

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

February 22, 2026
1st Sunday of Lent

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

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<u>Lectionary for today</u>	<u>Lectionary for next Sunday</u>
Genesis Chapter 1-3	Genesis Chapter 1-3
Psalm 32	Psalm 121
Romans 5:12-19	Romans 4:1-5, 13-17
Matthew 4:1-11	John 3:1-17

*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.



*GATHERING HYMN: "Spirit, Open My Heart"

MV #79

Refrain:
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.

God, replace my stony heart
with a heart that's kind and tender.
All my coldness and fear
to your grace I now surrender.

Refrain:

Write your love upon my heart
as my law, my goal, my story.
In each thought, word and deed,
may my living bring you glory.

Refrain:

May I weep with those who weep,
share the joy of sister, brother.
In the welcome of Christ,
may we welcome one another.

Refrain:

CALL TO WORSHIP: *(responsively)*

As we begin our Lenten journey,
we pay attention to what is behind us,
Love revealed, an epiphany of light...

(Christ Candle and 6 Lenten candles are silently lit here)

and we notice God's presence.

We pay attention to what is among and around us,
relationships, questions, sorrows and dreams...

and we know that God is here.

We notice what is before us,
even as the future is uncertain...

**in faith we realize that the path is unclear,
and yet we know Christ's promise.**

No matter who we are,

who we love, what we love, what makes us tick,

no matter where we come from,

what town, territory or tradition,

no matter where we're at, no matter where we are going...

the kingdom of God is near!

So, we gather to worship,

taught by Christ,

moved by the Spirit,

and loved, so loved, by God.

Adapted from words by Richard Bott, then in Vancouver, BC.
Gathering, L/E 2023 p. 31. Used with permission.

CENTERING FOR WORSHIP: "Hold Us in Your Grace"

***Hold us in your grace, O God,
Hold us in your grace.***

***Hold us in your grace, O God,
Hold us in your grace.***

***Hold us, hold us in your grace.
Hold us, hold us in your grace.***

GATHERING PRAYER: *(in unison)*

**God of our journeys, we began this holy season with ashes
and oil, remembering our mortality and your healing love,
and your presence in all that comes. Feed us for our
Lenten journey as we take time for introspection, for
penitence, for discovery and a deepening faith, and as we
remember Jesus' own journey to Jerusalem. The days are
lengthening even as shadows grow, and so we have hope,
knowing that you will again sing out, "Let there be light."
Amen**

***PSALM 32:** Be glad in God you righteous.

Rejoice, O saints, rejoice

VU Page #759

Refrain:

Be glad in God you righteous.,

Rejoice, O saints, rejoice.

Blessed are those whose 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:

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:

LENTEN CANDLE LITURGY

Cheryl Brewster

There were those who did not want to hear what Jesus had to say, who could not bring themselves to rejoice and sing his song. Who did not understand what he was doing, who thought he was a heretic and a danger and a transgressor of religious and social norms. Who were silent about the sins and the brokenness of the world, when what was needed were prophets and faithful healers.

It has been said that silence is complicity. And when there is injustice and there is oppression, and when our consciences are pricked and the need of the world lies heavy upon us, and yet our fear and self-doubt win out and we close our eyes and cover our ears and say and do nothing, a little of the life and the light that we share is shadowed over, our light is dimmed.

The first candle is extinguished

As we worship, we remember, and we recommit to the sacred way of the internal and eternal light, even as the clouds move in over a distant hill. We remember and proclaim that God is Love, and who, in love, says again and again to all, "Don't be afraid."

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.***

***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:** "I've Got Peace Like a River"

VU #577

African-American Spiritual

I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river in my soul.
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river in my soul.

I've got joy like a fountain,
I've got joy like a fountain,
I've got joy like a fountain, in my soul.
I've got joy like a fountain,
I've got joy like a fountain,
I've got joy like a fountain, in my soul

I've got love like an ocean,
I've got love like an ocean,
I've got love like an ocean in my soul.
I've got love like an ocean,
I've got love like an ocean,
I've got joy I love like an ocean in my soul

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION: *(in unison)*

Shadows may begin to fall, we may be tempted into doubt and dismay, yet always we have the promise of light. Illuminate our reading, listening and reflecting, O God, our learning too, for in you is our bright hope, our original blessing and our luminous assurance. In you is our vision of life. Amen

SCRIPTURE STUDY (week 1):

Genesis, chapters 1 to 3 Our spirituality, our story, ourselves

GIFT OF MUSIC: "Creator and Poet"

YOUR GENEROSITY MATTERS

Judy Losier

INVITATION TO MAKE AN OFFERING

We live by every word that comes from the mouth of God, words of creation and compassion, of justice, mercy and peace, words of limitless love. We live in these, and so, we give. Our offerings will now be gathered.

***OFFERING RESPONSE:**

VU #541

"Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow"

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
praise God, all creatures high and low;
give thanks to God in love made known:
Creator, Word and Spirit, One.***

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

**As we sing our praise, as we give our thanks, bless all that we are and share, blessed and beloved One, that your world may be one in hope, in healing, in peace and in love.
Amen**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASTORAL PRAYER

PRAYER OF JESUS

***CLOSING HYMN:** "God the Creator"

tune "Morning has broken" (Bunessan, VU 409).

God the Creator, heavenly parent,
bringing existence to all that is;
you are the blessed ground of our being,
deeply connected with everything.

God, Jesus Christ, our beloved sibling,
love made incarnate, trav'ling the earth;
yours are the hands that stretch out in blessing,
reminding people of their true worth.

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God, Holy Spirit, breath of Creator,
blowing upon creation's deep void;
small voice in stillness, shakes our foundations,
Advocate, Guide, Baptizer enjoyed!"

"Creator, Christ, and Spirit most Holy,
Three-Who-Are-One, and One-Who-is-Three;"
"Trinity always, in Unity blessing,
creation transforming Great Mystery!"

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Excerpt From Something Sacred: Reflections on Music and Faith
Alydia Smith*

***COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION**

***CHORAL SENDING FORTH** "When You Walk from Here" VU #298

***When you walk from here,
when you walk from here,
walk with justice, walk with mercy,
and with God's humble care.***

SHARING THE LIGHT

POSTLUDE

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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
	9:00 AM	Ways & Mean Team - RMR
Tuesday	9:30 AM-11:30 AM	Quilters – DEMH Downstairs office
	1:00 – 3:00 PM	Knitting Group – RMR
<i>Bible Study continues after April 20th</i>		
Wednesday	<i>Roast Pork Supper Preparation</i>	
Thursday	4:15 PM	Choir Practice
Thursday	Roast Pork Supper Take Out – 4:00 to 5:30 PM Eat In – 4:30 to 6:00 PM	
Saturday	8:00 AM–1:00 PM	Bathurst Community Market – GYM

Peanut Butter – Once again this year our goal is to collect 1,000 jars of peanut butter to donate to the Bathurst Volunteer Center. Up to February 19th we have delivered 108 jars with funds on hand to purchase another 10.

February is Black History Month, and to honour this, we are including African-American spirituals in our worship music this month. You are also invited to check out the link below to a Broadview article about an exhibit showcasing Black history in Canada and in the United Church, produced as part of our denomination's 100th Anniversary. The exhibit is called Here All Along, and the article includes a link to a YouTube video of the exhibit. <https://broadview.org/black-history-exhibit-united-church/>

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.

Recognizing the pull of social media and non-stop advertising, when we make faithful purchasing decisions, our identity changes from consumers to stewards.

Church News

Eat in or Take out Roast Pork Supper will be held **Thursday, February 26th**. Tickets available - \$18 for adults and \$6 for children under 12. Please contact a member of the *Ways & Means Committee*, drop by the church office or call 506-546-3532.

*Sponsored by
McDonald's - Bathurst*



The Upper Room daily devotion for March and April are in the Narthex just outside the Ruth Morrison Room. Please feel free to take one. A container for donations is located with the publication.

Community News

Royal Canadian Legion, Bathurst Branch #18 located at 1220 Bridge Street is pleased to present "**a fun afternoon of music**" on Sunday March 15th from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM with **Catalyst**. Catalyst consists of New Brunswick Country Music Hall of Fame inductee *Alysa Collins* on lead vocals, *Claudette Belliveau* on bass guitar and vocals, and *Eddie Edwards* on acoustic guitar and vocals. They perform an eclectic mix of harmony-rich country, folk and rock featuring covers by artists from Anne Murray to Linda Ronstadt to Buddy Holly.

Tickets are \$10 each and are available from the legion.

***Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning
Waters Regional News***

President's Message, February 18, 2026

Greetings and peace to all! As we enter this season of Lent our minds and thoughts are drawn towards the journey we now face as we move daily closer to Holy Week.

Lent for me has always been a time of contemplation, reflection and prayer following that traditional hearty feast of pancakes and maple syrup. It is a seemingly quiet time of year. Some of us will embrace a warm sunny holiday to avoid the snow and cold while others are content to curl up by the fire with a good book. With apologies to the Irish, there are no "major" holidays to distract us in these 40 days. Some denominations describe Lent as a period of "simple living" which I think is a pretty accurate description of life in this season...or at least one we would like to embrace in our often chaotic and anxious world. It is somewhat unrealistic to believe any of us will achieve 40 continuous days of simple living but maybe we can strive to insert pieces of simple living into our daily schedule. Time set aside to embrace creation, visit a neighbour or maybe participate in a daily Lenten study. I think my understanding of living simply in Lent is best described in Micah 6:8

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.

And what does the LORD require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly[a] with your God.

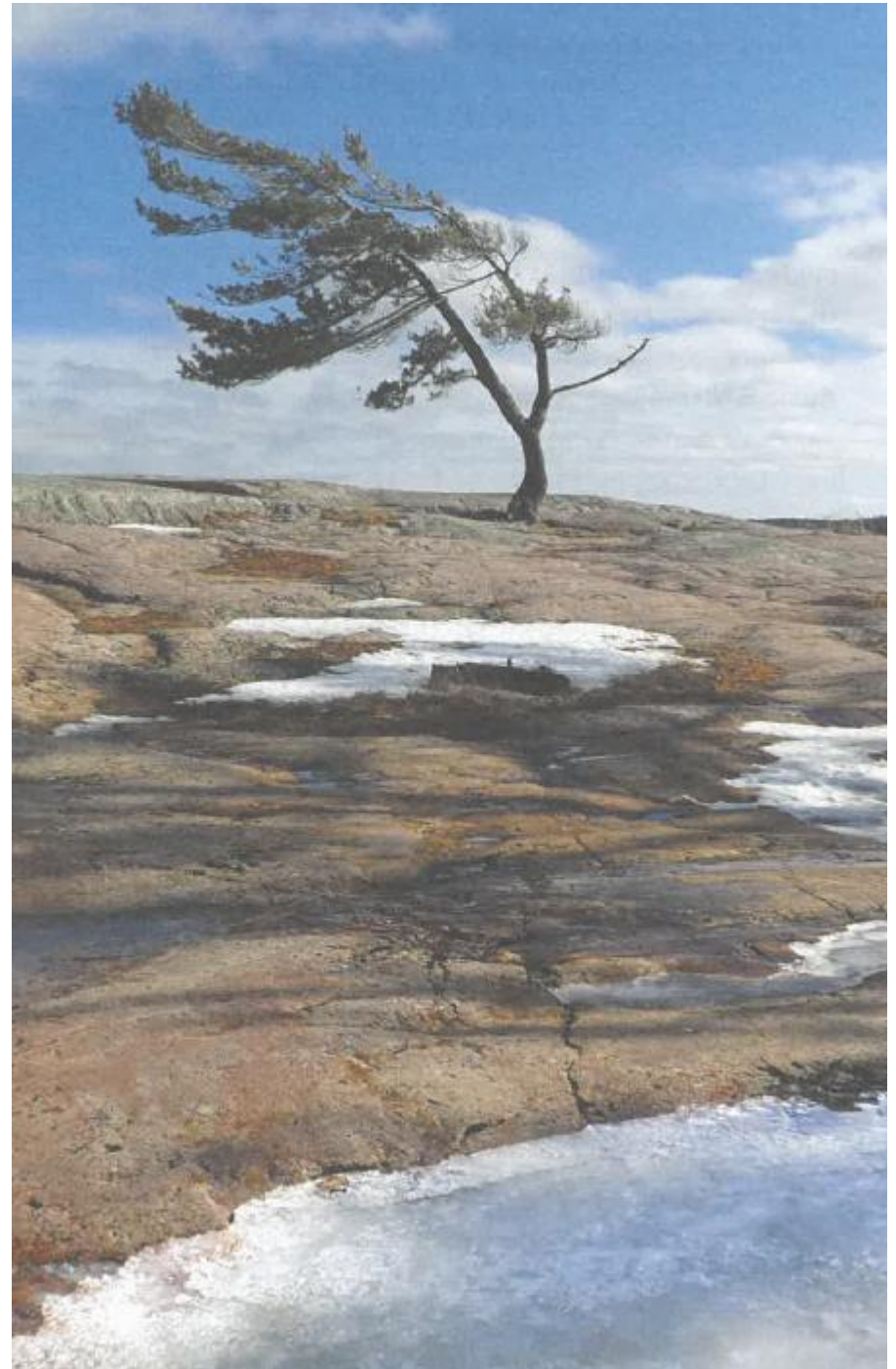
Seeking justice, offering mercy and forgiveness and living humbly are precisely what the Lord asks of us. These are all evidence of grace.

Such grace was clearly evident in our country this past week in the wake of the events which occurred in Tumbler Ridge BC. Politicians set aside their political rhetoric to jointly embrace grieving families and a hurting community. An entire town opened their hearts and doors to those in need of support and connection. Words of compassion and mercy for the deceased mother of the shooter were issued from families most directly affected by this tragedy. In the midst of chaos and tragedy, we seem to always be able to find evidence of grace. I wish each of you well on your Lenten journey. May you support that which is just, share mercy and forgiveness with those you encounter, and may you walk with humility and loving hearts as you experience and offer examples of grace.

May you become light and salt to a world in need of both and may the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you in this season and always.

Blessings.

Hugh



SCRIPTURE READINGS – New International Version

Genesis Chapters 1-3

The first story:

- 1** In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
- 2** Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.
- 3** And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.
- 4** God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness.
- 5** God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.
- 6** And God said, "Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water."
- 7** So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so.
- 8** God called the vault "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.
- 9** And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so.
- 10** God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good.
- 11** Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so.
- 12** The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.
- 13** And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.
- 14** And God said, "Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years,
- 15** and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so.

16 God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars.

17 God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth,

18 to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good.

19 And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

20 And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky."

21 So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

22 God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth."

23 And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

24 And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so.

25 God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

26 Then God said, "Let us make [humanity] in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

27 So God created [humanity] in his own image, in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

29 Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.

30 And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

Chapter 2

1 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

2 By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.

3 Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

4 This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, when the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.

The second story:

5 Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth and no plant had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground,

6 but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground.

7 Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

8 Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed.

9 The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

10 A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters.

11 The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold.

12 (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.)

13 The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush.

14 The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Ashur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

16 And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden;

17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

18 The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

19 Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name.

20 So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found.

21 So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and then closed up the place with flesh.

22 Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

23 The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.”

24 That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

25 Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

Chapter 3

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”

2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,

3 but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

4 "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman.

5 "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

9 But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?"

10 He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

11 And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

12 The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

14 So the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.

15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

16 To the woman he said, "I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labour you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

17 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,' cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life.

18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.

19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

20 Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.

21 The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

22 And the Lord God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever."

23 So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.

24 After he drove him out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.