

# FIRST THINGS FIRST

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

### FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, REGINA

October 2017

#### MINISTER'S MESSAGE

This month at First Church I am happy to be leading a membership class on Tuesday evenings. When I invited people to participate in this class, I said you might want to take it if you are new to First Church, new to The Presbyterian Church in Canada, or new to Christianity. I suggested that some might like to take the class who have been attending church for a long time but have not yet explored church membership. Others might have questions about faith, church, or what it means to be a Christian today. I am pleased to have gathered a small group of participants, and I really enjoyed our first session together earlier this week.

I want to ask you (who are reading this) to consider a question I asked the membership class this week: If someone asked you to explain what a Presbyterian is, what would you say? If you ever identify yourself as a Presbyterian, you're sure to get that question or some configuration of it like, "What's the difference between a Presbyterian and a Protestant?" Or "What's the difference between a Presbyterian and a Catholic?" And if you get a question like that from a friend, or colleague, or someone at the bus stop it is a perfect opening to gently and respectfully share your faith!

You might start, as one of our membership class participants did, by explaining that a Presbyterian is a Christian. We are one particular "type" or "flavour" of Christian and although we have some particular distinctives that make us Presbyterian, we consider ourselves to be part of the one, global, Christian church. We do not believe that our particular emphases and ways of doing things make us the only Christians who are "right" or the only Christians who are "real" Christians. We consider other Christians to be our sisters and brothers in Christ and share with them in common witness,

in mission, service, and fellowship. Through gatherings of churches like the Canadian Council of Churches, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, and the World Council of Churches, we bring our particular Presbyterian gifts to share with the whole church. We also aspire to work together with other churches in our cities and neighbourhoods.

But what are those Presbyterian gifts? I usually start by explaining the word itself. "Presbyterian" comes from a Greek word, "presbyter", which means "elder." The name of our denomination is related to the structure and polity of our church (ie., the way we make decisions together) and literally means, "ruled by elders." The clergy person that we often call the "minister" is also called the "teaching elder," and the teaching elder works together with "ruling elders" who are elected by the congregation and ordained to serve. When the elders gather they constitute what is known as the "Session" and together they have oversight over the congregation's ministries, listening for the Spirit's guidance, making decisions and providing leadership in the church.

Rather than having a bishop to oversee local congregations and clergy, Presbyterians have "presbyteries" which are made up of all the ministers in a geographical area plus an equal number of representative elders from the congregations in that area. Presbyteries are responsible for the oversight and care for all their congregations. Beyond the presbyteries, there are "synods" that oversee the presbyteries in a larger area (e.g. all of SK); and at the national level we have the annual meeting called the General Assembly that oversees the work of the whole Presbyterian Church in Canada. At every level, ministers and elders work together, listen to one another's ideas and perspectives, and trust that the Holy Spirit will guide us.

Besides the gift of eldership, Presbyterians emphasize Scripture study, solid preaching, and orderly worship that is well-planned and executed for the glory of God. We are Reformed (tracing our history from the 16th Century Reformation and from theologians like John Calvin and John Knox) and we are always being reformed according to the Word of God. In other words, change is possible in the way we do things, in what we believe, and how we carry out our ministries because God continues to guide us into new things.

In the last few weeks, a couple of questions came up about what our Presbyterian Church believes about certain topics (eg., global warming and the environment, and physician-assisted suicide). In both cases, our denomination has studied, debated, made statements and suggested responses to these issues. There is a great document that is revised each year that summarizes our church's position, statements, and actions on a wide range of social issues. I checked out the latest one and found it is 331 pages long!

It is great to be with you at First Church, sharing with you in ministry and mission, and learning together week-by-week what it means for us to be Christians and Presbyterians in the world today. If you want to do a little more reading, studying, and thinking about this topic, I would suggest two resources which you can access online (or ask me for a copy if you don't use the internet).

*Social Action Handbook:* Go to <http://presbyterian.ca/resource-centre/> and scroll down to find "Social Action Handbook" under "Church Life and Supplies."

*Living Faith: A Statement of Christian Belief* is another useful resource, as it is a Presbyterian articulation of what we believe about God, the Bible, the church, ministry, worship, sacraments, the family, mission, and life everlasting. You can find it online at the same resource page link above. Just scroll down further to find it in the list of worship resources.

Rev. Amanda Currie

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

On the first Sunday following Thanksgiving we will be trying a new Sunday School schedule. Children will be in worship for the first part of the service instead of the latter part. The children's story will be earlier in the service after which they will go to their Sunday school classes for the remainder of the hour. Teacher volunteers are welcomed for one or more Sundays.

The Youth Leader position will be advertised in the near future. The position will be posted on SaskJobs and shared with other congregations.

Youth and young adults, please mark your calendars and plan to take part in the upcoming Saskatchewan Presbyterian Youth (SPY) Weekend which will be hosted here at First Church. We will welcome youth from across the province, and the theme will be all about PEACE. SPY participants will be involved in worship leadership on Sunday, November 5<sup>th</sup>, a service that will include an Act of Remembrance and a celebration of Holy Communion.

With youth coming to Regina from other parts of the province we are looking for church members willing to billet young people in their homes that weekend. This includes providing a bed or couch for two nights (Nov. 3 & 4), shower, and light breakfasts for two or more youth. Please speak to Rev. Amanda for more details or to indicate your willingness to serve in this way.



LET'S TALK ABOUT PEACE

MICAH 6 V 8

SASKATCHEWAN

**SPY @ First Presbyterian Regina, SK**

PRESBYTERIAN YOUTH

REGISTRATION FORM AVAILABLE ON FACEBOOK - TYPE "SPY" IN THE SEARCH FIELD OR FROM YOUR MINISTER 50 DOLLARS PER TEEN FOR COSTS

FOR DETAILS CALL TEXT MARTHA FERGUSSON 306 270-2378

**FRI NOV 3, 2017 ARRIVE AFTER 7 P.M - LEAVE SUN NOV 5, 2017 AFTER 12.**

Bette Kelly  
Christian Education Convener

## PLANNED GIVING

**New Deadline to Apply for Planned Giving Funds\***

Every year our First Church Planned Giving Program invites applications for activities

supported by our Planned Giving Funds. A project or initiative needs to support one aspect of our mission:

- be joyful in our worship
- tender in our lives together; and
- daring in our outreach

This year we're moving the deadline for Planned Giving project applications to November 30. Applications will be considered by the congregation at the Annual General Meeting in spring 2018.

You can pick up an application form in the Narthex or from Shirley during office hours. We welcome your proposals to further the mission of First Church!

Lisa Ann Wood  
Stewardship Committee Member

### PASTORAL CARE

The Pastoral Care Committee is excited about starting a new ministry at First Presbyterian Church. It is to develop a Prayer Shawl Ministry!

Prayer Shawls are shawls that are knitted (or crocheted) with intention. As you make the shawl you infuse healing and good thoughts, as well as prayers for the person to whom the shawl will be given. Once the shawl is completed, it is given to the Prayer Shawl Ministry so that shawls can in turn be given to church members and others beyond the church community who need a little extra prayer and encouragement. These may include people who are sick, in hospital, home-bound, grieving, or experiencing other challenges. They are presented with prayer by the minister, an elder, or another member of the church, and they carry with them the prayers of the whole community.

The Pastoral Care Team would like to invite you to an introduction meeting on Sunday October 22 after worship. We will have sample patterns and yarn, and we can see if there is an interest in gathering once a month to knit and pray together. You are also welcome to use your own pattern and knit on your own! If you have questions please contact Rev Amanda or a member of the Pastoral Care Committee.

### FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

Advance Notice - There will be a Bunwich Lunch after church on November 5 so we can celebrate with the Synod Youth who will be at our church for a conference that weekend. Mark your calendars!

Sheila Wilson  
Fellowship Convener

### RIVERBEND CROSSING WALK

Riverbend walk resumes on Thursday, Oct. 12. Volunteers are needed. Please contact Rev. Bob Wilson.

### STEWARTSHIP COMMITTEE

**Value Village FUNDrive** Our FUNDrive will take place on [October 28](#) so you have a few weeks to finish going through your closets and cleaning out storage spaces!

We get paid by the pound - \$0.15 per pound of Soft Goods, and \$0.05 per pound of Hard Goods. **Soft Goods** are clothing, shoes, hats, scarves, undergarments, jewelry, accessories, bags, wallets, bedding, towels, curtains, tablecloths and other cloth materials. **Hard Goods** are toys, small household goods and appliances, books, CD's and DVD's. The **Do Not Accept List** includes all weapons, hazardous materials, construction materials, flammable products, automobile parts, damaged furniture, beds, bedding parts, televisions, computer monitors, infant car seats, cribs and other infant products restricted by law, swing sets, food, pets, large appliances, marine vessels, swimming pools, vehicles, cash and intangible property.

We will be hauling everything to Value Village on Oct. 28 (our appointed time is 12 noon). There are a number of ways you can contribute:  
- Beginning on [Oct. 22](#) you can bring your bags of material to the church and we'll put them in the back of the gym until [Oct. 28](#) when everything will be hauled to Value Village.

- If you're unable to bring your bags to the church we will arrange for pickup during the week of [Oct. 22](#). Call the office to let us know.
- If you have a carload, you can join our convoy on [Oct. 28](#) and take it directly to Value Village when we go to drop off. (Meet at the church at 11:30 am on Oct. 28)

Consider having your own mini-drive among friends and neighbours - ask them to fill a bag and give it to you! Let's make this event a great fundraiser!

### **Stewardship Campaign**

The theme of our educational campaign this year is "Live Generously". The campaign will run from Oct. 8 to 29.

Jo Szostak  
Stewardship Convener

### **CAMP CHRISTOPHER**

Camp Christopher is very thankful for:

- 224 campers that attended this summer
- 18 young people who gave their summer to be at camp
- the 5 Leaders in Training and 7 volunteers
- all the money raised to put in a new kitchen stove and compressor for the walk-in cooler
- the money raised by Tri4Kids to send kids to camp
- all the work completed around the camp this summer, including the completion of our Gazebo

"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;  
his love endures forever" ~ Psalm 107:1

Donna Wilkinson  
Camp Administrator

### **FUNDSCRIP**

The next order [Sunday](#) is [Oct. 15](#). When you order, your cards will be here the [next Sunday](#). October promotions include Shell (3%) and Giant Tiger (5%). Grocery and gas cards are on hand for sale anytime. The next order [Sunday](#) will be [November 5](#) (3 weeks later) Plan ahead so you don't run out. Start to think ahead for Christmas gifts. Please stop by the FundScrip table in the gym following worship. It doesn't cost you any extra and the church gets a percentage back on every

card. Please support this fundraising for the church - buy a card [today!](#)

### **A GATHERING FOR RECONCILIATION**

Over the weekend of September 15-17 a group of 40 Presbyterians from across Canada, including several First Nations members, clergy, lay people and university students gathered to reflect on the Church's reconciliation journey to date, and on ways in which as Presbyterians they could contribute to reconciliation and support each other in the healing and reconciliation process. Of the 40 attendees, I was honoured to be one of the 5 from Saskatchewan invited to this most interesting and challenging weekend.

The gathering, held at a Jesuit retreat centre in Pickering (Ont.) east of Toronto, was organized and hosted by the Justice Ministries of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

One of the four Indigenous guest speakers poignantly reminded the gathering that "true reconciliation" will take several generations to accomplish, given the injustices and harms visited upon Aboriginal peoples in this country for over 150 years. She explained that genuine reconciliation consists of four components: acknowledgment of the injuries done; restoring trust by compensating for those wrongs; healing through cultural renewal; and the realization of reconciliation. Another speaker stressed the need for "truthful conversations" between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples, and for an end to the former telling the latter how to live and what to do, calling instead for greater co-operation between the two sides on many levels, such as in the educating of all Canadian children and youth in the history of residential schooling.

In other sessions, delegates were asked to identify what "grounds" them in their reconciliation journeys, eliciting a range of responses: God's love and wanting to bring healing to one another; visits to Indigenous sacred sites and to inner-city missions; the realization of our common humanity; the 1990 Oka crisis in Quebec.

Small group discussions focussed on what delegates could do to promote reconciliation in their home churches and communities such as

having congregations do the blanket exercise, getting church people to participate in local walks for reconciliation, attending pow-wows, and lobbying local MP's to support the implementation of the UN's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Delegates were also asked to name one thing The Presbyterian Church in Canada should prioritize in its reconciliation journey. Responses included: be more vocal and courageous in calling out racism; focus on the contributions of youth; make the Church's Confession (1994) a source of "rising awareness" and ask congregations to include it on their websites.

A touching moment occurred during the Sunday morning worship service when a residential school survivor was invited to recite a poem she had written about her school memories that still haunt her. She refers to these memories as her "shadow child". The poem is reprinted here with permission.

Shadow child  
Where are you?

I am here  
I am in the words  
I am in the tears  
That you shared  
That day.

Shadow child  
I need you.

I am here  
With your friend  
That church person  
You now call sister or brother  
Forever and a day

Shadow child  
Have you left me?

No, little one  
! am still here  
I am that warm ray  
Of sunshine  
On a dark day.

Shadow child  
Do I walk alone now?

Little one  
You have given  
Of yourself  
A small part of me

Now we walk with others.

Shadow child  
I feel so empty

Little one  
Your pain is easing  
Your sharing of me  
Is healing  
For all.

Peace little one.

By Vivian Ketchum (Winnipeg)

Doug Stewart  
Editor

### **ART FROM THE MORRIS ROOM**

Today I am going back to two more paintings, 22 and 23, of the many by this artist featured in the Kitson Collection in the Morris Room. Both were painted by the Dutch artist Jan Vermeer (1632 - 1675) and were called "Maid servant Pouring Milk" and "The Lacemaker".

Of the great painters of the past three centuries, none has left so many unanswered questions about himself, his goals, theories and influences as the man who has been aptly called the "Sphinx of Delft". Few have left such a glowing legacy of genius as did Jan Vermeer, his small body of work approaching true perfection. His art has the ability to attract people with its quietness and hold them with a sense of order.

In "Maid servant Pouring Milk" Vermeer's light diffuses itself evenly through space, and as it does so it creates its own unerring record, revealing the texture of cloth, bread and wicker. It flows around objects and gives shape to them. The girl is defined by light. Her blue cuffs and pleats of her apron fairly scintillate, her head dress and white collar glow while the shadowed folds of her clothing suggest subdued richness. As Vermeer watched the colours of the scene come to life in the light from the window, time stands still in this modest room. It is not just any moment but one chosen, unforgettable moment which life etches in our minds from time to time. There is a great stillness in this masterpiece.

Enclosed within her world, a girl making lace bends to her task with a concentration that must

reflect Vermeer's own attitude toward work. By foreshortening and blurring the foreground objects, he gave this jewel-like canvas (9 1/6 x 8 1/16) a striking sense of intimacy.

If the mystery of Vermeer endures, so does his genius. Serene, luminous, delicately balanced, the poetry of Vermeer's art is impervious to time. Silent, intense in his light-filled studio, the Master of Delft, moves us still.

John Macfarlane



Maid servant Pouring Milk



The Lacemaker

**OCTOBER EVENTS**

<b>8</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Worship</b>
9		Thanksgiving Day - Office Closed
10	9:00 AM 10:30 AM noon 7:00 PM	Adult Walk Bible Study Freedom 55ers Membership Class
12	9:00 AM 7:00 PM	Adult Walk Choir
14	9:30 AM	Sunday School Cleaning Bee
<b>15</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>	<b>Worship Service &amp; Sunday School</b>
	noon	Mission & Outreach
17	9:00 AM 10:30 AM noon 7:00 PM	Adult Walk Bible Study Freedom 55ers Membership Class
19	9:00 AM 7:00 PM	Adult Walk Choir
20-21		Synod Meeting at Norman Kennedy Church, Regina
<b>22</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>	<b>Worship Service &amp; Sunday School</b>
	noon	Introduction to Prayer Shawl Ministry
24	9:00 AM 10:30 AM noon 7:00 PM	Adult Walk Bible Study Freedom 55ers Membership Class
25	7:00 PM	Board of Managers
26	9:00 AM 7:00 PM	Adult Walk Choir
28	10:00 AM noon	Worship Committee Value Village FUNDrive
<b>29</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>	<b>Worship Service &amp; Sunday School</b>
31	9:00 AM 10:30 AM noon	Adult Walk Bible Study Freedom 55ers