

FIRST THINGS FIRST

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, REGINA

October 2014

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

My friend Troy coaches high school track and cross-country in Ellinwood Kansas. And that got me thinking.

It is interesting to watch a group of runners getting set for a race. The tension mounts as they wait for the start. They get nervous about cramps and pulled muscles, they think about pushing off, extending the stride, and breathing.

At the given signal they are off like a rocket, completely oblivious to everything and everyone around them because they are so focused on winning the race.

If they are going to win the race they must be sure of the direction of their goal and keep their eyes focused on it. The shortest distance between two points is a straight line. Every bit helps and the slightest detour can mean a loss.

On October 25, 1964 Jim Marshal was playing with the Cleveland Browns against the San Francisco 49ers. He recovered a fumble and then he ran 66 yards to make a touchdown. Just one problem. He ran the wrong way and scored a goal for the other team!

When running the race or playing the game you can't lose sight of the goal. That's the whole point.

Our goal is Jesus Christ, the "Author and the Finisher" of our lives. Our eyes are to be centered on Him. It is not enough to look up; we must look up to Him. It is not faith in ourselves we need, but faith in Him.

The Lord knows our race. The Lord understands our course. He knows the obstacles along our way. He has the power to keep us on the course, avoiding the impediments that may hinder us.

Sometimes detours cause us to take our eyes off the goal. We may be distracted by looking at obstacles, hindrances, circumstances, environment, or problems. But we must keep our eyes focused on our goal, the Lord Christ Jesus. He who is with us at the beginning of the race and at the end of the race accompanies us along the way as well, strengthening and encouraging us.

When Blondin, the great tightrope walker decided to cross over Niagara Falls on a cable, we were told he had a star fixed to the opposite side. Focusing his eyes on it, not looking down at the falls, he succeeded in completing his high-wire feat.

Where are your eyes focused today? Where are mine? Are they on ourselves? Are they on our obstacles? Are they on the course itself? According to the Scriptures the secret of crossing the finish line victoriously is to keep our eyes on Him. "Looking unto Jesus, keep fixed upon him, the author and finisher of our faith". (Hebrews 12:2)

May this be our task every moment of everyday!

Bradley Childs

Rev. Brad Childs

SESSION

This has been a very difficult month with the loss of four treasured members of our congregation – Edna Pollock, Don Cook, Prof. Jim Baker and the Rev. Doug Garner. We have been blessed by their presence. Their memories will live on in our hearts. Our heartfelt sympathy and prayers go out to their families.

Please mark your calendars for Sunday, Nov. 2, as there will be a congregational meeting following worship. The purpose of the meeting is to make a decision about the re-distribution of our investment funds as we move into our new Planned Giving structure. Materials will be provided a couple of weeks ahead for you to read and consider.

Jo Szostak
Clerk of Session

MUSICAL NOTES

This year the Senior Choir will be introducing a number of new anthems covering a range of musical styles. We are fortunate to have 20 members in the Choir this year. New members are always welcome. Choir rehearsals are normally Thursday evenings at 7:30 p.m. The Choir will be starting work on a Christmas Cantata in the near future.

We are pleased that Will Ireton is one of our Choral Scholars and we are actively seeking a second Scholar. Choral Scholars are given the opportunity to gain experience in accompanying and conducting the Choir, performing solos and providing input into the choice of choral repertoire.

We are arranging for a trumpeter to play for the Remembrance Service on November 9, 2014

The pre-service hymn sing will begin again during Advent, and new sung responses will be introduced during Sunday Services through the Advent season.

Your input and feedback is important and is welcomed. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (306) 522-9571.

William (Bill) Sgrazzutti
Music Director

ADULT WALK

Adult Walk is resuming Tuesday, October 7th. Come join us each Tuesday and Thursday at 9:00AM in the gym.

STEWARDSHIP

Our stewardship educational campaign begins on Thanksgiving Sunday, Oct. 12, and runs for four weeks. With a focus on "Fearless Generosity", the four weekly themes will be: Fearless Living, Fearless Service, Fearless Sowing, and Fearless Giving. What does it mean to respond to God's call and step out of our comfort zones?

During the next two months, First Church will be partnering with a residential community -- Brightwater Senior Living that offers assisted living, personal care, and memory care. Brightwater uses a "best friends approach" and we will be arranging opportunities for involvement with residents in a variety of different ways. Allan Yakemchuk will share a presentation with us following the service on Oct. 19 so please make sure you stay for coffee and hear what he has to say. There will be opportunities for fearless living and service for all ages and abilities. We are excited about the potential of this partnering project!

Another opportunity for us to explore fearless living is to participate in the forthcoming healing and reconciliation workshop being hosted by the Mission and Outreach Committee on Saturday, October 25. We encourage you to take part in this worthwhile initiative. (For further details see the Mission and Outreach report elsewhere in this issue.)

Jo Szostak
Stewardship Convenor

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Summer is over and the Worship Committee is making plans for the upcoming church year. It is great to have a break over the summer, feel refreshed, and be ready to get back into action.

The Committee met on September 27. We first expressed our sincere thanks to Dolores Nelson for purchasing new serviettes to be used at Communion, and to Fay Richardson who spent many hours monogramming the serviettes using the colours of the church year. These beautiful

linens were dedicated to the Glory of God on World Wide Communion Sunday, October 5, and will be used on Communion Sundays throughout the year.

A special thanks to the guest ministers who conducted Summer Sunday Services while Rev. Childs was on vacation.

Joel Richter, First Church's Youth Leader, and the Christian Education Committee have contacted the Worship Committee asking that our youth do Scripture Readings at one service each month.

And speaking of lectors, we still have dates available for the months of November and December. If you would like to serve as a Scripture reader at one of our services during this period please contact Marianne Woods.

We look forward to seeing you all at "First Church" in the coming Sundays.

Joyce McKersie
Worship Committee

MISSION & OUTREACH

Saturday October 25: Seeking Renewed Relationships Workshop. Plan to join us for a few hours of interactive learning. We welcome David Phillips, national church office staff person for healing and reconciliation ministries. David will lead us through past and present Presbyterian and Aboriginal relationships. We'll be active too - in a simulation game, in some discussion and reflection. We will visit the cemetery of the former Presbyterian Industrial School on the city outskirts, and hear the latest on how First Presbyterian and Knox-Met United are working with First Nations and City Hall to protect that sacred site. And, we'll enjoy lunch, snacks, and each other's company. 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 pm in the church hall. Please sign up in the church narthex or email mary.jesse@uregina.ca so we can prepare for everyone.

November is the start of Freedom from Freezing, our annual knitting ministry for young children at Kitchener Community School. The School is very excited to know that knitting will be sent to their students again. Bins for donated wool and mittens and hats will be out in the narthex next month.

Mary Jesse
Mission & Outreach Convenor

DECEMBER CRAFT SALE

We are planning a craft and bake sale to be held on Saturday, December 6, 2014. Please start crafting or thinking about what you can give. For more information please talk to Tracy, Tammy or Donna.

FUNDSCRIP

Due to the high cost of shipping, we are going to try consolidating our orders on a trial basis from now until Christmas. If our orders reach \$5000, the shipping is free. With \$3000 in orders, we only pay half the shipping. Our orders in September were in the \$1000 – \$1500 range each week, so we paid full shipping at about \$15 a week, or a total of \$75 for the five weeks.

We will now try placing orders twice a month – in the first and third weeks -- hoping there will be sufficient orders to save half the shipping costs each time, so it will only cost us \$15 a month for shipping. Orders will be placed following the Sundays of Oct. 19, Nov. 2, Nov. 16 and Dec. 7 – the first and third Sundays of the month.

You can continue to give us your order any Sunday but we will only place an order following these specific Sundays. Delivery will be a week later. So if you order on Oct. 12 or on Oct. 19, the order will be placed after Oct. 19 and delivered on Oct. 26.

We will still have cards for groceries and gas available each week so you can stock up that way if you prefer.

FundScrip offers us such an easy way to raise money for the congregation. With lots of people

participating, it can make a big difference. Remember, it costs you nothing, and the church wins with every purchase as we get a percentage back.

Visit the FundScrip table at coffee time and become a part of this great fundraiser!

Jo Szostak

PLANNED GIVING

Giving Thanks in Everything We Do

In one form or another, on one date or another, people in countries across the world celebrate a day of thanksgiving. In North America, Thanksgiving has long been celebrated in the autumn and tied to giving thanks for a bountiful harvest.

As we gather and spend precious time with family and friends and enjoy traditional holiday foods, let's reflect on the many blessings of our First Church community: a place to worship God, to join in songs of praise, to enjoy a unique and sustaining fellowship. These are just a few of the gifts of First Church that enrich our lives.

We give thanks for and support our Church community in numerous ways through our gifts of time and talents, our weekly contributions to support the day to day operation of our Church, and through the legacy of planned gifts.

Our Planned Giving program -- Growing our Vision: Seeds of Abundant Joy -- provides an opportunity for us to look beyond operating expenses with planned gifts for the long term, for renewing the physical structure of our church, for supporting programs and initiatives to fulfill our mission.

The Planned Giving Program also gives each of us an opportunity to use the planned gifts dedicated to First Church. Every year the Planned Giving Committee accepts applications for funding to support activities and programs to further our mission. If you have an idea for a project or activity, applications will be available in

the narthex or from Shirley in the church office. Individuals and groups/committees may apply.

The deadline for submitting applications is October 31, 2014. In November and December, the Planned Giving Committee will review applications, develop recommendations, and present applications and recommendations through the Stewardship Committee to a joint Board/Session meeting in January/February 2015. Applications will be forwarded by Session with recommendation for consideration of the congregation at the Annual General Meeting in February.

Consider giving thanks by helping First Church fulfill its mission to be joyful in our worship, tender in our lives together and daring in our outreach.
Happy Thanksgiving!

Lisa Ann Wood
Planned Giving Committee

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Sunday School has begun and teacher volunteers are needed. Please consider adding your name to the teacher roster. We need volunteers to teach the Grade 4,5,6 class and the preschool/kindergarten class. The next meeting of the Christian Education Committee will be October 21 at 7:00. All interested parents and teacher volunteers are welcome.

Bette Kelly
Christian Education Convenor

SINCERE THANKS

First Church contributed \$500 each to St. Mark's, Moose Jaw and St. Andrew's, Swift Current, to pay for the registration for one member of their 4-person team to attend Stewards by Design in November. First Church has benefited from this conference and we hope and pray that these two congregations will be encouraged and strengthened by their involvement in it.
From St. Mark's, Moose Jaw:

“On behalf of Session and the congregation of St. Mark’s, please accept our thanks for First’s generous contribution of \$500 in support of our attendance at Stewards by Design in November. We are looking forward to attending and returning with a multitude of ideas that will help St. Mark’s grow and continue to minister in Moose Jaw in the future”.

Bill Henry, Clerk of Session, St. Mark’s Presbyterian Church, Moose Jaw, SK

From St. Andrew’s, Swift Current:

“Dear friends at First Regina,
Thank you so much for responding to the lead of our generous Lord to encourage us with a gift of \$500 towards our tuition at the Stewards by Design conference. It is a practical act of fellowship that reminds us of our unity as congregations in the Presbytery of Assiniboia and Christ’s Church. Additionally, as we continue to respond to the lead of the Spirit in getting our financial administration sorted out, it is a reminder of the presence of our Lord with us as He speaks, renews, and revives us according to His Word.

May the Lord continue to bless you as you pursue Him on the particular journey He has for you as a congregation of His people. He certainly has blessed us through you. Thank you”.

The Session, St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Swift Current, Sask.

Canada Youth was held in July, 2014 and First Church was pleased that two of our young adults – Will Ireton and Joel Richter -- were able to participate. First Church paid for the travel and registration for Will and Joel so that the Synod funds available could be used to assist with travel for the youth from the province who attended. We also provided \$600 to assist with the costs of youth from Mistawasis.

The following thank you letter was received from The Rev. Bob Wilson, Clerk of the Synod of Saskatchewan:

“Synod is most grateful for the generous, over and above provision of both travel and

registration for Will Ireton and Joel Richter to attend Canada Youth, 2014, and also to provide \$600 to the Synod’s Canada Youth Fund to support travel for the Mistawasis youth.

As you know, with the change from a 3-year to a 2-year cycle for Canada Youth, it has been a challenge to provide as much assistance as Synod has in the past for travel and incidentals for our youth. We are excited to have 28 youth and leaders from Saskatchewan to attend Canada Youth 2014. It speaks well of the hard work and promotion everyone has done, and in particular our Synod Youth Coordinator, Martha Fergusson. They will bring back the spirit of Canada Youth to our congregations and have gained leadership experience from which their churches will benefit.

We thank the people of First Church for your continued support of Presbyterian youth over the years.

Grace and Peace!”

Rev. Bob Wilson, Clerk,
Synod of Saskatchewan

Jo Szostak

CAMP CHRISTOPHER

Dear First Presbyterian Church,

On behalf of the Camp Christopher Board, it is my pleasure to thank the members of your church for your generous donation of \$926 for a canoe. We very much appreciate your continued support of the camp, which helps us provide a great outdoor ministry experience for children and youth. As many of the campers are sponsored, it is also an outreach ministry to those who otherwise wouldn’t have such an opportunity. In addition, and not less important at a time when it’s harder to engage the 15-25 year old age group, the Camp offers leadership training and employment opportunities for youth and young adults.

Thanks to the dedication and expertise of the staff who worked over and above the call of duty,

it was a good summer, despite a shortage of onsite staff especially prior to the start of the camping season. Many of the counsellors were recent graduates of the Leaders-in-Training program for kindergarten to grade two children.

Thank you once again for your financial support and prayers for our ministry.

Sincerely in Christ,
Ursula Wiig
Camp Christopher, Treasurer

ART FROM THE MORRIS ROOM

The ninth painting I will be discussing from the Kitson Collection in the Morris Room is

“The Haymaking”

by the French artist
Leon Augustin Lhermitte.

Lhermitte was a French realist painter and etcher whose primary subject matter was of rural scenes depicting the peasant worker. This painting is an excellent example of his work. Using oils, pastels and charcoal drawings, he brought the image of rural life and landscapes into the twentieth century.

In 1874 Lhermitte spent several months in Brittany where he became fascinated with Breton culture: their costumes, activities, celebrations, and the colourful nature of their life. For the next five years he returned to this region on several occasions, later exhibiting scenes from rural life. During his early period he executed compositions replete with minute details, depicting each diverse activity before the advent of industrialization overtook the village life of France.

In 1809 he earned another medal for his charcoal drawings which were fully developed compositions noted for their subtle handling of light, their precise detail and emphasis on observation.

Lhermitte’s oil painting “Paying the Harvester” solidified his artistic success in 1882. To him, rustic activity embodied dignity. The countryside

was seldom dour or depressing, the atmosphere often appeared light and airy, and the environment spacious. Earning the title “singer of wheat” he focussed not only on peasant life in the fields but also on peasant life at home especially peasant women.

In 1885 he began experimenting in pastels and he became so successful that he almost abandoned his charcoal drawing. In 1890 he fell under the influence of the Impressionists and began using a light palette and treating atmospheric effects. He was both a Realist and a progressive.

Lhermitte was highly successful and was appreciated because he represented “the good old days” focussing on the image of society before its disappearance with industrialization.

During the latter part of his career after 1900 he devoted less space to his figures and more to the overall impression of the landscape. As he grew older he stayed closer to his home and executed several landscape pastels based on the banks of the Marne near his studio.

He received many honours across Europe during his life but his work fell into oblivion after 1925 only being reappraised in a major exposition at the Musée d'Orsay in 1990.

John Macfarlane

OCTOBER EVENTS

5	10:30 AM	Worship Service & Sunday School
7	9:00 AM 10:30 AM noon	Adult Walk Bible Study Freedom55ers
9	9:00 AM 7:30 PM	Adult Walk Choir
12	10:30 AM	Worship Service & Sunday School
14	9:00 AM 10:30 AM noon	Adult Walk Bible Study Freedom55ers
16	9:00 AM 7:30 PM	Adult Walk Choir
19	10:30 AM	Worship Service & Sunday School
21	10:30 AM noon	Bible Study Freedom 55ers
23	9:00 AM 7:30 PM	Adult Walk Choir
26	10:30 AM	Worship Service & Sunday School
28	10:30 AM noon	Bible Study Freedom 55ers
30	9:00 AM 7:30 PM	Adult Walk Choir