

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

December 18, 2022

Minister Rev. Neal Palmer **Music Director** Martha Vickers
Office Adm. Margaret Daniels **Greeter** Julie Spence
Custodian Lester Scott Harvey Spence

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<u>Lectionary for today</u>	<u>Lectionary for Christmas Eve</u>
Isaiah 7:10-16	Isaiah 9:2-7
Psalms 80:1-7, 17-19	Psalms 96
Romans 1:1-7	Titus 2:11-14
Matthew 1:18-25	Luke 2:1-20

Today's bulletins are in loving memory of ***Ruth Knowles***
Placed by Joyce MacLeod and family

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

GATHERING

MUSIC AS WE GATHER

WELCOME & LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

THE ADVENT OF LOVE *(responsively)*

The Ronalds family (Sally, Clint, Grace & Autumn)

Three candles are lit.

Today is the Advent of love.

As we light this candle, we remember all who are feeling lonely and distressed at this time of year.

We live in a world that fears the stranger and the strange.

We light this candle as our commitment to love that is expressed in inclusivity.

We are the community that welcomes unconditionally and generously.

We light this candle for Jesus, the Lover of All.

The fourth candle is lit.

"Hope Is a Star" – VU #7 *(Verse 4)*

***Love is a flame that burns in our heart,
Jesus has come and will never depart.
When God is a child there's joy in our song.
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,
and none shall be afraid.***

CALL TO WORSHIP

GATHERING PRAYER

***GATHERING CAROL** – "A Candle is Burning"

VU #6

A Candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,
a candle of hope in December's dark night.
While angels sing blessing from heaven's starry sky,
our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh.

A Candle is burning, a candle of peace,
a candle to signal that conflict must cease:
for Jesus is coming to show us the way;
a message of peace humbly laid in the hay.

A candle is burning, a candle of joy.
a candle to welcome brave Mary's new boy.
Our hearts fill with wonder, and eyes light and glow
as joy brightens winter like sunshine on snow.

A candle is burning, a candle of love,
a candle to point us to heaven above.
A baby for Christmas, a wonderful birth,
for Jesus is bringing God's love to our earth.

We honour Messiah with Christ-candle's flame,
our Christmas Eve candles glad tidings proclaim.
O come, all you faithful, rejoice in this night,
as God comes among us, the Christian's true light.

PRAYER OF HUMILITY

CHORAL RESPONSE

O holy Child of Bethlehem!
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in;
be born in us today.

***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** – "Jesus, Our Brother"

VU #56

Jesus, our brother, kind and good,
was humbly born in a stable rude,
and the friendly beasts around him stood,
Jesus, our brother, kind and good.

"I," said the donkey, shaggy and brown,
"I carried the mother up hill and down,
I carried his mother to Bethlehem town;
I," said the donkey, shaggy and brown.

"I," said the cow, all white and red,
"I gave him my manger for his bed,
I gave him hay to pillow his head;
I," said the cow, all white and red.

"I," said the sheep with curly horn,
"I gave him my wool for his blanket warm,
he wore my coat on Christmas morn;
I," said the sheep, with curly horn.

"I," said the dove, from the rafters high,
"I cooed him to sleep that he should not cry,
we cooed him to sleep, my mate and I;
I," said the dove, from the rafters high.

Thus all the beasts, by some good spell,
in the stable dark were glad to tell
of the gifts they gave Emmanuel,
the gifts they gave Emmanuel.

ENGAGING

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READING

Helen Knowles

Matthew 1:18-25

REFLECTION

MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

GIFT OF MUSIC - "Come, Adore Him"

RESPONDING

MINUTE FOR MISSION

Bev Murphy

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

THE OFFERING IS BROUGHT FORWARD

*OFFERING HYMN

(Tune – Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow)

***Love fills our hearts and overflows,
Love fills our lives, expands and grows.
Loving is how we're called to live,
Loving is how each one can give.***

*OFFERING PRAYER *(in unison)*

**Holy One,
may these ordinary gifts of paper and card swipes, of coins
and electronic transactions honour you.
May the everyday gifts of our lives and the work we do in
your name honour you too.
Amen**

SHARING OUR CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kindom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kindom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

GOING OUT (as Spirit people)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*CLOSING CAROL – “Once in Royal David’s City”

VU #62

Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for his bed.
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven
who, with God is over all,
and his shelter was a stable,
and his cradle was a stall.
There among the poor and lowly
lived on earth our Saviour holy.

For he is our lifelong pattern;
daily, when on earth he grew,
he was tempted, scorned, rejected,
tears and smiles like us he knew.
Thus he feels for our sadness,
and he shares in all our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see him,
through his own redeeming love;
for that child who seemed so helpless
is our Lord in heaven above;
and He leads his children on
to the place where he is gone.

*BLESSING *(responsively)*

...An angel came to Joseph and proclaimed:

Emmanuel! God with us!

In this final week before Christmas day, may our waiting proclaim:

Emmanuel! God with us!

Go forth in joy to tell the world:

Emmanuel! God with us!

Amen

***CHORAL CLOSING** – "I Am Walking a Path of Peace" – MV #221

*I am walking a path of love,
I am walking a path of love,
I am walking a path of love,
lead me home, I am home.*

(The Advent Candles are extinguished.)

POSTLUDE

Church News

Gifts with Vision - Are you looking for a gift to celebrate someone special for Christmas, Birthday, Anniversary, Congratulations - for that someone who has everything, or who doesn't want anything more to add to their 'clutter'?

Gifts with Vision is the perfect gift for you to give! The United Church of Canada has put together a catalogue and online 'store' of gifts that make a difference in people's lives throughout Canada and the world. Each 'Gift with Vision' provides support for remarkable Mission and Service partners for special projects that address many life-changing issues, such as hunger, poverty, anti-racism, well-building, environment, healing and reconciliation.

There are catalogues, which show a small sample of what is in the on-line store, at the back of the church for you to take - we can get more! The on-line store is at giftswithvision.ca.

Thank you for being part of these life-changing activities!

Church News

Church office hours - Monday to Friday 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

The office will be **closed** on Monday and Tuesday, December 26th and 27th, reopening on Wednesday, December 28th at 9 AM.

Christmas Eve Services will be held at 4 PM and 7 PM. There will not be a worship service on Christmas morning, December 25th.

Peanut Butter Update - As of December 15th, 2022, 389 jars of Peanut Butter has been collected to go to the Bathurst Volunteer Center. **Our goal is 900 jars for the year** and we currently have **847** including what has been purchased with monetary donations.

Broadview (Observer) Renewal is due in December. If you receive this publication and have not yet renewed your subscription at the church office please do so by Monday, December 19, 2022. If you would like to start to receive this publication please contact the office at 546-3532. The annual subscription rate is \$25 (tax included).

White Gift Contributions - 151 items were donated to the church for the Volunteer Center as well as 13 pairs of socks – 7 pairs of mittens and 24 toques. These items were delivered to the Volunteer Center by Jennifer Oliver and 10 of her students.

Also 24 pairs of pajamas were donated to Passage House.

Thank you one and all for your generosity!!

Thank You - We would like to thank anyone who helped in any way to make our Christmas Memorial Hymn Sing, held on Sunday, December 11th, a huge success. With your generous donations we have been able to contribute approximately \$5600 towards the life and work of First United Church. Wishing you all a Merry Christmas!



Into the December Darkness

"Blue Christmas"

In the context of the festive season, the darkness may heighten feelings of grief or sadness, pain or loneliness that may be associated with past experiences or present circumstances.

Thus, "Blue Christmas" services are offered as a pastoral response to this reality.

The emphasis in such services is on quiet carols, scripture and silence to allow space, recognizing that it is not necessarily a season of joy for everyone.

This service provides a place to acknowledge the fact that Christmas can be very difficult for many of us.

A Blue Christmas Service offers a time to reflect and deal with some of the less festive feelings.

***On Wednesday December 21st
On the longest night***

At 7:00pm

Central United Church, Clifton

***Will be holding an
Ecumenical "Blue Christmas" Service***

All are welcome



SCRIPTURE READING *(New Revised Standard Version)*

MATTHEW 1:18-25

18 Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

19 Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.

20 But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

21 She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.'

22 All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

23 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel', which means, 'God is with us.'

24 When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife,

25 but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

May God bless to our understanding this significant part of our Christian story...