

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

February 25, 2024

Minister Rev. Neal Palmer **Music Director** Martha Vickers
Office Adm. Margaret Daniels **Custodian** Lester Scott
Greeters Margaret Payne-Chénard & Wayne Cormier
Audio & Visual Technicians Shirley Allain & Donald Eddy

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| <u>Lectionary for today</u> | <u>Lectionary for next Sunday</u> |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16 | Exodus 20:1-17 |
| Psalm 22:23-31 | Psalm 19 |
| Romans 4:13-25 | 1 Corinthians 1:18-25 |
| Mark 8:31-38 | John 2:13-22 |

The asterisk * identifies those times in the service where you are invited to present yourselves, body, mind, and spirit, as is comfortable for you today...

GATHERING

MUSIC AS WE GATHER

WELCOME & TERRITORY 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.

LENTEN CANDLE-LIGHTING *(responsively)*

(As we follow the path of Jesus, we light one additional candle for each Sunday of Lent.)

Today, we take one step further on our Lenten journey, travelling in the shadow of our teacher, hoping to follow faithfully in his *Way*.

We keep our senses attuned, attentive to God's Child, the Beloved. Even when what we experience makes us uncomfortable or afraid, we don't turn away.

Two Lenten Candles are lit.

CENTERING FOR WORSHIP –

MV #115

"Behold, Behold, I Make All Things New"

Behold, behold, I make all things new, beginning with you and starting from today. Behold, behold, I make all things new, my promise is true, for I am Christ the way.

CALL TO WORSHIP *(responsively)*

We who fear the marvels of creation

have gathered to worship.

Our Creator doesn't hide from the hardship and suffering of the world.

In the midst of suffering, the Spirit finds ways to satisfy the hungry and provide deliverance to the oppressed.

From generation to generation,

we celebrate our Maker.

GATHERING PRAYER

***GATHERING HYMN – “Bring Many Names”**

VU #268

Bring many names, beautiful and good,
celebrate, in parable and story,
holiness in glory, living, loving God.
Hail and hosanna! Bring many names!

Strong mother God, working night and day,
planning all the wonders of creation,
setting each equation, genius at play:
Hail and hosanna, strong mother God!

Warm father God, hugging every child,
feeling all the strains of human living,
caring and forgiving till we're reconciled:
Hail and hosanna, warm father God!

Old, aching God, grey with endless care,
calmly piercing evil's new disguises,
glad of good surprises, wiser than despair:
Hail and hosanna, old, aching God!

Young, growing God, eager, on the move,
saying no to falsehood and unkindness,
crying out for justice, giving all you have:
Hail and hosanna, young, growing God!

Great, living God, never fully known,
joyful darkness far beyond our seeing,
closer yet than breathing, everlasting home:
Hail and hosanna, great, living God!

LENTEN TENEBRAE (*responsively*)

Weston Brewster & Cheryl Brewster

...Five Candles are lit, as well as the Christ Candle...

One: We live unaware of the spiritual realities around us.

Two: We fail to grasp the reality of God's presence in the world.

One: Like Nicodemus, we cannot grasp the kingdom of God.

Two: Thus, we muddle through life, suffering the consequences of our lack of attentiveness.

One: Thus, we bear the impact of climate change in the pursuit of economic gains.

Two: We live with enormous amounts of plastic waste in the name of convenience.

One: We live with micro-aggressions and systemic racism.

Two: We mourn our ignorance and underdeveloped religious beliefs.

The second candle is extinguished.

CHORAL RESPONSE – “Don't Be Afraid”

MV #90

***Don't be afraid. My love is stronger,
my love is stronger than your fear.
Don't be afraid. My love is stronger
and I have promised,
promised to be always near.***

One & Two: Let us pray.

**Holy One,
we pray to be born anew,
in order to grasp the meaning of your kingdom.
We long to discover our authentic selves
as we shed our false ones in this Lenten season.
May truth set us free.
May we abide in your spirit of integrity
so we may live lives celebrated—
as being Christ-led.
Amen**

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

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

And also with you.

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

Mark 8:31-38

***SINGING A SONG** – “Teach Me God, to Wonder” VU #299

Teach me, God, to wonder, teach me, God, to see;
let your world of beauty capture me.

Refrain

*Praise to you be given, love for you be lived,
life be celebrated, joy you give.*

Let me, God, be open, let me loving be;
let your world of people speak to me.

Refrain

Let me, God, be ready, let me be awake,
in your world of loving my place take.

Refrain

Teach me, God, to know you, hear you when you speak,
see you in my neighbour when we meet.

Refrain

ENGAGING

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READING

Cheryl Brewster

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

REFLECTION

MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

GIFT OF MUSIC - “I Have Called You by Your Name”

RESPONDING

YOUR GENEROSITY MATTERS

Anne Wilson

INVITATION TO MAKE AN OFFERING

THE OFFERING IS GATHERED

***OFFERING RESPONSE** – VU #541

“Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow”

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
praise God, all creatures high and low;
give thanks to God in love made known:
Creator, Word and Spirit, One.***

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

**Creator and Creating One,
may these gifts build on the legacy
we’ll leave for future generations.
May ours be a legacy
of justice, hope, faith and,
most importantly, love.
Amen**

SHARING OUR CONCERNS

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**

GOING OUT (as Spirit people)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***CLOSING HYMN – “Faith of Our Fathers”**

VU #580

Faith of our fathers, living still
in spite of dungeon, fire, and sword;
O how our hearts beat high with joy,
when e'er we hear that glorious word:
 faith of our fathers, holy faith,
 we will be true to you till death.

Faith of our mothers, daring faith,
your work for Christ is love revealed,
spreading God's word from pole to pole,
making love known and freedom real:
 faith of our mothers, holy faith,
 we will be true to you till death.

Faith of our sisters, brothers too,
who still must bear oppression's might,
raising on high, in prisons dark,
the cross of Christ still burning bright:
 faith for today, O living faith,
 we will be true to you till death.

Faith born of God, O call us yet;
bind us with all who follow you,
sharing the struggle of your cross
until the world is made anew.
 Faith born of God, O living faith,
 we will be true to you till death.

***BLESSING**

***CHORAL CLOSING – “Stay with Us through the Night”**
VU #182 (Verse 1)

***Stay with us through the night.
Stay with us through the pain.
Stay with us, blessed stranger
till the morning breaks again.***

(The Christ Candle, Lenten Tenebrae & Lenten candles are extinguished.)

POSTLUDE

Church News

| This Week at First United – Feb 26 th to March 2 nd | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Monday | 9:00-11:00 AM | Badminton – DEMH GYM |
| Monday | 9:00 AM | Ways & Means RMR |
| Wednesday | 9:00-11:00 AM | Badminton – DEMH GYM |
| Thursday | 4:15 PM | Choir Practice |
| Saturday | 8:00 AM–1:00 PM | Bathurst Community Market |

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

Peanut Butter – Once again this year we are setting a goal of **900 jars** of peanut butter to donate to the Bathurst Volunteer Center. Up to February 22nd, 2024 we have collected 126 jars.

The **Annual General Meeting of Bathurst Pastoral Charge** will be held following the church service on Sunday, March 17, 2024

Confirmation Classes: If anyone is interested in attending confirmation classes, please contact Rev. Neal or the church office at 506-546-3532.

Pastoral Care: If you, or anyone you know, is in need of a pastoral visit, please contact Rev. Neal Palmer or any member of the Pastoral Care Team. Please help this ministry by keeping us informed. Thank you!

Church News

A Saint Patrick's Gathering sponsored by the Pastoral Care Team will be held at First United Church, 309 Saint Patrick Street, Bathurst, on **Thursday, March 14th from 1 PM to 3 PM.** (Snow date Friday, March 15th)

Music will be provided by The Treble Makers. There is no admission fee. A voluntary donation towards the life and work of First United Church or a non-perishable item for the church pantry would be appreciated. Everyone is welcome!

Members of the group include: Linda Knowles MacPherson - Piano; Donald Eddy- Clarinet & Guitar; Ann Marie Hocquard - Voice & Percussion; Julia Henry - Trumpet & Voice; Charles Ramsey - Voice; Karen McCrea - Violin & Voice; Hazen McCrea - Bass Guitar

As part of our **Stewardship Program** here at First United, information on Planned Giving through Wills and Bequests is available to our congregational membership. All members / adherents are encouraged to review this information and take the appropriate steps pertaining to your wishes. The information is available from the church office.

Below you will find a stewardship quote relating to the same.

"God has given us two hands,
one to receive with and the other to give with."

~ Billy Graham

Community News

Melodies for Missions featuring the *Bathurst Jazz Band* and *Alysa Collins*, Sunday March 17th at 2:30 p.m. at Evangel Pentecostal Church, 150 Basin Street. Tickets \$10.00. Children 12 and under free. In support of the Evangel Mission Team. Contact Glen or Joyce Daley 506 546 3764

Community News

A FAMILY AND COMMUNITY BREAKFAST will be held at St. George's Anglican Church, 432 King Avenue, on **Saturday, March 9th from 8:00 – 10:00 am.** As this community event serves to fund our local mission projects, we rely on donations and ask that you consider a minimum donation of \$ 8.00 to help defray costs. We appreciate your kindness and support. Come and enjoy fellowship and great food.

SCRIPTURE READING

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

The Sign of the Covenant

1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless.

2 And I will make my covenant between me and you and will make you exceedingly numerous."

3 Then Abram fell on his face, and God said to him,

4 "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations.

5 No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations.

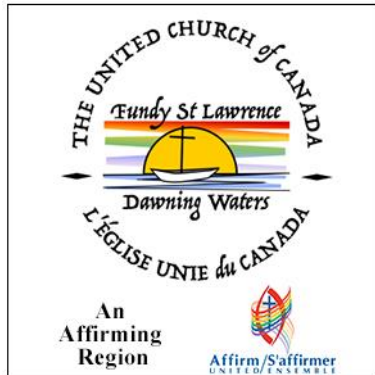
6 I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you.

7 I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.

15 God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name.

16 I will bless her and also give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her."

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



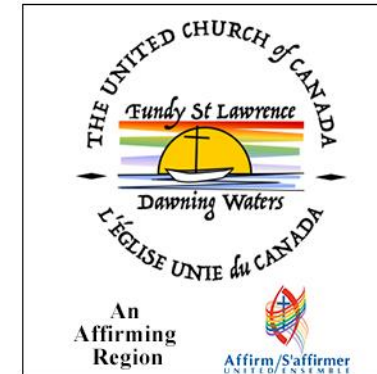
Communities of Faith: Singing Songs of Hope to Support Mental Health – Feb 28th at 7:00PM

This webinar will be an opportunity to dive deeper into our understanding of spirituality, mental health and the impact a community of faith can have on providing support.

When life is out of balance a person's mental well-being can become compromised. They might change behaviors, forget who they are, who cares for them and maybe they even feel disconnected from God.

Our Presenter is Kelly Hudson-Lewis, Manager of Spiritual Care for the Saint John Area of Horizon Health. Kelly is a United Church minister who, in 25 years of ministry, has served in congregations, community advocacy agencies as well as mental health outreach.

For registration please click on this [link](https://ucceast.ca/82881-fslw-affirm-webinar-mental-health-and-spirituality).
(<https://ucceast.ca/82881-fslw-affirm-webinar-mental-health-and-spirituality>)



The United Church Bookstore: Join the Lenten Study Group!

Every Tuesday starting February 20, join the Rev. Stephen Fetter and others in a six-week [Lenten study series](https://united-church.ca/search/all?search_api_fulltext=Actfast)
https://united-church.ca/search/all?search_api_fulltext=Actfast

to deepen your connection to God and Creation while exploring devotional readings from Act/Fast: Spiritual Practices for a Climate in Crisis.

Bonus: Those who enroll in the course will also receive a coupon for 15% off the cost of the softcover book from the United Church Bookstore.

I Am because We Are

I am an Asante from Ghana. The Asante use proverbs, parables, and symbols in their teachings. In one story, they teach that it is not taboo to go back to retrieve what has been forgotten. Looking back at our history helps us celebrate yesterday's blessings and informs our choices and attitudes today. By looking back we can move confidently into the future.

This February, as Canada both commemorates the legacy and celebrates the contributions of people of African descent, I recall one African maxim in particular: "I am because we are." None of us is self-sufficient. We are interdependent; we all belong to one human family. This is envisioned in the message of Martin Luther King's speech "I Have a Dream." No one is a stranger or an outsider in the human family, but all dine together at the same table as brothers and sisters.

This hope for human freedom becomes a reality only when we partner with God to "loose the bonds of injustice" (Isaiah 58:6) and proclaim the *true* freedom in Jesus Christ as we heed Christ's call to be "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" (Matthew 5:13, 14).



Your gifts to the **Mission and Service Fund** support our intercultural programs in the United Church.



The United Church of Canada
L'Église Unie du Canada

Photos: Anne MacRae (Photo location: Cape Coast Castle—a fortification used in the transatlantic slave trade—Cape Coast, Ghana)
Text: Emmanuel K. Ofori

