

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



**November 30, 2025**

**First Sunday of Advent - Hope**

**Minister** Rev. David Allan      **Music Director** Martha Vickers  
**Office Adm.** Margaret Daniels      **Custodian** Lester Scott  
**Greeters** Linda Knowles MacPherson & Brenda Parrott  
**Audio & Visual Technicians** Shirley Allain & Lester Scott

*All musical selections reprinted under license #4-606499, One License for Churches*

<u><b>Lectionary for today</b></u>	<u><b>Lectionary for next Sunday</b></u>
Isaiah 2:1-5	Isaiah 11:1-10
Psalms 122	Psalms 72:1-7, 18-19
Romans 13:11-14	Romans 15:4-13
Matthew 24:36-44	Matthew 3:1-12

	<b><i>We welcome the Men's Choir this morning and thank them for their gift of music</i></b>	
---	--	---

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

**MUSIC AS WE GATHER**

**WELCOME**

**\*TERRITORY 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)*

With joy we've come to God's own house,  
we've entered with a song.

**With hope we've come, giving thanks at our arrival.**

We come expectant, for the arrival of the Child of Light.

**We come trusting and faithful, into a pregnant peace,  
that Love grows and is born again.**

In this time of preparation, we come to worship,

**We come as children of light.**

**CENTERING FOR WORSHIP:** "As We Are Waiting"

*Tune While Shepherds Watch Their Flocks*

***As we are waiting for a sign***

***As we long for Christ's birth.***

***We trust your word revealed to us***

***Is hope for all the earth.***

*© Catherine MacDonald 2010*

**GATHERING PRAYER:**

God of Life and God of Hope, today we begin anew. These winter days are short; in your light we long for you. Make us your Advent people, expectant yet prepared to meet you in unexpected places. And may your creative and surprising Spirit be among us, as we unwrap our spirits and open our hearts. **Amen**

**\*GATHERING CAROL:** "All Earth Is Waiting"

VU #5

All earth is waiting to see the Promised One,  
and open furrows await the seed of God.  
All the world, bound and struggling, seeks true liberty;  
it cries out for justice and searches for the truth.

Thus says the prophet to those of Israel,  
"A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel."  
One whose name is "God with us," our Saviour shall be,  
Through whom hope will blossom once more within our hearts.

Mountains and valleys will have to be made plain,  
open new highways, new highways for our God,  
who is now coming closer, so come all and see,  
and open the doorways as wide as wide can be.

In lowly stable the Promised One appeared.  
Yet, feel that presence throughout the earth today,  
for Christ lives in all Christians and is with us now;  
again, on arriving, Christ brings liberty.

**LIGHTING THE 1<sup>ST</sup> ADVENT CANDLE:** *(responsively)*  
*The Watling family (Rick, Ainsley & Ingrid)*

Today we light a candle of hope.

**This is an expectant time, a time of waiting.**

It is also a time of preparation. We open our minds to wonder.  
Together, we make room.

**Hope is made real as we prepare for the coming of the  
light of hope.**

Hope is made real as we look for the light of the world.

**Hope is made real as we share the light with all who  
are waiting.**

*(The first candle is lit.)*



**CHORAL RESPONSE:** "We Light This Candle"

***We light this candle for Hope.  
Await the new life within.  
May our hearts now live each day,  
so Hope can find a way,  
so Hope can find a way.***

*Words and music: Pat Mayberry © 2016  
Arrangement: David Kai © 2016*

**We Open Our Hearts:** Psalm 122 VU #845  
"I will seek your good"

*Refrain:  
With joy we go to God's own house  
and enter with a song.*

I was glad when they said to me:

**Let us go to the house of God.**

And now our feet are standing within your gates,  
O Jerusalem.

**Jerusalem is built as a city bound firmly together.**

There the tribes go up, the tribes of God,  
to give thanks to the name of God, as was decreed for Israel.

**There the thrones of justice stand,  
the thrones of David's house.**

*Refrain:  
With joy we go to God's own house  
and enter with a song.*

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

May those who love you prosper!

**May there be peace within your walls,  
Prosperity within your palaces!**

For the sake of my kin and friends I say:  
Peace be with you!

**For the sake of the house of our God,  
I will seek your good.**

*Refrain:  
With joy we go to God's own house  
and enter with a song.*

**OUR HEARTS ARE FILLED:**

Our Psalm was most likely written before the construction of the temple, singing of the hopes and anticipation of pilgrims ascending to Jerusalem. It sings of a dream, a desire for peace, the shalom that is a part of the name of the holy city – "Jeru-salem" – "shalom." A peace that there seems ever more elusive, isn't it? It is a peace that is not only prayed for, and not only offered as a blessing, but sought after.

It is a peace that is shared with us and that we actively seek out, work and prepare for, and share with one another. A peace that is not passive, but heartfelt and strengthening in our vulnerability. And in grace, a promised peace that surpasses all understanding, that spreads beyond the walls of any city or shuttered spirit. God's new creation, the good that we seek and that God sees in you.

**CHORAL RESPONSE:** "Breathe into this Moment of Peace"

***Breathe into this moment of peace  
with courage to let go, daring to dream.  
For the days are surely coming,  
when we'll rise strong together once again in peace.***

**SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST:** *(responsively)*

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

**And also with you!**

*Please share with one another words and signs of peace.*

**\*ADVENT HYMN:** Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus VU #2

Come, thou long-expected Jesus,  
born to set thy people free:  
from our fears and sins release us,  
let us find our rest in thee.

Israel's strength and consolation,  
hope of all the earth thou art,  
dear desire of every nation,  
joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver;  
born a child and yet a King;  
born to reign in us forever;  
now thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thine own eternal Spirit  
rule in all our hearts alone;  
by thine all-sufficient merit  
raise us to thy glorious throne.

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION:** *(in unison)*

**We have sung joining our voices together, and now together we listen. May we hear your voice, gentle God, borne through words written long ago. May we hear your hopeful heart, in words written for us today. Amen**

**SCRIPTURE READINGS:**

*Gary Branch*

Isaiah 2:1-5                      Swords into ploughshares

Romans 13:11-14              Wake up! The day is near

Matthew 24:36-44              No one knows the hour

**REFLECTION:** Attention Everyone!

**GIFT OF MUSIC** – "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

**YOUR GENEROSITY MATTERS**

*Judy Losier*

**INVITATION TO MAKE AN OFFERING**

It is not only in gratitude that we give, but in hope, actively taking our place in the coming of the light of love. Our offerings will now be gathered.

**THE OFFERING IS GATHERED**

**\*ADVENT OFFERING RESPONSE:** *(Tune Old 100th)*

***Hope in our faith so filled with awe.  
Hope in the promise of our God.  
Hope for these gifts we offer here.  
Use them and us throughout the year.***

**\*THE OFFERING IS BROUGHT FORWARD**

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

**We take many steps along the road to Bethlehem. In the assurance of hope we make our offerings, in the assurance of your grace, birthing God, we give our thanks, and in the assurance of love we share our lives. May all that we offer here bring the light of hope to the world. In the name of the One who comes we pray. Amen**

## PASTORAL PRAYER

## PRAYER OF JESUS

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### \*CLOSING CAROL: "Once in Royal David's City"

VU#62

Once in royal David's city  
stood a lowly cattle shed,  
where a mother laid her baby  
in a manger for his bed.  
Mary was that mother mild,  
Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven  
who, with God is over all,  
and his shelter was a stable,  
and his cradle was a stall.  
There among the poor and lowly  
lived on earth our Saviour holy.

For he is our lifelong pattern;  
daily, when on earth he grew,  
he was tempted, scorned, rejected,  
tears and smiles like us he knew.  
Thus he feels for our sadness,  
and he shares in all our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see him,  
through his own redeeming love;  
for that child who seemed so helpless  
is our Lord in heaven above;  
and He leads his children on  
to the place where he is gone.

### \*COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION

## \*CHORAL SENDING FORTH—

MV #221

"I Am Walking a Path of Peace"

*I am walking a path of hope,  
I am walking a path of hope,  
I am walking a path of hope,  
lead me home, I am home.*

## SHARING THE LIGHT

*(The Advent Candle is extinguished.)*

## POSTLUDE



The Christian Development team would like to thank Gary Branch, Gwen Sturgeon, Elizabeth Branch, Debrah & Rick Watling Sara Ernst, Wayne Clowater, Peter Gammon, Beth Sullivan, Isabel Clouston and Lester Scott for decorating the church for the Christmas Season.  
Their talent is much appreciated.

# 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	9:30 AM-11:30 AM	Quilters – DEMH Downstairs office
	1:00 – 3:00 PM	Knitting Group – Eddy Room
	3:00 PM	Bible Study
	4:00 PM	Bathurst Pastoral Council
Wednesday	9:00-11:00 AM	Badminton – DEMH GYM
	6:30 PM	Choir Practice
	7:00 PM	Christmas 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 November 26, 2025 we have received 858 jars with funds on hand to purchase 65+ jars.

### **Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at 2 PM – Memorial Hymn Sing**



To celebrate the **100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** of The United Church of Canada, First United Church along with special guests, will be offering an afternoon of Christmas Carols that mean so much to us as we remember our loved ones. A reception will follow. Free-will offering at the door

***Mark your calendars, tell your friends & family to come and join us for this musical event!***

### **UPCOMING CHRISTMAS SERVICES AT FIRST UNITED:**

December 7<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM – Advent 2

December 14<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM – Advent 3 *White Gift Sunday*

December 21<sup>st</sup> at 10 AM – Advent 4 *Service with Communion*

December 24<sup>th</sup> at 4 PM – Family Christmas Eve Service

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

# Church News

**Bathurst Pastoral Council** will be meeting on Tuesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> at 4 PM in the Eddy Room. A copy of the agenda and other pertinent information will be emailed during the coming week.

There are a “limited” number of **2026 United Church of Canada calendars** available for any congregants who wish to have one. Clara Carroll submitted a picture of St. John’s United Church on Miscou Island and this picture was chosen for the month of March. We congratulate Clara on her submission and thank her for the generous gift of these calendars to our congregation.

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.

As you consider your Christmas giving this year,  
how can you give in order to bring hope?



Once again this year we are hoping to have the beauty of our sanctuary enhanced with poinsettias for the Christmas season. Those wishing to contribute to the **Annual**

**Poinsettia Fundraiser** may place an envelope in the offering plate on Sunday morning. Please mark clearly on the face of the envelope – Poinsettia Fundraiser with your name, PAR or envelope number. List the names that you wish to have printed in the Christmas bulletin insert. Donations will also be received in the church office – *deadline is Wednesday, December 10, 2025.*

## Church News

**Annual Christmas Benevolence Fund:** - It's that time of year! Giving to this fund is even more important than ever. The costs relating to feeding families, and having a warm place to live is still very prevalent in our area. Should you wish to give you will find an envelope on the tree which is set up in the narthex. Then you may drop the envelope in the offering plate or drop it off at the church office during the week. Make your cheques payable to First United Church. Please mark clearly that this donation is for the Benevolence Fund. The proceeds from this fund support the Bathurst Volunteer Center and people in our congregation who need assistance.

***We thank-you for your generosity***  
***– Community Outreach Sub-Team+***

## Community News



### **SHRINERS – Give help and hope for kids**

Shriners are a brotherhood of men committed to family, engaged into ongoing personal growth, and dedicated to providing care for children and families in need. Our backgrounds and interests are diverse, but we are bound together by our shared values and a desire to have fun, do good and build

relationships that can last a lifetime.

Once again, this year you can help the Shriners with their fundraiser. Purchase a calendar for \$20 and have a chance to win prizes every day of the year. The fruitcakes are delicious and you can get a box of three for \$25. Or a package Milk Chocolate Almonds for \$5. All the money from this fundraiser goes to help the children in our area. Contact Harvey Spence at 506-546-2742 for reservation.

**St. George's Anglican Church invites** you to be a part of our **annual Christmas Carol Sing** evening on Thursday, December 11 at 7:00 pm. Come celebrate the season with music and light refreshments following.

## Community News

### **The Bathurst Community Concert Band Flute and Clarinet Ensembles** presents:

#### ***A Christmas Celebration: Music for the Season.***

This afternoon, November 30<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m. St. Lukes Presbyterian Church, 395 Murray Ave. Free-will donations accepted.

Come together with family, friends, and neighbors to hear local musicians perform a selection of beloved carols, that capture the true spirit of the season.

**A FAMILY AND COMMUNITY BREAKFAST** will be held at St. George's Anglican Church, 432 King Avenue, on ***Saturday, December 13th 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.

**The Downshore Community choir**, which consists of the Anglican and United Church choirs and friends, will present "*An Evening of Christmas Carols*" on Saturday, December 13, at 7 PM at Central United Church in Clifton. Please mark the date on your calendar and join us for some familiar favourite carols. Admission at the door will be \$10.00, under 10 years free. Proceeds will be shared by both local churches.

**Thank you!** On behalf of the "Lesotho Initiative" Committee of ASD - N, a special 'thank you' is extended to the members of the congregation of First United Church who supported our recent calendar drive. A total of 200 "Help Lesotho" 2026 calendars were sold, and this will raise \$ 3000. for the work of "Help Lesotho" with Grandmothers and vulnerable children in the tiny mountain kingdom of Lesotho, Africa. Since 2006, this initiative has raised over \$154,000. for the work of "Help Lesotho". (There are additional calendars available for anyone else who would like to support this cause. Gary Branch [egbranch@rogers.com](mailto:egbranch@rogers.com) – 506-546-9208))



# *White Gift Sunday*

## *December 14<sup>th</sup>*

The tradition of White Gift Sunday has its roots in a small Methodist church in Ohio in 1904. What began as a humble way to reflect on the love and devotion of the giver and not the value of the gift has grown into today's white gift services in many churches across several denominations. The story is told that a minister's wife initiated the idea to solve the problem of inequity of gifts given at the Sunday school Christmas party. Instead of focusing on receiving gifts, the focus shifted to bringing gifts to Jesus that could in turn be shared with people around the world who did not have much. All the gifts would come wrapped in plain white paper, so that no one would know which was an expensive gift and which was a more modest one. No one would feel ashamed of their gift and everyone would share in the joy of giving to others.

**In keeping with the spirit of the first White Gift service all those attending bring a gift wrapped in white paper to be given to someone in need.**

Some suggestions from the Volunteer Center and for our own pantry are pastas and sauces, cereal, canned meat, canned milk, canned fruits and canned vegetables. It is also suggested that gift cards from places such as Burger King, McDonalds or Tim Hortons could be placed in small boxes and gift wrapped for children. They love to unwrap something at Christmas.



## **SCRIPTURE READINGS – New International Version**

### **Isaiah 2:1-5**

**1** This is what Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem:

**2** In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will stream to it.

**3** Many peoples will come and say,  
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths."  
The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

**4** He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples.  
They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.  
Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.

**5** Come, descendants of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the Lord.

### **Romans 13:11-14 NIV**

**11** And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.

**12** The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light.

**13** Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.

**14** Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.

### **Matthew 24:36-44**

**36** "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

**37** As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

**38** For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark;

**39** and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

**40** Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left.

**41** Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

**42** "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.

**43** But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into.

**44** So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.