

FIRST THINGS FIRST

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, REGINA

January 2015

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Nationally there is a lot going on in the Presbyterian Church in Canada. If you read the *Presbyterian Record* (and hey why wouldn't you, your minister has been writing for the magazine for 9 years now – and he is soooo clever) you may know most of this already. But many are probably not aware of all that's been going on. So here's the news. .

We've given laity, in certain cases, the authority to administer the Lord's Supper. I can now lead a communion service by skype for a congregation 1,000km away if I want. We're considering doing away with some of our Synods. As a denomination we've begun talking about our "official" stance on physician-assisted death. Our pension fund is struggling and a lot of older churches are closing. At the same time, Presbyterians are for the first time in a long while putting their money into planting new congregations and doing a lot of investigating of different ways of "doing church". We've talked about selling our "headquarters" at 50 Wynford Dr., in Toronto and about other ways to better use your money. There is a lot going on. But one topic has clearly overshadowed the rest – Human Sexuality.

If you didn't know, during the summer of 2014 an anonymous open letter appeared online and later on the PCC Facebook page and then later still expanded to its own webpage. It included an endorsement that you may sign. The letter was a call for "full inclusion of Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Queer" people in all life and manner of the church. Much debate erupted. Some people even got nasty. The page was taken down. Then it came back. More debate ensued.

By the time of the 2015 General Assembly, it turned out that two of the people who had signed the open letter were being presented to Assembly for appointment to the Committee on

Church Doctrine (that's the one I'm on) which was soon to be focused the issue of Human Sexuality. To many, it appeared this was an attempt to "stack the deck". A third name was also included. And that's when a major debate got really heated. See, the third name was that of the Presbyterian Church in Canada's first openly gay minister. He had "come out" only recently; though he had not exactly been in hiding. His Presbytery (Edmonton Lakeland) chose not to remove him, though that was far from unanimous. At the Assembly there was a backlash and more discussion. It appeared the *other side* attempted to retaliate and "even the deck out" with the addition of a fourth name. I thought the whole thing was a mess and that people on both *sides* were acting poorly. It all seemed to me to be very... political. Others saw it differently. Some found it civil. Procedures were invoked. The assembly halted and then restarted. Someone "came out" on the floor of the assembly. Many passionate voices bravely spoke. Then a vote was called.

At the same Assembly a number of overtures were brought to the court. Some called for further study. Some called for a vote on "full inclusion" while others asked the Court to reaffirm its previous statement (1994) on Human Sexuality. Small groups discussed predetermined questions and attempted to understand the diversity of opinions. People struggled.

In the end all three names (and including the later addition) were added to the national Committee on Church Doctrine. The issue of Human Sexuality was handed over to the Life and Mission agency along with the Committee on Church Doctrine to produce a discussion guide (with more to follow). The initial Study Guide: *Body, Mind and Soul* was published and put online (which also did not happen without controversy). Sessions, congregations, Presbyteries, Synods and individuals are asked

to read, think and pray about the information it provides and to lead discussions together.

Our larger church body is doing a lot of work. We are a church somewhat divided. We are, if being honest with ourselves, in a time of controversy. But we are trying to be of "one body" and to understand and respect each other. As a result, everyone in the church is urged to participate and let their voices be heard. The more information it has the better our national church will understand our views, and the sooner they understand the better. While there will be plenty of time for us to express our various thoughts, some deadlines are fast approaching. As a result the Session of First Presbyterian Church will be working through this discussion in the coming month. We will also be setting up several different evenings for any and all interested parties in the congregation to come and work through *Body, Mind and Soul* together at the church.

In the Narthex you will find a signup sheet. We don't know exactly when we will begin these discussion nights but here is what we do know:

- We would like to get a general idea of who might be interested in joining the discussion
- There would probably be about 8 sessions in total
- We would attempt to do 1 session per week
- Although we would love for you to come to all of these evenings, they will be set up in a way that makes it possible for you to come to one and miss another and not be lost if you chose come back to a later one
- And lastly we are all going to find a way to respect each other and stay "one body" in the words of the Apostle Paul, "so much as it depends upon us".

Bradley Childs

Rev. Brad Childs

MISSION & OUTREACH

February PWSD Appeal:

Each year First Church supports an international development project. In 2016 we are focusing on

mother and baby health in Malawi and Afghanistan. These two countries have very high mortality rates for new mothers and their children. Presbyterian World Service and Development has been working for several years to make a difference through community education, medical training and supplies, and village "safe motherhood" committees. Our donations will be used to provide bicycle ambulances, medical supplies for labour and delivery centres, and training for village birth attendants. Funds donated to this project are matched 3:1 by the Canadian government. The Saskatchewan Government has also given funds to this project. Our PWSD appeal begins on February 7 with PWSD Sunday, and concludes on February 21. Please make cheques payable to First Presbyterian Church, with PWSD in the memo line.

Christmas In Memoriam gifts: First Church folks were very generous with Christmas offerings for Syrian refugees. \$2,535 was sent to PWSD in December, and funds will be used to provide food, shelter and psychological support for those living in refugee camps in Lebanon and Jordan. These funds were matched by the Canadian government.

Freedom from Freezing: A warm and heartfelt THANK YOU to all of our dedicated knitters. This project wraps up at the end of January with our final shipment to Kitchener School.

Mary Jesse,
M&O Convenor

FUNDSCRIP

We have been participating in FundScrip for just over 4 years and in that time we have made \$8,738 for First Church! (We've actually earned over \$10,000 but paid about \$1300 in shipping charges.) It doesn't cost anything for you to contribute to this success. If you buy a gift card, it's as good as cash and you pay \$50 for a \$50 gift card. Use them to buy groceries, gas, or to shop at dozens of different retailers. When you buy a card, the church gets a % rebate - anywhere from 2% to 10%. Grocery cards earn 3%. If you spend \$200 a month on groceries, that means that the church would earn \$72 a year - if 100 people did that, we would earn

\$7200! If you used cards for gas and other household purchases as well, the possibilities are mind boggling! To save on shipping charges, we only place orders on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month. Our next order Sundays are Jan. 17 and Feb. 3. Orders placed are available the next Sunday. Stop by the FundScrip table in the gym after church. Thanks for your continued support!

LAY EDUCATION

Have you ever wondered how you might deepen and broaden the understanding of your faith? The Ewart Centre for Lay education is offering two on line programs this winter - Introduction to the New Testament and Pastoral Care: Loving God's People. Each course is 6 weeks long. There are no educational prerequisites and no academic credits given. Take them for interest and enrichment only. To register go to <https://www.netdirectories.com/~knox/oler2.cgi?1167>

A PIANO RENDITION OF PURPOSE & GRATITUDE

by Gabriell Omolida

SAVE THE DATE!

January 24, 2016

7:00 PM at First Presbyterian Church

Everyone is welcome!

A fundraising campaign for Guatemala Mission

Trip on March 22- April 1, 2016

Joint project by Regina Christian School & Impact Ministries.

With guest performers:

Rodolfo Omolida, Jr.

Mavelyn Herrera-Bondoc

Free will offering will be collected.

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

Each year many Christian churches observe the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 18th through to the 25th of the month. This year the Regina Council of Churches is again having a

worship service to celebrate our unity in Jesus Christ our Saviour. The theme of the WPCU for 2016 is "Called to proclaim the mighty acts of God", based on 1 Peter 2:9, and the liturgy has been prepared by Christians of Latvia. The service is being hosted by the three congregations of Living Spirit Centre, 3018 Doan Drive, at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, January 24. You are invited to attend, or to send representatives of your congregation.

Rev. Charles Kooger

Regina Council of Churches, Convenor

ART FROM THE MORRIS ROOM

Today I'm going to discuss the seventeenth painting from the Kitson collection by William Hogarth, an English artist who lived from 1699 - 1764. The painting is called "The Shrimp Girl". It was completed between 1740 and 1745 and resides in the National Gallery of London.

The painting depicts a woman selling shellfish on the streets of London - typically a job for the wives and daughters of fishmongers who owned stalls in markets such as Billingsgate. The subject balances a large basket on her head, bearing shrimps and mussels together with a half-pint pewter pot as a measure. The size of the painting suggests that it was intended as a portrait rather than a sketch for a larger work. It is not strictly finished and was still in Hogarth's estate after his death. His widow, June, was said to have told visitors "They say he could not paint flesh. There is flesh and blood for you."

In this relatively late work, Hogarth experimented with a loose, almost impressionistic style, its subject resembling the prints of hawkers and traders in Hogarth's day.

Hogarth himself aspired to be a "historical painter" but found his fame, fortune and subject matter in England's lively present. He attacked the hypocrisies of society with scathing satirical allegories and he invented his own picture "dramas" of people caught up in the turbulence of London's high and low life.

A superb painter, engraver and talented writer, Hogarth's common touch, crusading zeal, ribald wit and themes of moral uplift sold countless

numbers of his prints. Relying on the facility of his brush, Hogarth usually painted a scene first then made an engraving of it to supply the prints that invariably became best sellers. "Gin Lane", "Beer Street" and "The Fates of Good and Bad Boys" or the Rakes Progress are among his most popular prints.

John Macfarlane



JANUARY EVENTS

10	10:30 AM 2:00 PM	Worship Service & Sunday School Youth
12	9:00 AM 10:30 AM Noon	Adult Walk Bible Study Freedom 55ers
14	9:00 AM 9:45 AM	Adult Walk Brightwater Walk
17	10:30 AM 2:00 PM	Worship Service & Sunday School Youth
19	9:00 AM 10:30 AM Noon	Adult Walk Bible Study Freedom 55ers
21	9:00 AM 9:45 AM	Adult Walk Brightwater Walk
23	10:00 AM	Worship Committee
24	10:30 AM 2:00 PM	Worship Service & Sunday School Youth
26	9:00 AM 10:30 AM Noon	Adult Walk Bible Study Freedom 55ers
28	9:00 AM 9:45 AM	Adult Walk Brightwater Walk
31	10:30 AM 2:00 PM	Worship Service & Sunday School Youth