

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

**Dec. 31, 2017**

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

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<u>Lectionary for today</u>	<u>Lectionary for next Sunday</u>
<i>Isaiah 61:10-62:3</i>	<i>Isaiah 60:1-6</i>
<i>Psalm 148</i>	<i>Psalm 72</i>
<i>Galatians 4:4-7</i>	<i>Ephesians 3:1-12</i>
<i>Luke 2:22-40</i>	<i>Matthew 2:1-12</i>

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

*We welcome the Men's choir today  
and thank them for leading our worship service*

### THE COMMUNITY GATHERS

#### Musical Prelude:

**\*Choral Opening:** *'Go, Tell It on the Mountain'* #43 VU  
***Go, tell it on the mountain,  
Over the hills and everywhere.  
Go, tell it on the mountain  
That Jesus Christ is born.***

#### Welcoming:

Jesus went with his parents  
and came to Nazareth;  
and his mother kept all these things in her heart.  
And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature,  
and in favour with God and the people.  
*Luke 2:51-52*

#### Welcoming Friends Worshipping by CD:

#### Announcements:

#### Lightening of the Christ Candle:

One: Holy God, we light the Christ Candle  
as we prepare to enter this new year.  
We thank you for your presence with us  
in all the years of our lives.

**All: We have known joy, and also sorrow,  
success and failure,  
and through it all you have been with us—  
the companion of all our journeys.**

One: Much of life is fleeting  
and so we thank you for things that endure:  
the love of faithful friends,  
wisdom gained from experience,  
the reliability of nature,  
and your steadfast love.

**All: We thank you for this new year which awaits us;  
take us by the hand and lead us on.**

#### Call to Worship:

One: A star shining brightly in the East,  
**All: discovered by those who have eyes to see  
the unusual and the challenging.**  
One: A journey into unknown territory,  
**All: taken by those who have courage and curiosity.**  
One: An encounter with an evil presence,  
**All: evil faced, yet resisted with care.**  
One: The Holy One recognized, in spite of humble origin;  
**All: the glory and the gifts given to God's chosen Child.**  
One: Let us worship God!



**Prayer of Approach:**

Almighty God,  
as your Son our Saviour was born of a Hebrew mother,  
but rejoiced in the faith of a Syrian woman  
and of a Roman soldier.  
He welcomed the Greeks who sought him,  
and suffered a man from Africa to carry his cross;  
so teach us to regard the members of all races  
as fellow heirs of the kingdom of Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**\*Opening Hymn:** *'Good Christian Friends, Rejoice'* #35 VU

**THE SERVICE OF THE WORD**

**Prayer for Understanding:**

O God,  
your Word is a lamp to our feet,  
and a light to our path.  
Give us grace to receive your truth  
in faith and love. Amen.

**Scripture Readings:**

Gary Branch

**Old Testament Lesson:** Isaiah 61:10-62:3

**Responsive Psalm:** Psalm 148 #871 VU

**Gospel Lesson:** Luke 2 :22-40

**\*Hymn:** *'Joy Is Now in Every Place'* #45 VU

**Message:** "As One Year Ends a New One Begins"

**Anthem:** *'We Three Kings'*

**THE COMMUNITY RESPONDS**

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

**Choral Response:**

*(Tune Praise God from whom all blessings flow.)*  
*Praise God with songs that never cease,*  
*Praise God who fills the earth with peace.*  
*Praise God for love and joy within,*  
*The Holy Child is born again*

**\*Prayer of Dedication:** (in unison)

**Ever-present God,**  
**with this offering we present also ourselves:**  
**all that we have been,**  
**all that we are,**  
**and all that we shall become,**  
**and our resolve to walk in your way.**  
**Accept us and our offering, we pray for Jesus' sake.**  
**Amen.**

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

**Light has come into the world**  
**but we love the night.**  
**Love has come into the world**  
**but we continue to hate.**  
**Grace has come into the world**  
**but we cannot forgive.**  
**Hope has come into the world**  
**but we are surrounded by despair.**  
**New life has come into the world**  
**but we are tired.**  
**Peace has come into the world**  
**but conflict continues.**  
**Joy has come into the world**  
**but we are sad.**

*(silence)*

**Judge us, O God, by your gracious love.**  
**Forgive us, O God, and set us free. 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 the Creator brings you new life,  
forgives and redeems you.  
At the beginning of this new year take hold of this forgiveness,  
and live your life in the spirit of Jesus. Amen.

**Silent Prayer:**

**Reflective Music:**

**Pastoral Prayer:**

Gracious God,  
we pray this day  
for all who have come with us to Bethlehem.  
We pray for all who are poor and cold  
and hungry like the shepherds,  
that they may hear good news.  
We pray for all who are wandering and searching like the magi;  
that they may find the place to leave their gifts  
and their burdens.  
We pray for all who are busy, hurried,  
preoccupied like the innkeeper,  
that they may know the peace  
that comes from genuine acts of hospitality.  
We pray for all like Herod who have power,  
that they may use it with good will.  
We pray for ourselves—we who need comfort, peace and joy,  
even in this starlit season,  
and all the days of our lives. Amen.

**The Lord's Prayer:**

**THE COMMUNITY GOES FORTH**

**\*Closing Hymn:**      *'Once in Royal David's City'*      **#62 VU**

*(Please form a circle around the sanctuary for the commissioning,  
the blessing, and the toasting in of the new year.)*

**Commissioning:**

One: As sages from the East offered you their best,

**All: so may we honour you, O Christ,  
with our highest visions and finest energies.**

One: As you turned the water to wine at Cana,

**All: so come to your church,  
and teach us to change human tears to joyful song.**

One: As you were baptized to fulfill all righteousness,

**All: so may your church humbly do your will.**

One: As you gave light to those who followed you on earth,

**All: so be our light as we follow you  
on city streets or country roads.**

**Be revealed among us in power, in word,  
in sacrament, and in places  
where we live and work.**

**Glory be to you, O Christ, now and forever. Amen.**

**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**  
***Love 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:**

*Whether we want them or not,  
the New Year will bring new challenges;  
whether we seize them or not,  
the New Year will bring new opportunities.  
~Michael Josephson~*

# Church News

## This Week at First United –Jan. 1- Jan. 5

Monday	Closed	New Year's Day
Wednesday	9am	Badminton

**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.

**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.

**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.

**Thank You:** Thank you to all the participants as well as those who attended our Christmas concert, 'Silent Night, Holy Night'. \$2170.00 was raised to support the ongoing life and work of our church.

*One resolution I have made,  
and try always to keep,  
is this:  
to rise above the little things.  
~Author unknown ~*

## Isaiah 61:10-62:3 New International Version (NIV)

<sup>10</sup> I delight greatly in the LORD;  
my soul rejoices in my God.  
For he has clothed me with garments of salvation  
and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness,  
as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest,  
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

<sup>11</sup> For as the soil makes the sprout come up  
and a garden causes seeds to grow,  
so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness  
and praise spring up before all nations.

### Zion's New Name

62 For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,  
for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet,  
till her vindication shines out like the dawn,  
her salvation like a blazing torch.

<sup>2</sup> The nations will see your vindication,  
and all kings your glory;  
you will be called by a new name  
that the mouth of the LORD will bestow.

<sup>3</sup> You will be a crown of splendor in the LORD's hand,  
a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

## Luke 2:22-40 New International Version (NIV)

### Jesus Presented in the Temple

<sup>22</sup> When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord

<sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"<sup>[a]</sup>),

<sup>24</sup> and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons."<sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him.

<sup>26</sup> It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah.

<sup>27</sup> Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required,

<sup>28</sup> Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

<sup>29</sup> "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,  
you may now dismiss<sup>[c]</sup> your servant in peace.

<sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen your salvation,

<sup>31</sup> which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:

<sup>32</sup> a light for revelation to the Gentiles,  
and the glory of your people Israel."

<sup>33</sup> The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him.

<sup>34</sup> Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against,

<sup>35</sup> so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

<sup>36</sup> There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage,

<sup>37</sup> and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. <sup>[d]</sup> She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying.

<sup>38</sup> Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

<sup>39</sup> When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth.

<sup>40</sup> And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.