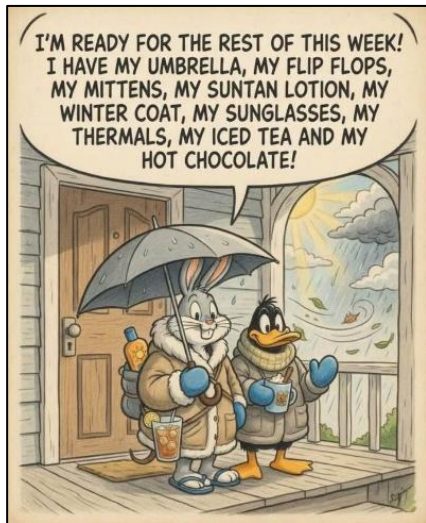


**FIRST THINGS FIRST  
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER  
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, REGINA  
April 2026**

**MINISTER'S MESSAGE**

Spring in Saskatchewan has a sense of humour. One day we're in sunglasses, the next we're in mittens, and sometimes, just to keep us humble, we need both at once. The week of spring weather we experienced after Easter felt perfectly captured by a cartoon that Marcia Kooger shared with me; it expressed our collective experience with humour and truth. The unpredictable weather feels a bit like a living parable: life rarely unfolds in a straight line, yet God meets us in every season, every temperature swing, every unexpected turn.



The season after Easter carries that same playful, hope-filled energy. The world thought the story was over, but God had one more surprise waiting in the empty tomb. Resurrection is God's joyful reminder that nothing, not even death, gets the final word. Like spring weather, God's grace keeps showing up in ways that catch us off guard and make us smile.

As we look around our church family, we see signs of new life everywhere. I am deeply thankful for the ministry we share—from the littlest ones in Sunday School to the most seasoned among our Seniors.

Our children remind us that faith is playful, curious, and full of wonder.

Our youth and young adults bring energy, questions, and courage to grow.

Our adults and seniors offer wisdom, prayer, and steadfast love.

Our volunteers and leaders give generously of their time, creativity, and hearts.

Every lesson taught, every visit made, every hymn sung, every act of kindness—these are glimpses of resurrection life among us. They show that God is working through our whole church community, weaving together generations in love and purpose.

One day in March, someone even traced a heart in the snow Outside the church. A simple but meaningful reminder that love is at the centre of who we are. Every shared meal, every act of service, and every joyful moment in worship reflects the love of God alive in our church community.



As we continue through this season after Easter, may we carry the joy of resurrection with us. May we trust that God is still surprising us, still renewing us, still calling us into life-giving ministry together.

Thanks be to God for all we have done, and for all that is still unfolding in the days ahead.

Rev. Sumi Jung  
Minister of Youth and Families

## SESSION

I hope you had a blessed and joyful Easter weekend! It was a busy time at First, with a Maundy Thursday potluck and Communion, a Good Friday service and an Easter Sunday service that included a dramatic representation of the Easter scripture story.



Hot cross buns were enjoyed following the service on Sunday.

Thank you to the 16 volunteers from First who helped with lunch April 8 at a workshop for Indigenous youth, hosted by the Women of the Dawn. The workshop was designed to help young people from various parts of the province deal with fentanyl. The day also included a feast and round dance. The event was funded by the PCC.

As we head into a couple of weeks of plus temperatures (as Joel says, this was our final winter!) we look forward to spring and summer activities. Please note the following:

- On May 3, following worship, we will hold our annual congregational meeting. Lunch will be provided. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend.
- We will be participating in the Cathedral Village Arts Festival on May 23. See further information in this newsletter.
- Our fundraiser concert, "Singing with the Spirit" will be held at First on Saturday, May 30 at 3:00 pm. Donations are accepted and all proceeds will go to the Joyful Worship fund to assist with the Music Scholar program.

- On Tuesday, June 9, we will have another steak night at Bushwacker Brewpub. This was really well received last year and it's a great congregational event. Tickets are being prepared and will be for sale soon. Tickets are \$45 each.
- The Presbytery of Assiniboia will be holding a congregational event on Saturday, June 20 at Crooked Lake. There will be outdoor worship followed by a potluck lunch and an afternoon at the lake. Watch for more information in May.
- Amanda will be conducting a Memorial Service for Ethel Shuba on Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup>. The details will be shared with the congregation when they are available. She will also be assisting with a Memorial Service for Eric LeRoux on Sunday afternoon, June 7<sup>th</sup>. (Neither of these services will be held at the church.)

Included in this newsletter is the March Synod Mission Focus about the global world hunger crisis, the efforts of PWS&D to help, and Grow Hope Saskatchewan's role in raising money for those efforts.

Also included is the Synod initiative to provide camperships for children and youth to attend camp this summer, so please check it out.

Thank you to Ralph Wood and his son for crafting a new Bible stand for our Communion table.

Congratulations to Aina Ferozdin who will be attending General Assembly in June on behalf of the Presbytery of Assiniboia as a Young Adult Representative (YAR).

Jo Szostak  
Clerk of Session

## **BAPTISM**

On Sunday, March 29, Nyson Kooger and Boga Kooger were baptized by their grandfather, the Rev. Charles Kooger (who just recently became a minister of the The Presbyterian Church in Canada). May God bless the whole family as Nyson and Boga continue to learn to walk with the Lord.



John 3:16 through the art therapy session led by David and Daniel, where they expressed worries and released stress using 딱지 (ddakji), a traditional Korean paper game.

They also stepped into worship by joining the choir and acting in a skit portraying Jesus, those he healed, and the soldiers, bringing the Gospel story to life. A special milestone this month was their participation in serving communion, sharing in the privilege of the Lord's Table with reverence and joy. We are especially grateful to Mary Okumura, whose generous support for youth lunch and activities has helped create a warm, welcoming environment for our young people. Her kindness continues to nourish both body and spirit, and thanks for her continuous care.



We praise God for our youth, whose enthusiasm, creativity, and willingness to serve are a blessing to our entire church community.

## **YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRIES**

**Our youth** have enjoyed a rich and meaningful season in March, growing together through fellowship, creativity, and worship. They began the month with a joyful bowling event, strengthening friendships and welcoming new faces. During our Lent gathering, we explored 'why Easter?!'; what's Jesus all about? John 6:35; why did Jesus have to die? 1 John 3:16; why does it matter that Jesus rose from the dead? John 11:25-26; what does all this mean for me? John 8:36; what do I need to do?

**This Easter season** was full of warmth and joy in our church Families, showing us again what it means to live as one family in Christ. Our Children & Youth Choir helped lead worship with hopeful, bright voices that filled the sanctuary on Easter morning. After the service, the sanctuary became a playful maze as children searched between pews and near the windows for Easter Egg Hunt. Their laughter filled the whole space, and every child went

home with a lovely, sweet Easter goodie bag, thankful for Genalyn (Gigi) Omolida's thoughtful care for our Sunday School families.



Holy Week also brought meaningful moments for all ages. Messy Church gave families a chance to explore faith through creativity and hands-on activities. On Maundy Thursday, we gathered around a potluck table filled with a delicious variety of dishes, shared the Lord's Supper as one family, and practiced gentle hand-washing as a reminder of Christ's call to serve one another with humility and love.



Our life together continued into the local community, as volunteers of all ages helped

prepare and distribute lunch for the Women of the Dawn's one-day conference for Indigenous youth. This group is currently focused on educating Indigenous youth about the dangers of fentanyl and other drugs, as well as promoting well-being through culture and spirituality.

As we move into the season ahead, these memories encourage us to keep walking together in gratitude, generosity, and the hope of the risen Christ.

Rev. Sumi Jung  
Youth and Family Ministry

### **BOARD OF MANAGERS**

Thank you for your generous contributions over the Easter weekend. The offering for Good Friday and Easter Sunday was almost \$10,000. We appreciate your offerings to facilitate the life and mission of First Church!

Recently we upgraded the telephone system at First Church, as we were using phones from at least 30 years ago! We now have a fully digital system running on fibre optic and our Internet has been upgraded to Infinet 150. There is a new telephone in the hallway by the washrooms that is fully functional and available for public use.

Please plan on attending the annual meeting following worship on Sunday, May 3. Annual reports will be printed and available prior to that Sunday so you can read through them. Lunch will be provided by the Fellowship committee.

### **DIRECTIONS TASK FORCE**

The 1080 Architecture Team has been working through the activities of the Feasibility Study. The building assessment has been completed, and we expect a date to be set soon for a gathering with interested members of the congregation and other stakeholders.

## **MISSION & OUTREACH COMMITTEE**

Mission and Outreach is grateful for the generosity of our congregation for two important mission projects. In February you responded with over \$3500 for our Presbyterian World Service Appeal for Gaza relief. The Easter Mission Project raised \$1380 for the Saturday Lunch Program that occurs weekly at First Baptist Church. First Church will be responsible for all groceries and hosting on July 11 and October 31.

Our congregation is taking part in the Cathedral Village Arts Festival Street Fair on Saturday, May 23. We will offer a creative, fun Messy Church event for all ages with crafts, stories, and songs with the theme "Who is our neighbour?". It's a come and go event from 1-4 pm during the street fair which we hope will build community connection with our neighbours. We will also offer a low sensory room for those who would like a quiet space to rest and relax during the Street Fair.

If you can offer an hour of your time that day for set-up, guiding art activities, serving snacks, or just being a good neighbour, please contact Mary Jesse or Sumi Jung. Thanks!

Mary Jesse  
M&O Convener

## **FUNDSCRIP**

Thank you for your continued support of our FundScrip initiative. You can buy gift cards and the church gets a percentage back. It costs you nothing extra. There's a wide range of retailers involved, so you can use gift cards for your regular purchases, and the church benefits. The next order Sunday will be May 3. When you order gift cards they will be available for pickup the following Sunday. We also have gas and grocery cards on hand for purchase.

## **LUNCH BUNCH**

Join the Bunch for Lunch on Tuesdays! We start with Forever in Motion at 11:30, then lunch at 12 and a program at 12:30. Looking ahead, Marianne will be singing for us on March 17.

## **CAMP CHRISTOPHER**

Summer is coming and Camp Christopher is looking for your help.

Applications are open for staff for the summer and volunteers and campers are needed.

Please look at the information provided in the narthex or email Donna at [info@campchristopher.ca](mailto:info@campchristopher.ca).

Donna Wilkinson  
Camp Christopher



## **SARCAN**

**Donations for Youth** The church has set up a "drop 'n go" account so people can make donations for the First Church youth group at SARCAN without having to wait for bottles and cans to be counted. The church's code is **FC1925**. You need this code to make sure that the church gets credit for your donation.

- How to:
1. take donations to SARCAN
  2. enter through the "drop 'n go" door if there is one, or just go inside
  3. enter code FC1925 into computer and follow instructions - the printer will print out labels
  4. attach labels to bag of bottles/cans
  5. put donation in bin marked "drop 'n go" - done!



Please talk with Bette Kelly if you have any questions. If you would like to make arrangements for a pickup, please contact the church office.



**SYNOD MISSION FOCUS**  
**PWS&D and Grow Hope Saskatchewan**

World hunger is a critical crisis affecting 318 million people facing acute food insecurity in 2026, more than double the 2019 figure, with famine confirmed in areas of Gaza and Sudan. Driven by conflict, climate change, and economic instability, over 673 million people go to bed hungry nightly. (UN World Food Programme)



**Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D)** is the development and relief agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. PWS&D has an account at the Canadian Foodgrains Bank that they draw from to provide food assistance during emergencies around the world and to fund programs that support families and communities in their efforts to access more and better food in the long term. Following are the projects PWS&D is currently involved in.

**Kunar, Afghanistan** - A significant earthquake hit Kunar on August 31, 2025, causing significant loss of life and livelihoods and damage to infrastructure, markets, and food supplies.



This compounded an already challenging food security situation. Kunar was already experiencing a protracted crisis due to economic instability, extreme weather, and limited humanitarian access.

**Bamyan Province, Afghanistan** - The food security situation across Afghanistan remains challenging due to the political transition in August 2021 and the impacts of natural disasters like floods, earthquakes, and droughts. In Bamyan province, harsh winters, geographic isolation, challenging topography, recurring droughts and flash floods have led to the death of livestock and the destruction of agricultural lands, homes, and infrastructure.



**Pakistan** - PWS&D and Community World Service Asia (CWSA) are partnering on food assistance and agriculture and livelihoods projects in the Umerkot District, Sindh Province, Pakistan. The region is suffering from an alarming prevalence of food insecurity, exacerbated by recurrent severe droughts, erratic rainfall patterns, and limited access to agricultural resources.

Unprecedented changes in the climate have killed livestock and drastically reduced production of major cash crops like rice, maize, sugarcane, cotton, pulses, and fruit.

In 2023, approximately 5.75 million people, constituting 30% of the rural population, experienced high levels of acute food insecurity. There are alarming rates of malnutrition among vulnerable populations with 42% of children under five years old



suffering from stunting, while 22% are experiencing wasting due to acute malnutrition and 33% of women of reproductive age are experiencing malnutrition.

Project participants will be provided with training on Climate Smart agriculture practices; supporting tree-planting campaigns; providing inputs for income generating activities; training on kitchen gardens, livestock management and value-added products; veterinary services and troughs for animals; and nutrition, health and hygiene training.

**Malawi** – PWS&D is partnering with Churches Action in Relief and Development (CARD) on a food assistance project in the Balaka District of Malawi. Balaka is a region in the south that has been most affected by El-Nino-related droughts in 2023-24, which wilted crops and exacerbated food insecurity.

PWS&D is supporting CARD with a second phase, three-year agriculture and livelihoods project in the Utale Extension Planning Area of Balaka District, Malawi. The area is grappling with high levels of food insecurity primarily due to low agricultural productivity, climate change, and inadequate adaptation capabilities. Recent cyclones, such as Freddy in 2023 and Anna in 2022, have intensified food insecurity by causing significant losses in agricultural production.

The project will promote diversity in crops, livestock, trees, and activities, with a focus on cereal (maize, millet/sorghum), legumes (pigeon peas and cowpeas), and vegetable production under rainfed and small-scale irrigation to enhance their resilience against drought.



**Malawi** – PWS&D is supporting Synod Of Livingstonia Development Department (SoLDEV) with a three-year agriculture and livelihoods project in Lupembe, Malawi. Food insecurity issues in Lupembe have increased as a result of droughts, limited access to inputs as well as markets for the sale of agricultural products, pests, and farming techniques that have resulted in soil infertility. Gender dynamics due to social and cultural norms are also contributing to food insecurity. SoLDEV will work towards improving food production and diversification to meet annual food needs for farmers. The project will also promote and encourage women through training.

**Haiti** – PWS&D is supporting Zamni Lasante/



Partners in Health Haiti with a three-year humanitarian nutrition response project in Haiti. This project seeks to treat acute malnutrition in the communes of Hinche, St. Marc and Boucan-Carré. Acute childhood malnutrition is driven by many factors in Haiti including poor infant and young child feeding practices (IYCF); lack of access to clean water and sanitation; high unemployment; and poverty.

**Guatemala** – PWS&D is supporting Fraternidad de Presbiteriales Mayas with a three-year agriculture and livelihoods project in four municipalities of Quetzaltenango, Guatemala.

Food insecurity issues are persistent in these municipalities due to poor land quality on farms that are already too small. Hurricanes and the Covid-19 pandemic have further exacerbated the situation. Acute and chronic malnutrition increased to over 80% in recent years.



In response to these issues, the partner will work with 20 groups of women to diversify and improve access to and consumption of good quality and nutritious food at all times. They will promote sustainable agricultural techniques, livestock improvement and more sustainable forestry production practices, all using an agroecological approach.

Donations can be sent directly to PWS&D to help in this work. Another source of revenue is from Growing projects.

**Grow Hope Saskatchewan** is an ecumenical project involving six churches/agencies. It involves farmers and urban dwellers working together to grow crops. Farmers donate acres to grow crops and others donate money towards the inputs – seed, fertilizer, fuel, etc. (Up to \$350 per acre). All proceeds go to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank to help address the deepening world hunger crisis. The proceeds from the Synod of Saskatchewan acres go to PWS&D to support its projects.

Donors in the Synod of Saskatchewan sponsored 31 acres for the 2025 crop year, which resulted in crop proceeds of \$20,404. That amount was forwarded to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, where it will help to fund projects of Presbyterian World



Service & Development that are addressing the world hunger crisis. Funds that are used for food crisis projects are matched 4:1 by Global Affairs Canada, so our contribution could grow to \$100,000 in funding!

Altogether in 2025, Grow Hope Saskatchewan raised crop proceeds of over \$300,000 which, when matched by Global Affairs Canada,



would provide \$1.5 million for world hunger projects. So, our initiative is having a tremendous impact on

the plight of hungry people in the world.

The 2026 season of Grow Hope Saskatchewan will be launching in April/May.

Please consider donating acres, if you are a farmer, or helping pay for inputs.

Contact [SynodSaskGrowHope@gmail.com](mailto:SynodSaskGrowHope@gmail.com) for information or to donate (etransfers accepted), or Google Grow Hope Saskatchewan.

Donation information is available on the Grow Hope Saskatchewan website. Thanks for your support!

Jo Szostak  
Congregational and Mission Development  
Coordinator  
Synod of Saskatchewan



## Send Your Child to Camp!



Christian camping has a positive impact on faith formation in children and youth. They have fun and enjoy being in nature with others in a Christian community.

For the summer of 2026, the Synod of Saskatchewan is offering assistance for children/youth to attend camp with the following conditions:

- The program is inclusive – open to all kids to attend any Christian camp (parents can decide which camps are good)
- Preference will be given to first-time campers and distance to travel
- Half of the registration fee up to \$250 will be provided and paid directly to the camp
- Based on Google mileage, 10 cents/km per vehicle will be paid after camp to the parent who drove

Parents can choose the camp they would like their child/young person to attend. You may choose to send them to Camp Christopher, the Synod Presbyterian camp, or to another camp closer to where you live.

Deadline for applications is April 30, 2026.

Send completed application to: Jo Szostak, Mission Committee  
1-2338 Assiniboine Ave E  
Regina, SK S4V 2E9

Camper's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Email \_\_\_\_\_

Name of congregation: \_\_\_\_\_

Street address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town: \_\_\_\_\_ Province: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Camp Choice

Name of Camp Facility \_\_\_\_\_

Camp Session Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Camp: \_\_\_\_\_ Registration Fee: \_\_\_\_\_

Camp contact name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Website: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**April Calendar**

**Apr. 12 10:30 am 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter  
(Sanctuary & Online)**  
 Sunday School  
 11:45 am Coffee Hour (Gym)  
 12:30 pm Christian Ed. Cmt.  
 Meeting (Kennedy  
 Room)

*Rev. Amanda will be on holidays April 6-20.*

Apr. 14 11:30 am Forever-In-Motion  
 (Gym)  
 12:00 pm Lunch Bunch  
 Apr. 15 12:30 pm Bible Study (Zoom)  
 with Rev. Sumi  
 Apr. 16 6:30 pm Band Practice  
 (Sanctuary)  
 7:00 pm Choir (Sanctuary)

**Apr. 19 10:30 am 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter**  
 Sunday School  
 11:45 am Coffee Hour (Gym)

Apr. 21 11:30 am Forever-In-Motion  
 (Gym)  
 12:00 pm Lunch Bunch  
 6:30-8 pm "The Chosen"  
 7:00 pm Board of Managers  
 (Zoom)

Apr. 22 12:30 pm Bible Study (Zoom)  
 Apr. 23 6:30 pm Band Practice  
 (Sanctuary)  
 7:00 pm Choir (Sanctuary)

**Apr. 26 10:30 am 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter**  
 Sunday School  
 11:45 am Coffee Hour (Gym)

Apr. 28 11:30 am Forever-In-Motion  
 (Gym)  
 12:00 pm Lunch Bunch  
 Apr. 29 12:30 pm Bible Study (Zoom)  
 Apr. 30 6:30 pm Band Practice  
 (Sanctuary)  
 7:00 pm Choir (Sanctuary)

