

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

March 1, 2026
2nd Sunday of Lent

Minister Rev. David Allan **Music Director** Martha Vickers
Office Adm. Margaret Daniels **Custodian** Lester Scott
Greeters Wilma Dempsey & Shirley Sealy
Audio & Visual Technician Brenda Parrott & Lester Scott

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<u>Lectionary for today</u>	<u>Lectionary for next Sunday</u>
Genesis Chapter 1-3	Genesis Chapter 1-3
Psalm 121	Psalm 95
Romans 4:1-5, 13-17	Romans 5:1-11
John 3:1-17	John 4:5-42

*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:** "Teach Me, God, to Wonder"

VU #299

Teach me, God, to wonder, teach me, God, to see;
 let your world of beauty capture me.

Refrain:

*Praise to you be given, love for you be lived,
 life be celebrated, joy you give.*

Let me, God, be open, let me loving be;
 let your world of people speak to me.

Refrain

Let me, God, be ready, let me be awake,
 in your world of loving my place take.

Refrain

Teach me, God, to know you, hear you when you speak,
 see you in my neighbour when we meet.

Refrain

CALL TO WORSHIP: *(responsively)*

It's a new day, and the Lenten road stretches out before us,
 lit by Love and Creator.

(Christ Candle and 5 Lenten candles lit here)

It's a new journey, into unknown places and the intimacy of our hearts.

We walk with our questions,
we walk with our wonder-filled uncertainty,
 we walk with our desire for truth.

We gather on the way, that of the mystery of faith,
 called into a widening perspective.

**As walkers of the way, we worship our God,
 opening ourselves to the open road, guided in grace.**

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:

We open ourselves to you, open-hearted God, we open ourselves in faith. Enter in; enter into the deepest parts of ourselves, that we might overcome all that would hold us back, and be strengthened in all that would have us move forward. Bless us as we continue our Lenten journey, bless we who are born in you. Born of the Spirit we pray, and borne by your love, we stay the course. **Amen**

***PSALM 121:**

VU Page #844

Our help is in the name of our God who made heaven and earth

Refrain:

*Our help is in the name of our God
who made heaven and earth.*

I lift my eyes to the hills.

From where will I look for help?

**My help comes from God,
who has made heaven and earth.**

God will not let your foot stumble;
the One who protects Israel will not slumber..

**The One who protects you
will neither slumber nor sleep.**

Refrain:

It is God who protects you,
your defence at your right hand.

**The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.**

God will protect you from all evil,

God will protect your life.

**God will protect your going and coming,
now and forever.**

Refrain:

*Our help is in the name of our God
who made heaven and earth.*

LENTEN CANDLE LITURGY

Anne Brooks

There were those who did not hear what Jesus had to say, who could not bring themselves to meet his gaze, a gaze lit by both compassion and challenge. 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 thought they could carry on unnoticed, participating in the brokenness of the world, when what was needed were prophets and faithful healers.

When our faith slips and falters, when we fail to notice or open ourselves to experience the presence of our God of Love, of the Creator of All in the midst of the need of the world, we don't see as clearly as we might. A little of the light that we share is shadowed over, our light is dimmed.

The second candle is extinguished

As we worship, we remember, and we recommit to the way of 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:** "Seek us and find us"

TLUS #74

Seek us and find us;
God, hear our prayer;
through tribulation, aid our despair.
Guiding us gently,
you are our trust
through times of trouble, you are with us.

Seek us and find us;
Saviour, draw near;
share in our struggle, cast out this fear.
We are your children,
work of your hands.
Lead us and lift us to your bright lands.

Seek us and find us;
those who are worn.
Be with us now, God:
you know we mourn.
With healing presence,
you keep us strong;
on life's long journey, make this our song.

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PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION: *(in unison)*

It is Lent and so, God of our journeys, we join you in searching the depths of our being. We seek understanding even as the depths seem to be over our heads half the time. Shine your light in the nighttime of our wonder; shine your light on our wandering to Jerusalem. Make your word shine for us, a beacon for our souls. Amen

SCRIPTURE STUDY (week 2):

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

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

YOUR GENEROSITY MATTERS

Martha Vickers

INVITATION TO MAKE AN OFFERING

We can serve the world in many ways, and offering of ourselves, turning to the need of the world, is one way we can turn to God, the way of repentance as the kingdom of God comes near. As we journey together, we give as one. 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)*

In gratitude we seek to bless the world with all that we have and are. Bless us, God of grace, in our giving, in our seeking wisdom and your way. Bless these offerings which are of you. Together, we bless your holy name. Amen

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASTORAL PRAYER

PRAYER OF JESUS

***CLOSING HYMN:** "O Beautiful Gaia"

MV #41

Refrain:

*O beautiful Gaia, O Gaia, calling us home.
O beautiful Gaia, calling us on.*

Soil yielding its harvest, O Gaia, calling us home.
Soil yielding its harvest, calling us on.

Refrain:

*O beautiful Gaia, O Gaia, calling us home.
O beautiful Gaia, calling us on.*

Waves crashing on granite, O Gaia, calling us home.
Waves crashing on granite, calling us on.

Refrain:

Pine bending in windstorm, O Gaia calling us home.
Pine bending in windstorm, calling us on.

Refrain:

Loon nesting in marshland, O Gaia, calling us home.
Loon nesting in marshland, calling us on.

Refrain:

***COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION**

***Choral Sending Forth:** "An Old Irish Blessing"

***May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind be ever at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face
and the rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again, and until we meet again,
may you be held in the hollow of God's hand.***

SHARING THE LIGHT

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
	9:00 AM	Ways & Means 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	9:00-11:00 AM	Badminton – DEMH GYM
Thursday	4:15 PM	Choir Practice
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 25th we have delivered 118 jars with funds on hand to purchase another 20.

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.

Acts of generosity pull us towards dreams of a new relationship to God, to the earth, and to all others.

Ways & Means Team would like to thank everyone who assisted with the recent Roast Pork Supper, either by working in the kitchen, baking, serving the food, buying and/or selling tickets. Thanks to McDonald's for their generous sponsorship. The final numbers will be ready next week. The next event is tentatively planned for March 22nd, a **Sunrise Breakfast!**

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.

Church News

Thank you to our volunteers in February - Counters – Bev Murphy & Shirley Sealy; **Greeters** Julie & Harvey Spence; **Your Generosity Matters** – Martha Vickers, Ronalds family, Bev Murphy and Judy Losier; **Scripture Readers** – Wayne Lord, Judy Losier and Gary Branch; **Lenton Candle Reader** - Cheryl Brewster; **Hospitality & Friendship** – Nancy Jagoe, Shirley Sealy and Wilma Dempsey; **Sound System** – Shirley Allain and Ralph Jamieson; **Audio Specialist** – Don Eddy for preparing audio for CDs; **Videographer** – Lester Scott and Margaret Payne Chenard and to Josh Gammon and his staff at WebSolutions.ca for uploading the YouTube link to the website and Facebook.

Affirming Questionnaire: So far, we have received 10 responses (thanks!), and we would love to have twice to three times that many to help guide your Affirming Team as we journey together in this vital aspect of our shared ministry. If you need a copy, there are some on the Affirming table in the Narthex, along with a place to return them and other information that you should find helpful. If you have any questions at all, please ask a member of the Team: Randy Breckinridge, Cindy Doucet, Hugh Ellis or Bev Murphy. Rev. David would also be happy to speak with you. Thank you!

Community News

Royal Canadian Legion, Herman J. Good V.C. Branch #18 located at 1220 Bridge Street is pleased to host a **Spaghetti Supper & Dessert** on *Sunday, March 8th at 5 PM*. Tickets are \$20 each and includes Caesar salad, roll, and tea or coffee. All tickets will be sold in advance and are available from the legion. An auction will be held after the supper.

A FAMILY AND COMMUNITY BREAKFAST will be held at St. George's Anglican Church, 432 King Avenue, on **Saturday, March 14th 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.



The Affirming Process

Encountering the Need

A need, question, or vision leads a ministry to ask how it can be publicly, intentionally, and explicitly welcoming.

Discerning

A group forms to start looking at how to become (more) radically and intentionally welcoming. They consider the Affirming process, and get in touch with the Affirming ministry coordinators.

Embarking

The decision to formally enter the Affirming process is made by the ministry's governing body. A working group is set up.

Engaging

Educating. Story telling. Praying. Hearing fears and hopes. Working with all in the ministry and wider community to discern what being Affirming could look like for your ministry.

Documenting

Before a final decision is made, an inclusive marriage policy, Vision Statement, Action Plan for the future, and more must be created.

Deciding Together

The community discerns how it's going to decide on whether to formally become Affirming. A positive decision needs to include a "yes" from at least three quarters of those involved in deciding.

Joining the Family

Holding a public celebration! Being welcomed formally to our Canada-wide family.

Affirm United/ S'affirmer Ensemble works for the full inclusion of all sexual and gender identities in the United Church of Canada, and beyond.
Learn more! www.ause.ca Twitter: @affirmunited Email: communications@ause.ca
Look for both our group and our page on Facebook.



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.