

**FIRST THINGS FIRST
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, REGINA
NOVEMBER 2022**

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

**Come, All You People!
Come and Praise Your Maker!**

I must admit that I began this Fall Season feeling rather tired. I came home from our big trip to Germany and the World Council of Churches rather exhausted from all the travel and still recovering my energy after getting Covid at the end of the trip. Although I jumped back into ministry at First Church, I felt somewhat discouraged when we postponed some of our planned in-person events and when attendance at worship was still pretty sparse.

But as we moved into October, we re-started in-person Coffee Hour after worship, the Freedom 55ers group began to meet in the gymnasium again, and then we had almost 50 people gathered for a pot luck supper on October 23rd. I had almost forgotten what great cooks and bakers we have in our church community! Besides all the fellowship gatherings, attendance at worship has been slowly ticking upwards too, kids are back at church and attending Sunday School, and the choir is having a great time with our Interim Music Director, Chloe Golden, together with Music Scholars Gabe Omolida and Arthur Jack. (Yes, Arthur is our newest Music Scholar, adding a beautiful baritone voice to our choir and some awesome conducting skills too!)



One of the most fun things we have been doing the last few weeks is our co-operative banner project. Heather Mazurak and I came up with the idea during the summer, and Heather has worked really hard this Fall to make it a reality. Heather's assistants have been Shazia Ferozdin,

Aina Ferozdin, Nyagai Ngor, and Sheila Wilson. As well, I believe that Steve Mazurak helped out quite a lot with cutting out felt hands!

I also want to mention that Heather and I came up with the idea after we found a beautiful, bright, and colourful Communion table cloth at the church. When we asked a few people about the cloth, we discovered that it was handmade by one of our church members, Dolores Nelson, but in fact may never have been used. So, thanks to Dolores for making the cloth and inspiring us to create a matching banner to go with it.

When you come to worship this Sunday, November 6th you' will be able to see the finished banner which is now hanging at the front of the sanctuary. It is beautifully decorated with handprints representing all the people of our congregation praising God together with joy. It seems very appropriate that we are able to share the banner for the first time on All Saints Sunday, when we are celebrating all God's holy people, including those who came before us in faith, those who will follow in our footsteps, and all the beautiful people who make up the Body of Christ that is the church today.

Thanks to all of you who participated in the banner-making project by sharing your handprints. Now you are invited to "Come, all your people. Come and Praise Your Maker" this Sunday at First Church. Our service this Sunday will include an Act of Remembrance in anticipation of November 11th as well as the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Rev. Amanda Currie

SESSION

All of a sudden it's November! Advent begins on Sunday November 27th and we will be holding our annual Advent Party after worship that day. See the Fellowship committee information in this newsletter and mark your calendars!

The Session has decided that we will not be electing any elders in 2023. We were fortunate to be able to elect five elders this year so we will hold the next election in 2024. There have been some changes to the elders' lists. We will be holding a "Meet your Elder" event in the new year.

Refugee family update - We currently have two families for whom we are waiting. The Mathiang family has passed all the assessments, and apparently these applications are just waiting for an official to give the final approval. We have the house at 1435 Rupert St set up and ready for them. The Saleem family received information from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada requiring their photos and fingerprints "to determine if they may enter or stay in Canada." So, the process is moving forward! We also received information from Adnan Saleem that his mother Doris needs heart bypass surgery. Please keep Doris and her family in your prayers!

Jo Szostak
Clerk of Session

WORSHIP COMMITTEE



The Red Poppy
by Larry Tickel

The red poppy is a symbol
to simply show we care
For all our fallen heroes,
a loss we all equally share

The red poppy is a symbol
for too many we have lost
In every conflict of war,
their valour was at a cost

The red poppy is a symbol,
wear it with pride for them
As each and every year goes by,
we will remember them

Members of the Worship Committee met on Saturday, October 1st. We welcomed Chloe Golden, our Interim Director of Music to the Committee. Chloe is doing a great job. She is a

good director, very positive and encouraging, and has had a positive response from choir members.

We will celebrate Holy Communion on Sunday, November 6th at our Remembrance Day Service. We are looking forward to having the "Come all you People" banner presented during the service. Special thanks to Heather Mazurak, Sheila Wilson, Shazia Ferozdin, Nyagai Ngor, and Aina Ferozdin for their time and dedication for such a worthwhile project.

Lectors are needed to read the Prayer for Illumination, Psalms and Lessons for the month of December. The Season of Advent begins on Sunday, November 27th. If you are willing to be a reader, please contact Marianne at marianne@osac.ca.

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

Marianne Woods
Worship Committee Convener

BOARD OF MANAGERS

After working for First Church over many years, our caretaker, Bob Dempsey, decided to retire this fall. His last official day was October 31, but he will continue helping out with caretaker duties until we have a new person in place. The Board is in the process of interviewing candidates for the position Thank you to Bob for his dedicated and conscientious work for the church. We appreciate all that you have done!

MISSION & OUTREACH

Presbyterian World Service & Development Appeal: \$1400 was donated to PWS&D during our 3-week appeal. Saskatchewan Ride for Refuge walk on October 15 also received \$2000 in donations for PWS&D, many from First Church folks. THANK YOU!

Aid For Afghanistan: PWS&D has joined other Canadian aid organizations in asking the Government of Canada to immediately remove barriers that have blocked and deterred the provision of lifesaving humanitarian assistance to people in Afghanistan for the past year.

Canadians can also raise their voices and influence the government by sending an e-mail

to their Member of Parliament at www.AidForAfghanistan.ca.

Close to 23 million people in Afghanistan need humanitarian support because of conflict, extreme drought, and the lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. When the Taliban took over the country in August 2021, PWS&D was unable to continue our long history of work in Afghanistan. We were unable to send funds to Afghanistan due to Canadian sanctions and a restrictive interpretation of the Canadian Criminal Code's Anti-Terrorism provisions.

As the situation in Afghanistan deteriorated, leaving millions of people vulnerable to hunger, the UN requested that countries find a solution and reduce restrictions when it comes to providing aid to the people of Afghanistan. Many Canadian allies, including the USA, the UK, the EU, and Australia took steps to allow aid organizations to provide life-saving support. While many thought that Canada would quickly find a way for aid organizations to provide support, it has not yet happened. Now is the time for the Canadian government to remove these barriers so that Canadian aid organizations can get on with providing support to the millions of Afghans who need support.

At AidForAfghanistan.ca you can send a letter to your MP, also copying key government leaders so that they are aware that compassionate Canadians believe the women, men and children of Afghanistan should be supported.

Practical Compassion book available: A few copies of "Practical Compassion", the 75th Anniversary PWS&D book, are available from the church office. The cost is \$25 for a beautiful book of stunning photographs and compelling stories that chronicle the work of our development and relief agency.

Homelessness Petition: A group of concerned citizens have established a petition urging the City of Regina to make homelessness solutions a top priority in upcoming budget deliberations. The petition states:

- homelessness is increasing in the City of Regina
- citizens have repeatedly voiced concerns within all levels of government, to no avail

- the 5 Year "Plan to End Homelessness" is now more than 5 years old and has not moved to Implementation Phase

THE UNDERSIGNED ASK AS FOLLOWS:
That funding to end homelessness takes priority in the 2023 City of Regina budget. Priority is defined as follows:

- the fact or condition of being regarded or treated as more important
- a thing that is regarded as more important than another
- the right to take precedence or to proceed before others

You can add your name to this petition by signing it in the narthex after worship, or by emailing/phoning the church office to have your name added.

Christmas In Memoriam Project: Mittens, gloves and socks are in high demand by marginalized Regina citizens in the winter. During the four Sundays of Advent you can help meet this need by bringing warm socks, mitts or gloves (new please) to the church, or by making a cash donation for purchase of the items. Your gifts in memory of a loved one will be distributed to people in need by White Pony Lodge, a volunteer community care organization in North Central, and by the Ecumenical Saturday Lunch program, run by Regina churches. Watch for details closer to Advent.



Mary Jesse
Mission & Outreach Convener

FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE



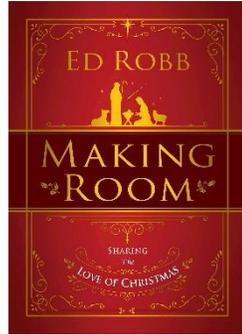
Mark your calendars!!! The Fellowship Committee is planning our Annual Advent Party on Sunday, November 27 immediately after church. We will have some Advent activities, Christmas Bingo – of course -- and a lot of fun. We are planning on having chili as well as mac 'n cheese. Plan on joining all the other fun-loving people at First for this event. Hope to see all of you there.

Sheila Wilson
Fellowship Committee Convener

ADVENT BOOK STUDY 2022

During the Season of Advent, join Rev. Amanda and other folks from First Church in learning how to make room in our hearts for God and neighbours this Christmas.

We will be gathering by Zoom on Monday evenings at 7 pm (Nov. 28, Dec. 5, 12, & 19) to reflect on the book "Making Room: Sharing the Love of Christmas" by Ed Robb.



One of the things we love most about Christmas is gathering with dear family members and close friends to celebrate Christ's birth. That's an important part of the season, but Dr. Ed Robb, author of *Making Room*, says if we look at the Advent story we will quickly learn that the focus of the coming of the newborn king is outward. This four-week study explores the warmth of welcome at Christmas following interactions with the Holy Family, the shepherds, and the magi. The story of Christ's birth encourages us to widen our borders and increase our sense of community—and make room for others.

Let Amanda know by November 15th that you would like to participate so that she can order enough copies of the book. If you would prefer to use a digital book, let her know that too so she can let you know how to get one. The church will be covering the cost of the books, but if you would like to make a donate to help off-set that cost, about \$10 should cover it.

Rev. Amanda Currie

WELCOME AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

The Welcome and Inclusion Committee will be hosting an education event on November 21, 2022 at 7pm by Zoom.

We will be looking at the video "Not all are Welcome," and have some discussion about how First Church can become a more welcoming community.

Please let Shirley in the office know if you wish to attend so we can send you the Zoom link.

Just Wondering – Pronouns

"I've started to notice people writing things like (she/her) or (they/them) in their email signature

or after their display name on Zoom calls. What does this mean and why are they doing it?"

This question was initially answered by Carragh Erhardt, Sexuality & Inclusion Program Coordinator, in the Summer 2021 edition of the *Presbyterian Connection*

What you are noticing is people choosing to share their pronouns. One of the main ways we use pronouns is to refer to people without repeating their names. When talking about one person, the most common pronouns are she/her, he/him and they/them.

More people share their pronouns when introducing themselves, in email signatures, or in their display name on platforms like Zoom, so as to help other people know how to refer to them. While it may seem like you can know what pronouns someone uses based on their name or appearance alone, these assumptions can be inaccurate and harmful, especially for people whose pronouns are often disrespected whether intentionally or unintentionally.

For many people, pronouns are a way of expressing their gender; although this isn't always the case. Some people ask to be referred to by their name instead of pronouns. Remember that while pronouns, like our names, are information that we often share publicly so people can refer to us accurately and respectfully, our sense of gender may be more private and nuanced than what we choose to share with other people.

Cisgender (see below) people often have their pronouns used consistently and without pushback even when someone initially assumes their pronouns incorrectly. For instance, can you remember a time when you guessed someone's pronouns wrong over email? It may have been embarrassing to be corrected for a moment but then you likely corrected yourself in later conversations.

Transgender (see below) and non-binary people (see below) are more likely to have their pronouns assumed incorrectly or, when they share their pronouns, are often dismissed, or subjected to invasive questions or statements about their gender identity.

Adopting the practice of inviting people to share their pronouns, and ensuring that pronouns are respected, is one way that church groups can work toward being more welcoming and loving to transgender and non-binary people. Especially for leaders, it is helpful to think through what to do if you notice someone makes a mistake in the pronouns they use for someone else. Learning to offer correction with grace is a good way to model respect in your community.

To learn more about pronouns and how to respond when mistakes are made, I recommend the website mypronouns.org.

Definitions:

Gender refers to a set of social, psychological and/or emotional traits, often influenced by societal expectations, that inform one's sense of being a woman, a man, a mixture of both or neither. Gender expression is the way individuals outwardly present those traits, for example through clothes, hair styles, makeup, etc.

Transgender is an umbrella term that refers to people who do not identify either fully or in part with the gender associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.

Cisgender is a term that refers to people whose gender identity aligns with the one typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.

Non-binary is an umbrella term used by some people who experience their gender identity and/or gender expression as falling outside the categories of man and woman. They may define their gender as falling somewhere in between or a combination of man and woman, or they may define it as wholly different from these terms.

Donna Wilkinson

PLANNED GIVING

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, 2022. Applications will be considered by the congregation at the Annual General Meeting in spring 2023.

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 (end of newsletter). 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, 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 Woods,
Planned Giving Committee Member

ADVENT MODERATOR PROGRAM

What Are We Waiting For?

Advent Reflections with the Leaders of the Anglican, Evangelical Lutheran, Presbyterian, and United Churches

The Rev. Dr. Bob Faris, [Moderator of the 2022 General Assembly](#), has worked with other church leaders to prepare an ecumenical Advent program of devotions and conversations.

Every Monday during Advent the national church leaders of The Anglican Church of Canada, The Evangelical Lutheran in Canada, The Presbyterian Church in Canada and The United Church of Canada will release an ecumenical Advent meditation and conversations reflecting the four Advent themes of hope, peace, joy and love, as well as addressing challenges facing the Canadian churches.

Every Thursday at 6 pm (SK time) during Advent, listeners are invited to join in a live discussion, via Zoom, with one of the leaders on

that week's Advent theme. Attendees to the gathering will be able to ask questions during the online conversation.

December 1: Hope, "Signs of the Time"

Bob Faris in conversation with Susan C. Johnson about the church in the 21st Century. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted many trends that all Canadian churches are experiencing. All of the churches face shrinking membership and a changed position in communities across the country. Can we read the signs of our own times to understand where we are being called to be the church?

December 8: Peace, "Finding the Good Path"

Bob Faris in conversation with Carmen Lansdowne about truth telling and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. Three of the churches represented here ran Residential Schools. The recovery of hundreds of unmarked graves in Kamloops and in many other locations has, once again, shocked all of us into hearing the truth that Indigenous people have been telling for decades. What is the path forward?

December 15: Joy, "God's Love Includes Everyone"

Carmen Lansdowne in conversation with Bob Faris about the inclusion of all in the church. For decades, all churches have been engaged in discussion around the inclusion of 2SLGBTQI+ people. All four participating churches have taken steps towards greater inclusion, but the discernment continues. What does it mean to include everyone?

December 22: Love, "The Cost of Discipleship"

Bob Faris in conversation with Linda Nicholls about the church's public witness in a rapidly changing social and political context in Canada. At times, the church is called to take positions that are not in tune with popular opinion or with other church partners. When should the church take a prophetic stand, and are we willing to pay the price to witness to the gospel?

Sign up for the Ecumenical Advent Conversations:

<https://form.jotform.com/Presby/ecumenical-advent>

November Calendar

Nov. 6	10:30 am	Worship With Communion and Service of Remembrance (In Person & Online)
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour (in the gym)
	12:00 pm	Christian Education Meeting (Morris Room)
Nov. 8	12:00 pm	Freedom 55ers (gym)
Nov. 10	7:00 pm	Choir
Nov. 11		Remembrance Day (Office is Closed)
Nov. 13	10:30 am	Worship (In Person & Online)
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour (in the gym)
Nov. 14	7:00 pm	Welcome & Inclusion Team (Zoom)
Nov. 15	12:00 pm	Freedom 55ers (gym)
Nov. 17	7:00 pm	Choir
Nov. 19	9:30 am	Presbytery of Assiniboia (Zoom)
Nov. 20	10:30 am	Worship (In Person & Online)
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour (gym)
	12:00 pm	Decorating the Christmas Tree (sanctuary)
Nov. 21	7:00 pm	Welcome & Inclusion Team Event: Video & discussion (Zoom)
Nov. 22	12:00 pm	Freedom 55ers (gym)
Nov. 23	12:00 pm	Bible Study (Zoom)
	7:00 pm	Book Club (Zoom)
Nov. 24	7:00 pm	Choir
Nov. 26	11:30-3:30	Missional Leadership Course
Nov. 27	10:30 am	Worship (In Person & Online)
	11:45 am	Advent Party (gym)
Nov. 28	7:00 pm	Advent Book Study
Nov. 29	12:00 pm	Freedom 55ers (gym)
Nov. 30	7:00 pm	Board of Managers
Dec. 1	7:00 pm	Choir
Dec. 4	10:30 am	Worship (In Person & Online) With Holy Communion

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.