

FIRST THINGS FIRST

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, REGINA

March 2019

MINISTER'S MESSAGE



I can't vouch for the accuracy of these statistics or even cite their source, but I can attest to my personal experience that hugs are awesome! When I recently came across this meme about hugging, I immediately thought about First Presbyterian Church. When I moved to Regina, I learned quickly that a lot of hugs are shared at First Church every Sunday. Even when I was still a newcomer, I became the recipient of many hugs each week. And I think I now receive just about as many hugs on Sunday morning as hand shakes!

Many of us think of our congregation as a "Church Family" and therefore we are free to be a little more friendly and informal, showing our affection, love, and care for one another not only through words, but through physical expressions like hugging. Although I can't cite the research, I do believe it's true that hugging can have healing properties. If not physical healing, then at least emotional healing is possible.

As wonderful as hugs can be, however, we need to be cautious about when, how, and who we hug in church. I remember one enthusiastic greeter in another congregation who loved to hug everyone she met. Although her intentions were good, she did sometimes startle newcomers and visitors to the church when she embraced them rather forcefully before even exchanging names!

You may know that the Presbyterian Church in Canada has a policy for the safety and protection of children, youth, and vulnerable adults, to which all our congregations must adhere. The *Leading with Care* policy helps us to create a safe environment for all people, and our Session reports to the Presbytery each year concerning how we are implementing the policy in our congregation. It includes things like making sure that the property is safe: smoke detectors, emergency procedures, first aid kits, etc. It covers things like interviewing and training our teachers and leaders and having criminal record checks completed for our staff and volunteers who work with vulnerable people.

In the resources provided by *Leading with Care* there is some helpful information for teachers and leaders about physical contact and touching. Although the material is specifically aimed at those who have contact with vulnerable people (children, youth, frail elders, etc.) it is good advice for all of us as we live together in the church community. Let's enjoy the gift of being free to hug one another in our church family, while being sensitive to those who may not want to be touched in that way.

Appropriate and inappropriate touching
A touch can convey a multitude of positive messages and communicate care, comfort and love; however, it is important to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate touching. It is also important to be aware of, and sensitive to, differences in interpretation of touching based on sex, culture or personal experience.

Some examples of appropriate touch

Love and care can usually be expressed in the following common sense ways:

- Holding or rocking an infant who is crying
- Affirming a participant with a pat on the hand, shoulder or back
- Bending down to the child's eye level and placing a hand gently on the child's hand or forearm
- Putting your arm around the shoulder of a person who needs comfort
- Taking a child's hand and leading him/her to an activity
- Holding hands for safety when changing locations
- Shaking a person's hand in greeting
- Holding a child gently by the hand or shoulder to keep his/her attention as you redirect behaviour
- Anointing a person with oil on the head
- Holding hands in a circle prayer or song
- Providing comfort with a wet, warm cloth

Some examples of inappropriate touch

Avoid the following:

- Kissing a child/youth/vulnerable adult or coaxing them into kissing you
- Extended cuddling
- Tickling
- Piggy-back rides
- Having others sit on your lap (except for babies/young toddlers)
- Touching anyone in any area covered by a bathing suit (except changing infant's diapers)
- Hand holding, except for the examples listed above
- Running hands through hair

I am thinking of a colleague and friend who is a priest in the Catholic Church. Before he greets me with a hug, he usually asks if it's okay first. He says, humourously, "May we share a chaste embrace?" And I laugh, and say, "Of course!" Asking before embracing another person is always a good policy. You can also pay attention to the physical cues they will give you as to whether they welcome a hug or not. If the person you want to hug happens to be a child, young

person, or someone else who is vulnerable, avoid doing so in a private space like a classroom or office, and keep the embrace short. If in doubt, consider a hand shake, high five, or fist bump instead.

Hugs are awesome! But what's even more awesome is the gift of a loving church community where everyone feels safe and secure because we have all learned to show respect for each other through appropriate touch.

Rev. Amanda Currie

MISSION & OUTREACH

Lenten Mission Appeal, March 10-24

Each year during the Season of Lent, we designate a few weeks to learn about the mission work of Presbyterian World Service & Development, and we encourage the people of First Church to support a particular PWS&D project in another country. This year we are highlighting how PWS&D facilitates and supports refugee sponsorship by local congregations in Canada. The Mission & Outreach Committee is inviting you to make a special donation as usual, but this year our contributions will be used right here in Regina to support the South Sudanese refugee family that our congregation has agreed to sponsor.

The Mathiang family are refugees from South Sudan with direct ties to First Presbyterian – they are Nyabani Mathiang's parents, siblings, and niece. Nyabani, her husband Elijah Ngor and their children Nyagai, Liing, and Ruaikuoth (Riko) are long-time members of our congregation.

Background: The people of South Sudan have been caught in a violent civil war since 2013. Almost 400,000 civilians have died; half killed in fighting between ethnic rivals, and the other half from disease and hunger caused by the conflict. 2.4 million people fled South Sudan to 7 neighbouring countries and are now in refugee camps. Almost 2 million remain displaced inside South Sudan, unable to return home.

The Mathiang family fled South Sudan in 2014 and has been in Sudan's Dabat Bosin refugee camp for 5 years. The family includes parents Nyatot (midwife, age 58) and Peter (teacher, age

60), son Lieb (construction, care aid worker, age 23); daughter Nyachangkuoth (waitress, age 25) and her daughter Nyabgwa (age 5). Nyachangkuoth's husband is missing since fleeing from attackers. Nyabani tells us that life in the refugee camp is "day by day" and conditions are difficult. The camp provides a tent for the family and basic food rations. There is no work for the adults and no school for Nyabgwa.

Our Sponsorship: PWS&D administers the refugee sponsorship program for the Presbyterian Church in Canada and helps congregations navigate the complex requirements to bring refugees to Canada. The Session has been working closely with PWS&D for over a year, and the congregation approved the sponsorship of the whole family (6 family members) in November 2018. First Church is responsible for meeting financial needs of the family for the first 12 months and also assisting them as they transition to fruitful lives as new Canadians. We expect that the Mathiangs could arrive in 2020 or 2021. We need to be ready!

How can you help?

Your financial gifts are very important. We may need up to \$60,000 to cover living costs for the first year. All funds raised in this year's PWS&D appeal are designated for our refugee fund. If you haven't already made a pledge, consider giving to this appeal. Many volunteers will be needed to prepare for and then welcome and assist the family. Contact the church office if you are able to help. A Refugee Committee will likely be established soon to co-ordinate our efforts, so you may want to be involved that way also. Please pray for the Mathiangs as they wait to come to Regina, and for the people of South Sudan.

Mary Jesse
M&O Convener

Coldest Night of the Year Thanks for your support of the First Church team "Burning Bush" when we participated in the "Coldest Night of the Year" walk on Saturday, February 23rd. Our team of seven walkers raised about \$800 for the Regina YWCA's shelter, "My Aunt's Place." Of course, we were part of a group of 66 walkers in Regina who together raised nearly \$20,000 for

the YWCA. Across Canada, the "Coldest Night of the Year" walk (which took place in 133 locations) raised over five million dollars for local helping agencies!

The Coldest Night of the Year is a moment when tens of thousands of Canadians step outside the warmth and comfort of home and shine a light of welcome and inclusion.

Together, we collected donations that fund critical services at a local charity partner who serves and supports vulnerable families and individuals in our CNOY community.

- We walk through the cold and dark on February 23, 2019 to declare our concern for people who have no home, and take shelter in nooks and crannies.
- We walk for those whose days are a battle to house and feed their families, and whose nights are filled with fear and frustration.
- We walk for those driven from home by violence and abuse. And we walk for people overwhelmed by isolation, guilt and despair.
- We walk humbly, realizing that anyone can lose their footing and then lose everything else.

Each step we take brings someone closer to safety, health and home, as together, we raise funds for organizations whose commitment and work transforms peoples' lives.



The "Burning Bush" Team, enjoying chili and warm drinks after the walk.



*Lizz Magee, Sheila Wilson, Mary Okumura,
Rev. Amanda Currie, Mary Jesse and Coleen Rankin.
(Not pictured: Graeme Mitchell)*

ASH WEDNESDAY

Ashes are an ancient sign of penitence. From the Middle Ages it became the custom to begin Lent by being marked in ash with the sign of the cross. The reminder that we are dust turns our attention to the creative power of God, and God's ability to heal the brokenness in our lives when we offer that brokenness to God. That turning to God is the work of Lent, preparation for the celebration of Easter.

This year for Ash Wednesday (March 6th), there were two opportunities to begin the Season of Lent with the sign of ashes. We had a worship service at First Church in the evening which about 20 people attended. Thanks to Will Ireton for leading the music, to Andrew Donovan who served as the lector, and to all who chose to participate.

It was a simple service shared together in the chancel (the area at the front of the church where the choir normally sits), and included some reflection about why and how we practice spiritual disciplines (like worship, prayer and service) in our daily lives and especially during the Season of Lent. With the imposition of ashes on our foreheads or on our hands, we remembered our human frailty – that we are dust and to dust we shall return. We also remembered the gift of our baptism – that in life and in death, we belong to God who loves us.

This year a group of downtown Regina Christian clergy also offered ashes on the Scarth Street

Mall over the noon hour on Ash Wednesday. We did so because we believe that the reminder of need, humility, and healing shouldn't be confined to a church building. We probably need it more when we are in the middle of our



daily business! The ashes we receive are to remind us throughout the day of our need for God, and of God's call to us.

Although it was cold out, and my fingers and toes did get a bit frozen, it was a very good experience. Together with clergy from the Lutheran, United, Anglican, and Roman Catholic Churches, I was out on the street to offer ashes, prayer, conversation, and coffee, and it was very well received. Although many people rushed by, others did stop to chat, and to learn about the ancient Christian tradition of Ash Wednesday. It was a blessing to have the opportunity to mark many people with the sign of the cross and to offer prayer for several more. It was a unique opportunity to connect with people in our community!

Of course, there is much more to the beginning



of Lent than ashes alone, and we are all encouraged to make time for worship with our communities of faith, for the support of others and of the great traditions of faith in our work of repentance and renewal. But God meets us not just in

worship, but in the midst of life, and it was good to offer the opportunity to remember our faith to those whose schedules made it hard to stop and pray with others on Ash Wednesday.

Rev. Amanda Currie

"I MUST STAY AT YOUR HOUSE TODAY"

– A Reflection for Lent by Joyce Rupp

[Zacchaeus] was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him... When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him.

– Luke 19:3-6

Jesus, this Lent I am yearning to wear a Zacchaeus heart. I am wanting to hear you call my name as you did his. I am anxious to know that you are inviting yourself to my home. I am humbled, amazed, excited, and astounded, just as he was.

But that is where the desire to wear a Zacchaeus heart stops, because I know what happens when you visit someone's house. Conversations occur. Choices are presented. Changes happen. That's because you look for more than dust when you come to visit, and you talk about things more vital than the weather. You move into the heart's dimension. You gaze deeply. You don't just dwell. You interact. You activate. You dwell so lovingly that the truth cannot be resisted. This Lent help me to welcome you and yearn for your love. Grant me a Zacchaeus heart that turns around and sees the truth. I need the gaze of your love to remind me of my truest self. I, too, need the strong call to make amends and start anew. Hurry, Jesus, come and stay at my house today.

Source: Rupp, Joyce. *Out of the Ordinary: Prayers, poems, and reflections for every season.* Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 2000.

FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

A huge shout out to everyone who helped make the Celebration of Love Fine Dining Event a success. We raised \$1660.00 for our Refugee Sponsorship fund and we are most grateful for all those who worked and for all who attended to make it the success that it was.

There have been numerous requests for the recipes so if you were unable to attend and would like to prepare your own Celebration of

Love, you will find the recipes at the end of this newsletter. Enjoy your Celebration of Love. If you have any questions call Sheila at (306) 536-6742.

Sheila Wilson
Fellowship Committee Convener



Emily Ireton, Wendy Prior and Margaret MacDonald



Our wonderful servers



Meaghen Kidd, Kaye Hunchuk, Beth Tarr, Ron Tarr, Pat Fyffe, Joyce Rivers



Elijah Ngor, Nyabani Mathiang, Nyagai, Ruaikuoth, and Liing



Mary Jesse, Christeen Shire and Willa



Joyce Rivers and Pat Fyffe



Bob and Sheila Wilson



Lois Pearce and Carole Cann



Graeme Mitchell and Bill Sgrazzutti



Rev. Amanda Currie and Nick Jesson



Timo, Aina, Nyagai



Yousaf Ferozdin and Grandchildren



Rodolfo, Gigi, Gabe and Timo Omolida



The MacDonald Family



Bill Sgrazutti, Kaye Hunchuk, Graeme Mitchell

CAMP CHRISTOPHER

Camp Christopher is looking for Staff, Campers and Volunteers for summer 2019! Look for applications and Camp Brochures at the back of the church or the bulletin board down stairs.

Canadian Tire Money Your donated Canadian Tire Money is greatly appreciated at Camp Christopher! When it is all added together, we can buy amazing things for camp from kayaks to craft supplies to pots and pans! You can leave your CT money in the container on the top of the mailboxes in the narthex. Thank you.

Donna Wilkinson
Camp Administrator

FUNDSCRIP

Our next order Sunday is March 17. Specials for March are the Ultimate Dining Card 6% (includes Montana's, East Side Mario's, Swiss Chalet), Dollarama 4% and Shell 3%. Cards ordered today will be available next Sunday. Visit the FundScrip table in the gym following worship. Thanks for your support.

MARCH EVENTS

10	10:30 AM	Worship & Sunday School
	Noon	Mission & Outreach Cmt.
12	9:00 AM	Adult Walk
	10:30 AM	Bible Study
	Noon	Freedom 55'ers
	6:00 PM	Youth Group
	7:30 PM	Membership Class
13	9:45 AM	Riverbend Walk
	7:30 PM	Wondering Wednesday
14	9:00 AM	Adult Walk
	7:00 PM	Choir
17	10:30 AM	Worship & Sunday School
19	9:00 AM	Adult Walk
	10:30 AM	Bible Study
	Noon	Freedom 55'ers
	7:30 PM	Membership Class
20	9:45 AM	Riverbend Walk
	7:00 PM	Board of Managers
21	9:00 AM	Adult Walk
	10:00 AM	Pastoral Care Committee
	7:00 PM	Choir
23	10:00 AM	Worship Committee
24	10:30 AM	Worship & Sunday School
26	9:00 AM	Adult Walk
	10:30 AM	Bible Study
	Noon	Freedom 55'ers
	6:00 PM	Youth Group
	7:30 PM	Membership Class
27	9:45 AM	Riverbend Walk
	7:00 PM	Book Club @ Sheila Wilson's
28	9:00 AM	Adult Walk
	7:00 PM	Choir
29	2:30 PM	Prayer Shawl Group @ Wintergreene Estates
31	10:30 AM	Worship & Sunday School

APRIL HIGHLIGHTS

7	10:30 AM	Communion Sunday
14	10:30 AM	Palm Sunday
	Noon	Annual General Meeting
18	6:00 PM	Maundy Thursday Potluck
19	10:30 AM	Good Friday
21	10:30 AM	Easter Sunday
28	10:30 AM	Masonic Church Parade

DO YOU WANT TO FAST THIS LENT?
In the words of Pope Francis

- Fast from hurting words and say kind words.
- Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.
- Fast from anger and be filled with patience.
- Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.
- Fast from worries and have trust in God.
- Fast from complaints and contemplate simplicity.
- Fast from pressures and be prayerful.
- Fast from bitterness and fill your hearts with joy.
- Fast from selfishness and be compassionate to others.
- Fast from grudges and be reconciled.
- Fast from words and be silent so you can listen.

pietrafitness.com

INSTANT POT PORK TENDERLOIN WITH GARLIC HERB RUB

1 cup chicken broth	1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
1 lb pork tenderloin	1 tsp garlic powder
1 tsp dried parsley	½ tsp seasoning salt
¼ tsp onion powder	¼ tsp black pepper

GLAZE

2-3 tbsp honey	1 tbsp ketchup
1 tbsp water	1 tbsp corn starch



DIRECTIONS

1. Place trivet in the Instant Pot and add chicken broth and balsamic vinegar
2. Trim silver skin from the side of the tenderloin. Cut in half and place on the trivet in the Instant Pot or pressure cooker
3. In a small bowl, combine the garlic powder, parsley, seasoning salt, onion powder and black popper. Sprinkle half over tenderloin in Instant Pot. Flip and sprinkle remaining seasoning over top.
4. Place lid on Instant Pot and turn valve to sealing. Select Manual, high pressure (the default) and set timer for 7 minutes for fresh pork (10 minutes for partially frozen, or 13 minutes for frozen).
5. When the cook time is done, turn the Instant Pot off and let pressure release naturally for 8-10 minutes. Open the lid and remove the trivet with the pork on it and let it rest for 5-10 minutes while you make the glaze. Do not drain the liquid.

TO MAKE THE GLAZE

1. Turn the Instant Pot to sauté and add the honey and ketchup. Stir together the water and corn starch and whisk into the Instant Pot. Let simmer for 2-3 minutes until thick and bubbly. Taste and adjust seasoning or sweetness to taste.
2. Slice tenderloin and serve with glaze as desired.

OVEN ROAST POTATOES

Mix together:

½ cup basil	¾ cup chives
T tbsp black pepper	2 tbsp salt
T tbsp dried rosemary	

This is enough for 30 lbs. of potatoes. Use 1 tbsp with 1 ½ tbsp oil for 4 servings. Toss potatoes in this mixture and roast at 350 for about 45 minutes.

CHEESE CAKE

For the crust

- 2 cups crushed graham cracker crumbs
- ¼ cup sugar
- 6 tbsp butter melted

For the filling

- 2 ½ eight-ounce packages of cream cheese
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ¼ tsp salt
- 3 large eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 2 tbsp milk



DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees
2. In a nine-inch springform pan, mix the cracker crumbs and the melted butter. Press the crumb mixture into a crust across the bottom and about 1 inch up the sides. Bake the crust for 8 minutes.
3. In a large bowl cream the cream cheese with the sugar. Add the eggs, vanilla and milk all at one. Mix until just combined, scraping down the sides of the bowl. Pour the filling mix into the crust.
4. Bake for 30 – 45 minutes or until the cheesecake filling is set.
5. After the cheesecake has cooled for ten minutes, with a thin-bladed spatula, loosen the edges of the cheesecake from the pan so that the cake will pull away from the pan as it cools. Remove the rim of the pan after the cake has cooled for about forty-five minutes.
6. Serve with a topping of your choice.