

**FIRST THINGS FIRST
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, REGINA
NOVEMBER 2021**

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Advent and Christmas at First Church

The Season of **Advent begins on Sunday, November 28th** with four Sundays leading up to Christmas. Worship will include lighting the Advent Candles of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love, with the Scripture readings and preaching highlighting the theme of waiting for Jesus to be born, while we also wait for his coming again in glory. Music will include Advent and Christmas hymns, anthems, and solos, to brighten our hearts and lead us into a joyful celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ our Lord.

If you are fully vaccinated and comfortable attending worship in-person, please consider joining us in the sanctuary for worship during this special season of the year. We will continue to livestream all the services for those who are unable to attend.

Go deeper this Season of Advent by participating in the **“Presbyterians Read” Advent Book Study** on Adam Hamilton’s book, “Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas.” If you would like a copy of the book, let Rev. Amanda know **THIS WEEKEND** (Nov. 13-14) so that she will order enough books. Then consider joining the Tuesday evening discussion group on Zoom starting on Nov. 30th at 7:00 pm, and continuing Dec. 7, 14, & 21.

Try out the spiritual practice of pilgrimage by participating in the **Walk to Bethlehem** during this Advent Season. Check out the details below.

Mark your calendar now for two special worship services. The **Blue Christmas Service** will be on Wed. Dec. 15th at 7:00 pm. This service acknowledges that December can be a difficult and even sad season for many of us, whether due to grief, loss, loneliness, or stress. This quiet service of music and prayer will be an opportunity to rest in God’s presence without expectations, and it will include an opportunity to light a candle in memory of a loved one who has died.

The **Christmas Eve Service** will be on Fri. Dec. 24th at 7:00 pm. Bring your family and invite your friends to this joyful celebration of the birth of Christ. Our large sanctuary has plenty of room to gather without getting too crowded, and it has been two years since we last had the opportunity to celebrate Christmas together!

Also watch the announcements for **Advent and Christmas Hymn Sings online**. These will be great little videos for you to watch, sing along with, or just play in the background to bring some light into your December.

Walk to Bethlehem: An Advent Pilgrimage
As you likely know, I do like to walk. When I started walking every day five years ago, I discovered that walking improved my health, gave me more energy, made me feel better about myself, allowed me time to think and pray, and connected me to others. It all began when I decided to embark on an Advent Pilgrimage – the Walk to Bethlehem. This Season of Advent, I want to invite you to walk with me. Whether you already include walking in your daily life, or whether you will be stretching yourself to start moving a little more, please consider joining me.

Mary and Joseph walked from Nazareth to Bethlehem, a journey of about 111 km. You can choose whatever distance you would like to walk each day, but one possible goal is to walk the full distance of 111 km in the 28 days of Advent – about 4 km each day. You can walk indoors in the gymnasium at First Church or outdoors on the sidewalks and pathways. One circle around the main section of Wascana Lake just happens to be 4 km!

You can count your steps and distance with various watches or pedometer devices. There are many free apps available for iPhones or Android phones that you can also download. Or don’t worry about the exact distance too much, and just walk every day. It’s your choice.

The biblical texts each day are meant to help you meditate as you walk your Advent journey to the manger by reminding us of the Advent promises that are ours in Jesus – Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Some of the passages refer to walking and our journey of faith.

You can pick up a copy of the “Walk to Bethlehem” booklet in the narthex at the church. It includes instructions, Bible passages for each day, and a log sheet to keep track of your distance or steps. May this Advent journey be a blessing to you as you journey towards Christmas and to the gift of Emmanuel, God with us.

You are also welcome to literally walk with me in the gymnasium at First Church. I’ll be walking there from 11 am – Noon Tuesdays to Fridays, starting on Nov. 30th.

Rev. Amanda Currie

Listening God

(A prayer by Alma Fritchley)

Listening God,
I never really had much hope
for your human race.

We seem at best
silly and outrageous,
at worst,
well, read any paper.

And then, through you,
we go and surprise ourselves -
amaze ourselves -
with spontaneous acts
of kindness.

'Man saves dog from freak wave.'
'Woman frees trapped child from car.'

Thanks for sticking with us, God,
when the going gets tough.
Thanks for taking us through trials
to triumph.

Now,
let us go from joy
into justice
From fear into freedom. Amen.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Leave your worries of yesterday there
Today's a New Day, a Fresh Start
Pray and let God take the Lead
He will take you exactly where you need to go
Blessings Be on You Today!

~ Frances Ridley Havergal

Members of the Worship Committee met on Saturday, October 23rd. We celebrated Holy Communion on Sunday, November 7th at our Remembrance Day Service. Special thanks to Lyle Buddecke who played trumpet, and Luke and Al Yakemchuk who presented the Canadian and Saskatchewan flags in honour of those who served our Country. “In Flanders Fields” was sung by our Small Choir Ensemble, and Paula Weber favoured us with her solo - “Pie Jesu” - from the Faure Requiem.

Thank you to our Welcome Team comprised of Ron Pugsley, Heather Mazurak, Murray Kyle and Alfred Ferozdin. Your contributions are greatly appreciated. If you are interested in volunteering for the Welcome Team for December, please contact Marianne - marianne@osac.ca.

Lectors are still needed to read the Prayer of Illumination, Psalms and Lessons on December 5 and 26th. Thank you to those who have already made a commitment. The Season of Advent begins on Sunday, November 28th. If you are willing to be a reader, please contact Marianne at the above e-mail address.

From Our Director of Music:

Choir rehearsals will be held weekly on Thursday evenings to prepare for the Season of Advent and Christmas. The Choir will be featured more frequently during worship and will sing two anthems per month instead of one. Small Groups (Classical and Contemporary) will have regularly scheduled rehearsals during November and December. If you are interested in joining the Choir, please contact Will Ireton – willireton@gmail.com

Words for special music presented at each worship service will now be included in the printed Order of Worship each Sunday, just below the words for the hymns.

The organ blower has been replaced in the pipe organ, and it was a joy to hear the organ

played by our Music Director on Sunday, November 7.

In closing, the Worship Committee expresses our heartfelt thanks to Joyce McKersie for preparing reports of the committee's work for many years to the newsletter. Joyce is retiring from these duties, but will continue to do the excellent work she does, along with Jeannie Macfarlane, in beautifying our church sanctuary.

Wishing each of you God's Blessings. Stay safe and healthy!

Marianne Woods
Worship Committee Convener

MISSION & OUTREACH

PWS&D - Afghanistan Access to food has



become a critical issue in Afghanistan, but we have the opportunity to respond and

help people get through a most challenging time. Will you join us?

In October, the United Nations estimated that over 18 million Afghans—half of the country's population—are facing a humanitarian crisis. Currently 1 in 3 people are hungry and 2 million children are malnourished. The numbers will only increase as winter sets in.

PWS&D is planning an emergency food assistance project with an experienced partner on the ground. This project is in partnership with Canadian Foodgrains Bank which provides access to matching funds, meaning donations will reach as many people as possible.

Cash transfers to the most vulnerable families will help them buy food and pay for critical items, with the hopes of livelihood recovery in the new year. Aid to internally displaced people and host communities, with a focus on women-headed households, the elderly and people with disabilities, will have an enormous impact.

Join us in praying for the people of Afghanistan, given the ever-evolving situation on the ground and the serious humanitarian crisis that is developing.

The worsening situation in Afghanistan means our support and solidarity are needed now more than ever. Please make cheques payable to First Presbyterian Church marked "Afghanistan".

Toiletries for Camp Marjorie: UPDATE

Thank you to those who have already made donations of toiletries for Camp Marjorie. The camp has indicated that they have enough supplies right now, and the greater need is for meals for the people.

If you have already purchased some toiletries for this project, feel free to bring them to the church and they will be distributed to a shelter or other mission where they will still be very helpful.

If you would like to make a financial donation to support Camp Marjorie, please do so and the Mission & Outreach Committee will use it to assist with a meal for the camp. Mark your donation as "Camp Marjorie" and give by cheque, cash, or e-transfer.

Mary Jesse
Mission & Outreach Convener

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Applications Welcome! Do you have a project that supports our First Church mission?

Our First Church Planned Giving Program is inviting applications for activities supported by our Planned Giving Funds. The project or initiative needs to support one or more aspects of our mission to be:

- joyful in our worship
- tender in our lives together; and
- daring in our outreach

The deadline for Planned Giving project applications is December 31, 2021. Applications will be considered by the congregation at the Annual General Meeting in spring 2022.

There are a variety of ways you can apply. If you receive the church newsletter by email, we have attached a Planned Giving application form. If you received the newsletter via regular mail and need a planned giving application form, please contact Shirley in the office at 306.522.9571 and she will mail you one. Once you have completed your application (found at the end of the

newsletter), please submit it to Shirley in the office, either by

- email to firstpresregina@sasktel.net
- by regular mail to First Presbyterian Church, 2170 Albert Street, Regina, SK, S4P 2T9, or
- by dropping your application off at the registration table if you are attending church in person on Sundays.

We welcome your proposals to further the mission of First Church!

Lisa Ann Wood
Stewardship Committee member

THANK YOU

We received the following note from Grace Presbyterian Church, Yorkton, along with a donation.

Dear First Church Family,

We have been enjoying online services that you have provided for many months now - either at our homes or watching on the screen in our sanctuary. We have been enjoying them so much - the beautiful music and singing, the thoughtful and inspiring services and prayers.

Please accept this small token of our thanks and appreciation. You helped carry us through this difficult time. Bless you.

Grace Yorkton Church Family

THEY WERE LOVED: A Covid Tribute

MacLean's recently had published an article in which one of First Church members was recognized.

They Were Loved The magnitude of COVID-19's impact on Canadians' lives is difficult to fathom. Canada has already lost more than 20,000 people to the pandemic, with the number ticking steadily upwards; each of those losses has cascaded through families and communities, leaving many more thousands bereaved. Public health guidance around social distancing has resulted in restrictions around traditional mourning customs and rituals—heart-wrenchingly, many were unable even to say goodbye.

They Were Loved is an obituary project to commemorate thousands of coronavirus victims, as well as to mark this historic moment in Canadian history. Our goal: to pay tribute to everyone who has died of COVID-19 in Canada, and every Canadian who has died of the disease abroad. In partnership with Carleton University's Future of Journalism Initiative and journalism schools across Canada, Maclean's is striving to capture the richness of each life lost in elegant obituaries.



Joan Frew

A compassionate social butterfly

Joan Jemima Frew was born on Nuttal farm, just outside of Pense, Sask., in 1934. She and her twin sister, Joyce, had plans to become nurses. "The nursing school didn't let them room together, so they didn't go," says Kathy

Hancock, Joan's daughter. Joan and Joyce were inseparable—the two even shared a double wedding in 1956. Joan married her husband of 62 years, H. Don Frew, and spent over 25 years working with Saskatchewan's ministry of health in the deputy minister's office and later in vital statistics. When she retired, she took up her hobby of woodworking full time. "She made hundreds of wooden tulips," says Kathy. Later in life, she took loving care of her husband, Don. "Dad got dementia about 12 years before he passed away, and my mom was his primary caregiver," says Kathy. Joan spent the last years of her life at a personal care home in Regina. She was a devoted Presbyterian parishioner. "A couple years ago Mum said that she knew God's purpose for why she was still here [on earth]," Kathy says. "It was to provide compassion to the people in the care home." This is exactly what Joan did. When her friends in the home needed more exercise, she would get them up and walking around, even though she used a walker herself. "She was a social butterfly," says Kathy with a laugh.

—Denée Seaton

Died on December 21, 2020
Regina, SK
Age 86

EXPLORING OUR SACRED TESTS:
A conversation about stewarding
our common life



Over the last month, Rev. Amanda was pleased to participate in three online conversations with Rabbi Jeremy Parnes and Imam Dr. Mohamed Masloh on the topics of Generosity, Hospitality, and Compassion. Organized by the Ecumenical Stewardship Committee of the Anglican Diocese of Qu'Appelle, the Saskatchewan Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church In Canada, and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Regina, these interfaith conversations brought together 60-90 participants on Zoom and they were livestreamed to YouTube.

In these days of increased social polarization and intolerance, where racism, antisemitism, and Islamophobia appear to be increasing daily, dialogue between faith communities is an antidote to ignorance and hatred. Generosity, hospitality, and compassion are social virtues that can heal the wounds of our society.

If you missed the opportunity to participate live, you can still watch the videos on the Archdiocese of Regina's YouTube channel. They are found in the category of "Stewardship" and here is the direct link to the first conversation:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0YcLqdfFdM&list=PLx-MMJwsBsiuh1bqMtfVzqgDsNatLDYfr&index=3>

NOVEMBER EVENTS

Nov. 10	12:00 pm 7:00 pm	Bible Study (Zoom) Session
Nov. 14	10:30 am	Worship (In-Person & Online)
	12:15 pm 1:00 pm	Sunday School (Zoom) Coffee Hour (Zoom)
Nov. 15	7:00 pm	Mission & Outreach (Zoom)
Nov. 16	5:30 pm	Music Team
Nov. 17		No Bible Study Today
Nov. 18	7:00 pm	Choir
Nov. 20	10:00 am	Presbytery (Zoom)
Nov. 21	10:30 am	Worship (In-Person & Online)
		Reign of Christ Sunday
	12:15 pm 1:00 pm	Sunday School (Zoom) Coffee Hour (Zoom)
Nov. 23	12:00 pm	Freedom 55ers (Zoom)
Nov. 24	12:00 pm 7:00 pm	Bible Study (Zoom) Board of Managers (Zoom)
Nov. 25	7:00 pm	Choir
Nov. 27	10:00 am	Worship Committee
Nov. 28	10:30 am	Worship (In-Person & Online)
		First Sunday of Advent
	12:15 pm 1:00 pm	Sunday School (Zoom) Coffee Hour (Zoom)
Nov. 30	7:00 pm	Presbyterians Read (Zoom)
Dec. 1	12:00 pm 7:00 pm	Bible Study (Zoom) Session (Zoom)
Dec. 2	7:00 pm	Choir
Dec. 3	10:00 am	Pastoral Care Committee
Dec. 5	10:30 am	Worship (In-Person & Online)
		2nd Sunday of Advent
	12:15 pm 1:00 pm	Sunday School (Zoom) Coffee Hour (Zoom)

Growing our Vision: Seeds of Abundant Joy

Application Process

- This process is designed to align with the annual congregational planning process.
- Applications are to be received in the Church office by December 31st.
- The Stewardship Committee reviews applications, considers money available, and develops recommendations.
- The Stewardship Committee presents all applications, with recommendations, to the joint Board/Session meeting in January/
February.
- All applications are forwarded from the joint Board/Session meeting, with recommendations, to the congregational Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- Applications are considered for approval by the congregation at the AGM.
- Other applications arising during the remainder of the calendar year may be considered as funds are available. For amounts up to \$2000, the Session may approve projects. For amounts over \$2000, congregational approval is required.

**Growing our Vision: Seeds of Abundant Joy
Application Form for Funds**

Name/Group _____

Contact: (Person Responsible) _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Project: _____

Describe your Project: (Attach supporting documents if necessary)

How does this further the Mission of the Church:

Joyful in Worship _____ Tender In Life: _____ Daring in Outreach _____

Amount requested: _____

Signature

Date

Forms due December 31st of each year to the office of First Presbyterian Church, 2170 Albert Street, Regina SK S4P 2T9. Completed forms can also be emailed to firstplannedgiving@sasktel.net