

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

March 8, 2026

3rd 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 Shirley Allain & Lester Scott

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<u>Lectionary for today</u>	<u>Lectionary for next Sunday</u>
Genesis Chapter 1-3	1 Samuel 16:1-13
Psalm 95	Psalm 23
Romans 5:1-11	Ephesians 5:8-14
John 4:5-42	John 9:1-41

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: "Water Flowing from the Mountains" MV #87

Water flowing from the mountains.
Water flowing o'er the earth.
Water comes to us, so precious.
Living water gives us birth.

Refrain

*Drink deep this source of life.
Drink deep and know.
For living water sings, and living water brings
the love that makes our spirit grow.*

Water rushing down the rivers.
Water rushing to the sea.
Water comes to us, so precious.
Living water makes us free.

Refrain

Water springing from the dry place.
Water springing in the sun.
Water comes to us, so precious.
Living water for each one.

Refrain

CALL TO WORSHIP: *(responsively)*

In the light of love, in the glow of the first light that still shines among us, we come.

(Christ Candle and 4 Lenten candles are silently lit)

In the throes of this troubled world,
we come thirsty, and with all of our foibles and fears.

We come to the well of grace.

We come thirsty, and with our thoughts,
our questions and concerns.

We come to the spring of hope.

We come thirsty, for assurance, connection and peace.

We come to the font of faith. *(continued page 3)*

We come to worship in spirit and truth, in a place of blessing.

**By font and chalice and by open hearts shared,
love wells up here.**

**We are grateful, and so we respond
with song and prayer...**

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:

Pour out your love upon us here, gracious God, fill us with your quenching presence as we gather for worship. Fount of every blessing, grant us living water, so that our lives together may never be parched, may never know the dryness of despair. Drench us with love, inside and out, that we may be filled for the journey as we look inward and toward Jerusalem too. In the name of Jesus we pray, amen.

***PSALM 95**

Come, let us bow down and worship

VU Page #814

Refrain:

***Come, let us bow down and worship;
Let us kneel before God our maker.***

Part One (1-7)

O come, let us sing to God,

Let us shout with joy to the rock of our salvation.

Let us come into God's presence with thanksgiving;

let us joyously shout to God with songs of praise.

Refrain

***Come, let us bow down and worship;
Let us kneel before God our maker.***

For you are a great God,

high sovereign above all gods.

In your hand are the depths of the earth;

to you belong the heights of the mountains.

The sea is yours, for you made it;

your hands also formed the dry land.

You are indeed our God;

we are your people, the flock that you shepherd.

Refrain

***Come, let us bow down and worship;
Let us kneel before God our maker.***

Part Two (8-11)

O that today you would listen to God's voice;

"Do not harden your hearts as at Meribah,

as on that day at Massah in the wilderness;

**when your forebears tried me, and put me to the test,
though they had seen my works.**

Forty years I loathed that generation, and said,

'They are a people whose hearts are perverse,

for they give no heed to my ways.'

Then, I vowed in my anger:

they shall not enter my rest."

Refrain

***Come, let us bow down and worship;
Let us kneel before God our maker.***

LENTEN CANDLE LITURGY

Helen Knowles

There were those who did not hear what Jesus had to say, who despite his teaching and stories, could not bring themselves to remember that God was with them, the Creator, the Caregiver, the Constant and Eternal One, even as the powerful in their folly wielded oppression and fear. Where the eternal good was touched by temporary evil, there were struggling people who imagined that God was against them too.

Who did not therefore understand what Jesus was doing, who thought he was a heretic and a danger and a transgressor of religious and social norms. Who thought they could counsel their own hearts, respond only to their own desires, when what was needed were prophets and faithful healers. When what was needed was unconditional love.

When we find ourselves in the wilderness, on a path away from what stifles and binds us and that takes us toward the unknown, we can forget that we're not alone. We can forget God's promise; we can forget to trust and have faith. We can forget to sing with joy God's love song. Then, a little of the light that we share is shadowed over, our light is dimmed.

The third 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.

Remain standing for hymn

***HYMN:** "Each Blade of Grass"

MV #37

Each blade of grass, ev'ry wing that soars,
the waves that sweep across a distant shore,
make full the circle of God.

Each laughing child, ev'ry gentle eye,
a forest lit beneath a moon-bright sky,
make full the circle of God.

Each silent paw, ev'ry rounded stone,
the buzz that echoes from a honey'd comb,
make full the circle of God.

Each fire-brimmed star, ev'ry out-stretched hand,
the wind that leaps and sails across the land,
make full the circle of God.

Each icy peak, ev'ry patterned shell,
the joyous chorus that the dawn foretells,
make full the circle of God.

Each cosmic hue, ev'ry creature's way,
all form the beauty of this vast array,
making full the circle of God.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION: *(in unison)*

**God, you are our rock and salvation, out of you flows love and wisdom and the promise of life. You show us what is good and you deliver us from evil. As we engage with your word, may our thirst for you and all you graciously provide be met. Meet us now, that we might meet the world refreshed, and work for a renewed heaven and earth.
Amen**

SCRIPTURE STUDY (week 3):

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

GIFT OF MUSIC: "God the Creator"

YOUR GENEROSITY MATTERS

Ronalds Family

INVITATION TO MAKE AN OFFERING

We remember the story of woman from Samaria, who met Jesus at a well and told all of how in Christ she was changed. We remember the story of a man with leprosy who met Jesus on a road, and who from deep within proclaimed a story of healing, thankfulness and joy. Love meets us here. In the generosity of our offerings, we too tell a story, of gratitude, of loving commitment and faithful hope. The well of love never runs dry. We seek to change this thirsty world. 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*)

**Through our offerings, generous God, we seek to be at one with you. One in love, one in grace, one in hope and your continuing creation. Bless us in our giving as you have blessed us with your gifts. Bless all whose need is touched by what we do here today; bless us all with your embrace.
Amen**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASTORAL PRAYER

PRAYER OF JESUS

***CLOSING HYMN:** "I Heard the Voice of Jesus"

VU #626

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Come unto me and rest;
lay down, O weary one, lay down
your head upon my breast."

I came to Jesus as I was,
weary and worn and sad;
I found in him a resting-place,
and he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Behold, I freely give
the living water; thirsty one,
stoop down, and drink, and live."
I came to Jesus, and I drank
of that life-giving stream;
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
and now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"I am this dark world's light;
look unto me, your morn shall rise;
and all your day be bright."
I looked to Jesus, and I found
in him my star, my sun;
and in that light of life I'll walk
till travelling days are done.

***COMMISSIONING AND BLESSING**

*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

*May flowers always line your path
and sunshine light your day.*

*May songbirds serenade you
every step along the way.*

*May a rainbow run beside you
in a sky that's always blue.*

*And may happiness fill your heart
each day your whole life through.*

~Irish Blessing~

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 – RMR
<i>Bible Study continues after April 20th</i>		
Wednesday	9:00-11:00 AM	Badminton – DEMH GYM
Thursday	1:00 PM	Rug Hooking Group - RMR
	4:15 PM	Choir Practice
	7:00 PM	Christian Development - RMR
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 March 5th we have received 131 jars with funds on hand to purchase another 30.

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.

Sharing what we have—our time, our energy, our money, our belongings—spreads water on a world thirsting for justice.

The Annual General Meeting of Bathurst Pastoral Charge/First United Church will be held following the church service on ***Sunday, March 29, 2026.*** The Annual Report is now available for pick up. If you take one home with you, please bring it with you to the annual meeting.

Church News

Ways & Means Team is pleased to announce the net profit for the 2026 Roast Pork Supper is \$4,405.25. Thank you once again to McDonald's for their generous sponsorship and to everyone who assisted with this meal.

The Sunrise Breakfast is scheduled for **Sunday, March 22nd**. It will be held in the Donald Eddy Memorial Hall from **8:30 AM to 12 noon**. The tickets will be on sale in the next few days. Prices are \$12.00 for adults and children under 12 will be \$5.00.

Affirming Questionnaire: So far, we have received 12 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 Breckenridge, Cindy Doucet, Hugh Ellis or Bev Murphy. Rev. David would also be happy to speak with you. Thank you!

Community News

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.

March is officially recognized as **Irish Heritage Month** across Canada. Now in its third year, this special time invites communities to come together and celebrate the rich traditions, history and culture of the Irish Canadian Community. The Chaleur region boasts a deep and lasting connection to Ireland with many families tracing their ancestry back to Irish immigrants who arrived as early as the 18th century. March 18th – The Village Bridge watch tower will illuminate to green. March 13th at 1 PM – Irish flag will be raised in front of City Hall and a friendly parade will follow. New members always welcome. Contact Ron Jessulat at 506-545-7804.

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.