

**FIRST THINGS FIRST
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, REGINA
February 2025**

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Last month we enjoyed a wonderful celebration of our congregation's 100th Anniversary. Particular thanks are due to the Anniversary Committee for all their efforts to make it a joyful and meaningful weekend. Thanks also to everyone who participated in the Birthday Party and Talent Show, the special worship service with guest preacher, the Rev. Brad Childs, and the catered meal and program that we shared on Sunday, Jan. 12th.

While it was fun to look back and remember some of the highlights of First Church's past ministry, our call now is to keep our eyes focused on the present and the future, paying close attention to what God is calling us to do today and tomorrow.

This Sunday, Feb. 9th, our Gospel text will be from Luke 5:1-11 in which Jesus guides some fishers (Simon & Andrew) to let down their nets in the deep water for a catch. In the moment before the tired fishers follow Jesus' instructions, they initially respond with some skepticism. Simon says, "We've worked all night long but have caught nothing." It reminds me of an oft-spoken response to a new mission proposal at church: "We've tried that before. It didn't work."

As the Anniversary Committee read through decades of First Church's history to prepare for our celebration, we came across many accounts of mission and ministry adventures over the years. Some were effective and successful, and others didn't work out so well. First Church tried lots of things to grow the congregation's ministry and to reach out in love to our neighbours, and the results were mixed.

But today, in the context of our very different world than First Church knew in the 1950s and 1960s, with a smaller congregation, a large and expensive building, and a community around us that desperately needs to hear the good news and experience God's love and grace through

us, we are still being instructed to "let down our nets for a catch."

We need to remember that when Simon and Andrew let down their nets - even with their obvious doubts about the likelihood of success - their efforts resulted in so many fish being caught that their nets began to burst, and they had to call James and John to help bring in all the nets!

I wonder where Jesus will direct us to let down our nets at this time in our congregation's history. And I wonder if we'll have enough faith to give it a try.

Please do join us this Sunday, Feb. 9th after the Souper Sunday Lunch as we work together on clarifying our mission priorities going forward. This is a follow-up to the work we began in November, and we need your voice, perspective, and ideas as we listen together for the mission priorities that Jesus' is calling us to take up at this time.

Let's not be afraid, but give thanks because Jesus has plans for us to be fishing for people today and tomorrow. Let's embrace our mission with hope, and follow Jesus where he will lead us.

Rev. Amanda Currie

SESSION

Thank you to everyone who participated in the 100th anniversary celebrations! And a special thank you to those who put so much time and effort into putting it all together! The birthday party was a lot of fun, the anniversary service was inspiring, and the dinner was a great celebration! Everyone was engaged and had a good time. The whole weekend was a testament to 100 years of faithful witness!

As we look forward to the future, the Directions Task Force is continuing its work. One area of focus is discerning the mission priorities of the

congregation. In order to help with our building discussions, we need to have a vision of what God is calling us to do as a congregation. Building on the work from Nov. 3, we will be having a further discussion on Feb. 9 following worship. So come to Souper Sunday, enjoy a homemade soup lunch, and take part in this important discussion that will help us narrow down our mission priorities.

The second area we are working on is related to the possibilities for our church building. Clarifying our mission priorities will help us understand what we need in a building. We are investigating a number of different possible directions for the congregation to take. The PCC is working on providing grants for congregations to carry out feasibility studies. So the Task Force will be doing the background work necessary to put together a Request for Proposals to choose a company that could do a feasibility study and help us discern which direction might work best for us.

Be assured that the Directions Task Force is working to put together information that will help the congregation make a decision about a path forward. We will keep you informed as we work through this process!

Jo Szostak
Clerk of Session

MESSY CHURCH!

**A chance for families to have fun,
explore faith and enjoy a meal!**



**Join us for Messy
Church on the 2nd
Saturday of the
month 10:30-12:30**

Next one: Feb. 8th

Did you enjoy the Messy Church programs we've had over the last few months? Did you plan to attend, but missed out because of illness or scheduling conflicts? Were you thinking of inviting your grandchildren, neighbours, or friends to this fun and engaging intergenerational program?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, we hope you'll mark down the dates for Messy Church at First Church in 2025. We plan to gather on the 2nd Saturday of most months from 10:30 am – 12:30 pm, including lunch. The dates will be Feb. 8, Mar. 8, Apr. 12, May 10, Sept. 13, and Oct. 11.

Speak to Rev. Amanda if you'd like to support the program by helping out with making/serving lunch.

THE SEASON OF LENT

(March 5th – April 20th)

Shrove Tuesday

You're invited to a Pancake Lunch on Tuesday, March 4th at 12:00 pm in the gymnasium.



Join the Lunch Bunch for this Mardi Gras meal on the Eve of the Season of Lent. The cost will be \$5/person. Please let Sheila Wilson know that you plan to attend so we're sure to make enough pancakes.

Ash Wednesday

The Season of Lent begins on Wednesday, March 5th. We will be marking the beginning of this penitential time in the Church Year with an



Ash Wednesday Service in the sanctuary and online at 7:00 pm on March 5th. It will be a reflective service with prayer and singing, as well as the

imposition of ashes. You can choose to receive a cross of ashes on your forehead or hand as a reminder of your human frailty and an assurance that you are a beloved child of God.

Lent Devotional

Pick up a copy of the Lent Devotional: "**Lift Up Your Voice: Singing Through Lent and Easter**" from the SALT Project, and use it for your personal devotions and/or join in the group



devotional time on **Thursdays from 12:30-1:30 pm in the Morris Room**. Meetings begin on Thursday, March 6th and continue until Thursday, April 10th. (Joining us in the Morris Room will be ideal because we will be singing together. But there will also be a link to join via Zoom for those who need it.)

“All of creation,” wrote the twelfth-century German abbess and composer, St. Hildegard of Bingen, “is a song of praise to God,” a swirling symphony all around us.

“To sing is to pray twice,” St. Augustine, the fourth-century North African bishop, is said to have once remarked – that is, first praying through the song’s words, and second through its music.

And for Martin Luther, next to theology, music is the greatest art: “For if you want to revive the sad, startle the jovial, encourage the despairing, humble the conceited, pacify the raving, mollify the hate-filled... what can you find that is more effective than music?”

This Lenten season, why not take the Christian musical treasury as your guide, this sacred art, thousands of years old, in which big ideas and beautiful melodies come together?

In this devotional, each week, biblical texts and beloved songs inspire practices you can try yourself or with the devotional group at First Church. As the days lengthen, the birds will sing – and so will we, strengthening our spirits, praying twice, and joining in with creation’s symphony of sorrow and joy, anguish and comfort, death and new life.

Lift up your voice, and sing!

Holy Week

Looking ahead to Holy Week at First Church, plan to join us for these special services:

- Maundy Thursday Service and Potluck Supper on Thursday, April 17th at 5:30 pm in the gymnasium.
- Good Friday Worship on Friday, April 18th at 10:30 am in the sanctuary and online.
- Easter Sunday Worship on Sunday, April 20th at 10:30 am in the sanctuary and online.



Holy Week

WORSHIP COMMITTEE



Ephesians 4:32

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”

The Worship Committee met on Saturday, February 1st to make plans for

upcoming services. The first Sunday in Lent is March 9. I have been in contact with several families in our congregation to read. Thank you for your willingness to participate.

Scripture readers are needed for the months of March-June. We are very fortunate to have many members of our church family who are willing to read on a regular basis. For those of you who are new to First Church, 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. Readings are e-mailed by Shirley Durell, our Office Manager, in advance to the reader participating for that week and a copy is left in the narthex as well. Please contact Marianne Woods at 306-541-9358 or marianne@osac.ca if you are willing to participate.

Two greeters are needed each week from 10:00 10:30 am, to welcome those attending and make them feel ‘at home’. If you would be willing to participate occasionally, please contact Wendy Prior in person or email kwprior@gmail.com. Your help would be greatly appreciated.

Ron Pugsley and his team of ushers - Murray Kyle, Alfred Ferozdin, Keith Prior and Andrew Donovan, do a splendid job of assisting with the elevator and chair lift, supporting worshippers with mobility needs, and gathering the offering during worship. If this is something that interests you, please contact Marianne or Ron to assist. There are times during the year when your help would be appreciated, and there is ‘on the job’ training!

Holy Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of each month from January-June and September-December. At present, Marianne, Andrew, and Rev. Amanda look after preparing the bread, wine and juice and setting up the Communion table in the Sanctuary the day before. Those of us who participate find it to be a very meditative and reflective time. If you would like to be part of this meaningful task, please contact Marianne.

Thank you to all of those who provided musical offerings during the Christmas season and in January. This includes the Choir, our Music Scholars, and soloists. Our Thursday Choir rehearsals have resumed for 2025, beginning at 7:30 pm. New members are welcome, please come by if you are interested!

Wishing each of you God's Blessings!

Marianne Woods, Convenor, Worship Committee

MISSION & OUTREACH COMMITTEE

The Advent In Memoriam project for our Refugee Sponsorship Fund raised \$12,000, including one gift of \$10,000. These additional funds allow us to meet our sponsorship obligations. Thank you to all who participated.

Saturday Lunch Program Thank You: Our energetic First Church volunteers did a great job of preparing food and hosting guests last weekend. Many guests enjoyed sandwiches, hot chocolate, coffee, and a warm spot to sit on a very cold day. Your donated toiletry items and knitting were very popular too! We host again on June 14 and will ask for helpers in the spring.



PWS&D Special Offering: Our special offering for Presbyterian World Service & Development, our denomination's development and relief agency, runs from February 2 to 16. Through PWS&D, Canadian Presbyterians work with local partners in several countries, joining in their efforts to improve food security, community health, vocational training and so many other needs. To donate, mark your Sunday offering or your e-transfer with "PWS&D".

Mary Jesse
Mission & Outreach Convener

LUNCH BUNCH

Join the Lunch Bunch seniors group on Tuesdays. Forever in Motion exercises are at 11:30, followed by lunch at 12 and a program at 12:30. On Feb. 11, Marianne will share love songs with us for Valentine's Day. On Feb. 18, Sharon Miller will share pictures and stories from their river cruise! On Feb. 25, we will celebrate February birthdays, and Amanda will provide a program. Bring your bag lunch and join in! Then on March 4, we will celebrate Shrove Tuesday, and the Fellowship Committee will prepare a pancake lunch!

YOUTH

Last December, on Christmas Eve, the Youth Handbell Choir, led by Cari Kooger Vixamar, celebrated Jesus' birth with beautiful sounds. We sincerely appreciate her contributions.

During the youth gathering, we explored the true meaning of Christmas, exchanged gifts, decorated a biblical tree, and completed Nativity puzzles together.



Aksa & Al Yakemchuk and Rodolfo & Gigi Omolida, who provided the delicious sandwiches and pizza lunch for our gathering! We still have some spots available for lunch providers for our youth. If you are interested, please let Sumi know.



JANUARY 19 FEBRUARY 16 MARCH 16 APRIL 20 MAY 18 JUNE 15		ALL 6 th – 12 th GRADERS ARE WELCOME
2025 YOUTH MINISTRY at FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH		12:15 PM – 2:30 PM KENNEDY ROOM FOOD, FELLOWSHIP, SNACKS, BIBLE DISCUSSIONS, GAMES & MORE!

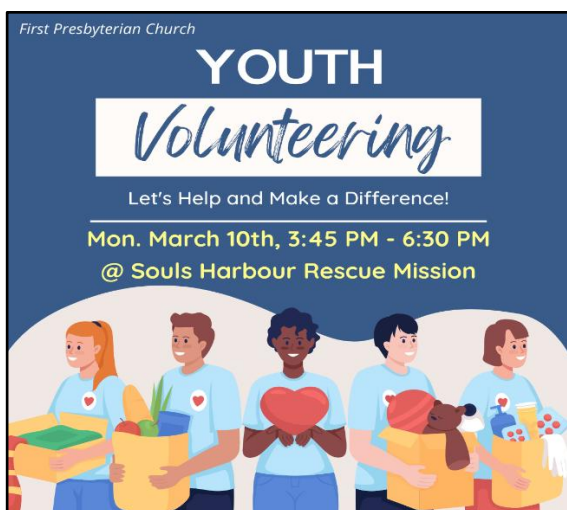


In January, at the monthly youth gathering, we surprised Mika for her birthday and then explored Bible characters, starting with Abraham, the father of faith, and following them step by step through their faithful journeys with God.

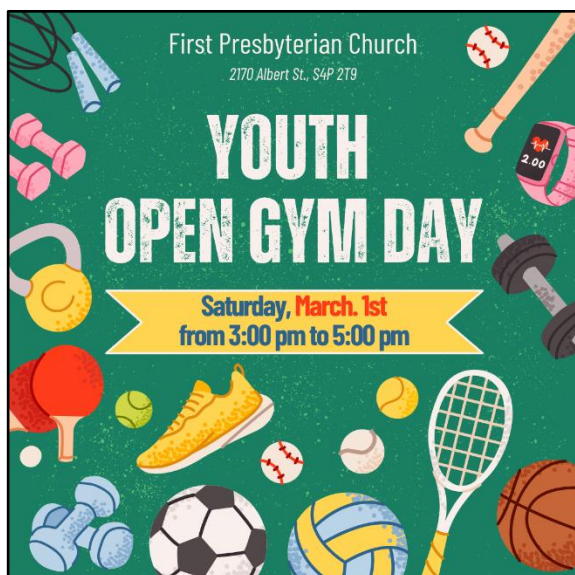
We also enjoyed an Art Therapy session led by BanSeok (Peter) Kim and SangHyuk (Joshua) Lim, who majored in counselling. We appreciate

Last, but not least, there was a wonderful opportunity to serve our community through the Ecumenical Lunch program on Feb. 1st. The kindness of our youth will continue to be shared with our community in March.





YOUTH OPEN GYM DAY - On Saturday, March 1st, from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM, All 6th - 12th Graders and Young Adults are Welcome. Bring your friends, a water bottle, and a clean pair of runners!



Sumi Jung
Youth Leader

FUNDSCRIP

Did you know that we started using FundScrip to raise money in October of 2011, and since then, we have earned more than \$17,000 for First Church? It is such an easy way to raise money for the church and we'd like to encourage more people to participate.

For example, if a family bought \$300 worth of grocery cards, that would earn 3% or \$9 for the church. You would still be able to buy \$300 worth of groceries using the cards! If you bought \$300 worth of cards every month, that would be over \$100 in a year! If 50 people in the congregation did that, First Church would earn over \$5,000 in a year.

There is a wide range of gift cards available - groceries, gas, restaurants, and all kinds of retail stores. Some cards earn 5%, 8% or even 10%, and there are specials every month.

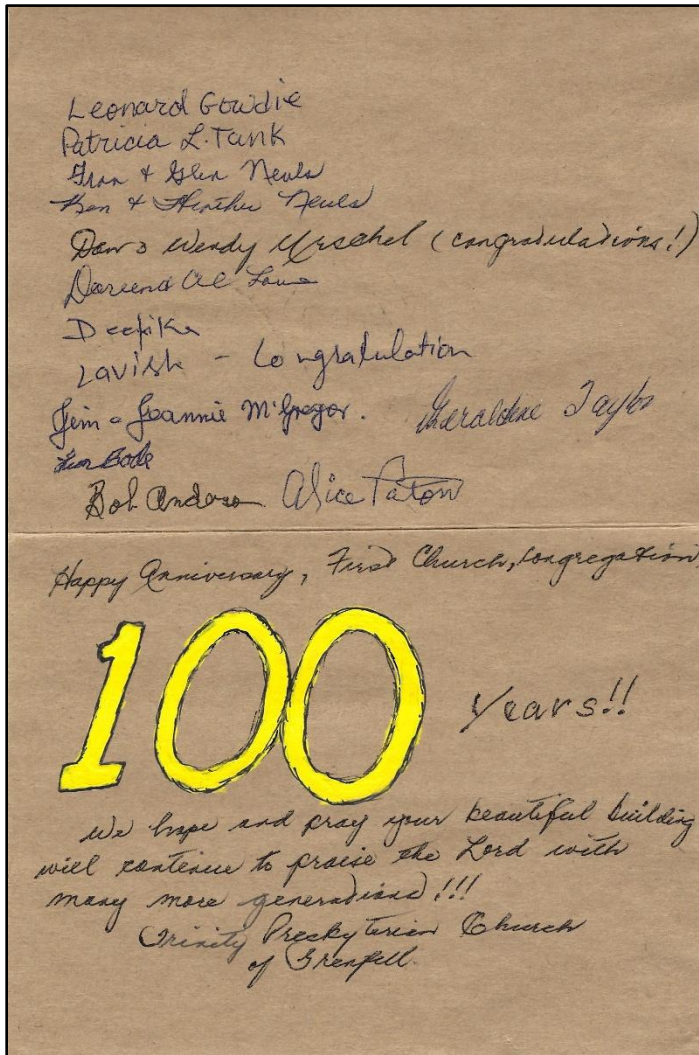
Our next Order Sunday will be Sunday, March 2. So, we hope that you will place an order. Your cards will be ready for pick up the next Sunday. We also keep a small inventory of grocery and gas cards on hand so that you can purchase them directly on Sunday at the FundScrip table in the gym.

Every purchase helps! Thanks for your support!

100TH ANNIVERSARY

First Church - First 100 years: Here's a little anecdote from our history! As you sit in our sanctuary, take a look at the beams above you! Charles Sissons, who specialized in working with heavy beams, came up from the U.S. in 1926 to install our beams! Charles Sissons was the grandfather of Beth Tarr and Doug Brownlee! As the family moved around, they left a daughter in Saskatoon and another one in Regina. Bertha (who preferred to be called Bunny) Brownlee and her husband ran the Brownlee drugstore a few doors down from the church (where the art gallery is today). Bunny Brownlee was the mother of Beth and Doug. Thank you to Beth for sharing this interesting piece of First Church history!

We received this 100th anniversary card from Trinity Presbyterian Church, Grenfell, signed by the congregation!





Read the full call for a permanent ceasefire here: <file:///C:/Users/Admin/Downloads/Joint-Ecumenical-Call-for-Ceasefire.pdf>

COME TOGETHER
“The PCC, Colonization and Residential Schools”

Dear friends,

On this cold and blustery winter day, I hope you are well and keeping warm!

Our next Come Together event will be on February 12, 2025, 12:00 pm to 1:30 pm (SK). The topic is “The PCC, Colonization and Residential Schools”. We are pleased to have Katharine Sisk, Senior Program Coordinator of Justice Ministries of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC), speak about this very important and sensitive topic about our church (the PCC) and the Indigenous People of Canada. Please contact me at skim@presbyterian.ca if you would like the Zoom link, and I will be glad to send it to you.

You are welcome to join us for a time of virtual fellowship from 11:45 pm (SK).

Blessings,

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

NEWS FROM THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA:

Welcoming the temporary ceasefire on January 9 this year between Israel and Hamas, the Moderator of the 2024 General Assembly, the Rev. Dr. Pat Dutcher-Walls, co-signed a letter along with other church leaders from the Anglican Church of Canada, The United Church of Canada, and the Evangelical Church in Canada. Noting that this was a “first step and potentially a meaningful one toward a permanent ceasefire and peace in this fractured land, the letter goes on to state that as “Christian leaders, since October 7, 2023, we have repeatedly called for a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, for the immediate and safe release of all captives, humanitarian aid for Gazans, and the safe return of Gazans to their homes and neighbourhoods.”

February/March Calendar

Feb. 8 10:30 am Messy Church (Gym)
1:00 pm Pastoral Care Cmt (Morris)

Feb. 9 10:30 am 5th Sunday after Epiphany
(Sanctuary & Online)
Sunday School
11:45 am Souper Sunday Lunch & Mission Exercise (Gym)

Feb. 10 No Membership Class Tonight

Feb. 11 11:30 am Forever-In-Motion (Gym)
12:00 pm Lunch Bunch

Feb. 13 7:30 pm Choir

Feb. 15 10:00 am Directions Task Force (Zoom)

Feb. 16 10:30 am Intergenerational Worship
(Sanctuary & Online)
11:45 am Coffee Hour (Gym)
12:15 pm Youth Gathering (Kennedy Room)

Feb. 17 7:30 pm Membership Class (Morris)

Feb. 18 11:30 am Forever-In-Motion (Gym)
12:00 pm Lunch Bunch

Feb. 19 7:00 pm Board meeting (Zoom)

Feb. 20 No Choir Practice Tonight

Feb. 22 10:00 am Welcome & Inclusion Team
2:30 pm Youth Fun Day (@ District 3)

Feb. 23 10:30 am 7th Sunday after Epiphany
(Sanctuary & Online)
Sunday School
11:45 am Coffee Hour (Gym)

Feb. 24 7:30 pm Membership Class (Morris)

Feb. 25 11:30 am Forever-In-Motion (Gym)
12:00 pm Lunch Bunch

Feb. 26 7:00 pm Book Club (Zoom)

Feb. 27 7:30 pm Choir

Mar. 1 3:00 pm Youth Gym Day (Gym)

Mar. 2 10:30 am Transfiguration Sunday
(Sanctuary & Online)
Sunday School
11:45 am Coffee Hour (Gym)

Mar. 3 7:30 pm Membership Class (Morris)

Mar. 4 11:30 am Forever-In-Motion (Gym)
12:00 pm Lunch Bunch
Shrove Tuesday Pancake Lunch

Mar. 5 7:00 pm Ash Wednesday Worship
(Sanctuary & Online)
8:00 pm Session Meeting

Mar. 6 12:30 pm Lent Devotional Group (Morris)
7:30 pm Choir

Mar. 8 10:30 am Messy Church (Gym)

Mar. 9 10:30 am First Sunday in Lent
(Sanctuary & Online)
Sunday School
11:45 am Coffee Hour (Gym)

Mar. 10 3:45 pm Youth Volunteering (@ Souls Harbour)