

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

June 2023

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

On Sunday, June 4th, our worship included two important themes – the Triune nature of God and our call to become communities of welcome and inclusion for all people. Thanks to Jo Morris for supplying the rainbow balloons to brighten our worship space. The variety of colours was a good reminder of the beauty of diversity made by God in the Creation of the world and all its creatures including people. Thank you to Chloe Golden (Music Director), Marianne Woods (soloist) and the choir for sharing a beautiful and appropriate anthem “You Say” by Lauren Daigle. (And thanks also to Marianne’s nephew for suggesting the song!)



One of the things I said in my sermon was that pride parades are not about 2SLGBTQI+ people saying they are better than other people. It's not that kind of pride. But rather, they're about people who have been marginalized, ridiculed, excluded, and told that they must change their identities in order to be good enough coming together to affirm for one another that they are worthy of love just as they are. When First Church folk participate in the Regina Pride Parade on Saturday, June 10th, our message will be “God’s Love Includes Everyone.”

I invite you to read the words of Lauren Daigle’s song (in case you didn’t catch every word when the choir sang it last Sunday). Notice that it’s a prayer. The “You” in the lyrics is God. And notice that whenever the singer is inclined to think

poorly of themselves, God affirms again and again that they are enough, they are loved. Our job as the church is to speak those words of love to people who need to hear them today.

“You Say” by Lauren Daigle

I keep fighting voices in my mind that say I'm not enough
Every single lie that tells me I will never measure up

Am I more than just the sum of every high and every low
Remind me once again just who I am because I need to know, Ooh-oh

You say I am loved when I can't feel a thing
You say I am strong when I think I am weak
And you say I am held when I am falling short
And when I don't belong, oh You say I am Yours
And I believe Oh, I believe
What You say of me I believe

The only thing that matters now is everything
You think of me
In You I find my worth, in You I find my identity
Ooh-oh

You say I am loved when I can't feel a thing
You say I am strong when I think I am weak
And you say I am held when I am falling short
When I don't belong, oh You say I am Yours
And I believe Oh, I believe
What You say of me Oh, I believe

Taking all I have, and now I'm laying it at Your feet
You have every failure, God, You have every victory, Ooh-oh

You say I am loved when I can't feel a thing
You say I am strong when I think I am weak
You say I am held when I am falling short
When I don't belong, oh You say I am Yours
And I believe Oh, I believe
What You say of me I believe

Rev. Amanda Currie

SESSION

As summer approaches, we hope that you have a chance to relax and enjoy it! Thank you for your consistent generosity throughout the year. We'd just like to remind you that church expenses occur all summer, so consistent givings would be greatly appreciated. Offerings can be mailed by cheque to the church or firstpresreginaoffering@gmail.com to donate by e-transfer. Thank you!

The Session approved a proposal from the Music Team for next year. Will will be back in Regina, studying at the U of R. He will rejoin the team at First, playing the piano and organ for services. Chloe will continue in the role of Music Director, directing the choir and providing overall coordination. Gabe will accompany the choir. We are blessed to have so many talented musical people at First!

The Session has also approved an offer from a local artist, Olivia Redston, to paint a mural on the alley wall of the church. We have ongoing problems with graffiti and hope that this will discourage graffiti and beautify the alley.

Communion will be celebrated on Sunday, Sept. 10 instead of Sept. 3, to avoid the Labour Day weekend when lots of people are away.

Jo Szostak
Clerk of Session

MATHIANG FAMILY SPONSORSHIP

The Mathiangs have now been with us for six months! From -35 to +35, they're learning to live in Canada - and they are amazed that the sticks they have seen all winter are now bursting forth with life as the city turns green!

Everyone in the family is taking lessons to improve their English. Lieb has a job with REAL, setting up for events on the exhibition grounds, and he loves it. Mona has a job lined up but is waiting for a start time. Nyabgwa is currently in grade three at the Regina Christian School. A year sounds like a long time, but there is so much to do to get settled in Canada!

The church is committed to supporting the family for at least the first year. We need to raise additional money to do this, as expenses are so much higher than budgeted. We have a goal of

about \$20,000 for the fall. There will be some fundraising activities planned, but we request your generosity in making donations to the Refugee Sponsorship Fund. Thanks!

MISSION & OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Interchurch Saturday Lunch Program

Would you like to spend a few hours in July giving back to our local community? First Church is hosting the Interchurch Saturday Lunch program on Saturday, July 15.



Several city churches co-operate together to provide 200 bagged lunches for people in the city who are chronically hungry. We need 4 or 5 people to make sandwiches in our church kitchen and 8 to help assemble lunches, hand out meals and move tables and chairs at First Baptist Church. It is a fun morning with a good purpose. If you can help between 9-1:30 pm on July 15 please contact Mary Jesse (maryjesse@gmail.com or 306-570-8662).

Camp Christopher On Sunday, May 28th, we celebrated Pentecost and Camp Sunday. Thanks to Donna Wilkinson, Administrator of Camp Christopher, for preaching and leading worship. If you missed worship that day, check out the video on our YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@FirstPresbyterianRegina>. Donna even had a campfire for the children's time!



Thanks for your generous support for the recent Camp Christopher fundraiser. \$1,165 was donated; enough for more than 100 camp t-shirts!

Mary Jesse
Mission & Outreach Convener

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



Parents, get ready to launch your kids (grade 1 to 8) into adventure!

At Stellar VBS, kids discover what it means to shine Jesus' light in everyday life. Stellar is filled with awesome Bible-learning experiences kids see, hear, and touch! Creative crafts, team-building games, fun Bible songs, and tasty treats are just a few of the standout activities that help faith flow into real life.

Parents, grandparents, and friends are invited to join us at the Cosmic Closing each day at 11:30am, a daily celebration of Jesus' light and love!

So, mark these dates on your calendar:

July 3rd – July 6th, 2023.

We launch at 9:00am and return to earth at 12:00pm.

For more information or registration forms, email Rev. Devon at sasksynodyouth@gmail.com. Paper copies of registration forms are also available in the narthex.

Rev. Devon Pattemore

2023 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The 2023 General Assembly took place from Sunday June 4 to Wednesday June 7, and was held in-person at St. Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. This in-person gathering provided an opportunity for the church to consider matters affecting the ministry and mission of our denomination.

Commissioners, who are responsible for the business of Assembly, discern and make decisions. At Assembly, commissioners, young adult and student representatives welcome ecumenical and interfaith guests. The Rev. Bob Wilson and Heather Neuls were the commissioners from our Presbytery of Assiniboia. Asher Ferozdin participated as the Young Adult Representative for Assiniboia, and

Donna Wilkinson assisted as the coordinator of the YAR program at Assembly.

The Assembly began with opening worship last Sunday, June 4th at St. David's Presbyterian Church in Halifax. The outgoing Moderator, the Rev. Dr. Bob Faris preached the sermon. Following worship, the Rev. Mary Fontaine was confirmed and installed as the 2023 General Assembly Moderator. Mary is the first moderator of Indigenous descent, and is originally from the Mistawasis First Nation here in Saskatchewan.

We will hear more from our representatives when they return home to Saskatchewan, but if you would like to learn more about the Assembly or watch some of the videos of worship, guest presentations, or the meetings themselves, you can find everything here:

<https://presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2023/>.

The Parents Circle – Families Forum: The 2023 Cutting Edge of Mission Award Recipient

Each year at the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, an award is given to recognize a person or group for their work on the cutting edge of mission.

The annual award this year recognizes the work of The Parents Circle – Families Forum (PCFF)—a joint Israeli-Palestinian organization of over 600 families who have lost immediate family members to the ongoing conflict and who work together for reconciliation and a just resolution to the conflict. The award was accepted during the 2023 General Assembly in Halifax, Nova Scotia, by two advocates representing PCFF. The advocates, Laila AIShekh and Robi Damelin work toward reconciliation and sustainable peace.

The presentation by Laila and Robi was one of the most powerful moments during the General Assembly this year. If you missed seeing it, you can watch the video online here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQqpPfXW6I&list=PLTDwb7caO0LqNBj91YA821tctaLHSfxKk&index=15>

CHRISTIAN OR INSPIRATIONAL DVD's WANTED

Can you donate any of your little-viewed DVD's to the chaplain's ministry at Saskatchewan Penitentiary? I can swing by your church or home to pick them up. Text me at 306-530-9678, or email at charleskooger@outlook.com. I go up to Prince Albert monthly and will deliver them.

Pastor Charles Kooger,
Regina Community Chaplaincy

ECUMENICAL CRAFTERS' GROUP (Regina)

An ecumenical crafters' group is being established at Living Spirit Centre, Regina. The group will quilt, sew, knit, and crochet items, using donated supplies, to give to and in support of local charities and parishes. Two organising sessions are scheduled for Wednesday, June 14, at 2-4pm or 7-9pm, at Living Spirit (Doan and Arcola). All are welcome, regardless of skill level, age, or gender. They also welcome donations of fabric, sewing machines, or other supplies.

For more information or to donate, contact Rev. Deacon Christine Burton, ph/text 306-540-7903 or christinemburton1@gmail.com.

COME TOGETHER MEETING

Dear friends,

Summer is practically here. The warm weather brings wonderful sunshine but also tragic fires. I pray that you are keeping healthy but also conscientiously working towards improving climate change.

World-wide, climate change is affecting many countries. One country that recently experienced a devastating environmental disaster is Malawi, when the cyclones hit. At the next Come Together meeting, Cathy Reid (WMS President) will bring a fresh report having recently returned from a trip to Malawi. She will be joined by the Rev. Dr. Silas Ncozana and Mr. Spencer Suliani, both from Blantyre area in Malawi. The Rev. Ncozana has been the pastor at Chuluchosema Church, CCAP since 2013. He has served as Chairman of the Mulanje Mission Hospital and is a member of the Panel on Higher Education, among many other organizations. Spencer Suliani is the Session Clerk of Mount Moriah

Church of the Central Church of Africa Presbyterian (CCAP). He is very involved in the Timvane Children's Centre in Chipagala. Together, they will talk about the situation in Malawi, as well as lead in worship.

Please join us on June 14th, 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm (EST), by Zoom, for a time of hearing about mission in Malawi. Please email SKim@presbyterian.ca for the Zoom link.

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

Summer Calendar

Jun. 10	11:00 am	Regina Pride Parade (Meet at First Church)
Jun. 11	10:30 am	Worship (In Person & Online)
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour (Gym)
Jun. 12	9:30 am	Pastoral Care Committee
Jun. 17	10:00 am	Presbytery in Whitewood
	2:00 pm	Funeral for Marion Baller At Trinity Presbyterian Church, Grenfell
Jun. 18	10:30 am	Worship (In Person & Online)
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour (Gym)
Jun. 21	7:00 pm	Board of Managers (Zoom)
Jun. 25	10:30 am	Worship (In Person & Online)
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour (Gym)
Jun. 28	7:00 pm	Book Club

Sunday Worship continues at 10:30 am through July and August

July 3-6	9 am – Noon	Vacation Bible School
July 15	9 am - 1:30 pm	Sandwich Program at First Baptist
Aug. 30	7:00 pm	Book Club
Sept. 6	7:00 pm	Session Meeting
Sept. 9	10:00 am	Worship Committee
Sept. 10	10:30 am	Communion Sunday

GROW HOPE SASKATCHEWAN

World hunger is a growing crisis in the world. Grow Hope Saskatchewan is an effective way to help. Farmers donate acres to grow crops and other folks contribute donations to pay for seed, fuel, fertilizer etc. The proceeds from each acre are donated to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank where the funds can be used by PWS&D for projects around the world that combat world hunger. Farmers receive \$350 an acre for inputs. Acres can be donated, or

any amount can be contributed to provide inputs and you will receive regular updates on how the crops are doing. For more information or to send an e-transfer, contact SynodSaskGrowHope@gmail.com or send a cheque to Grow Hope Saskatchewan, 1-2338 Assiniboine Ave E., Regina, SK. S4V 2E9

Jo Szostak
Synod Congregational and Mission
Development Coordinator

Grow hope.
Saskatchewan

Brought to you by the Synod of Saskatchewan to support the work of Canadian Foodgrains Bank

Imagine a world where nobody goes hungry...

Grow Hope connects urban and rural communities to share in the risk and reward of farming until all are fed.

Canadian Foodgrains Bank
PWRDF
Development and Peace
CBM
Presbyterian World Service & Development
Mennonite Central Committee

"Feed the hungry and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be bright as noon." (Isaiah 58:10, NLT)

How it works

1. Generous farmers in Saskatchewan have agreed to donate land to grow a crop for *Grow Hope*.
2. Generous people like you sponsor the growth of a crop with a donation to help cover the input expenses. Donors receive a charitable donation receipt from the Synod of Saskatchewan.
3. After harvest, farmers sell the crop and donate the proceeds to the partners of *Grow Hope*, including the Synod of Saskatchewan. **The proceeds from the sale of the crop can be as much as \$600 per acre or more.** These funds are often matched up to 4:1 by the Government of Canada and distributed to PWS&D and the other partner agencies through the Foodgrains Bank.

Turn \$350 into as much as \$3,000 to provide food.

This project is a response to God's invitation to participate in the work of restoring humanity's relationship to God, to each other, and to creation.

Grow Hope is a great project for individuals, families, schools & churches!

For more information or to donate, email or send an e-transfer to SynodSaskGrowHope@gmail.com or send a cheque made out to the Synod of Saskatchewan to Synod of Saskatchewan, Grow Hope Saskatchewan 1-2338 Assiniboine Ave E., Regina, SK S4V 2E9