

# FIRST THINGS FIRST

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

### FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, REGINA

#### December 2014

#### MINISTER'S MESSAGE

For the last five years I have daily heard the sounds of screeching tires followed by the inevitable thud of colliding metal. Sirens have been a weekly occurrence. Many a story have I heard about someone I know nearly being rundown by a driver carelessly flying by as pedestrians attempt to cross the road at Albert and 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

As our beloved city continues to grow, congestion gets worse and patience shorter. The busy streets and the delays merely make drivers more aggressive. Our little corner had become a very dangerous place indeed.

And that is where you came in. You helped petition the powers that be. You spoke to our city Councillor, you sat down with him, you contacted others, you spread the word, you voiced concern, you worried and you prayed. And thanks to you, with the help of Shawn Fraser, our little corner seems safe once again.

On October 30, 2014, joined by the Councillor of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ward, we braved the cold and biting wind to dedicate a traffic light to the glory of God. I know, it sounds a tad silly. But it was a victory for us, it meant safety for us, it meant he could be not just listened to by our city but also heard. And so there we stood with red cheeks and stinging ears, out at that corner in our Sunday best. We had a litany of dedication and then we walked together around all four corners and then back to the church for a celebration. For those unable to join us, here are my humble words spoken that day.

#### Litany of Dedication

**Scripture Sentence** Thank you for braving the cold today as we come to celebrate the installation of a new traffic light.

From the Psalms...

May the favour of the Lord our God be on us and establish us for all we do.

Psalm 90:17

#### **Prayers**

Let's pray together...

Ever present God,

You have been with us throughout our days,  
Like a parent to a child,  
You lavish gifts on us.

As we gathered to receive yet another gift,  
We honour you.

While it may seem to many an inconvenience  
And to many others a trivial thing,  
There is no question for us here at First  
Church,

That this light will save lives.

May we be reminded of your kindness,  
To us, and to all creation,

May we be inspired again,  
To cooperate in your generosity  
And ourselves, become gifts of your love to  
the world.

In thanksgiving for all you do and all those  
you have done this through.

And Through Jesus Christ our Lord  
Amen

#### **Presentation of the Gift**

This traffic light we receive very gratefully  
and dedicate it this day to the glory of God.

Thanks be to all that petitioned,  
Thanks be to those who heard our calls for  
help,  
And thanks be to God.  
Amen

*Bradley Childs*

Rev. Brad Childs

## STEWARDSHIP

**Traffic Light Celebration** - Thanks to everyone who participated in the celebration on Nov. 30! Brad shared a prayer of thanksgiving and dedication and then we walked around the intersection in all four directions. We were pleased to have Shawn Fraser, our city councilor, join us. During cake and ice cream, he shared a few words with us. Shawn made two points. Regina is a young city - we have more future ahead of us than we have history behind us. So what are we going to build for the future? This project showed the power of community working together to get something done - so what needs are we going to advocate for in the future? A big thanks to Sheila Wilson for making the traffic light bookmarks that were given to everyone as a memento. Thanks also to Tom and Emily Ireton for arranging the cake and ice cream.

**Fearless Generosity** - During our stewardship educational campaign highlighting "Fearless Generosity", we have partnered with Brightwater Senior Living. Thanks to everyone who participated! In addition to helping with activities at Brightwater we held a worship service there, the choir visited and presented a program, and the children/youth visited with the residents one Saturday afternoon. A group of Brightwater folks have been walking at First Church each Thursday morning. The 55ers brought in items and put together about a dozen "nostalgia kits" --used to stimulate memories of the past -- on various themes such as farming, kitchen, babies, knitting and school days. Although our campaign has ended we will continue to partner with Brightwater when possible.

Jo Szostak  
Stewardship Convenor

## FELLOWSHIP

Everyone is invited to the Advent Party after church on Sunday, December 7. Please join us for lunch, a few games, and some carol singing.

Sheila Wilson  
Fellowship Convenor

## WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Christmas is quickly approaching and there are many special dates for us to remember.

Poinsettias have been ordered and will be displayed in the sanctuary from December 14th through the Christmas season. You may make a financial gift in memory of a loved one or in living tribute to someone this Christmas. As you know, we purchase the plants with donations and the remainder is given to an outreach project of the church. This year's funds will be sent to *Doctors Without Borders Canada* to assist with the Ebola crisis in West Africa.

There will be two Christmas Eve services: a Family/Children service at 4 pm; and a traditional Christmas Eve service at 7 pm. Both services are open to everyone.

We are looking for lectors as we have openings available from January - June 2015. Please contact Marianne Woods if interested.

We wish each and every one of you a truly blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Wendy Prior/Jeannie Macfarlane,  
Worship Committee

## MUSICAL NOTES

**Musical Talents Needed!!!** We are looking for musical talents of all ages! If you sing, or play an instrument, and would like to be a part of our Sunday services we would love to have you participate. Please talk to me after church on any Sunday if you are interested or you may leave a message for me by calling the church office or e-mailing me directly.

([william.sgrazzutti@uregina.ca](mailto:william.sgrazzutti@uregina.ca))

Bill Sgrazzutti,  
Worship Director

## BOARD OF MANAGERS

**2014 Donations** If you wish to make a donation to have a tax receipt issued for the 2014 year, it must be at the church office by 4pm on Wednesday, December 31st.

**2015 Offering Envelopes** are ready for pick up on the tables in the Narthex.

**2015 PWS&D Calendars** will be sold in the gym after church on Sundays. Cost is \$5.00.

Donna Wilkinson  
Board of Managers

### **MISSION & OUTREACH**

We are trying a new outreach this Advent season. 6000 postcards inviting people to attend our Christmas Eve services are being delivered in our neighbourhood over the next week. Please be prepared to welcome newcomers on December 24. There are a few extra cards in the narthex so if you would like to invite a friend to come, please take one or two and share them around your neighbourhood.

Freedom from Freezing continues - thank you for your contributions!

Mary Jesse,  
Mission & Outreach Convenor

### **FUNDSCRIP**

December 7 is the last ordering Sunday for FundScrip prior to Christmas, so plan ahead for Christmas and be prepared to place your orders! We will still have cards for groceries and gas available each week, so you can stock up that way if you prefer. January orders will be processed following January 4 and January 18. Visit the FundScrip table at coffee time and become a part of this great fundraiser!

Jo Szostak

### **PLANNED GIVING**

**Celebrating the Greatest Gift** According to the calendar, Winter does not officially start until December 21<sup>st</sup>, but here in Saskatchewan it has already settled in. Snow banks are building day by day, dreaded ice is forming and early sunsets and long shadows frame our days.

In the heart of this cold and darkness we are preparing for Christmas, one of the most joyous of our Christian celebrations. Although we sometimes get caught up in the secular rituals and traditions with elaborate preparations, extravagant gift giving, food consumption and overcrowded schedules that can leave us feeling exhausted and stressed, there remains a deep longing for, and connection to, the essential meaning of the season -- the celebration of God's most precious gift to us, his only Son.

As we reach out this month to those who are alone, give selflessly to those truly in need, embrace family and friends too often distant in today's busy world, delight in the simple pleasure of meals shared, and join our voices in worship and song, we embody the spirit of Christmas.

Take a moment over the next few weeks to remember the greatest gift – the birth of the baby Jesus. The love behind God's gift to us is beyond comprehension, a true blessing, and yet every time we choose to give from our hearts, we also demonstrate our capacity to love. We wish all of you and your loved ones a joyous and blessed Christmas.

Lisa Ann Wood,  
Planned Giving Committee

### **ADULT WALK**

Adult Walk for First Church continues from 9:00 to 10:00AM Tuesdays and Thursdays. We will break for the Christmas season with the last Adult Walk on Thursday, December 18. We will resume again on January 6.

Adult walk folk had a very positive experience sharing our Thursday walks with folk from Brightwater during the last part of October and November. We are happy to announce that arrangements have been made for the Brightwater walkers to continue to walk in our gym on Thursdays at 10:00AM. First Church walkers and other volunteers will try to be available to assist with Brightwater walkers when possible.

Bob Wilson

### A CHRISTMAS POEM

A little nightingale just born in spring  
Fell out of his nest and broke a wing.  
As it grew older it learned to fly  
But never well, so it could reach the sky  
On top of a tree it sat all evening long  
One could hear the most beautiful song  
Many people listened, it touched their hearts  
As little nightingale sang its parts.

Then one morning, as it awakes  
Winter had come, blessing us with snowflakes  
It tried to shake them off, it tried to unfold  
But the wind was strong, icy and cold  
As for food becoming rare,  
It was hard to find a share  
In greatest despair it struggled along  
And never forgot to sing a song

Now bells were ringing, some soft some loud  
Little nightingale wondered what it's all about  
People were hustling through the busy street  
And didn't hear the song it sang so sweet  
Now its eyes were asking very sad  
Are all the nice people going mad?  
Shivering, anxious and full of fear  
It managed to hop to a window very near

What is this, what do I see?  
I never saw such ornate a tree  
A tree with a golden and silver shine  
Oh how I wish that tree was mine  
All excited it knocked with its little beak  
But the sound was drowned, it was too weak  
Silently it watched the people's odd behavior  
They were praising the Lord their Saviour

As it began to freeze, ready to die  
A child sees it, twinkling an eye  
The window opened, a warm had stretch out  
To put a bird where it could sing and shout  
Hallelujah, I am in heaven with thee  
Once again it sang on top of a tree

Violet Lochore

### DECEMBER EVENTS

<b>7</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>	<b>Holy Communion &amp; Sunday School</b>
	<b>11:30 AM</b>	<b>Advent Party</b>
<b>9</b>	9:00 AM 10:30 AM noon	Adult Walk Bible Study Freedom 55ers
<b>11</b>	9:00 AM 7:30 PM	Adult Walk Choir
<b>14</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>	<b>Worship Service &amp; Sunday School</b>
<b>16</b>	9:00 AM	Adult Walk
<b>18</b>	9:00 AM 7:30 PM	Adult Walk Choir
<b>21</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>	<b>Worship Service &amp; Sunday School</b>
<b>24</b>	4:00 PM 7:00 PM	<b>Family/Children's Christmas Eve Service</b> <b>Traditional Christmas Eve Service</b>
<b>25</b>	Christmas Day - Office Closed	
<b>26</b>	Boxing Day - Office Closed	
<b>28</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>	<b>Worship Service &amp; Sunday School</b>