

FIRST THINGS FIRST

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, REGINA

April 2018

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! There was a spirit of joy around First Presbyterian Church as we celebrated the resurrection of Christ last Sunday. Many people in our church community worked hard to make our Holy Week services very special, and I am grateful for all the time, effort, and talent that you invested in our church's ministry in the last few weeks.

Members of the Worship Committee made our worship spaces inviting and appropriate for each service, organized lectors, greeters, and ushers, prepared the table for our Easter Communion, and organized a wonderful potluck supper on Maundy Thursday. Our Music Team and choirs (including the Sunday School children) all made lovely contributions to the liturgies as well.

Thanks also to those who served as lectors, those who led Lenten liturgies and snuffed out candles, those who washed hands and made bread on Maundy Thursday, and to the elders who served Communion on Easter Sunday.

Thanks also to all of you who came to worship with us. You walked with Jesus on the road to Jerusalem, stayed with him through his passion, waited quietly, and celebrated the resurrection with joy and gladness. Your presence, and the presence of your family and friends who joined us on Easter Sunday, made our celebrations very special.

One might think that the season after the great celebration of Easter would be a little bit quieter in the church. But Easter is a season (not a single Sunday) and our celebrations will continue. I hope that you'll keep coming to worship Sunday-by-Sunday to remember and reflect on Jesus' resurrection appearances and the early experiences of the first Christians.

The month of April at First Church will include several special events with details about each one included in this newsletter. Our Annual Meeting is coming up on Sunday, April 15th. We

will welcome members of the Sons of Scotland on Sunday April 22nd for a special "Kirkin' o' the Tartans" service. We are also encouraging everyone to sign up and get their pictures taken for our new church photo directory (April 26-29).

The Mission & Outreach Committee is organizing a speaker series with Dr. Blair Stonechild on Monday evenings April 30, May 7, May 14 at 7:00 pm. These will provide us and the wider community with an opportunity to learn about Indigenous Spirituality. The first Sunday in May is Healing and Reconciliation Sunday and we will have the Rev. Margaret Mullin of the Winnipeg Inner-city Missions as our guest preacher for that service.

As we continue through this Season of Easter, we will meet the Risen Christ in story and song. We'll also meet some of his earliest disciples, hear about their faith and their doubts, and reflect on our own. This Sunday, April 8th the Rev. Henry Friesen will be preaching while I am serving as chaplain at the Clerks' Consultation in Ontario. The Gospel text will be John 20:19-31 and you will meet Thomas, sometimes known as "Doubting Thomas." In preparation for Sunday, I offer you this reflection (from the perspective of Thomas) written by Ruth Burgess of the Iona Community:

Thomas's Story

It was different for me;
maybe it had to be.

All of my life it had been the same,
the same as my twin brother -
the same clothes,
the same first day at school – at the synagogue,
the same birthday – often the same presents.
Even the same name, if people got us mixed up.

Jesus was the first person
who really treated me as an individual.
He knew what was important to me.
He knew what made me, me.

So maybe, on reflection, Jesus had his reasons to meet with the other disciples when I wasn't there.

It was a strange week for me. Everyone was talking about angels and ghosts, about stolen bodies, about journeys and broken bread.

I didn't know what to believe. I needed to see Jesus for myself - and a week later I did.

He stood in front of me naming me – Thomas - inviting me to touch him to make sure for myself that he was flesh and blood.

It was different for me - but maybe it's different for everyone.

Jesus names each one of us, and invites us into his risen life.

Rev. Amanda Currie

KIRKIN' O' THE TARTANS

On Sunday, April 22nd 2018 we will welcome the Sons of Scotland Camp Balmoral (Branch 177) to First Presbyterian Church to worship with our congregation. The occasion is the Scottish service known as the Kirkin' o' the Tartans, and it will be a Sunday not to miss! There will be bagpipes, a special blessing of the tartans, and a time of fellowship after worship including Scottish country dancing.

You are invited to wear a tartan (if you have one) on Sunday, April 22nd. There will be little cloth pieces of tartan given out in the narthex for anyone who would like to participate in the blessing of the tartans.

What is the Kirkin' o' the Tartans? You might be wondering, especially if you don't happen to have a Scottish ancestry.

The History... The ceremony of Kirkin' o' the Tartans is American in origin, though based on

Scottish history and legend. After Bonnie Prince Charlie's Scottish forces were defeated by the English in the Battle of Culloden, 1746, Scotland once again came under British rule. An Act was passed that forbade the bearing of arms and the wearing of kilts or tartans which represented Scottish heritage.

As the Legend Goes... This Act prompted the Scots to carry secretly a piece of their tartan as they went to the Kirk (church). The minister then slipped a blessing (a Kirkin') into the service for the tartans. The prohibition against tartans lasted for nearly 50 years. When at last repealed, the Church of Scotland celebrated with a Service of Family Covenant, at which time the tartan of each family was offered as a covenant expression for the Lord's blessing.

The First Kirkin'... The Saint Andrew's Society of Washington, D.C. held the first Kirkin' during the early years of World War II. The late Dr. Peter Marshall, an eloquent Scot, then Chaplain of the US Senate as well as a pastor, led the service in 1943, choosing "Kirkin' o' the Tartan" for the title of his sermon. He had preached many sermons in support of the British War Relief and of the Scottish Clans Evacuation Plan. As the war continued, the St. Andrew's Society in Washington continued to hold prayer services for the British subjects. These became known as Kirkin's.

The Service... The service is traditional in content, using much of the Church of Scotland's form of worship. Central to its theme is the presentation of various tartans – through flags and the wearing of tartans – for a blessing. Clans were simply a gathering of peoples for their protection and for economic, political, and social support. The Kirkin' is intended to encourage participants to reflect, with thanksgiving, on their own family and ethnic heritage, and to celebrate God's grace poured out for all generations.

SESSION

This is a very busy time in the church and there are several things I'd like to bring to your attention:

- Annual meeting - Plan to be here following worship on April 15 for our annual congregational meeting. Lunch will be provided.
- Pictorial Directory - Be sure to sign up for a time to have your picture taken. We'd like to have everybody in this directory. See the information elsewhere in this newsletter.
- Vacation Bible School - Our dates have been confirmed for this summer. VBS will be held during the week of August 20 - 24 in the mornings. More information will be coming out but please mark your calendars now!
- Election of Elders - We have three nominees for elder this year. Jim Doolittle, Bette Kelly, and Margaret MacDonald have completed a term and are willing to stand for re-election. At the annual meeting we will be voting by secret ballot, following the procedure set out in the Presbyterian Book of Forms. Only members of the congregation may vote. Each member will be provided with a ballot and two envelopes. On the ballot, the voter will check off Yes or No beside each name, then seal the ballot in an unmarked small envelope. That envelope will then be sealed in a larger envelope on which the voter prints their name and signs it. This allows all members to discern and indicate their choice. Ballots will be counted by a small group of elders. The outside envelopes will be used for identification and discarded. Then the ballots will be removed from the unmarked envelopes and tallied. If you are unable to be at the annual meeting you may pick up a ballot at the office and turn it in prior to the meeting.
- Refugee Sponsorship - At the annual meeting last year the congregation agreed to sponsor family members of Nyabani and Elijah Ngor. We have received word that PWS&D has selected our six applicants to fill the quota spots that they have been assigned by Immigration Canada. The next step is to complete all the paperwork required by Immigration Canada. This is very exciting news! It will still take time to go through the process but we are another step along the way!

Jo Szostak
Clerk of Session

Choral Music at First Church

We are blessed to have so many gifted musicians in our congregation who share their talents with us on a regular basis. There are now 3 choral ensembles in our music program – the Choir, the Contemporary Group, and the Chancel Singers. Together, these ensembles provide a variety of music that would otherwise be difficult to achieve with just one choir.

Our music team includes the Rev. Amanda Currie, Rodolfo Omolida (Contemporary Music Arts Coordinator), and Will Ireton and Gabe Omolida (Music Scholars). The music team works with me to ensure all aspects of music worship align with sermon and scripture themes. The music team assists in planning rehearsals and determines when the various ensembles will be singing. The music team also considers feedback from the congregation regarding choral music in order to fine-tune the program.

The Choir, with currently 29 members, is the core voice ensemble in the music program. In alphabetical order the members of the choir are: Gordon Balfour, Al Barnes, Rev. Amanda Currie, Heather Gosselin, Kaye Hunchuk, Emily, Tom and Will Ireton, Bette and Bill Kelly, Margaret Klassen, Bob and Marilyn Macdonald, Margaret MacDonald, Sharon Miller, Graeme Mitchell, John Murray, Ginny Nisbet, Mary Okamura, Gabe, Gigi, Rodolfo and Timo Omolida, Brett Pollard, Joyce Rivers, Bob and Sheila Wilson, and Marianne Woods. The Choir prepares music for worship that may be considered standard repertoire from a variety of music periods, normally in 2-, 3- or 4-part harmony. A recent example is the Russell Nagy composition, **He Is Not Here!**, sung on Easter Sunday. Rehearsals for the Choir are Thursday evenings from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the Sanctuary, from September through late May/early June. Will Ireton and I share responsibilities for conducting the Choir. We welcome anyone - of all ages - interested in singing to consider joining the Choir!

The Contemporary Group grew out of an initiative that began with Rev. Bradley Childs,

Rodolfo Omolida and members of the congregation, to provide an alternative to standard choral repertoire for Sunday worship. There are currently 12 regular members in the Contemporary Group, including Al Barnes, Rev. Amanda Currie, Emily and Will Ireton, Bette Kelly, Sharon Miller, Gabe, Gigi and Rodolfo Omolida, Jo Szostak, and Bob and Sheila Wilson. The Contemporary Group is accompanied by piano and guitar. At present, the repertoire draws largely on compositions available through SongSelect – CCLI, an online source for contemporary worship sheet music and lyrics. Music selections are normally sung in unison or 2-part harmony. A recent example is the piece, **Above All**, by Michael W. Smith, sung by the Contemporary Group on Good Friday. Rehearsals are normally bi-weekly on Thursday evenings, from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. in the Sanctuary, from September through late May/early June, under the leadership of Rodolfo and Gabe Omolida. Everyone interested in singing with the Contemporary Group is welcome!

The Chancel Singers grew out of a desire to provide an alternative for those interested in singing advanced choral repertoire that is not normally sung by the Choir. There are at present 10 members in the Chancel Singers, including Rev. Amanda Currie, Heather Gosselin, Betty Kelly, Graeme Mitchell, John Murray, Ginny Nisbet, Gabe, Gigi and Rodolfo Omolida, and Marianne Woods. The Chancel Singers present music from a variety of periods and music genres, accompanied or acapella, in 4- to 8- part harmony. Recent examples include **Fall Slow Tears** (by Ruth Elaine Schram) sung during Lent, as well as movements from Canadian composer Eleanor Daley's **Requiem**, sung on Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Rehearsals are normally bi-weekly on Thursday evenings, from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. in the Sanctuary, from September through late May/early June, with Will Ireton as conductor. Membership in the Chancel Singers is by invitation. Please contact either Will Ireton or myself for more information.

We are fortunate to have Sheila Wilson and Jo Szostak who encourage and work with our younger musicians from our Church School, preparing special music for Christmas and

Easter celebrations. Their music presentation on Easter Sunday with selections from **Fish Tales** (Kathie Hill and Melody Morris) was outstanding!

In addition to the current members of our choral groups, we are blessed to have other musicians from our congregation and the wider music community who join us from time to time, singing with our ensembles and providing solo pieces as well.

For more information on the choral music program please do not hesitate to contact me.

William (Bill) Sgrazzutti,
Music Director



The Choir, Easter Sunday Service



The Children's Choir, Easter Sunday Service

MISSION & OUTREACH

Indigenous Spirituality: A three-part study series in April & May:

Please mark your calendars for Mondays, April 30, May 7 and May 14 from 7-8:30 pm at the church. Dr. Blair Stonechild, Professor of Indigenous Studies at First Nations University of Canada will lead this study program. Dr. Stonechild is pleased to return and share his knowledge with us. His topics are:

April 30: A History of Indigenous Spirituality

May 7: Principles and Practices of indigenous Spirituality

May 14: Mysticism in Indigenous Spirituality

This study series is open to the general public, so invite your friends along. Come to one of the talks or all three for insightful evenings of learning and discussion.

Healing and Reconciliation Sunday May

6: The Rev. Dr. Margaret Mullin, Presbyterian minister and former Executive Director of Winnipeg Inner City Missions (WICM), will be our guest preacher. Learn about WICM's work in building safe and healthy community in Winnipeg and hear her perspectives on integrating Christian and Indigenous spiritual teachings.

PWSD Appeal: Mission and Outreach gives thanks for the congregation's generosity in supporting our 2018 Appeal. A total of \$2,585 was raised, allowing several children to attend school in a PWSD-supported program.

Planting Trees in Palestine: The Easter In-Memoriam fund-raiser was well-supported again this year. We will be sending \$ 929.65 to support an ecumenical project to replant olive orchards destroyed during violent confrontations in the area. Olive trees are the basic source of livelihood and nutrition across the Mediterranean and are also an ancient symbol of peace.

Camp Christopher Fund-raiser: Watch for announcements later this spring.

Mary Jesse
M&O Convener

YOU OUGHTTA BE IN PICTURES!



Session has decided that it is time for a new Photo Directory since out last one was done in 2011 – and a few of us may have changed slightly since then! Artistic Impressions – a company from Calgary – will be here from April 26 to April 29 to take our photos. Signup sheets are available at the church so that you can choose the times most convenient for you and your family to come and have your photos taken. **You can also call Shirley in the office – Monday's 8:30 - 11am, Wednesday - Friday 8:30am - 3pm to book your appointment.** We are looking for a great turn-out so that our directory can be as complete as possible. Additional photos will be available for purchase if you wish, but there is absolutely no pressure to purchase extra photos. Each family will receive a free full colour copy of the new directory. Mark the dates on your calendar. Hope to see you all in pictures!!!

LOVE ON A PLATE

Love on a Plate is a joint initiative of the Pastoral Care and Fellowship Committees. It is a program that provides meals to those who may need them (e.g. after having surgery, going through a difficult time, etc.). You can be part of this program in one of two ways: (1) by letting us know if you may be in need of a meal or you know someone who could benefit from this assistance; (2) by being part of the team of people who prepare the meals when needed.

“Providing” a meal means making a meal and delivering it to the person who needs it. We have a supply of disposable containers for you to use, instructions and ideas for what could be included in a meal, and you will receive information about any allergies or other dietary needs of the individual.

If you are interested in providing meals for this program, please contact Donna Wilkinson at donnaw@sasktel.net or by phone at 306-586-4026.

If you could use meals for a short period of time, or know someone who would benefit from this program, please contact Rev. Amanda Currie (306-580-8095), or the Convener of the Pastoral

Care Committee, Emily Ireton (306-584-2002), or the Convener of the Fellowship Committee, Sheila Wilson (306-525-3889).

PRAYER SHAWLS

The next Prayer Shawl Gathering will be Friday, April 20th at 2:30 pm at Wintergreene Estates, 4950 Pasqua Street. Please bring whatever you are knitting or crocheting and join others for coffee, conversation, and prayer.

THE EUCHARIST AND CHRISTIAN UNITY:

Our ecumenical agreements on the Eucharist - April 27 & 28

One of the least known achievements of the ecumenical movement is the consensus on the doctrine of the Eucharist (Communion). What is the significance of the agreements reached? What does this mean for interchurch families and ecumenical shared ministries? The Catholic Archdiocese of Regina is offering a spring workshop on April 27 and 28 to explore the ecumenical agreements on the Eucharist. All churches are welcome and no registration is required. A free-will offering will be taken to cover meal expenses. For further information contact Nick Jesson, 306-352-1651 or email jesson@ecumenism.net.

ARCIC agreement on Eucharistic Doctrine:

Dive into the dialogue with Canon Claude Schroeder and Dr. Brett Salkeld as they explore the Anglican-Roman Catholic agreements. **Friday, April 27, at 6pm at St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church**, 3337 15th Ave, Regina. The evening begins with Evensong followed by a light supper. The discussion begins at 7pm.

Ecumenical Convergence on the Eucharist:

Continue the exploration as we break open the bilateral agreements as well as the World Council of Churches' seminal text *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry* - led by Nick Jesson and a range of local Christian speakers. **Saturday, April 28, from 9:30am to 3pm at Christ the King RC Parish**, 3239 Garnet St, Regina. A light lunch will be provided.

ART FROM THE MORRIS ROOM

Today I am going back to discuss two more paintings – “Maid servant Pouring Milk” and “The Lacemaker” -- by the Dutch artist, Jan Vermeer (1632 – 1675) which are part of the Kitson Collection in the Morris Room.

Of the great painters of the past three centuries, none has left so many unanswered questions about himself, his goals, theories and influences as the man who has been aptly called the “Sphinx of Delft”. Few have left such a glowing legacy of genius as did Jan Vermeer, his small body of work approaching true perfection. His art has the ability to attract people with its quietness and hold them with a sense of order.

In “Maid servant Pouring Milk” Vermeer’s light diffuses itself evenly through space, and as it does so it creates its own unerring record, revealing the texture of cloth, bread and wicker. It flows around objects and gives shape to them. The girl is defined by light. Her blue cuffs and pleats of her apron fairly scintillate, her head-dress and white-collar glow while the shadowed folds of her clothing suggest subdued richness. As Vermeer watched the colours of the scene come to life in the light from the window, time stands still in this modest room. It is not just any moment but one chosen, unforgettable moment which life etches in our minds from time to time. There is a great stillness in this masterpiece.

Enclosed within her world, a girl making lace bends to her task with a concentration that must reflect Vermeer’s own attitude toward work. By foreshortening and blurring the foreground objects, he gave this jewel-like canvas (9 1/6 x 8 1/16) a striking sense of intimacy.

If the mystery of Vermeer endures, so does his genius. Serene, luminous, delicately balanced, the poetry of Vermeer’s art is impervious to time. Silent, intense in his light-filled studio, the Master of Delft, moves us still.

John Macfarlane



Maid servant Pouring Milk



The Lacemaker

April EVENTS

8	10:30 AM	Worship Service (Henry Friesen) & Sunday School
10	9:00 AM 10:30 AM noon	Adult Walk Bible Study Freedom 55'ers
12	9:00 AM 9:20 AM 7:00 PM	Adult Walk Riverbend Choir
14	10:00 AM	Worship Committee
15	10:30 AM	Worship Service & Sunday School ANNUAL MEETING
	11:30 AM	
17	9:00 AM 10:30 AM noon	Adult Walk Bible Study Freedom 55'ers
18	7:00 PM	Board of Managers
19	9:00 AM 9:20 AM 7:00 PM	Adult Walk Riverbend Choir
20	2:30 PM	Prayer Shawl Gathering (at Wintergreene)
22	10:30 AM	Worship Service (Kirkin' of the Tartan) & Sunday School
24	9:00 AM 10:30 AM noon	Adult Walk Bible Study Freedom 55'ers
25	9:30 AM	Pastoral Care
26	9:00 AM 9:20 AM 7:00 PM	Adult Walk Riverbend Choir
29	10:30 AM	Worship Service & Sunday School
	11:30 AM	Christian Education
30	7:00 PM	Speakers Series Dr. Blair Stonechild

Happy Easter from the Presbytery of Assiniboia!

Did you know that your congregation is part of the Presbytery of Assiniboia? Presbytery is the body that cares for and oversees all the ministers and congregations within the southern portion of Saskatchewan. It is a group made up of all the ministers within the bounds as well as representative elders from each congregation.

The Presbytery wants to keep in touch with all our congregations and share about what is happening within the church at the Presbytery level. This little note is hopefully the first in a series that you can share in your congregation by putting it in the bulletin, sending it out by email, or otherwise distributing this information.



The Presbytery of Assiniboia met most recently on March 17th within Knox Presbyterian Church in Whitewood. Knox Church provided

wonderful hospitality and attendance at the meeting was excellent! The Rev. Devon Pattemore led us in worship, and since it was still the Season of Lent, she preached about sin (including a story about drinking coffee in hell that we will not soon forget!).

Besides approving the Presbytery's 2017 financial statements and reviewing most of our congregational record books, we also received the good news that Knox Church in Weyburn will be receiving a Sustaining Ministries grant from the AvondBloem Fund in the amount of \$30,000 in 2018-2019. This will assist them with new outreach projects.

Presbyters had the opportunity to cast ballots for the next Moderator of the General Assembly, and the news came out this week that the Rev. Daniel Cho has been elected. Go to the PCC website: www.presbyterian.ca to read about Daniel Cho.

The Presbytery approved in principle a request from the congregation at Kipling to sell the Bekevar Presbyterian Church building, contingent on the submission of a Mission Plan to be approved by Presbytery and the Trustee Board of the PCC. The congregation believes that selling their church building to another growing church with young families will benefit the community and relieve their small congregation of the burden of looking after the building. They intend to continue as a congregation, to worship together in rented space, and continue their mission work in Kipling.

Following up on previous discussions about a possible New Church Development in White City, the Presbytery approved a recommendation to sponsor a Vacation Bible School in White City during the summer of 2018. This will be done with the support of the Synod's VBS Team and volunteers from Regina. We have also become aware of other denominations considering new church work in White City, and we will be participating in a meeting to explore a possible ecumenical approach to church development in that community.

The next meeting of the Presbytery of Assiniboia will be June 16, 2018 at 9:30 am within Norman Kennedy Presbyterian Church in Regina. Presbytery meetings are open meetings, and Presbyterians are welcome to attend, listen, and observe. Please let the Clerk of Presbytery know if you plan to attend so that accommodations for space, food, etc. can be made. The Clerk, Dr. Jo Szostak, can be contacted at <jszostak@accesscomm.ca>

Rev. Amanda Currie
Congregational Life Committee