The United Church of Canada
Bathurst Pastoral Charge

First United Church, Bathurst

www.firstunited-bathurst.ca

November 29, 2026

First Sunday of Advent - Hope

Minister	Rev. David Allan	**Music Director**	Martha Vickers
Office Adm.	Margaret Daniels	**Custodian**	Lester Scott
Greeters	Julie & Harvey Spence		
Audio & Visual Technician	Brenda Parrott & Lester Scott		
Minister Emeritus	Rev. Blair Lewis		

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Lectionary today	**Lectionary for next Sunday**
Isaiah 64:1-9	Isaiah 40:1-11
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19	Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
1 Corinthians 1:3-9	2 Peter 3:8-15a
Mark 13:24-37	Mark 1:1-8

*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 among its waters, and live in peace and in friendship with its people.



*__GATHERING HYMN__: "All Earth Is Waiting" VU #5

All earth is waiting to see the Promised One,
and open furrows await the seed of God.
All the world, bound and struggling, seeks true liberty;
it cries out for justice and searches for the truth.

Thus says the prophet to those of Israel,
"A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel."
One whose name is "God with us," our Saviour shall be,
Through whom hope will blossom once more within our hearts.

Mountains and valleys will have to be made plain,
open new highways, new highways for our God,
who is now coming closer, so come all and see,
and open the doorways as wide as wide can be.

In lowly stable the Promised One appeared.
Yet, feel that presence throughout the earth today,
for Christ lives in all Christians and is with us now;
again, on arriving, Christ brings liberty.

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE:

The sharing of our stories is woven through the unfolding of our lives. Time seems to fold in on itself. In this Advent season, as we wait in expectation for the birth of the light of the world, we remember too that the Christ light is already here as it always has been. Always the song is sung, "Let there be light," and there is light. We light this candle as a sign of the light of enduring love.

(The Christ Candle is lit…)

LIGHTING THE AFFIRMING CANDLE:

From the Christ Candle we light our Affirming Candle. With this candle we proclaim that God's limitless light and love shines within and from all of us and all of creation. We proclaim God's desire that all be one, in our uniqueness and gifts, and together in our created being, in the image of Love.

(The Affirming Candle is lit…)

CHORAL RESPONSE: "O Come, Emmanuel"

(Tune: Veni Emmanuel, VU 1) (The Gathering A/C/E 2020/21)

O come, O come, Emmanuel
Refresh us at your life-giving well.
All people long to feel your grace.
Pour out your Spirit on every place.
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel,
Shall come to thee wherever you may dwell.

MINUTE FOR AFFIRMING *Troy Duguay*

CALL TO WORSHIP: *(responsively)*

The busyness of our lives seems at times to never let up.
Expectations are all around; we feel them put upon us, and we have them of ourselves and others.
We are entering a time of expectation and of waiting too;
we are entering the season of light.
And so, we come to worship, to pause and to pray,
we come into a time of communion and care.
This Sabbath day we come to remember that God is with us,
and we come with the hope of which our faithfulness gives birth.
We are people of light, seekers and dreamers;
we are watchful, expectant, in body and in soul.

CENTERING FOR WORSHIP: MV #220
"Hope Shines as the Solitary Star"

Hope shines as the solitary star.
Faith is the inner light.
You and I together mirror the Light of Lights,
and illumine the pathway home.

LIGHTING A CANDLE OF HOPE Members of the Affirming Team
Troy Duguay & Randy Breckenridge

God has given us the gift of hope. Hope for a world healed of division and pain, and hope for a creation mended. Hope bolstered by the light, strengthened by God's desire, made real through our worship, words and work.

Even in our Advent waiting and expectation, hope is gestating; in our lives together, hope grows. Even as the daylight diminishes bit by bit in this holy season, the heavenly light of hope is here.

CHORAL RESPONSE: "We Light This Candle"

We light a candle for Hope.
Await the new life within.
May our hearts now live each day,
so Hope can find a way,
so Hope can find a way.

OPENING PRAYER:

Our hope is more than a glimmer; it is a flame lit by faith and trust. Our hope is in you, O God, in the beauty and warmth of your presence, the love that shapes and guides us.
Hear us as we pray, as we offer laughter and lament, our hearts and our hope. Hear us as we share an ancient psalm of your people, and the assurance and grace of one of your saints. Hear, O God, our fervent "amen."

PSALM 80:1-7, 18-19 Shine on us and give us peace
Part 1 VU Page 794

Part One "Shine on us and give us peace"

Refrain:
Your face, God, shine on us and give us peace.

Shepherd of Israel, hear us,
you who lead Joseph like a flock,
you who are enthroned amidst the cherubim.
Shine forth before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh;
stir up your might, come and save us.

Refrain:
Your face, God, shine on us and give us peace.

God of hosts,
how long will you be angry with your people's prayer?
You have fed us with the bread of weeping,
and given us tears in plenty to drink.

You have made a mockery of us to our neighbours,
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.
Let your hand rest on the one of your right hand,
on the one you have made strong for yourself.
Then we will never forsake you;
give us life, and we will call on your name.

Refrain:
Your face, God, shine on us and give us peace.

ASSURANCE: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

***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:** "O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

O Come, O come Emmanuel
make true the stories prophets tell –
so all those chained by fear find release,
and, war forgotten, bring a world of peace.

Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel
is come to birth where all God's children dwell.

O Come, Love's-season, to our lonely days,
and guide us in our words and ways
to be the ones whose Advent begins
with healing earth and all that live within.

Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel
is come to birth where all God's children dwell.

O come, Desire of Nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind;
Make envy, strife, and quarrels cease;
fill the whole world with heaven's peace. *(Original)*

Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel
is come to birth where all God's children dwell.

Credit: Rev. Maren C. Tirabassi, United Church of Christ.
Blog: Gifts in Open Hands. 2023

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION: *(in unison)*

As seekers of light, we can have trouble waiting in our yearning. Still, grant us now, O God, the patience to hear your word, grant us now the wisdom to understand, and grant us the faith, hope and the love to live it out. God, be our light, and come, O come, light of the world. Amen

SCRIPTURE READINGS: *Gary Branch*

Isaiah 64:1-9	The prophet prays to God
Mark 13:24-37	Jesus tells his disciples to be alert

SERMON: A hope that heals

GIFT OF MUSIC: "Wait for the Promise"

YOUR GENEROSITY MATTERS *Judy Losier*

INVITATION TO MAKE AN OFFERING

The whole world waits for change, the faithful wait in hope for the birth of a shared community joined in justice and peace. We work in hope too, we share, and we do these things for love. With thanks for the gift of grace, our offerings will now be gathered.

***ADVENT OFFERTORY RESPONSE:** *Tune Old 100th*

Hope in our faith so filled with awe.
Hope in the promise of our God.
Hope for these gifts we offer here.
Use them and us throughout the year.

Rev.Catherine MacDonald 2007

***OFFERING PRAYER:** *(in unison)*

Bless, O God, all that we offer here, that through us and these gifts hope is brought to our community and to the world. Through you and all we bring, may the light of love shine in every heart. Amen

PASTORAL PRAYER

PRAYER OF JESUS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*__CLOSING HYMN__: "Hark the Glad Sound" VU #29

Hark, the glad sound! The Saviour comes,
the Saviour promised long:
let every heart prepare a throne,
and every voice a song.

He come the prisoners to release
in Satan's bondage held;
the gates of brass before him burst,
the iron fetters yield.

He comes, the broken heart to bind,
the bleeding soul to cure,
and with the treasures of his grace
to bless the humble poor.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
your welcome shall proclaim;
and heaven's eternal arches ring
with your beloved name.

COMMISSIONING and BENEDICTION

***CHORAL SENDING FORTH–** MV #221
"I Am Walking a Path of Peace"

I am walking a path of hope,
I am walking a path of hope,
I am walking a path of hope,
lead me home, I am home.

SHARING THE LIGHT

(The Candles are extinguished.)

POSTLUDE



White Gift Sunday
December 13th

The tradition of White Gift Sunday has its roots in a small Methodist church in Ohio in 1904. What began as a humble way to reflect on the love and devotion of the giver and not the value of the gift has grown into today's white gift services in many churches across several denominations. The story is told that a minister's wife initiated the idea to solve the problem of inequity of gifts given at the Sunday school Christmas party. Instead of focusing on receiving gifts, the focus shifted to bringing gifts to Jesus that could in turn be shared with people around the world who did not have much. All the gifts would come wrapped in plain white paper, so that no one would know which was an expensive gift and which was a more modest one. No one would feel ashamed of their gift and everyone would share in the joy of giving to others.

In keeping with the spirit of the first White Gift service all those attending bring a gift wrapped in white paper to be given to someone in need.

Some suggestions from the Volunteer Center and for our own pantry are pasta sauces, cereal, canned meat, canned milk, canned fruits and vegetables. Gift cards from places such as Burger King, McDonalds or Tim Hortons would also be appreciated

UPCOMING ADVENT & CHRISTMAS SERVICES AT FIRST UNITED:

December 6th at 10 AM – Advent 2
December 13th at 10 AM – Advent 3 *White Gift Sunday*
December 20th at 10 AM – Advent 4 *Service with Communion*
December 24th at 4 PM – Family Christmas Eve Service
December 24th at 7 PM – Christmas Eve Service

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
	1:00 – 3:00 PM	Golden Knitters – Eddy Room
Tuesday	9:30 AM-11:30 AM	Quilters – DEMH Downstairs office
	1:00 – 3:00 PM	Knitters & Rug Hookers – RMR
Wednesday	9:00-11:00 AM	Badminton – DEMH GYM
	6:30 PM	Choir Practice
Thursday	1:00 – 3:00 PM	Golden Knitters – Eddy Room
	6:00 – 8:00 PM	North Shore Girl Guides – GYM
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 November 25th we have received and/or purchased 885 jars with funds on hand to purchase 48 more.

The Ways and Means Team would like to express a sincere thank you to all who helped in anyway with our Turkey Supper on November 26th. A very special ***"thank you"*** to Kenny's Trucking and The Shine House for their generous sponsorship. The final numbers will be available this coming week.

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.

Be aware! Keep alert!
For you do not know when an opportunity will come
to be generous, and you must be ready to respond.

Church News

Ecumenical Advent Devotional Group: Along with St. Lukes Presbyterian and St. George's Anglican, planning has begun for a time of devotions during Advent. Gatherings will take place on three Thursday afternoons, December 3rd (at St. Lukes), 10th (at First UC) and 17th (at St. George's), and include creativity, singing, prayer and reflection. The tentative time will be from 1:30 to 3:00. Participants will receive a booklet called "Sing a New Song", produced by The Presbyterian Church in Canada. All are welcome! This a great opportunity to share your faith and build connections. Please let Rev. David know if you are interested.



Once again this year we are hoping to have the beauty of our sanctuary enhanced with poinsettias for the Christmas season. Those wishing to contribute to the ***Annual Poinsettia Fundraiser*** may place an envelope in the offering plate on Sunday morning. Please mark clearly on the face of the envelope – Poinsettia Fundraiser with your name, PAR or envelope number. List the names that you wish to have printed in the Christmas bulletin insert. Donations will also be received in the church office – *deadline is Thursday, December 10, 2026.*

Annual Christmas Benevolence Fund: - It's that time of year! Giving to this fund is even more important than ever. The costs relating to feeding families, and having a warm place to live is still very prevalent in our area. Should you wish to give you will find an envelope on the tree which is set up in the narthex. Then you may drop the envelope in the offering plate or drop it off at the church office during the week. Make your cheques payable to First United Church. Please mark clearly that this donation is for the Benevolence Fund. The proceeds from this fund support the Bathurst Volunteer Center and people in our congregation who need assistance.

We thank-you for your generosity
– Community Outreach Sub-Team+

Church News

"Share in the Joy of Christmas" by adding light and meaning to our Christmas Services. Sign up in groups of two or more (grandparent/grandchild, parent/child, Duos, etc.) While one person lights the Advent Candle, the other(s) reads a few lines.

We have 1 service remaining that needs a reader:
December 24th at 4 PM

Please sign up on flip chart located in the narthex.

Community News

St. Lukes Presbyterian Church, 395 Murray Ave. will be hosting the following events:

- Saturday December 5th from 9 am to 1:30 pm Everything Christmas Bazaar with soup and tea biscuit luncheon. A variety of baked goods, etc. will be available for purchase.
- Saturday December 12th from 9 am to 1 pm Christmas Bazaar
- Sunday December 13th from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm Christmas Concert with members of the Bathurst Community Band flute, clarinet, and woodwind ensembles.

Thank you! On behalf of the "Lesotho Initiative" Committee of ASD - N, a special 'thank you' is extended to the congregation of First United Church who supported our recent calendar drive. A total of 190 "Help Lesotho" 2027 calendars were sold, and this will raise $ 2850. for the work of "Help Lesotho" with Grandmothers and vulnerable children in the tiny mountain kingdom of Lesotho, Africa. Since 2006, this initiative has raised over $158,000. for the work of "Help Lesotho". (There are additional calendars available for anyone else who would like to support this cause. Contact - Gary Branch - egbranch@rogers.com – (506-546-9208))

A FAMILY AND COMMUNITY BREAKFAST will be held at St. George's Anglican Church, 432 King Avenue, on **Saturday, December 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 10.00 to help defray costs. We appreciate your kindness and support. Come and enjoy fellowship and great food.

Christmas Hymn Sing – Sunday, December 6th



Celebrate the joy and spirit of the Christmas season with us at **First United Church, 309 St. Patrick Street on Sunday, December 6th at 2:00 p.m.** for our annual Christmas Hymn Sing!

Once again, we are delighted to welcome the combined choirs of First United Church, Bathurst, and Central United Church, Clifton. Special guests this year include **The Treble Makers, In Harmony** and local musical group **Catalyst**.

And there's more! Everyone is invited to join in singing their favourite Christmas carols as we share the music and traditions that make this season so special.

Tickets are $10.00 each and are available from choir members or through the First United Church office. A limited number of tickets will also be available at the door.

A portion of this year's proceeds will support the **First United Church Pantry**. A reception will follow the concert.

Come and enjoy an afternoon of music, singing, fellowship, and Christmas cheer. **All are warmly welcome!**

SCRIPTURE READINGS – New International Version
Isaiah 64:1-9 NIV

The prophet prays to God

1 Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would tremble before you!

2 As when fire sets twigs ablaze and causes water to boil,
come down to make your name known to your enemies
and cause the nations to quake before you!

3 For when you did awesome things that we did not expect,
you came down, and the mountains trembled before you.

4 Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you,
who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.

5 You come to the help of those who gladly do right, who remember your ways.
But when we continued to sin against them, you were angry.
How then can we be saved?

6 All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags;
we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

7 No one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you;
for you have hidden your face from us and have given us over to our sins.

8 Yet you, LORD, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.

9 Do not be angry beyond measure, LORD; do not remember our sins forever.
Oh, look on us, we pray, for we are all your people.

Mark 13:24-37 NIV

Jesus tells his disciples to be alert

24 "But in those days, following that distress,
"'the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light;

25 the stars will fall from the sky,
and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'

26 "At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.

27 And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.

28 "Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near.

29 Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door.

30 Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.

31 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

32 "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

33 Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.

34 It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

35 "Therefore, keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back - whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn.

36 If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping.

37 What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'"