

**FIRST THINGS FIRST  
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER  
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, REGINA  
December 2023**

**MINISTER'S MESSAGE**

The First Sunday of Advent at First Church was a wonderful beginning for this special season of the Church Year. Many people worked together to make it a wonderful day of worship, fellowship, and fun for all. Thank you to the folks who decorated the sanctuary, set up communion, prepared meaningful music, organized and served lunch, led the Advent Party program, welcomed one another in love, and cleaned up at the end of it all. Whether you were with us in the building or on online for worship, I am glad that you were part of our celebrations.

I expect that last Sunday was especially appreciated by the extroverts among us who thrive on connecting with lots of people and lively activities. It also probably suited those of us who were feeling happy, hopeful, and joyful about this season. As we continue through the Season of Advent, I hope we will have lots of people in church each Sunday and for our special services, but we will also take some time in worship to be quieter, pausing to listen for God's voice speaking to us with messages of peace, joy, and love.



*Our Choir with Music Director, Chloe Golden*

If this season is going to be a difficult one for you – due to the loss of a loved one, struggles in your physical or mental health, loneliness, weariness, or grief – I want to encourage you to join us for the **Blue Christmas Service on Monday, Dec. 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm**. At Christmas we remember and hold on to the hope that Christ shines as the Light of the World into the darkness of our lives. We don't need to pretend that everything is wonderful and good, but we can support one another as we endure the hard things of life as well. The service will include an opportunity to light a candle in memory of a loved one.

As you plan your schedules for the next few weeks which may include parties, concerts, family gatherings, and more, do include Advent and Christmas worship as part of your plans. Invite your family and friends to some of our services, and give them an opportunity to hear God's message of love and grace in coming to us in Jesus the Christ. **Remember that December 24<sup>th</sup> will include two services this year: 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent in the morning (10:30 am) and Christmas Eve Service in the evening (7:00 pm).**

Last Sunday our focus in worship was Mary's Song of Praise (the Magnificat). As we continue through this season we will sing with Zechariah, the Angels, Simeon, and the Psalmist. We will also sing new words for "Oh come, oh come, Emmanuel" each week, written by members of



*The Omolida Family*

our Advent Devotional Study, reflecting on the themes and messages of the biblical song writers. Come and join your voice with ours as we wait and hope for the coming of Jesus into our lives and world today: *Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

Rev. Amanda Currie

### **SESSION**

We were pleased to receive Stephen and Vinuta Arawatigi and Gavin MacLean as new members of First Presbyterian Church on Nov. 26. Welcome!

Thanks to the Fellowship Committee for the wonderful Advent Party on Dec. 3! We had over 80 people participate. The food was delicious and it was a lot of fun - not to mention the great opportunity to visit! Mark your calendars for the next Fellowship event - Souper Sunday on Jan. 14!

There are some special Christmas events coming up... our Blue Christmas service will be held Dec. 18 at 7:00 pm and our Christmas Eve service will be held on Dec. 24 at 7:00 pm.

Tune in to CTV Morning Live on Thursday, Dec. 21 to hear the "Noteables" sing Christmas carols. Marianne Woods and Will Ireton both sing in this group, and it will be recorded in the First sanctuary.

Our special Christmas appeal this year will benefit Lulu's Lodge, so be sure to submit your donation along with names either "in memoriam" or in "living tribute."

The church office will be closed from Dec. 22 to Jan. 2, so please arrange to deliver any cheques prior to Dec. 22 so they can be deposited in 2023. Also, please remember that Amanda's day off is Monday, so refrain from phoning, texting, or emailing on Mondays, unless it is an emergency. Thanks!

Have a wonderful Christmas celebration and a restful holiday!

Jo Szostak  
Clerk of Session

### **WORSHIP COMMITTEE**



"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

– Isaiah 9:6

During this season of Advent and as we near the end of 2023, I would like to celebrate the members of our Worship Committee:

- ◆ Wendy Prior, who asks those in our congregation to greet at Worship services,
- ◆ Ron Pugsley, who schedules our ushers,
- ◆ Heather Mazurak, who ensures that our sanctuary looks beautiful,
- ◆ Chloe Golden, our Director of Music, who provides our Choir and Congregation with joyful and uplifting music,
- ◆ Andrew Donovan, who assists me with Communion set-up,
- ◆ Douglas Stewart, who I look to for guidance as a mentor,
- ◆ and to Rev. Amanda, our Ex-Officio member who guides us in the right direction.

Thank you to the families who are involved in the Advent readings during the Christmas season and to all those who volunteered to be Lectors throughout the Year.

Lectors are needed to read the Prayer of Illumination, Psalms and Lessons for January 2024. If you are willing to be a lector, please contact Marianne at [marianne@osac.ca](mailto:marianne@osac.ca)

Wishing each of you God's Blessings during this Christmas Season and throughout 2024. Stay safe and healthy!

Marianne Woods  
Convener, Worship Committee

### **MISSION & OUTREACH COMMITTEE**

PWS&D Annual Appeal in October raised \$2,615 for Pakistan flood relief. These funds will help with cash transfers to families for food

purchase, rebuilding damaged infrastructure, and training for climate-smart farming methods.

Lulu's Lodge Christmas Project: Support vulnerable youth in Regina by donating this Christmas in honour of a loved one. Lulu's Lodge is a transitional home for LGBTQ2S youth facing homelessness. The Lodge also serves local queer youth not living at the home who need employment, mental health, and other supports.

Financial donations will be used for programming and household operations. Gifts of toiletries, mitts, winter hats are in high demand, and can be dropped off in the church narthex until Dec 24. Christmas In Memoriam forms are in Sunday bulletins or available from the church office.

Mary Jesse  
Mission & Outreach Convener

### **PLANNED GIVING**

Planned Giving funds are available for projects that support our mission.

Our First Church Planned Giving Program is inviting applications for activities supported by our Planned Giving Funds. The project or initiative needs to support one or more aspects of our mission to be:

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

The deadline for Planned Giving project applications is December 31, 2023. Applications will be considered by the congregation at the Annual General Meeting in spring 2024.

There are a variety of ways you can apply. If you receive the church newsletter by email, we have attached a Planned Giving application form. If you receive the newsletter via regular mail and need a planned giving application form, please contact Shirley in the office at 306.522.9571 and she will mail you one. Once you have completed your application, please submit it to Shirley in the office, either by

- email to [firstpresregina@sasktel.net](mailto:firstpresregina@sasktel.net)
- by regular mail to First Presbyterian Church, 2170 Albert Street, Regina, SK, S4P 2T9, or

- by dropping your application off at the registration table if you are attending church in person on Sundays.

We welcome your proposals to further the mission of First Church!

Planned Giving Committee

### **WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY CHRISTMAS SERVICE**

Dear friends,

I bring you Advent greetings! As we prepare for the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, let us continue to pray for peace on earth and ask for God's love to prevail throughout our war-torn world!

As is posted on the WMS website, the next **Come Together event will be on December 13th, 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm (ET).**

Our guest speaker will be the Rev. Lynda Reid, writer of the Christmas worship resource. Lynda is a retired ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. She is also a member of the Order of Diaconal Ministries. During her ministry years, she was an Area Education Consultant with the WMS and then a Regional Staff person with the CNOB Synod/Synodical. Everyone is welcome to attend.

If you would like the Zoom link for this event, and are not on the participants' list, please contact Sarah Kim at [SKim@presbyterian.ca](mailto:SKim@presbyterian.ca).

I look forward to worshipping with you all!

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

### **GRASSROOTS ECUMENISM**

Re-imagining Lay People as Stewards of Doctrine

On Wednesday, January 24 at 7pm, you are invited to come to Riffel Auditorium in Campion College, University of Regina, to hear guest speaker, Rev. Dr. Karen Petersen Finch. Rev. Finch is an ecumenical theologian in the Reformed tradition who specializes in dialogue with Roman Catholic theology at the local,

national, and international levels. Her book *Grassroots Ecumenism: The Way of Local Christian Reunion*, is currently inspiring multilateral dialogue among lay people in the West Island of Montreal.

If you would like to view the lecture on-line, please follow this link:



### **A SERVICE OF REPENTANCE, HEALING AND HOPE**

This service was last Sunday (during our Advent party), but the video is available to watch online: <https://presbyterian.ca/2023/10/27/a-service-of-repentance-healing-and-hope/>



The 2023 General Assembly adopted a Confession regarding the ways in Service of Repentance, Healing and Hope flyer which The Presbyterian Church in Canada has silenced, mistreated and slandered the “ethnic contingent” of the church. Following the Assembly’s direction, on Sunday, December 3, 2023, at 3:00 pm (ET), a Service of Repentance, Healing and Hope will be held at St. Timothy

Presbyterian Church, located at 106 Ravenscrest Dr., Etobicoke, Ontario. This service will also be live-streamed so that Presbyterians across the country may be able to participate.

As the church begins a new year with the First Sunday of Advent, we pray that this service of repentance will lead to a renewed journey of healing and hope within all parts of our church.

The service will feature leadership from the diversity of our denomination, including the Rev. In Kee Kim of St. Timothy Presbyterian Church, who will preach the sermon and the Rev. Drs. Heather Vais and John Vissers.

The service will be live-streamed and recorded for those who cannot attend in person. The link is <https://timothy-pc.com/repentance/> or visit the congregation’s website, <http://timothy-pc.com/>.

### **A JUST AND LASTING PEACE**

The Presbyterian Church in Canada joins in prayer for the people of Palestine and Israel as they face war, danger and uncertainty.

Amidst the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, Palestinian farmers residing in the West Bank are gearing up for their olive tree planting season. The fields have been prepared for the orchards since before October of this year. The Joint Advocacy Initiative (initiated by our local partners, the East Jerusalem YWCA/YMCA), which oversees the campaign, has confirmed that the planting will proceed despite security concerns. However, the number of trees planted will be reduced to 15,000. The farmers will handle the planting themselves. The Presbyterian Church in Canada has sponsored the planting of 261 trees in Bethlehem and Hebron between 2022 and 2023. The PCC is accepting donations for the Olive Tree Campaign, and you can contribute to this campaign, which will help Palestinian farmers to replant their destroyed olive orchards.

Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D) is planning humanitarian assistance that will be provided through members of the ACT Alliance. PWS&D’s humanitarian response will assist with shelter, food, livelihoods, emergency health, psychosocial and mental health support, as well as cash assistance to allow people to purchase the goods they require.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada asks that people pray for all who are affected and threatened and for an end to violence and a just peace in the land of Christ’s birth.

#### **Prayer to end violence**

God of truth, mercy and peace, God of life and of reconciliation, we mourn the suffering and murder of your people, and we pray for a just peace and reconciliation for the people of Palestine and Israel who have endured the burden of violence and conflict for so long.

Console those who grieve, heal the injured, comfort those who are alone and afraid, protect those who are held hostage, and restrain those who would cause more violence or act cynically for political gain and power.

Let wisdom settle on your churches and on the governments and leaders of this world so that justice is sought, reconciliation found, peace established, and security provided for all.

In the name of Jesus, we pray.  
Amen.

**OPEN CALL FOR PHOTOS:**  
**Planting Seeds of Hope**

*“The kingdom of God is as if a person would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow and the sower does not know how.” - Mark 4*

Curled up inside the smallest seed is the potential for future growth of life, nourishment and beauty. Jesus uses seeds when he speaks of the mysterious potential of the reign of God to grow among us in life-giving ways from even the smallest things. Actions, words, decisions, gifts, and ministries plant seeds that, unbeknownst to us, will grow and bear fruit in ways we could never ask for or imagine.

Is there a community garden or Canadian Foodgrains project associated with your ministry? Is a new generation of young people being nurtured by a creative ministry you participate in? Is there a flower growing from the stonework of your worship space that evokes God’s unexpected grace and power? Is there an image of the Lord’s Table set with bread and wine made from the fruit of the field that testifies to God’s presence?

We are asking for high-resolution photos taken horizontally (not portrait but rather landscape) for use in the 2025 calendar, the newspaper and other resources. The photos should depict how we, in the PCC, see the reign of God growing in the world as seeds of hope and potential.

Click on the link below to send your photos and a description. If you’d like your photos to be considered for the 2025 Wall Calendar, please send them by February 15, 2024.

Cut and paste the following link into a browser to submit your photos.

<https://form.jotform.com/220324249628960>.

**December Calendar**

<b>Dec. 10</b>	<b>10:30 am</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent</b> (Sanctuary & Online) Sunday School
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour (Gym)
Dec. 12	7:00 pm	Advent Study (Zoom)
Dec. 13	2:00 pm	Advent Study (Morris Room)
	7:00 pm	Board of Managers (Zoom)
Dec. 14	7:15 pm	Choir
<b>Dec. 17</b>	<b>10:30 am</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent</b> (Sanctuary & Online) Sunday School
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour (Gym)
	12:00 pm	Youth Group
Dec. 18	7:00 pm	Blue Christmas Service (Sanctuary)
Dec. 19	7:00 pm	Advent Study (Zoom)
Dec. 20	2:00 pm	Advent Study (Morris Room)
Dec. 21	7:15 pm	Choir
<b>Dec. 24</b>	<b>10:30 am</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent</b> (Sanctuary & Online) Sunday School
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour (Gym)
	7:00 pm	Christmas Eve Service (Sanctuary & Online)
<b>Dec. 31</b>	<b>10:30 am</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Christmas</b> (Sanctuary & Online)
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour (Gym)
Jan. 3	7:00 pm	Book Club (Zoom)
Jan. 4	7:15 pm	Choir
Jan. 5	1:30 pm	Anniversary Committee (Morris Room)
<b>Jan. 7</b>	<b>10:30 am</b>	<b>Worship with Holy Communion</b> (Sanctuary & Online) Sunday School
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour (Gym)

## **Growing our Vision: Seeds of Abundant Joy Application Process**

- This process is designed to align with the annual congregational planning process.
- Applications are to be received in the Church office by December 31st.
- The Stewardship Committee reviews applications, considers money available, and develops recommendations.
- The Stewardship Committee presents all applications, with recommendations, to the joint Board/Session meeting in January/  
February.
- All applications are forwarded from the joint Board/Session meeting, with recommendations, to the congregational Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- Applications are considered for approval by the congregation at the AGM.
- Other applications arising during the remainder of the calendar year may be considered as funds are available. For amounts up to \$2000, the Session may approve projects. For amounts over \$2000, congregational approval is required.

**Growing our Vision: Seeds of Abundant Joy  
Application Form for Funds**

Name/Group \_\_\_\_\_

Contact: (Person Responsible) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe your Project: (Attach supporting documents if necessary)

How does this further the Mission of the Church:

Joyful in Worship \_\_\_\_\_ Tender In Life: \_\_\_\_\_ Daring in Outreach \_\_\_\_\_

Amount requested: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Forms due December 31st of each year to the office of First Presbyterian Church, 2170 Albert Street, Regina SK S4P 2T9. Completed forms can also be emailed to [firstpresregina@sasktel.net](mailto:firstpresregina@sasktel.net)