

FIRST THINGS FIRST

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, REGINA

May 2018

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Each year The Presbyterian Church in Canada designates a Sunday in the month of May as Healing and Reconciliation Sunday, and it encourages congregations to mark this theme during worship services on that day. With the leadership of First Church's Session and the Mission & Outreach Committee, Healing and Reconciliation Sunday has been honoured at First Church in the past. In 2017, for example, you welcomed Dr. Blair Stonechild from the First Nations University of Canada as a guest speaker following the worship service.

This year, Session approved a proposal from Mission & Outreach to invite Dr. Stonechild back to First Church so that we can continue our learning about Indigenous Spirituality. We have already held the first of three study evenings with Dr. Stonechild, and there are two more scheduled for Mondays May 7 & 14 at 7:00 pm. We were pleased that over 100 people came out last Monday for the first session, and we hope that we will have a similar attendance at the upcoming sessions.

One of the things that I noted from Dr. Stonechild's first presentation was the teaching within Indigenous Spirituality that we are created to be stewards of the Earth, taking care of all the created things. (It sounds a lot like an important teaching within Christianity also!) He talked about the phrase "all my relations" which I have noticed is often used as a greeting or way of signing off at the end of a letter by my Indigenous friends. We might assume that "all my relations" only refers to my relatives or at least to other human beings. But it actually refers to everything in the Creation – plants, animals, and people. It reminds us as human beings that we are only one part of God's Creation, we are late-comers to Creation, and we need to learn how to develop appropriate relationships with all created things.

An example of an Indigenous spiritual practice was shared with regard to our human practice of eating other animals. Dr. Stonechild explained that Indigenous hunters would say a prayer to say thank you to the spirit of the deer that has given up its life for the sake of the people who will consume it. I remember another elder teaching that when we live in right relations with the creatures of the earth, when we treat the animals with respect and dignity and give thanks to the Creator, then the animal actually offers its life willingly as a sacrifice for our good. How many of us actually say a prayer of thanks when we pick up steaks at the grocery store? How many of us pause to truly give thanks to God whenever we share food?

Now, some of you may be wondering why a Christian church like ours would be interested in learning about Indigenous Spirituality. Indeed, you may even be questioning whether such study of other spiritual practices is appropriate or not. Perhaps it will be helpful to know that our denomination made a statement on Aboriginal Spiritual Practices in 2015, after debate and discussion within the church, about how we should engage with our Indigenous neighbours.

You can read the full statement online at <http://presbyterian.ca/2015/01/29/statement-aboriginal-spiritual-practices/> but here are a few relevant excerpts for your consideration:

"First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, before any encounter with Christianity, found meaning, spiritual benefit and the presence of the Creator through life-giving Indigenous spiritual practices that have deeply rooted traditions.

"Through the church's participation in the residential school system, The Presbyterian Church in Canada contributed to the banning of those traditions. The Presbyterian Church in Canada presumed to know better and, in our cultural arrogance, tried to suppress practices

whose value we were then incapable of perceiving.

“We are now aware that there is a wide variety of Aboriginal spiritual practices and we acknowledge that it is for our church to continue in humility to learn the deep significance of these practices and to respect them and the Aboriginal elders who are the keepers of their traditional sacred truths...

“It is not for The Presbyterian Church in Canada to validate or invalidate Aboriginal spiritualities and practices. Our church, however, is deeply respectful of these traditions. In this spirit The Presbyterian Church in Canada is committed to walking with Aboriginal people in seeking shared truth that will lead to restoring right relations.”

This Sunday, May 6th at First Church, we will celebrate Healing and Reconciliation Sunday with a guest preacher, the Rev. Dr. Margaret Mullin. Margaret has a passion for inner city mission and has been working in the inner city of Winnipeg since 1999. She recently retired from serving as the Executive Director of Winnipeg Inner City Missions, a mission of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, serving the city's north end. She continues to serve as the minister at Place of Hope Presbyterian Church in Winnipeg.

Margaret has devoted her life to healing and reconciliation between the church and Canada's First Nations and Aboriginal people. Due to her Ojibway and Irish/Scottish origins, she has often felt that “my people hurt my people,” which has driven Margaret to be a bridge between the two worlds and to find ways to heal from the past and move forward together in peace.

On Sunday, Margaret will preach from God's Word to us through the prophet Ezekiel (chapter 37, about the Valley of the Dry Bones), and she will share some Indigenous Spiritual practices that are regularly incorporated into her Christian and Presbyterian ministry in Winnipeg. We can look forward to learning about praying in the four directions, listening to a traditional drumming song, and experiencing the practice of smudging. I hope that you can be with us for worship this Sunday to welcome Margaret, to worship God together, and deepen our

understanding of our Indigenous sisters and brothers as we learn from them.

Rev. Amanda Currie

SESSION

Thanks to everyone who came out to have their photo taken last week. We had a wonderful turnout and we look forward to our new photo directory!

As summer approaches, we have a busy time ahead at First Church!

- Sunday, May 6 is Healing and Reconciliation Sunday and we are pleased to welcome The Rev. Dr. Margaret Mullin from Winnipeg as our guest preacher. We will also be celebrating Holy Communion.
- Monday, May 7 and May 14 will be the final two presentations in the Indigenous Spirituality Series with Dr. Blair Stonechild from the First Nations University of Canada. Over 100 people attended his first presentation.
- Sunday, May 20 is our celebration of Pentecost - remember to wear red if you can!
- Sunday, May 27 is the final day of our Church School for the year. We will also be welcoming the Masons for their annual church parade.
- Holy Communion will be celebrated on Sunday, June 3. Rev. Bob Wilson will be leading worship as Amanda will be at General Assembly. This will be the last celebration of Communion until September.
- Beginning June 4, the pipe organ will be cleaned and upgraded. Volunteers are needed. Please see “Organ Appeal” below.
- June 10 is Camp Sunday. Donations are encouraged to support the camp in providing duffle bags for campers, so they don't have to pack their gear in garbage bags.
- The Sunday School picnic will be held in June, with the date to be determined.
- Plans for the Fall include: a Meet your Elder Sunday at coffee time; a welcome back potluck supper; a Rory Allen concert; and a Value Village FundDrive (start saving contributions as you do your spring and summer cleaning!)

Enjoy Spring now that it has finally arrived! We are thankful for the many blessings God has provided.

Jo Szostak
Clerk of Session

ORGAN APPEAL

In June, we will have some important work done on our pipe organ. All the pipes will be removed and cleaned, and some new sets of pipes will be added to provide features we don't currently have. Our organ, as a result, will sound brighter and better than ever! Normally these kinds of upgrades can be very expensive but, fortunately, we were able to acquire some used pipes last year so the whole project will cost approximately \$9,000. The Session and Board of Managers have agreed to appeal to the congregation to raise the \$9,000 needed. To date, over \$1,000 has already been collected. If you would like to make a donation you can include it in your regular offering envelope, but mark Organ under special projects. Thanks for your support!

Volunteers Needed! The work on the organ will begin on Monday, June 4. Volunteers are needed on Monday, June 4 and Tuesday, June 5, beginning at 9:30 a.m. Hart Godden is arranging the work and says "It would be best if a larger number of volunteers were available on the Monday. The work involves carrying small pipes out of the chambers, unpacking the crates and sorting pipes, and washing the pipes in the kitchen. Many hands make light work". If you can help out either day, please let Shirley know in the office. You can also sign up in the narthex on Sunday.

COMMISSIONED VISITORS

First Presbyterian Church is very fortunate to have seven commissioned visitors who regularly have contact with individuals in our congregation who are home-bound. These contacts involve phone calls, sending cards, and making personal visits.

Here are what visitors have to say about visiting.
"Pastoral Care visiting is very rewarding, it

warms my heart when I visit a non-verbal person who smiles when I hold a hand while I talk or who leans towards me and rests her head on me."

Another said, *"To me, being a commissioned visitor means sharing love with another person. I recently visited a lady in a care home, and when I walked into her room, I was dismayed to see her so down. She told me she wanted to die. I asked her if I could hold her hand for a few minutes. She took my hand and we just sat there. After a while we went for a wheelchair walk, and before long we were laughing and singing, and we had a most wonderful visit. She waved to me as I left on the elevator. Just knowing I added a little something to her day made my day that much more special."*

If you know someone who could use a visit, or if you might be interested in being part of this ministry, please talk to Emily Ireton or the Rev. Amanda.

Donna Wilkinson

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



Shipwrecked: Bible Fun Camp

Once again, we are offering a summer experience for kids age 5 to 12. Leadership will be provided by a Synod team, with volunteer help from First Church.

August 20, 2018 — August 23, 2018
9:00 am — 12:00 pm

Venture onto an uncharted island where kids survive and thrive. Anchor kids in the truth that Jesus carries them through life's storms. Register online now!

(vbspro.events/p/reginafirst2018) or call 306-522-9571 for more information.

FUNDSCRIP

Order Sundays for FundScrip this month are May 6 and May 20. Specials for the month include Home Outfitters and Hudson's Bay (5%) and the Ultimate Dining Card (6%). The Ultimate Dining Card is good at a variety of restaurants including Montana's, East Side Mario's, Swiss Chalet, New York Fries and Original Joe's. Gas and grocery cards are available for purchase every Sunday. If you order, you will have a wide array of retailers from which to choose, and cards will be ready for pickup the following Sunday. Start stocking up for summer now, as the final order dates will be in June before we take a break for the summer. Stop by the table in the gym after church. Thanks for your support!

CANADA YOUTH



Thank you, thank you, thank you! Thanks to everyone who has supported fundraising efforts to assist youth and young adults from First Church to attend Canada Youth 2018, our national Presbyterian gathering that takes place in St. Catharines Ontario every second summer.

You have helped make this amazing opportunity possible by giving to the general fund of the church (we budget \$1000 under Christian Education for this purpose each year), as well as by making donations at fundraising events like the Indian Buffet Dinner, pancake suppers, and bunwich lunches.

We are pleased to report that First Church will be supporting six members of our community to attend CY18 this summer: Alex Doolittle, Avery Doolittle, Miranda Gobin, Gabe Omolida, and Matthew Yakemchuk will attend either the Youth Track or the Discipleship Track. Aksa Yakemchuk will be going as an Adult Advisor, while our new youth leader, Jordan Sim, will attend the Youth Ministry Training Track.

We may have one small fundraiser, yet to be organized, before the summer. So, please watch for that opportunity. We'll also have an opportunity to commission our participants during a worship service before they head off in July, and we'll look forward to hearing about their experience and its impact on their lives and faith when they return. Thanks again for your support!

CAMP CHRISTOPHER

Work Weekend - May 25-27, 2018

Camp Christopher needs help getting the camp ready for summer. There are all types of jobs, projects and cleaning to do! We will provide food, materials and some camp activities. For more information or to let us know you are coming please email info@campchristopher.ca. You can also call Donna Wilkinson at 306-586-4026!

Camp Open House - You are invited to join us for our annual Open house, Saturday July 7th, 2018, from noon until 4pm. Join us for worship as we commission the summer staff, spend time on the beach, meet the staff, visit old friends or introduce camp to a first-timer. There will be a BBQ at noon followed by the Commissioning Service at 3pm. All you need to bring is your appetite to help us launch the summer of 2018 in style!

Canadian Tire Money - Your Canadian Tire Money is greatly appreciated at Camp Christopher! When it is all added together we can buy amazing things for the Camp from kayaks to craft supplies to kitchen pots and pans!

PRAYER SHAWLS

The next Prayer Shawl Gathering will be Friday, June 1st at 2:30 pm at Wintergreene Estates, 4950 Pasqua Street. Please bring whatever you are knitting or crocheting and join others for coffee, conversation, and prayer.

MISSION & OUTREACH

Indigenous Spirituality: The last two parts of a three-part study series is still coming up.

Please join us Mondays, May 7 and May 14 from 7-8:30 pm at First Church. Dr. Blair Stonechild, Professor of Indigenous Studies at First Nations University of Canada will lead this study program. Dr. Stonechild is pleased to return and share his knowledge with us. His topics are:

May 7: Principles and Practices of indigenous Spirituality

May 14: Mysticism in Indigenous Spirituality

This study series is open to the general public, so invite your friends along. Come to one of these talks or both for insightful evenings of learning and discussion.

Mary Jesse
M&O Convener

WALKING PROGRAMS

Now that the weather is nice, and we can get outside to walk, both the Adult and Riverbend walking programs have wrapped up for the season. A big thank you for the volunteers who helped with the residents of Riverbend. Although several walks had to be cancelled due to weather or staffing issues at Riverbend this year, you and your time are greatly appreciated!

THANK YOU!

Thanks to everyone for coming out and having your pictures taken for the Pictorial Directory. We had a great turn out, and from what I saw the pictures were fantastic! A big thank you to Carole, John, Marg, Mary, Wendy, Kash, and Jo for helping with registration, and a very special thank you to our church secretary, Shirley, who did a tremendous amount of work phoning, scheduling etc. etc. And thanks to all of YOU. WE are all going to look great in the Pictorial Directory!

Sheila Wilson

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations from the congregation of First Church to Maureen Meston-Pockett on receiving the Governor General of Canada Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers. The write-up from their

website reads: *For more than 20 years, Maureen Meston-Pockett has been actively involved in her community. She has devoted her time to youth, to people with visual impairments and to terminally ill patients by giving countless hours of her time to such organizations as the Qu'Appelle Health Region's Palliative Care, Regina Lakeside Lions Club and many more.*



Maureen with husband, Rick



Maureen

GENERAL ASSEMBLY



The General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada will begin on Sunday June 3, at Wilfred Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario, at 7:00 p.m. with worship and the Celebration of Communion taking place in Lazaridis Hall. This year's theme is "With Glad and Generous Hearts."

The General Assembly is the highest court (decision-making body) of the denomination. It is made up of about 1 out of every 6 ministers of the church and an equal number of elders who are commissioned by their presbyteries to attend the annual meeting.

This year, First Church will have a few members present at the General Assembly in various roles, even though it is not our turn to send either a minister or an elder as a voting commissioner. Rev. Amanda Currie is finishing up her term as Convener of the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee, so she will be attending the assembly to present her committee's report, and to host and introduce the ecumenical and interfaith guests.

Rev. Amanda has also been asked to assist with introducing a new method of debate and discussion – consensus decision-making – which will be tested out at the Monday evening sitting. She will work with the clerks, moderator, and a couple of other assistants to help make this experiment with consensus decision-making as smooth as possible. Rev. Amanda has also agreed to be the preacher at the Monday morning worship service on the text of Acts 4:32-37 in which the early Christian community enjoyed great unity and held all their possessions in common.

As you may know, in addition to ministers and elders who serve as voting commissioners at the General Assembly, there are Young Adult Representatives (YARs) sent each year from 1 out of every 2 presbyteries across the country. This year, Matthew Yakemchuk will be attending the General Assembly as the YAR for the Presbytery of Assiniboia.

YARs have the opportunity to attend all the meetings and events surrounding the General Assembly, read and consider the reports, and ask questions and participate in the discussion and debate. Although YARs do not have a vote when it comes time for making final decisions, they are encouraged to share their thoughts on all the issues before the Assembly. One of the ways they do this is through an "Advisory Vote" in which the YARs indicate their vote on a matter before the commissioners are invited to do so.

A third member of First Church will also be attending the General Assembly this year. Donna Wilkinson has recently been asked, and has agreed, to serve as a mentor for the YARs, orienting them to the workings of the General Assembly (with the assistance of the Clerks of Assembly), supporting and encouraging them in their participation, and generally equipping these youth and young adults to have a great experience at the assembly.

Please pray for Rev. Amanda, Matthew, and Donna, as they attend and participate in the 2018 General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Pray for the whole Assembly, for wisdom, good discernment, a spirit of cooperation and care for one another in our deliberations, and for God's will to be done through our work. The commissioners from the Presbytery of Assiniboia are the Rev. Lip Boon Lee (minister at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Moosomin) and Fran Neuls (elder at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Grenfell). Please keep Lip Boon and Fran in your prayers during the assembly as well.

You can find out more about the General Assembly online at <http://presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2018/> and watch live streaming of the meeting starting on Sunday, June 3rd at 5:00 pm (CST).

FIRST CHURCH ONLINE

Did you know that First Church has an online presence? Although we love to gather in person to worship, serve, and share fellowship, many of us also connect online to share, reflect, and pray for one another.

Here are some ways that you can connect with First Church online:

- Our church website is www.firstpresregina.ca where you can find information about the various ministries of the church, read the latest "First Things First" newsletter, see upcoming events, make an online donation, and more. Our wedding policy and rental policy are included on the site as well.
- Rev. Amanda has a website where she posts all her sermons. You can go online to read a recent sermon that you may have missed, or browse by Scripture passage or date to read older sermons as well: www.curriejesson.ca
- You can also connect with First Church on Facebook by becoming friends with our Facebook identity: FirstPresbyterian Regina. We regularly post items about what's happening in and around the church, as well as other items of interest to our members.

If you would like to be added to our e-mail distribution list, please give your e-mail address to the office.

MAY EVENTS

6	10:30 AM	Worship Service & Sunday School
7	7:00 PM	Indigenous Spirituality #2 Dr. Blair Stonechild
8	10:30 AM noon	Bible Study Freedom 55'ers
10	7:00 PM	Choir & Chancel Singers
13	10:30 AM	Worship Service & Sunday School
14	7:00 PM	Indigenous Spirituality #3 Dr. Blair Stonechild
15	10:30 AM noon	Bible Study Freedom 55'ers
16	7:00 PM	Board of Managers
17	7:00 PM	Choir & Contemp. Grp.
20	10:30 AM	Worship Service & Sunday School
21	Victoria Day -	Office Closed
22	10:30 AM noon	Bible Study Freedom 55'ers
24	7:00 PM	Choir & Chancel Singers
27	10:30 AM	Worship Service & Sunday School
29	10:30 AM noon	No Bible study Freedom 55'ers
June 1,	2:30 PM	Prayer Shawl Gathering (at Wintergreene)