

# FIRST THINGS FIRST

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

### FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, REGINA

November 2013

#### **SESSION**

Once again, lots of exciting plans are developing for First Church this year!

- On November 23, the Grey Cup Parade will travel along Albert St. passing in front of First Church. We are opening our doors for the use of washrooms and we will be providing free coffee and hot chocolate to parade watchers in our area.
- A Christmas Lunch will be held on Sunday, December 15 following worship.
- The Youth Group will be caroling and stuffing Regina Rescue Mission gift bags on December 7 and leading the worship service on December 15. The Synod has a new Youth Coordinator, Martha Fergusson, and we look forward to more synod and regional connections.
- Christmas services this year will include a Blue Christmas service on Sunday, December 8 at 3:00 p.m., a "Kids' Carol Service" on December 24 at 4:00 p.m. and a Christmas Eve service on December 24 at 7:00 p.m.
- Rev. Herb Gale visited First Church last weekend in support of our ongoing Planned Giving initiative. A joint group of Session, Board, Memorial Committee and Stewardship Committee members worked through the material that has been developed. A final draft will be presented at the annual meeting in February for approval.
- The Music Committee has arranged for Bill Sgrazzutti to be our interim organist until the end of January. Job descriptions have been developed for a Choir Director and Organist/Pianist (one person may qualify to do it all.) Advertising will begin shortly.
- The worship committee has two exciting choir opportunities. If you love to sing but can't commit to the regular choir, there will be a special Christmas choir opportunity for you. A short term contemporary choir will begin in January 2014.
- Birthday Sunday will be held this year on Sunday, January 26.
- A St. Patrick's Day Supper will be held on March 16. Mark your calendar now so you don't miss it!
- We are thankful for many gifts, donations and bequests to First Church. Several years ago, Larry and Elizabeth Kitson donated numerous pieces of art to First Church. They are displayed in the Morris Room. To give more people the chance to see and appreciate this gift, one painting from the collection will be highlighted each month with a newsletter article and displayed during coffee hour on the third Sunday of the month.

Jo Szostak  
Convenor of Session

#### **BOARD OF MANAGERS**

At the end of September, First Church showed a deficit of just over \$16,000, which is 66% of our budgeted deficit of \$24,000 for the year. At the end of the third quarter we would expect to be at the 75% level, so even though we have a deficit, it isn't as large at this point as was projected. It's also important to remember that some large items like our insurance bill have already been paid in full. Identified contributions to this point were \$135,626 or 68% of the \$200,000 budgeted, but we know that there is

traditionally a higher level of givings in the Fall, leading up to the end of the year.

Thank you to everyone for giving generously to support our operating budget! We had a good summer, with enough cash flow to cover expenses. Let's work towards a strong ending to the year!

Jo Szostak  
Board of Managers

### **ELECTION OF ELDERS**

Last year, the Session decided to work towards having 12 Elders on Session for 6-year terms, with 2 Elders elected annually. We have 8 whose terms end at the annual meeting in February. At its November meeting, Session decided to elect Elders with varying terms. A nominating committee was established to prepare a slate of nominees for election at the Annual Meeting. All members of the congregation are invited to nominate members of the congregation to fulfill this important role.

According to the Book of Forms...

*“Election to the eldership is the call of God, through the congregation, for service in Christ’s Church. Since the eldership is a spiritual office concerned with the rule and pastoral oversight of the congregation only suitable men and women should be considered. They should be committed Christians, in regular attendance at public worship, persons of sound judgment and upright character, and either knowledgeable or prepared to learn of the government of the church.”*

If you would like to nominate someone, please contact either Marianne Woods or Bette Kelly.

### **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

#### **November 23 morning**

- The Youth group has a number of activities planned for the months of November and December. Among these are serving hot chocolate at First

Presbyterian during the Grey Cup parade on Saturday morning, November 23.

#### **December 7 evening**

- We’ll be caroling to shut-ins from the congregation. Afterwards, we’re going to have hot chocolate.
- Following this, the Youth will once again stuff gift bags for the Regina Rescue Mission. We’ll be putting together 50 bags for needy children aged 2 to 12.

The Youth group thanks you for the donations you made to this project last year. You are invited to donate the following items this year:

- Toothbrush, toothpaste
- Hotel Sized Soap, Shampoo, Lotion
- Washcloth, Kleenex, Comb, Lip Balm
- Gum, Small Candies
- Small Sewing Kit
- Small Address Book, Pen, Small Pad of paper
- Small Books,
- Small stuffed toys (ie Beanies)
- Hair items for girls
- Socks, mitts, gloves, scarves, toques
- Small toys for boys and girls

Items NOT to include are articles that contain alcohol such as mouthwash or perfume, breakable items, medicine (Tylenol, cough drops, etc.), cosmetics, money, gift certificates, and movie passes.

Donated items can be placed in the gift-wrapped box in the narthex by **December 6**.

#### **December 15 morning**

- The Youth will be leading worship.

Joel Richter  
Youth Worker

## WORSHIP COMMITTEE

We extend a sincere “thanks” to all those who participated in our recently-conducted Christmas Services survey. The number of congregants who responded – over 60! -- was indeed heartening, and the data generated has already been of considerable help in planning for this year’s Christmas services.

Here’s a quick summary of the results:

- an almost equal number of respondents indicated they either would or would likely attend a Blue Christmas service as did those who said they either would not or would be unlikely to attend
- a few respondents preferred two Christmas Eve services while the vast majority preferred one such service. In the former group, an afternoon service at 4pm and an evening service at 7pm were the more common preferences; in the latter group, a large majority favored either a 7 or 7:30pm start for a Christmas Eve service.
- “family availability” proved to be the strongest factor influencing respondents’ choices for Christmas Eve services followed by “family traditions”, while “work schedule” was the least influential factor.
- the two most heavily (and equally) favoured styles of worship for Christmas Eve were a “service of lessons and carols” and a “candlelight service with special music”; a “service that includes communion” was next, and the two least favoured styles were a “traditional service (lectionary and sermon)” and a “service with a short drama presentation”.
- 17 respondents offered written comments including: concerns about parking for midweek services, a plea for traditional carols/hymns at Christmas Eve services, a request for a youth

drama presentation in a Sunday morning service during Advent, an appreciative “thanks for asking us” comment, a query about what a “Blue Christmas” service means, etc.

These findings were presented to Session on November 6 and, following discussion, Session voted in favor of: (i) a Blue Christmas service to be held Sunday December 8 beginning at 3pm; (ii) a Kid’s/Young families Christmas Carol service on December 24 beginning at 4pm; and (iii) a Christmas Eve service at 7pm.

Doug Stewart  
Worship Committee

## MISSION & OUTREACH

### FREEDOM FROM FREEZING

It is time to start knitting children’s mitts again! Our annual Freedom From Freezing program runs from November until January, in partnership with Kitchener Elementary School. Here’s how it works:

- **If you knit:** Start making mittens, and drop them off in the Mitten Bin in the narthex. If you need wool, check the Mitten Bin for donated wool.
- **If you don’t knit:** DONATE wool! Drop it off in the Mitten Bin so our knitters can make mitts to keep little hands warm this winter.
- **Who gets the mitts?** Kitchener School, an elementary school in North-Central Regina. The school principal tells us that the school counts on our mitts every year to help out kids who need them. They can use every pair we provide - so keep knitting, please!

### A GREAT EXAMPLE

Birthdays are usually a time to receive gifts, but one member of our congregation wants to **give** gifts on his special day. Doug Garner’s birthday is on November 21 and he is providing a birthday cake after worship on Nov 24. Doug prefers that his First Church friends donate their

spare change to a Malawi mission project that Sunday instead of buying him birthday cards. The project he has chosen is to supply new graduates from Zomba Theological College in Malawi with theological books as they begin their ministry.

The mission field is close to Doug's heart and he feels this is a great way to celebrate another year of life. He would also like to challenge others in the congregation to donate to a church project instead of receiving gifts or cards. If you want to follow Doug's example go to <http://presbyterian.ca/gifts-of-change/> or speak to a member of the Mission and Outreach committee for some suggestions. There are many excellent Presbyterian Church project here in Canada and internationally. It makes a great birthday, anniversary or Christmas gift.

Mary Jesse,  
M&O Convenor

## **PLANNED GIVING AT FIRST CHURCH**

### **A Foundation on Which to Dream**

How would you use \$100,000 to benefit First Church? On Saturday November 2<sup>nd</sup> the Session, Board of Managers and the Memorial and Stewardship Committees were invited to answer this question as well as review the structure and learn about draft policies for the proposed First Church Planned Giving Program. The meeting was an opportunity to ask questions and provide comments to the Planned Giving Team and to the Rev. Herb Gale, Associate Secretary for Planned Giving for the Presbyterian Church in Canada. After a lively discussion which clarified the need for Session oversight of the Planned Giving initiative and helped identify remaining work on the draft policies, attendees finished their morning together with a hopeful, future-focused exercise – each participant identified how they would use a Planned Gift of \$100,000 to benefit First Church.

This was just one part of the full weekend Rev. Herb Gale spent with our First Church family, beginning with a supper meeting with the

Planned Giving Team Friday evening. On Sunday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Rev. Gale delivered the Homily, and following the service he gave an educational presentation to congregation members at a “bunwich” lunch organized by the Fellowship Committee. He also spoke personally with anyone interested in having a conversation about planned giving.

The weekend confirmed that the work of the Planned Giving Team is on track. Policies have been drafted to build on the proposed structure for the program that was first shown to the congregation at the Annual General Meeting in February 2013. Over the next few months, the Planned Giving Team will continue to finalize the policies necessary for implementing and operating our Planned Giving program, and to present the Program elements to the Board of Managers and Session for final review and comments. The Planned Giving Program will then be presented to the congregation for approval at the Annual General Meeting in February 2014 and, if approved, implementation will proceed in the early spring.

And what were some of the ideas for spending the \$100,000 shared at the Saturday morning session? Many participants indicated they would not designate the money for a specific purpose, but preferred to see funds divided according to the fund structure proposed for the Planned Giving program – among an endowment-type fund, the three funds dedicated to fulfilling the First Church mission, and the Property Fund.

Ideas for the Property Fund included roof repairs, improving accessibility and seating for disabled members of the congregation, as well as painting and improving the lighting in the sanctuary. Ideas to support being Joyful in our Worship Fund included improving technology in the sanctuary to aid participation in and enjoyment of Sunday services, and adding to the music program with an upgrade to the organ and more choral students. Ideas to support the Tender in our Lives Together Fund included a Parish nurse, an after school care program, seniors services and a pastoral care program. Ideas for Daring in Our Worship Fund

included marketing efforts to promote our church, improving local mission efforts and developing strategies to attract more youth to our First Church.

Thanks to the interest and input of church members and the support and guidance of Rev. Herb Gale, development of our Planned Giving program is well on its way to creating a sound foundation for an active and healthy future for our First Church community.

Lisa Ann Wood,  
Planned Giving Committee

### **ART ON DISPLAY**

Several years ago Larry and Elizabeth Kitson kindly donated a collection of their paintings to First Church. At the time, it was decided to hang these works in the Morris Room. An unintended consequence of this decision, however, has been that many people do not get to see these paintings and some, or perhaps many, may not even know that these works exist in our church.

In response to this situation, and beginning with the present issue of *First Things First* and continuing in subsequent issues, Elizabeth Kitson and John Macfarlane will tell the stories of selected works of art from the collection. Each selection will then be displayed for everyone's viewing during coffee hour on the third Sunday of each month.

First on display this month will be *The Gleaners* (1857) by the French Painter Jean-Francois Millet. His work later influenced many artists including, but not limited to, Vincent Van Gogh. *The Gleaners* was done with oil on canvas in the style of realism, typical to Millet central figures (as opposed to traditional  $\frac{3}{4}$  placement), making them a clear focal point. *The Gleaners* is also believed to capture well the love and toil of rural life by an artist rare enough to have experienced that sort of upbringing first hand. How apt it is to have this famous work on display here in southern Saskatchewan where the love and toil of the land is so integral to whom we are.



### **REMEMBRANCE DAY**

"Grandma, why is it a holiday?"

"We shall never forget that important day,  
The end of the biggest wars, WW I and II  
Now life could again begin, free and anew.

Your forefathers had seen the rise of  
dictatorship,  
Threatening to take over free countries into  
their grip.  
They became enemies, took drastic measures  
with bombs,  
And destroyed many buildings and homes.

They had no choice to protect their land,  
The men volunteered to fight, giving a helping  
hand.  
Women and children worked with horses in the  
fields,  
To produce the grain with bountiful yields.

My darling Grandchild, treasure your freedom,  
You have shelter and food, your parents are  
home.  
When you find thousands of graves dug in one  
year,  
Thank the Lord you can forever live without  
fear.

November 11, every year we celebrate life,  
"Lest we forget," especially husband and wife,  
and their wounded friends, united after six  
years, they sing:  
"O Canada. We stand on guard for peace."

Violet Lochore

## NOVEMBER EVENTS

<b>10</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>	<b>Worship Service &amp; Sunday School</b>
<b>12</b>	9:00 AM 10:30 AM Noon	Adult Walk Bible Study Freedom 55ers
<b>14</b>	9:00 AM 8:00 PM	Adult Walk Choir
<b>17</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>	<b>Worship Service &amp; Sunday School</b>
<b>19</b>	9:00 AM 10:30 AM Noon	Adult Walk Bible Study Freedom 55ers
<b>21</b>	9:00 AM 8:00 PM	Adult Walk Choir
<b>24</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>	<b>Worship Service &amp; Sunday School</b>
<b>26</b>	9:00 AM 10:30 AM Noon	Adult Walk Bible Study Freedom 55ers
<b>27</b>	7:00 PM	Board of Manager
<b>28</b>	9:00 AM 8:00 PM	Adult Walk Choir