

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

December 24, 2022  
Christmas Eve – 4 PM

**Minister** Rev. Neal Palmer    **Music Director** Martha Vickers  
**Office Adm.** Margaret Daniels    **Custodian** Lester Scott  
**Greeters** The Lavigne Family

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<u>Lectionary for today</u>	<u>Lectionary for next Sunday</u>
Isaiah 9:2-7 Psalm 96 Titus 2:11-14 Luke 2:1-20	Isaiah 63:7-9 Psalm 148 Hebrews 2:10-18 Matthew 2:13-23
This afternoon's bulletins are in loving memory of <b>George Jardine</b> placed by his wife, Bernice and <b>Edgar Brown</b> placed by Helené & 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 (in unison)

As we gather to worship, let's respectfully pause to remember we live and work and worship on lands that are, by law, the unceded territory of the original peoples, the Mi'kmaq. May we live with respect on this land, and live in peace and in friendship with its people.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES

...We light one candle and break out in song.  
(Gifted by Addison MacLaggan)

"O Little Town of Bethlehem" – VU #64 (Verse 1)

O little town of Bethlehem,  
how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
the silent stars go by;  
yet in thy dark streets shineth  
the everlasting light;  
the hopes and fears of all the years  
are met in thee tonight.

...We light the second candle and find a reason to sing.  
(Gifted by Charlotte Woods)

"O Little Town of Bethlehem" – VU #64 (Verse 2)

For Christ is born of Mary;  
and gathered all above,  
while mortals sleep, the angels keep  
their watch of wondering love.  
O morning stars, together  
proclaim the holy birth,  
and praises sing to God the King,  
and peace to all on earth.

...We light the third candle for this child that grounds our hope in what's possible.  
(Gifted by Chloe McLellan)

"O Little Town of Bethlehem" – VU #64 (Verse 3)

How silently, how silently  
the wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
The blessed gift of heaven.  
No ear may hear his coming;  
but in this world of sin,  
where weak souls will receive him, still  
the dear Christ enters in.

...We light the fourth candle to shine in all holy splendour.

*(Gifted by Cameron MacLaggan)*

**"O Little Town of Bethlehem"** – VU #64 *(Verse 4)*

*O holy child of Bethlehem,  
descend to us, we pray;  
cast out our sin, and enter in;  
be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels  
the great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us,  
our Lord Emmanuel.*

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

...The Peace of Christ be with you all.

**And also with you.**

*ENGAGING*

**SCRIPTURE READING** – Isaiah 9:2-7

*(Gifted by Mya Brewster & Alexa Chamberlain)*

**Mya:** Many, many years before Jesus was born, there lived a prophet called Isaiah. Isaiah was sad about the kings and leaders in his time who had forgotten God's way. Isaiah dreamed of a time when God would send a new leader, a king who would be fair and loving and would show people God's way once again. He described the coming of this new leader in this way:

**Alexa:** The people have seen a great light. They lived in a land of shadows, but now light is shining on them. A child has been born for us; a son given to us. And he will be our ruler. He will be called "Wonderful Counselor," "Mighty God," "Everlasting Father," "Prince of Peace."

His royal power will continue to grow, and his kingdom will always be at peace. He will rule as King David's successor, basing his power on justice and righteousness from now 'til the end of time. God is determined to do this.

**\*CAROL** – "Gentle Mary Laid Her Child"

VU #46

Gentle Mary laid her child lowly in a manger;  
there he lay, the undefiled, to the world a stranger.  
Such a Babe in such a place, can he be the Saviour?  
Ask the saved of all the race who have found his favour.

Angels sang about his birth, wise men sought and found him;  
heaven's star shone brightly forth, glory all around him.  
Shepherds saw the wondrous sight, heard the angels singing;  
all the plains were lit that night, all the hills were ringing.

Gentle Mary laid her child lowly in a manger;  
he is still the undefiled, but no more a stranger.  
Son of God of humble birth, beautiful the story;  
praise his name in all the earth; hail the King of glory!

**CREATING A BIRTHPLACE**

...As we walk in the shoes of our everyday lives, we carry trembling hopes for the future.

We prepare a place for the Christ to be born among us.

**\*CAROL** – "Away in a Manger" – VU #69

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
the little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.  
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,  
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the Baby awakes,  
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.  
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,  
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay  
close by me forever, and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,  
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

...Each small commitment to good is like a straw, a piece of wood, or a source of nurture for the Holy Child.

**GIFT OF MUSIC - "Go, Tell It on the Mountain"**

*Gifted by Children of the Sunday School*

*RESPONDING*

**PRAYER FOR THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD**

*The Christ Candle is lit.*

*(Gifted by Grace & Autumn Ronalds)*



**INVITATION TO THE OFFERING**

**THE OFFERING IS BROUGHT FORWARD**

*(Gifted by Grace & Carter Lavigne)*

**\*OFFERING CAROL - "In the Bleak Midwinter" - VU #55 (Verse 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.***

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

**Holy One,**

**take our offerings—what we offer here, what we offer with our time and energy and make them holy.**

**May such light shine from us and from these gifts that all may know your peace.**

**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 kingdom 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 kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.  
Amen.**

*GOING OUT (as Spirit people)*

**SHARING THE CHRIST LIGHT**

...And light your candles.

*The sanctuary lights are dimmed...*

**\*CLOSING CAROL - "Silent Night, Holy Night" - VU #67**

My Friends in Christ, the light has come into the world. The light shines in our lives and in our hearts.

And now please stand, and as we sing together, remember to shine God's light into every corner of the world...

**\*BLESSING**

**\*THE CHRIST CANDLE IS EXTINGUISHED**

**\*POSTLUDE - "We Wish You a Merry Christmas"**

*Refrain*

*We wish you a Merry Christmas (3X)*

*And a Happy New Year*

Good tidings we bring, to you and your kin

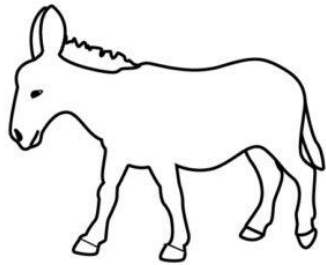
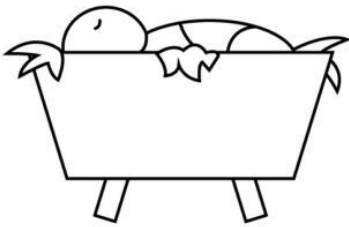
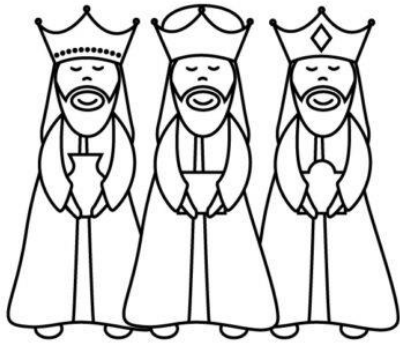
We wish you a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year

*Refrain*

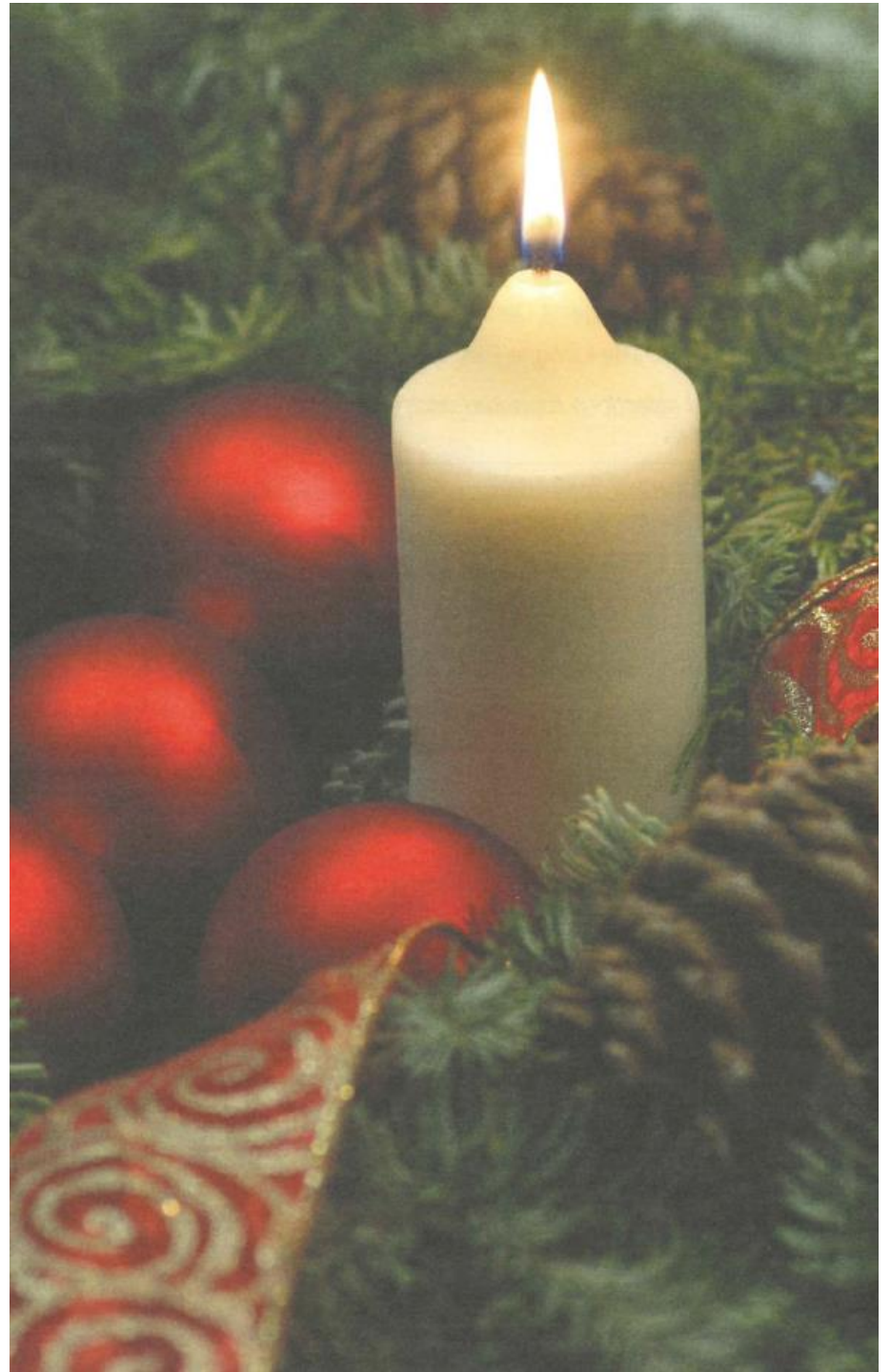
*(The Advent Candles are extinguished.)*

Merry Christmas

One & All



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## *Highlights of Bathurst Pastoral Council Meeting December 1, 2022*

With Sandra Boone presiding, others present were Brenda Parrott, vice-chair; Judy Losier, secretary; Dave Morison, church treasurer; Wayne Lord, Ian Oliver, Lester Scott, Martha Vickers, Rick Watling, Isabel MacLaggan and Rev. Neal Palmer, who opened with prayer.

The church's financial status, as presented by Dave, showed a 2022 deficit of \$11,807 to date. The budgeted deficit for this 11 month period was \$22,028 but two unexpected donations totalling \$13,500 helped to improve the financial picture.

Total revenue as of November 30 was \$213,753. Two Ways and Means takeout's resulted in \$18,370 of that revenue. Operating expenses amounted to \$225,561, partly due to an increased insurance premium this year and a drop in rental income.

Three monthly meetings of the Christian Development Team this fall revealed a busy schedule. With Brenda Parrott as chair, the team saw the return of the choir and after service fellowship, an eight week block of Sunday School sessions, six membership transfers, several baptisms, Holy Communions, installation of the sound system, land acknowledgment focus, and Advent preparation, in conjunction with Rev. Neal, among other responsibilities. Coming up are the Memorial Christmas Hymn Sing on Sunday afternoon, December 11 and two Christmas Eve services.

After four decades, the UCW at First United has disbanded. Funds, in the amount of \$3,942 were distributed to the Poinsettia Fund (\$500), peanut butter fundraiser (\$200), First United Endowment Fund (\$1500) and the balance directed to the Church's General Fund.

The Pastoral Care Team's December 1<sup>st</sup> meeting determined Christmas remembrances to shut-ins, seniors and others. Expressions of sympathy were sent to Rev. Keith Adams, his wife, Judy, and daughter, Haley whose 13 year old daughter Sophie passed away unexpectedly as the result of a sudden and serious illness.

Chaired by Lester Scott, the November meeting of the Property Management Team dealt with many items including the installation of the sound/video system, rentals, new windows and outdoor lights, the energy consumption audit, interior painting and other improvement, installations and repairs.

Ways and Means Chair Wayne Lord reported on a successful turkey dinner takeout. He said new team members are welcome.

Martha Vickers provided executive minutes of the Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council, formerly known as the Maritime Conference. She said the annual meeting, May 26 – 28 next spring will be held at the University of Prince Edward Island rather than at Mount Allison at a considerable saving in expenses.

Nominations chair Rick Watling referred to the posting in the narthex regarding Council members for 2023. He encouraged new members to sign up and noted that one such person had offered already.

The next Council meeting was scheduled for February 2.

Isabel MacLaggan  
Communications Sub-team