

FIRST THINGS FIRST

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, REGINA

December 2018

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

In mid-October I received a phone call from a minister in Ontario (a former classmate of mine at Knox College) and she wondered if I would let my name stand if I were nominated for Moderator of the 2019 General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC). Apparently, a number of people had been discussing possible nominations during which my name had come up. My heart raced a little at the thought of moderating the General Assembly, but I remembered that a little bit of fear is to be expected when you are asked to do something you've never done before.

After some thinking, praying and consulting with others, I said "yes." In the weeks that followed at least three (and perhaps as many as seven) presbyteries nominated me for the role of Moderator. On December 3rd, the Principal Clerk of the General Assembly, the Rev. Stephen Kendall, officially announced the ballot of nominees for the 2019 Moderator that included my name as well as the Rev. James T. Hurd, Minister at Parkwood Presbyterian Church in Ottawa.

What is a moderator? In other settings such a position might be called a "chairperson" or "convener," but in Presbyterian Church polity every court, i.e., Session, Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly, has one person who presides as moderator. In a local congregation, the moderator of the Session is normally the minister of that congregation. In the higher courts of the Church, however, a moderator is elected from among the members of those courts in which case a moderator can be either a minister or a representative elder, usually for a term of one or more years.

A moderator does not make decisions for a court but rather assists the members of a court in making decisions together. The Book of Forms (section 15) states: "A moderator is judge only of order, and it is his/her part 'to announce matters,

gather the votes, and cause good order to be kept'." So, if I am elected as Moderator of the 2019 General Assembly, that will be my role at the Assembly in Waterloo, Ontario June 2-6, 2019.

Long-time Presbyterians know, of course, that serving as Moderator of the General Assembly is a year-long commitment. When the Assembly concludes in June it is dissolved, but the Moderator continues in office until the following year when a new moderator is installed. Throughout that year, the Moderator works with the Assembly Council and committees, travels across Canada visiting Presbyterian congregations and speaking at various functions, represents the denomination in ecumenical relationships, communicates with governments and officials, and speaks on behalf of the Church when possible (i.e., when the church's position on a matter is clear).

The Moderator's itinerary also includes an international trip to visit one or more of the Church's mission partners overseas. The Moderator does not leave his/her ministry position in the local congregation, but does require additional assistance with pulpit supply and pastoral coverage when she/he is travelling as the Moderator.

How does the election work? The ballots are sent to every member of every presbytery, i.e., to all ministers and representative ruling elders. The ballots are then collected in time to be counted on April 1, 2019. The candidate with the majority of votes will be the sole nominee presented to the General Assembly at the first sederunt (i.e., the first sitting of the Assembly) in June 2019.

So, there it is – exciting, scary, nerve-wracking, wonderful news! I, along with other nominees, have one important task to do in the next few weeks – to answer some questions that will be posted on the PCC's website so that people can

get to know the nominees. After that, we will just be waiting until we know the result of the election. I got used to waiting during the year before my call to First Church, so I am sure I can handle that!

Meanwhile, we have plenty to keep us occupied at First Church as we continue our ministry and mission together. Right now, I'm pretty excited about all the special things we have planned for the Seasons of Advent and Christmas at First Church. May the Spirit be at work among us as we worship and serve the living God in this place, and may the Spirit be at work in the wider church also, helping us to discern God's will for us (including the tiny matter of the next Moderator of the General Assembly).

Rev. Amanda Currie

SESSION

The busy Christmas season is upon us. Notices about the many Christmas activities, services and concerts are included in this newsletter, so please read them over and mark your calendars!

Our Advent Party last Sunday was a great success and lots of fun! (See below for photos taken at this event.)

At the congregational meeting held following worship on Nov. 25, final approval was given to our refugee sponsorship project. A pledge campaign will be launched in January to begin raising money for the project.

Our Transform Team will be meeting in the new year to discuss ways to engage the congregation in a planning process, so watch for that in the weeks to come.

As you will have learned from reading the Minister's Message (above), our Rev. Amanda Currie has been nominated for the role of Moderator of the 2019 General Assembly. The election takes place by mail over the next few months and an announcement will be made on April 1. *Congratulations, Amanda! It is a tremendous accomplishment and we wish you success!*

On behalf of the Session, have a wonderful and blessed Christmas, and enjoy the opportunity to celebrate with family and friends. Take some time to relax and enjoy!

Jo Szostak
Clerk of Session

BOARD OF MANAGERS

Thanks to everyone for your generous contributions to the work of the church! Statements were distributed last week. We're hoping to make it to the end of the year without needing to make transfers from the contingency fund.

The final total for the Rory Allen Concert, with all ticket sales in, is \$4317.37. This has been a real boost to our budget. Thanks again to Brett Pollard and his committee for making this event happen!

We've also seen a significant increase in our rental income with God's Little Blessings Child Care, and the Wascana Volleyball Club, making good use of our facilities.

The projector has been installed in the sanctuary and is operational. Funds to cover that project came from the Joyful Worship Fund. As well, a defibrillator was purchased with funds from the Tender in our Life Together Fund. It will be installed soon.

The date has been set for our annual meeting., Please mark April 14, 2019, on your calendars and plan to stay for lunch and this important meeting.

Jo Szostak
Board of Managers

MUSIC PROGRAM NOTES

The members of our music program have been busy planning and rehearsing music for Advent and Christmas. The Choir, the Contemporary Group, the Chancel Singers, soloists and guest musicians will be providing music leadership during Sunday worship and at other services and events in December. The Contemporary Group

will be introducing both new and familiar hymns and other contemporary pieces. The Choir and Chancel Singers will share in providing the Ministry of Music.

We are delighted to announce the Children's Drama – **The Word Became Flesh** – on Sunday, December 23rd with special music and congregational carols for everyone to participate. Thank you to Sheila Wilson and Bette Kelly for their leadership in working with our children and youth on this special presentation.

The Chancel Singers and Friends will be presenting **A Festival of Lessons & Carols** on Thursday, December 20th at 7:30 p.m. at First Church. The program will include choral works, instrumental pieces, readings and congregational carols. Admission is free, though a free will offering will be taken in support of First Church's sponsoring of the refugee family from South Sudan. We seek your help in promoting this event as widely as possible!

We are fortunate to have so many talented musicians at First Church. I would also like to acknowledge and to thank our guests from the wider music community who will be joining us in December –

Cade Eastwood (Trumpet)
Catherine Folstad (Cello)
Joshua Hendricksen (Baritone)
Alison Purdy (Soprano)
Michael Vance (Tenor)
Dale Wilson (Violin)

We anticipate using the new projector at the front of the church to enhance sermons, children's time topics, announcements, news and other graphical and textual materials, including congregational hymn singing.

In closing, I would like to thank the members of our Music Team for their support and their many contributions to the music program. Thanks to the Rev. Amanda Currie, Will Ireton, Gabe Omolida and Rodolfo Omolida for sharing your gifts of music and leadership with us.

William (Bill) Sgrazzutti,
Music Director

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

The Worship Committee wishes everyone at First Church blessings as you prepare during the Advent season for Christ's coming. The sanctuary has been prepared for the season with the advent wreath as a focal point. On the first Sunday of Advent, Dec 2nd, we lit the candle of Hope and celebrated Holy Communion.

You will once again be able to remember a loved one by donating towards placing a Christmas poinsettia in the sanctuary, and supporting the Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry.

Please keep in mind the following services (below) as the season progresses. We wish to thank all the families that have agreed to be a part of the Advent readings and lighting of advent candles at each of these Sunday services.

- Dec. 9 - we light the candle of Peace.
- Dec. 16 - is Advent 3 and we light the candle of Joy. We hope to have the poinsettias in place as well
- Dec. 18 - at 7:00 PM A Blue Christmas service for those who are feeling the need to express their sadness this season. Feel free to come, whatever your need is.
- Dec. 23 – We light the candle of Love as we remember that Love came down to all the people of the earth. The Choir and Sunday School have prepared a special service.
- Dec. 24 – 7:00 PM Christmas Eve with our candle light service, carols, and the Good news of Great Joy for all.

There is, as always, a need for ushers and lectors at each service throughout the year. Please speak to Marianne Woods if you can assist. Greeters are needed for each Sunday as well. Wendy Prior would be pleased to have you volunteer to help out in this area.

The Worship Committee wishes each and every one of you the Blessings of our Lord Jesus Christ this Christmas and in the coming year as we continue to worship at First Church and carry on with all the projects that have been planned.

Joyce McKersie
Worship Committee Member

MISISON & OUTREACH

Christmas Poinsettias: Remember and Reach Out You are invited to make a financial gift in memory of a loved one or in living tribute to someone this Christmas. A few poinsettias will be purchased for the church sanctuary. A list of all those remembered will be published in the Sunday, December 23 bulletin. All other funds raised will be sent to Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry.

Forms will be available in the bulletins this Sunday. Please submit your form and donation by December 16 via the offering plate or to the church office.

STEWARDSHIP

Applications Welcome for Planned Giving Projects 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 statement:

- joyful in our worship
- tender in our lives together
- daring in our outreach

This year we are moving the deadline for Planned Giving project applications to December 31, 2018. Applications will be considered by the congregation at the Annual General Meeting in April 2019.

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

FUNDSCRIP

The last order we placed exceeded \$5000 which means that the shipping is free. The church earned \$194.15 on that order! So, thanks to everyone who placed orders! We've placed the last order for 2018. The next order Sunday will be Sunday, January 6. In the meantime, we do have some gas and grocery cards on hand for sale. Visit the FundScrip table in the gym following worship.

FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

Advent Party. Our annual Advent Party was a great success. The photo booth was very popular as you can see by these photos. The full photo gallery is on the bulletin board in the gym. Check this out!



Rodolfo, Gigi, Gabe and Timo Omolida



Rev. Amanda, Shazia Ferozdin, Matthew Yakemchuk, Elijah Yakemchuk and Aina Ferozdin



"The Five Wise Women"
Kaye Hunchuk, Pat Fyffe, Joyce Rivers, Jean Koopman
and Fay Richardson



Bob & Marilyn Macdonald, Betty Green, George Madeley, Emily & Tom Ireton



Lisa Ann Wood, Kathleen Upton, Margaret & Ralph Wood

Sheila Wilson,
Fellowship Committee Convener



Clarice Walker, Reta Duncan, Carole Cann, Sylvia & Vincent Aitken



Nyabani, Elijah, Ling, Nyagai and Riko Ngor

CAMP CHRISTOHER

November 29, 2018

Dear Congregations,
Blessed Advent and Merry
Christmas from all of us at Camp
Christopher! As we finish up this year, we are
reflecting back on the summer of 2018 at camp,
as well as planning for the future of our camping
ministry.



Thank you for all the ways that you supported
the ministry at Camp Christopher this year. The
summer program included staff training, Leader-
in-Training program, seven weeks of kids'
programs for various age groups, and the
Women's Camp weekend September 7-9, 2018.
We had 244 children and youth registered for
camps this summer with 127 of those being
children sponsored through the TRI-4-KIDS-4-
CAMP program in Prince Albert.

The TRI-4-KIDS-4-CAMP Committee continued
its work, this being the first full summer since
the dissolution of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church
(the congregation from which this program
began). Although they were not able to have as
many fundraising events as in the past, they still
raised a significant amount of money and
facilitated a similar number of campers to attend
the summer camp programs. Some of the kids
who have been attending Camp Christopher
through TRI for many years have now
participated in the LIT program and two of them

for counsellors this summer. A few have also been participating in SPY weekend events over the last few years.

We had five full time staff on site during the summer and 15 counsellors who worked a variety of weeks. We also had four volunteer chaplains, three first aid volunteers, one maintenance volunteer, three liaison committee volunteers, and three other volunteers.

The Camp Christopher duffle bags were well-received this summer. These were purchased (with the generous help of several congregations) instead of Camp T-shirts, and to meet a need of many of our campers to have a proper bag in which to pack their belongings.

This summer we added a new aspect to the program because we were able to have a First Nations elder visit the camp one day each week. Although we have had lessons on Indigenous culture in the past, this was the first time we were able to have this led by an elder. Darlene Turner, who also works with the Prince Albert schools, taught beading, crafts, understanding the tee pee, and storytelling.

Funding for her honoraria and travel was paid through a grant of \$1000 from the UCC (received in the Fall of 2017) and a grant of \$4000 from the PCC (received in 2018, and intended to be used over two summers). We only used about half of the funds available this summer, so we can continue this program in 2019, and we are eligible to re-apply for the UCC funding for future summers as well. We also had a visit from Carragh Erhardt from PCC Justice Ministries. She led a Blanket Exercise with one of our camps – a version she adapted for use with younger children.

Women's Camp was a good success this year. It was noted that there was an influx of United Church women who had not attended in the past. Another United Church camp (run by the Prince Albert area Presbytery) has now closed, so some of the women involved in that camp decided to come to the Camp Christopher Women's Camp Weekend instead.

Whereas the camp site is owned by the Synod of Saskatchewan, the ministry of Camp Christopher is a shared ministry of the Synod of

Saskatchewan (Presbyterian Church in Canada) and the River Bend Presbytery (United Church of Canada). However, this relationship of shared ministry is somewhat in question at the moment as the UCC goes through structural changes in their church courts. UCC Presbyteries and Conferences will cease to exist at the end of 2018, and will be replaced by Regions.

Since the River Bend Presbytery was the body that appointed United Church representatives to our committee and provided at least \$15,000 per year in funding, we have many questions about the future. The Camp Committee made an application this Fall for continued funding from the new Region that includes Saskatchewan, but that funding was not approved due to overall lower levels of available funding. We will continue to explore possible sources of funding from the UCC with the help of our current and recent UCC representatives, and will seek to develop a good relationship with Saskatoon area UCC congregations going forward.

A bright spot of news is that we have been informed that the congregation of Third Avenue United Church in Saskatoon, which recently closed, has designated a significant gift for the ministry Camp Christopher. We are deeply grateful for being included in the congregation's mission plan.

It has become increasingly clear to the Camp Committee that we need to engage in some serious planning for the future of the camp's ministry. In terms of the maintenance, repair, and development of the camp site, we need to set priorities and make a plan that is in line with our mission as a camp and a ministry of the church. In addition, the steady erosion of funding from various sources raises questions about how we will sustain this mission. We will be starting a process of Strategic Planning before Christmas, and we ask for your prayers as we dream, discern, and plan for the future that God is preparing for our camping ministry.

I want to thank the members of the Riverbend Presbytery and the Synod of Saskatchewan and all the congregations for their faithful support for this ministry. Thank you for sharing in this vital

ministry through your gifts and your prayers. Please think of Camp Christopher when you are looking for opportunities for your children, grandchildren, and children in your congregation, and remember the opportunities for leadership training and growth available for youth and youth adults as well. We hope that in 2019 you may want to be involved in the ministry of Camp Christopher in new ways as well. There are always opportunities to visit the camp, volunteer, and share in this wonderful ministry!

Many blessings to you for your congregation's ministry and mission in 2019. We look forward to continuing our partnership with you through the ministry of Camp Christopher this year.

Rev. Amanda Currie
Camp Committee Convenor

DECEMBER EVENTS

- | | | |
|-----------|-----------------|--|
| 9 | 10:30 AM | Worship for Advent
(Advent 2 – Peace) |
| 11 | 9:00 AM | Adult Walk |
| 11 | 7:30 PM | Advent Bible Study (2 of 2) |
| 12 | 9:45 AM | Riverbend Walk |
| 13 | 9:00 AM | Adult Walk |
| 16 | 10:30 AM | Worship for Advent
(Advent 3 – Joy) |
| 18 | 9:00 AM | Adult Walk |
| 18 | 7:00 PM | Blue Christmas Service
(This special time of worship is open to everyone, especially those who are feeling a little “blue” at this time of year.) |
| 19 | 9:45 AM | Riverbend Walk |
| 20 | 9:00 AM | Adult Walk |
| 20 | 7:30 PM | Christmas Concert
(A Festival of Lessons and Carols; featuring the Chancel Singers and Friends. There will be a free will offering to support our refugee sponsorship.) |
| 23 | 10:30 AM | Worship for Advent
(Advent 4 – Love: This service will include a dramatic presentation by the children of our Sunday School, titled “The Word Became Flesh.”) |
| 24 | 7:00 PM | Christmas Eve Service
(Candles, carols and the Good News of Great Joy for all people!) |
| 30 | 10:30 AM | Worship Service
The Rev. Bob Wilson will lead worship. |

Please note the office will be closed from December 24th to January 2nd.