

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

1st Sunday of the Season of Creation – September 7, 2025

Clergy Rev. David Allan **Music Director** Martha Vickers
Office Adm. Margaret Daniels **Custodian** Lester Scott
Greeters Cheryl & Dave Brewster
Audio & Visual Technicians Brenda Parrott & Donald Eddy

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<u>Lectionary for today</u>	<u>Lectionary for next Sunday</u>
Psalm 139 Philemon Luke 14:25-33	Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28 Psalm 14 1 Timothy 1:12-17 Luke 15:1-10

*The asterisk * identifies those times in the service where you are invited to stand as you are able.*

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.

CALL TO WORSHIP: *(responsively)*

Country folks and city folks,
local folks and folks from away,
all of us shaped by God, wondrous, of love and mystery.
We come together as followers of Jesus,

learning the cost of discipleship

and sharing the blessings of community.

We come together as one, to worship our God who is One.

**We come together in the presence of Love,
embraced, emancipated by eternity.**

We gather in the freedom that is faith.

CENTERING FOR WORSHIP: "Gather Us In" MV #7

***Gather us in, ground us in you.
Gather us in, ground us in you.
Gather us in, gather us in,
ground us, ground us in you.***

GATHERING PRAYER: *(in unison)*

Loving God, as we join together to worship you today, please help us to know your presence. Sing your joy in us; sing your comfort in us. Ring out your peace, your love, your mercy and justice in us. May your voice resonate through our bodies, our spirits, and our lives. Birth in us life, new life, abundant life, and equip us to share that life and love with the world you so love. Amen

Acknowledgement:

*Gathering Prayer by Chelsea Masterman, Grace UC, Edmonton, AB
Gathering, Pentecost 1, 2022, p. 41. Used with permission.*

***GATHERING HYMN:** "Called by Earth and Sky" MV #135

*Refrain
Called by earth and sky,
promise of hope held high.
This is our sacred living trust,
treasure of life sanctified,
called by earth and sky.*

Precious these waters, endless seas,
deep ocean's dream,
waters of healing, rivers of rain,
the wash of love again.

Precious this gift, the air we breathe;
wind born and free.
Breath of the Spirit, blow through this place,
our gathering and our grace.

Refrain

*Called by earth and sky,
promise of hope held high.
This is our sacred living trust,
treasure of life sanctified,
called by earth and sky.*

Precious these mountains, ancient sands;
vast fragile land.
Seeds of our wakening, rooted and strong,
Creation's faithful song.

Precious the fire that lights our way,
bright dawning day.
Fire of passion, sorrows undone,
our faith and justice one.

Refrain

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE: *(The Christ Candle is lit)*

We light this candle as a symbol and a reminder of the presence of Christ, the light of the world, the first light of Creation. It is the lovelight shared with all, that shines within and from us all, that draws us ever closer to the Source of All. The light calls us forward as the family of God, to see with new eyes, to love with shimmering hearts, to live in the brightness of hope.

***PSALM 139:** God, you have searched me and known me.

VU Page #861

Refrain:

*God, you have searched me,
you know me through and through.*

O God, you have searched me and known me.
You know when I sit down and rise up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.

**You discern my path and the places I rest;
you are familiar with all my ways.**

Before a word is on my tongue,
you know it, O God, completely.
You guard me from behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.

**It is beyond my knowledge; it is a mystery;
I cannot fathom it.**

Refrain:

Where can I escape from your spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?

**If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
if I lie down in the grave, you are even there.**

If I take wind with the dawn
and alight at the sea's farthest limits,
**there also your hand will be guiding me
your powerful hand holding me fast.**

If I say, "Let the darkness cover me
and my day be turned to night,"
**even darkness is not dark to you:
the night is as bright as the day,
for darkness is as light to you.**

Refrain:

It was you who formed my inward parts;
You fashioned me in my mother's womb.

**I praise you, for I am fearfully, wonderfully made.
Wondrous are your works; that I know very well.**

My frame was not hidden from you
when I was being fashioned in secret,
intricately woven in the mystery of clay.

**Your eyes saw my substance taking shape;
in your book my every day was recorded;
all my days were fashioned,
even before they came to be.**

Refrain:

How deep your designs are to me, O God!
How great their number!

I try to count them but they are more than the sand.

I come to the end – I am still with you.

Search me, O God, and know my heart;

test me and know my thoughts.

Watch closely, lest I follow a path of error

And guide me in the everlasting way.

Refrain:

WE OPEN OUR HEARTS:

Some of us are introverts and some of us are extroverts, and all of us are created in the image of God. Whichever way we understand ourselves, or perhaps are understood, we all at times want and try to turn away, to be alone, to keep the things that burden us a secret. Our worries, our regrets, our doubts and our

pain, our deep soul-felt needs and fears, all these can cause us to retreat, to flee, to keep our humanity and our vulnerability private and unknown, unseen...

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.

*A moment for silent reflection and contemplation,
a time for listening...*

OUR HEARTS ARE FILLED:

And so it is that our God opens to us, love pours out, love wings its way into our presence, love flows into our very being. We are invited into a sacred openness, the holy mystery that is genesis and grace. Wherever, whenever we turn inward or away, God meets us, listens and loves us into awareness and newness of being. Fear not, my friends, we are not alone. We live in and as God’s Creation. And it is good.

SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST: (responsively)

...The peace of the risen Christ be with you all!

And also with you!

Please share with one another words and signs of peace.

SHARING OUR STORIES

***HYMN: “Each Blade of Grass”**

MV #37

Each blade of grass, ev’ry wing that soars,
the waves that sweep across a distant shore,
make full the circle of God.

Each laughing child, ev’ry gentle eye,
a forest lit beneath a moon-bright sky,
make full the circle of God.

Each silent paw, ev’ry rounded stone,
the buzz that echoes from a honey’d comb,
make full the circle of God.
Each fire-brimmed star, ev’ry out-stretched hand,
the wind that leaps and sails across the land,
make full the circle of God.

Each icy peak, ev’ry patterned shell,
the joyous chorus that the dawn foretells,
make full the circle of God.
Each cosmic hue, ev’ry creature’s way,
all form the beauty of this vast array,
making full the circle of God.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION: (in unison)

God of our life, as we listen for your word, we admit that the meaning sometimes seems obscure and delight that sometimes we are filled with awe. Send among us the Spirit of understanding. Bind to us your heart’s desire, and help us to free our minds of all fetters, all impediments to relationship with you. This we pray in the name of Christ who has freed us all. Amen

EPISTLE READING:

Isabel MacLaggan

Paul's Letter to Philemon

A LITTLE BIBLE STUDY

Rev. David Allan

GRADUAL HYMN: "Pulsing Spirit"

Pulsing Spirit, rippling river,
source of mercy's tender might.
Gentle power, humble glory,
subtle, ever dancing light.
Healing Wisdom in us flowing,
now reveal our human worth.
Play beneath the muddied waters,
come renew the face of earth!

Spirit free, unbounded motion,
beauty's mirror, heart's delight,
Gift abundant all around us,
flood the world with life and light.
Fountain ancient, ever springing,
play in new, creative ways.
Lift us, steam of lavish loving,
high on waves of joyful praise!

*Text © Delores Duffner 1993.
Seasons of the Spirit Songbook – vol. 7*

GOSPEL READING:

Isabel MacLaggan

Luke 14:25-33 - The cost of discipleship.

A BRIEF REFLECTION

GIFT OF MUSIC: "I Have Called You by Your Name"

YOUR GENEROSITY MATTERS

Martha Vickers

INVITATION TO MAKE AN OFFERING:

We have been freed to offer all that we are and have. We have been freed to choose love, and to follow Jesus on the way of a grace-shaped life. We are invited to give freely, in faith and in hope. Our offerings will now be gathered.

OUR OFFERING IS GATHERED

***OFFERING HYMN** – "These Gifts We Bring"

*These gifts we bring with grateful hearts,
to reconcile, make new.
Gather us in grace, show us the way,
to live our lives in Truth
to share Your love in all we do.*

OFFERING PRAYER: *(in unison)*

Your love, O God, is given freely, with abandon. And in us, the Body of Christ, you do not abandon the world. Bless these offerings that all creation may ring with your song of new life, and the glory that is your healing grace. Amen

PASTORAL PRAYER

PRAYER OF JESUS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***CLOSING HYMN:**

VU #563

"Jesus, You Have Come to the Lakeshore"

***COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION**

***CHORAL SENDING FORTH** "Lift Us Up, Send Us Out"

*Lift us up, send us out
as we now go in peace
and our worship and living entwine.
May God's presence be near
and may concord increase
when our hope and our actions combine.*

*Be the salt, be the light
and let each be a sign
that our caring will highlight the way.*

***Share a meal, plant a tree,
let our faith underline
that by giving, our love is conveyed.***

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***SHARING THE LIGHT**

(The Christ Candle is extinguished.)

POSTLUDE

Church News

This Week at First United Church		
Office Hours: 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM Monday to Friday		
Tuesday	1:00 PM	Knitting Group – Eddy Room
Wednesday	4:00 PM	Finance Team – Eddy Room
	6:30 PM	Choir Practice
Saturday	8:00 AM–1:00 PM	Bathurst Community Market - GYM

Peanut Butter –Our quota for 2025 is to collect 1,000 jars of peanut butter for the Volunteer Center. Up to September 4, 2025 we have received 660 jars.

As part of our **Stewardship Program** here at First United, information on Planned Giving through Wills and Bequests is available to our congregational membership. The information is available from the church office. Below you will find a stewardship quote relating to the same.

Let us not hold back from giving to others
as God has given to us.

BBQ BEEF SUPPER will be held on Thursday, September 18th.

Take out will be from 4:00 PM to 5 :30 PM

Eat in will be from 4:30 PM to 6:00 PM.

Tickets are now available - **\$18** for adults and **\$6** for children. As there are a limited number of tickets they will be sold on a first come-first served basis. Please contact a member of the *Ways & Means Committee* or drop by the church office from 9 AM to 3 PM.

Sponsored by Hatheway Auto Group

Finance Team meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 10, 2025 at 4 PM in the Eddy Room.

Choir Practice resumes on Wednesday, September 10th at 6:30 PM. All are welcome to join!

The Knitting Group will meet on Tuesday afternoons at 1 PM in the Eddy Room of the Donald Eddy Hall

Thank you to our volunteers in August - Counters – Beth & Bob Sullivan; **Greeters** – Ellen O’Neil, Brenda Gilliss, Brooke Knowles and Beth Sullivan; **Your Generosity Matters** – Martha Vickers, Ronalds family, Judy Losier and Anne Wilson; **Scripture Readers** –Judy Losier, Helen Knowles, Isabel MacLaggan, Jennifer Oliver and Stephen Maisey; **Sound System** –Brenda Parrott, Shirley Allain, and Ralph Jamieson; and **Videographer** – Don Eddy as well as to Josh Gammon for uploading the YouTube link to the website and Facebook.

Community News

A FAMILY AND COMMUNITY BREAKFAST will be held at St. George's Anglican Church, 432 King Avenue, on Saturday, September 13th from 8 AM to 10 AM. As this community event helps 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.

"HELP LESOTHO" CALENDARS

The Anglophone School District – North has been sponsoring "Help Lesotho" since 2006 as part of its global awareness initiative. As a fundraiser where all of the money raised goes to help finance its work with orphans, vulnerable children, and grandmothers in Lesotho, Africa; "Help Lesotho" has 2026 calendars for sale at a cost of \$15.00. You are invited to support this initiative with your donation. Gary Branch (506-546-9208) (egbranch@rogers.com) will be taking orders for these calendars until October 14, 2025. Payment can be made in advance by cash, cheque, or e-transfer, or when the calendars are delivered in November. Cheques are to be made payable to "Help Lesotho". Thank you to the congregation of First United Church for your continued support of this initiative.

READINGS – New International Version

Paul's Letter to Philemon

1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker - **2** also to Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier - and to the church that meets in your home:

3 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, **5** because I hear about your love for all his holy people and your faith in the Lord Jesus. **6** I pray that your partnership with us in the faith may be effective in deepening your understanding of every good thing we share for the sake of Christ. **7** Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the Lord's people.

8 Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, **9** yet I prefer to appeal to you on the basis of love. It is as none other than Paul - an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus - **10** that I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. **11** Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me.

12 I am sending him - who is my very heart - back to you. **13** I would have liked to keep him with me so that he could take your place in helping me while I am in chains for the gospel. **14** But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favour you do would not seem forced but would be voluntary. **15** Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back forever - **16** no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a fellow man and as a brother in the Lord.

17 So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. **18** If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. **19** I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back - not to mention that you owe me your very self. **20** I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ.

21 Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask.

22 And one thing more: Prepare a guest room for me, because I hope to be restored to you in answer to your prayers.

23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. **24** And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers.

25 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Luke 14:25-33

25 Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: **26** "If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters - yes, even their own life - such a person cannot be my disciple. **27** And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

28 "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? **29** For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, **30** saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.'

31 "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? **32** If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. **33** In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.