

FIRST THINGS FIRST

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, REGINA

February 2019

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

The Gift of Love

I've been thinking about LOVE a lot lately. This has been partly prompted by the "Love Chapter" (1 Corinthians 13) that came up in the lectionary readings for a Sunday recently. It has also been encouraged by our preparations for the upcoming "Celebration of Love" fine dining event at the church on Sunday evening, February 10. And my focus on Love has been reinforced by the fact that we are coming up to Valentine's Day next week.

So, in thinking about LOVE...I've been pondering the unconditional love God has for each one of us; considering the greatest commandment God has given us, that is to love God and to love our neighbours as ourselves; and I've been giving thanks for the wonderful love I have been blessed to experience in my life.

At this time of the year we would do well to pause and appreciate the gift of love we have received, and to be intentional about showing some love for the people in our lives. Whether we give gifts to our spouses, write Valentines for our friends, or do something special for someone who may be suffering from loneliness or loss, Valentine's Day gives us a little push in the direction of sharing God's love in word and deed, and that in itself is a gift.

For your reflection on the gift of love I offer the section headed "Love" taken from *Living Faith: A Statement of Christian Belief*, which is a contemporary statement of faith of our denomination, The Presbyterian Church in Canada. I particularly like the very last line: "Love foreshadows life in heaven." Think about that whenever you experience the love of a friend, parent, child, partner, neighbour, or stranger. Think about that whenever you decide to show love for someone yourself. Love expressed, enacted, and shared in this life is a

glimpse, a taste, a foreshadowing of life in heaven.

8.3 Love

We bow before the mystery of God's love.
From it came our creation.
By it we are daily nurtured.
Through it we find salvation.
A consuming fire of purity, God's love
is yet warm and gentle compassion.
We respond to the God who is love
by loving in return.

Love means seeking the best for others
and is the mark of a Christian.
Love for God leads to love for others.
We cannot claim to love God,
whom we do not see,
if we hate those about us, whom we do see.
Love of God and of neighbour
fulfils the law of God.

Love is compassion for creation.
Love is the service of others
and is not self-centred.
Love speaks the truth tempered with kindness.
Love grows in knowledge and discernment.
It is the road to Christian maturity, and is
the way of seeing others as God sees them.
Love follows the example of Jesus Christ.

We should also love ourselves.
Self-love is not selfishness.
We love and accept ourselves because
God has already loved and accepted us
in Christ,
providing the foundation of our sense of worth.

Love is the greatest gift in the world
because it will last beyond this world
and is supremely pleasing to our Lord.
Love foreshadows life in heaven.

Rev. Amanda Currie

SESSION

The applications for our Refugee Sponsorship family were submitted in December. Now we wait as the paperwork travels through channels. We anticipate that it may be as long as two years before our family is approved, but we hope it happens sooner than that! Our budget for the project is approximately \$60,000. We received \$3000 prior to the end of 2018 and so far in 2019, we have received \$2440. We circulated pledge cards in the bulletins in January and we have about a dozen pledges in already, totalling approximately \$12,000. If you haven't submitted your pledge card yet, you can drop it in the offering plate or turn it in at the church office. Thank you for your generous contributions!

The Session and Board of Managers held a joint meeting on February 6 to consider the 2019 budget. It will be presented at our annual meeting on April 14 following worship. Lunch will be provided. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend this important event in the life of our church.

Jo Szostak
Clerk of Session

MISSION & OUTREACH



2019 Regina's Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY) walk is a fun, family-friendly fundraiser for the YWCA women's shelter, My Aunt's Place. Our congregation's **Burning Bush** Team welcomes anyone who would like to join us in this 2 km, 5 km or 10 km outdoor walk. We will join other teams at St. Paul's Cathedral on **Saturday, February 23**. The walk starts at 5 pm and concludes with a light meal for teams and volunteers.

To support our Burning Bush Team you can sign the donation sheet (one in Narthex and one near

the coffee station in gym) or make an online donation at cnoy.org/location/regina and select the Burning Bush team. More walkers are welcome; speak with Rev. Amanda or Mary Jesse.

With your help we can help this important community service.

Mary Jesse
M&O Convener

WONDERING WEDNESDAYS



A Common Witness Project of
the Anglican-Roman Catholic
Dialogue of Canada

Did you ever wonder... *"Why belong?"*

"Why is the world the way it is?"

"What is my mission in life?"

"How can we be courageous?"

"Is suffering good for anything?" *"Why believe?"*

"What good is the church?"

"What does it mean to belong to this church?"

"Why pray?"

"Why are there so many religions?"

"Are science and faith in opposition?"

"WILL IT BE OKAY?"

These are the kinds of big questions that come up in the midst of the challenges and joys of living, but we may not have the opportunity to consider, discuss, and explore them with others in community. Well, here is your opportunity!

You are invited to join with others who, like you, sometimes wonder about big questions. We will gather in the Morris Room on the 2nd

Wednesday evening of each month to discuss a couple of questions. We'll be using a video resource called "Did you ever wonder..." from the Canadian Roman Catholic – Anglican Dialogue. Members of the Dialogue have reflected on these types of questions and provided some "small answers to big questions." After watching the short videos together, we will consider their answers as well as our own.

Our first "Wondering Wednesday" begins on Wednesday, February 13th at 7:30 pm in the Morris Room at the church. After that, you can mark your calendar for March 13th, April 10th, and May 8th. Feel free to come whenever you can, and to invite your friends.

Rev. Amanda Currie

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP CLASSES

Are you a new Christian, new to the Presbyterian Church, or new to First Church? Do you have questions about what the church believes or about how we are called to live according to our faith? Have you been in the church for a long time but haven't taken the step of making a personal profession of faith and becoming a member of a congregation?

You are invited to participate in the upcoming series of membership classes at First Church. Whether you are in grade 9 or age 99, you are welcome. Please speak to Rev. Amanda to indicate your interest and ask any questions you may have, and plan to attend the classes on Tuesday evenings during the Season of Lent: They begin on Tuesday, March 12th at 7:30 pm, and continue for five weeks, finishing on Tuesday, April 9th.

Rev. Amanda Currie

THE FIRST CHURCH BOOK CLUB

Read with us! Last summer I thought it would be fun to start a

Summer Book Club with folks from First Church. I chose a couple of books of fiction that looked interesting, and a



group of about ten women gathered at my house in July and August to discuss each book. [Please Note: Men are also welcome. We just haven't had any attend yet!] We had such a good time; sharing food, wine, fellowship, and great conversation, that we decided to continue.

Since then we've been getting together about once a month in the homes of some of our members. We use the Regina Public Library's "Book Club in a Bag" program so we don't have the expense of buying a book each month or the hassle of each of us trying to get a copy from the library. We choose a book from the wide selection available, place it on hold, and pick up a bag full of copies to distribute at each of our gatherings.

Some of the books we've read have been excellent, others less than stellar, but every discussion has been lively and interesting. No matter the topic I always seem to find a connection to raise some questions of faith, and I've left every Book Club meeting feeling enriched and encouraged by the thoughts, experiences, and reflections of the group.

Would you like to join us? You would be most welcome. We typically meet on the 4th Wednesday evening of the month. The next gathering is planned for Wednesday, February 27th at 7:00 pm at Heather Mazurak's house. What are we reading this month? *A Talent for Murder* by Andrew Wilson. It's the real-life mystery surrounding the queen of crime herself: Agatha Christie!

Rev. Amanda Currie

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 2019

It was a very cold and stormy time in Regina to celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity January 20 – 27, 2019. However, with several opportunities for Christians in our city to gather and pray together for justice and unity, we marked the occasion quite well. A few members of First Presbyterian Church attended the "Singing into Unity" service at Westminster United Church on January 20th and others took part in the closing service at Resurrection Roman Catholic Parish on January 27th.

Although I was the lone Presbyterian at the “Beer & Bible” event at O’Hanlon’s Irish Pub on the Friday evening, it was one of the highlights of the week for me. It included about 12-15 Christians from a variety of traditions getting together at the pub to discuss Scripture and this year’s Week of Prayer for Christian Unity theme: “Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue” (Deuteronomy 16:20). We hope that similar gatherings may be organized ecumenically throughout the year!

I have been participating in the Regina Council of Churches since moving to this city, and was recently involved in some of the organizing for the closing worship service. Initially, the preacher was to have been the Anglican Bishop, the Rev. Rob Hardwick, but due to a family emergency he was away that week. Although a number of potential preachers were approached, the task eventually fell to me, and I had the honour of reflecting on the theme and text provided by the Churches of Indonesia.

As you may know, the Churches of one country work together ecumenically each year to provide theme texts, reflections, Bible study materials, and worship resources. This year’s material focused on the call to all Christians and Churches to pursue justice as a first priority. If you are interested in reading my sermon and checking out some photos from the service, you can find them online at <https://archregina.sk.ca/news/2019/01/30/week-prayer-christian-unity-concluding-service-resurrection-parish-regina>



Rev. Amanda Currie and Archbishop Don Bolen

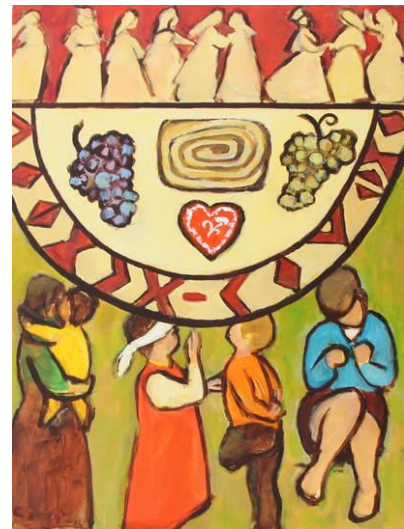
Rev. Amanda Currie

FUNDSCRIP

Order Sundays this month are February 3 and February 17. Cards ordered will be available for pickup the following Sunday. Specials this month include Starbucks - 6% comes back to the church. Stop by the FundScrip table in the gym following worship. Gas and grocery cards are available for purchase as well. Thanks for your support.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Friday, March 1, 2019
2:00 PM



Living Spirit Centre
3018 Doan Drive, Regina, SK

Each year on the first Friday of March, the World Day of Prayer brings Christians together in worship around the world, and in more than 2,000 communities across Canada. Christian women of many traditions come together to observe a common day of prayer. World Day of Prayer began in Canada and the United States in 1922 and is observed in more than 170 countries today.

This year’s worship service has been written by the World Day of Prayer Committee of Slovenia. The theme is “Come ~ Everything is Ready!” Everyone is invited to this ecumenical gathering for prayer, fellowship and refreshment.

For more information, please contact the coordinator, Deacon Rita Brann, St. Philip Anglican Church, (306) 757-3173.

Elizabeth Magee

FEBRUARY EVENTS

- 10 10:30 AM Worship & Sunday School**
5:30 PM "Celebration of Love" dinner
(This is a sold-out event. Thanks for your support of our refugee sponsorship!!)
- 12 9:00 AM Adult Walk
10:30 AM Bible Study
Noon Freedom 55'ers
6:00 PM Youth Group
- 13 9:45 AM Riverbend Walk
7:30 PM Wondering Wednesday
- 14 9:00 AM Adult Walk
7:00 PM Choir
- 17 10:30 AM Worship & Sunday School**
- 18 Family Day – Office closed
- 19 9:00 AM Adult Walk
10:30 AM Bible Study
Noon Freedom 55'ers
- 20 9:45 AM Riverbend Walk
7:00 PM Board of Managers
- 21 9:00 AM Adult Walk
7:00 PM Choir
- 23 10:00 AM Worship Committee
5:00 PM Coldest Night of the Year
Walk
- 24 10:30 AM Worship & Sunday School**
- 26 9:00 AM Adult Walk
10:30 AM Bible Study
Noon Freedom 55'ers
6:00 PM Youth Group
- 27 9:45 AM Riverbend Walk
7:00 PM Book Club
@ Heather Mazurak's
- 28 9:00 AM Adult Walk
7:00 PM Choir