

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

August 23, 2026

13rd Sunday after Pentecost

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

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

Greeters Julie & Harvey Spence

Audio & Visual Technician Shirley Allain & Lester Scott

Minister Emeritus Rev. Blair Lewis

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<u>Lectionary for today</u>	<u>Lectionary for next Sunday</u>
Exodus 1:8—2:10	Exodus 3:1-15
Psalms 124	Psalms 105:1-6, 23-26, 45c
Romans 12:1-8	Romans 12:9-21
Matthew 16:13-20	Matthew 16:21-28
The bulletins today are placed by <i>Helene Brown</i> , in memory of <i>Edgar Brown</i> who passed four years ago on August 24 th and now rests in peace and love with God.	

*The asterisk * identifies those times in the service where you are invited to stand as you are able.*

MUSIC FOR GATHERING

WELCOME

TERRITORY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT *(in unison)*

As we gather to worship, let's respectfully pause to remember we live and love and work and worship on lands that are, by law, the unceded territory of the original peoples, the Mi'kmaq. May we live with respect on this land, and live in peace and in friendship with its people.

CALL TO WORSHIP: *(responsively)*

We come to this place rooted in faith;

we come in the presence of God.

We come as we are; we come as we're called,

gifted with peace and with purpose.

We come to worship, as disciples and dreamers,

wide open to a daring love.

We come to worship, beloved of God,

to be renewed, and ready to live,

for the oneness and wholeness of all.

CENTERING FOR WORSHIP: "Praise to the Lord"

VU # 835

(Verse 1 only)

Praise to the Lord, all of you, God's servants.

Blessed be the name of our God now and ever.

From the rising up of the sun

may the Lord be praised,

praise to the name of the Lord!

GATHERING PRAYER:

We have come here, knowing you are with us, God, wherever we are. God of all, in this moment, as our hearts are moved, as you name us your own, strengthen us in faith, hope and love to live into your call and into our salvation, life in you. Bless this time of worship, as we set our hearts and minds toward what matters, to loving you as we love one another and your creation. As followers of Jesus, this we pray, offering our praise. **Amen**

***GATHERING HYMN:** "Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness"

VU # 375

Refrain:

Spirit, Spirit of gentleness,

blow thro' the wilderness calling and free,

Spirit, Spirit of restlessness,

stir me from placidness, Wind, Wind on the sea.

You moved on the waters, you called to the deep,
then you coaxed up the mountains from the valleys of sleep;
and over the eons you called to each thing:
wake from your slumbers and rise on your wings.

Refrain:

*Spirit, Spirit of gentleness,
blow thro' the wilderness calling and free,
Spirit, Spirit of restlessness,
stir me from placidness, Wind, Wind on the sea.*

You swept thro' the desert, you stung with the sand,
and you goaded your people with a law and a land;
and when they were blinded with their idols and lies,
then you spoke thro' your prophets to open their eyes.

Refrain:

You sang in a stable, you cried from a hill,
then you whispered in silence when the whole world was still;
and down in the city you called once again,
when you blew through your people on the rush of the wind.

Refrain:

You call from tomorrow, you break ancient schemes,
from the bondage of sorrow the captives dream dreams;
our women see visions, our men clear their eyes,
with bold new decisions your people arise.

Refrain:

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE:

This candle that we light, reminds us of the shining presence of Christ, the luminous stream of divine love that flows through and among us all. It brightens our path; it shows us, and indeed is, our way. It is the Lovelight, the light of justice and peace, the light of hope and of faith. It is the light of the world.

(The Christ Candle is lit...)

LIGHTING THE AFFIRMING CANDLE:

From the Christ Candle we light our Affirming Candle, as a further illumination for us all that the divine light, the Lovelight, shines in all of God's colourful, beloved and good Creation. The rainbow is a sign of God's eternal covenant with all that God sings into being and brings into belonging, through love making the waters of chaos recede and new life to rise up and appear.

We are all created in the image of God, we all grow ever more into the likeness of Love. And so, we affirm that all can find belonging here. Not only regardless of your background, culture or where or how you find yourself today, not only regardless of your understanding or your questions or your circumstances, not only regardless of your sexual orientation or gender identity, your piety or your politics. *You belong simply and precisely because of who you are, a beloved child of God.* We are all, together through Christ and the affirmation of Jesus, the light of the world. God affirms your life. We shine with the light.

(The Affirming Candle is lit...)

CHORAL RESPONSE: "Take, O Take Me as I Am"

MV # 85

***Take, O take me as I am;
summon out what I shall be;
set your seal upon my heart
and live in me, in me.***

ASSURANCE:

We are God's continuing creation, neither cemented in place nor condemned to pain. We are a people of potential, of possibility, called into partnership with the Source of All and the Spirit of Love. We are gifted and given to the world to participate in its healing. With God as our help, in Christ we have hope, and the Spirit moves over and through the birth of the kingdom of heaven, where all, where you, belong.

***PSALM 124** Our help comes from God

Refrain #1 VU Page 848

Refrain:

*Our help comes from God
the maker of heaven and earth.*

"If God had not been at our side,"

now let Israel say:

"If God had not been at our side
when mortals rose up against us,

**then they would have swallowed us alive,
when their fury was roused against us.**

Then the flood would have swept us away,
and the torrent would have covered us.

**Then the raging waters
would have gone right over our heads."**

Refrain:

*Our help comes from God
the maker of heaven and earth.*

But praised be God:

who has not given us a prey to their teeth.

**We have escaped like a bird
from the hunter's snare;
the snare is broken and we are free.**

Refrain:

*Our help comes from God
the maker of heaven and earth.*

***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

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)*

**God of the human story, as we listen and reflect, grant us
the key to deeper understanding, to faithful commitment
and to a daring love. May the opening up of scripture open
our lives to the earthly beauty of your creation, and in it
the breadth of the kingdom of heaven. Amen**

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

Wayne Lord

Exodus 1:8 – 2:10 Pharaoh's daughter adopts baby Moses

Romans 12:1-8 Present yourself as a living sacrifice

Matthew 16:13-20 "Who do you say I am?"

SERMON: Midwives of mercy, servants of steadfast love

GIFT OF MUSIC: "Deep in Our Hearts"

YOUR GENEROSITY MATTERS

Judy Losier

INVITATION TO MAKE AN OFFERING

When we let loose our love in the world, love lets loose in heaven too, the harmony of the eternal love song rings out so all may hear and sing along. Jesus was castigated for his wanton loving. Do we dare to love unconditionally, no matter what, no longer fixated on our fears? Do we dare to trust in the Spirit's creative unpredictability and transformative power, in what we might call, "loose change?" Our offerings will now be gathered. The Spirit is on the loose!

***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)**

God of comfort and God of challenge and change, we bless you, for your love is powerful and it is provocative. Bless us all and all that we are, bless all that we offer here today. Through these offerings, may your people and your world know the power of your kingdom of love. Through our love, may the world be provoked into the ways of healing, justice and peace. Amen

PASTORAL PRAYER

PRAYER OF JESUS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***CLOSING HYMN: "God, Make Us Servants of Your Peace"**

VU # 676

God, make us servants of your peace:
where there is hate, may we sow love;
where there is hurt, may we forgive;
where there is strife, may we make one.

Where all is doubt, may we sow faith;
where all is gloom, may we sow hope;
where all is night, may we sow light;
where all is tears, may we sow joy.

Jesus, our Lord, may we not seek
to be consoled, but to console,
nor look to understanding hearts,
but look for hearts to understand.

May we not look for love's return,
but seek to love unselfishly,
for in our giving we receive,
and in forgiving are forgiven.

Dying, we live, and are reborn
through death's dark night to endless day;
God, make us servants of your peace,
to wake at last in heaven's light.

COMMISSIONING and BENEDICTION

***CHORAL SENDING FORTH—**

MV # 221

"I Am Walking a Path of Peace"

***I am walking a path of peace,
I am walking a path of peace,
I am walking a path of peace,
lead me home, I am home.***

SHARING THE LIGHT

(The Christ Candle and Affirming Candle are extinguished.)

POSTLUDE

Church News

Summer Office hours are now in effect – The office will be closed on Fridays until after the Labour Day Weekend.

Please note the church office will be **closing at 2 PM** on **Wednesday, August 26th** due to an appointment.

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 August 20th we have received 555 jars with funds on hand to purchase another 130+.

Thank you to all who assist with this meaningful project!

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 ourselves, as members of the body of Christ,
is an act of generosity.

The Ways & Means Team are pleased to announce the
BBQ BEEF SUPPER will be held on **Thursday, September 17th**.

Take out will be from 4:00 PM to 5 :30 PM

Eat in will be from 4:30 PM to 6:00 PM

Tickets are now available - **\$18** for adults and **\$6** for children. As there are a limited number of tickets they will be sold on a first come-first served basis. Please contact a member of the *Ways & Means Committee* or drop by the church office from 9 AM to 3 PM.

Sponsored by Hatheway Auto Group

Community News

A FAMILY AND COMMUNITY BREAKFAST will be held at St. George's Anglican Church, 432 King Avenue, on **Saturday, September 12th from 8:00 – 10:00 AM**. As this community event helps to fund our local mission projects, we rely on donations and ask that you consider a minimum donation of \$8.00 to help defray costs. We appreciate your kindness and support. Come and enjoy fellowship and great food.



SCRIPTURE READING

New International Version

EXODUS 1:8-2:10

NIV

8 Then a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt.

9 "Look," he said to his people, "the Israelites have become far too numerous for us.

10 Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country."

11 So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labour, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh.

12 But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites

13 and worked them ruthlessly.

14 They made their lives bitter with harsh labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their harsh labor the Egyptians worked them ruthlessly.

15 The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah,

16 "When you are helping the Hebrew women during childbirth on the delivery stool, if you see that the baby is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live."

17 The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live.

18 Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, "Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?"

19 The midwives answered Pharaoh, "Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive."

20 So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous.

21 And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own.

22 Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: "Every Hebrew boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live."

Chapter 2

1 Now a man of the tribe of Levi married a Levite woman,

2 and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months.

3 But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile.

4 His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him.

5 Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her female slave to get it.

6 She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. "This is one of the Hebrew babies," she said.

7 Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?"

8 "Yes, go," she answered. So the girl went and got the baby's mother.

9 Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you." So the woman took the baby and nursed him.

10 When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, "I drew him out of the water."

ROMANS 12:1-8

NIV

1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God - this is your true and proper worship.

2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will.

3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.

4 For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function,

5 so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith;

7 if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach;

8 if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead [or provide for others], do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

MATTHEW 16:13-20 NIV

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

14 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

15 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

17 Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.

18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

20 Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

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