

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

December 15, 2024

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent

**Interim Minister** Rev. Ivan Gregan **Music Director** Martha Vickers

**Office Adm.** Margaret Daniels **Custodian** Lester Scott

**Greeters** Julie & Harvey Spence

**Audio & Visual Technicians** Ralph Jamieson & Donald Eddy

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<u>Lectionary for today</u>	<u>Lectionary for next Sunday</u>
Zephaniah 3:14-20	Micah 5:2-5a
Isaiah 12:2-6	Luke 1:46b-55 or Psalm 80:1-7
Philippians 4:4-7	Hebrews 10:5-10
Luke 3:7-18	Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)

*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.**



**\*CALL TO WORSHIP** *(responsively)*

Holy God, who is wholly Mystery, You are calling us.

**With those who have gone before us,  
with those who are around us,  
and with those throughout the world  
who are with us now,  
we will gather with God.**

Incarnate God, who is appearing in human flesh, You are calling us.

**With those who have gone before us,  
with those who are around us,  
and with those throughout the world  
who are with us now,  
we will gather with God.**

Inspiring God, who is breathing new life into each of us, You are calling us.

**With those who have gone before us,  
with those who are around us,  
and with those throughout the world  
who are with us now,  
we will gather with God.**

**\* CENTERING FOR WORSHIP** "Gloria" VU #37

**Gloria! Gloria! In excelsis Deo!  
Gloria! Gloria! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Glory to God! Glory to God! Glory in the highest!  
Glory to God! Glory to God! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**

**\*LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE** *(in unison)*

In the wilderness of anxiety,

**The Light of God's Presence shall come!**

To dry and parched souls, longing for inspiration,

**The light of God's Presence shall come!**

In the midst of this congregation assembled,

**The Light of God's Presence shall come!**

Even now God is here, we are not alone!

*The Christ Candle is lit.*

**GATHERING PRAYER** *(in unison)*

**Eternal God, You are the Sender of light  
in the midst of darkness,  
You are the Bringer of joy in the midst of worries,  
And You are the Giver of direction  
in the midst of confusion.  
Send your Holy Spirit among us and fill us with joy  
that together we may be guided on your  
journey home to You.  
This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.**

**\*GATHERING HYMN** – “Make a Joyful Noise”

VU #820

*Refrain:*

*Make a joyful noise all the earth!  
Worship your God with gladness.  
Make a joyful noise all the earth.  
Come to this place with a song!*

Know that your God has made you.  
Know it's to God we belong.  
And come to this place with joyfulness and praise.  
Worship your God with a song!

*Refrain*

Enter these gates, thanks giving.  
Enter these courts with praise.  
Sing thanks to your God and bless the holy Name.  
Worship your God with a song!

*Refrain*

Ages through endless ages,  
seasons of endless years,  
the love of our Maker ever shall endure.  
Worship your God with a song!

*Refrain*

**PRAYER OF HUMILITY** *(responsively)*

Most merciful Redeemer, faithful Friend of all who turn to You,  
**Send your Holy Spirit among us.**  
Set us free from the weight of yesterday,  
**From the burdens we have carried for far too long,  
from the fears that have ensnared us for far too long,  
and from the personal and private thorns that have  
stung us for far too long.**  
Set before us the pathway that leads us home.  
**Give us courage to begin a new journey,  
looking forward to the destination,  
and trusting in the previous forgiveness we have  
experienced from you.**  
Hear now our silent prayers that we make in your Presence.  
Amen.

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

**CHORAL RESPONSE** – “Hope Is a Star”

VU #7

***Joy is a song that welcomes the dawn,  
Telling the world that the Saviour is born.  
When God is a child there's hope in our song  
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong  
And none shall be afraid!***

**LIGHTING OF THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE – JOY**

*Krissy, Chloe & Lia McLellan*

We are the people of God, perfect and imperfect,  
**Holy creations and wholly belonging to God.**  
We come with fear and faith, worry and wonder,  
**And we come with JOY, knowing that we belong to God.**  
God gives us light, not to be sheltered but to be shared,  
**So with joyful expectation and joy-filled hearts, we  
turn to God who has created a place for us to belong  
and is here to greet us with JOY.**

*Lighting of the Candle of JOY*

**CONGREGATIONAL RECITATION AS THE CANDLE OF JOY IS LIT:**

**The candle of joy's light reminds us of home,  
from where God is calling for all who would roam  
The proud will be humbled; the lowly will rise.  
God's kingdom is one of delight and surprise.**

**CHORAL RESPONSE – "A Candle is Burning" VU #6**

***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.***

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

**In peace, dear God, I come to you  
through Jesus Christ who makes me new.  
And while I run or play or rest,  
be with those whom I love best.  
Guide me in your Holy Way,  
as You walk with me each day, Amen.**

**\*SINGING A SONG – "Never Ending Joy" MV #40**

***Refrain***

*Never ending joy, never ending joy,  
never ending joy,  
never ending joy, never ending joy,  
never ending joy!*

God of every tribe, every language,  
God of every river and sea,  
God of every mountain and island,  
you bring joy to me.

***Refrain***

God of every hill, every valley,  
God of every leaf, every tree,  
God of every cloud, every raindrop,  
you bring joy to me.

***Refrain***

*Never ending joy, never ending joy,  
never ending joy,  
never ending joy, never ending joy,  
never ending joy!*

God of every song, every story,  
God of every captive set free,  
God of every dance, every footstep,  
you bring joy to me.

***Refrain***

**SCRIPTURE READINGS**

*Anne Brooks*

Philippians 4:4-7

Luke 3:7-18

**REFLECTION**

**MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION**

**GIFT OF MUSIC – "My Spirit Soars"**

**YOUR GENEROSITY MATTERS (formerly Minute for Mission)**

*Anne Wilson*

**INVITATION TO MAKE AN OFFERING**

**OFFERINGS ARE GATHERED**

**THE OFFERINGS ARE BROUGHT FORWARD**

**\*ADVENT OFFERING HYMN**

*(Tune: Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow)*

***Joyful is how we seek to live,  
Joyful in what each can give.  
Joyful in what we speak and hear,  
And joy in what we offer here.***

**COMMUNAL PRAYERS**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

\*CLOSING HYMN - "Joy to the World"

VU #59

Joy to the world! The Lord is come:
let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! The Saviour reigns:
let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods,
rocks, hills and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
nor thorns infest the ground:
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the earth with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

\*COMMISSIONING AND BLESSING

The Christ Candle is extinguished.

"I am Walking a Path of Peace"

I am walking a path of joy,
I am walking a path of joy,
I am walking a path of joy,
lead me home, lead me home.

POSTLUDE

Church News

Table with 2 columns: Day, Activity. Title: This Week at First United. Office Hours Monday to Friday 9 AM to 3 PM. Monday: Badminton will resume in January 2025. Tuesday: Knitting will resume in January 2025. Wednesday: Choir Practice will resume on Thursdays in 2025. Saturday: 8 AM to 1 PM Bathurst Community Market - DEMH.

Peanut Butter - Once again this year we set a goal of 900 jars of peanut butter to donate to the Bathurst Volunteer Center and we have surpassed our goal. Congratulations and way to go!! The Center is feeding many more families this year. Up to December 11th, 2024 we have collected 1,024 jars.

Introduction to becoming an "Affirming Congregation" - there will be a short introduction/information session next Sunday, December 15th from 12 noon to 1 PM lead by Rev. Ivan Gregan for anyone who would be interested.

Time for Fellowship - The 2025 Hosting Sheets are in the Ruth Morrison Room. Would you like to assist the members of the Hospitality & Friendship Team to provide/serve refreshments following our church services? We are looking for families, individuals and youth interested in contributing to this enjoyable fellowship opportunity. Please feel free to add your name to the sign-up sheet in the Ruth Morrison Room and talk with a member of the Fellowship Team.

Many thanks to everyone who has volunteered in 2024!
Your Hospitality & Friendship Team,
Bill Stack, Nancy Jagoe, Shirley Sealy, Gayle Ferron

# Church News

If you are aware of **anyone in the hospital or needing a visit**, please let the office know (506-546-3532) and the message will be forwarded to the Pastoral Care Team.

**Thank you to one and all who contributed to White Gift!** We received in excess of 187 food items; 15 gift cards; 25 personal hygiene products; 50 blankets, clothing, mitts etc. and 5 toys. Thank you to Bev Murphy, Helen Knowles and Isabel Clouston for sorting all of the gifts received and to Bill Stack for transporting them to the Center.

## ***Upcoming Christmas Services***

### ***at First United:***

December 22<sup>nd</sup> at 10 AM ~ Advent 4 Service with Communion

December 24<sup>th</sup> at 4 PM ~ Family Christmas for Children of all ages

December 24<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM ~ Family Christmas Eve Service

December 29<sup>th</sup> ~ First Sunday of Christmastide

### ***2024 Christmas Hymn Sing Update***



On December 1<sup>st</sup> we collaborated, once again, with the choir of Central United Church in Clifton to fill the choir loft, under the direction of Martha Vickers. Thank you to the many participants who assisted with the program and to those who supported the joint fundraising event. This event raised just over \$1,700 that is shared between the two churches.

Please note the recording of the event is available on our website

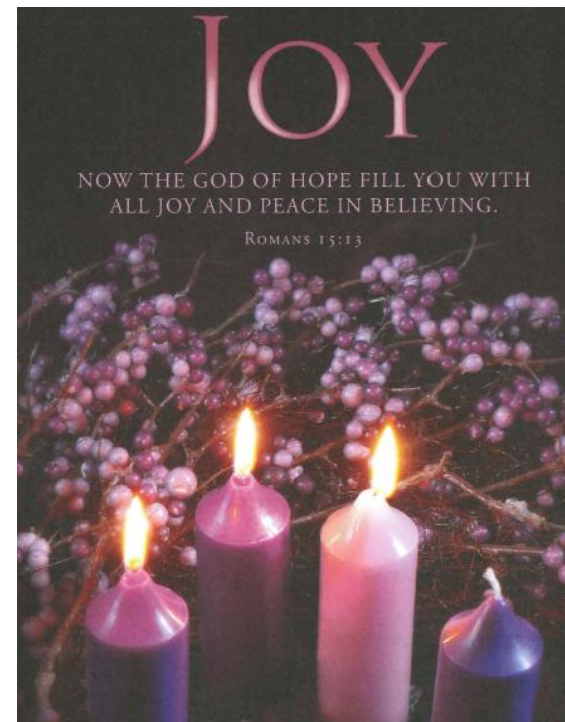
[https://www.firstunited-bathurst.ca/uploads/services/HymnSing\\_2024.mp4](https://www.firstunited-bathurst.ca/uploads/services/HymnSing_2024.mp4)

# Community News

Everyone is invited to ***"Come in From the Cold"*** and join us for an evening of Christmas Carols and songs. Along with Mrs. Barb Aubie at the piano, we will be joined by special guests and friends of St. Lukes who will provide special music. *December 15 at 7:00 p.m. at St. Lukes Presbyterian Church, 395 Murray Avenue, Bathurst.* Free admission but free will donations to support our ministry to the community will be accepted with our thanks.

A most sincere ***Thank You*** from Gary Branch, Jini Palmer and Gwen Sturgeon of the Bathurst Spirit of Christmas for Seniors Committee for the generous contributions from many in our church family to this week's heart-warming deliveries in our community! All special delivery bags were appreciated by the recipients!

Rosalind Kennedy Townsend will be leading her students and a few special guests in an evening of Christmas music this Tuesday, December 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 here in the sanctuary. No admission fee however a voluntary donation at the door for the Bathurst Volunteer Center will be greatly appreciated.



## SCRIPTURE READINGS

### New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

#### PHILIPPIANS 4:4-7

**4** Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

**5** Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.

**6** Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

**7** And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

#### LUKE 3:7-18

**7** John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?"

**8** Therefore, bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.

**9** Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

**10** And the crowds asked him, "What, then, should we do?"

**11** In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none, and whoever has food must do likewise."

**12** Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?"

**13** He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you."

**14** Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

**15** As the people were filled with expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah,

**16** John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

**17** His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

**18** So with many other exhortations he proclaimed the good news to the people.