

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

August 30, 2026

14th 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 3:1-15	Exodus 12:1-14
Psalms 105:1-6, 23-26, 45c	Psalms 149
Romans 12:9-21	Romans 13:8-14
Matthew 16:21-28	Matthew 18:15-20

*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)*

This is a holy day, and all the earth is holy. We are on holy ground.

We are grounded in the Holy One.

And so, as Moses stood with bared feet before a bush alight with the Divine Presence,

we bare our hearts, aflame with faith, hope, and love.

We bare our souls, to the One who abides in all that is, who says, "I Am Who I Am."

We respond, we bare our lives, saying, "I am here, we are here."

Created in God's image, we humbly say, "We are who we are."

Together we come, we approach our God, in worship, in thanks and in praise.

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:

As seekers of the light, we approach with wonder. Drawn with burning hearts, hearing our sacred name, we come and we say, "Here I am." God of all being, we have come from different places, to be joined together. We have come to be joined with you. We come closer this day; we come as we are that you might be revealed to us in new and amazing ways, and in ways that renew our faith and give us hope. Be with us in this time of worship. God who sees with compassion, who hears our hearts, be with us forever, wherever we may be led by your love, in the grace of liberty in you. **Amen**

***GATHERING HYMN:** "Called by Earth and Sky"

MV # 135

Refrain:

*Called by earth and sky,
promise of hope held high.
This is our sacred living trust,
treasure of life sanctified,
called by earth and sky.*

Precious these waters, endless seas,
deep ocean's dream,
waters of healing, rivers of rain,
the wash of love again.

Precious this gift, the air we breathe;
wind born and free.
Breath of the Spirit, blow through this place,
our gathering and our grace.

Refrain:

*Called by earth and sky,
promise of hope held high.
This is our sacred living trust,
treasure of life sanctified,
called by earth and sky,
called by earth and sky.*

Precious these mountains, ancient sands;
vast fragile land.
Seeds of our wakening, rooted and strong,
Creation's faithful song.

Precious the fire that lights our way,
bright dawning day.
Fire of passion, sorrows undone,
our faith and justice one.

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.***

MINUTE FOR AFFIRMING

***Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26** Part 1 (first two stanzas), Part 3

VU Page 828

ASSURANCE:

The selected verses of our Psalm reveal an ancient theology where God is both the source of strength and joy, and the One who turns hearts toward hatred and violence. It is an understanding of a God from whom both creation and calamity surely must come, because there is only one God whose will is all. For us today, we can be assured that our God of love accompanies us in our

vulnerability and in our victories, in all that we are and do and experience. We are strengthened to be lovers and liberators, creators and people of grace. If we stumble, God will lift us up. If we are less than humble, God will open our hearts, inviting us into empathy and care. And if times of sadness arise over the horizon, as we know at times they will, we can be assured that our timeless God of compassion will be not the cause, but our comfort and care, wiping away every tear, and granting us peace. God's will is love.

***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:** "God Says" " MV # 172

God says, "Be still so you may hear
the words I whisper in your ear.
If you will listen, you will know
I'm with you always where you go."

God says, "Look up and see the prize
I've placed here right before your eyes.
Find beauty in the things of earth,
a cause for wonder and rebirth."

God says, "Come here! I need your voice.
Please teach my people to rejoice.
In who you are, in what you do,
your life will show my love for you."

God says, "Reach out! The world's in need
and wants a word, a song, a deed.
I send you forth to speak, to sing,
to act for Christ in everything."

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION: *(in unison)*

God of word, wonder and wisdom, may your presence be revealed to us in scripture. May your desire and delight be made evident to all hearts, and may we carry your hope as you carry us. In the name of your liberating love, we pray. Amen

SCRIPTURE READINGS: *Stephen Maisey*

Exodus 3:1-15 Moses and the burning bush; holy ground

Romans 12:9-21 Love must be real; grounded in holiness

SERMON: Really? Yes, really!

GIFT OF MUSIC: "I the Lord of Sea and Sky"

YOUR GENEROSITY MATTERS *Martha Vickers*

INVITATION TO MAKE AN OFFERING

We now recall the urging of Paul to the church, to love, hope, share and nourish one another in faithful humility. 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:** *(responsively)*

Gracious God, it is said that all revelation is surprising. Moses was surprised to find you in the midst of an amazing sight, and he was taken aback when called into leadership.

We can be surprised to experience your presence in the mundane and in the mysterious, and stand blinking in the brightness of hearing our name and call to discipleship. *(continued on page 7)*

May your presence be experienced through us and all that we offer both here and out in the world.

And from this holy grounding, may your love be known in awe, in gratitude, and in the call to justice and peace. Amen

PASTORAL PRAYER

PRAYER OF JESUS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***CLOSING HYMN:** "As a Fire Is Meant for Burning" VU # 578

As a fire is meant for burning
with a bright and warming flame,
so the church is meant for mission,
giving glory to God's name.
Not to preach our creeds or customs,
but to build a bridge of care,
we join hands across the nations,
finding neighbours everywhere.

We are learners; we are teachers;
we are pilgrims on the way.
We are seekers; we are givers;
we are vessels made of clay.
By our gentle, loving actions,
we would show that Christ is light.
In a humble, listening Spirit,
we would live to God's delight.

As a green bud in the springtime
is a sign of life renewed,
so may we be signs of oneness
mid earth's peoples, many-hued.
As a rainbow lights the heavens
when a storm is past and gone,
may our lives reflect the radiance
of God's new and glorious dawn.

COMMISSIONING and BENEDICTION

***CHORAL SENDING FORTH—**

"I Am Walking a Path of Peace"

MV # 221

*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.

The Celebration of Life for **Kenneth Lavigne** will be held here at First United Church on **Friday, September 4th at 11 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 August 26th we have received 558 jars with funds on hand to purchase another 150.

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.

Let love be genuine! Show hospitality, rejoice and grieve with others, and share generously as part of your call to live in Christian community.

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

Cake mixes are available in the narthex for those willing to bake for the upcoming BBQ Beef Supper. Please sign the sheet when you take one. Cakes are to be brought to the kitchen **September 17th before 2 PM.** Thank you.

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.

Highlights of May 26th *Bathurst Pastoral Council Meeting*

As summer comes to a close, here are some of the highlights of the May 26th Council Meeting and items that will be attended to in the near future.

In attendance at the meeting were Sandra Boone, chair, Brenda Parrott, Martha Vickers, Wayne Lord, Ian Oliver, Isabel MacLaggan, Lester Scott and Rev. David Allan, ex-officio.

New Business:

It was decided unanimously that Rev Blair Lewis be declared Minister Emeritus of First United Church. Such a designation is purely an honorary and ceremonial title, given to a retired minister, to recognize long and distinguished service. It is a token of gratitude and respect.

A former minister of the Bathurst Pastoral Charge, Rev. Blair recently marked his 50th year as an ordained minister in the United Church of Canada. As he continues to reside in Bathurst with his wife, Ruth, he is an active volunteer visitor within our congregation and is also involved in local community activities.

In his report, Rev. David expressed concern about the lack of a Pastoral Care Team chair. It was suggested a joint meeting with the Christian Development Team be held in September to discuss the matter. Gwen Sturgeon continues to send out care cards to congregants on a regular basis and team members have been keeping in touch with shut-ins.

The Community Outreach Sub-Team continues to help meet challenges of the needy. Often there are five to six families who come to the church weekly seeking help with food. Helen Knowles has resigned as chair after many years of service.

Church Treasurer Alberta Buttimer presented the finance picture for the first quarter of 2026. Net income, without bequests, was \$2,910. Expenses amounted to more than for the same period last year.

Wayne Lord reported a net income of \$4,741 from the ham dinner. He said printed tickets will be increased from 250 to 275. There were 140 takeouts. Increased advertising will be maintained.

There was a draw of two names from the numbered list of volunteers to receive a free ticket to the next dinner. The winners were Rick Watling and John Clouston. The annual roast beef dinner will be held on September 17.

The Property Management Team, chaired by Lester Scott, reported that two television sets have been mounted at the front of the sanctuary. A new microphone for the minister has improved the video.

To an inquiry, it was decided that the John and Elizabeth Bursary will be advertised going forward.

Correspondence:

In correspondence, a UNB legal student offered to conduct a session on legal matters for seniors. Council supported the offer in general and will seek more information.

Report prepared by Isabel MacLaggan

Communion Servers Needed — Many Hands, One Holy Meal

World Communion Sunday is October 4, 2026, however as Rev. David Allan will be out of town, First United Church will celebrate communion on Thanksgiving Sunday, October 11, 2026 with Rev. Ivan Gregan presiding over the service.

Sharing Communion is one of the most meaningful moments in our worship life — and it runs best when there are a few extra pairs of willing hands (and steady trays!).

We are inviting **members of The United Church** to volunteer as **Communion Servers** at First United Church, throughout the year.

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 —
because miracles aside, dishes don't wash themselves.

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.

How to sign up:

Four (4) people are needed to serve at each Communion. Please call the Church Office at (506) 546-3532, to let Margaret know the dates you are available to help.

_____ October 11th - Thanksgiving Sunday

_____ November 22nd – Anniversary of First United Church

Serving Communion is a quiet but meaningful way to support worship and care for one another as a congregation. If you've ever thought, **"I could do that,"** — this is your nudge!

Thank you for helping us share the table with grace, generosity, and maybe even a smile.

SCRIPTURE READINGS - New International Version

Exodus 3:1-15

1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

2 There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up.

3 So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight - why the bush does not burn up."

4 When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!"
And Moses said, "Here I am."

5 "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."

6 Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

7 The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering.

8 So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey -the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.

9 And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them.

10 So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."

11 But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

12 And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, [all of] you will worship God on this mountain."

13 Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"

14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

15 God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers - the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob - has sent me to you.' "This is my name forever, the name you shall call me from generation to generation."

Romans 12:9-21

9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.

10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves.

11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.

12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

13 Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone.

18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

20 On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

*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.*