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

Dec 20, 2015
Forth Sunday of Advent

Clergy	Rev. Blair Lewis	**Organist**	Martha Vickers
Office Adm.	Isabel Clouston	**Greeters**	Nancy & Allen Jagoe
Custodian	Alan Wilcox		

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Lectionary for today	Lectionary for next Sunday
Micah 5:2-5a	*I Samuel 2:18-20, 26*
Psalm 80	*Psalm 148*
Hebrews 10:5-10	*Colossians 3:12-17*
Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)	*Luke 2:41-52*

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS

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

Organ Prelude:

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

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

One: Oh, with hearts open wide,
With hands open, too;
living God's love each and every day, through -
All: Jesus people, walking Christ's Way.
One: Opportunities here,
Opportunities there,
Using our talents, God's gifts we will share –
All: Jesus people, walking Christ's Way.

One: This Advent flame is burning,
To brighten day and night,
Invites us to discipleship –
To shine out the Christ light!

Oh, with hearts open wide,
With hands open, too;
Living God's love each and every day, through -
All: Jesus people, walking Christ's Way!
(The fourth candle is lit)

Advent Candle-Lighting Hymn:
'A Light Is Gleaming' **#82 VU**
A light is gleaming,
Spreading its arms throughout the night,
Living in the light.
Come share its gladness,
God's radiant love is burning bright,
Living in the light.

Call To Worship:
One: Let every tongue give praise to God.
All: Let us proclaim that God is with us, forgiving, liberating, and redeeming.
One: Let us rejoice in our worship;
let us be open to God's leading.
All: We will praise the God of love.

Welcoming:
Rejoice, daughter of Zion!
I am coming,
I shall make my dwelling among you, says our God.
Zechariah 2:10

Welcoming Friends Worshipping by CD:

Announcements:

Prayer of Approach:

Restore us, O Spirit of God, in this time of worship.
Feed us by your word. Strengthen us in prayer.
Lead us in songs of praise.
And move us even closer to the certainty that God is with us.
All praise to Emmanuel, our hope and our salvation. Amen

***Opening Hymn:** *'Love Comes'* *(tune VU# 331 Aurelia)*

Love comes to us incarnate
In manger's dingy bed
Love's star invites the strangers
All waiting to be led.
Love comes to us incarnate
With skin and face and name;
Love walks the earth that we walk
Our flesh, our blood: enflamed

Love comes to us incarnate
Life's bread, new-broken here.
Love lifts its cup of blessings,
In grace that knows no fear.
Love comes to us incarnate
in prison's darkened cell,
in hunger's bony features,
in rooms where lonely dwell.

Love comes to us incarnate
In blessing's ceaseless flow;
A daily consecration
Of all we see and know.
Love longs to be incarnate
On our unlikely bones
Love's breath stirs life within us
And calls us: welcome home.

Written by S. Curtis Tufts, 2008Gathering, A/C/E 2009-2010
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Children of All Ages:

***The Lord's Prayer:**

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM

Introduction to the Sacrament of Baptism:

Minister: Parents, Family, Relatives, Friends in Christ, we gather now around this font to celebrate the gift of grace in the Sacrament of Baptism.

They were bringing children to Jesus that he might touch them, and bless them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it he was indignant and said to them.
"Let the children come to me, do not hinder them, for to such belongs the realm of God. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the realm of God like a child shall not enter it."

And then Jesus took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.

Baptismal Hymn:

'Out of Deep, Unordered Water' **#453VU**

Prayer:

One: Let us celebrate God's gift of grace
given to us in the sacrament of baptism.

All: There is one body
and one Spirit;
we have one hope in Christ.

One: There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
one God, Creator of us all.

All: Out of the water of baptism
we rise with new life,
forgiven, renewed, and one with Christ,
members of Christ's body.

Ephesians4:4-6

One: The Sacrament of Baptism proclaims
and celebrates the Grace of God.
Therefore, we gather at this font
to proclaim for **Drew Bradley Chamberlain**
the gift of God's Grace and Call
in Jesus Christ, and to celebrate his welcome
into the Family of Faith.

Presentation of child for Baptism: Brenda Parrott

On behalf of the Christian Development Team
of the Bathurst Pastoral Charge,
a congregation of the United Church of Canada,
I present **Drew Bradley Chamberlain** son
of Adam Brian Chamberlain and Heather Carolyn Conde
to receive the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

Questions of the Parents

Minister: Do you desire to have your child
baptized into the Family of Faith of Jesus Christ?
Answer: We do!

Minister: Therefore, I ask you before God, and your families and friends, do you profess your faith in God your Heavenly Father, in Jesus Christ your Saviour and Lord, and in the Holy Spirit your teacher and guide?
Answer: We do!

Minister: Will you bring up your child in the knowledge and love of God, teaching him the truths and duties of the Christian Faith, that he may be led to profess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour?
Answer: We will, God being our helper!

Minister: Will you join with your brothers and sisters in the mission and ministry of Christ's Church?
Answer: We will!

Minister: Will you share with your children the Christian Life, and seek to grow with him in faith, hope and love?
Answer: We will!

***A New Creed:**

We are not alone,
we live in God's world.
We believe in God:
who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,

who works in us and others
by the Spirit.
We trust in God.
We are called to be the Church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.
In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.
We are not alone.
Thanks be to God. Amen

***Church Family Commitment**

Minister: We pledge to this child and his parents our support and care**.**

All: As a baptized and baptizing Church,
we commit ourselves to support
and uphold this child, and his parents,
within the Community of Faith.
May God grant us the Grace to live out our Baptism.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Pouring of Water:

Minister: God be with you.
All: **And also with you.**
Minister: Lift up your hearts
All: **We lift them up to God**
Minister: Let us give thanks to God
All: **It is good to give God thanks and praise**

Minister: *(As Water is being poured).*
Eternal and present God,
we thank you for the Water with which you bless us.
We pray O God that you will send
your Holy Spirit upon us, and upon this water,
that this font may become our font of blessing
and your gift of peace.

Prayer: (in unison)

Gracious and Holy God,
we bless you for the gift of life,
and, within it, the gift of water.
Over its unshaped promise
your Spirit hovered at creation.
By water, comes the growth of the earth.
Through water,
you led the children of Israel to freedom.
In the waters of the Jordan
your Child Jesus was baptized.
Now may your Spirit be upon us and what we do,
that this water may be a sign for all
of new life in Christ,
in whose name we pray.
Amen.

The Baptism:

I baptize you Drew Bradley Chamberlain
in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.
I sign you with the Cross.

The Laying of the Hands:

May the power of the Holy Spirit work within you
that being born of Water and the Holy Spirit;
you may be a faithful witness to Christ. Amen

Welcome by the Congregation:

Minister: We welcome Drew into the Household of Faith.
We welcome you with joy and thanksgiving.

All: **We are members of the Body of Christ.**
We are inheritors of God's promise.
So, in the Name of Christ,
we welcome Drew into the family of faith.

Choral Response:

'*A Little Child the Saviour Came*' **#445 VU**

Placement of Banner Sheep:

Presentation of Stole, Certificate, Candle, and Bible:

Blessing:

The Grace of Christ attend you, the love of God surround you and the Holy Spirit keep you. Amen.

All who are united in the Covenant of Baptism are the Body of Christ in the world. Go now in peace, and remember always who you are and whose you are!

THE SERVICE OF THE WORD

Prayer for Understanding: (in unison)

Oh God, in this time of worship
as we hear readings from Scripture
may we be open to your promises,
your love, and your transformation.
May we vision and dream.
May we be surprised by the depth of your love
May we receive the life you give us as a gift.
May we encounter Emmanuel – God with us. Amen

Scripture Readings: Elna Scott
Old Testament Lesson: Micah 5:2-5(a)
Responsive Psalm: Psalm 80 **#794VU** Part 1
Gospel Lesson: Luke 1 :46-56

***Hymn:** '*Infant Holy, Infant Lowly*' **#58 VU**

Meditation: **"Signs of Love at Unexpected Times"**

Anthem:

THE COMMUNITY RESPONDS

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.

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

As we prepare, O God,
for the festival of Christ's birth,
help us to give in expectation of his return.
May our gifts be used to prepare
the world for Christ's coming,
when all creation shall sing your praise. Amen.

Prayer Of Confession:

All: We come this morning as a broken people, O God.
We have turned our lives from your path.
We do wrong against each other.

One: We choose apathy instead of activism.
We leave when we should stay.
We talk when we should listen.
We stiffen when we should bend.

All: We choose ourselves when we should choose you.
No wonder we're waiting for you to come.
No wonder we cannot take what is wrong
and make it right.
We confess our sin,
and we confess our need for your grace,
your courage, and your tenderness.
Heal our wounds.
Find our hearts,
and make us your people once more. Amen

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:

God comes to us in dreams and visions,
in prophecies and affirmations, in longing and in hope,
in salvation through a little child.
Claim this promise for yourself,
and let God's healing love fill you.

Reflective Music/ Silent Prayer:

Pastoral Prayer:

One: O God, during this season,
We will celebrate your birth amongst us as a human child.
Renew your church as the Body of Christ.
O Holy Child of Bethlehem,

All: be born in us today.

One: In this holy season Christians the world over
Are prepairing to celebrate Christ's birth.
Open our hearts to faith.
O Holy Child of Bethlehem,

All: be born in us today.

One: On the first Christmas, there was no room in the inn.
Protect with your love those who have no home,
and all who live in poverty.
O Holy Child of Bethlehem,

All: be born in us today.

One: Your Christ came as a light shining in the night.
Bring comfort to all who suffer any kind of pain
or sadness in our world.
O Holy Child of Bethlehem,

All: be born in us today.

One: Shepherds in the fields heard good tidings of joy.
Give us grace to share the gospel of love.
O Holy Child of Bethlehem,

All: be born in us today.

One: Angels sang, "Peace to God's people on earth."
Strengthen those who work for your peace and justice
In all the world.
O Holy Child of Bethlehem,

All: be born in us today. Amen

THE COMMUNITY GOES FORTH

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

***Commissioning:** (in unison)

As we head into the final days before Christmas,
may we leave this place secure in the knowledge
that God's promises will be fulfilled.
December 25 is just a few days away,
but the gift that God gives us
will not wear out or fade away.

***Blessing:**

Go with the love of God,
who extends mercy from generation to generation..
Go with the illumination of the Holy Spirit,
who prepares us for the coming of our Lord.
Go with the peace of the Christ child,
who comes to partner with us to bring the kingdom that will never end.

*** Choral Closing:** *I am Walking a Path of Peace'* **(#221 MV)**

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:

For God so loved the world,
that he gave his only begotten Son,
that whosoever believeth in him
should not perish,
but have everlasting life.
John 3:16 (KJV)

Church News

This Week at First United –Dec. 21 – Dec. 26

Thursday	12pm - Closed	Christmas Eve
	4pm	Church Service
	7pm	Communion/Candle Lighting
Friday	Office Closed	Christmas Day
Monday	Office Closed	Boxing Day

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

Peanut Butter for Volunteer Centre

Commitment December 31, 2015 **900**
Total to Date **842**
To meet our obligation, we will need to collect 29-30 jars of peanut butter per week.
The Volunteer Center supplies, on average, 430 households monthly with that amount growing to over 530 during the Christmas season.

Thank you! The West Bathurst and St. Luke's "Old Scottish" Cemeteries' "Endowment Fund" continues to grow thanks to the generous support of its donors through donations as well as PAR givings. As of November 30, 2015, the total for the "Endowment Fund" was $54, 985.00. The West Bathurst Cemetery Committee wishes to thank everyone who made a donation to the fund during 2015. Your support is appreciated.

The CD titled, "Christmas on the Bay", is now available. It features a variety of Christmas music by Linda Knowles MacPherson, with help from friends, Donald Eddy, Archie Fowlie, and Anne Marie Hocquard. A copy may be obtained with a donation to First United Church. Please contact Isabel at the church office to obtain or reserve a copy.

Notice: Sound system units for hearing impaired individuals are available. Please ask the soundboard operator for assistance.

2016 Envelopes: The Givings Envelopes for 2016 are located in the narthex. Please insure that envelopes for the correct year are used as individual contribution #'s may have changed.

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.

Notice from Nominations Team

The Nominations Team would like to take this opportunity to invite all who support the life and work of Christ's Church in the world to serve on a working team of our faith community. A complete list of Teams and Sub-Teams is posted in the Narthex for your convenience in volunteering for a specific team. Those presently serving on teams are also encouraged to review the lists to ensure their names have not been omitted in error and to verify that their choice of team has not changed. If you have any questions as to the role of a specific team, please contact one of the Nominations Team members or the Church Office. We thank you in advance for your continued support, and for your feedback by January 6, 2016. This would give the Team sufficient time to prepare their report for the Annual Meeting for approval.

There is no surprise more magical
than the surprise of being loved.
It is God's finger on man's shoulder.
~Charles Morgan~

REFUGEE BULLETIN UPDATE No. #3 –
FOR DECEMBER 20th

Work continues on the presbytery's behalf. We have ten communities identified and a handful more to plan for. Where possible, we are sharing resources with two other projects. As members of the Miramichi Presbytery (from Blackville to Upsalquitch and then north to New Richmond) we are encouraged to assist in the task of providing a safe nurturing home for a refugee family.

Numerous meetings will be scheduled throughout the Presbytery region during the first two weeks of January. Our primary goal will be to coordinate upcoming efforts and outline the fundraising plan. We will also provide details on the project itself, answer questions, and provide you with an opportunity to get directly involved, if you are so inclined.

Blue Ribbon Fundraising Campaign:

With the singing of 'Hope is a Star' during Advent, we are reminded "*peace is a ribbon that circles the earth, giving a promise of safety and worth*". The color blue is symbolic of *peace* (ex. blue berets) thus our blue ribbon theme. Hopefully, for one family we can fulfill that promise.

Phase One running from **January 3th to February 7th** (before the family arrives) will focus on *'gifts in kind'*. Items big and small are needed to outfit their home. Please prepare items you would feel comfortable using in your home.
We will also begin to accept *individual and business pledges*. Please make cheques payable to your church. Receipts will be issued for your contribution.

Total Fundraising Goal: $25,000.00

If you look for me at Christmas

If you look for me at Christmas,
You won't need a special star.
I'm no longer just in Bethlehem,
I'm right there where you are.

You may not be aware of Me,
Amid the celebrations.
You'll have to look beyond the stores,
And all the decorations.

But if you take a moment,
From your list of things to do,
And listen to your heart, you'll find
I'm waiting there for you.

You're the one I want to be with,
You're the reason that I came.
And you'll find Me in the stillness,
As I'm whispering your name.

Love, Jesus

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."

3 Therefore 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.

4 He 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.

5 And 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 1:46-56 New International Version (NIV)

Mary's Song

46 And Mary said:

"My soul glorifies the Lord

47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

56 Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home