

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

December 14, 2025
Third Sunday of Advent - Joy

Minister	Rev. David Allan	Music Director	Martha Vickers
Office Adm.	Margaret Daniels	Custodian	Lester Scott
Greeters	Julie & Harvey Spence		
Audio & Visual Technicians		Shirley Allain & Lester Scott	

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Lectionary for today

Isaiah 35:1-10
James 5:7-10
Luke 1:47-55
Matthew 11:2-11

Lectionary for next Sunday

Isaiah 7:10-16
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-25

*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) *(drawn from Psalm 146)*

Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob.

Joyful are those whose spirit is with the God of Mary.

Our hope is in our God, the Creator of heaven and earth,
the sea and all that is in them.

Our peace is in the presence of God,
and the sustaining power of the Spirit.

And so, we come to worship,
**to rejoice, to pray, to keep faith and to walk
in the light of love.**

CENTERING FOR WORSHIP: "As We Are Waiting"

Tune While Shepherds Watch Their Flocks

***As we are wondering what comes next.
As we seek peace and joy.
We trust your word revealed to us.
Proclaimed in a baby boy.***

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GATHERING PRAYER:

In the glow of the joined light of hope, peace and joy, we join together in the patience of assured expectations and the urgency and the immanence of the kingdom. Advent God, we come together as you come to us, we come together as the child comes ever nearer, we gather, open to the Spirit. Bless us in this holy time as we praise and bless your name.

Amen

***GATHERING HYMN: "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice"**

Gathering, A/C/E 2007 Page 86

Good Christian friends, rejoice,
With heart and soul and voice,
In darkness we have heard a call:
Hope! Hope!
Gift of God for one and all.

Light shines in the darkness near.
We're released from all our fear.
A candle flames in hope,
A candle flames in hope.

Good Christian friends, rejoice,
With heart and soul and voice,
Battles, wars should be no more:
Peace! Peace!
Harmony will be our core.
Calls for peace and calls you all,
In penitence to humbly fall.
A candle flames for peace,
A candle flames for peace.

Good Christian friends, rejoice,
With heart and soul and voice.
Now we hear of endless bliss:
Joy! Joy!
Jesus Christ was born for this.
He has opened heaven's door
And we are blessed forevermore!
A candle flames in joy,
A candle flames in joy!

LIGHTING THE 3rd ADVENT CANDLE: *(responsively)*
Helen & Brooke Knowles

Today we light a candle of joy.

**It is a great joy, a joy filled with hope, and the
blessings of peace.**

Joy is a gift, to be savoured and spread,
as life and spirit grow within us and in the world.
Together, we rejoice.

**Joy is made real when we prepare for the coming of
the light of joy.**

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

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

(The third candle is lit.)

CHORAL RESPONSE: "We Light This Candle"

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

Words and music: Pat Mayberry © 2016

Arrangement: David Kai © 2016

WE OPEN OUR HEARTS:

Song of Mary / Magnificat

Refrain 1 VU Page 898

We pause for a moment of reflection...

OUR HEARTS ARE FILLED:

As God chose Mary, God chooses to dwell in us and in all of Creation. God chooses you so that you too can be a courageous conduit of love, and that hope might be magnified and made real. God chooses you that you too can be bringers of new life, seeking together to repair and restore the world with joy and a song, a holy "yes" to love, justice and peace. Like Mary, we say "yes" to God, because God first says "yes" to us. We are filled with the Presence of Love.

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:** "Jesus, Our Brother"

VU #56

Jesus, our brother, kind and good,
was humbly born in a stable rude,
and the friendly beasts around him stood,
Jesus, our brother, kind and good.

"I," said the donkey, shaggy and brown,
"I carried the mother up hill and down,
I carried his mother to Bethlehem town;
I," said the donkey, shaggy and brown.

"I," said the cow, all white and red,
"I gave him my manger for his bed,
I gave him hay to pillow his head;
I," said the cow, all white and red.

"I," said the sheep with curly horn,
"I gave him my wool for his blanket warm,
he wore my coat on Christmas morn;
I," said the sheep, with curly horn.

"I," said the dove, from the rafters high,
"I cooed him to sleep that he should not cry,
we cooed him to sleep, my mate and I;
I," said the dove, from the rafters high.

Thus all the beasts, by some good spell,
in the stable dark were glad to tell
of the gifts they gave Emmanuel,
the gifts they gave Emmanuel.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION: *(in unison)*

Just as you know us, intimate God, our stories and scriptures are familiar. Raise in us the desire to hear them as though for the first time. May we hear them anew, that new understanding, new hope and joy and new conviction are born in and through our lives together. Amen

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

Anne Brooks

Isaiah 35:1-10	The desert blooms and rejoices
James 5:7-10	Wait patiently for the coming of the Lord
Matthew 11:2-11	John's disciples visit Jesus

REFLECTION: Impatience and imagination

GIFT OF MUSIC

YOUR GENEROSITY MATTERS

Ronalds Family

INVITATION TO MAKE AN OFFERING

We praise God with more than words; we give our praise in all the ways that we love one another. And so, we give with generosity of heart, and a joyful spirit. Our offerings will now be gathered.

OUR OFFERINGS AND WHITE GIFTS ARE BROUGHT FORWARD

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

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

***OFFERING PRAYER** *(responsively)*

God of vision, you call us into wakefulness, into attentiveness, to be witnesses to the life of this world, and to give witness to the Light of the World. People of God, what do we see and hear?

We see people struggling to survive, without a home, without employment, without anyone to love. We hear the hunger of the world. And we see the face of Christ.

What do we see and hear?

We hear of wars and rumours of wars, we see suffering and fear and feelings of helplessness and despair. We repent; we rethink our lives together. And we hear the call of Christ.

And so, awake to one another and to your Creation, O God, we give.

We prepare the way.

We give our offerings and white gifts, we give of our time and talents, we share our wisdom.

We prepare the way.

With open hearts we receive the lived stories of others, to better understand, to better respond in love, to be changed with the world.

We prepare the way.

God of new birth, bless us and these offerings that we and they help prepare the way for the coming of Christ into the life of the world.

Bless all that we offer here, bless all with whom we join in community, to whom we join in committing our lives. Bless your Creation, so that the gifts of hope, peace, joy and love are known and shared by all. For the coming of Christ, we pray. Amen

PASTORAL PRAYER

PRAYER OF JESUS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***CLOSING HYMN: "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

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

Refrain



***COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION**

***CHORAL SENDING FORTH-**

"I Am Walking a Path of Peace"

MV #221

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

SHARING THE LIGHT

(The Advent Candles are extinguished.)

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	3:00 PM	Bible Study
Wednesday	9:00-11:00 AM	Badminton – DEMH GYM
Thursday	6:30 PM	Concert – Vocal & Piano Students of Rosalind Kennedy Townsend
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 December 10, 2025 we have received 970 jars.

UPCOMING CHRISTMAS SERVICES AT FIRST UNITED:

December 21st at 10 AM – Advent 4 Service with Communion

December 24th at 4 PM – Family Christmas Eve Service

December 24th at 7 PM – Christmas Eve Service



Thank you to everyone who has donated to our *Annual Poinsettia Fundraiser*.

The booklets will be ready for pick up at the service on Sunday December 21st.

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.

Rejoice in being able to use your gifts to do God's work.

Church News

Time for Fellowship - The 2026 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 2025!

Your Hospitality & Friendship Team,

Bill Stack, Nancy Jagoe, Shirley Sealy, Gayle Ferron

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

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for purchasing the calendars, fruitcakes, and chocolate nuts. We raised nearly \$1000 from the sale. All money raised is used to transport New Brunswick children to Shriners' facilities for world class medical treatments at no cost.

Thank you again and Happy Holidays to each and every one of you!

Harvey Spence

SCRIPTURE READINGS – New International Version

Isaiah 35:1-10

NIV

1 The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus,
2 it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendour of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the LORD, the splendour of our God.
3 Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way;
4 say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you."
5 Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.
6 Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.
7 The burning sand will become a pool, the thirsty ground bubbling springs. In the haunts where jackals once lay, grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.
8 And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness; it will be for those who walk on that Way. The unclean will not journey on it; wicked fools will not go about on it.
9 No lion will be there, nor any ravenous beast; they will not be found there. But only the redeemed will walk there,
10 and those the LORD has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

James 5:7-10

NIV

7 Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains.
8 You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.
9 Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!
10 Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Matthew 11:2-11 NIV

2 When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples
3 to ask him, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"
4 Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see:
5 The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.
6 Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me."
7 As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind?
8 If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces.
9 Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.
10 This is the one about whom it is written: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.'
11 Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.