

FIRST THINGS FIRST

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, REGINA

April 2014

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Messy. Loving. Serving. This thing called church.

It is Sunday morning in Seoul, Korea, and Pastor David Yonggi Cho stands before a gathered crowd of more than a million members to preach "The Healing Power of the Holy Spirit." There is no steeple. This is a massive arena. That same day in rural Alabama at Rock House Holiness Church, a group of 30 – some people come to test their faith through the handling of venomous serpents. Meanwhile the High Kirk of Edinburgh is having a very solemn communion service. Here at the "Mother Church of Presbyterianism" the people sit in lovely green pews beneath the priceless stained glass held within the grey stonework. Yet while the Kirk proclaims the Prince of Peace, the families of Westboro Baptist in Topeka, Kansas, are planning to picket a local soldier's funeral as an act of worship. At sunrise, New Monastics dumpster dive for communal food and pray for AIDS patients; Jay Backer preaches to pimps and prostitutes, and a heavy metal worship service begins in Mexico City. In central B.C., Jae Bong Koo is singing old hymns with his family of four in the living room and praying that their agnostic neighbour will be the first to visit their home church.

All of these gatherings are called "church."

In the Bible people didn't talk about "the church" the way we do. They called themselves "brothers and sisters" (Romans 12:1), "the disciples" (Acts 19:30) or followers of "the Way" (Acts 19:23). Those gathered together in Christ's name are also called "the bride" (John 3:29). Interestingly we were first called "Christians" in Antioch, which was most likely intended as an insult against Jesus followers or

"little Christs." Instead of the church, the Bible speaks of the ekklesia—a term that occurs 115 times in reference to "gatherings" or "an assembly" but never once is used to refer to a physical structure of any kind. One thing is for sure: the "church" is not a building. Oddly enough, though ekklesia is often translated as "church," that same word is also used for a judicial court (Acts 19:38) and to describe an angry, disorganized mob (Acts 19:32). Apparently a "church" isn't just a place where Christians are found; sometimes, it's just a mess of equally messy people.

Like a good Presbyterian, I'm tempted to say: "The church is Christ together with his people called both to worship and to serve him in all of life," and leave it at that (Living Faith 7.1.1). But I can't because that doesn't do it justice. Sometimes church is a million worshippers, other times just two or three. Sometimes its hands are outstretched to help, sometimes quietly folded. Sometimes it is the loving community; sometimes it is the mob.

So what is church? Three things are clear to me. First, like the Holy Spirit, perhaps, it's helpful to understand what it's not. It's not a building. Second, it's a gathering. And third, it's messy. As the old joke goes, "the church would be perfect if not for all these people." Then again, maybe that's just it. Maybe church is so diverse because church is just a gathering of imperfect people desperately trying their best to know and serve the God of scripture and never quite getting it right.

Bradley Childs

Rev. Brad Childs

Editor's note: This article first appeared in the April 2014 issue of the Presbyterian Record.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

The winter months are winding down and, with the days getting longer, we look forward to the month of April and spring.

Keeping this in mind, we are in the midst of the Lenten Season at First Church, the most noticeable evidence of which is the display of the colour purple at the front of the sanctuary as well as the addition of Lenten readings each Sunday by different families in the congregation. A special thanks to all who have participated in this way. Your contribution is most appreciated.

On Easter Sunday, the Church color changes to white and remains that way until Pentecost Sunday, seven weeks after Easter.

Holy Week and Easter being just around the corner we look forward to the special services planned:

- On Palm Sunday, April 13, the children will offer their musical presentation, "Fish Tales".
- April 17 is Maundy Thursday and we will once again have a Pot Luck Supper beginning at 6 PM, followed by Communion in the church gym. Also planned for that evening is a presentation of a traditional "Seder Supper" or, as we understand it, Passover. Jesus would have celebrated this supper on the night he was betrayed. Do plan on coming for this evening of fellowship and worship, and please bring a friend if you like.
- The Good Friday Service is on April 18 at 10:30 am in the sanctuary when we remember Jesus' Passion and the disappointment of the disciples as they think all is lost.
- Easter Sunday, April 20, is a day of celebration when Jesus rose; renewing his disciples' passion for the mission he had prepared them for. We also celebrate with music and joy at the knowledge of eternal life for each one of us.

Our new Music Director, Bill Sgrazzutti, has special music planned for the Easter Sunday Service.

The Worship Committee is pleased to welcome Bill to our ranks and we look forward to his musical contributions to our Worship Service each week.

The Sons of Scotland will attend our Morning Service on Sunday April 27. Pipers will lead the group into the sanctuary. Following the service we will be treated to a taste of Scottish baking and entertainment.

Lectors are still needed for May and June. Marianne Woods would welcome anyone who would like to participate in Worship in this manner. Please speak to her if you would like to help out in this way.

Joyce McKersie,
Worship Committee

CAMP CHRISTOPHER

Dust off the sleeping bag and start looking for all the pieces of your tent. It's camp time again! Yes, Camp Christopher is in full swing for the 2014 season as we look forward to another awesome summer. If you are wondering how you can be involved this year, here are a few different suggestions:

- **Pray!** Camp Christopher is expecting over 250 campers this camping season. Please pray for the committee as it looks for staff; for Matt who will be running the program this summer; for all who go up to help and be part of this ministry; and for the campers that will attend.
- **Go as a camper!** We have programs for all ages: from Day Camp to Canoe Camp, Skills Camp to LIT, Women's Camp and everything in between. **Register now!** Brochures are available in narthex or you can register online at www.campchristopher.ca.

- **Volunteer!** We are *ALWAYS* looking for volunteers at Camp Christopher to lend a hand in the kitchen, with first aid, with maintenance, and with leading Bible study. Pick which week you'd like to come and talk to Donna. Didn't see something you'd be comfortable helping with? Let us know as we can find something else for you! Can't stay for the whole week? Not a problem. Again, just talk to us and we can figure out a schedule that fits for everyone.
- **Join us for our Open House or our Work Week!** This year we've ramped things up a notch, expanding our Work Weekend to an *ENTIRE WEEK* at the end of May (24th -30th). You don't have to volunteer for the whole week, and there are jobs for every skill set, so don't be shy! Not familiar with our site? Come join us on **June 28th** for our Open House. We'll be commissioning our 2014 staff that afternoon, but there will also be a barbecue and an opportunity to check out our site and participate in some of our programming.
- **Come work for us!** As always, Camp Christopher is looking for enthusiastic individuals who are willing to share their gifts with the ministry of camping. We are still seeking counselors, and several program positions have yet to be filled. Application forms are available in the narthex, on the website (www.campchristopher.ca), or you can talk to Donna (306-586-4026).
- **Canadian Tire (CT) Money** - donate your Canadian Tire money - every little bit you give makes a huge difference when combined with other CT donations from around the province!

CHURCH GARAGE SALE

Start cleaning those closets! Spring is here! It's time for First Church's Annual Garage Sale to be held this year on Saturday May 3, 2014 from 10am - 3pm! Bring things you want to sell (pre- priced please!) by Friday May 2, 2014. All proceeds from the sale will go to the Roof Fund! If you require further information please talk to Tracey, Tammy or Donna.

ART FROM THE MORRIS ROOM

Robert Harris 1849 - 1919

So far we've discussed the outstanding art of the Kitson Collection by two Dutch artists, Vermeer and Von Ruisdael; a British artist, John Constable; and a French artist, Millet. Following the service on Easter Sunday we are going to look at the work of a Canadian artist, Robert Harris.

Called "Harmony", it is a simple, but powerful portrait of the artist's wife, Elizabeth, playing the organ. It was painted in 1886 when Harris was 37 and it was purchased by the National Gallery of Canada in 1957.

Perhaps this is a good time to mention the framing of art which can so enhance or detract from a work of art. Larry and Elizabeth spent thousands of dollars framing these reproductions, not the least of which is seen on "Harmony".

Harris was born in Wales in 1849 but came to Canada in 1856 settling in Charlottetown, P.E.I. He started painting at 14, studied with a number of important artists and as a young man traveled extensively to Halifax, Boston, Paris, Rome, Florence, Venice and Montreal.

In 1883 he was commissioned to paint his most famous work, "Gather of Confederation", which unfortunately was destroyed when the Centre Block of the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa caught fire in 1916.

He painted extensively, including powerful portraits of eminent people (Sir John A. MacDonald), beautiful landscapes, and "A Meeting of the School Trustees" which also hung in the National Gallery and appeared on a stamp in 1980.

An important collection of his works is housed at the Confederation Centre of the Arts in Charlottetown.

He died February 27, 1919.

John Macfarlane

APRIL EVENTS

6	10:30 AM	Holy Communion & Sunday School
8	9:00 AM 10:30 AM Noon	Adult Walk Bible Study Freedom 55ers
10	9:00 AM 6:00 PM 7:30 PM	Adult Walk Contemporary Choir Choir
13	10:30 AM	Worship Service: 'Fish Tales' Drama
15	9:00 AM 10:30 AM Noon	Adult Walk Bible Study Freedom 55ers
17	9:00 AM 6:00 PM 7:30 PM	Adult Walk Maundy Thursday Potluck Choir
18	10:30 AM	Good Friday Service
20	10:30 AM	Worship Service & Sunday School
22	9:00 AM 10:30 AM Noon	Adult Walk Bible Study Freedom 55ers
23	7:00 AM	Board of Managers
24	9:00 AM 6:00 PM 7:30 PM	Adult Walk Contemporary Choir Choir
27	10:30 AM	Worship Service & Sunday School
29	9:00 AM 10:30 AM Noon	Adult Walk Bible Study Freedom 55ers