

FIRST THINGS FIRST

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, REGINA

June 2013

JACK PARTRIDGE

On Tuesday, June 4th our church's long time Music and Choir Director, organist and friend Jack Partridge died very unexpectedly at the age of 71.

As I said on the Sunday following Jack's memorial service, "Jack was a hard headed musical genius that loved joking around in the office, loved eating out, loved the organ, loved his choir and loved this church. His devotion, experience, leadership and knowledge gifted this church with a care and continuity rarely found in this world, not easily matched and quite simply irreplaceable. Of course our prayers go out to John and Jack's loved ones as he will be greatly missed.

Throughout the next few months this church will be faced with the difficult task of trying to determine how we might move forward with our musical program. While we do not presently know exactly what that means we do know that things will never be the same. We cannot replace the irreplaceable - all we can do is attempt to plant something new beneath that great shadow, and what we can do is promise one another that we will nurture what is planted to the best of our abilities.

Today begins a new chapter in the worship at First Presbyterian, a bumpy road lies ahead, there will be challenges in our story to come, but we cannot help it, the page has already been turned for us."

We will never be quite the same again. That is how it is with loss. Likewise our music will never be quite the same either. That's how it is with challenges and change. But we are a strong people. And although we will not forget we must go on.

Rev. Brad Childs

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Many years ago if a Presbyterian wished to take Communion that person would have to see their elder prior to a quarterly offering for a time of confession and reflection. If you did this you would be given a token which you would present to your elder at the narthex of the church before entering the sanctuary on a Communion Sunday. If you didn't have one, you would be expected to remain in the narthex for the duration of the service and be excluded from receiving Communion. As an added measure, the elders would gather around the Communion Table to assist the minister in serving the elements – a practice that was called "fencing the table". In this way, if someone snuck out of the narthex and attempted to take Communion without authorization, their elder would be there to deny them. As a result, most Presbyterian churches developed a practice of having only ordained elders distribute the elements at the Lord's Supper. But things have changed a bit.

No longer do we offer Communion tokens. No longer do we force people to stand in the narthex. No longer do we "fence the table", and no longer is it considered necessary for only elders of the church to assist the minister in distributing the elements. Officially speaking, our Church has moved on (both nationally and here at First). Specifically our Session passed a motion allowing for greater inclusion and wider participation in our Communion services. As a result, we might have weeks where ordained elders serve the Lord's Supper. We might have weeks where our kids and young people are encouraged to serve and we might just have a week when we ask if you would like to participate as well. It may not always look the same up at the front of the church on Communion Sunday but that's for good reason. We recognize that

we, all of us, are guests at God's table, and we are all servants to the great servant. We should all have a chance to serve.

Rev. Brad Childs

SESSION

This is a very difficult time as we mourn the loss of Jack Partridge. He will be deeply missed by this congregation. The Session has decided that we will make interim arrangements from now until Thanksgiving. At the September Session meeting we will begin to discuss how we want to move forward in a more permanent way. We will have a better sense then of what the possibilities are and what would work best for the congregation.

Jo Szostak
Clerk of Session

BOARD OF MANAGERS

After many consultations with roofing individuals, the Board of Managers has come up with a plan to deal with the roof issues we are having. Here is the plan of action for **this summer**:

- Pointing of Brick - south side of church (Completed last week)
- Eaves troughs - install heat tape to minimize ice damming; install covers on gutters to greatly reduce plugging with leaves and garbage,
- Windows - calked around the outside of the church
- Roof - replace two small flat roof areas on sanctuary; repair roof in stairwell area between sanctuary and gymnasium and where the two buildings join

In 2016 – replace roof over the offices and gymnasium.

In 2026 – replace sanctuary roof as part of the celebrations for the 100th anniversary of First Presbyterian Church.

Summer office hours for July and August will be as follows: Tuesday - Friday 9am -1pm.

Donna Wilkinson
Board of Managers

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

First Presbyterian Youth group will be taking a break for the summer and will resume activities in the fall.

Have a safe and relaxing summer!

Joel Richter
Youth Worker

MISSION & OUTREACH

For the third year, First Presbyterian had a booth at the Cathedral Arts Festival Street Fair on May 25. We provided information on a PWSD mosquito net project in Malawi and fairgoers contributed \$309.25. Many stopped by to play with our giant bubble wands too. Thanks to volunteers, especially the youth group and the Rev. Childs who brought along his guitar.

Thank you to the congregation for your enthusiastic response to the Camp Christopher T-Shirt appeal. \$1140 was raised for Camp T-Shirts and soon campers will be proudly wearing them!

Mary Jesse
Mission & Outreach Convenor

RAISE THE ROOFS

Thank you to everyone for your participation in this initiative! We had many creative activities and a lot of successful fundraising. The total raised by this project was \$5,727. As indicated, half of that amount will go into our own roof fund and the other half; \$2,863.50 will be donated to Knox, Weyburn to assist with the replacement of their roof. Thank you for your generous contributions!

Jo Szostak

PLANNED GIVING AT FIRST CHURCH

The Foundations of Planned Giving

What is the scriptural foundation, or theological framework for planned giving? Although planned giving is not specifically referenced in any biblical teachings, there are numerous passages that provide guidance and are relevant in understanding the basis for planned giving as an opportunity for a wide variety of individuals to enrich their spiritual discipleship and also provide a lasting contribution to the life and work of our church.

Perhaps the simplest place to begin is with acknowledgement of the many biblical passages that depict God as a giving Being. The clearest example of all is the passage known by every child who grew up in the church, which begins: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son . . .” (John 3:16). This is the guideline we have before us as we attempt to live our lives “in a godly fashion.”

Jesus also provides instructions in the New Testament on managing the resources God provides. The parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30) is most directly relevant to planned giving. The fearful one who buried the asset that had been provided to him was scoffed, reprimanded and condemned to the “outer darkness.” The others who managed well that which was provided were rewarded. They used what had been provided, they grew it, and they returned it with glad and faithful hearts to the one who had provided it.

Another example is when Paul wrote Timothy, whom he called his “loyal child in the faith” he urged the younger man to command those who are rich “to set their hopes on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.” Paul goes further to declare that that “they are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life” (1 Timothy 6:17-19).

The words of Psalm 100 are also relevant in understanding the impact and power of planned giving:

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

Worship the LORD with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.

Know that the LORD is God.

It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;

give thanks to him and praise his name.

For the LORD is good and his love endures
forever; his faithfulness continues through all
generations.

Not only does this passage remind us that God is the origin of all, it also shows the importance of responsive praise and worship and the steadfastness of God. The words also emphasize thanksgiving and deep and abiding gratitude. Humble gratitude invites us to honour God through the gifts that God has given us for the good of this generation and those to come.

These are just a few examples of biblical references to giving. It is vital that First Church’s planned giving program be solidly grounded in biblical understanding and a theological framework. This will help First Church to ensure that our planned giving program brings deep personal satisfaction to the lives of people in our church community while enhancing the financial strength of our congregation so that we can fulfill our mission to be joyful in our worship, tender in our life together, and daring in our outreach.

*Adapted by Lisa Ann Wood from the book
Creative Giving—Understanding Planned Giving
and Endowments in Church by Michael Reeves,
Rob Fairly and Sanford Coon*

THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone for your outpouring of caring and support I received on the recent death of my Mom. I really appreciate all the cards and messages as it has been a very difficult time. I'll be going back to the coast later in June for a memorial service and burial of both my parents' ashes. Please continue to pray for my family throughout this time. Thank you!

Jo Szostak

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - CANADIAN MINISTRIES

Dear First Presbyterian Church,

Greetings from Canadian Ministries of the Presbyterian Church in Canada! We thank you for your gift of \$451.07 that you donated to the 'Let the Children Come to Me' project in the Cariboo Ministry.

Much work is being done with the children in the First Nations community of Nazko. A Bible class takes place weekly on the Nazko reserve, offering games, healthy snacks, crafts, Bible stories, praise songs and prayer in a way that also celebrates and honours the children's Carrier culture. As you can see below, this generous amount will go far in this project:

- \$300.00 covers the cost for one week of Vacation Bible School
- \$25.00 buys pizza and juice for the Teen Girl's Talking Circle
- \$25.00 purchases snacks and supplies for one week of Bible Class
- \$10.00 goes where needed most

Please continue to pray that the spiritual growth will continue for our neighbours in the Cariboo, and that God will bless the missionaries in their work there. Together we are working on a common mission to follow Christ in love and service. Let us continue to work together to make Christ's message come alive.

With warm regards and wishing you all at First God's rich blessings!

Sheilah Alyea, Secretary
Canadian Ministries

The Presbyterian Church in Canada

This was money raised through the "Flowers in the Sanctuary - Easter Lilies".

EDITORIAL NOTE

The next issue of *First Things First* will appear in September. We close for the summer this year in sadness as we mourn the sudden death of our beloved Music Director, Jack Partridge. It was just a few Sundays ago that we celebrated his

45th year as organist and choral director at First Church. Congregants and friends along with choir members past and present all came together following the morning service that day to honour Jack's outstanding service to the worship of God through sacred music and to express to him our heartfelt thanks. As usual, Jack was in fine form on the occasion and no doubt looking forward to many more years of doing what he excelled at and what he most loved to do.

Unapologetically, Jack set and maintained high standards for the performance of religious music, both choral and instrumental; and all those worshipping at First over the years have been the beneficiaries of this unfailing commitment to excellence. Jack's knowledge of church music was as deep as it was broad. From Prelude to Postlude the meticulous preparation and care he gave to the music component of each Sunday service was palpable. Because of this, and of his keen "sense of occasion" -- nowhere more evident than in his selections of choral and instrumental works beautifully attuned to the different seasons of the church year -- our worship services were immeasurably enhanced.

Jack took enormous pride in the choir and its accomplishments, and justly so. He nurtured the talents of its members, giving them encouragement and scope to perform works that were at times challenging, new, or different, yet always rewarding; and they, in turn, responded in full measure with loyalty, devotion, and with gratitude for the experience of performing under his leadership week in and week out.

It somehow seems inadequate to say that Jack will be sorely missed, that his absence, a void not easily to be filled. Yet this is all too plainly and painfully true. We have indeed been richly blessed by Jack's ministry of music so ably and lovingly offered for over four decades.

May he Rest in Peace.

Doug Stewart
Editor

CAMP CHRISTOPHER

LADIES! This one is for you! “Women’s Camp” will take place September 6 - 8, 2013. The theme will be ‘Sister, Let Me Be Your Servant’ {Ministry of Presence}. Join us for a weekend of fellowship, fun, food and friendship building!

JUNE EVENTS

16	10:30 am	Worship Service
23	10:30 am	Worship Service
26	7:00 pm	Board of Managers
30	10:30 am	Worship Service