

# FIRST THINGS FIRST

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

### FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, REGINA

February 2016

#### MINISTER'S MESSAGE

##### **The Pastoral Advocate Position**

Last year the Stewardship Committee applied for funding from the church's Tender in Our Life Together Fund. The Committee wanted to find someone to help people in need locate information, assistance, and organizations in order to help individuals find retirement accommodations, forms for government assistance and many other forms of care.

At last year's Annual General Meeting the congregation agreed to release funds for just such a position. The process was part of our church's first trial run and "transitional year" whereby some of our funds were set up in direct connection with our mission and vision for our future of First Church. Quickly we found bumps along the road. We never really talked through the process of hiring someone. We never determined the formality of hiring for these positions or the guidelines we would use for interviews. In short we learned that our church has no real understanding of Human Relations. And why should we. We don't do a lot of hiring and firing around these parts. We are a church. We were lacking in more than one area. But that's okay. We were trying something new.

A job description was written and rewritten, interviews were conducted, advertisements were sent out, interviews and applications were formalized, people applied and things got moving again.

Well, it has been about a year now since all of this started and many are wondering what has become of the Pastoral Care Advocate position. The answer is: The Session recently determined **not** to staff the position.

Now, sadly, there has been a lot of misunderstanding and a lot of rumours about this decision. Assumptions have been made; people are angry. But there are several things I can promise you. The people that set up interviews

are good people and did their best for the church. Multiple applicants were considered valid prospects. Wonderful and loving volunteers sat on an interview committee and determined what they believed to be best for the congregation they love. And Session came to its conclusion after much deliberation and care.

Whatever you think about the outcome of all of this, as people who were not present for interviews or Session's discussion, please believe this... the congregation's best interests were in mind and the people you elected as elders of your church have attempted to serve you to the best of their ability. If you have further questions, understanding that Session is a "closed court", please contact me.

*Bradley Childs*

Rev. Brad Childs

#### SESSION

**Ministry** - By this time, those of you on our email list will have received a letter from Rev. Brad, indicating that he intends to accept a call from Fairview Presbyterian Church in Vancouver. In part, Brad shared this in his letter:

"I will be leaving sometime in the next few months. Tracy and the kids will follow shortly after. We will be moving to Vancouver where I have accepted a call as the new minister of another Presbyterian congregation. It has not been an easy decision and was come to through a lot of prayer and spiritual discernment. It is an odd feeling, leaving. We love you. You have been wonderful and God has blessed us mightily through you and throughout my ministry here. I am saddened greatly by all of the things I will not get to be here for and all of the great things God still

has in store for you that I won't get to be a part of. We love you all."

God has plans for Brad and plans for First Church. This will be a difficult move for Brad and his family, but responding to God's call is not always an easy thing. It will also be a very difficult time for First Church.

I want to share some information with you about how the process works. The phrases in quotation marks are from the Book of Forms.

1) Brad preached for the call last weekend. The congregation held a meeting and decided to proceed with a call and insert Brad's name in it. That call must now be signed by the members of the congregation (and signed in concurrence by adherents) and then presented to the Presbytery of Westminster.

2) The Presbytery of Westminster may either deal with the call at their regular meeting in early March or call a special meeting to deal with it. Because the call is addressed to a minister currently in another charge, "reasons for translation" are prepared by the congregation and presented to the presbytery by commissioners from the congregation. If the call is sustained, then it will be transmitted to the Presbytery of Assiniboia "with extract minutes of the proceedings, reasons for translation, and a certified copy of the guarantee for the payment of stipend."

3) The Presbytery of Assiniboia then needs to decide when to deal with the call. The next regular meeting of the Presbytery of Assiniboia is March 19. "Commissioners for prosecuting the call are appointed both by the presbytery and the congregation. " At least 10 days before the presbytery meeting at which the call will be addressed, First Church will be cited "to appear in their own interests and show cause if so advised against the translation."  
"If more than two Sundays intervene between the time when the clerk receives a call addressed to a minister belonging to his/her presbytery and the next meeting of the court, the clerk shall send notice that he/she has received the call, to the minister and the clerk of session of the congregation, and take steps to see that a

meeting of the congregation be held to deal with the matter, and furnish them with the reasons for translation."

4) "At the meeting of presbytery at which the call is dealt with, all parties duly cited are expected to appear. They are heard in the following order: first the commissioners from the presbytery, if there be such, and the commissioners from the congregation calling; secondly, the commissioners from the congregation of the minister who is called; thirdly, the commissioners prosecuting the call in reply. The minister is then asked to state his/her mind on the subject; and the presbytery, if it sees fit, puts the call into the hand of the minister, who then declares his/her acceptance of the call, or declines it, or asks time to consider."

The Presbytery is an open court and the congregation of First Church will be invited to attend the meeting when the call is being dealt with.

5) "If the presbytery grants the translation, it dissolves the connection between the minister and his/her congregation, to take effect at a date determined by the presbytery. It instructs the minister called to await the orders of the other presbytery; and transmits to it extracts of procedure. Also with all convenient speed the presbytery causes the congregation, whose minister has been so translated, to be declared vacant and appoints an interim moderator of session."

It is important that this congregation take an active role in this process. Further information will be provided as it becomes available.

Once the pulpit has been declared vacant and an interim moderator appointed, we must make plans to proceed from there. We need to have approval from the Presbytery to begin a search. The Session briefly discussed the potential creation of a search committee. In the past, such a committee has included representatives from the various groups and interest areas in the congregation – ie committees of Session, choir, 55ers, youth. So you can begin to consider who might best serve in this capacity. If you are interested in being involved in the search and you aren't an active member of one of these

groups, we would like to hear from you – please contact any elder on Session and indicate your interest.

May God bless us all as we proceed through this difficult and challenging time.

### **Refugees**

The Session is exploring the possibility of First Church participating in the sponsorship of a refugee family. The need is great and this is an area where we could contribute. Sponsoring a family would only proceed with the approval of the congregation. I'd like to share some information with you so that you can consider this opportunity and provide feedback. We could look at sponsoring a family on our own, or we might partner with other churches. The Session is asking Mission and Outreach to make contacts with other churches and see what the possibilities might be.

Arrangements to sponsor a family are made through Presbyterian World Service and Development (PWS&D). Information on various aspects of this process may be found on the Presbyterian Church in Canada website: <http://presbyterian.ca/pwsd/refugee-sponsorship/>

We would likely participate in what is called the Blended VOR initiative (Visa Office-Referred): *“(This) is a program designed to resettle refugees identified by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and submitted to Canadian visa offices abroad. It is referred to as a “blended” program because it is a cost-sharing arrangement whereby Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and Sponsorship Agreement Holders (or SAHs - The Presbyterian Church in Canada is a SAH) both contribute to financially supporting the refugees. Refugees under this program have already met eligibility and admissibility criteria, making them travel-ready. However, they must be matched with a sponsor before they can travel to Canada. (Citizenship and Immigration Canada -CIC)”*

“Refugees coming under the Blended VOR Program normally arrive within 1–4 months from when a sponsorship is filed - it is quite fast.

**The government provides** income support at provincial welfare rates for the first 6 months after arrival. Costs of language classes are also covered by the government. The refugees qualify for provincial health care and for full Interim Federal Health Program benefits, including vision and hearing care, prescribed medications, and ambulatory devices.

**Sponsors are responsible for:** meeting the refugee(s) upon arrival, securing lodging, and paying start-up costs (furnishings, house wares, and initial clothing). They help them to register for school (if there are children), for language classes, provincial health care and the Interim Federal Health Program, as well as for income support programs (e.g. family benefits) where applicable. The sponsors provide an introduction to public transit and to shopping wisely in Canada, and extend friendship and emotional support. They assume financial support – equivalent to the government's support - for the first month and for the last 5 months of the sponsorship, aiming for financial independence by the end of the 12-month period.

Costs for sponsorship depend on the size of the family. For example, for 1 person, start-up costs are estimated to be \$2800 and 12 months of income support \$9800 (of which the government would pay half.) So the cost to the congregation would be \$7600. For a family of 4, start-up costs would be about \$7000 and 12 months of income support \$20,000 (half paid by government) so the cost to the congregation would be \$17,000.

Please consider this initiative prayerfully and pass on your feedback to any elder.

Jo Szostak  
Clerk of Session

### **BOARD OF MANAGERS**

#### **Annual Congregation Meeting**

Please plan ahead to attend the annual congregational meeting which will be held **Sunday, March 13 after the service.** Lunch will be provided.

## **Providing Accessible Seating in the Sanctuary**

There is a need to increase the available seating in our sanctuary for members of our church family who use wheelchairs and walking aids. It would also be good to have accessible seating available to welcome visitors.

The Board of Managers is proposing to provide accessible seating at the rear of the sanctuary, on the south side. Specifically, we are proposing to remove half of one pew in the second or third row from the back of the sanctuary on the south side of the centre aisle. This will provide a wider row so that wheelchairs can be easily moved into the pew area. It will be the same configuration as we now have at the front of the sanctuary on the north side of the centre aisle.

We welcome any comments or questions about this proposal. Please share your thoughts and views with the following members of the Board of Managers: Keith Prior, Lisa Ann Wood, Gordon Wiles, Rodolfo Omolida, Elizabeth Magee or Jo Szostak. If you prefer to share your comments by email, please email Shirley Durell at [firstpresregina@sasktel.net](mailto:firstpresregina@sasktel.net) and she will forward your email to the Board.

Lisa Ann Wood,  
Board of Managers

## **MISSION & OUTREACH**

Special thanks to our knitters! Yesterday, our second shipment of knitted items was delivered to Kitchener School - 138 mitts, 28 hats, and 20 scarves. The school staff was very appreciative of this practical demonstration of care from our congregation. Freedom From Freezing is now concluded for another winter.

## **PWS&D Appeal: February 7-21**

We are excited to begin our annual appeal for Presbyterian World Service and Development on Sunday. This year's project is Mother and Baby Health in Afghanistan and Malawi. PWSD has been leading a strong program in these two countries to improve health outcomes for new moms and their young children. Funds cover village health education, purchase of bicycle ambulances and maternity supplies for hospitals.

This project is also supported by the Canadian government so our donations are matched and thus go even further! Check out the narthex display for examples and more information. Please consider supporting this project during February. If you are writing a cheque, make it payable to First Presbyterian, and write PWSD in the memo line.

Mary Jesse,  
M&O Convenor

## **BIRTHDAY SUNDAY**

Birthday Sunday will be on February 21 after church. We are looking for 12 cakes so that we can celebrate all our birthdays. There is a sign up sheet at the back of the church if you can help out and supply a cake. The money raised will be used for Canada Youth which is happening this year.

Thank you for your support.

Sheila Wilson  
Fellowship Committee

## **FUNDSCRIP**

Order Sundays for February are February 7 and February 21. We have a number of regular supporters and would like to encourage more members of the congregation to get involved. In 2015, we raised \$1,770 for the church. It doesn't cost you anything extra and you can use the gift cards like cash to buy groceries, gas and other retail items. Stop by the table in the gym after the worship service. Some grocery and gas cards are available to purchase, or you can place an order from numerous different retailers. Thanks for your support!

## **CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER/TREASURER FOR THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA**

If you might be interested, or know of someone who might consider serving in this capacity, or if you would like more information about the position, please contact the Search Committee at [dsutherland980@gmail.com](mailto:dsutherland980@gmail.com) or [thamilton@presbyterian.ca](mailto:thamilton@presbyterian.ca)

Thank you in helping us be as extensive as we can in advertising this position and seeking applicants.

Mr. George Smith, CPA, CA, LPA  
CFO Search Committee Co-Convenor

The Rev. Dr. David Sutherland  
CFO Search Committee Co-Convenor

### **ART FROM THE MORRIS ROOM**

The eighteenth and nineteenth paintings from the Kitson collection are entitled “Grace Before a Meal” and “Return from Market” by the French painter Jean-Baptiste Simeon Chardin (1699-1779).

He was known as the master painter of still life and scenes of domestic tranquility in which he created a hushed and harmonious world of glowing colour. Chardin understood so well the soft diffusion of natural light, the well-turned composure of carefully delimited space, and whose textures are so rich, so varied and which interact so perfectly.

Chardin always painted from nature preferring to develop his compositions by brushing colour directly onto canvas rather than from a sketch.

Unfortunately, still life was regarded as a secondary field commanding low prices so eventually he turned to painting people and he did so brilliantly.

Our paintings illustrate Chardin’s special qualities. The figures are carefully arranged as apples on a table, the atmosphere is stilled by their intense concentration and his careful control of light and harmonic sense of colour.

Silence, calm and order prevail in Chardin’s domestic scenes just as in his still life scenes. He selects those legitimate moments when people naturally come to rest, if only fleetingly. In the first of these works, that moment is when a mother waits for her youngest child to finish saying grace before she serves the meal.

In the other painting, Chardin senses the weary seconds when a young housewife, back from the

market, lays down her bulky round loaves of bread and gathers strength to swing her shopping bag into the cabinet. In every picture, time is arrested and the viewer becomes The Rev. Dr. David Sutherland involved with Chardin’s subject.

He lived to be 80 and in his later life began to quickly work in pastels. Pastels require less preparation than oils and he may have found the medium more relaxing. To the end he was an innovator and experimenter and he brought to pastels the same vitality that characterized his best paintings.

John Macfarlane



Grace Before A Meal



Return from Market

## **FEBRUARY EVENTS**

<b>7</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>	<b>Worship Service &amp; Sunday School</b>
	2:00 PM	Youth
<b>9</b>	9:00 AM	Adult Walk
	10:30 AM	Bible Study
	Noon	Freedom 55ers
<b>11</b>	9:00 AM	Adult Walk
	9:45 AM	Brightwater Walk
<b>14</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>	<b>Worship Service &amp; Sunday School</b>
	2:00 PM	Youth
<b>15</b>	Family Day - Office Closed	
<b>16</b>	9:00 AM	Adult Walk
	10:30 AM	Bible Study
	Noon	Freedom 55ers
<b>17</b>	7:00 PM	Youth: Games Night
<b>18</b>	9:00 AM	Adult Walk
	9:45 AM	Brightwater Walk
<b>21</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>	<b>Worship Service &amp; Sunday School</b>
	2:00 PM	Youth
<b>23</b>	9:00 AM	Adult Walk
	10:30 AM	Bible Study
	Noon	Freedom 55ers
<b>24</b>	7:00 PM	Board of Managers
<b>25</b>	9:00 AM	Adult Walk
	9:45 AM	Brightwater Walk
<b>28</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>	<b>Worship Service &amp; Sunday School</b>
	2:00 PM	Youth