



Thanksgiving 2026

Have you ever heard the expression, **"living with an attitude of gratitude"**? It seems to me that living out our gratitude requires first exploring that which gives rise to our gratitude. What are we grateful for? Why? How does our gratitude root, deepen and enrich our spirituality and our lives together?

Living out our gratitude requires a spirituality of attentiveness, of discernment, and not just of a joy that can be infectious. Living out our gratitude in life affirming ways, in ways that spark connection and transformative relationship requires humility, itself an attitude of awareness, and an abundance of grace.

Jesus, who gave thanks before breaking loaves and fish to feed a hungry people on a hillside, who in a time of heightened awareness in an upper room likewise gave thanks before breaking bread and pouring wine in a parable of a selfless life of loving attentiveness, calls us into a life of thankfulness, awareness and remembrance, and transformation. (Remember that "eucharist" means "thanksgiving.") "Wake up!" he says, "Pay attention!" He invites us to consider the lilies of the field, and to keep awake for the immanence of the kingdom. He notices everyday people in their need, up to and even from a cross, and calls upon us to do the same. His gratitude is always enfolded with awareness. "Come and see," he says to his new and questioning followers, still wet from hopping out of their boats, even as he himself continues to grow in wisdom and in years.

The late poet Mary Oliver, herself grounded in a spirituality shaped by Creation and gratitude, writes:

Ten times a day something happens to me like this – some strengthening throb of amazement – some good sweet empathic ping and swell. This is the first, the wildest and the wisest thing I know: that the soul exists and is built entirely out of attentiveness.

In another poem she writes simply and wisely:

Instructions for living a life: Pay attention. Be astonished. Tell about it.

We are called to come and see where the divine abides, how the loving Presence fills and overflows through all of Creation, through you and me and the spaces between, to experience the revelation of the Holy in the Whole. The ancient Celts spoke of "thin places," where the distance between the divine and the devoted is gossamer thin. Perhaps you've been in such a place. I certainly have experienced awe, at the vastness of a northern night sky saturated with stars, catching a glimpse of eternity and a sense of belonging in something greater than all reasoning, in sacred mystery. I have watched in wonder as a tiny spider weaves its web in a small corner of a room. I have experienced amazement in being fully loved by a woman for who I am, at the birth of a child, and in being comforted by a beloved who was dying. And in all of this, paying attention was and is anointed with a gratitude that shapes me and my living.

I think all of Creation is a thin place, and if we pay attention, we will, in awe and wonder, be transformed and be readied to be the lovers we are created to be. How could we not then be grateful? How could we not then carry the light of our gifts and gratitude into the world with a daring and a tender love, and to see and acknowledge with grace the divine light in all whom we meet and all that we encounter? We open our hearts, we open our minds, we open our hands, attentive to the beauty and the wisdom and the need of the world. Attentive to the pulse of the Heartbeat of Creation within and without, we are changed, we are charged, with the commandment to love and be loved, in gratitude, in grace, in the kin-dom of life, and in the power of love, and in the glory of the light.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Rev. David

Up-Coming Events at First United

- October 11th – Thanksgiving
October 18th – World Food Sunday with guest speaker Rev. Shepherd Munikwa
November 8th – Remembrance Sunday
November 26th – Turkey Supper
December 6th – Christmas Hymn Sing (*tentative*)

First United Email Addresses

Please ensure you have updated your contact email address for the church office - the address is admin@firstunited-bathurst.ca

The email address for Rev. David is rev.david@firstunited-bathurst.ca



To date, there are 114 households receiving the newsletter online. We thank all who have requested to be part of our online distribution. If you wish to have your letters in the future sent directly to your email, send your request to admin@firstunited-bathurst.ca

Finance Team

Financial Report as of August 31, 2026

Local Givings - Actual	\$142,040.00
Local Givings - Budgeted	<u>\$132,000.00</u>
	<u>\$ 10,040.00</u>
Total Revenue	\$199,900.43
Total Expenses	<u>\$204,899.08</u>
Actual Deficit	<u>\$(- 4,998.65)</u>
Budgeted Deficit	<u>\$(- 13,399.12)</u>

Finance Team

Special envelopes for Thanksgiving contributions can be picked up from the church office or found in the Narthex prior to the worship service.

Church envelopes - If you haven't had contribution envelopes in the past and wish to have them for 2027, please advise the church office. Another way of making contributions is through PAR.

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 93 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 information.

Ways & Means Team

The Ways and Means team would like to express a sincere thank you to all who helped in anyway with our Beef BBQ Supper on September 17th. A very special **"thank you"** to Hatheway Group of Companies for their generous sponsorship. The net profit was \$4,886.17.



The next Ways and Means team event – **THE TURKEY SUPPER** will take place on Thursday, November 26th. Once again it will be an *Eat in or a Takeout supper*.

The team is always looking for people to join their preparation, serving and clean-up crews. Even if you are available to only work a couple of functions, it would be a great help to the team. Call the church office to volunteer – 506-546-3532.



Annual Remembrance Service

Each year, on the Sunday immediately prior to Remembrance Day, we honour our war veterans as well as those who lost their lives in war. Our Remembrance Service will be held on **Sunday, November 8th**. Those wishing to place memorial crosses in the sanctuary are reminded to contact the Legion office directly at 506-546-3135.

West Bathurst Cemetery Team

The West Bathurst Cemetery Committee is responsible for the upkeep of Saint Luke's "Old Scottish" Cemetery on St. Luke's Court which was established in the 1820's, and the West Bathurst Cemetery on St. Anne Street which dates back to the 1890's. Committee members are Robert Branch (Committee Chair), Heidi Jansson, Jodie Lee, Byron Mclean, Lester Scott, and Gary Branch (Secretary). We are happy to have Jodie Lee join our committee this year. Appreciation was expressed to Robert Willis's family at his funeral for his years of service on our committee.

The committee met on May 6, 2026, to prepare for the maintenance of the cemeteries for 2026. Lester Scott was hired to mow the two cemeteries. A "spring clean-up" of both cemeteries was completed in May. Appreciation was expressed to Gary Bourque who hauled several loads of leaves and fallen tree branches to the city compost site in the Industrial Park. A "to do" list was compiled of repair work needing to be done for both cemeteries.

There were two committal services held at West Bathurst Cemetery one in June and another in July. The cemetery records were updated following each service.

N.B. Power cut down a dead tree on the West Bathurst Cemetery property. Several fallen trees at both cemeteries were also removed by the committee. Thanks to Lester Scott and John Clouston, fencing in disrepair at St. Luke's Cemetery was removed.

Appreciation is expressed to everyone who continues to support the West Bathurst Cemetery through PAR donations or by dropping off a donation at the church office. Donations to the cemetery fund as of September 30, 2026 total \$1030.00. Maintenance expenses for 2026 total \$3,630.00.

Choir

The choir has resumed weekly practices – Wednesday evenings at 6:30 PM. An appeal goes out for new choir members. Anyone who enjoys singing, please feel free to attend. ***New members are always welcome!***



Thanksgiving Service – October 11th, 2026



Anyone wishing to contribute items to decorate the church is encouraged to bring them in by 3PM Thursday October 8th. Thank you in advance.

Community Outreach Team



The Community Outreach team continues to offer support to those within the community who are in need. 748 jars of peanut butter have been collected for the Volunteer Center to

the 30th of September. This is below the number we collected in 2025 up to this date. The Volunteer Center supplies approximately 450+ households monthly.

Our pantry has been a great lifesaver to many individuals who are experiencing hardship and/or homelessness. We have 15+ who visit on regular basis. During the hot summer months, they are guaranteed a bottle or 2 of water and a bag of food items that hopefully will help their needs.

Christmas Hymn Sing



Plans are underway for a ***Christmas Hymn Sing.***

The choir of First United Church in Bathurst and Central United Church in Clifton will once again be

offering an afternoon of Christmas music with a reception to follow. If you would like to join the combined choir for this event, practices will begin Wednesday, October 14th from 7:00 to 8:15 PM. ***All are welcome!*** Confirmation of the date and ticket information will be coming soon!

Property Management Report

Just a quick update for our Fall Newsletter. As was mentioned and voted on at our recent Congregational meeting the back door entrance is going to be replaced complete with handicap door opener. At the same meeting it was voted on to replace the fluorescent lights in Room 7 (basement) as well as the kitchen and food preparation area with new LED lights as fluorescent light bulbs are no longer available.

The final plans are completed for the back step and ramp but will not be done this year as we did not receive bids during the tendering process. Our plan is to break down the bids into two separate bids - 1) Concrete and Site work, and 2) Railings. This process will begin early in the New Year in order to be on next summer's work schedule.

The final plans are being completed for the wheelchair lift at the back entrance as well. We are continuing to seek various ways to fund this worthwhile project as it will make both levels of the DEMH fully wheelchair accessible. Although the chair lift at the front entrance has served us well, there is an inherent risk in transferring people in and out of the chair especially at the top of the stairs. An enclosed lift is far more superior from a safety aspect.

We have recently accepted another evening rental for a second AA group, as well as being asked by the Girl Guides if we have space for them due to the future closing of the Cathedral. We are still in discussions with them to see if we can accommodate their preferred evening and time.

***Respectfully submitted by
Lester Scott***

A look back over the summer months

Let's take a look at what took place at First United during the past few months. As expected, church life proceeded at a slower pace during the summer but attendance at the Sunday church services proved to be constant.

Summer vacationers, many of whom are former residents, were greeted and a few newcomers were welcomed as well. Noticed was the steady attendance of dedicated choir members both at regular church services and at least four funerals.

Linda Knowles MacPherson was our supply organist/pianist during July and August. This provided a summer break for Martha which was so well earned and enjoyed.

Likewise, Margaret Payne-Chenard supplied in the church office while Margaret Daniels took a break. The Hospitality and Friendship Team cancelled after service refreshment time until September.

Of course, The Bathurst Community Market continued every Saturday in the Donald Eddy Memorial Hall. This kept our custodian well occupied along with his other duties.

Rev. David Allan took his study leave in July. Leading Sunday services in his absence were Wayne Lord, Rev. Neal Palmer, Sandra Boone and Jennifer Oliver.

...lead up to summer...

The month of May was dedicated to PAR (pre-authorized Remittance) when congregants were encouraged to direct or update their givings through this convenient and automatic arrangement.

Other highlights included Red Dress Day honouring indigenous people, Christian Family Sunday accompanied by a flower fundraiser netting \$1,771 and a luncheon supporting our food pantry that resulted in \$860 in free will offerings.

It was also in May that Rev. Blair Lewis was declared **Minister Emeritus** of First United Church. The designation, humbly accepted by our former minister, is an honorary and ceremonial title that recognized his fifty years of ordained ministry here and elsewhere in the United Church of Canada.

Also honoured was Hugh Ellis, since deceased, who as a layman completed his term as president of the Regional Council in May. Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council embraces United Churches in New Brunswick, the Gaspé Coast of Quebec and Bermuda.

...June & July...

In June, the Affirming Candle was lit for the first time at the beginning of a regular Sunday service, following the lighting of the Christ Candle. It symbolizes that all are created in the

image of God regardless of one's sexual orientation or gender identity.

Graduates with First United affiliation and from all schools of learning were recognized during an intergenerational church service.

The Sacrament of Baptism was celebrated on July 19th.

...August theme...

August was highlighted by events of a cultural nature. Leander Angelo, a 15-year-old student at St. Michael's Choir School in Toronto, presented an organ postlude after a regular Sunday service. He was grateful to First United for allowing him to practise on the organ over the summer. His parents performed at the same time the following Sunday, Allison being an accomplished professional vocalist and Joseph her accompanist. The family was vacationing in the area at the time.

Then in mid-August, First United was the venue for three performances given by the Classical Music Festival ensemble. The concert presentations were organized by David Scott, a local musician.

A sad occurrence during the month was the unexpected death of Dave Morison. A chartered accountant, Dave was our volunteer church treasurer for 18 years.

...September activity...

September saw some regular activities resume including Wednesday evening choir practices and handicraft groups. The amazing and dedicated Ways and Means Team served its annual BBQ Roast Beef supper to 325 +/- people.

A congregational meeting on September 20th approved the installment of new doors off the parking lot. The \$34,000 expenditure also included initial costs relating to new outdoor steps and ramp at the back entrance as well as lights in the building for which replacements are no longer available. Recent bequests directed to the Repair Fund are being used.

***Respectfully submitted,
Isabel MacLaggan***

Community Events

Bathurst Community Market holds their weekly market every Saturday morning from 8 AM to 1 PM in the gymnasium of the Donald Eddy Hall. Many different types of vendors selling various types of products – soaps & shampoos – baking including cookies, pies and bread – wool and knitted items – jams and jellies – maple syrup – wooden crafts – complete pottery painting experience – sea glass – jewellery – just to name a few. Breakfast also served! Come for a visit and bring a friend!!

After Thanksgiving, every Monday and Wednesday from 9 AM to 11 AM there is a ***Ladies Fun Badminton Group*** who gather, and play in the Donald Eddy Memorial Hall gymnasium. Any ladies interested in joining please contact Joyce Daley for information.

Choeur Louisbourg Choir



The Louisbourg Choir, under the direction of Monique Richard, has made it its mission to break away from the beaten path of concert music since its founding in 2006. Both for the authenticity and refinement it aspires to in its interpretation of early music and for the importance it gives to the promotion of contemporary music, the choir occupies a unique place in the cultural landscape of New Brunswick.

Choeur Louisbourg Choir is holding a musical concert here in the First United Church sanctuary on Friday, November 20th at 7:30 PM. Tickets will be available at the door or are available through their website. The link is as follows:

<https://ticketscandy.com/e/orgue-en-fete-voix-en-choeur-bathurst-21199>