**Be United Communities of Faith**

**Bridgewater United West Side United New West Pine United Caledonia Pastoral Charge St. Andrews-St. Marks United**

**January 7, 2024 First After Epiphany The Baptism of the Lord**

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

**West Side United Student Minister:** *Donna Kelly*

**Audio Visual Technician:** *Evan Rafuse* **Sound Engineer:** *Randall Knox*

**Greeter:** *Marion Demond* **Greeter:** *Karen Townsend*

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

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

Prelude

**\*Hymn:** **# 9 VU – People, Look East**

Scripture Reading: Matthew 2:1-12

Words of Welcome

**Invitation To Worship:**

We come together as people seeking direction.

**May God’s Spirit lead us into the future.**

We come with anticipation at the beginning of this new year,

**holding on to faith and hope for the journey ahead.**

We celebrate the constant love of God,

**which is always surrounding and nurturing us.**

We embrace the gift of Love,

**a light for our journey.**

Let us worship God.

**\*Chorus: B-United**

Lighting of the Christ and Inclusivity Candles

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

**Gracious God, whose holy, healing light shines into the deepest shadows of our lives and world: fill us with your radiance. Calm our fears, and lead us to rejoice in the good news of your amazing love. May the light of your presence fill this place and each of us, and meet our deepest needs. Amen.**

**Hymn: # 381 VU – Spirit of Life**

Your Generosity Matters: Exploring Equity: Flourishing Relations

Announcements

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 your leave.*

*The Offering Plates are not circulated among the congregation*

*during our Service of Worship.*

**Hymn: # 703 VU – In the Bulb There Is a Flower**

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

**God, you give to us all we have and we respond with gratitude and thanks with our gifts. May what we offer sow seeds of hope and love within the ministry we share in this place, in our community and throughout Creation. Bless the gifts we share and the ministry we offer as the followers of Jesus. Amen.**

Learning Together: A Time For All Ages

**The Lord’s Prayer**

**\*Hymn: # 241 VU – Oh, Sing to Our God**

Scripture Reading: Mark 1:4-11

Holy Wisdom. Holy Word.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Hymn: # 2 VU – Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus**

Message

Reflective Meditation

Prayers of the Community

**\*Hymn:** **# 145 MV – Draw the Circle Wide**

Extinguishing The Candles

Commissioning And Benediction

Postlude

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**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**

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

Monetary donations and donations of non-perishable food items are always appreciated throughout the month. For January, there is a request for Canned Fruit, Kraft Dinner, Canned Stew, Rice Krispie Squares and Juice Packs. Thank you.

**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. This wonderful Outreach helps B-United remain current on our Church Community’s concerns. Please contact the Church Office if you feel this Outreach is calling you to serve.

**Why Volunteer?**

Here at B-United, we are always looking for volunteers during our Worship Service as well as on Committees/Ministries of Bridgewater United Church. Taking the first step to see what volunteering is all about, is the toughest part, but in the end, the rewards are endless. Not only do you get to use your own gifts to help others, but you may also build new skills as you go along. Volunteering allows you to meet new people, and build a strong fellowship within your Church Community. Take some time and think about the various volunteer portions of our Worship Services; Greeter, Sound Engineer, Audio Visual Engineer, Scripture Reader, Offering Counter and Sunday School Volunteer. All of these are important to the growth of our church, so think where your talents and gifts can be offered, and speak to our Ministry Team today or reach out to us by email at [info@bridgewaterunited.ca](mailto:info@bridgewaterunited.ca).

**B-United Youth Group**

The B-United Youth Group will be meeting on Friday, January 12th from 6:30pm-8:00pm at Bridgewater United Church. All youth in Grade 5 to Grade 12 are welcome to join us as we create Blessing Bags for Souls Harbour Bridgewater. Souls Harbour is a home for the homeless. It is hope for the hopeless. It is food for the stomach and food for the soul. It is friendship for the lonely. #LoveOneAnother

**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 the 2023 Annual Report. Please be reminded that your report is based on 2023 activities. All reports are to 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.*



**Reverend Hans van Nie**

Hans is a retired United Church minister currently living in Lunenburg. He began his ministry in Nova Scotia during the 1980’s serving as the founding minister of Orchard Valley United Church in New Minas and as a part-time professor of Scripture Studies at the Atlantic School of Theology in Halifax. For the next 30 years, Hans served congregations in Hamilton and Toronto, while also participating in many Regional and General Council activities. Hans is looking forward very much to working with the congregation of Bridgewater United Church in a part-time supply ministry for the next several months. Please contact Reverend Hans by email at [hans@bridgewaterunited.ca](mailto:hans@bridgewaterunited.ca) or through the Private Ministers’ Line at (902) 543-6854.

**A Message from your Envelope Steward**

Your 2024 offering envelopes are in the Narthex and listed in alphabetical order. 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, please contact Tracy; *Envelope Steward* at (902) 543-4833 or [info@bridgewaterunited.ca](mailto:info@bridgewaterunited.ca).

**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 bi-monthly online services. We also have a radio service on the 3rd and 4th Sunday of the month at 11:00am on CKBW (98.1FM).

**Minute for Mindfulness**

*“Use what talent you possess: the woods would be very silent,*

*if no birds sang except those that sang best.”*

*~ Henry Van Dyke*

***“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)**

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