

**FIRST THINGS FIRST
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, REGINA
JANUARY 2021**

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

As I write this message, we are about to begin the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Since I am a committed ecumenist who longs for the unity of the whole Christian Church, this is often a high point of the year for me. I look forward to ecumenical gatherings for worship, prayer, and dialogue, and the opportunities to gather with Christian friends and colleagues from many Christian traditions.

Of course, this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will be different, just as everything has been different during the Covid-19 Pandemic. We won't be able to meet together in our churches, but we will encounter one another online. I'm looking forward to sharing an ecumenical hymn sing from First Church – an offering of singing and praying for the unity of the church – on Sunday, January 17th at 2:30 pm on our FirstPresbyterian Regina Facebook page. Throughout the week, we'll join others across Saskatchewan in an ecumenical Bible study by Zoom. And many of us will participate in a WPCU online service that will be hosted by the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism in Montreal on Sunday, January 24th. (Details about all these opportunities are included later in this newsletter.)

The theme for the 2021 WPCU is based on John 15:5-9 "Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit." You may remember that this is the passage in which Jesus presents the metaphor of the Vine and the Branches. Christ is the vine, and we are the branches that must abide in him, staying connected to our Lord in order to be fed and strengthened in faith. It is only through our reliance on Jesus that our lives and ministries will bear fruit. Think of the "fruit of the Spirit" that Paul lists as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and more.

The Vine and Branches image reminds us that we cannot live and love through our own power alone, that all our ministries flow from Christ's

love and power. It also reminds us that when we are connected to Christ, we are also connected to one another. And when we are connected to one another, we are connected to Christ who makes us one and helps us to produce an abundant harvest together.

This year has been difficult in so many ways, and one of the greatest difficulties has been the inability to gather together safely in our Christian communities (whether as congregations or ecumenical gatherings). But we have been learning how to stay connected with each other and with Christ in new and creative ways. We continue to worship, we continue to pray together, we continue to reach out in love and mission to our neighbours, and we even try to extend our reach and make new connections through online ministries.

I am grateful for the ways that the family of First Church has maintained our connections to one another and to God during these difficult months. But I'm also aware that some have drifted away somewhat, whether due to the challenges of navigating online worship, meetings, and other gatherings; because these connections pale in comparison to what it is like to come together in-person; or because you've simply gotten out of the habit of doing church.

So, I want to invite you again today to join in our gatherings. Please do be in touch if I or someone else from the church can help you with technical aspects of joining in online. Or if online meetings just do not work for you, please do read along with our worship services and sermons. Please do phone me, or your elder, or another church friend to connect.

And for those of you who continue to be deeply engaged in our ongoing ministries during these months, consider reaching out to someone that you haven't seen or heard from in a while. Let them know that you are thinking of them, and keep the connections between us that nurture our spirits and link us up with Christ who is the

source of our life and hope. In this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, take a moment to pray for unity between diverse Christians and Churches also, and consider reaching out to a friend from another tradition in love, respect, and acknowledgement that we all belong to God and to one another.

May God strengthen the Vine and all its branches during these months of challenge so that even now our ministries will produce good fruit.

Rev. Amanda Currie

SESSION

In light of the action of the provincial government to extend the current COVID restrictions to the end of January, the Session has decided to extend the suspension of in-person worship and facility rentals until Feb. 4, 2021. A further decision will be made at the Feb. 3 Session meeting.

The Session has approved the designation of January 31 as Legacy Sunday and a special Ash Wednesday service to be held Feb. 17 at 7:00 pm.

Jo Szostak
Clerk of Session

BOARD OF MANAGERS

First Church has received a substantial bequest from the estate of Elizabeth and Larry Kitson. Elizabeth's will stipulates that First is to receive 7% of the estate, which is to be invested with the proceeds supporting the maintenance and repair of the church property. We have received the initial payment (about 2/3 of the total) of \$173,609.54. These funds have been invested with Connor, Clark and Lunn in a new fund titled "Property Endowment". Any income earned in that fund will be transferred into the existing Property Fund.

Givings and Envelopes

The pandemic has changed the way we do many things! Our offerings have continued to be strong and we thank everyone in the congregation for their generous givings! Many of you have turned to e-transfers, which are quick and easy to complete online. To send an e-transfer, just

choose Interac Transfer in your online banking and send it to firstpresreginaoffering@gmail.com (with "What street is the church on?" as the security question.) Some of you have set up automatic withdrawals through the PAR program, so that your offering automatically comes out of your account once a month. If you are interested in that, please contact Shirley in the church office. Others in the congregation send cheques by mail, or drop them off at the church, and these contributions are appreciated as well. For those of you who are using the paper offering envelopes, we do have the 2021 envelopes, as we purchase them early in the year. But the church was closed before we had a chance to set them out for pickup. You can pick up your envelopes from Shirley in the church office - just contact her to make an arrangement. Or, if you would like them mailed out, we can do that. We won't be mailing them all out, but once the church re-opens, we will set them out for pickup.

Jo Szostak

MISSION & OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Many thanks to First Church folks for your generosity towards others through our Advent In Memoriam initiative. Contributions to Regina's Indigenous Christian Fellowship totalled \$922.50 and our Refugee Sponsorship Fund grew by \$1617.50. That is a wonderful response!

Mary Jesse
M&O Convener

FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

B.I.N.G.O! ...and we have a winner! Mark your calendars! The Fellowship Committee is hosting a Bingo and Games night on Friday, January 29 at 7pm. Get rid of those January blahs and plan to join us for a "Zoom along" Bingo and Games night.

We will e-mail you the link for the Bingo sheets and you can print as many as you like. Just rip up pieces of paper, use old pennies or markers of any kind to cover your squares. If you don't have a printer and can't print the Bingo sheet, but would like to join in the fun on Zoom, please let us know by calling Shirley at the office (306) 522-9571 and we will make arrangements for you to get them. Plan on bringing your favourite

beverage and snack to enjoy while the games are on. Hope to see lots of you there.

Sheila Wilson
Fellowship Committee Convener

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

The Scholarship Committee (Jim Doolittle, Chair; Sandra Fyffe, Ron Pugsley, Alfred Ferozdin and Andrew Donovan) would normally try to distribute at least some of the awards in-person at a designated Sunday service, but of course that simply was not possible this year.

The following are individuals to whom we awarded scholarships and their respective programs:

- Nyabani Mathiang, University of Regina, Faculty of Nursing (2nd year)
- Gabe Omolida, University of Regina, Faculty of Music (4th year)
- Matthew Yakemchuk, University of Regina, Faculty of Business Administration (2nd year)
- Lauren Miller, Saskatchewan Polytechnic, Hotel and Restaurant Management Diploma (2nd year)
- Dale Wilson, University of Manitoba, Master of Science (Disability Studies)
- Yoonjeong Choi, Briercrest Seminary, Master's in Counselling.
- Woonghee Han, Knox College, Doctoral Studies, with a focus on Homiletics. (2nd year)

Andrew Donovan
Scholarship Committee Member

CHRISTMAS EVE LIVESTREAM

Thanks to everyone who participated in our Christmas Season worship services and hymn sings. We appreciate the efforts of the musicians, singers, readers, and tech people who made the services possible, as well as Shirley Durell (our Office Administrator) who put together bulletins and PowerPoint slides. Besides the small group that could gather in the church to lead worship, we were blessed with the online presence and prayer of the members of First Church, their families, friends, and others across the province and the country who were able to join us in celebrating the birth of Jesus -

Emmanuel, God with us. These are just two photos from the Christmas Eve Service.



Rev. Amanda Currie, Bette Kelly, Jo Szostak



Gabe and Rodolfo Omolida

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

We had great fun putting together a little Online Christmas Pageant this year. Thanks to the actors and musicians who gave their time and effort to make it work. If you missed it, you can still find it on the FirstPresbyterian Facebook Page or at <https://curriejesson.ca/online-christmas-pageant/> These are just a few photos from the Pageant, which was titled "A Pandemic Christmas."



Alfred and Shazia Ferozdin and Maksym Chickoski



Eli, Matthew, and Jonah Yakemchuk



Joy to the world! the Lord is come: let earth receive its King
let every heart prepare him room
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Gigi, Timo, Gabe and Rodolfo Omolida

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY



WPCU Bible Study 2021 A daily Bible study on the theme of the 2021 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Monday, January 18 to Monday, January 25 from 12:15-1:00pm CST (except Sunday, Jan. 24 at 1:00pm CST)

Register at <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/wpcu-bible-study-2021-tickets-135920448721>

Hosted by the Prairie Centre for Ecumenism and the Regina Council of Churches, this study is free and open to all. A different Christian leader will guide us each day as we explore the theme "Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit" (John 15:5-9).

The 2021 theme calls us to pray and to work for reconciliation and unity in the church, with our

human family, and with all of creation. Drawing on the Gospel image of vine and branches, it invites us to nourish unity with God and with one another through contemplative silence, prayer, and common action. Grafted into Christ the vine as many diverse branches, may we bear rich fruit and create new ways of living, with respect for and communion with all of creation.

WPCU Online Ecumenical Service

You might also want to register for the WPCU Online Ecumenical Service planned by the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism (Montreal) on Sunday, Jan. 24 at 3pm (Eastern). The service is bilingual. Register to receive the Zoom or YouTube links at

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdvWfInQX5_1870OoiXcWKWgmDkwGJXY5mYZHSNJXq9Njp-GA/viewform

The daily themes are as follows:

- Day 1 - Monday, January 18th: **Called by God:** "You did not choose me but I chose you" (John 15:16a)
- Day 2 - Tuesday, January 19th: **Maturing Internally:** "Abide in me as I abide in you" (John 15:4)
- Day 3 - Wednesday, January 20th: **Forming One Body:** "Love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12b)
- Day 4 - Thursday, January 21st: **Praying Together:** "I do not call you servants any longer...but I have called you friends" (John 15:15)
- Day 5 - Friday, January 22nd: **Letting Oneself Be Transformed by the Word:** "You have already been pruned by the word..." (John 15:3)
- Day 6 - Saturday, January 23rd: **Welcoming Others:** "Go and bear fruit, fruit that will last" (John 15:16b)
- Day 7 - Sunday, January 24th: **Growing in Unity:** "I am the vine, you are the branches" (John 15:5a)
- Day 8 - Monday, January 25th: **Reconciling with all Creation:** "So that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete" (John 15:11)

ROBBIE BURNS VIRTUAL FUNdraiser EVENT

Camp Christopher is hosting a "virtual" Robbie Burns night on **Saturday, January 23rd @ 6:00 p.m.** You can even order a Burns Dinner for pick-up!

How? Fill in the form at the end of the newsletter and order a dinner and zoom event or only the zoom event.

Two days before the event you will receive the Burns Zoom event link - you are welcome to call Martha 306-270-2378 for a zoom practice session.

There will be a program. Our MC will be Rev. Roberto DeSandoli

Will there be an Address to the Haggis? **YES**

Will there be a wee bit of bagpipes? **YES**

Will I learn about bit more about Camp Christopher? **YES**

also.....

We will have a minister from Scotland saying the Grace and Virtual Scottish Dancing

*We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne*

Join us to raise monies for Camp Christopher and have some truly Scottish fun.

Questions? Contact Donna Wilkinson 306-535-6916 or Shelia Coulter 306-280-8165.

Donna Wilkinson
Camp Christopher

A Prayer ~ Norman Shanks

God of ever-new beginnings,
God in whom past, present and future
perpetually coalesce,
as a new year unfolds before us,
through the dark days of January,
through the vagaries of the weather,
though storm, flood, ice or snow may
unsettle us,
though personal difficulties may beset us,
help us always to remember
that your light shines through the deepest
darkness,
that your love surrounds and summons us,
that your life is stronger than death itself,
and that your grace sustains us
and is sufficient for all our needs. Amen.

FROM THE PCConnect MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER

New Online Series for Young Adults

The first episode of *The Weight of Waiting* - a new online series from the folks who brought you Canada Youth - is now available to watch on the PCC website. Designed especially for young adults who might be looking for a sense of sanctuary, stability and community, this series will provide a space to have genuine conversations, ask questions and connect about our faith journey.

Watch Now: presbyterian.ca/yas

2021 General Assembly After consulting and gathering feedback from presbyteries, the Assembly Council has decided that the 2021 General Assembly will be held online between **June 6 and 9, 2021**. The General Assembly Office will regularly share plans for the online General Assembly as they develop.

Ballot for Moderator of the 2021 General Assembly The names on the ballot for Moderator of the 2021 General Assembly (presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/) are:

- The Rev. Paulette Brown
- The Rev. Mary Fontaine
- The Rev. Dr. Daniel Scott

Ballots have been sent to presbyteries for members of presbytery to vote. The Committee to Advise with the Moderator will count the ballots on **April 1, 2021**.

The 2021 General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada will be held online **June 6–9, 2021**.

Learn More About the Nominees:

presbyterian.ca/2020/12/01/ballot-for-moderator-of-the-2021-general-assembly

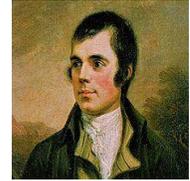
A call for nominations to the 2021 General Assembly standing committees has also been sent to Sessions, presbyteries and synods. The deadline for nominations is **February 28, 2021**.

Learn More: presbyterian.ca/gao/committee-to-nominate

JANUARY EVENTS

- Jan. 17 10:30 am Worship (online)**
12:15 pm Sunday School
1:00 pm Coffee Hour
- Jan. 17 2:30 pm Ecumenical Hymn Sing
- Jan. 19 noon Freedom 55'ers
- Jan. 20 7:00 pm Board of Managers
- Jan. 21 1:00 pm Bible Study
- Jan. 23 6:00 pm Burns Night Fundraiser
for Camp
- Jan. 24 10:30 am Worship (online)**
12:15 pm Sunday School
1:00 pm Coffee Hour
- Jan. 26 noon Freedom 55'ers
- Jan. 28 1:00 pm Bible Study
- Jan. 29 7:00 pm Fellowship Event
(by Zoom)
- Jan. 31 10:30 am Worship
(Legacy Sunday)**
12:15 pm Sunday School
1:00 pm Coffee Hour
- Feb. 2 noon Freedom 55'ers
- Feb. 3 7:00 pm Session
- Feb. 4 1:00 pm Bible Study
- Feb. 7 10:30 am Worship (online)**
12:15 pm Sunday School
1:00 pm Coffee Hour

FUND-raiser



ROBBIE BURNS NIGHT SATURDAY JANUARY 23, 2021

Please complete this order form:

Name

Email:

Phone (home)

Phone (cell)

Burns Menu - Alba Su Brath

*Tain of Haggis, Neeps & Tatties
with whiskey & horseradish sauce
Calleach Buttery Shortbread
Tablet*



*A pint of Ire Bru
(the other favourite Scottish Drink)*

@ \$30.00 Burns meal plus Zoom Robbie Burns Event

@ \$ 20.00 Zoom Robbie Burns Event ONLY

TOTAL AMOUNT:

Pick-up Location

St. Andrew's Presbyterian – Saskatoon 1:30 – 3:00 PM

First Presbyterian Church - Regina 4:00 PM – 4:30 PM

TWO PAYMENT OPTIONS:

1. **SEND FORM AND CHEQUE TO:** Camp Christopher, Treasurer,
c/o Sheila Coulter,
210-930 Heritage View,
Saskatoon, SK S7H 5S6

2. **EMAIL FORM & ETRANSFER AMOUNT TO Sheila at:**

s.coulter@sasktel.net
(USING PASSWORD: BURNS2021)