting of the Christ Candle:**

One: *(candle is lit)* Light and peace in Jesus Christ.

**All: Thanks be to God!**

**\*Call to Worship:**

L: "I will be your God and you will be my people",

**All: A sacred promise that shapes our lives.**

L: "I have called you by your name and you are mine",

**All: A sacred promise that shapes our lives.**

L: "Nothing can separate us from the love of God",

**All: A sacred promise that shapes our lives.**

L: As we come together to covenant for a new ministry in this place, we celebrate God's promised love and presence. We rest in God's faithfulness; we embrace our hope; we take hold of our possibility. Let us worship God together. **Amen. Thanks be to God!**

**\*Hymn:** Let Us Build a House

MV 1

Let us build a house where love can dwell  
And all can safely live,  
A place where saints and children tell  
How hearts learn to forgive.  
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,  
Rock of faith and vault of grace;  
Here the love of Christ shall end divisions;

***Refrain:***

All are welcome, all are welcome,  
All are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where prophets speak,  
And words are strong and true,  
Where all God's children dare to seek  
To dream God's reign anew.  
Here the cross shall stand as witness  
And as symbol of God's grace;  
Here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:

***Refrain:***

Let us build a house where love is found  
In water, wine and wheat:  
A banquet hall on holy ground,  
Where peace and justice meet.  
Here the love of God, through Jesus,  
Is revealed in time and space;  
As we share in Christ the feast that frees us:

***Refrain:***

Let us build a house where hands will reach  
Beyond the wood and stone  
To heal and strengthen, serve and teach,  
And live the Word they've known.  
Here the outcast and the stranger  
Bear the image of God's face;  
Let us bring an end to fear and danger:

***Refrain:***

Let us build a house where all are named,  
Their songs and visions heard  
And loved and treasured, taught and claimed  
As words within the Word.  
Built of tears and cries and laughter,  
Prayers of faith and songs of grace;  
Let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:

***Refrain:***

All are welcome, all are welcome,  
All are welcome in this place.

Opening Prayer (*seated*)

**Presentation of the New Minister**

Region President: Rev. Audrey Lounder

Friends, we are gathered here in the presence of God to celebrate a new ministry and to covenant together for the service of God in this place.

Member of the Joint Search Committee: Co Chair: Sandra Boone  
We present Rev. Neal Palmer, who has been called to a ministry of Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care in the Bathurst Pastoral Charge. We believe that he is qualified according to our prayerful and diligent discernment.

Region President: Rev. Neal, seeing that you are called to ministry by the grace of God and that you are here in response to the action of the Bathurst Pastoral Charge, Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Region, we now mark a new relationship involving you, the region, and the congregation of this pastoral charge. We believe that God who has given us the will to do these things, will give us the grace to perform them.

**Disbanding of the Joint Search Committee:**

*(members of the Joint Search Committee are asked to stand)*

Region President: Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Region and the members of the Bathurst Pastoral Charge would like to express our gratitude to the Joint Search Committee for your faithful service over the past number of months. Your commitment of time, faith and discernment has brought us all to this significant time and place. Thank you for the completion of this work.

**Anthem**

"How Great Thou Art"

**Service of the Word**

**Prayer for Illumination:**

**Eternal God,  
in the reading of the scripture,  
may your Word be heard;  
in the meditations of our hearts,  
may your Word be known;  
and in the faithfulness of our lives,  
may your Word be shown. Amen.**

Scripture Readings:

Jeremiah 1:4-10  
Mark 4:35-41

Reflection:

\*Hymn: Deep In Our Hearts

MV 154

Deep in our hearts there is a common vision;  
deep in our hearts there is a common song;  
deep in our hearts there is a common story,  
telling Creation that we are one.

Deep in our hearts there is a common purpose;  
deep in our hearts there is a common goal;  
deep in our hearts there is a sacred message,  
justice and peace in harmony.

Deep in our hearts there is a common longing;  
deep in our hearts there is a common theme;  
deep in our hearts there is a common current,  
flowing to freedom like a stream.

Deep in our hearts there is a common vision;  
deep in our hearts there is a common song;  
deep in our hearts there is a common story,  
telling Creation that we are one.

### **The Act of Covenanting**

Region President: In Jesus Christ, God came into the world not to be served, but to serve. By our baptism we are called to a ministry of worship, witness, and reconciliation. As we prepare to make commitments to one another, let us join in a statement of our communal faith.

#### **\*A New Creed**

*(p. 918 VU)*

#### **Statement of this new Ministry:**

*(The new minister comes forward at the invitation of the presider)*

Presider: Rev. Neal, you have been called to minister here on the Bathurst Pastoral Charge in a ministry of Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care. You, the people of this pastoral charge are called together with Rev. Neal, as a Christ-centred community, to worship, study, prayer and action. We, the region, will be responsible for the encouragement, support and oversight of this ministry. Let us ask for God`s grace as we covenant together this day.

Let us pray:

**All: Gracious God,  
at our baptism  
you called each of us to Christ`s ministry;  
pour out your Holy Spirit upon us  
as we commit ourselves  
to work together in Jesus` name. Amen.**

#### **Promises of the new Minister:**

Region President: Rev. Neal, do you, in the presence of this congregation, commit yourself to this new trust and responsibility?  
*R: I do, by the grace of God.*

Region President: Will you accept the discipline of the presbytery and, together with its other members, be responsible for the oversight of the life of God`s church here and in the world?  
*R: I will, by the grace of God.*

Region President: Will you accept the support and encouragement of this pastoral charge and this presbytery?  
*R: I will, by the grace of God.*

#### **Promises of the Pastoral Charge:**

*(pastoral charge members stand)*

Region President: Will you join with Rev. Neal, in a ministry of worship, study, hospitality, prayer, and action within this pastoral charge and in the world?  
*R: We will, by the grace of God.*

Region President: Will you support Rev. Neal, pray for him, and grow together in love and faith as he serves among you in this ministry?  
*R: We will, by the grace of God.*

#### **Promises of the Presbytery:**

*(members of Presbytery stand)*

Region President: Will you, as members of Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Region, join with Rev. Neal and with the Bathurst Pastoral Charge in the ministry that is both theirs and ours?  
*R: We will, by the grace of God.*

Region President: Will you exercise oversight for their work, and support and encourage them in this ministry?  
*R: We will, by the grace of God.*

**Hymn:** Spirit of Life VU 381

Spirit of Life, come unto me.  
Sing in my heart all the stirrings of compassion.  
Blow in the wind, Rise in the sea, move in the hand  
Giving life the shape of justice.  
Roots hold me close, wings set me free;  
Come to me, come to me.

Presentation of Symbols:

*(members of pastoral charge present symbols to the new minister)*

BIBLE:

*Presenter: Be among us as one who shares the Word of God.*

**All: Amen.**

WATER:

*Presenter: Be among us as one who baptizes in the name of the  
Triune God.*

**All: Amen.**

BREAD & CHALICE:

*Presenter: Be among us as one who breaks the bread and blesses  
the cup.*

**All: Amen.**

HYMN BOOK:

*Presenter: Be among us as one who encourages the joy of music.*

**All: Amen.**

TOY:

*Be among us as one who encourages joy and laughter.*

**All: Amen.**

Region President: Rev. Neal, and members of the Bathurst Pastoral Charge, let all these be signs of the ministry that is ours and yours in this place.

**All: Amen!!**

**Declaration and Response:**

Region President: In the name of Jesus, and on behalf of Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Region, I declare you, Rev. Neal Palmer, duly covenanted as minister of the Bathurst Pastoral Charge. Let us rejoice in the covenant we have made.

**Prayer & The Lord's Prayer:** *(seated – led by new minister)*

**Offering:** *(the offering will benefit the work of the Region)*

**\*Offertory Hymn:** Praise God from Whom All Blessings VU 541

***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.***

**\*Offertory Prayer:**

**May these gifts bring light  
to those who walk in darkness,  
hope to those who live in despair,  
and justice to those who are oppressed.  
Grant to each giver a sense of participation  
in the most important opportunity of all time:  
to share your love with the world.  
To this end, we dedicate our offering and ourselves.  
Amen.**

**\*Hymn:** It's a Song of Praise to the Maker MV 30

It's a song of praise to the Maker,  
The thrush sings high in the tree.  
It's a song of praise to the Maker,  
The gray whale sings in the sea.

**Refrain:**

And by the Spirit you and I  
can join our voice to the holy cry  
And sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.

It's a call of life to the Giver  
When waves and waterfalls roar.  
It's a call of life to the Giver  
When high tides break on the shore,

***Refrain:***

It's a hymn of love to the Lover,  
The bumble-bees hum along.  
It's a hymn of love to the Lover;  
The summer breeze joins the song,

***Refrain:***

It's the chorus of all creation;  
It's sung by all living things.  
It's the chorus of all creation;  
A song the universe sings,

***Refrain:***

And by the Spirit you and I  
can join our voice to the holy cry  
And sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.

**\*Commissioning & Benediction** *(led by new minister)*

**\*Choral Blessing:** "May the God of Peace" – MV #224

***May the God of peace and of all good,  
may the God of peace and of all good  
be always with you. Amen!***

***May God's peace be with you. Amen!***

**Musical Postlude**

***You are invited to share in some refreshments  
following the service, in the Ruth Morrison Room.***