



He is Risen!!!

Rejoice!!!

Easter Greeting – 2020

As I write, we're about half way through the Season of Lent. The Gospel of John, for the most part, being our travel companion this time around.

I say "for the most part" because, we actually began with Matthew—with Jesus in the wilderness—before switching over. Then, in John, we encountered Nicodemus and through his interaction with Jesus, we too were assured of God's care in the winds of change and new birth. Then, we sat on the edges with a woman from Samaria as she drew from the well of life-giving waters. This coming Sunday, hopefully, we'll see the movement of the Spirit in our lives and in the world around us in the story of one who is born blind. Then, we'll experience the pain of a community in the death of Lazarus. Later, we'll join the conversation that unbinds and brings forth life. Later yet, we'll enter Jerusalem on a path paved with cloaks and branches—a path that leads to betrayal, abandonment, prayer and violence. One, seemingly, that comes to an end with the closing of a tomb.

Last year, at this time, we were discerning our path as a new ministry together, and not sure of what that might be. I can tell you, though, not for a minute did I think it would involve a worldwide pandemic that would pretty well shut everything down—including our First United Church building.

Earlier, I mentioned the story coming to an end at the tomb. Seemingly, at least. But, as we know, that's not how it went. It, instead, was a beginning.

Some, over the past few days, have shared with me their "questioning our God" regarding COVID-19. Wondering aloud, how this could be? How could God let this happen?

I respect their honesty. I respect their choosing to discuss it even more. To discuss alternatives. An understanding of God, for example, as being one of presence with us. That God is not the cause, but—a huge part of the solution. That resurrection—is new beginnings.

For the past number of days, I've seen God's presence here in our community and beyond. People, as they often do in situations like this, going out of their way to be at their very best. Concentrating largely on what's truly important! Not so much, on what's important for us as individuals.

Once the gloom of our own Good Friday passes, as it will, I look forward to new beginnings—more, perhaps, than ever before.

Happy Easter!!!

With much love & prayer,

Rev. Neal

First United Church COVID-19 Response

As we continue on our Lenten journey toward Easter, we find ourselves on another unexpected journey. This new COVID-19 journey is filled with uncertainties, potholes, challenges and sometimes fear or anxiety.

During this troubled time, the council of First United Church has had to make some tough decisions and changes to the routines and activities of our church. Our primary concern must be the safety and health of our church family and our wider community in general. Our council is very mindful of the recommendations issued by the government and medical community regarding social distancing and other precautions in its attempt to limit the spread of COVID-19 and will be adhering to those recommendations as closely as possible.

Therefore, the following measures will be put into effect as of March 17, 2020.

- Our church office is now closed.
- Our office administrator will check and address any messages which may have been left on our answering machine.
- Regular Sunday services in the Sanctuary have been cancelled until further notice.
- We will continue video streaming of our Sunday service through our website (www.firstunited-bathurst.ca) and Facebook group.
- Extra CDs of our services will be available to those who are unable to access internet. Just make a call to the office to make arrangements.
- You will be receiving regular voice mail messages, and emails to keep you updated on the situation and any changes which may be required.
- Our website and Facebook group will be updated regularly to keep you up to date.
- Rev. Neal and the Pastoral Care team will make regular telephone contact with those who may be ill, shut-in or in need of their services.
- Rentals will be cancelled for the immediate future.
- We will review these measures regularly and make any changes as they become necessary.

NOTES:

Many people in our community may be experiencing hardships, challenges, anxiety, fear etc. during these uncertain times. Please check in on those who may be in need and let Rev. Neal (655-7592) or the Pastoral Care Team (Pat Brown 546-4322) know of anyone who may need some assistance with the new challenges of life (or just a listening ear) so that we can make contact and offer our assistance.

Although we have had to make changes in our regular routine, our financial commitments remain unchanged. If you are not on PAR, we hope you will continue your financial support of our church by mailing a cheque to us at:

First United Church
309 St. Patrick Street
Bathurst N.B. E2A 1E2

Donations can also be made through Etransfer to **firstun@nb.aibn.com**

Thank you for your continued support of First United Church.

Sandra Boone
Chair of Council
(546-5453)

Community Outreach

Our team continues to be very active. We supply breakfast of cereal and coffee for the students of the Adult Continuing Education classes on a daily bases. A full breakfast for about 20 students, team members and staff was prepared as a pre-Christmas treat. Thanks to Mick Knowles for doing the cooking.

We gave our yearly donation to the Breakfast Programs of the local schools. We also have an emergency food pantry from which we supply people in the community who are in need. Thank you to the members of our congregation that have donated product to fill our shelves for this cause.

We donate peanut butter to the Volunteer center, and with your help, met our 900 unit quota 2019 and generous donations have been made in 2020. A donation of \$1000.00 was given from the Benevolence Offering at Christmas. The Volunteer Center is grateful for all the assistance that we have been able to give them as there is a great need within the Bathurst area.



The Ways and Means and The Friends of First teams would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has helped this year with our Suppers, Breakfasts and Luncheons.

A special thank you to our generous sponsors

- The Hatheway Automotive Group
- Kenny's Trucking
- Shine House
(Division of Stothart Automotive)
- Kent and White Insurance
- Mac Donald's Restaurant
- Catherine and Company
- Elm Tree Resources
- Colin Brewster
(Assante Wealth Management)
- Websolutions.ca
- Jean Coutu (Beresford)
- Bayside Automotive Group

Thank you to everyone who volunteers, attends or helps in any way to make our events such a success. All events are currently suspended but we hope to be seeing you in the near future.

Did You Know: A couple of really good ways to keep updated on First United Church events are to check out our website www.firstunited-bathurst.ca or to follow us on Facebook. Here you will find upcoming events as well as cancellations if the need arises.

PAR: Pre Authorized Remittance (PAR) is a convenient way to support the ongoing work of your church. Your monthly contributions are taken directly from your bank account or charged to a Major Credit Card. Currently we have 95 households using this method of support. Signing up for PAR takes only a few minutes and can be done for you at the church office. All that is required is a void cheque or your credit card number.

Newsletters If you wish to have your letters in the future sent directly to your email send your request to firstadmin@nb.aibn.com. Your donations can be mailed to:

First United Church
309 St Patrick Street
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E2A 1E2

*Hope
is some extraordinary spiritual grace
that God gives us to control our fears,
not to oust them.
~Vincent McNabb~*

Easy Paper Easter Wreath



Supplies

Paper plate
Spring and Easter themed/colored paper
Glue
Glue Dots
Ribbon (we used a 7/8" wide craft ribbon)
Egg Cookie Cutter or oval cookie cutter
Scissors

Note on cookie cutter: the cookie cutter used for this project was for 4 inches high and 3 inches across the middle—we traced the inside of the cookie cutter.

Directions

1. Cut the inner portion from the paper plate, so that you have the outer portion intact.



2. If your paper has a design on it, turn it over and trace the cookie cutter onto the paper for a template.
3. Cut the eggs from the paper and glue onto the back of the paper plate wreath.
4. Cut a piece of ribbon, make a bow, use a glue dot, and attach to the top of the wreath.
5. Cut another piece of ribbon, form a loop, use a glue dot, and attach to the back of the wreath.
6. Hang and enjoy for Easter

White Chocolate Easter Egg Candies



Ingredients

1 package (10 to 12 ounces) white baking chips
3 ounces cream cheese, cubed
1 teaspoon water
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
Colored sprinkles, colored sugar

Directions

In a microwave-safe bowl, melt the chips at 50% power. Add the cream cheese, water and vanilla; stir until blended. Chill until easy to handle, about 1 hour. Quickly shape into 1-1/4-in. eggs. Roll in sprinkles or colored sugar. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

