

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

Fourth Sunday in Lent - March 30, 2025

Clergy Rev. David Allan **Music Director** Martha Vickers
Office Adm. Margaret Daniels **Custodian** Lester Scott
Greeters Beth Sullivan & Gary Branch
Audio & Visual Technicians Brenda Parrott & Donald Eddy

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<u>Lectionary for today</u>	<u>Lectionary for next Sunday</u>
Joshua 5:9-12 Psalm 32 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32	Isaiah 43:16-21 Psalm 126 Philippians 3:4b-14 John 12:1-8
<p><i>The bulletin today has been placed in loving memory of</i> Andrea Clowater, Hudson Clowater <i>and Kenneth Bernier</i> <i>by Wayne and Colette Clowater</i></p>	

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)*

My friends, our loving God does not approach us with judgement and condemnation,

so let us approach our God with gratitude and joy!

My friends, when we stumble, God lifts us up, when we tumble, God shows us a better way,

**so let us openly raise our praises and prayers,
let us lift up our both happy and hurting hearts to God.**

My friends, God's love is steadfast and true, God's grace is abundant and for all,

**so let us bring our true selves to worship,
all that we are, hope for and are going through,**

for here, in this place and in this time, we are invited into wholeness, and a holy peace.

GATHERING PRAYER:

We have been travelling together for a few weeks now, along the Lenten road. Here we have paused to rest, to be nourished, to be strengthened for the way ahead. God, you accompany us every day, all along our way. May our way be yours. Continue to bless us, gracious God, in this sacred time and in this holy season. Be with us in our worship, that we may better know our being and belonging in you. Be with us that we may be your glad people, gifted through the Spirit, and graced with the name of Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen

***GATHERING HYMN:** "Joyful, Joyful We Adore You" VU #232

Joyful, joyful we adore you, God of glory, life and love;
hearts unfold like flowers before you, opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness, drive the gloom of doubt away;
giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.

All your works with joy surround you,
earth and heaven reflect your rays,
stars and angels sing around you, centre of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain, flowery meadow, flashing sea,
chanting bird and flowing fountain, sound their praise eternally.

You are giving and forgiving, ever blessing, ever blest,
wellspring of the joy of living, ocean depth of happy rest!
Source of grace and fount of blessing, let your light upon us shine;
teach us how to love each other, lift us to the joy divine.

Mortals join the mighty chorus which the morning stars began;
God's own love is reigning o'er us, joining people hand in hand.
Ever singing, march we onward, victors in the midst of strife;
joyful music leads us sunward in the triumph song of life.

LENTEN CANDLE LITURGY:

Brooke & Helen Knowles

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 from John's Gospel the story of Jesus being followed by a large crowd of over 5,000 people, and how he could see that they were hungry, in body and soul. He asked Philip where they might find enough food for them all, even though the disciple knew that they didn't have nearly enough money to buy even a little bit for all those people. Andrew said that there was a small boy in the

crowd, with five loaves of barley bread and two fish, but thought that wouldn't be enough either. Jesus had everyone sit down, broke the bread and gave thanks, and had his friends and followers share what they had with one another. The miracle was that everyone not only had enough, but, wonder of wonders, there were twelve baskets of leftovers. The people, once hurting and hungry, were now so joyful and excited that Jesus could see that they wanted to make him their king, whether he wanted it or not. So, he went into the hills to be alone for awhile. Jesus comes to change the world, not to be forcefully shaped by the world into something that he is not, even as he is deeply touched by the pain and suffering of the world, and even as he rejoices in the peace and life-affirming pleasure of the world that is of God. When Jesus would not conform to what some wanted him to do or to be, they turned their backs on him, they turned away from him, in their anguish and anger they even *turned on* him. In those moments, they tried to turn out the light.

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 such places, in too many places still, the presence of the light within and among all was dimmed for a while...

The pink 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:

In some Christian traditions, today, the fourth Sunday of Lent, is called Laetare Sunday, from the Latin word for "rejoice." Just as in Advent a pink candle is sometimes lit signifying joy, today a pink candle has been extinguished. Lent is generally seen as a solemn and sombre time, and yet the tradition has recognised the need for joy here at the midpoint of our journey. And so, we can look at

the joy that the small and faithful boy with his generosity must have felt in the midst of the doubt of the disciples and the hunger of the crowd. We can, here in the midst of our Lenten reflections, in the sanctuaries of our spirits, know too as children of God the hope and joy that comes with the recognition of the presence of holiness, of sacred mystery and wonder, even as some in this world seek to put out the light. We can still sing, calling to God as we are called to follow, and to come and see...

CHORALE RESPONSE: "And When You Call for Me" MV #96

*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 32 VU Page #759

"Be glad in God you righteous"

*Refrain:
Be glad in God you righteous.,
Rejoice, O saints, rejoice.*

Blessed are those who offences are forgiven,
whose sin has been put away.

**Blessed are those to whom God imputes no guilt,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.**

Refrain:

While I kept silence, my body wasted away,
while I groaned all the day long.

**For your hand was heavy upon me day and night;
My strength dried up as in a summer drought.**

Then I acknowledge my sin to you,
my guilt I did not hide.

**I said: "I will confess my sins to God";
and you forgave the guilt of my sin.**

Therefore let all the faithful pray to you in time of trouble;

**when great floodwater rises, it shall not come near
them.**

You are a hiding place for me,
you will preserve me from trouble;

you will surround me with shouts of deliverance.

Refrain:

*Be glad in God you righteous.,
Rejoice, O saints, rejoice.*

I will teach you, and guide you in the way you should go.

I will keep you under my eye and instruct you.

Be not like a horse or mule, without understanding,

whose course must be checked with bit and bridle.

Many pains are in store for the wicked,

**but whoever trusts in God,
is surrounded by steadfast love.**

Refrain:

SHARING OUR STORIES (with those of all ages)

***HYMN:** "This is God's Wondrous World"

VU #296

This is God's wondrous world, and to my listening ears
all nature sings, and round me rings the music of the spheres.
This is God's wondrous world; I rest me in the thought
of rocks and trees, of skies and seas, God's hand the wonders wrought.

This is God's wondrous world:

the birds their carols raise;

the morning light, the lily white, declare their Maker's praise.

This is God's wondrous world:

God shines in all that's fair;

in the rustling grass or mountain pass, God's voice speaks everywhere.

This is God's wondrous world:

O let me ne'er forget

that though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the Ruler yet.

This is God's wondrous world:

why should my heart be sad?

Let voices sing, let the heavens ring:

God reigns, let earth be glad!

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION: *(in unison)*

As the apostle Paul travelled, he invited the church to rejoice in you, God of the Way. And so, we pray that in hearing your word we come to know the joy that is life in you, the joy that is in coming into wisdom, into hope, and into a love that will carry us and bear all things. Into your prodigal love we go together, opened to our new creation. Amen

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

Jennifer Oliver

Joshua 5:9-12

God takes away the shame of Egypt from the people

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Anyone in Christ is a new creation

Luke 15:1-3; 11b-32

The prodigal son; the prodigal father

REFLECTION: "Joy on the journey: a prodigal grace"

GIFT OF MUSIC: "Creator God, You Gave Us Life"

YOUR GENEROSITY MATTERS

Judy Losier

INVITATION TO MAKE AN OFFERING:

Just as we are loved unconditionally, we are invited to give with the same grace, to give with joy. Let us give that the world may live in gladness, with full hearts and knowing the way home...

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.

Gathering L/E 2017 pg. 53 Words & Music: Bryan Cook

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

Again and again, God of joy, you bless your creation. You see with delight that what you are making is good. You declare, in the hearing of all, your pleasure, how in us as we live out our baptism, as we live into the likeness of your being, you are well pleased. Bless these offerings of ourselves and what we have been given so that all may sing of joy to the world, and that you always come among us. Amen

***HYMN:** "O God, How We Have Wandered"

VU #112

"O God, how we have wandered and hidden from your face; in foolishness have squandered your legacy of grace. But how, in exile dwelling, we turn with fear and shame, as distant but compelling, you call us each by name.

And now at length discerning the evil that we do, by faith we are returning with hope and trust in you. In haste you come to meet us, and home rejoicing bring, in gladness there to greet us with calf and robe and ring.

O God of all the living, both banished and restored, compassionate, forgiving, our peace and hope assured. Grant now that our transgressing, our faithlessness may cease. Stretch out your hand in blessing, in pardon, and in peace."

PASTORAL PRAYER

PRAYER OF JESUS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***CLOSING HYMN:** "To Show by Touch and Word"

VU #427

To show by touch and word devotion to the earth, to hold in full regard all life that comes to birth, we need, O God, the will to find the good you had of old in mind.

Renew our minds to choose the things that matter most,
 our hearts to long for truth till pride of self is lost.
 For every challenge that we face
 we need your guidance and your grace.

Let love from day to day be yardstick, rule, and norm,
 and let our lives portray your word in human form.
 Now come with us that we may have
 your wits about us where we live.

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

Christ Candle is extinguished

***Choral Sending Forth:** "May God's Sheltering Wings" MV #214

**May God's sheltering wings,
 her gathering wings protect you.
 May God's nurturing arms,
 her cradling arms sustain you,
 and hold you in her love,
 and hold you in her love.**

POSTLUDE



Church News

This Week at First United Church		
Office Hours: 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM Monday to Friday		
Monday	9 AM – 9 PM	Chaleur Music Festival - Sanctuary
	9:00 AM	Ways & Means – Admin Office
Tuesday	9:00 - 11:00 AM	Badminton – DEMH GYM
	9:30 AM-11:30 AM	Quilters – DEMH Downstairs office
	1:00 – 3:00 PM	Knitters - 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 - GYM

Rev. David has finally been officially set up with an email address for First United Church. His address is rev.david@firstunited-bathurst.ca

Peanut Butter –Our quota for 2025 is to collect 1,000 jars of peanut butter for the Volunteer Center. Up to March 27th we have received 304 jars and have funds on hand to purchase another 30+ jars.

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 minister and to the Pastoral Care Team.

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.

"So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; look, new things have come into being!"
 (2 Corinthians 5:17 NRSV)

First United Quilters are now gathering on *Tuesday mornings* in the old office downstairs in the Donald Eddy Memorial Hall from 9:30 AM to 11:30 AM. It is a time for *fun, work, talk* and *fellowship* with new or old friends. Please contact Anne Brooks (506-548-2156) or Pat Thibodeau (506-546-2705) for more details

Church News

The Sunrise Breakfast is this morning!!

Upstairs in the Donald Eddy Memorial Hall

8:30 AM – 12:00 noon.

\$12 Adults and \$5 Children (under 12).

Sponsored by Jean Coutu & Websolutions.ca

Community News

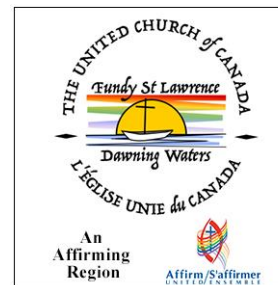
Free Tax Clinics for those with a modest income and a simple tax situation will be held at the KC Irving Regional Center (Paul Ouelette Room) March 31st – April 4th and April 7th – 11th from 9 AM to 3 PM.

A FAMILY AND COMMUNITY BREAKFAST will be held at St. George's Anglican Church, 432 King Avenue, on **Saturday, April 12th from 8 AM – 10 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.

The Bathurst Legion will begin serving a delicious breakfast beginning Sunday April 6th, 9 AM to 1 PM - \$10 per person. This will be a weekly project and everyone is welcome.

The Bathurst Heritage Museum will be having its **Grand Reopening** on *Wednesday, April 2nd, 2025*. There will be a smudging ceremony performed by Connie Sewell of Pabineau First Nation starting at 1:00 PM followed by an Open House to celebrate our renovations. Later in the evening, we are happy to have **The Treble Makers** in concert from 6:30 - 8:00 PM. You will hear music like "April Showers", "Sentimental Journey", "Five Foot Two" and a variety of jigs, etc. All are welcome. Come and join with us to celebrate the Museum's new look and the beginning of spring.

The Bathurst Chapter New Brunswick Scottish Cultural Association presents a **Tartan Tea – A Highland Social & Dance** on Sunday, April 6th at the Bathurst Heritage Museum. 1:30 PM to 4:00 PM. Tickets at the door \$10 per person. (*snow date: Sunday April 13th*)



Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional News

Youth @ Region 2025!

Calling all Youth, between grades 6-12! Registration is now open for Youth@Region!

Y@R is a place of community and a place of faith where United Church youth, between grade 6 and grade 12, meet from across Bermuda, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and the Gaspé. It will take place during the Centennial Gathering of Bermuda-Nova Scotia and Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Councils at Mount Allison University, Sackville NB. May 30th to June 1st.

The group creates an inclusive, diverse and safe community for youth in the name of Christ. We provide a place for youth to explore their faith and to learn more about the United Church of Canada while sharing in music, worship and fun in a spirit-filled community.

We hope to see you there!

If you have any questions, please email Catherine Stuart
cstuart@united-church.ca

Register [here!](#)
(<https://ucceast.ca/89862-2025-bns-and-fsldw-youthregion>)

Hope to see you there!

SCRIPTURE READINGS – New International Version

JOSHUA 5:9-12

9 Then the LORD said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.” So the place has been called Gilgal to this day.

10 On the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, while camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the Passover.

11 The day after the Passover, that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain.

12 The manna stopped the day after they ate this food from the land; there was no longer any manna for the Israelites, but that year they ate the produce of Canaan.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-21

16 So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:

19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

20 We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.

21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

LUKE 15:1-3, 11B-32

1 Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus.

2 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

3 Then Jesus told them this parable:

11 “There was a man who had two sons.

12 The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them.

13 “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living.

14 After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need.

15 So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs.

16 He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

17 “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!

18 I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.

19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’

20 So he got up and went to his father.

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

21 “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

22 “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.

23 Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate.

24 For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

25 "Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing.

26 So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on.

27 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.'

28 "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him.

29 But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends.

30 But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'

31 "'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours.

32 But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'"

