

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

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

This newsletter is coming out just as we are beginning the Season of Lent. Thanks to the Fellowship Committee and their volunteer pancake flippers for the delicious "Mardi Gras" Pancake Lunch we enjoyed on Shrove Tuesday, March 4th. Thanks also to our Music Team of Chloe Golden, Will Ireton, and Arthur Jack who made our Ash Wednesday Service on March 5th very special. If you missed attending in person, you can still worship along with the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7xBb5Ybhrd8> Thanks to Vinuta Arawatigi for doing the livestreaming.

As we continue through the season, you're invited to use the Lent Devotional, "Singing through Lent and Easter" and join the devotional group that is meeting on Thursdays from 12:30-1:30 pm in the Morris Room (or by Zoom). We'll be using a wide variety of hymns and songs inform our reflection, lift our spirits, and draw us close to God as we journey towards Easter.

Some of you will probably choose to attend the Lent Devotional group because you always come to the seasonal studies and discussion groups that we have at First Church. I'm thankful for your faithfulness and all that you contribute to our shared learning and reflection!

But I wonder if some others might choose to attend the group this Lent, not because it's Lent, but because you want to gather in Christian community to pray and care for each other during a difficult time.

Come folks in our community are going through a difficult time because of personal challenges, illness or injury, loss or grief, or other stresses and strains in work or family life. But we're all going through a difficult time because of politics and international relations that are affecting Canada in significant new ways.

Canadians are very used to wars, conflicts, and difficulties in other parts of the world, and we

expect our nation to advocate for justice, contribute to peace keeping, and stand together with nations of good will who are trying to make the world a better place. But in my lifetime, I have not experienced the current level of aggression, economic pressure, and threats against our country of Canada.

At the same time, my prayers are not only for Canadians, but for so many Americans who are being hurt by the current Administration's drastic cuts, job losses, reversals of DEI policies, removal of supports for vulnerable people, and deportation of so many undocumented people.

My heart breaks for the people of Ukraine, for people living in Gaza, and for people in so many countries being impacted by radical cuts to USAID programs.

We are living in deeply unsettling and dangerous times in which we need to be paying attention, speaking up, advocating for justice, and caring for one another. We need each other. We need our faith. We need to remember that God is with us, that Jesus shows us the way, and the Holy Spirit will empower us to do, and say, and be what is needed in the weeks and months ahead. We also need to pray for our leaders in Canada and for leaders around the world.

Here is a prayer for the world community which we can pray and share together. It comes from The Presbyterian Church USA, a sister denomination to our own.

Almighty God, in Jesus Christ you have ordered us to live as loving neighbours. Though we are scattered in different places, speak different words, or descend from different races, give us common concern, so that we may be one people, who share the governing of the world under your guiding purpose. May greed, war, and lust for power be curbed, and all people enter the community of love promised in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Rev. Amanda Currie

SESSION

The Session is currently exploring ways to expand Sumi Jung's role with the children and youth. Sumi has done an excellent job so far this year and we appreciate her efforts. First Church will be applying for grant funding to assist with extending this work.

Jo Szostak
Clerk of Session

DIRECTIONS TASK FORCE

Mission Priorities & Values of First Church

Over the last few months, we have had two congregational gatherings to share ideas, discuss, and discern our mission priorities as a congregation. This work is already helping our Session and committees to develop plans and move forward their work in new and creative ways, but the main purpose of the process was to inform the Directions Task Force as they explore options for our building that will support our mission priorities and values as a congregation.

We have one more ask of you, the people of First Church, to have a look at the values and mission priorities as we have compiled them from our congregational gatherings. Let us know if we got the values right, and which mission priorities you believe are most important. See the document circulated with your bulletin on Sunday, March 9th, as well as in the Friday email on March 7th, and plan to give us your feedback by the end of March. On Sunday, March 23rd after worship, we'll have a short meeting to talk through the document, answer any questions, and review how you can give your feedback.

Hybrid Coffee Hour: Do you join worship at First Church through the YouTube livestream? Do you worship with us in the building, and wonder about the folks who worship online? You're invited to a Hybrid Coffee Hour this Sunday, March 9th after worship at 12:00 pm. Join in by Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8084662666?omn=88262060340> or in the Kennedy Room at the church.

BOARD OF MANAGERS

As many of you know, First Church had a break-in on Feb. 8. There is little of value kept in the office, so the loss was minimal. The Board has purchased a set of security cameras and is making plans to have them installed in various locations.

With the extreme cold we experienced this winter, our heating bills have been high again - ranging about \$5000 a month. So we had to withdraw money from our Planned Giving initiative to fund cash flow. Thank you to those who continue to share generously through their offerings!

Bill Klock resigned as our caretaker in February. We thank Bill for his dedicated service over the past two years! The Board has hired Adnan Saleem as our new caretaker and Sunday caretaker. We welcome Adnan to the position, as he becomes familiar with the role!

FUNDSCRIP

Thanks to those who placed orders for gift cards this month. First Church earned \$150 from the order, so it really adds up! The next Order Sunday will be Sunday, April 6. Orders placed will be available for pickup the next Sunday.

The gift cards cost nothing extra and can be used like money, but the church gets a percentage back. You can also stop by the FundScrip table in the gym following worship, and buy grocery and gas gift cards. Thanks for your support!

LUNCH BUNCH

Come and join in on Tuesdays at lunch time. We start with Forever in Motion exercises at 11:30. Bring a bag lunch for lunch at 12. Then we have a short program.

This is the lineup for March:

- Mar. 11 - Heather will share pictures of her cruise to the ABC islands (Aruba, Bonair, Curacao)
- Mar. 18 - Sheila will share pictures of her trip to Mexico
- Mar. 25 - Amanda will share a program - It's always inspiring!

YOUTH GROUP

VALENTINE'S DAY! I had an enjoyable trip to deliver goodie bags to all our youth members' houses. I was so happy that everyone felt delighted, and I enjoyed chatting with them.



At our monthly YOUTH GATHERING, we discussed the Bible character Simon Peter. Despite making significant mistakes, he knew that God loved him constantly, and he accomplished remarkable things to spread the Gospel. Similarly, we can be confident that God will do amazing things with our lives, even when we feel like we stumbled or failed.

We also enjoyed Art Therapy, which was led by **DaYoung (Diane) An** and **NaGyeong (Rina) Lee**, who is studying counselling in Korea. We want to thank **Mary Jesse** and **Donna Wilkinson** for saving and providing delicious chili soup, buns, and chips for the youth. Additionally, we appreciate **Mary Okumura** for supplying a variety of snacks! There are still some spots available for lunch providers for our youth. If you are interested, please let Sumi know.

Due to the school break, we gathered informally for OPEN GYM DAY on February 20th. A big thank you to **Bette Kelly** for taking the trouble to fix the ping-pong table and donating the

equipment. All 6th - 12th graders and young adults are welcome to the gym day in March! Bring your friends, a water bottle, and clean runners!



Last but not least, February was so cold for a couple of weeks. However, there was a really exciting and FUN DAY at the Escape Rooms for our youth!

Please keep our lovely youth in your thoughts and prayers. Thank you!



JANUARY 19
 FEBRUARY 16
MARCH 16
 APRIL 20
 MAY 18
 JUNE 15

ALL 6th – 12th
 GRADERS ARE
 WELCOME

**3RD SUNDAY
 YOUTH
 GROUP**

2025
 YOUTH MINISTRY
 at **FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

12:15 PM – 2:30 PM
 KENNEDY ROOM

FOOD, GAMES, BIBLE DISCUSSIONS,
 SNACKS, ART THERAPY & MORE!

Sumi Jung
Youth Leader

THE SEASON OF LENT
(March 5th – April 20th)

Lent Devotional

Our Lent Devotional this year is: **“Lift Up Your Voice: Singing Through Lent and Easter”** from the SALT Project. Pick up a copy 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 began 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.)

Holy Week

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.

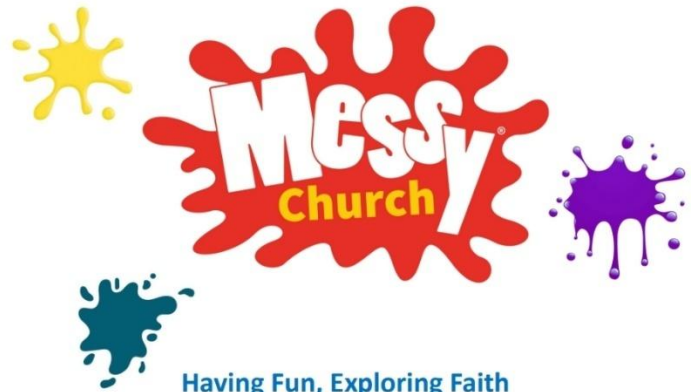


Holy Week

MESSY CHURCH

We plan to gather on the 2nd Saturday of most months from 10:30 am – 12:30 pm, including lunch. The dates will be 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.



Saturday, March 8th from 10:30am—12:30pm

First Presbyterian Church—2170 Albert Street



Learn the Lord's Prayer

Decorate a prayer cup

Make a prayer bracelet or keychain

Design a card for someone you pray for

Ecumenical Statement of Solidarity with Palestinian and Israeli Partners

KAIROS, church leaders, and heads of church agencies have signed an ecumenical statement in solidarity with Palestinian and Israeli partners, calling on the international community to hold Israel and Hamas accountable for their violations of international law. Appalled by the Trump Administration's statements supporting ethnic cleansing and further forced displacement in Gaza, this ecumenical statement urges all Canadians to act in support of the human rights and dignity of Palestinians and in opposition to continuing violations of their legal, civil and human rights by the Israeli government and its allies.

In it, they write:

"Words are not enough. We call on church members to continue to pray and act for peace. We urge church members to share their concerns for human rights, international law, and a just peace in the Middle East with their elected leaders and with those seeking public office. We call on member churches, church constituents and all Canadians to amplify the calls of churches, faith leaders, civil society organizations and partners in the region for just peace, human dignity and international law, with strength and with urgency."

Read the full statement here:

<https://www.kairoscanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Ecumenical-Statement-in-Solidarity-with-Palestinian-and-Israeli-partners.pdf>

AN ECUMENICAL DEVOTIONAL TOWARDS ANTI-RACISM

The Commission on Justice and Peace (CJP), an ecumenical body within the Canadian Council of Churches, has released a devotional resource entitled *Journeys to the Well – An Ecumenical Devotional Towards Anti-Racism*. This devotional addresses racism as a central issue for the church.

The contributors, most of whom are Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour, are from diverse denominations, ages, and locations across Canada. They were invited to reflect on self-selected scriptures and their personal

experiences and a minimal editing approach was taken to centre the authors' authentic voices.

The devotional aims to connect faith with anti-racism action, encouraging readers to engage with scripture and prayer as a foundation for working towards racial justice. It is intended for flexible use, allowing readers to engage with the reflections in whatever way resonates with them.

Read online or download the devotional here:

<https://councilofchurches.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Journeys-to-the-Well-An-Ecumenical-Devotional-Towards-Anti-Racism-ENGLISH.pdf>

MESSAGE FROM THE CANADIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

As Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent for many Western Christians, and as our Eastern and Western Christian friends journey through Lent toward the joyous celebration of Christ's resurrection, the Council is mindful of the challenges that Canadians face.

In the midst of this challenging time, the Executive Committee of the Council, led by President Amanda Currie, offers a reflection, a prayer, and words of encouragement to Christians across Canada. Read the full reflection online:

<https://councilofchurches.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Ash-Wednesday-Reflection-and-Prayer-March-3-2025-EN.pdf>

World Day of Prayer 2025: "I Made You Wonderful" (Psalm 139: 1-18)

The World Day of Prayer is traditionally celebrated on the first Friday of March, though communities can choose other dates. A different participating country writes the service each year, and for 2025, it is the Christian women of the Cook Islands.

Join online for a NATIONAL World Day of Prayer (WDP) 2025 service on Saturday, March 15, 2025, 11am-12pm (CST), Canada.

Register at <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/national-online-world-day-of-prayer-2025-tickets-1071013513249>

Imagine over 1.5 million Christians speaking 90 different languages in 150 countries coming together in spirit; uniting to pray for relevant issues affecting women and children. This was the 2024 reality for this tremendous movement that has been active for nearly 100 years.

The World Day of Prayer is traditionally celebrated on the first Friday of March, though communities can choose other dates. A different participating country writes the service each year, and we look forward to that prepared by the WDP Committee of Cook Islands 2025.

March/April at First Church

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)
	12:00 pm	Hybrid Coffee Hour (Kennedy Room)
Mar. 10	3:45 pm	Youth Volunteering (@ Souls Harbour)
Mar. 11	11:30 am	Forever-In-Motion (Gym)
	12:00 pm	Lunch Bunch
Mar. 13	12:30 pm	Lent Devotional (Morris)
	7:30 pm	Choir
Mar. 15	9:30 am	Presbytery of Assiniboia (Zoom)
Mar. 16	10:30 am	2nd Sunday in Lent (Sanctuary & Online)
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour (Gym)
	12:15 pm	Youth Gathering (Kennedy Room)
Mar. 18	11:30 am	Forever-In-Motion (Gym)
	12:00 pm	Lunch Bunch
Mar. 19	7:00 pm	Board meeting (Zoom)
Mar. 20	12:30 pm	Lent Devotional (Morris)
	7:30 pm	Choir
Mar. 22	10:00 am	Directions Task Force (Zoom)
Mar. 23	10:30 am	3rd Sunday in Lent (Sanctuary & Online) Sunday School
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour (Gym)
	12:00 pm	Short Presentation about Mission Priorities
Mar. 25	11:30 am	Forever-In-Motion (Gym)
	12:00 pm	Lunch Bunch

Mar. 26	7:00 pm	Book Club (Zoom)
Mar. 27	12:30 pm	Lent Devotional (Morris)
	7:30 pm	Choir
Mar. 29	10:00 am	Pastoral Care Ct. (Morris)
Mar. 30	10:30 am	4th Sunday in Lent (Sanctuary & Online) Sunday School
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour (Gym)
Apr. 1	11:30 am	Forever-In-Motion (Gym)
	12:00 pm	Lunch Bunch
Apr. 2	7:00 pm	Session & Board Joint meeting (Zoom)
Apr. 3	12:30 pm	Lent Devotional (Morris)
	7:30 pm	Choir
Apr. 5	10:00 am	Welcome & Inclusion (Zoom)
	3:00 pm	Youth Gym Day
Apr. 6	10:30 am	4th Sunday in Lent Worship with Holy Communion (Sanctuary & Online) Sunday School
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour (Gym)

JUST FOR FUN... I asked Google's AI (Artificial Intelligence) for a prayer for the Season of Lent. Here's what it offered. Not bad!

"Lord, as we journey through this season of reflection and renewal, help us to deepen our faith, embrace your teachings, and grow closer to you through prayer, fasting, and acts of service." Amen!

Rev. Amanda Currie

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