

# FIRST THINGS FIRST

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

### FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, REGINA

#### November 2011

#### MINISTER'S MESSAGE

##### What the Minister Wears

The Collar: Presbyterians have traditionally worn three different types of Clerical Collars. The most common of these is the Collarino. The Collarino is as it sounds a Roman Collar and is essentially a small opening in the shirt that is filled with a small piece of plastic. Around the turn of the century many Presbyterians began to wear the Neckband Collar or “wrap-around” detachable collar that surrounds the entire neck as a way of distinguishing themselves from Roman Catholic Priests. A third and more traditionally Presbyterian way to wear a Collar is to use either of the above but to also attach “Tabs”. Officially referred to as “Bands” or even “Geneva Bands”, Tabs are easy to spot. They are white cloth pieces that hang down from the neck sort of like an untied bowtie folded over itself. In fact that is most likely wear bowties and even ties came from in modern fashion. Originally the Collar and Tabs were worn by Lawyers and Academics. Because John Calvin was both an Academic and a Lawyer a tradition developed around Presbyterian clergy continuing to wear these pieces of clerical garb. Both the Collars and the Tabs generally symbolize the office of preaching. Wearing these is meant to make it clear who is filling the pulpit for the sermon.

The Robe: Like Preaching Tabs, the tradition of wearing a Robe in the Presbyterian Church came to us from the Church of Scotland. Originally this practice developed because the Robe (like the Tabs) was a symbol of academic standing. John Calvin wore a Robe because that was what Lawyers wore. However that is not the end of the story. The Presbyterian Tradition developed on 4 major distinguishing principles (things that made you Presbyterian). One of

these is “Educated Clergy”. John Calvin and his followers differentiated themselves from other Protestants by demanding specific educational requirements of all candidates for ordination. The Presbyterian’s... would be intellectuals. Over the years the Robe has taken on other meanings. Today some openly reject the wearing of Robes feeling that they unnecessarily divide between clergy and laypeople. Others see the Robe as an outdated piece of fashion. Others say that the business suit is the “uniform” of the business person, that a firefighter has a particular attire to differentiate him or her and that a minister too should have a kind of “uniform” even if only to set the minister apart for newcomers to easily identify. Still others say that the Robe covers over the minister and hides him or her; thus taking the attention off the minister and putting it on the Word where it belongs. Truthfully for me, I find the Robe to be a bit awkward. The big sleeves make it impossible to play the guitar. It is hot. It is heavy. It’s easy to trip on and hard to walk up stairs or sit on the steps with the kids. But there is still something striking about it; something special something “holy” in the true sense of the word (otherworldly).

The Stoll: The stoll is a long cloth scarf worn around the neck and over a Robe or simply over a suit. The history of the stoll is entirely lost. Unfortunately no one really knows where this tradition began. However there are two popular theories. One theory says that the Stoll is a symbol of the yoke of Christ that Jesus calls his followers to take upon their shoulders (Matthew 11:29-30). A second theory suggests that the Stoll is a symbol of the “towel” that Christ used when he stooped to wash his disciples’ feet the night of his arrest (John 13:1-20). Interestingly at the time of Jesus a “yoke” was a particular Rabbi’s vein or Rabbinic tradition and the “towel” (λ□ντιον) from John’s gospel was likely much

more akin to what we might call an apron. Anyhow, in both cases the Stoll is thought to symbolize that the person wearing it is a servant.

In the end, the meaning of the clerical garb in the Presbyterian Church in Canada is really up to the individual. There are no set guidelines, no official statements, and no one overarching tradition. Rather, we have a beautiful array of traditions and meanings. The tradition and the symbols mean different things to different people all across the Canada. What do they mean to you?

Rev. Brad Childs

### **CLERK OF SESSION**

The annual meeting of the Synod of Saskatchewan was held in Regina in October. The Rev. Brad Childs was elected moderator of the Synod and Jo Szostak was elected Treasurer. The Rev. Bob Wilson continues as Clerk of Synod. Please pray for the work of the Synod.

There was a Presbytery of Assiniboia visitation to First Church in October and the team has submitted their report. Overall, things are going very well in our congregation and the team was impressed with the positive attitude and the many initiatives being carried out at First. We are very pleased with our new minister, The Rev. Brad Childs. In the words of one congregation member, when asked what was going well at First, her answer was "Everything!"

As winter approaches, things are getting into full swing at First. Thanks to everyone for your contributions! It takes all of us working together to be a success!

Jo Szostak,  
Clerk of Session

### **MUSIC AT FIRST**

The choir sang "How Beautiful", a new anthem, on Reformation Sunday, October 30. Organ music included a setting of "A Mighty Fortress is

our God" and an organ transcription of an anthem "Onward Ye Peoples" by Jean Sibelius.

November 6 will be Communion, an observance of All Saints and Remembrance Sunday. Trumpeter Brent Ghiglione will be playing the Last Post and Reveille.

On November 13, the choir will be singing a first performance of a newly published anthem. Tenor soloist Rodolfo Omolida will be singing and the offertory will be played by Will Ireton, pianist.

November 20 is Christ the King Sunday. The choir will sing "Rejoice the Lord is King"

The first Sunday in Advent is November 28. The choir will be singing two selections that will be performed at the Rotary Carol Festival on Wednesday evening, November 30. The time of our performance will be announced. Watch for us on television, both Wednesday evening and on repeat performances. Piano accompanist for our Rotary Carol Festival performance is Bill Sgrazzutti.

Plans are being made for our Christmas Music Sunday which will include performances by the Senior and Youth Choirs.

Jack Partridge  
Director of Music

### **FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE**

Mark your calendars!!!! The Fellowship Committee is planning the Second Annual Advent Party on December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2011 from 4-7 pm at the church. We will have some Christmas games, carol singing ..... and a lot of fun... followed by a chili supper. So, plan on joining all the other fun loving people at First for this event. Hope to see all of you there.

Sheila Wilson,  
Fellowship Committee

## **STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE**

### **FundScrip Launch**

You can help raise money for the church by doing your shopping using gift cards purchased through the FundScrip program. We have purchased cards for groceries and gas and will have them available for purchase as we launch this program on Sunday, November 6. We will also have them available at the potluck supper.

At the same time, paper order forms will be available so that you can consider what cards you might like. Order forms should be returned with a cheque (made out to First Church) on Sunday, Nov. 13. The ordering cycle will take place weekly. If you're interested in ordering cards, you order them on Sunday. We place the order and the cards arrive by courier during the week and will be available for you on the following Sunday.

In addition to groceries and gas, cards are available for restaurants like Boston Pizza, Earl's, the Keg, Montana's, Red Lobster, East Side Mario's and other retailers like Canadian Tire, Future Shop, Chapters, Best Buy, Home Depot, Mark's Work Warehouse, Rona, Shoppers Drug Mart, Toys R Us, Staples, Zellers and many more!

After Sunday, November 6, order forms will be available in the narthex of the church or from the church office.

Jo Szostak,  
Stewardship Committee

## **STEWARDS BY DESIGN**

The Stewards by Design team (Rev. Brad Childs, Rev. Bob Wilkinson, Donna Wilkinson, Jo Szostak) had an excellent experience in Orillia Oct. 27-30 and are anxious to share what they have learned with the congregation.

- A brief summary:
  - Pre-reading was Kennon Callahan's book *Twelve Keys to an*

*Effective Church*. One key message was the importance of focusing on your strengths and building on those.

- The Rev. Dr. Kennon Callahan was the keynote speaker and, in addition to the material in the book, presented material on givings. The broad themes addressed were expanding your giving family, sources of giving, ways of giving, and thank yous. There were numerous ideas presented, some of which could be initiated immediately.
- The Rev. Herb Gale presented very informative sessions on the various aspects of planned giving.
- We had a half hour meeting with Kennon to discuss our own congregation.
- The team will be meeting soon and discussing ways we would like to recommend that we move forward at First Church.

Jo Szostak,  
Stewards By Design Committee

## **MISSION & OUTREACH**

**FREEDOM FROM FREEZING** It's time to start knitting children's mitts again! Our annual Freedom From Freezing program runs from November until January, in partnership with Kitchener Elementary School. Here's how it works:

If you knit: Start making mittens, and drop them off in the Mitten Bin in the narthex. If you need wool, check the Mitten Bin for donated wool.

If you don't knit: DONATE wool! Drop it off in the Mitten Bin so our knitters can make warm mitts to keep little hands warm this winter.

Who gets the mitts? Kitchener School, an elementary school in north-central Regina. The school principal tells us that the school counts on our mitts every year to help out kids who need

them. They can use every pair we provide - so keep knitting!

New this fall: CARE KITS Many marginalized people in Regina can't afford basic personal care items such as soap, shampoo and toothpaste.

We think First Church folks can help meet this need. We invite you help us make "Care Kits" until Christmas and the Salvation Army will distribute them among their clients.

*What is a Care Kit?* It's a small bag of travel-size care items that can be easily carried by one person. It includes items such as hand soap, toothpaste, small toothbrush, shampoo, facecloth, small comb in a small Ziploc bag or paper lunch bag.

*How can we help?* Bring some of these items to the "CARE KIT BIN" in the narthex between November 5 and December 15. Remember - travel-sized only. Please do not bring mouthwash - it cannot be included in the kits.

We will assemble the kits, decorate the bags, and take them to the Salvation Army before Christmas.

## **REMEMBERING 2011**

By Violet Lochore

A woman walks slowly by the shore  
her body stooped, it seems sore,  
she sees a bench along the way,  
seating a mother with her son at play.

"May I join you?" she asks, "I need a rest.  
I am weary, my health is not the best."

"Please do," the mother kindly said.

"I do not think that we have ever met."

"I used to be a mom long time ago,  
my son and I sat here, his name was Joe  
he played just like your little guy,  
pretending to fly, high in the sky.

He had finished school when the war broke out,  
he joined the army, he was so proud,  
and soon he kissed me a fond good bye,  
wiped my tears and said, 'Mom, don't cry.'

He was so certain of his goal,  
to help others find freedom on the whole  
he landed in the midst of gunfire  
carrying his rifle and heavy attire.

He tried to crawl to a safer place,  
then started to shoot, though into empty space,  
he could not kill a thing or anyone,  
and asked if this is how a war is won.

As guns fell silent, he looked around,  
and heard his comrade's wailing sound,  
facing the death of his friend of many years,  
no longer could he hold his tears.

'Help me, O God,' were the cries he heard.  
One had lost a leg and a lot blood,  
When he passed out Joe called for medical aid,  
helped carry him, it was a sad parade.

They soldiered on and prayed to Thee,  
stepping o'er bodies, listening to last pleas,  
angry, small victories gained they did not enjoy  
because of lives lost, discarded like toys.

They could not resign or just go home,  
out there, each man was on his own,  
decisions to be made, on the spot,  
carry on—or else be shot!

Wherever he could Joe helped save lives,  
wrote letters, I have them in my files,  
I was so happy when he returned,  
with some awards that he had earned.

He had left as a child of seventeen,  
returned an old man, just five years it had been,  
he could never forget what he had seen,  
nor speak of the horror, it was too extreme.

Joe suffers still, and now I care for him,  
but to heal his mind, the chances are slim.  
Nice meeting you and your little guy,  
God bless you and good-bye."

Violet is a regular worshipper at First Church.

## **NOVEMBER EVENTS**

- 6<sup>th</sup> 10:30 am Holy Communion & Worship Service  
Sunday School**
- 8<sup>th</sup> 9:00 am Adult Walk  
10:30 am Bible Study  
Noon Freedom 55ers  
7:00 pm Evening Bible Study  
*"The Flood Revisited"*
- 10<sup>th</sup> 9:00 am Adult Walk  
8:00 pm Choir
- 13<sup>th</sup> 10:30 am Worship Service  
Sunday School**
- 14<sup>th</sup> 7:00 pm Board of Managers
- 15<sup>th</sup> 9:00 am Adult Walk  
10:30 am Bible Study  
Noon Freedom 55ers
- 17<sup>th</sup> 9:00 am Adult Walk  
8:00 pm Choir
- 19<sup>th</sup> 10:00 am Worship Committee Meeting
- 20<sup>th</sup> 10:30 am Worship Service  
Sunday School**
- 22<sup>nd</sup> 9:00 am Adult Walk  
10:30 am Bible Study  
Noon Freedom 55ers
- 24<sup>th</sup> 9:00 am Adult Walk  
8:00 pm Choir
- 27<sup>th</sup> 10:30 am Worship  
Sunday School**
- 29<sup>th</sup> 9:00 am Adult Walk  
10:30 am Bible Study  
Noon Freedom 55ers

\* Rev. Childs will be away on a Study Leave from November 21 - 29th