**Bridgewater United Church**

**February 25th, 2024 Second in Lent**

**Ministry Team:** *Reverend Neil McEwen and Reverend Hans van Nie*

**Organist and Pianist**: *Walter Delahunt*

**Audio Visual Technician:** *Ewart Morse* **Sound Engineer:** *Liam Wamboldt*

**Greeter:** *Jane Martin* **Greeter:** *Karen Townsend*

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

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

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

**\*Chorus:** “B-United”

Lighting of the Christ Candle and Inclusivity Candles

**Invitation to Worship****:**

May the God of grace be welcome in our midst.

**May we receive the power and peace of divine love.**

Let us worship with our hearts and minds and bodies.

**Let us become one seeking justice and compassion.**

Blessed be God who challenges, heals, and unites us.

**Blessed be God who inspires all things to be new.**

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

**God of promise and hope,**

**you call us to trust in your way and set before us paths of faithfulness.**

**We hesitate to follow you and to make changes in our lives.**

**Our priorities and commitments reflect personal interests,**

**more than your desire for our lives and world.**

**Free us, O God, that we might be faithful to you,**

**in the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.**

**\*Hymn:** “New Every Morning” (VU 405)

Your Generosity Matters: Dismantling White Supremacist Culture

Invitation to Offering

*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 you leave.*

*The offering plates are not circulated among the congregation during our Service of Worship.*

**\*Offertory Response:** “Jesus, You Fill Our Hearts” (MV 101) (x3)

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

**Through these gifts, O God,**

**may the voice of justice be heard,**

**may the call to compassion be honoured,**

**may the way of sharing be embraced,**

**as we strive to live in the Way of Christ. Amen.**

Learning Together: A Time For All Ages

**The Lord’s Prayer**

**\*Hymn:** “When Hands Reach Out Beyond Divides” (MV 169)

Epistle Scripture Reading: Romans 4:13; 18-25

Herein is guidance.

**Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Scripture Reading: Mark 8:31-38

Herein is good news.

**Thanks be to God.**

Sermon: “Take Up Your Cross”

**\*Hymn:** “Take Up Your Cross” (VU 561)

Prayers of the Community

**\*Hymn:** “Now Quit Your Care” (VU 109)

\*Extinguishing The Candles

**\*A Lenten Prayer:** (VU 110) (*unison)*

**God of love,**

**as in Jesus Christ you gave yourself to us,**

**so may we give ourselves to you,**

**living according to your holy will.**

**Keep our feet firmly in the way**

**where Christ leads us;**

**help our lips speak the truth that Christ teaches us;**

**fill our bodies with the life that is Christ within us.**

**In his holy name we pray. Amen.**

\*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 my mother, Mary Ann Fickes,***

***a gift of daughter, Barbara Pate.***

***The February church radio broadcast is presented to the glory of God,***

***and in loving memory of Dr. and Mrs. Hugh Fraser,***

***gift of their daughters, Jean McHarg and Mary Fulleman.***

**Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship, Daring Justice**

The United Church of Canada is a community of hope, a vibrant and vital church with both purpose and vision. We live in a time of rapid change in religious life, great inequities between peoples, and collective harm to our earth community. Together, we strive towards repentance, repair, and right relations with all peoples and the planet. Living purposefully into this call and vision anticipates becoming the Beloved Community—the ever inbreaking, transforming, reconciling realm of God, today!

**Vision Statement**

As followers of Jesus Christ, Bridgewater United Church is a church family that values each person as equal and unique loving expressions of God with gifts and talents to share. People of all ages, gender, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, differing abilities, ethnic background, economic circumstance, and those experiencing other barriers that limit inclusion are welcome to fully participate in all our ministries.

**Mission Statement**

To create a vibrant community of followers of Jesus where everyone deeply knows they belong, are cared for, can grow spiritually and actively demonstrate our love in the world and towards one another.

**Core Values**

We value energetic engagement in our:

Spiritual Health

Generosity

Acceptance of all

Responsiveness to the world

Love for God, creation, self, and others

**#APlaceWhereEveryoneBelongs**

**#ChooseLove**

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87 Hillcrest Street, Bridgewater, NS, B4V 1T2

Church Office Phone: (902) 543-4833

 Ministers’ and Pastoral Care Private Church Phone: (902) 543-6854

Reverend Neil McEwen westsideunitedchurch@gmail.com (902) 523-5687

Reverend Hans van Nie hans@bridgewaterunited.ca (902) 277-4235

Church Office E-mail: info@bridgewaterunited.ca Website: www.bridgewaterunited.ca

Church Office Hours ~ Tuesday to Friday ~ 10:00am – 12:30pm

Be sure to like and share our Facebook and YouTube page!

**Our Church is a Nut-Free and Scent-Free Church**

**A Lenten Prescription**

The rituals of Ash Wednesday belong together with those of Shrove Tuesday.

The word “shrove” comes from the Old English verb “to shrive”

which means “to write.”

Traditionally, on Shrove Tuesday,

people would come to church to have a Lenten prescription “shriven” for them. (Note that the word “prescription” derives from the same verb.)

You are invited to write your own Lenten prescription in the space below.

You can then say you were in church

and that you “shrove” yourself a prescription for Lent!

In the space below, you can “shrive” some commitments

for your spiritual practice during Lent,

such as keeping a journal or daily meditation.

During Lent this year I commit to the following spiritual practice(s):

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**B-United Search Committee**

At our Special Congregational Meeting held on Monday, February 12th, the motion to search for one Full-Time Ministry Personnel (100%) and one Part-Time Ministry Personnel (50%) for Bridgewater United was approved. We look forward to establishing a Search Committee in the next week to begin the process. We have some potential candidates but if anyone else is interested in serving on the Search Committee, you can contact Audrey Wamboldt; *Church Council Vice-Chairperson* at (902) 354-5572 or by email at oddpike@gmail.com by TODAY. We need to have all potential candidates’ names ready for review for our next Church Council meeting.

**Supporting Mission and Service Through Lent**

Envelopes that are on the seats are to be used for your Mission and Service donations for Lent. Loving our neighbour and compassion, lies at the heart of generosity. Mission and Service transforms and saves lives, inspires meaning and purpose and helps to build a better world. Mission and Service of the United Church of Canada is all about respect. They work in partnership with people and organizations and never impose their solutions, ways of doing things, or belief systems. They aim for long-term solutions over quick fixes because they want to make a lasting difference.

**A Message from your Envelope Steward**

Your offering envelopes and 2023 Income Tax receipts are in the Narthex and listed alphabetically. Envelopes allow your church givings to be tallied into a year-end tax receipt. Please contact Tracy Rafuse; *Envelope Steward* at (902) 543-4833 or by email at info@bridgewaterunited.ca for more information. With your tax receipt, you will find an important form (on pink paper) to fill out by all congregational families to help the Church Office update important details in our PowerChurch files. Thanks.

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

Monetary donations and donations of non-perishable food items are always appreciated throughout the month. For February, there is a request for Canned Baked Beans, Canned Spaghetti, Alphaghetti or Zoodles, Jam, Goldfish Crackers and Canned Mushrooms and Canned Soup. Thank you for your continued support.

**Community Outreach Opportunity**

We have had a request for a Syrian Canadian family who just moved to Bridgewater from Mahone Bay. Normally, there are two family members that need to go to language class once a week from 9:30am to 12:30pm at the Lunenburg Academy. The family would need to be picked up in central Bridgewater at 8:30am to get there for 9:00am and then picked up in Lunenburg at 12:30pm and driven back home. Please contact Alison Smith at alison@aesmithwriter.com for more information.

**Minute for Mindfulness**

*“The day I understood everything,*

*was the day I stopped trying to figure everything out.*

*The day I knew peace, was the day I let everything go.”*

*~ Unknown*

**Confirmation Class**

Are you interested in Confirmation class (Grade 8 and up) at Bridgewater United Church? In the United Church of Canada, confirmation means the “confirming” of baptismal vows, which were taken earlier, usually when a person was an infant or a child. Participants who are not yet baptized are also welcome in a confirmation group. Baptism is included prior to the act of confirmation for them. Confirmation involves exploring, affirming, and claiming the Christian faith as one’s own, in a journey that is both individual and part of a group. Confirmation is a time when we publicly declare our intention to live in Christ and practice our faith within the life and fellowship of the church. Confirmation signifies full membership in the congregation and the United Church of Canada. Contact the Church Office for more information.

**Joining Membership with Bridgewater United Church**

Are you interested in joining the membership of B-United? We will be welcoming new members by Confirmation or Transfer of Membership from another congregation. A full member is one who has been baptized, either as infant, child, youth or adult, and has made a public profession of faith before the congregation. Membership is not required in order to worship at a United Church, and many who regularly attend worship are adherents rather than members. In order to become a full member, a person goes through a process called "confirmation". This is offered to adults (starting at around age 13) and usually involves a series of classes about the beliefs of the United Church. Following this, the candidate makes a public profession of faith before the congregation, thereby "confirming" the statements made by his or her parents during baptism. If the person is unbaptized, the minister baptizes the person before the profession of faith. The new member's name is then entered on the official Roll of Members for that congregation. Only members can vote at congregational meetings, although members can vote to extend voting privileges to adherents. Although confirmation takes place at the congregational level, the person is a member of the entire United Church of Canada, not just one congregation; therefore, membership can be transferred freely from congregation to congregation.

**Criminal Records Check**

The United Church of Canada is committed to providing a safe environment for worship, work and study for all those who operate under its name. Chairpersons of all Church Committees are responsible to ensure their members have an up-to-date criminal records check. Your criminal records check is good for three years. Please contact the Church Office to begin the process. Your Ministry and Personnel Committee Representative for this initiative is Marg Forbes at (902) 543-2495.

**What is a District Representative?**

A District Representative is the key to providing a constant line of communication with our Church Community and Bridgewater United Church. A District Representative is assigned a list of members, with whom they contact approximately four times a year, under the guidance of the Pastoral Care Ministry. Consider being a District Representative. It is a wonderful Outreach of B-United. Reach out today!

**Why Volunteer?**

Here at B-United, we are always looking for volunteers during our Worship Service. Take some time and think about the various volunteer portions of our Worship Services: Greeter, Sound Engineer, Audio Visual Engineer, Scripture Reader, Offering Counter, Community Choir and Sunday School Volunteer. Reach out today!

**Lenten Study: 40 Days of Engagement on Anti-Racism**

We offer this opportunity to learn and grow in our understanding and faithful response to racism in our church, community and circles of living. Our in-person discussion group will be alternating between Bridgewater United and West Side United on Wednesdays at 7:00pm and a ZOOM discussion session will be held on Tuesdays at 7:00pm. These sessions will continue until March 27th. Be The Change.

**B-United Church Council**

Church Council will be meeting in the Sanctuary on Wednesday, February 28th at 7:00pm. All committee reports are to be sent to Edna at ednamatheson@gmail.com. All are welcome to attend the meeting, but only Chairpersons have the right to vote.

**Watoto Children’s Choir**

The Watoto Children's Choir from Uganda East Africa are returning to Bridgewater Baptist Church; 564 Glen Allan Drive on Thursday, February 29th at 6:30pm. There is no charge to attend – a Love Offering will be collected. Everyone Is Welcome.

**B-United Annual Congregational Meeting**

Our Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, March 3rd, with a storm date of Monday, March 4th at 6:30pm. We will highlight all our Committees and Ministries throughout the Worship Service, and then proceed with the Business Meeting to review the Annual Report and hold elections following the service.

**World Day of Prayer**

Join our surrounding church communities on Friday, March 8th for the Ecumenical World Day of Prayer Service at the Bridgewater Baptist Church; 564 Glen Allan Drive at 2:00pm. The service this year has been written by the women of Palestine: "I Beg You…Bear With One Another in Love,” based on Ephesians 4:1-3. This calls us to bear with each other in love, despite all difficulties and oppression. They reflected collectively on this theme from the context of their suffering as Palestinian Christian women. They hope to inspire other women around the world to bear with one another in love during troubled times. Storm date is March 9th at 2:00pm.

**Faith Formation Committee Student Letters**

The Faith Formation Committee and B-United would like to remember our students in post-secondary studies with a letter of encouragement during final exams in April. If you know a student that is in studies whether on-site or by virtual classes, please contact the Church Office with their address no later thanMarch 15th. Student Care Letters are created and coordinated with the generous support of our congregation. If you would like to support this wonderful Outreach; you can always make a monetary donation to “Student Care Outreach” to help cover the cost. Thank you.

***“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 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. 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)**



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