**Be United Communities of Faith**

**Bridgewater United Church**

**December 24th, 2023 Fourth of Advent**

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

**Audio Visual Technician:** *David Moran* **Sound Engineer:** *Shelley Moran*

**Greeter:** *Joanne Johnson* **Greeter:** *Linda Rowter* **Musical Guest:** *Barbara Boulton*

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

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

Prelude

**\*Hymn:** **# 81 VU – As with Gladness Men of Old**

Welcome and Announcements

**Invitation to Worship:**

Advent is a time to dream.

**Advent is a time to prepare.**

We dream of hope, peace, joy and love.

**And prepare for God to be revealed in new life.**

We open our hearts to receive God’s gift.

**And transform the dream into a reality.**

As we continue our Advent journey,

**we worship and praise God.**

**\*Chorus: B-United**

Lighting of the Inclusivity Candles

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

Candle of Hope, Peace and Joy Are Lit

On this fourth Sunday of Advent,

we light this candle symbolizing love.

**We come to lean into loving one another – even when it is difficult.**

**Jesus demonstrated that every person is worthy of our love,**

**a flame of purpose that should not be extinguished.**

Candle of Love Is Lit

Love is most fully lived in relationships that are mutual, life-giving, and self-giving.

**We come, learning how to love with kindness and compassion.**Let us sing as we celebrate the good news embodied in love alive among us.

**Advent Chorus:** **Hope Is A Candle**

Let us join together in prayer, inspired by everlasting love:

**Teach us, O God, to hear the cries of those impoverished.**

**Show us how to care for others with loving-kindness.**

**Communicate with us so that we, too,**

**may communicate the good news with love.**

**Encourage us to move toward those who need us.**

**Open our perceptions to discover Christ’s face in one another,**

**setting our hearts on fire with passionate self-giving. Amen.**

**Chorus:** **# 64 VU – O Little Town of Bethlehem (Verse 4)**

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

**We gather this morning, God, waiting, anticipating. But we’re not even sure what we are waiting for anymore. Yet we are here, ready to receive, to search, to ponder, and simply to be still in anticipation of something that will happen, that is happening among us now. Make us aware of the holy mystery that surrounds us always and keep us moving toward a deeper relationship with you. Amen.**

Your Generosity Matters: Act Now - Humanitarian Crisis in the Middle East

Offering our Thanks

*We offer our gifts of time, talents and treasures each day.*

*Offering plates are located at the entrance of the Sanctuary*

*where you can place your donations as you arrive or as your leave.*

*The Offering Plates are not circulated among the congregation*

*during our Service of Worship.*

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

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

**Generous God, you have offered to us the blessing of generosity by giving us life and providing what we need. We offer back to you a portion of what we have been given as a faithful act of watching and waiting like sentinels and shepherds. Use our gifts this night to bring peace to a world which is waiting. Amen.**

Special Music: Mary, Did You Know? *sung by Barbara Boulton*

Time with Children

Prayer with The Lord’s Prayer

**Hymn: # 55 VU – In the Bleak Midwinter**

Gospel Scripture Reading: Luke 1:46-55

Holy Wisdom. Holy Word.

**Thanks be to God.**

Message

Reflective Meditation

**Sacrament of Holy Communion**

Invitation to the Table

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

Sacrament of Communion

*We are invited to come forward (centre aisle) to receive individually prepared Bread and Grapes. Return to your seats (Side Aisles) and we will consume together as one Community of Faith unified by the blessing of the Spirit throughout our Advent journey.*

Prayer

Special Music: Baby in the Straw *sung by Barbara Pate*

**\*Hymn:** **# 73 VU – The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy**

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 dear friends and family,***

***gift of Greg and Anne Gatchell and family.***

***The December church radio broadcast is given to the glory of God,***

***and in loving memory of Olive and Herb Ritcey, gift of Ruth and Darryl.***

***The December church radio broadcast is given to the glory of God,***

***and in memory of loved ones, a gift of Janice and Brian Buck and 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 and provided grocery cards for Christmas for our six families this year. We are truly blessed to be in community with all of 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 created fifteen Blessing Bags with personal care items, snacks and warm outerwear for Souls Harbour Bridgewater. Monetary donations are most welcomed to cover the cost of the Blessing Bags items purchased by the Faith Formation Committee, as our Youth continue to promote love for one another.

**Christmas Eve at Bridgewater United**

Join Bridgewater United tonight, for our Christmas Eve Worship Service at 8:00pm. Come join us for a time of reflection, as we get ready to welcome the Prince of Peace.

**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.

**New Year’s Eve at Bridgewater United**

Join Bridgewater United on New Year’s Eve for Worship and Reflection at 10:30am. Come join us as we celebrate the works that help to transform lives, inspire meaning and purpose, and helps in the building of a better world as we move forward in 2024.

**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!

**A Message from your Envelope Steward**

Your 2024 offering envelopes are in the Narthex and listed in alphabetical order. 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.

**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!

**Worshiping Online With Our B-United Church Community**

Bridgewater United offers audio recordings of our worship services on our website, [www.bridgewaterunited.ca](http://www.bridgewaterunited.ca), as well as our online services. We also have a radio service on the 3rd and 4th Sunday of the month at 11:00am on CKBW (98.1FM).

**Thank You For Your Support**

A thank you is extended to all who supported our B-United Fundraisers during 2023. We had a wonderful evening of music in September for our Memorial Hymn Sing and we seen a total of $1,642.48 in donations towards our Local Fund. Thank you to Reverend Neil and Barbara Pate for all your hard work in creating a wonderful evening of music and reflection. In the beginning of December, under the guidance of Yvonne Hirtle and her many elves, we had a very successful Homemade Un-Baked Pie Sale which seen a profit of $1,505.85 go towards our Local Fund. Thank you.

**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**

Monetary donations and donations of non-perishable food items are appreciated through the month. 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**

*″People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did,*

*but people will never forget how you made them feel.”*

*~ Maya Angelou*

**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: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_