

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

First Sunday in Lent - March 9, 2025

Clergy Rev. David Allan **Music Director** Martha Vickers
Office Adm. Margaret Daniels **Custodian** Lester Scott
Greeters Nancy & Allen Jagoe
Audio & Visual Technicians Shirley Allain & Donald Eddy

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<u>Lectionary for today</u>	<u>Lectionary for next Sunday</u>
Deuteronomy 26:1-11	Genesis 15:1-12
Psalms 91:1-2,9-16	Psalms 27
Romans 10:8b-13	Philippians 3:17-4:1
Luke 4:1-13	Luke 13:31-35

*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*

MUSIC FOR GATHERING

WELCOME

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: *(in unison)*

...As we gather to worship, let's respectfully pause to remember we live and love, 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.

CENTERING FOR WORSHIP: "Spirit Open My Heart" MV #79
(refrain only)

***Spirit, open my heart to the joy and pain of living.
As you love may I love, in receiving and in giving,
Spirit, open my heart.***

CALL TO WORSHIP: *(responsively)*

The days slowly lengthen, and even as the light increasingly brightens our days, we pause, we take stock, we reflect upon the shadows and the light. The Season of Lent has begun, and in this time of flickering candle flames and a deeper, faithful focus, we are touched with reminders of our vulnerability and our blessings. Our hearts are opened to the awful and the awe-filled moments, and the movement of the Spirit as we are tugged along.

So begins a season of reflection, of penitence, and gathered courage.

As we accompany Jesus in his journey to Jerusalem, we begin our Lenten journey, a journey of the spirit, of growth and grace.

Come; let us worship our God of the journey. Let us pray to our God of the Way...

GATHERING PRAYER: *(responsively)*

God of the wilderness way, this is a journey for which we do not pack, but unpack. We do not plan our itinerary but open ourselves to your prompting. We do not look ahead to our destination as much as look around and within; this is a journey led by the winds of the Spirit.

Into our worship then, send your Spirit to breathe into us new visions and renewed hope, to lead us in new directions with renewed conviction, and gift us with challenge and grace us with peace. Send your Spirit this day, that we may find our way, the way which is ever yours. Amen

***GATHERING HYMN:** "This Day God Gives Me" VU #410

This day God gives me strength of high heaven,
sun and moon shining, blame in my hearth,
flashing of lightning, wind in its swiftness,
deeps of the ocean, firmness of earth.

This day God sends me strength to sustain me,
might to uphold me, wisdom as guide.
Your eyes are watchful, your ears are listening,
your lips are speaking, Friend at my side.

God's way is my way, God's shield is round me,
God's host defends me, saving from ill.
Angels of heaven, drive from me always
all that would harm me, stand by me still.

Rising, I thank you, mighty and strong One,
King of creation, giver of rest,
firmly confessing Threeness of Persons,
Oneness of Godhead, Trinity blest.

LENTEN CANDLE LITURGY:

Margaret Payne-Chénard & Mike Kierstead

During the season of Lent, we remember and retell the story of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. He came bringing light and love, assurance and amazing grace. But there were those who were shut down by the shadows of fear, or reshaped by a desire for power, with hearts that were shrunken and shrivelled up. They sought to extinguish the light and exclude the love that brings life.

We remember the story from Luke's Gospel, where Jesus returns to his hometown of Nazareth and the local synagogue. It immediately follows today's story of his testing in the wilderness. Jesus' presence brings joyful hope, and his words jealous hatred. He is taken to the highest point in town, to the edge of a cliff to be thrown down. It's a wilderness moment. Later, on a hill outside Jerusalem called Golgotha, he will be raised up in order to throw down and throw out all that he stands for, all that he lives for. It's a time of testing.

We know that the lovelight will always be raised up, it will rise over every new horizon, and we know that it will never be overcome. And yet, in those places, in too many places still, the presence of the light within and among all was dimmed for a while...

A candle is extinguished

CHORALE RESPONSE:

MV #18

"Lord, Prepare Me to be a Sanctuary"

***Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,
pure and holy tried and true;
with thanksgiving, I'll be a living
sanctuary for you.***

ASSURANCE:

We're not unfamiliar with the light of God's children being discouraged and overshadowed. You may have experienced this yourself. But even as we remember that a little of the light which came into the world was extinguished for a time, we also remember that the days are getting longer, that the light of God will always shine ever stronger on you, in the chapels of your hearts and in the sanctuaries of your souls. As on the wings of eagles, as on beams of light, you are lifted into life's promise, and called into the grace of love's peace.

CHORALE RESPONSE: "And When You Call for Me"

MV #18

***And when you call for me,
I have already answered.
And when you call for me,
I am already there.***

SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

RESPONSIVE READING: Psalm 91 "On Eagle's Wings" VU #807

SHARING OUR STORIES *(with those of all ages)*

***HYMN:** "We Will Bring You Peace"

(Seasons of the Spirit, volume 2)

Refrain:

*We will bring your peace into the world.
We will bring your peace into the world.
With a loving hand, do the best we can,
we will bring your peace to the world.*

Jesus, you ask us to be gentle.
Jesus, you ask us to be kind,
to take good care of each other,
then your peace will be here for all to find.

Refrain:

Jesus, you ask us to be friendly.
Jesus, you ask us to be fair,
to take good care of each other,
then your peace will be here for all to share.

Refrain:

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION: *(responsively)*

The road to Jerusalem is a winding one, with dangers and diversions, valleys to cross and a hill to climb. Our scriptures are stories of challenge and change, of lives seeking and knowing a great love. They are the words of a people with both a wavering and a wonderful faith.

Still now our minds O God, that we may hear your Word, your promise, your love. We open our beating hearts, trusting that you might write on them anew, and fill us with your guiding Spirit. In the reading of scripture, we open ourselves to you. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

Helen Knowles

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

Rejoice in all the good things God has given us

Romans 10:8b-13

Declare with your mouth; believe with your heart

Luke 4:1-13 Jesus is tested in the desert

SERMON: "Faith-fullness"

GIFT OF MUSIC: "Like a Healing Stream"

YOUR GENEROSITY MATTERS

Ronalds Family

INVITATION TO MAKE AN OFFERING:

We know that too many of us, of God's children, journey through the wilderness of want and pain. We know too how much a faithful community matters on the roads of hope and healing. So, as we journey, as we reflect and receive so much, we give trusting in the power of love and a generous grace.

THE OFFERING IS GATHERED

***OFFERING RESPONSE:**

"Give What You Can, Take What You Need"

***Give what you can, take what you need.
For the body of Christ, is enough to feed.
The hungry for Spirit and the thirsty for love.
Give thanks when you can to our God up above.***

Words & Music: Bryan Cook

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

Creator God, transfigure these offerings of money and our lives, that they may shine with the power of your love. Through these gifts may we, our community and the world better know your presence and the brightness of your desire. Amen



HYMN: "When We are Tested"

MV #65
(tune of *Be Thou My Vision*)

When we are tested and wrestle alone,
famished for bread when the world offers stone,
nourish us, God, by your word and your way,
food that sustains us by night and by day.

When in the desert we cry for relief,
pleading for paths marked by certain belief,
lift us to love you beyond sign and test,
trusting your presence, our only true rest.

When we are tempted to barter our souls,
trading the truth for the pow'r to control,
teach us to worship and praise only you,
seeking your will in the work that we do.

When we have struggled and searched through the night,
sorting and sifting the wrong from the right,
Saviour, surround us with circles of care,
angels of healing, of hope, and of prayer.

Words by Ruth Duck, 1996

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE PRAYER OF JESUS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***CLOSING HYMN: "I Heard the Voice of Jesus"**

VU #626

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Come unto me and rest;
lay down, O weary one, lay down
your head upon my breast."
I came to Jesus as I was,
weary and worn and sad;
I found in him a resting-place,
and he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Behold, I freely give
the living water; thirsty one,
stoop down, and drink, and live."
I came to Jesus, and I drank
of that life-giving stream;
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
and now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"I am this dark world's light;
look unto me, your morn shall rise;
and all your day be bright."
I looked to Jesus, and I found
in him my star, my sun;
and in that light of life I'll walk
till travelling days are done.

***COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION; SHARING THE LIGHT**

Christ Candle is extinguished

***CHORAL SENDING FORTH: "An Old Irish Blessing"**

***May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind be ever at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face
and the rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again, and until we meet again,
may you be held in the hollow of God's hand.***

POSTLUDE

Church News

This Week at First United Church		
Office Hours: 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM Monday to Friday		
Monday	9:00-11:00 AM	Badminton – DEMH GYM
Tuesday	1:00 – 3:00 PM	Knitters - RMR
	7:00 PM	Property Management
Wednesday	9:00-11:00 AM	Badminton – DEMH GYM
Thursday	4:15 PM	Choir Practice
	7:00 PM	Christian Development - RMR
Friday	1:00–3:00 PM	Treble Makers
Saturday	8:00 AM–1:00 PM	Bathurst Community Market

The Annual General Meeting of Bathurst Pastoral Charge/First United Church will be held following the church service on Sunday, March 23, 2025.

The 2024 Annual Report will *hopefully* be printed and ready for pick up next Sunday prior to the regular worship service.

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.

Peanut Butter – We have increased our quota for 2025 to collect 1,000 jars of peanut butter. Up to March 6th we have received 172 jars and have funds on hand to purchase another 90+ jars.

Please Note – In an effort to assist the Bathurst Volunteer Center, should you wish to make a monetary donation you may now do so by **issuing your cheque to First United Church**, indicating it is to be used for the purchase of Peanut Butter. Your donation will be marked as such and will be included on your annual tax receipt. Your cheques can be dropped off at the church office, put in the offering plate or mailed. Periodically the office will purchase the peanut butter while on sale and have it delivered directly to the Volunteer Center

Church News

Ways & Means Team are planning a ***Sunrise Breakfast*** on Sunday, March 30th taking place in the Donald Eddy Memorial Hall from 8:30 AM – 12:00 noon. The menu consists of pancakes, sausages, baked beans, scrambled eggs, hash browns, toast, juice, coffee & tea – all for \$12 Adults and \$5 Children (under 12).

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 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.

Giving and sharing as a first priority is what keeps us in good relations with our neighbours and our neighbourhood.

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

SCRIPTURE READINGS – New International Version

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

1 When you have entered the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance and have taken possession of it and settled in it,

2 take some of the firstfruits of all that you produce from the soil of the land the LORD your God is giving you and put them in a basket. Then go to the place the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name

3 and say to the priest in office at the time, "I declare today to the LORD your God that I have come to the land the LORD swore to our ancestors to give us."

4 The priest shall take the basket from your hands and set it down in front of the altar of the LORD your God.

5 Then you shall declare before the LORD your God: "My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down into Egypt with a few people and lived there and became a great nation, powerful and numerous.

6 But the Egyptians mistreated us and made us suffer, subjecting us to harsh labour.

7 Then we cried out to the LORD, the God of our ancestors, and the LORD heard our voice and saw our misery, toil and oppression.

8 So the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders.

9 He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey;

10 and now I bring the firstfruits of the soil that you, LORD, have given me." Place the basket before the LORD your God and bow down before him.

11 Then you and the Levites and the foreigners residing among you shall rejoice in all the good things the LORD your God has given to you and your household.

Romans 10:8b-13

8b "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim:

9 If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

11 As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame."

12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile - the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him,

13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Luke 4:1-13

1 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

2 where for forty days he was tested by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

3 The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'"

5 The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world.

6 And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendour; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to.

7 If you worship me, it will all be yours."

8 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"

9 The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here.

10 For it is written: "'He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully;

11 they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"

12 Jesus answered, "It is said: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

13 When the devil had finished all this testing, he left him until an opportune time.