

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

December 6, 2020

Minister Rev. Neal Palmer **Music Director** Martha Vickers
OfficeAdm Margaret Payne-Chenard **Greeters :** Jini Palmer
Custodian Steve White Lester Scott

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<u>Lectionary for Today</u> Isaiah 40:1-11 Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13 2 Peter 3:8-15a Mark 1:1-8	<u>Lectionary for next Sunday</u> Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 Psalm 126 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 John 1:6-8, 19-28
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*Asterisk * identifies those times in the service where the congregation is invited to stand as able.*

This morning we welcome Grace and Autumn Ronalds as guest vocalists. Thank you for sharing your gift of music!

We also welcome Carter Lavigne and Jennifer Oliver-Lavigne as Advent Candle Lighters, Scripture Readers, etc

GATHERING

MUSIC AS WE GATHER

WELCOME

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING – Peace (*responsively*)

...Peace is the theme of this day.

What does peace look like?

...Peace looks like people living their lives, doing their jobs, walking their paths.

What does peace feel like?

...Peace feels like splashing in the rivers of justice rolling down from God’s holy mountain.

What is it like to live in peace?

...May its light help us find our way.

(The Peace candle is lit.)

**CENTERING FOR WORSHIP -
 “Hope Shines as the Solitary Star”**

MV # 220

***Peace shines as the solitary star.
 Faith is the inner light.
 You and I together mirror the Light of Lights,
 and illumine the pathway home.***

CALL TO WORSHIP (*responsively*)

Praise God from the tops of the highest mountains!

Grant us peace, Holy One.

Praise God from the bottoms of the deepest valleys!

Grant us peace, Holy One.

Praise God from the bumps in the road!

Grant us peace, Holy One.

Praise God from the still waters!

Grant us peace, Holy One.

Praise the God of highs and lows, both rough places and smooth.

We come to praise the One who brings peace to all.

GATHERING PRAYER

GATHERING 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

We will walk up the mountain of our God
With the children of the whole wide world abroad.
The hungry shall be fed, Yes, ev'ry girl and boy,
The captives shall go free, The lame shall leap for joy,
As we walk up the mountain of our God.

Refrain

PRAYER OF HUMILITY

CHORAL RESPONSE

***Breathe into this moment of peace
with courage to let go, daring to dream.
For the days are surely coming
when we'll rise strong together once again in peace.***

***GREETING ONE ANOTHER** (*responsively*)

The Peace of Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

SHARING A STORY (*with those of all ages*)

SINGING A SONG – Oh, what a wonderful gift

Refrain:

*Oh what a wonderful gift!
Oh what a wonderful gift!
God gives lives of hope and love,
Oh, what a wonderful gift!*

"Arise, your light has come!"
The world in stillness lay,
to hear the songs that lit the night
and brought us Love's new day.

Refrain:

Today we bring a light,
as Advent comes a new,
but hope and peace and love and joy
are gifts for all year through.

Refrain:

For all that we receive,
for all the love we hold,
we answer with our thanks to God,
and share them with the world.

Refrain:

So, as we bring our gifts,
and offer them with pray'r,
may we be people seeking peace
and justice ev'ry where.

Oh, what a wonderful gift!
Oh what a wonderful gift!
God gives lives of hope and love,
Oh, what a wonderful,
Oh, what a wonderful,
Oh, what a wonderful gift!

ENGAGING

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Mark 1:1-8
Isaiah 40:1-11

REFLECTION

MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

GIFT OF MUSIC – “Away in a Manager”

RESPONDING

MINUTE FOR MISSION

Bev Murphy

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

***OFFERING PRAYER** *(in unison)*

**We offer our gifts, Holy One, both tangible and spiritual, to level the ground and make smooth the way ahead.
We prepare, not just for our individual relationships with you, but for the wider community to find nurture and comfort as well.
We offer ourselves, our minds, and our hearts to reveal your presence in our midst.
May your beauty be revealed to us and in us.
Amen**

SHARING OUR CONCERNS

***O come, O come, Emmanuel
Refresh us at your life-giving well.
All people long to feel your grace.
Pour out your Spirit on every place.
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel,
Shall come to thee wherever you may dwell.***

(Tune: Veni Emmanuel, VU 1) (The Gathering A/C/E 2020/21)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER – VU #921 *(in unison)*

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever.
Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING HYMN – "Go, Tell It on the Mountain

VU # 43

Refrain:

*Go, tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere.
Go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.*

While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light.

Refrain:

The shepherds feared and trembled
when lo, above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Saviour's birth!

Refrain:

Down in a lonely manger
the humble Christ was born,
and God sent our salvation
that blessed Christmas morn'

Refrain:

BLESSING

CHORAL SENDING FORTH "*I am Walking a Path of Peace*" -MV
#221

***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.***

(The Candles are extinguished.)

Church News

Christmas Eve worship services will be held on December 23, 2020 at 7:00 pm and December 24, 2020 at 4:00 pm Please register with the office prior to the service you wish to attend.

Just a reminder that you need to register at the church office before 1:00 pm each Friday for the following Sunday's service.

Please note the office hours are Monday to Friday 9:00 am to 3:30 pm, closed for lunch from 12:00 to 12:30.

Peanut Butter Update To date, 446 jars have been collected and \$1090.00 towards the purchase of Peanut Butter has been given to the Bathurst Volunteer Center. Peanut butter can be dropped off at the church office anytime during office hours; cheques can be delivered or mailed to the Bathurst Volunteer Center at 464 King Ave., Bathurst NB E2A 1P5. Please indicate on your cheque that it is for the purchase of Peanut Butter for the First United contribution.

Annual Christmas Benevolence Fund: It's that time of year! Giving to this fund is even more important than ever because of COVID-19. Things will be a bit different, but we hope the results will be the same as other years. Should you wish to give, please place your donation in an envelope and drop it in the offering plate, or drop it off at the Church or mail to First United Church, 309 St. Patrick Street, Bathurst N.B, E2A 1E2. Make your cheques payable to First United Church. Please mark clearly that this donation is for the Benevolence Fund. The proceeds from this fund support the Bathurst Volunteer Center and people in our congregation who need assistance. We thank you for your generosity.
Community Outreach Sub-Team

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, 2020.

Thank you! On behalf of the "Lesotho Initiative" Committee of ASD - N, a special 'thank you' is extended to you for your support of our recent calendar drive. A total of 156 "Help Lesotho" 2021 calendars were sold, and this will raise \$2340. for the work of "Help Lesotho" with Grandmothers and vulnerable children in the tiny mountain kingdom of Lesotho, Africa. (There are additional calendars available for anyone else who would like to support this cause.)

Thank you Rick and Debrah Watling; Wayne and Colette Clowater for enhancing the beauty of our sanctuary with your Christmas decorating.

Thank you to our November greeters Gary Branch, Brenda Parrott, Gayle Ferron, Bev Murphy and Shirley Sealy and our counters Anne Brooks and Gayle Ferron.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Mark 1:1-8

Today's first reading comes from the Gospel according to Mark—Chapter 1—Verses 1 through 8...

1 The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

2 As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way;

3 the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'"

4 John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

5 And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

6 Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.

7 He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals.

8 I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Isaiah 40:1-11

Today's second and final reading comes from the Book of Isaiah—Chapter 40—Verses 1 through 11...

40 Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.

2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

3 A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

4 Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.

5 Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

6 A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field.

7 The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass.

8 The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

9 Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!"

10 See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.

11 He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

May God bless to our understanding these significant parts of our Christian story...