**Be United Communities of Faith**

**Bridgewater United Church**

**December 17th, 2023 Third of Advent**

**Minister:** *Reverend Neil McEwen* **Music Ministry Director:** *Barbara Pate*

**Audio Visual Technician:** *Evan Rafuse* **Sound Engineer:** *Liam Wamboldt*

**Greeter:** *Angela McGinnis* **Greeter:** *Judy Stringer*

*The asterisk (\*) indicates the congregation may stand, as they are able.*

*The print in* ***BOLD*** *is where the congregation participates.*

Prelude

**\*Hymn:** **# 59 VU – Joy to the World**

Welcome and Announcements

**Invitation to Worship:**

The Spirit of God is on me because God anointed me;

**God sent me to bring good news to the poor,**

to heal the heartbroken,

**to announce freedom to all captives.**

I will sing for joy in God,

**and let praise explode from deep in my soul.**

With joy in our hearts, and resonating in our spirits,

**let us worship.**

**\*Chorus: B-United**

Lighting of the Inclusivity Candles

**Advent Candle****-Lighting: When God Is A Child**

Candle of Hope and Peace Are Lit

On this third Sunday of Advent,

we light this candle symbolizing joy -

acknowledging the reality that joy often bursts out of pain, hardship, and failure.

Candle of Joy Is Lit

**Joy often comes to us unexpected,**

**especially when we have given up on life.**

**Joy reminds us that nothing is impossible - even in weakness.**

**In our joy, we are powerfully reminded that God is always near.**

Therefore, let us rejoice!

Let us sing as we celebrate the good news in this divinely newborn baby.

**Advent Chorus:** **Hope Is A Candle (Verses 1, 2 and 3)**

Rejoice! And again, I say, rejoice!

**Our joy erupts from the assurance,**

**that God is with us in our here and now.**

Let us join prayerfully in thanksgiving and through divine conversation,

to discover peace and strength for our living and our loving:

**Open our understanding, O God,**

**rooted in coming home to your loving.**

**Free our perceptions**

**from the chains of judgment and of polarization.**

**Equip us to perceive the good in one another,**

**while sharing right relations.**

**Inspire us for new life and new vision in all we think and do,**

**that we might dance joyfully in Jesus’ name. Amen.**

**Chorus:** **# 60 VU – O Come, All Ye Faithful (Chorus Only)**

**Opening Prayer:** (*unison)*

**Giver of joy, fill our hearts with praise as we gather to worship you. As your light fills this room, may your light shine within us that there is no shadow of fear of hesitancy as we live out our faith. Remind us of your presence and your faithfulness in all of our days with great and abundant joy! Amen.**

Your Generosity Matters: Moderator Carmen Lansdowne’s Advent Message

Offering our Thanks

**Offertory Response: # 55 VU – In the Bleak Midwinter – Verse 4**

**Prayer of Dedication:** (*unison)*

**May the gifts we offer, smooth the way for those who struggle, rebuild the lives of those who have fallen, and bring grace and comfort to all your people, loving God, we pray. Amen.**

Time with Children

Prayer with The Lord’s Prayer

**Hymn: # 82 VU – A Light Is Gleaming**



**Responsive Reading: Psalm 126**

When God brought Zion’s captives home, it seemed to us like a dream.

**But then our mouths were full of laughter,**

**and our tongues uttered shouts of joy.**

Then they said among the nations: “God has done great things for them.”

**Truly God has done great things for us, and therefore we rejoice.**

Restore our fortunes, O God, as streams refresh the Negev.

**Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy.**

Those who go out weeping, carrying seed for sowing,

**shall come home with songs of joy, bringing in their sheaves.**

We praise the One who gave the growth,

**with voices full and strong.**

Hebrew Scripture Reading: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Holy Wisdom. Holy Word.

**Thanks be to God.**

Message

Reflective Meditation

Prayers of the Community

Celebrating the Music Ministry of Barbara Pate

**\*Hymn:** **# 62 VU – Once in Royal David’s City**

Extinguishing The Candles

Commissioning And Benediction

Postlude

***CCLI No., 11287624, 20371363***

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***The church bulletins are given to the glory of God,***

***and in loving memory of Wendy Fraser,***

***gift of the Fraser family.***

**Bridgewater United Church Christmas Outreach Projects**

The Angel Tree Project is an Ad Hoc Committee of the Faith Formation Committee. We would like to send a huge thank you to everyone from the Bridgewater United Church Community, Bridgewater Day Care Centre, Universal Cheer Club and beyond, that helped to make this Christmas much brighter for six local families, with a total of six adults and fourteen children, that we sponsored through Christmas Daddies We successfully gathered one-hundred and forty-seven Angel Tags from the trees and provided grocery cards for Christmas groceries for our six families this year. Thank you to Diane Barry, Carolyn Prince-Selig and Tracy Rafuse, for prepping and arranging items for this special Outreach project. We are truly blessed to be in community with all of you. Thank you! ~ Tracy Rafuse; *Faith Formation Chairperson*

A thank you is also extended to everyone that supported the Salvation Army Community Christmas Boxes campaign, we were able to successfully supply two hundred cans of turkey and chicken gravy to this Outreach. Thank you to the Faith Formation Committee for purchasing the last remaining amount to reach our goal.

The B-United Youth Group will be creating fifteen Blessing Bags with personal care items, snacks and warm outerwear for Souls Harbour Bridgewater next week. The Youth Group also took three dozen cookies to Souls Harbour Bridgewater to share with their community during their lunches. Monetary donations are most welcomed to cover the cost of the Blessing Bags items that have been purchased by the Faith Formation Committee, as our Youth continue to promote love for one another.

**Church Council**

The Church Council will be meeting in the Sanctuary on December 20th at 7:00pm.

**Christmas Eve at Bridgewater United**

Bridgewater United will be worshipping on Christmas Eve at 10:30am for Advent IV with Holy Communion and then at 8:00pm for our Christmas Eve evening service. Come join us for a time of reflection as we get ready to welcome the Prince of Peace.

**Annual Reports of B-United**

It is that time of year again, when Committees and Ministries of B-United should be preparing their program reports for inclusion in the 2023 Annual Report. Please be reminded that your report is based on 2023 activities. The Church Office asks that all program and financial reports be typed and emailed in a Word Document by Friday, January 26th, 2024. **NO PDF FILES.** Reports are needed from the following: *Church Council, Ministry and Personnel Committee, Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council Representative, Board of Trustees Report and Financial Report, Memorial Ministry, Ministerial Team, Faith Formation Committee Report and Financial Report, Pastoral Care Ministry, Finance and Stewardship Committee Report and Financial Report, Ways and Means Ministry, Property Committee, United Church Women Report and Financial Report, Prayer Shawl Ministry, Profile Committee, Worship Committee, Music Ministry, B.U.C. Brigade Mission Trip, Bridgewater Day Care Centre Report and Financial Report, 3rd Bridgewater Scouting Group Committee Report and Financial Report and Bridgewater Inter-Church Council.* Thanks for all you do for B-United!

***Christmas Flowers and Poinsettias are given to the glory of God, and in loving memory of:***

*Husband, Stewart Ralph, gift of wife, Brenda.*

*Parents, Stan and Mae Forbes, gift of daughter, Janet.*

*Ian MacKinnon, Bob and Jean MacKinnon and David and Doris Aitken.*

*My parents, Clifford and Lorna Blades, gift of daughter, Diane Patten.*

**A Message from your Envelope Steward**

Your 2024 offering envelopes will be in the Narthex and listed in alphabetical order next Sunday. Please make sure that your address is correct on your label. Envelopes allow your church givings and your child’s Sunday School givings, to be tallied into an end-of-the-year tax receipt. If you would like Church Envelopes, and currently do not have them for 2023, please contact Tracy; *Envelope Steward* at (902) 543-4833.

**Church Office Closed**

The Church Office will be closed from December 25th thru to December 29th. For Emergency Pastoral Concerns, you may reach our Ministry Team at (902) 543-6854.

**Stay In Touch With Bridgewater United!**

Please pass along your email to the Church Office at info@bridgewaterunited.ca, so that you can be added to congregational emails regarding events, services, and storm closures. Check out our website at www.bridgewaterunited.ca for information about our Church, event calendar, worship services and so much more. The Church Office wants to remind members of the congregation, if the worship service is cancelled, an announcement will be placed on CKBW (98.1 FM), the church’s website at www.bridgewaterunited.ca, Facebook and the church voicemail stating the cancellation by 9:00am on Sunday morning. Stay in touch in the New Year!

**Faith Formation Sunday**

The Faith Formation Committee supports many wonderful aspects of our Faith Community, whether it is our B-United Sunday School Program, B-United Youth Group, Send a Kid to Camp, Student Care Packages, Angel Tree, Blessing Bags for Souls Harbour Bridgewater, Bible Study and so much more. Please find envelopes in support of this wonderful Outreach in the Narthex on the table. Thank you.

**B-United Supports our Local Food Bank**

Food banks are reporting an increase in clientele, which has put a huge strain on them financially. Monetary donations and donations of non-perishable food items are appreciated through the month. Items can be dropped off in Brother Lawrence’s Wheelbarrow. For December, there is a request for Pasta Sauce, Spaghetti, Canned Fruit, Instant Muffin Mix, and Granola Bars. Please be mindful of expiration.

**Minute for Mindfulness**

*“For every minute you are angry, you lose sixty seconds of happiness.”*

*~ Ralph Waldo Emerson*

**Treasurers’ Report to the Church Congregation**

**for the Eleven-Month Period ending November 30, 2023**

**Receipts**

Total Local Receipts $ 151,097.00

Trust Receipts

Mission and Service $ 11,814.00

UCW Funds for M&S $ 2,000.00

Food Bank Receipts $ 5,330.00

Send a Kid to Camp $ 1,835.00

Misc. Trust Receipts $ 3,400.00

Building Use Receipts $ 62,159.00

Radio Broadcast Service $ 1,450.00

Fundraising Receipts $ 4,902.00

UCW Donation for Local $ 1,000.00

Misc. Receipts $ 799.00

**Total Receipts (Note 1) $ 245,787.00**

**Disbursements**

Total Trust Disbursements $ 23,554.00

West Side/B-United Agreement $ 35,260.00

Total Personnel Expense $ 78,209.00

Total Office & Admin Expense $ 12,015.00

Heating Fuel $ 25,380.00

Lights, Water & Sewer $ 10,871.00

Snow Removal & Salting $ 7,551.00

Insurance $ 12,412.00

Floor Maintenance $ 322.00

Other Premises Expenses $ 12,690.00

UCC Assessment $ 8,033.00

Other Misc. Expenses $ 2,192.00

**Total Disbursements (Note 1)**   **$ 228,489.00**

**Operating Surplus at End of Period**   **$ 17,297.00**

**Bank and GIC Balance**: **$ 137,946.04**

**Note 1:** Total Receipts and Disbursements does not include Building Fund Receipts or Disbursements and the B.U.C. Brigade Mission Fund Transactions.

This report is a brief summary of the 2023 Actual Sage Accounting Income Statement.

Respectfully submitted,

Blake Hirtle; *Bridgewater United Church Treasurer*

December 13, 2023

***“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”***

***~ Matthew 6:21***

Prayerfully decide what you will give each year to your Church and divide that amount by twelve. Contributions help our Church’s Ministry, with a dependable flow of contributions, to increase our overall financial stability. Church envelopes allow your Church Givings to be tallied into a year-end income tax receipt. Your regular givings supports the local ministry of our congregation. With a Church Envelope you can designate where you would like your givings to be distributed.

**Local Expenses Designation** helps with the overall daily upkeep of the building, such as electricity, heating costs, insurance, as well as personnel expenses.

**Mission and Service Designation** is forwarded to The United Church of Canada to be deposited to their Mission and Service Fund which is used for many wonderful Outreach aspects that The United Church of Canada is a part of such as helping people overcome poverty, train new ministers and Mission and Service Gifts support vibrant and vital ministries for the healing of the world.

**Building Fund Designation** helps with repairs/upgrades that need to be undertaken by B-United, to make sure our building is safe for all that use it.

**Food Bank Designation** helps The Bridgewater Inter-Church Food Bank, which provides help to those who are in need. We encourage our members to bring in non-perishable food bank items to be placed in Brother Lawrence’s Wheelbarrow in the Narthex throughout the month or you can place a monetary donation in the Offering Plate. This can be specified on your Church Envelope.

**PAR** is a monthly pre-authorized bank withdrawal by Bridgewater United Church directly, that can be increased or decreased five business days before the end of the month. PAR is not only convenient, but it ensures regular monthly givings to help your Church’s Ministry even when you are away.

**Sunday School Local Designation** helps with obtaining supplies for weekly curriculum, snack items, yearly curriculum lessons and events the youth will be taking part in and much more. It provides for the daily upkeep of Sunday School.

**Sunday School Mission and Service Designation** is forwarded to The United Church of Canada to be deposited to their Mission and Service Fund which is used for many wonderful Outreach aspects of The United Church of Canada.

**e-Transfers** are now accepted by Bridgewater United Church. Add [info@bridgewaterunited.ca](mailto:info@bridgewaterunited.ca) as a payee, and you can submit your donation that way.

Any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Tracy Rafuse, Envelope Steward, at (902) 543-4833 or by email at [info@bridgewaterunited.ca](mailto:info@bridgewaterunited.ca). Thank you.

*We are now given an opportunity to be a blessing to others.*

*Through our PAR commitments, through our money, and through our time and talents,*

*we now return to God, so that we might be a part of God’s Love and God’s Mission.*

**B-United PAR Authorization Form**

**(Pre-Authorized Remittance)**

A picture containing text

Description automatically generated

**B-United PAR Authorization**

Donor Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Phone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Envelope #: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Monthly Gift Amount: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

My Monthly Gift of $ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will be designated to benefit monthly:

*(Please specify amounts designated to which Church Fund)*

Local: $\_\_\_\_ Mission and Service: $\_\_\_\_ Building $\_\_\_\_ Food Bank: $\_\_\_\_

I/we authorize, Bridgewater United Church, to debit my/our bank account on one of the following dates, 1st, 20th, or Month-End of every month, starting on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_.

I/we may change the amount of my/our contribution five days before month-end, by contacting the Envelope Steward with this adjustment. I/we have certain recourse rights if any debit does not comply with this agreement. I/we waive my right to receive pre-notification of the amount of pre-authorized remittance (PAR) and agree that I do not require advance notice of the amount of PAR before the debit is processed monthly.

I/we acknowledge that I/we have read and understood all the provisions contained in the terms and conditions of the pre-authorized payment authorization and that I/we have received a copy.

Please attach a **VOID** cheque.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_