

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

March 29, 2026

Palm Sunday

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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<p><u>Lectionary for today</u> Zechariah 9:9-10 Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 Matthew 21:1-11</p>	<p><u>Lectionary for Easter Sunday</u> Acts 10:34-43 Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24 Colossians 3:1-4 John 20:1-18</p>
<p><u>Lectionary -Maundy Thursday</u> Exodus 12:1-4, 11-14 Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 John 13:1-17, 31b-35</p>	<p><u>Lectionary - Good Friday</u> Isaiah 52:13—53:12 Psalm 22 Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9 John 18:1—19:42</p>

*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:** "Hosanna, Loud Hosanna"

Hosanna, loud hosanna
 the happy children sang;
 through pillared court and temple
 the joyful anthem rang;
 to Jesus, who had blessed them
 close folded to his breast,
 the children sang their praises,
 the simplest and the best.

From Olivet they followed
 'mid an exultant crowd,
 the victory palm-branch waving,
 and singing clear and loud;
 the Lord of earth and heaven
 rode on in lowly state,
 content that little children
 should on his bidding wait.

"Hosanna in the highest!"
 That ancient song we sing,
 for Christ is our Redeemer;
 earth, let your anthems ring.
 O may we ever praise him
 with heart and life and voice,
 and in his humble presence
 eternally rejoice!

CALL TO WORSHIP:(responsively)

drawn from Zechariah 9:9-10

Rejoice greatly, O children of God!

Shout aloud, O people of Bathurst and Big River, North and South Tetagouche, down shore and beyond, shout O people of God!

Wherever you call home, rejoice! See, your saviour comes to you, your glorious light; your heart-song comes.

(Christ candle and 1 Lenten candle is silently lit)

Once he came humble and riding on a donkey;

to our hearts he comes through scripture, sacrament
and Spirit's flight.

**In him all fear is banished,
healing and restoration come,**

he invites all into peace and abundant life.

**His light shines from sea to sea,
from the river to the ends of the earth.**

His lovelight shines here among and within us, leading us on,
through the gates of holiness, and into the garden of wholeness
and peace.

CENTERING FOR WORSHIP: "And on This Path" MV #8

***And on this path, the gates of holiness are open wide,
and on this path, the gates of holiness are open wide,
and on this path, the gates of holiness are open wide!
Open wide! Open wide! Open wide!
The gates are open wide!***

***So enter in the gates of holiness are open wide,
so enter in the gates of holiness are open wide,
so enter in the gates of holiness are open wide!
Open wide! Open wide! Open wide!
The gates are open wide!***

GATHERING PRAYER:

In life's procession, we witness many things. Today and again,
Jesus comes humbly before us, inviting us once more to follow.
Help us, God of life, to follow him. Bless us in this time as we
celebrate our faith, as we lay down before him all that would hold
us back from continuing on our journey. We are about to enter
Jerusalem, we are about to enter a holy time and place, where the
rawness, mystery and blessings of this life are lifted like a palm
branch, lifted, like a cross. Help us, O Beloved, to walk humbly
with our God. **Amen.**

***PSALM 118** Hosanna! Hosanna!

Parts 1, 3 & 4 - VU Page #837

*Refrain:
Hosanna! Hosanna!*

Let Israel now say:

"God's love endures for ever."

Let the house of Aaron say:

"God's love endures for ever."

Let those who fear God say:

"God's love endures for ever."

*Refrain:
Hosanna! Hosanna!*

Open to me the gates of the temple,
that I may enter and give thanks to God.

**This is the gate of God;
through it the righteous shall enter.**

I thank you for you have answered me;
you have become my salvation.

**The stone which the builders rejected
has become the chief cornerstone.**

This is God's doing, marvellous in our eyes.

**This is the day that God has made,
let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

*Refrain:
Hosanna! Hosanna!*

Save us, O God, we pray;

God, we pray, give us success.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of God.

We bless you from the house of God.

God, our God has given us light;

with palm branches in hand let us march to the altar.

You are my God, and I will thank you;

you are my God, and I will extol you.

*Refrain:
Hosanna! Hosanna!*

There were those who liked a parade of power, a procession of pomp and might and a warning with the subtleness of an armored empire on the march, letting everyone know who they believed was in charge. The path of Caesar wove through distant lands and hometowns alike, his potent legions and political lackeys sought control and submission through force and fear. They did not understand a life such as Jesus shared, the message that he lived out, even as he came to be seen as a danger and a transgressor of the values that they sought to instill and enforce. His little parade, with a donkey as a mount instead of a warhorse, with palm branches laid down rather than laurels placed on heads, with cloaks removed and laid out rather than breastplates of burnished bronze fastened tight, made no sense to the powerful, was laughable even. In a time of oppressed hearts and repressed hopes, when the hurting of the hunted was everywhere, what was needed were prophets and faithful healers. We can be dazzled by the lure of power and the lore of a corrupted patriotism. We can be rapt by the benefits of privileges great and small.

And we can forget that our God unwraps our hearts when we open ourselves to the power of love. When we forget the sacred way of vulnerability, when we forget to walk humbly with God, not in self-deprecation or diminishment, but recognizing with awe the depth of divine intimacy and the breadth of God's creative care, when we forget these things, then, a little of the light that we share is shadowed over, our light is dimmed.

The sixth 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 hill that now looms near. We remember and proclaim that God is Love, and who, in love, says again and again to all, "Don't be afraid."

***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.***

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION: *(in unison)*

**We wait expectantly; we lift up our hopes and dreams
praying that we hear and experience with all that we are
the radical, restorative word of God. May we be blessed
with insight, with vision and the wisdom of eternal life.
May the kingdom enter into our hearts and among us here.
May our collective hearts be the city of God, with gates
open wide, for love. Amen**

SCRIPTURE READING:

Stephen Maisey

Zechariah 9:9-10 See, your king comes to you

Matthew 21:1-11 Jesus enters Jerusalem

REFLECTION: Crowds, questions, and a cross

GIFT OF MUSIC: "He Comes in the Name of the Lord"

YOUR GENEROSITY MATTERS

Judy Losier

INVITATION TO MAKE AN OFFERING

Just as the people laid down their cloaks and branches before Jesus as he made his way, we too lay down what we have and are, to prepare the way of love. 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 palm branches are signs of the victory of life's promise and the reign of love, we pray that all that we offer here are signs of the kingdom's coming, and the means of justice and peace. As we enter Jerusalem, as we walk the way of Jesus, bless our giving, God of all, and bless all who receive, that your enduring love live in us all. Amen

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION *(see page 9 & 10)*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***CLOSING HYMN:**

MV #128

"When They Heard That Jesus Was Coming"

When they heard that Jesus was coming,
Sing hosanna to the chosen one!
All the people went out to meet him
Sing hosanna to the chosen one!
Sing hosanna, sing hosanna,
sing hosanna to the chosen one!

Spread their cloaks and branches before him,
Sing hosanna to the chosen one!
Children sang with palm branches waving.
Sing hosanna to the chosen one!
Sing hosanna to the chosen one!

Wondrous bread, and stream in the desert,
Sing hosanna to the chosen one!
Holy thirst, and God's living water.
Sing hosanna to the chosen one!
Sing hosanna, sing hosanna,
sing hosanna to the chosen one!

Rising sun, the light of the world,
Sing hosanna to the chosen one!
Word of life, who gives us your Spirit.
Sing hosanna to the chosen one!
Sing hosanna, sing hosanna,
sing hosanna to the chosen one!

Friend in death, who weep for our dying,
Sing hosanna to the chosen one!
Friend in death, who roll back the stone for us.
Sing hosanna to the chosen one!
Sing hosanna, sing hosanna,
sing hosanna to the chosen one!

***COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION**

***CHORAL CLOSING** – "Stay with Us through the Night" –

VU #182 *(Verse 1)*

***Stay with us through the night.
Stay with us through the pain.
Stay with us, blessed stranger
till the morning breaks again.***

SHARING THE LIGHT

POSTLUDE

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

Palm Sunday

The Peace of Christ be with you all!

And also with you!

God welcomes you and is with you always.

And so also with you.

Lift up your hearts!

We lift them up to God.

Let us give our thanks to God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

We give thanks for the Divine presence, that flows through us and the world bringing the gifts of hope and love, that sparks creativity, imagination and understanding, that embraces with healing and new life. Empires come and go, parading violence as a virtue and a solution, and self-interest as a sacred value. And yet our eternal God sends parades of angels singing “do not be afraid,” our Christ shares parables of neighbourly love, of vulnerable faithfulness, and again and again raises up the defeated, the downtrodden and the desperate for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The Spirit enters into our stories, shaping us in the beautiful image of God. With raised palms and humble hearts, we give our thanks. Together, we give thanks for the one who rules our hearts, for Jesus, living bread, the true vine, love made flesh. And we proclaim together,

Holy, holy, holy, God of power and might;

heav’n and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is the One who comes in the name, comes in the name of our God.

Blessed is the One who comes in the name, comes in the name of our God.

Hosanna in the highest; hosanna in the highest!

Just days after he entered Jerusalem, on the night before he died, Jesus gathered with his closest friends. It was a night where again the holy was found in humility and the sacred in the service of others. Looking at them with love, knowing of shared tenderness and trepidation, he spoke of how he had shared his life, his living, the entirety of his being with them. In an upper room Jesus spoke of the intimacy that is the kingdom, and of the wide open grace of unconditional love. He shared another parable. He picked up a simple loaf of bread, gave thanks, broke it and said, “I have given my body, like this bread, for you. Take and eat, and give and do likewise, remembering me. For this is the Bread of Life.” He took a humble cup, gave thanks, and said, “With every beat of my heart, I have given my lifeblood, like this wine poured out, for you. Take and drink, and give and do likewise, remembering me. For this is the Cup of God’s ever new Promise.” A covenant of peace.

Remembering, together in praise we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Hopeful, together we pray:

Generous God, send your Spirit among us and these gifts, that we too may be a sacrament: lives lived out that are signs of the deepest love and hope, broken bread for a broken world, poured wine for a thirsty creation.

Together we say amen, hosanna and amen!

And now, living the sacred way of a love that transforms the world, together we sing:

We Sing of Communion: We Are One *verse 3*

VU 402

We are one as we feast,
as we feast, peace becomes the sign;
in the bread and the wine
there’s a sense of love divine.
We are one as we come,
as we feed, we are fed;
and we feel God’s refreshing grace
as we meet at table in this place.

Pastoral Prayer

The Prayer of Jesus

We Sing Amen:

Amen, amen, amen. Amen, amen, amen.

Breaking the Bread, Pouring the Wine, Sharing the Feast

Post Communion Prayer:

We have tasted life, we have tasted love. We have been filled as wine fills a cup to overflowing, as our daily bread fills hungry hearts. And God, for this we are grateful. May we be sent into the world by the Spirit in hope, heralding your healing presence and your peace. May we live in remembrance of Jesus, as members of the Body of Christ. May we always be in communion with you, our Beloved, our Sustainer, our Life. Amen

Acknowledgment: Sung responses in the Communion liturgy by Lisa Waites, 2015.

Then Let Us Sing! # 19, 20 & 21

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 -11:30 AM	Quilters – DEMH Downstairs Office
	1:00 – 3:00 PM	Knitting Group – RMR
Wednesday	8:30 AM - 12:30 PM	Chaleur Music Festival - Sanctuary
	9:00-11:00 AM	Badminton – DEMH GYM
Thursday	4:15 PM	Choir Practice
Friday	10:00 AM	Good Friday Service
Saturday	8:00 AM–1:00 PM	Bathurst Community Market – GYM

Please note **the church office will be closed** on *Good Friday, April 3rd* and *Easter Monday, April 6th*. The office will re-open on Tuesday, April 7th at 9 AM.

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 26th we have received 143 jars with funds on hand to purchase another 48.

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.

Stewardship is a spiritual practice. How do we share our abundance to prepare the way for Jesus?

Thank You to all who supported the Sunrise Breakfast held on March 22nd and a huge thanks to all the volunteers who make these events possible. A special thanks to our sponsors for this event, ***Jean Coutu (Beresford) & Websolutions.ca*** whose financial support allowed the church to have a profit of \$1,850.36. Our next Ways and Means event will be the *Ham & Potato Scallop supper* (sit down or take out) to be held on Thursday, April 30th, 2026.

Church News

Communion Servers – The Christian Development team is in need to 3 more individuals to assist with service of communion for Easter Sunday.

What does serving involve?

- Helping prepare the bread and juice (no baking required!).
- Assisting the Minister during the Communion service.
- Helping with tidy-up afterward.

Who can serve?

- Full Members of The United Church of Canada.
- Training is provided — no previous experience needed, just a calm presence and a welcoming spirit.

Upcoming Services at First United

April 3rd – Good Friday Service – 10 AM

April 5th – Easter Sunday / Communion – 10 AM

April 12th – Guest presider - Rev. Ivan Gregan – 10 AM

April 19th – Guest presider - Randy Breckenridge – 10 AM

Rev. David will be away from the church on vacation from April 7th to April 20th, returning to the office on April 21st. During his absence Rev. Blair Lewis will provide pastoral care coverage.

Community News

Maundy-Thursday Service – Our friends at St. Alban’s Anglican Church located in Salmon Beach have invited our congregation to join them in their Maundy-Thursday Service on April 2nd at 6:30 PM. The address is 4633 Cape Road, Salmon Beach.

A FAMILY AND COMMUNITY BREAKFAST will be held at St. George’s Anglican Church, 432 King Avenue, on **Saturday, April 11th 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.

Community News

St. Lukes Presbyterian Church, 395 Murray Ave., will be hosting a group from **Teen Challenge Atlantic** at the 11 AM service on **Sunday April 12th**. All are welcome to attend. Teen Challenge Canada is a 12-month, faith-based, in-residence drug and alcohol rehabilitation program, for adults 18+, that is part of a network of over 19 Teen Challenge Centres across Canada and more than 1,400 worldwide. The program has a strong faith-based approach and offers spiritual, academic and vocational training that helps equip individuals to return to society as responsible citizens.

How to teach faith to our children and grandchildren.

Join us on **Saturday, April 18th, 2026** at **St. Andrew's United Church, Miramichi** from 10:00-12:00 with the Rev. Catherine Stuart, Regional Minister for Youth and Young Adults who will discuss on-line curriculums, purchased programs, and events to which we can bring our children. This is open for all interested people including parents, grandparents, as well as present, pondering and potential Sunday School Teachers and or Youth Group Leaders.



SCRIPTURE READINGS – New International Version

ZECHARIAH 9:9-10 NIV

9 Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

10 I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the warhorses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.

MATTHEW 21:1-11 NIV

1 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples,

2 saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me.

3 If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away."

4 This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

5 "Say to Daughter Zion, 'See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'"

6 The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them.

7 They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on.

8 A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

9 The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

"Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

10 When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?"

11 The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."