

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

**April 2025**

**MINISTER'S MESSAGE**

As we continue to sing our way through the Season of Lent, our Lent Devotional from the SALT Project suggested an African-American Spiritual to sing this week: "There is a balm in Gilead," which we plan to sing in worship this Sunday, April 6<sup>th</sup>.

The song references a lament made by the prophet Jeremiah (8:22) where he cries out "Is there no balm in Gilead?" And this raises a number of questions for me, the first of which is "Where is Gilead?" In the Bible, Gilead refers to a mountainous region east of the Jordan River, corresponding roughly to modern-day northwestern Jordan, and sometimes used more broadly for the entire area east of the river. It's located east of Judah and Jerusalem, whose people Jeremiah was addressing with his lament.

Interestingly, the region was known for its balm (a medicinal oil) collected from "balm of Gilead" trees. And perhaps more importantly, Gilead served as a refuge for Israelites, including those from the Southern Kingdom of Judah, particularly during times of conflict or rebellion.

In chapter eight, Jeremiah is lamenting that the people of Judah and Jerusalem have turned away from God and done terrible things. He says that "from the least to the greatest everyone is greedy for unjust gain; from prophet to priest everyone deals falsely." (8:10) He says that "We look for peace, but find no good, for a time of healing, but there is terror instead."

What is about to happen in the narrative is that the Southern Kingdom of Judah is going to be conquered by Babylon. The city of Jerusalem and the Temple will be destroyed, and the leaders of the people will be sent into Exile. Jeremiah attributes their downfall to their sin and misdeeds, and although he longs for healing of the people and their society, he doesn't see any hope for them at this point.

More than 2000 years later, African-American people, many of them slaves who were suffering under hard labour and oppression without human dignity and respect, proclaimed that "There is a balm in Gilead." Perhaps they sang it in hope for the freedom and fullness of life that they longed for. Perhaps they sang it in hope for the transformation of American society towards justice for all people.

The words they sang may resonate with us today as we consider the evil and injustice that seems to be prevailing in our world. Many of us are deeply concerned about debilitating tariffs that will put many people into poverty, the destruction of human rights that we see happening in the U.S., the terrible wars that continue to rage around the world killing more and more innocent people every day, and the intentional disinformation that is increasing division, hatred, and fear. It may be natural to join in Jeremiah's lament without much hope for the future.

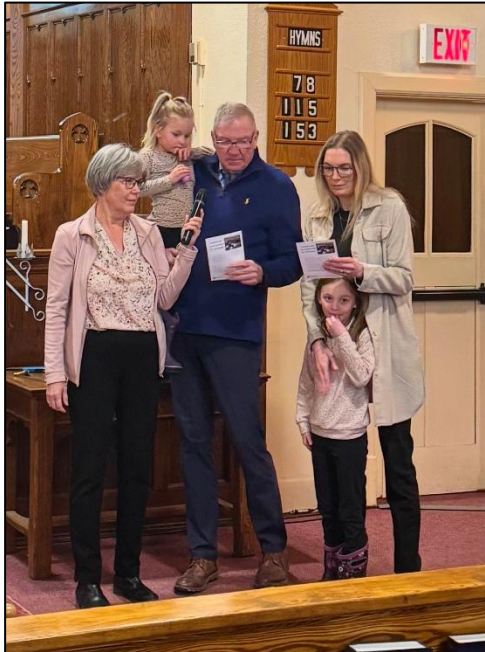
But the African-American slaves sang with determined hope in the power of God who comes to us in Jesus Christ with the mission of saving us all. I can relate to the words of the first verse in recent months: "*Sometimes I feel discouraged, and think my work's in vain, but then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again.*"

The feelings of discouragement and despair come in waves, often caused by the most recent news that I am reading or seeing on television. But the encouragement and the revival of my soul comes from gathering in Christian community to pray, sing, and attend to the good news of God in Jesus Christ. The song continues: "*Don't ever feel discouraged, for Jesus is your friend, who, if you ask for knowledge, will never fail to lend.*"

"*There is a balm in Gilead,*" as the spiritual song claims. That balm is the love and grace of Jesus Christ that can "*make the wounded whole and*

*heal the sin-sick soul.*” In this time of turmoil and uncertainty in the world, I hope that you will turn to God for encouragement and hope, and that First Church will be for you a place of refuge, strength, and hope.

Rev. Amanda Currie



*Jesse Family reading a Lenten Liturgy*



*It's a Party!*

**HOLY WEEK SERVICES AT  
FIRST CHURCH**

**Messy Easter:** All ages are invited to a Messy Church program on the theme of Easter on Saturday, April 12<sup>th</sup> from 10:30 am – 12:30 pm in the gym. There will be crafts, storytelling, music, fellowship, and lunch will be included.



**Palm Sunday:** Come sing “Hosanna!” with your church family on Sunday, April 13<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 am. Our children and youth will lead us in a Palm Parade of celebration because



Jesus is the King who comes in the name of the Lord. Even the stones will shout out!

**Maundy Thursday:** On April 17<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm, you’re invited to the Maundy Thursday potluck supper and worship in the gym, which will include the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper and a hand-washing ritual. Bring along a dish to share if you can. We would be grateful for a few more volunteers to assist with set-up that afternoon, and another four to help with clean-up. If you can help with this, please contact Donna Wilkinson at [donnaw@sasktel.net](mailto:donnaw@sasktel.net).



**Good Friday:** On April 18<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 am, we will mark the day that Jesus died on the cross with a special service in the sanctuary and online. As we remember Jesus’ passion and death, we will pray together for all those who are suffering in our world today.



**Easter Sunday:** We will celebrate the Resurrection of Christ with a joyful worship service in the sanctuary and online. Bring your family, friends, and neighbours to this intergenerational service of joy and hope on Sunday, April 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 am.



**MESSY CHURCH**



Saturday, April 12, 2025

10:30am—12:30pm

Crafts for all ages, storytelling, music, and lunch.



## SESSION

A lot of exciting things are happening in this congregation! Mark your calendars for Messy Church on April 12, and of course our Maundy Thursday potluck and communion on April 17.

May 4 is an important date, as we will hold our annual meeting following worship. Lunch will be provided by the fellowship committee, so plan to stay and participate in the meeting. There are some important topics that will be presented, so come and listen and offer your perspective!

In May, there's an exciting project taking place. Olivia Redston will be continuing her mural project in our back alley. One of the murals will be a "community" mural with the theme "What is meaningful to you?". During the Cathedral Arts Festival, community members will be invited to paint a picture, words or memory on the wall. At the same time there will be a BBQ with hot dogs and cold drinks. So, this will be an opportunity for us to connect with our neighbourhood! And at the same time, our murals will protect our walls from graffiti!

We'll be holding our Steak Night Fundraiser at Bushwackers on June 10, to raise money for expanding our child/youth ministry. Tickets are available at the FundScrip table every Sunday after worship.

On June 21, the Presbytery of Assiniboia will be meeting in Grenfell. The meeting will take place in the morning followed by a potluck lunch and a music workshop to explore the fun, upbeat songs in our hymnbook, so plan a little road trip!

Our VBS this summer will be held August 18-21, so we invite our families to participate - be sure to mark your calendar now.

Jo Szostak  
Clerk of Session



## MISSION & OUTREACH COMMITTEE

### **Sandwiches for Waterston House, May 11**

First Church provides 20 loaves of sandwiches to Waterston House on two Sundays a year, as part of an ecumenical effort. If you can bring one or two loaves of sandwiches to church on May 11, please let Mary Jesse know at [maryciesse@gmail.com](mailto:maryciesse@gmail.com). Thanks for helping with this outreach effort!

Mary Jesse,  
Mission & Outreach Convener

## YOUTH

During our monthly Youth Gathering, after lunch, we laughed a lot while we were playing the games, such as the Lent Trivia and the Cups Game! etc., and then we explored the scriptures Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13, which focus on the Temptation of Jesus in the wilderness for the Lent season. We shared our thoughts about the invitation to follow Jesus and enter the wilderness, preparing ourselves for times of testing and becoming more aware of God's presence in our lives and the world around us.

Due to the limited time, we were unable to have time for Art Therapy. However, we did discuss our youth activity plans for the remainder of the year. These include:

- Regular Group Gatherings on **April 13**
- Gym Day on **May 3rd**
- Volunteering opportunities on **May 16**
- Membership Class from **April 22 to 24**
- Outreach Project #1 from **April 22 to 24** - for the rental groups using our church building
- Outreach Project #2 on **May 24** - Cathedral Village Art Festival

Additionally, we are planning a Youth Mission for the summer. We have many fascinating events lined up!

We appreciate to **NaGyeong (Rina) Lee**, **DaYoung (Diane) An**, and **Shaylee Doolittle** for joining us and cheering us on! We sincerely thank **Rodolfo & Gigi Omolida**, who supported the lunch for the fresh ingredients of the sandwiches, which gave us a lot of energy. There are still some spots available for lunch providers for our youth. If anyone is interested, please let Sumi know.



We gathered for a regular OPEN GYM DAY on March 1st. It was a lot of fun playing Ping-Pong, Badminton, Basketball, Soccer, Pickleball, and line tag, etc. All 6th - 12th graders and young adults are welcome! The next event is on **May 3rd**, every second Saturday of the month. Bring your friends, a water bottle, and clean running shoes!

Friday. Our youth group, along with a few friends, volunteered to serve and clean for a couple of hours on March 10th. It was really impressive to see our youth demonstrate such respect, politeness, kindness, and warmth toward the community. We plan to continue volunteering at SHRM on May 16th.

Please keep our lovely youth in your thoughts and prayers. Thank you!

Sumi Jung  
Youth Leader



We had another wonderful opportunity to serve our community through Souls Harbour Rescue Mission, where Taeyang No works. They have a free meal program that runs from Monday to

### STEAK NIGHT FUNDRAISER

First Church is holding a Steak Night Fundraiser at Bushwackers BrewPub on Tuesday, June 10, from 5:30 to 7:30 pm to raise money to expand our First Church youth ministry. The meal includes a 6-ounce AAA New York strip steak, hand-cut fries, garlic toast, Caesar salad and choice of any regular 12-ounce Bushwacker brewed beer or pop, iced tea, coffee, or tea. Unfortunately for this event, no minors are allowed. Tickets are \$40. You can purchase them from Shirley in the office or stop by the FundScrip table after worship to purchase your tickets. Invite your family members, friends and neighbours... the food is excellent, and it will be fun! Let's make it a sellout!

## **FUNDSCRIP**

Sunday, April 6<sup>th</sup> is FundScrip Order Sunday. Cards ordered today will be ready for pickup next Sunday. On special for April are the Safeway/Sobeys/IGA/FreshCo grocery cards - instead of 3%, the church gets 5% back. It costs you no extra - so if you buy a \$100 card, you can purchase \$100 worth of groceries, and the church gets \$5 back. It all adds up! Place your orders at the FundScrip table during coffee time after worship. Thanks for your support!

## **SYNOD MISSION FOCUS**



We live in a world of plenty. Yet, today, more than 828 million people around the world will go to bed on an empty stomach.

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank is made up of 15 Canadian churches and church agencies working together to end global hunger. These members partner with trusted locally-based organizations in developing countries to meet emergency food needs and achieve long-term solutions to hunger. Currently, Presbyterian World Service and Development is involved in 12 projects in 5 different countries – Malawi, Haiti, Guatemala, Pakistan and Ukraine. Grow Hope is a project of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

The Synod of Saskatchewan of the Presbyterian Church is a partner in Grow Hope Saskatchewan.

Farmers donate land to grow crops and others donate money to pay for the inputs – seed, fertilizer, fuel, etc. In 2024, the Synod received enough donations to sponsor



19.7 acres, which resulted in \$11,112 in proceeds from the crops grown on those acres. Matched by

Global Affairs Canada up to 4:1, those proceeds could grow to provide \$55,000 in funding.

Please donate to support the 2025 crops of Grow Hope Saskatchewan or, if you're a farmer, donate a few acres to grow crops this year.

For more information or to donate, email or send an e-transfer (along with your contact information) to



[SynodSaskGrowHope@gmail.com](mailto:SynodSaskGrowHope@gmail.com) or send a cheque made out to the Synod of Saskatchewan to: Grow Hope Saskatchewan  
1-2338 Assiniboine Ave E., Regina, SK  
S4V 2E9

## **WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY: FOR EASTER WORSHIP**

Dear friends,

I hope you are doing well! With so much going on in the world, even the weather behaving in unusual ways, it may be difficult to keep focussed on the hope we have in God! Let us keep persevering through thick and thin, knowing that our God is our strength and our refuge!

How wonderful that we are able to come together to worship God! What a privilege it is! Let us come together and worship in anticipation of the Risen Christ who died and rose victoriously at Easter. Please join the WMS and our special guest speaker, the Rev. Jill Turnbull, writer of the Easter Worship resource,

on Wednesday April 9<sup>th</sup>, 11:00 am to 12:30 pm (SK), for our annual Easter Worship.

Please contact me at [skim@presbyterian.ca](mailto:skim@presbyterian.ca) if you would like the Zoom link, and I will be glad to send it to you. As always, join us for virtual fellowship at 10:45 pm (SK).

I look forward to seeing you all soon!

Blessings,  
Sarah Kim,  
Executive Director,  
Women's Missionary Society,  
The Presbyterian Church in Canada

### **FROM THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA:**

#### **Nominee for Moderator of the 2025 General Assembly of the PCC**

##### **The Rev. Jeffrey Murray**

The Committee to Advise with the Moderator will present The Rev.

Jeffrey Murray as the nominee for Moderator of the 2025 General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Jeff began ministry at St. Andrew's, Sackville, New



Brunswick, following his ordination and induction on February 28, 2007. He continues to minister in Sackville and raise his four wonderful children, who offer remarkable insights into the lives of young people. Jeff holds a Bachelor of Humanities from the College of Humanities, Carleton University, a Master of Divinity from Knox College, University of Toronto, and a Master of Arts from the Atlantic School of Theology.

While ministering in Sackville, Jeff served a term as president and board member of Concilio Prison Ministry, Springhill Institution. He was chair of the Program Committee for St. Luke's Renewal Centre at the Springhill Institution where inmates may experience healing, personal growth, and a new vision for life. For seven years, he volunteered with Sackville Fire

& Rescue, serving as chaplain, firefighter and president of the Firefighters' Association. He served on the Board of Open Sky Cooperative, which supports young adults living with mental health challenges or social disabilities such as autism spectrum disorder. He was also a founding member of the Sackville Refugee Response Coalition, which came together for four years in response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis.

In service to The Presbyterian Church in Canada, Jeff has been moderator for the Presbytery of New Brunswick and the Synod of the Atlantic Provinces and served as clerk for the Synod of the Atlantic Province for six years. On the national level, he was on the Grants Committee of Canadian Ministries, served on the Committee on Church Doctrine, was a listener in the Atlantic region for the Rainbow Communion, a Young Adult Representative (YAR) resource person at a few General Assemblies, and he is currently serving his second term on the Assembly Council. We wish Jeff all the best as he prepares for this important role in serving The Presbyterian Church in Canada over the next year.

In Christ,  
The Rev. Victor Kim,  
Principal Clerk of The General Assembly  
The Presbyterian Church in Canada

#### **Justice and Hope for All: A 2025 Federal Election Resource**

Canada's next federal election is scheduled for April 28. Democratic institutions rely on informed citizens' engagement. This resource contains questions about issues that The Presbyterian Church in Canada has spoken on. Grounded in our understanding that the church's role in society is to pursue love and justice for all of God's creation, this resource is intended to support personal reflection, conversation within congregations and advocacy with candidates.

What do we mean by love and justice for all of creation? Through Jesus Christ's ministry, we understand that love is the way of seeing others as God sees them and is compassion for creation. Love means seeking the best for others. Through Living Faith, we understand

justice as standing with our neighbours in their struggle for dignity and respect and demanding the exercise of power for the common good. We affirm that justice opposes prejudice in every form, rejects racism and relates to employment, education, health, rights and responsibilities. We know that God is at work when people recognize the inhumanity of war and work for peace with justice.

You are invited to use these questions as you reflect on how best to respond to God's call for love and justice in this time and place. While this resource focuses on issues that are national in scope, local issues also have a place in our advocacy with candidates and elected officials. If there is a topic not included in this resource that you would like to learn more about, you may be able to find out more about it on the [Social Action Hub](#).

Download a printable version of the topics and questions here:

[file:///C:/Users/Admin/Downloads/PCC-Federal-Election-Resource-2025%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Admin/Downloads/PCC-Federal-Election-Resource-2025%20(1).pdf). There are some printed copies in the narthex.

### **Letter from the Moderator to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship**

The Rev. Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls, Moderator of the 2024 General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, has written a letter to the Honourable Rachel Bendayan (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship) expressing her deep concern for recent changes in the Government of Canada's approach to immigration. She writes of the PCC's long history of advocating for the rights and dignity of immigrants, migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers and notes that we have commended the Government of Canada in recent years for its response to refugees through increased humanitarian support and resettlement in Canada. She states that Canada needs to continue to open its doors to refugees.

In response to recent changes to Canada's immigration policy, the Moderator requests that the Government of Canada sustain its commitment to refugees, roll back proposed cuts to refugee sponsorship levels, refrain from false

narratives that blame refugees for the housing shortage, and increase the levels of Government of Canada-assisted refugees to match or be higher than those for privately sponsored refugees.

Read the full letter here:

[file:///C:/Users/Admin/Downloads/Letter-from-Moderator-to-Minister-of-Immigration-Concerning-Immigration%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Admin/Downloads/Letter-from-Moderator-to-Minister-of-Immigration-Concerning-Immigration%20(1).pdf)

### **Ecumenical Statement of Solidarity with Palestinian and Israeli Partners**

[KAIROS](#), church leaders and heads of church agencies have signed an ecumenical statement in solidarity with Palestinian and Israeli partners, calling on the international community to hold Israel and Hamas accountable for their violations of international law. Appalled by the Trump Administration's statements supporting ethnic cleansing and further forced displacement in Gaza, this ecumenical statement urges all Canadians to act in support of the human rights and dignity of Palestinians and in opposition to continuing violations of their legal, civil and human rights by the Israeli government and its allies.

In it, they write:

"Words are not enough."

We call on church members to continue to pray and act for peace. We urge church members to share their concerns for human rights, international law, and a just peace in the Middle East with their elected leaders and with those seeking public office. We call on member churches, church constituents and all Canadians to amplify the calls of churches, faith leaders, civil society organizations and partners in the region for just peace, human dignity and international law, with strength and with urgency."

The full statement can be read

<https://www.kairoscanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Ecumenical-Statement-in-Solidarity-with-Palestinian-and-Israeli-partners.pdf>.

**SARCAN Donations for Youth** The church has set up a “drop ‘n go” account so people can make donations for the First Church youth group at SARCAN without having to wait for bottles and cans to be counted.

The church’s code is **FC1925**. You need this code to make sure that the church gets credit for your donation.

- How to:
1. take donations to SARCAN
  2. enter through the “drop ‘n go” door if there is one, or just go inside
  3. enter code FC1925 into computer and follow instructions - the printer will print out labels
  4. attach labels to bag of bottles/cans
  5. put donation in bin marked “drop ‘n go” - done!

Please talk with Bette Kelly if you have any questions. If you would like to arrange a pickup, please contact the church office.



**APRIL/MAY CALENDAR**

<b>Apr. 6</b>	<b>10:30 am</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent Holy Communion</b> (Sanctuary & Online) Sunday School
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour (Gym)
Apr. 8	11:30 am	Forever-In-Motion (Gym)
	12:00 pm	Lunch Bunch
Apr. 9	7:00 pm	Mission & Outreach (Zoom)
Apr. 10	12:30 pm	Lent Devotional (Morris/Zoom)
	7:30 pm	Choir
Apr. 12	10 :30 am	Messy Easter (Gym)
<b>Apr. 13</b>	<b>10:30 am</b>	<b>Palm Sunday Worship</b> (Sanctuary & Online)
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour (Gym)
	12:15 pm	Youth Gathering
Apr. 15	11:30 am	Forever-In-Motion (Gym)
	12:00 pm	Lunch Bunch
Apr. 17	5:30 pm	Maundy Thursday Potluck & Service (Gym)
Apr. 18	10:30 am	Good Friday Worship (Sanctuary & Online)

<b>Apr. 20</b>	<b>10:30 am</b>	<b>Easter Sunday Worship Intergenerational Service</b> <b>(Sanctuary &amp; Online)</b>
Apr. 22	10:00 am	Youth Membership Class (Morris)
	11:30 am	Forever-In-Motion (Gym)
	12:00 pm	Lunch Bunch
	1:00 pm	Youth Mission Project
	7:00 pm	Board of Managers (Zoom)
Apr. 22	10:00 am	Youth Membership Class (Morris)
	1:00 pm	Youth Mission Project
	7:00 pm	Book Club (Zoom)
Apr. 23	10:00 am	Youth Membership Class (Morris)
	1:00 pm	Youth Mission Project
	7:30 pm	Choir
Apr. 26	1:30 pm	Directions Task Force (Zoom)
<b>Apr. 27</b>	<b>10:30 am</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter</b> (Sanctuary & Online)
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour (Gym)
	12:00 pm	Hybrid Coffee Hour (Zoom/Kennedy)
Apr. 29	11:30 am	Forever-In-Motion (Gym)
	12:00 pm	Lunch Bunch
May 1	7:30 pm	Choir
May 3	3:00 pm	Youth Gym Day
<b>May 4</b>	<b>10:30 am</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter</b> (Sanctuary & Online)
	11:45 pm	Bunwich Lunch (Gym)
	12:30 pm	Annual Congregational Meeting (Zoom/Gym)
May 6	11:30 am	Forever-In-Motion (Gym)
	12:00 pm	Lunch Bunch
May 7	7:00 pm	Session Meeting (Zoom)
May 8	7:30 pm	Choir
May 10	10:30 am	Messy Church (Gym)

