

# FIRST THINGS FIRST

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

### FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, REGINA

September 2013

#### SESSION

Welcome back! I hope that you've had a refreshing and relaxing summer. Lots of good things are being planned for First Church this year! Be sure to mark your calendar for the "Welcome Back" potluck supper - look for the details under Fellowship in this newsletter.

Over the last two years, First Church has developed a plan to build on our strengths. Following a series of workshops, we have begun to implement a number of initiatives to strengthen our congregation in the areas of worship, visitation, and accessibility. That work is ongoing.

Last fall, an informative document called "A Survey of Growing Churches in the Presbyterian Church in Canada" was released. It can be downloaded online at [http://www.presbyterian.ca/geosynod/2013/2012-PCC\\_GrowingChurchSurvey.pdf](http://www.presbyterian.ca/geosynod/2013/2012-PCC_GrowingChurchSurvey.pdf), or you can go to [presbyterian.ca](http://www.presbyterian.ca) and search for Growing Churches. The survey indicates there are 6 primary ministries of growing churches: relevant preaching; inspiring music in worship; Sunday morning children's programming; local mission; corporate prayer; and pastoral care.

- Relevant preaching - We are blessed with the excellent preaching that Rev. Brad Childs provides!
- Inspiring music in worship - We have been fortunate to have Will Ireton and William Sgrazzutti providing music in worship over the summer. The Session is working on plans for the future and has agreed on a balanced approach, preserving our rich traditions while embracing the variety of musical gifts we have in our congregation. A committee is being set up to coordinate these efforts. While change is always a challenge, our

situation provides us with new opportunities. Jason Yuen, our music scholar, will be back with us this year and will begin directing the choir at the first practice on Sept. 12. If you're interested in joining the choir, please contact the church office.

- Sunday morning's children's programming - We're fortunate to have some dedicated volunteers but we need more help to provide Christian education for our children. Teachers are always needed. If you could volunteer for one Sunday, that would be a tremendous help.
- Local mission - Our Mission and Outreach committee engages us in numerous mission projects. If you would like to be a part of this committee, please contact the church office.
- Corporate prayer - Prayer for the people and activities of First Church is an important ministry to which we all contribute.
- Pastoral care - We provide a high level of pastoral care through hospital visits and our commissioned visitors. If you would like to be a visitor, either to the hospital or to those members of our congregation who are homebound or who appreciate regular visits, please contact the church office.

We are called to be joyful in our worship, tender in our life together and daring in our outreach. Thank you to the many who contribute their time and effort to the life of First Church!

Let's have a wonderful year!

Jo Szostak  
Clerk of Session

## **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

I hope that you all had an enjoyable and restful Summer vacation!

As Fall approaches, the Youth Group at First Presbyterian Church is gearing up for the new season.

We took part in many activities last year: the Food Bank Drive, leading a Youth Service, and going to the Pilot Butte Corn Maze. These are activities that will be part of our schedule again. However, we will also do some new activities, such as the "Odd Job Squad", "Drimes" and Go Karts.

First Presbyterian would like to promote the youth to take part in church services. Musical talents are always encouraged to enhance our worship experience.

Upcoming events will be posted in the Bulletin and monthly Newsletter and sent to the youth and families via email. Starting this Fall, a list of upcoming youth activities will be posted on the bulletin board across from the Youth Room.

If you have any comments, concerns, or suggestions for activities, please feel free to talk with me after worship, or email me at [www.fpyouth@sasktel.net](mailto:www.fpyouth@sasktel.net).

Joel Richter  
Youth Worker

## **WORSHIP COMMITTEE**

New flower arrangements for the Fall have been purchased for the sanctuary. They will soon be on display. We hope these add to our worship, especially as we will soon enter into Thanksgiving for all the blessing we have received over the spring and summer. The Worship committee looks forward to planning for the coming church year. The next meeting is scheduled for September 28.

Joyce McKersie  
Worship Committee

## **FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE**

WELCOME BACK POTLUCK SUPPER

Hope everyone has had a wonderful summer - relaxing, traveling, getting together with friends and family, reading a good book or just enjoying the great weather we have had.



Now it's time to catch up on our church family's activities and adventures over the summer, so the Fellowship Committee is hosting a Potluck Supper on **September 29<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm.**

Signup sheets are available in both the Narthex and gym so you can let us know how many in your family will be coming . . . and it is great to invite your friends to join us too!

Don't miss out on this opportunity for a great feast, great friends and great fellowship.

Sheila Wilson,  
Fellowship Committee

## **PLANNED GIVING AT FIRST CHURCH**

The Heart of the Giver . . .

There are countless motivations for making a planned gift. Although the stories of how planned gifts come about are as varied as the givers themselves, these stories have a common thread. From time to time, the Planned Giving Committee at First Church will share stories of individuals and their decisions to make a planned gift, and of how far-reaching the impact of these gifts can be.

The first story features an individual who is glad to relate a personal theology of planned giving but, characteristically, the donor wants planned giving, not his or her name, to be the focus of the story. "God knows what I've tried to do."

For this member of First Church – whose parents' contributions of time and energy to the church and the larger community despite difficult

economic times (while always having enough set aside for offerings on Sundays) -- it might be said that making a contribution became an ingrained part of life at a very early age. "I didn't know much about money when I was young, but I knew about the collection plate." Our story-teller learned a powerful lesson when that person's father paid neighbourhood boys to do chores who in turn used their earnings to contribute to a fund-raising effort for a special project at church.

The example set was one of respect for money, and, more importantly, the purposes to which money could be put. When this individual first worked on a small salary at jobs in towns across Saskatchewan, there was always money for the collection plate and money to save. "One of the most valuable lessons I learned was that if you expect to save money, don't put it in your pocket."

This individual has also given in countless ways, both professionally and as a member of the community. "I saw a man I respected very much who was offered an important position in a large city—a position that would have brought recognition and material success. But this person instead chose a job working on the front lines where he felt he could serve and make a real difference in the lives of people. He taught me there was more to life than prestige and making money."

Because of that example (and the family's examples of giving) our donor ultimately chose a career that focused on serving people rather than earning a large paycheck. A small-town person at heart, our contributor has called a number of Saskatchewan communities home, and has maintained a commitment to the church in these communities all the while contributing faithfully to the collection plate at First Church, to special offerings for mission work, and -- through volunteer labour and advice -- to maintenance work on our church building.

When asked why engage in planned giving, the answer was simple and heartfelt: "God has lent me so much—I hope I have used it for Him, in accordance with what pleases Him."

And when asked for advice to those considering planned giving, the response was: "First of all, think carefully about it. You don't part easily with hard-earned money. Then, planning is important—you can't give without planning. For me, God is in on the plan—He is the plan."

For this individual, the plan involves remembering extended family members, providing a contribution to charities, and "giving a good portion of one's material goods to the Church. Arrangements have been made to ensure that the gifts are anonymous—for this individual, the focus should always be on what good can be achieved with the money.

Sound planning has also enabled our donor to provide a planned gift by means of a "gift annuity" through the National church. The gift annuity provides better interest income (100% tax-free), needed to help with living expenses, than a financial institution would provide. This individual had previously planned on leaving a gift to the church as a charitable bequest in a will. But by donating the money now, by acquiring a gift annuity, our contributor is earning additional tax-free income for life, leaving a generous gift to the church upon death.

"I give what I feel I'm able and I give happily. "I never imagined I would be able to leave a planned gift, but I've always felt I've had that guiding light—even when it comes to money. I always gave what I was able to and a little bit more, and now I'm able to provide a legacy to the church communities that have played a vital role in my life."

If you would like to know more about planned giving, please contact any member of the Planned Giving Team: Donna Wilkinson (Convenor), Gordon Wiles, Jane Powell, Lisa Ann Wood, Tammy MacDonald, Jo Szostak, Ron Pugsley and Brad Childs.

Lisa Ann Wood,  
Planned Giving Committee

**CONCERT AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

Hank Knox, harpsichordist, will be performing the music of J.S. Bach on Tuesday, September 24 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets will be available for purchase at the door: \$20 adults and \$15 students and seniors. If you have questions please call the office at 306-522-9571.

**ADULT WALK**

Don't put away your running shoes just yet! Adult Walk takes place on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9:00AM beginning Tuesday, September 17<sup>th</sup>. Come and join us. For information contact Bob Wilson at 525-3889.

Rev. Bob Wilson

**A THANK YOU**

Dear Congregation of First Church,

What a blessing to receive your generous gift of \$2,863.50 from your fund raising initiative "Raise the Roofs". Session and our entire congregation would like to say a big "thank you" for this very generous donation to our fund raising efforts to repair our roof. We are thankful for your prayers and support. It is encouraging to know that your congregation shares in the concerns we have regarding our church building.

Once again, thank you for your generosity. We are forever grateful.

Sincerely,  
Cheryl MacKenzie,  
Clerk of Session  
Knox Presbyterian Church, Weyburn

**SEPTEMBER EVENTS**

<b>8</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>	<b>Worship Service</b>
<b>10</b>	10:30 AM Noon	Bible Study Freedom 55ers
<b>12</b>	8:00 PM	Choir
<b>14</b>	10:00 AM	Planned Giving
<b>15</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>	<b>Worship Service &amp; Sunday School</b>
<b>17</b>	9:00 AM 10:30 AM Noon	Adult Walk Bible Study Freedom 55ers
<b>19</b>	8:00 PM	Choir
<b>22</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>	<b>Worship Service &amp; Sunday School</b>
<b>24</b>	9:00 AM 10:30 AM Noon 7:30 PM	Adult Walk Bible Study Freedom 55ers Harpsichord Concert
<b>26</b>	8:00 PM	Choir
<b>28</b>	10:00 AM	Worship Committee
<b>29</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>  <b>5:30 PM</b>	<b>Worship Service &amp; Sunday School</b>  <b>Potluck</b>