

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

January 4, 2026

Epiphany Sunday

Minister Rev. David Allan **Music Director** Martha Vickers

Office Adm. Margaret Daniels **Custodian** Lester Scott

Greeters Cheryl & Dave Brewster

Audio & Visual Technicians Brenda Parrott & Lester Scott

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| <u>Lectionary for today</u> | <u>Lectionary for next Sunday</u> |
|--|---|
| Isaiah 60:1-6 Psalm 148 Matthew 2:1-23 | Isaiah 42:1-9 Psalm 29 Acts 10:34-43 Matthew 3:13-17 |
| <i>Today's bulletins are placed in loving memory of Manford Sealy by Shirley, Harley, Hadley & families</i> | |

*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:** Psalm 148

VU #871

"Glory be to God on high"

Refrain:

Let the whole creation cry

"Glory be to God on high."

Praise God from the leavens;
give praise in the heights!
Give praise, all you angels;
praise God, all you hosts!

**Praise God, sun and moon;
give praise, stars and lights!
Praise God, farthest heavens
and all waters beyond heaven!**

Refrain:

Let all things praise the Holy One
at whose command they were created,
who established them for all time,
setting bounds, which cannot be passed.

**Praise God from the earth,
great sea creatures and ocean depths,
lightening and hail, snow and frost,
gales that obey God's decree,**

all mountains and hills,
all fruit trees and cedars,
wild animals and cattle,
creatures winged and earth-bound,
**sovereigns who rule earth and its people,
all who govern and judge this world,
young men and women alike,
old people and children together.**

Refrain:

Let all things praise the name of God,
the name above every other,
whose splendour covers heaven and earth.

**You give strength to your people,
songs of praise to your faithful,
to Israel, the people dear to your heart.**

Refrain:

CENTERING FOR WORSHIP: "Come Touch Our Hearts"

MV #12 (verse 2)

***Come touch our souls that we may know and love you,
your quiet presence all our fears dispel;
create a space for spirit to grow in us,
let life and beauty fill us,
come touch and bless our souls.***

GATHERING PRAYER: (responsively)

As we waited with excitement and expectation, the promise of a child was made real, the Word became flesh and now Love is here again, incarnated anew in creation. A new year has come with the eternal promise of new opportunities and the gift of abiding grace.

**God of eternity, of all time and space,
shine your light upon us here.
Be with us in our worship and
in a world of new beginnings.
Created to create, christened to love,
together we pray: Let there be light!
Amen**

***GATHERING HYMN: "Come and Seek the Ways of Wisdom"**

MV #10

Come and seek the ways of Wisdom,
she who danced, when earth was new.
Follow closely what she teaches,
for her words are right and true.
Wisdom clears the path to justice,
showing us what love must do.

Listen to the voice of Wisdom,
crying in the market-place.
Hear the Word made flesh among us,
full of glory, truth and grace.
When the word takes root and ripens,
peace and righteousness embrace.

Sister Wisdom, come, assist us;
nurture all who seek rebirth.
Spirit-guide and close companion,
bring to light our sacred worth.
Free us to become your people,
holy friends of God and earth.

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE (The Christ Candle is lit...)

Brighter than the first evening star, brighter still than the awakening dawn, the Christ light shines, the Love light glows, the light of the world illumines all people and all things. We light this candle as a reminder of the presence and the power of the light. We light this candle as a reminder that through the light, the beauty and the need of the world is revealed. The light, God's Epiphany, is upon us. Through the light we respond in love.

CHORAL RESPONSE: "Light of Christ"

***Light of Christ shine in and through me.
Light of Love be with me now.
Take these hands, healing hands.
Light of Christ flow through me now.***

*Gathering, A/C/E 2025/26
Pat Mayberry and David Kai*

WE OPEN OUR HEARTS:

The Christmas lights still shine, the music of love and laughter lingers in our hearts, and the flavours of the season still make us happy. A new year comes, resolutions are considered, made, followed, or perhaps, already forgotten. As we look toward hope's horizon, the memories and dreams of yesteryear's journey mingle their varied colours with those of a new dawn. A people called upon to help prepare the way, we now wonder about the way forward, where we're going, how we'd like to get to where we'd like to be, how best to put one foot in front of the other, as one breath, one heartbeat, follows another.

We pause for a moment of reflection...

OUR HEARTS ARE FILLED:

And our God, who blesses us and Creation with the divine dream of hope held, peace practiced, joy joined and love lived out, calls us home together. We are called, invited, moved to journey home, to abundant life in God, by a different way. The way of faith, shaped by wonder and the contours of gratitude. A way not shadowed by fear or regret, not subject to the detours of denial or despair, but the luminous way of light. The way of Emmanuel, God-with-us. The way of 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.

***HYMN:** "Will You Come and See the Light"

VU #96

Will you come and see the light from the stable door?
It is shining newly bright, though it shone before.
It will be your guiding star, it will show you who you are;
will you hide, or decide to meet the light?

Will you step into the light that can free the slave?
It will stand for what is right, it will heal and save.
By the pyramids of greed there's a longing to be freed;
will you hide, or decide to meet the light?

Will you tell about the light in the prison cell?
Though it's shackled out of sight, it is shining well.
When the truth is cut and bruised, and the innocent abused,
will you hide, or decide to meet the light?

Will you join the hope, a light in the young girl's eyes,
of the mighty put to flight by a baby's cries?
When the lowest and the least are the foremost at the feast,
will you hide, or decide to meet the light?

Will you travel by the light of the babe new born?
In the candle lit at night there's a gleam of dawn,
and the darkness all about is too dim to put it out:
will you hide, or decide to meet the light?

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION: *(in unison)*

In the glow of candlelight, in human and divine stories of starlight and the light of the world, may your word, God, be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. In the reading and hearing of scripture may we be guided in the eternal sacred way of light and love's liberty. Amen

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

Jennifer Oliver

Isaiah 60:1-6

Arise, shine; for your light has come

Matthew 2:1-23

Following a star; fleeing in the night

REFLECTION:

GIFT OF MUSIC: "A Light is Gleaming"

YOUR GENEROSITY MATTERS

Martha Vickers

INVITATION TO MAKE AN OFFERING

We have journeyed here to witness hope in a humble setting, love in a light that moves our hearts, and to make our offerings out of the richness of our lives. Our offerings will now be gathered.

*** OFFERING RESPONSE:** "In the Bleak Midwinter"

VU 55

(verse 4)

***What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise one, I would do my part;
yet what I can I give him—give my heart.***

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

We remember gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, gifts given long ago symbolising a life lovingly shared with a world full of passion and pain. Today, God of wonder, God of light, we offer our gifts, not as symbols, but as signs of love's light breaking into the world. May the gifts and love that we share brighten hearts and bring hope and healing, that no one need flee or fear any more. Amen

PASTORAL PRAYER

PRAYER OF JESUS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***CLOSING HYMN: "I Am the Light of the World"** VU#87

Refrain

"I am the light of the world!

You people come and follow me!"

*If you follow and love you'll learn the mystery
of what you were meant to do and be.*

When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and the shepherds have found their way home,
the work of Christmas is begun:

Refrain:

To find the lost and lonely one,
to heal the broken soul with love,
to feed the hungry children with warmth and good food,
to feel the earth below, the sky above!

Refrain:

To free the prisoner from all chains,
to make the powerful care,
to rebuild the nations with strength of good will,
to see God's children everywhere!

Refrain

"I am the light of the world!

You people come and follow me!"

*If you follow and love you'll learn the mystery
of what you were meant to do and be.*

To bring hope to every task you do,
to dance at a baby's new birth,
to make music in an old person's heart,
and sing to the colours of the earth!

Refrain:

***COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION**

***CHORAL SENDING FORTH** – "May the God of Peace" – MV #224

***May the God of peace and of all good,
may the God of peace and of all good
be always with you. Amen!
May God's peace be with you. Amen!***

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

| | | |
|-----------|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 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 |
| Wednesday | 9:00-11:00 AM | Badminton – DEMH GYM |
| Thursday | 4:15 PM | Choir Practice |
| | 7:00 PM | Christian Development Team |
| Saturday | 8:00 AM–1:00 PM | Bathurst Community Market – GYM |

Peanut Butter –Our quota for 2025 was to collect 1,000 jars of peanut butter for the Volunteer Center. Up to December 30, 2025 we received 1,009 jars. ***Many thanks to everyone who assisted in reaching our goal!!***

Rev. David and Phyllis would like to thank everyone for their Christmas well wishes, cards and thoughtful gifts. You helped to make the season bright!

Thank you to our volunteers in December - Counters – Margaret Payne-Chenard and Mike Kierstead; **Greeters** –Julie & Harvey Spence; **Advent Candle Lighters** - Gary Branch, Leif & Sadie Larsen; Helen & Brooke Knowles, Ian Oliver & Grace Lavigne and Cheryl & Mya Brewster; **Your Generosity Matters** – Martha Vickers, Ronalds family, Anne Wilson and Judy Losier; **Scripture Readers** – Cheryl Brewster, Anne Brooks, Helen Knowles, Wayne Lord, and Joan MacMillan; **Hospitality & Friendship** – Shirley Sealy, Wilma Dempsey, Lola Nelson Beth Sullivan, Charlene Roy and Gayle Ferron; **Sound System** –Brenda Parrott, Shirley Allain, and Ralph Jamieson; **Audio Specialist** – Don Eddy for preparing audio for CDs; **Videographer** – Lester Scott and to Josh Gammon and his staff at WebSolutions.ca for uploading the YouTube link to the website and Facebook.

Church News

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.

Your generosity to Mission and Service helps refugees to find safety and live in peace.

Community News

A FAMILY AND COMMUNITY BREAKFAST will be held at St. George's Anglican Church, 432 King Avenue, on **Saturday, January 10th from 8:00 – 10:00 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.

SCRIPTURE READINGS – New International Version

Isaiah 60:1-6

- 1** “Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.
- 2** See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you.
- 3** Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.
- 4** “Lift up your eyes and look about you:
All assemble and come to you;
your sons come from afar,
and your daughters are carried on the hip.
- 5** Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy; the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come.
- 6** Herds of camels will cover your land, young camels of Midian and Ephah. And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the Lord.

Matthew 2:1-23

The Magi Visit the Messiah

- 1** After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem
- 2** and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”
- 3** When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.
- 4** When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born.
- 5** “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

6 “‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.’”

7 Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared.

8 He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

9 After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was.

10 When they saw the star, they were overjoyed.

11 On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

12 And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

The Escape to Egypt

13 When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”

14 So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt,

15 where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

16 When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi.

17 Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

18 "A voice is heard in Ramah,
weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children
and refusing to be comforted,
because they are no more."

The Return to Nazareth

19 After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt

20 and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead."

21 So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel.

22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee,

23 and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.

*For the word of God in scripture, for the word of God among us,
for the word of God within us all, thanks be to God.*