

**FIRST THINGS FIRST
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, REGINA
OCTOBER 2026**

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

This Thanksgiving weekend, I would like to take an intentional pause to practice gratitude. Certainly, I have lots of things, people, and circumstances for which to give thanks, but I am finding that the difficulties and worries of life often overshadow the blessings and cause me to feel anxious instead of grateful.

If you can relate to that feeling, perhaps you'd like to join me in taking an intentional pause to practice gratitude. How about if we start with Thanksgiving supper? Whether you are gathered with a big group of family and friends, sharing a simple meal with one or two others, or just on your own this Thanksgiving, I invite you to spend some time in prayer and thanks for God's blessings.

If you don't regularly pause before a meal to offer thanks to God, this may feel a little awkward at first. What will I say? What will I pray? What will my family or friends think about pausing to say grace? But Thanksgiving is a perfect time to begin a new practice that could become a regular part of your personal or family prayer life.

After you sit down at the table, but before you start to share the food, invite each person to name something that they are thankful for. You don't need to close your eyes or make it too formal. Just have a conversation together and celebrate the good things in your lives. Close the time of sharing with something like "Thank you, God! Let's eat!"

Or perhaps this Thanksgiving would be a good time to choose a table grace that you or your family can start using on a regular basis. Write it out on some cards that you can leave on the dining table to use day-by-day. Over time, you can memorize it and you won't need the cards anymore. Or if you like variety, put together a little collection of some table graces. Each time you sit down to eat, a different family member could choose which one to use. (Nick and I

have a wooden cube that we picked up at Iona many years ago. Each side of the cube has a short table grace. We can choose one, or even "roll the dice" to select a prayer to offer.)

You can write your own prayer, of course, or just say what is in your heart. But sometimes it's easier to begin a new practice of prayer if you have a written prayer to use. I found a bunch of traditional table graces online to give you some ideas, and I know you could find more and select one that feels right for you.

For what we are about to receive, may the Lord make us truly thankful. Amen.

Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest, and bless the bread thou gavest us. Amen.

Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts, which we are about to receive from thy bounty, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

O Lord, that lends me life, lend me a heart replete with thankfulness! Amen.

– William Shakespeare

We come before Thee, O Lord, in the end of thy day with thanksgiving.

– Robert Louis Stevenson

O God, we thank thee for the abundance of our blessings, but we pray that our plenty may not involve want for others.

– Walter Rauschenbusch

Some hae meat, and canna eat, / And some wad eat that want it; / But we hae meat and we can eat, / And sae the Lord be thanket.

– Robert Burns (This one is especially for the Scots among us!)

Having spent so many years in Christian camping and children's and youth ministry, I have always enjoyed the option of singing our thanks together as well. If you have children at home or just enjoy singing, try one of these possibilities.

Try this grace to the tune of Edelweiss:

**Bless our friends, bless our food,
Come, O Lord, and sit with us.
May our talk glow with peace.
May your love surround us.
Friendship and love, may they bloom and
grow, bloom and grow forever.
Bless our friends, bless our food,
Come, O Lord, and sit with us.**

Here are the classic words to the Johnny Apple Seed grace:

**O, the Lord is good to me and so I thank
the Lord for giving me the things I need,
the sun and the rain, and the apple seed.
The Lord is good to me. Amen.**

Here's a camp favourite to the tune of Rock around the Clock:

**God is great, God is good,
and we thank God for our food.
We're gonna thank God morning,
noon, and night.
We're gonna thank our God
cause he's out of sight!
Amen, amen, amen, amen.**

It doesn't really matter what words you choose to say or sing. The point is actually just to pause. Take a deep breath, take a moment of quiet. Remember the source of every good thing in your life, and indeed the source of life itself. Mealtimes may be a good time to do this, but you could also add first thing in the morning before you get out of bed, last thing in the evening before you go to sleep, or any time when you are feeling anxious or worried.

May our gratitude grow this Thanksgiving weekend, and may we each grow closer to our God, the giver of every good gift.

Rev. Amanda Currie

DIRECTIONS TASK FORCE

At the Sept 13 meeting, the congregation approved continuing to explore the feasibility of redevelopment options for our buildings, working with the 1080 Architecture team. This work will be done within the budget and grant received for the feasibility study. A document requesting Expressions of Interest has been circulated to a number of developers to see what interest there

may be. To date, there are at least 2 developers willing to meet and discuss it further.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

The Worship Committee will be meeting on October 17th to make plans for services in the next few months, including the Season of Advent. I will be contacting families to participate in the Advent Readings.

Scripture readers are needed for November and December. We are very fortunate to have many members of our church family who are willing to read on a regular basis. The reader carries in the Bible with Rev. Amanda at the beginning of the service and places it on the Stand while she lights the Christ Candle. Shirley Durell, our Office Manager, e-mails readings in advance to the reader participating for that week and a copy is left in the Narthex as well. Please call or text Marianne Woods at 306-541-9358 or e-mail mariannewoods1955@gmail.com if you are willing to participate. Thanks to those who have volunteered for October.

Thank you to Jeremy and Brad for being our Greeters during the months of October and November. Greeters are needed for December. Please contact Marianne at the above phone number and e-mail if you are interested in taking one or two Sundays.

A Thanksgiving Poem

The table warms with candlelight,
A gentle glow of gold,
As stories drift through autumn air
like memories retold.

The harvest rests in humble bowls,
The year's sweet gifts displayed,
And every hand around the cloth shows
how a home is made.

We pause to breathe the grateful breath that
busy days forget,

For love that lingers through the years,
for hearts that hold us yet.

So gather close and speak your thanks—

In whispers, laughs, or song;
For gratitude, like falling leaves,
has been our guide all along.

Wishing each of you a Blessed Thanksgiving!
Marianne Woods, Convener

BOARD OF MANAGERS

Financial Report: The Board of Managers has decided to provide monthly financial updates to keep the congregation informed. When the 2026 budget was approved in May, the budget for envelope givings and open plate offerings for 2026 was a total of \$302,500. It was set at this amount to offset the expenses and result in a deficit of \$38,351. (The actual received for 2025 was \$222,293.)

Currently, (as of Sept 30) givings have totaled \$158,371. This is 52.4% of the budgeted \$302,500, while we are 75% of the way through the year.

Generally, givings increase in the fall, and especially in December, so it's simplistic to judge all months the same way. For September alone, the givings were \$17,303. If you take 1/12 of the budget, the budget for a month would be \$25,208.

It looks like the givings for 2026 are on track to exceed what was given in 2025, so that's a good indication. We have only taken funds from our investments to cover cash flow three times this year for a total of \$40,000, and we are hopeful that we won't need to make any more withdrawals.

Our hall rentals have been up significantly, with \$18,000 to date and an annual budget of \$20,000.

It's also important to note that the congregation has given \$6050 to PWS&D and an additional \$2650 to Presbyterians Sharing (these amounts are over and above the budgeted amounts of 1000 for PWS&D and \$25,000 for Presbyterians Sharing.) As well, \$2,060 was donated for Camp Christopher and \$2,205 for the Saturday Lunch Program.

Thank you for your generous contributions!

MISSION & OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Mission & Outreach Food Security Focus

World Food Day is recognized every year on October 16 to raise global awareness about hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity. The problem of not being able to afford or find healthy food is both a global and local Regina issue. This month we have two opportunities

to help our neighbours become more food secure.

First, our annual **Presbyterian World Service and Development appeal** runs for two Sundays, October 18 & 25. This year your gifts for PWS&D will be used for Grow Hope Saskatchewan, a project of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and several Saskatchewan denominations, including ours. Rural and urban Saskatchewan folk collaborate by purchasing crop inputs, growing crops and donating the harvest proceeds to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. Those funds are used by PWS&D and other Canadian church agencies to provide emergency food and longer-term food security assistance around the world.

How does Grow Hope work?

1. Generous farmers in Saskatchewan agree to donate land, labour, and equipment to grow a crop for Grow Hope Saskatchewan.
2. Generous donors (like First Presbyterian, Regina) help cover the cost of seed, fertilizer, weed control, and fuel to grow a crop on donated acres. It costs up to \$350 to sponsor one acre.
3. After harvest, farmers sell the crop and donate the proceeds to Canadian Foodgrains Bank. The proceeds from the sale of the crop can be as much as \$600 per acre or more. These funds may be matched up to 4:1 through an arrangement with Global Affairs Canada.
4. Funds raised provide emergency food supplies and long-term food security programs to people facing hunger across Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe. Our donations will be sent to PWS&D's account at the Canadian Food Grains Bank.

Let's see how many acres we can support through our PWS&D appeal this month!

Our second opportunity is the **ecumenical Saturday Lunch Program** on October 31. First Church will purchase groceries, make sandwiches and serve around 150 people who come for lunch that day. We have enough sandwich makers but welcome more

volunteers to help set up and serve lunch at First Baptist for two hours that day. Your donations to the 2026 Easter Mission Project raised enough funds to cover our expenses for this outreach.

Mary Jesse
Mission & Outreach Committee

YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY

Upcoming Events! *For any questions regarding the events listed below, please contact Sumi.*

SUNDAY SCHOOL: Children & Families

As we continue into the new school year, Sunday School will offer engaging and faith-building activities for children and families. Children will continue to grow in faith through Bible stories, activities, prayer, and special seasonal events. Please continue to support our children and youth with your care, prayers, encouragement, and love.

- 🎄 **Christmas Pageant Practice Begins:**
Oct 18, Children begin rehearsals for December's Pageant.
- 🎃 **Costume & Pumpkin Carving Sunday:**
Oct 25, Fall celebration with costumes and pumpkin carving.
- ✝️ **Bible Adventure Day:** Nov. 8, Bible Quiz, Find It Fast, Bible Book Challenge, Team Games, and Bible Bingo.
- ✝️ **Bible Adventure Day:** Nov. 29, Another Sunday of learning, playing, and exploring the Bible together.

YOUTH: Gr. 6 to Gr. 12

This fall, our Youth Ministry is creating opportunities for youth to build friendships, grow in faith, have fun, and serve together.

- 💬 **Monthly Youth Group:** Oct. 25, 12:15–2:30 pm; Lunch, Games, Music, Bible discussion, and Gym time in the Kennedy Room and gym.
- 🤝 **Youth Volunteering:** Oct. 31, 11:30 am–1:30 pm; Youth are invited to serve together

at First Baptist Church and share their time and care with the wider community.

- 🏀 **Youth Open Gym Day:** Nov. 14, 3:00–5:00 pm; An opportunity to play, move, and build friendships together.
- 💬 **Monthly Youth Group:** Nov. 22, Youth gather for fellowship, faith conversation, and activities.

FAMILIES & ALL AGES: The Blessing Tree

October 25 – November 22

The Blessing Tree is a family faith project designed to encourage intergenerational connection and simple faith practices. Throughout the journey, participants take part in **two simple activities—Secret Blessing and Bible Reading**. As we bless others and spend time reflecting on God's Word, our Blessing Tree will grow and flourish with hearts and leaves added each week.

- ❤️ **Secret Blessing:** Share a small act of kindness or blessing.
- 📖 **Bible Reading:** Spend time reading and reflecting on the Sunday worship Scripture.
- 🎉 **Celebrate:** November 22 – Celebrate together during coffee hour.

MESSY CHURCH

Fun & Faith for All Ages! Join us for Messy Church, a Christ-centred gathering for families and people of all ages, with crafts, activities, stories, singing, experiments, and lunch.

Saturdays: Oct. 24 • Nov. 28 | 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. | @ First Church Gymnasium

FREE • All are welcome | Come, create, explore, celebrate, and grow in faith together.

Youth and Family Ministry,
Rev. Sumi Jung



STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

We will be holding a Tacos'n'Trivia event on Sunday, October 18 at 5:30 pm. Mark your calendar and come for an evening of fun and fellowship! The Stewardship committee is planning an intergenerational fundraising event. Supper will be delicious tacos, followed by a cooperative trivia game. There's no set price. Donations are encouraged - consider what you would spend on a night out with your family. Proceeds will go to the Youth and Family Ministry Fund. Please sign up in the narthex or the gym by Oct. 11 if you plan to attend - we need to know how many tables to set up and how much food to cook!



FUNDSCRIP

The purchase of gift cards through FundScrip is a helpful source of additional revenue. It costs you nothing extra and the church gets a percentage back. A wide variety of gift cards are available. We place an order on the first Sunday of each month, or you can stop by the FundScrip table in the gym following worship to purchase gas and grocery cards. Thanks for your support!

LUNCH BUNCH

Lunch Bunch is back in full swing this fall, meeting every Tuesday in the gym. We start with Forever in Motion exercises at 11:30, followed by lunch at 12 (bring a bag lunch) and a program at 12:30.

CAMP CHRISTOPHER

*"Oh give thanks to the Lord,
for he is good;
for his steadfast love
endures forever."*

~ 1 Chronicles 16:34

A Letter of Thanksgiving!

Camp Christopher is thankful for...

- 128 campers registered for camp this summer and experienced God's love
- 14 staff who served these campers this summer
- 4 ministers who came as chaplains

- 2 staff who made the camp safe and well cared for
- Summer camper drivers who transported our children safely
- Individuals and congregations who donated to this mission
- For the Malcolm Jenkins Foundation, PA Community Foundation and Blue Cross who provided grants
- Synod who approved grants to support the camp administrator and cabin leaders
- For volunteers who painted, sewed or provided expertise to the camp
- The prayers said for this ministry
- Organizations that send campers to camp – Tri4Kids, Dream brokers, social services
- For weather that allowed us to enjoy God's creation



FRUITCAKE FUNDRAISER

Did you get a chance to taste Nick Jesson's Christmas fruitcake last December? He brought some to share at coffee time on one of the Sundays in December, and the response was quite positive. A lot of people don't think they like fruitcake very much. They think of it



as heavy, dry, and not their first choice for a Christmas treat. But after tasting Nick's fruitcake (based on his mother Marge's dark fruitcake recipe) most people were changing their minds!

If you enjoyed a taste last year, this is your chance to enjoy it again. If you missed it last year, you have another opportunity this Christmas. Nick has already purchased all the fruit and started the process of soaking it in rum and brandy. He is preparing to make about 100 cakes, and they will be available for you to buy.

A six-inch round cake will be \$40 or a ten-inch round cake will be \$100. All the proceeds from the sales will be going to First Church's Youth and Family Ministry.

The cakes will contain brandy, rum, dates, fruit, sugar, flour eggs, and spices. They will NOT contain nuts or dairy. (If you have any other questions about the ingredients, Nick will be happy to answer your questions.)

Please pre-order your cake(s) at the FundScrip table any Sunday after worship. We will have a "Stir Up Sunday" on November 22nd when you can help stir up the fruit for the last time before the baking begins. The cakes will be ready for pick-up on Sunday, Dec. 6th.

MERCY SHIPS CANADA

Joyce McKersie's son, Warren McKersie is going to be volunteering as a Biomedical Project Assistant onboard the Africa Mercy in Cape Town, South Africa from Jan. 10 – Feb. 13, 2027. Mercy Ships are such an interesting and creative way to serve others that we thought we'd share about it with the First Church community. The following information is shared from Warren's blog:

<https://mercyshipsCanada.akaraisin.com/ui/mercycygiftsfundraising/p/WarrenMcKersie27>

About Mercy Ships: Founded in 1978, Mercy Ships does amazing work to provide free, life changing surgeries, training and medical capacity building in African countries, no strings attached. It changes the lives of many who have limited access to healthcare. Besides making an immediate impact on those who get surgeries and treatment, Mercy Ships also works to equip the host nations with the training, tools and infrastructure necessary in order to offer sustainable development long after the ships depart.

Warren's Journey: My name is Warren. I served in the Canadian Armed Forces was trained and worked as an Aircraft Instrumentation and Avionics technician for 20 years. After I retired from the military I was hired by a medical sterilizer manufacturer as a field service technician. Shortly after I moved into doing the same type of work for a major hospital facility in Edmonton Alberta. Around the same time my church pastor and his wife came back from Nepal after doing missionary visitation. They showed us pictures of the area and the work being done. They also showed photos of hospitals there and I saw the conditions of the equipment they were working with. I thought to myself, I could help these facilities using my experiences and knowledge from the military repairing downed aircraft in remote locations. Problem was that I had no idea of how to go about getting connected to solve the logistical problems this all would entail.

I discovered Mercy Ships when I saw a commercial for them on Fox News. This sparked my curiosity, so I looked up Mercy Ships online. I realized this was God's answer to my question, "How can I help these people with my skills?" This will be my first trip to perform maintenance on Africa Mercy. I am looking forward to finding out how much of my experience and knowledge I will be able to use. Please consider donating to Mercy Ships Canada. Every dollar raised helps us provide life changing surgeries. Thank you so much for your support, without your help we could not do the work that we do! (If you want to donate, you can go to the blog using the link above.)

Warren's Role: As the Biomedical Project Assistant, Warren is responsible for deployment of new medical equipment and maintenance of existing medical equipment during maintenance periods and designated projects. These tasks relate to medical equipment used in the hospital including, but not limited to, radiology, pharmacy, operating rooms, clean core, intensive care units, simulation training rooms, pre- and post-operative rooms, wards, nursing stations and sterilization decontamination rooms.

A MESSAGE FROM
THE REV. DR. RICHARD TOPPING,
(President and Vice-Chancellor of the
Vancouver School of Theology)

Students care about calling: All Christians share in Christ's ongoing ministry in the world. Everyone who is baptized is called to a particular way of life. The gospel shapes us for work and witness in the world God loves in every job we do.

The story of the calling of Andrew and Simon in Mark's gospel is stunning. Jesus says, "Follow me," and they drop their nets and follow him. Dietrich Bonhoeffer noted the absence of any psychological or historical bridge to soften the force of the story. No prior conversation is recorded. There is no tea with Zebedee, their father. The text contains no aspirational language suggesting that Andrew and Simon had always wanted to travel. There is simply a summons: "Follow me," and "immediately they left their nets and followed him." What Jesus says is effective because he says it. That's a shoulder tap, to be sure.

Christians receive that shoulder tap in baptism. A name with gravity is laid upon us, "Christian," and we spend the rest of our lives trying to grow into it and live up to it by the grace of the Holy Spirit. God gives gifts to equip all Christians for lives of service to God, the church, and the world. Discernment involves discovering those gifts in community and then setting them loose in the world in service.

Some Christians are called to ordained leadership. It goes by various names: priesthood, ministry of Word and Sacraments,

or pastoral ministry. Through the Holy Spirit, God gifts and calls people to this work, and the church recognizes that call through the laying on of hands in ordination. Determining whether a person is equipped by God for this form of leadership involves at least four dimensions of calling. H. Richard Niebuhr describes them in *The Purpose of the Church* (pp. 63-66).

There is the call to faith, an initial summons to repent, turn around, believe the gospel, and live a life of grateful service to the Jesus Christ, the servant Lord.

There is the secret, or inner, call, an inward sense that one is being summoned to leadership in ministry. It may begin as a faint inkling that gradually grows into a conviction strong enough to put oneself forward.

There is the providential call, a call often affirmed by family and friends who recognize your gifts for leadership. This is not pride. It is a sober and honest assessment of what God has given for the sake of God's people and the world God loves.

And then there is **the ecclesiastical call**, when the community recognizes the gifts needed for ministry and affirms them through processes authorized by the church, culminating in ordination.

Much more could be said about the call to ordained leadership. One thing, however, is certain: God is still calling people. The Holy Spirit continues to give gifts for leadership. The risen Christ continues to woo leaders, ordained and lay alike, into service.

I sometimes ask students to consider these four dimensions of calling and to argue for the most important one. Secret: there is no single most important dimension. The exercise, however, generates good learning and thoughtful conversation.

God may be calling you to ordained leadership in the Church of Jesus Christ. Or God may be moving you to help someone close to you discover a call to ordained ministry. You see their gifts and you might say so. Discernment belongs to the whole church. It is the church's

responsibility to recognize those whom God has gifted and called to lead.

At VST, we receive all students as a sacred trust. Our task is to fan into flame the gifts that are within them. Thank you for your help.

COME TOGETHER OCTOBER MEETING

How wonderful it is to be able to lift up our gratitude to God for all the goodness given to us throughout the days and years!

Join us on October 14th, 2026, 11:00 pm to 12:30 pm (in SK), for a time of worshipping and giving thanks to God in all circumstances. The Rev. Dr. Emily Webb, writer of the worship resource, will give the message.

Please contact me at skim@presbyterian.ca if you would like the Zoom link, and I will be glad to send it to you.

Sarah Kim, Executive Director
Women's Missionary Society

October - November Calendar

Oct. 11	10:30 am	Thanksgiving Sunday Intergenerational Worship
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour
Oct. 13	11:30 am	Forever-In-Motion (Gym) 12:00 pm Lunch Bunch
Oct. 14	12:30 pm	Bible Study (Zoom)
	7:00 pm	Membership Class (Morris)
Oct. 15	6:20 pm	Band practice
	7:00 pm	Choir practice
Oct. 17	9:00 am	Directions Task Force (Zoom)
	10:00 am	Worship Committee (Morris)
Oct. 18	10:30 am	PWS&D Sunday Sunday School
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour
	5:30 pm	Tacos & Trivia Night (Gym)
Oct. 19	7:00 pm	"The Chosen" Study (Morris)
Oct. 20	11:30 am	Forever-In-Motion (Gym)
	12:00 pm	Lunch Bunch
Oct. 21	12:30 pm	Bible Study (Zoom)

Oct. 21	7:00 pm	Board of Managers (Zoom)
Oct. 22	6:20 pm	Band practice
	7:00 pm	Choir practice
Oct. 23	7:00 pm	Induction of new minister at Norman Kennedy Church
Oct. 24	10:30 am	Messy Church (Gym)
Oct. 25	10:30 am	Reformation Sunday Sunday School (Costumes!)
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour
	12:15 pm	Youth Gathering (Kennedy)
Oct. 26	10:00 am	Funeral for Brenda Thomson (Speers Funeral Chapel)
Oct. 27	11:30 am	Forever-In-Motion (Gym)
	12:00 pm	Lunch Bunch
Oct. 28	9:30 am	Fellowship Committee (Zoom)
	12:30 pm	Bible Study (Zoom)
	3:00 pm	Pastoral Care Cmt. (Morris)
	7:00 pm	Book Club (Zoom)
Oct. 29	6:20 pm	Band practice
	7:00 pm	Choir practice
Oct. 31	9:30 am	Saturday Lunch Program
Nov. 1	10:30 am	All Saints Sunday With Communion Sunday School
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour
Nov. 2	7:00 pm	"The Chosen" Study
Nov. 3	11:30 am	Forever-In-Motion (Gym)
	12:00 pm	Lunch Bunch
	7:00 pm	Mission & Outreach Cmt. (Zoom)
Nov. 4	12:30 pm	Bible Study (Zoom)
	7:00 pm	Session meeting (Zoom)
Nov. 5 - 7		Synod meeting in Saskatoon
Nov. 8	10:30 am	Sunday Worship Sunday School
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour

