

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

May 2024

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Dear Members and Adherents of First Church,

Greetings to you all as we begin the month of May and watch the greening and blooming of the environment around us. April was a very full and meaningful month in our church's ministry, and it is delightful to see so many of you participating regularly in worship, fellowship, and service in our church family.

One of the recent big events at First Church was our Annual Congregational Meeting last Sunday, April 28th. We had about twice as many people (compared to other recent annual meetings) who stayed after worship to participate in the meeting, which was excellent. Part of the reason for the higher attendance may have been the conversations about our church building that we told you would take place. Thank you to all who took part in those conversations. Your initial thoughts, questions, and ideas have provided a good starting point for a team that will do further work on this topic. (There is more about this in the Session report from our Clerk of Session, Jo Szostak.)

A couple of other things we did at the annual meeting included appointing some new Board members (Thanks to Alfred Ferozdin and Gavin MacLean who volunteered to join the Board). We also re-elected two Elders whose terms on Session were finishing and who were willing to continue (Sheila Wilson and Tammy MacDonald).

Whenever we elect new Elders or vote on a call for a new minister (which doesn't happen as frequently) we are reminded that these are a couple of the decisions where only official members of the congregation are invited to vote. For most other congregational decisions, including the program plans, finances, and budget, both members and adherents are invited to vote.

We noticed last Sunday that there were some folks who weren't sure if they were members or not, so I thought I'd share a little about church

membership here – beginning with a few definitions:

Professing Members – Youth and adults who have made a public profession of faith and been received as members of the congregation, as well as others who have transferred their membership from another congregation to First Church. Professing members not only make a declaration of their faith, but also promise faithful participation in the life and ministry of this congregation.

Adherents – Children, youth, and adults who participate in the worship and life of the congregation. I often describe adherents as people who “stick” with us. Adherents may participate in all the ministries of the church, including serving on committees or the Board of Managers. They are not, however, eligible to be elected as Elders.

If you read the Session report in this year's annual report, you may have noticed that at the end of 2023, First Church had 138 professing members and about 64 adherents. (It's harder to count adherents, because some of you stick more closely than others, and there's no official process for you becoming an adherent.)

There is, however, a process for becoming a professing member. No matter how faithful you are to the congregation as an adherent through your attendance, service, and giving, we won't automatically add you as a member unless you let us know that you would like to be a member. About once a year, I offer membership classes to anyone who is interested in exploring their faith more deeply, learning about The Presbyterian Church in Canada, and considering membership in our congregation. I am also happy to work out a one-on-one membership preparation which may be suitable for some adherents. And if you moved from another Presbyterian congregation to First Church, please ask me about how you can arrange for a transfer of membership.

With all of that said, I want to remind you that we are all beloved children of God and valued participants in the church family that is First Church. Adherents, I'm so glad that you are sticking with us! Members, thank you for taking the step of committing yourselves to the ministry and mission that we share in this place!

Rev. Amanda Currie

SESSION

First 100th Anniversary

January 11, 2025, will mark the 100th anniversary of First Presbyterian Church. We're planning a big celebration that weekend! On Saturday, January 11, we will have a birthday party in the gym. On Sunday, January 12, there will be a catered dinner following worship. Rev. Brad Childs and his family will be joining us for the weekend, and Brad will preach on Sunday. Over the next few months, we will take some looks at the history of First through the eyes of those who have been part of our congregation over the decades. We start "Remember When..." today with Margaret MacDonald, who has been part of First for almost 70 years!

For our anniversary, we will be publishing a new photo directory of the congregation. Mark your calendar for Sept. 13, 14, 15 when Artistic Impressions will be at the church to take photos of all congregants.

Our 100-year-old Building

Times have changed over the past 100 years! When the church was first built, the sanctuary would be full on Sundays, with 200 children in the Sunday School! We continue to welcome new members, but we are now a smaller congregation than that. Maintaining an old building continues to be a challenge and heating it in our cold winters is extremely expensive. At our annual meeting on April 28, we had very good table discussions about what is important about First and its mission, and how we feel about various options for the future. If you would like to have input please contact the office to get a list of the questions we discussed. We are forming a task force to explore the possibilities for the future. If you would like to be a part of that group, please let either Amanda or Jo know.

UPLIFT

We are thrilled that we have seven young people registered for UPLIFT (formerly Canada Youth), as well as two adults. Attending in July will be Aina Ferozdin, Ashan Ferozdin, Shazia Ferozdin, Luke Yakemchuk, Elijah Yakemchuk, Jonah Yakemchuk, and Shay Doolittle. Al and Aksa Yakemchuk will be attending as adult advisers.

Scholarship Committee

Andrew Donovan is the new chair of the Scholarship Committee. We thank Jim Doolittle for his many years of service as chair of the committee!

Healing and Reconciliation

First Church has two copies of "*21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act*". The Synod circulated these books for congregations to read. The Session has read the book and discussed its contents. It's quite an eye-opening book about how government policy was developed and carried out. It's a pretty easy read - if you would like to read the book, please contact the church office to borrow one. Becoming aware of the justice issues is an important step in healing and reconciliation.

Jo Szostak
Clerk of Session

THE LIVING HISTORY OF FIRST

As we look forward to celebrating 100 years in the life of First Church in January, 2025, we want to recognize the rich history of the church over the decades. This month we are celebrating the life and dedication of Margaret MacDonald, who has currently been a member at First longer than anyone else!

Margaret J. MacDonald

Margaret grew up on a farm near Saltcoats, Saskatchewan. Margaret's parents farmed 1 ½ sections of land, and her mother was a beekeeper.

Margaret moved to Regina in 1954 and worked at SaskTel as a telephone operator. She roomed with Allan and Mary MacDonald in Regina, who were friends of her parents. She stayed there until she found a light housekeeping room to rent on her own.

While she was staying with the MacDonald family, Margaret and Mac started dating. This led to their lifelong relationship. Prior to their marriage, Margaret was baptized at the house. Margaret and Mac were married at First Presbyterian Church by Reverend Dr. Norman Kennedy on September 15, 1956. Their wedding reception was held in the old church basement, prepared by the ladies of the church. Margaret became a member of the church on October 7, 1956.

Eventually three more MacDonalds were added to the clan: Heather, Tammy, and Allan. All three children were baptized and attended Sunday School at First Church. As well, Margaret's two grandchildren, Amber and Ace, were also baptized there, making this 4 generations of MacDonalds to be members at First Presbyterian Church.

Other than the two years when the family moved to Prince Albert due to Mac's work, the MacDonalds have faithfully attended First Church. Margaret worked throughout her child-rearing years and well past retirement as a bookkeeper. She fully retired at the age of 82.

Over the years, Margaret has faithfully served the church in many ways. She has been an Elder on Session for many years, and has served on several other committees throughout her church life. It was Mac's mother, Mary MacDonald, who introduced Margaret to Mrs. Kennedy in 1954. Mrs. Kennedy was the choir director at the time, and Margaret has been singing in the choir ever since!

Sadly, Mac passed away in 2018. We are so fortunate and blessed to have Margaret as part of our church family for so many years. She plays a vital role in our congregation.

Remember When...

Margaret has been involved with First Church for 70 years, so has many memories of how things used to be!

- Margaret was baptized and married by the Rev. Dr. Norman Kennedy, who was the first minister from Saskatchewan to serve as a Moderator of General Assembly.
- In Margaret's early years at First, the gym addition hadn't been built yet, which is why

they had their wedding supper in the basement under the sanctuary. The 14th Ave door was considered to be the front door of the church.

- The choir pews were full and Margaret sat with the altos in the first two pews behind the organ. In those days, everyone was addressed as Mr. or Mrs., and Mrs. Kennedy, the minister's wife, was the organist and choir director. When Mrs. Kennedy retired, Jack Partridge took over as organist and choir director. Others in the choir at the time included Shelagh and Bill Kelly, Joyce Nicol, Kaye Hunchuk, Donna Smith, and Cameron Champ. (Cameron's parents provided the bequest that is the foundation of our investments.) Cameron couldn't talk very well, but he could sing! Every once in a while, Jack Partridge would get Cameron to sing a solo. One time, Mrs. Champ had the choir in for tea at their house in the crescents. The choir got together for potluck gatherings, often hosted by Jack and John at their home.
- In the early years, the ladies were organized in "Circles". Margaret was in the original Circle, but when she returned from PA in the late 60s, new Circles had been formed and she joined one of the new ones.
- Every fall, the ladies would cook turkeys at home and put on a fowl supper, with two or three sittings, to raise money for the church. It was an easy way to raise funds.
- Margaret remembers David Marshall, who was the Clerk of Session when she became an elder.

MISSION & OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Camp Christopher Fundraiser: May 26 is Camp Sunday, and your donations towards our camp are welcome on May 26 and June 2. As all water used at camp must be hauled in, your donations will be used to purchase water tanks for the summer (each tank costs \$330).

Ecumenical Saturday Lunch Program: Due to your generosity at Easter we now have funds to host this program twice more in 2024. Our next

hosting date is July 20. Sign up in the narthex or contact Mary Jesse if you can make sandwiches that morning in our church kitchen or help set up and serve over the lunch hour at First Baptist Church.



Thanks to all of the volunteers from First Church who made sandwiches and served lunch at the Ecumenical Lunch Program on April 6th. These are a few of the volunteers putting lunch bags together.

Mary Jesse
Mission & Outreach Convener

FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

Great fun on Birthday Sunday. About 70 People stayed and the cake selection was fantastic!



Sheila Wilson
Fellowship Committee Convener

CAMP CHRISTOPHER

Camp Christopher is still looking for some staff for summer 2024! We need a lifeguard and maintenance person and could always use a few more volunteers! Please contact Donna at donnaw@sasktel.net for more information.

Donna Wilkinson

WELCOME & INCLUSION COMMITTEE

Pride Parade Save the Date: First Presbyterian Church will be walking in the Pride Parade on June 15 at 12 noon and there will be a booth in the park from 12-5pm. More details to follow or talk with Donna at 306-535-6916 or e-mail donnaw@sasktel.net.

Donna Wilkinson
Welcome & Inclusion Convener

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2024

The General Assembly is the annual meeting of The Presbyterian Church in Canada at the national level. It normally happens every year during the first week of June. Every Presbytery across the country commissions an equal number of Elders and Ministers to attend and participate in discernment and decision-making around questions of church doctrine, polity, priorities, and programs. About one out of every six Ministers and an equal number of Elders serve as commissioners each year.

In 2019, I was honoured to serve as the Moderator (like a convener) of the General Assembly, but this year I'm happy to be attending again as a commissioner for the Presbytery of Assiniboia. Barry Holtslander,

from St. Mark's Presbyterian Church in Moose Jaw, will be the Elder Commissioner.

I'm letting you know about this for a few reasons. First, you'll understand why I am away from Regina from May 31 – June 6 when I will be attending a Pre-Assembly workshop on June 1, followed by the meetings of the Assembly in Waterloo, Ontario. Second, you may be interested in the agenda and discussions that will take place at the Assembly. You can read any of the reports on the Reports and Summaries page:

<https://presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2024/reports-to-general-assembly/> .

I need to read all of these reports in the next few weeks, but you can pick and choose the ones you're most interested in reading.

A couple of weeks ago, we had Dylon Nippi as our guest speaker for Healing and Reconciliation Sunday. Dylon is the Executive Director of the Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry, and he is also the co-convener of the Special Committee re Renewed Apology re Role in Colonialism and Residential Schools. You'll find the report of that committee at the link above. Another good report to read in order to get a sense of the breadth and depth of the ministry we share together as a denomination is the Report of the Life and Mission Agency Committee.

You may also be interested in watching the Assembly proceedings online. I'll share the link for the livestream when it is available. I would also ask for your prayers for me, for the Moderator, the Rev. Dr. Pat Dutcher-Walls, and for all the commissioners so that we will be guided by the Holy Spirit, listen well to one another, and make good decisions for the well-being of the church and its ministry and mission in the world.

Rev. Amanda Currie



GROW HOPE

We live in a world of plenty. Yet, today, 783 million people around the world will go to bed on an empty stomach. The Canadian Foodgrains Bank is made up of 15 Canadian churches and church agencies working together to end global hunger. These members partner with trusted locally-based organizations in developing countries to meet emergency food needs and achieve long-term solutions to hunger. Last year, Presbyterian World Service and Development was involved in 8 projects in 4 different countries – Malawi, Haiti, Guatemala and Pakistan.

Grow Hope is a project of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. The Synod of Saskatchewan of the



Presbyterian Church is a partner in Grow Hope Saskatchewan. Farmers donate land to grow crops and others donate money to pay for the inputs – seed, fertilizer, fuel, etc. In 2023, the Synod received enough donations to sponsor 18 acres, which resulted in \$12,487 in proceeds from the crops grown on those acres. Matched by Global Affairs Canada up to 4:1, those proceeds could grow to provide \$60,000 in funding.

Please donate to support the 2024 crops of Grow Hope Saskatchewan.

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:

Grow Hope Saskatchewan
1-2338 Assiniboine Ave E., Regina, SK S4V 2E9

**CONTRIBUTE TO A COLLECTION
OF STORIES ABOUT THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA**

In recognition of The Presbyterian Church in Canada's 150th anniversary in 2025, the Committee on History is preparing a published collection of stories about where we have been, where we are, and where we are going.

Do you have a favourite memory of singing in a choir, attending a youth group, going to a potluck supper, or attending the General Assembly—or anything else that shaped your involvement in church? What are some of the things your congregation is doing today to share the good news of Jesus in your community? And what are your hopes and dreams for the PCC as it approaches 150 years?

We want to hear from you! Please write to Ian McKechnie, project coordinator, at pcc150book@gmail.com. Submissions are being accepted through September 2024.



*Photo from the Presbyterian Church Archives of the National Presbyterian Young Peoples' Society Council at work at Camp Geddie in August 1956.
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May Calendar

May 5 10:30 am 6th Sunday of Easter
Intergenerational Worship with Holy Communion (Sanctuary & Online)
11:45 am Coffee Hour (Gym)
12:00 pm Christian Education Cmt. (Morris Room)

May 7 11:30 am Forever-In-Motion Exercises
12:00 pm Lunch Bunch (Gym)
May 8 7:00 pm Book Club (Zoom)
May 9 7:00 pm Choir
May 10 10:30 am Anniversary Committee

May 12 10:30 am 7th Sunday of Easter
Rev. Bob Wilson preaching (Sanctuary & Online)
Sunday School
11:45 am Coffee Hour (Gym)

May 14 11:30 am Forever-In-Motion Exercises
12:00 pm Lunch Bunch (Gym)
6:00 pm UPLIFT Fundraising Dinner
May 15 7:00 pm Board of Managers (Zoom)
May 16 7:00 pm Choir

May 19 10:30 am Pentecost Sunday
(Sanctuary & Online)
Sunday School
11:45 am Coffee Hour (Gym)
May 23 7:00 pm Choir

May 26 10:30 am Camp Sunday
(Sanctuary & Online)
Sunday School
11:45 am Coffee Hour (Gym)
May 29 7:00 pm Session Meeting
May 30 7:00 pm Choir

Start of June Calendar

June 2 10:30 am 2nd Sunday after Pentecost
Taeyang No preaching (Sanctuary & Online)
Sunday School
11:45 am Coffee Hour (Gym)
June 6 7:00 pm Choir

June 9 10:30 am 3rd Sunday after Pentecost
Worship with Holy Communion