

FIRST THINGS FIRST

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, REGINA

September 2018

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

These days my Facebook feed is full of pictures of friends' children on the first day of school. They are all ready with their fresh clothes, running shoes, and backpacks filled with all their school supplies. Their parents are proud and happy to send them off to a new grade, and I can see that they are excited too, with perhaps a little apprehension mixed in there as well.

September is a time for new beginnings, for starting new things, taking on new challenges, transitioning to new stages of life and work. Even those of us who aren't students any longer experience September in that way because all our community groups and church programs get going again in September as well. Our church calendar for this month is absolutely brimming with opportunities to engage once again and to delve deeper into the church community and our lives of faith! (For further details of events see below under "Super September at First Church").

As I think about these transitions though, I am aware they are not always fun and exciting. For many young people, the first week back to school is very difficult and full of anxiety. I'm also thinking about people in our church community who are going through other kinds of transitions right now -- moving out of their homes into assisted living, adjusting to married life from being single, preparing to welcome a child into the family, or grieving the loss of a loved one and getting used to daily life without that husband, father, niece, or friend with them anymore.

It's not that these transitions are all bad. Most of them are marked with a variety of emotions, with even the most joyful ones affected by the stress of the new challenges they include. But that's why we need to let God guide and help us in September. We need to remember that we are

not facing these new challenges and transitions alone, that God's Spirit is with us to comfort and encourage us through all that lies ahead.

This Sunday, September 9th we will have a "Blessing of the Backpacks" during the children's time in worship. I like the image of the backpack filled with all the books and supplies our kids will need to make their time at school successful. There is a sense of security in having your backpack on your back – that you'll have what you need and be okay. It reminds me of one contemporary translation of the beloved Psalm 23: "The Lord is my shepherd; I have everything I need..."

As we go through all our transitions this month, let's pray for one another and support each other through the blessings and difficulties that we will encounter. And let's also remind one another of the good news that God loves us, that God has come to us in Jesus, and that He abides with us through the Holy Spirit. Like a child with a well-supplied backpack on the first day of school, we will have everything we need for today and the days ahead because our God is with us.

Rev. Amanda Currie

SESSION

Welcome back to the beginning of an exciting year. There are lots of things planned for this fall, so be sure to mark your calendars with the dates in this newsletter!

The organ project is almost complete. Hart Godden is in the process of installing trumpet pipes and then the work will be finished. Thanks to all of you for your generous contributions to the organ fund! We raised \$10,395 so all the costs of the work are covered.

This Sunday, Sept. 9, we will be hosting a Presbytery Visitation. A team consisting of the

Rev. Devon Pattemore and Dave Schappert will join us for worship and then meet with the congregation over coffee. The visitation team will then meet with the Session over lunch at 12:30, followed by a meeting with the Board of Managers at 1:45.

Plan to attend the Welcome Back Potluck Supper on Sept. 16! It is always a delicious meal and great to reconnect with people after the summer.

On Sept. 23, we will have Meet your Elder during the coffee hour following worship. You will have an opportunity to get together with your elder as well as others in your district.

These are just a few of the many things taking place - please refer to the September list and make notes on your calendar!

Session has approved sending a team from First Church to "Transform" -- an event hosted by Canadian Ministries and Stewardship & Planned Giving of our national church to be held in Orillia, Ont., Nov. 8-11. Funding for the team will be provided from our Daring in our Outreach Fund. The theme of this event is: "Transform the way you live as leaders, congregations and ministries." The Rev. Dr. Grace Kim will be the inspirational keynote speaker, with a missional focus. Workshops will be shared by congregations that have experienced success in stewardship, discipleship development, community engagement and more. These will provide our team with an opportunity to consider concrete ways for our congregation to move forward. If you are interested in participating, please let Amanda know.

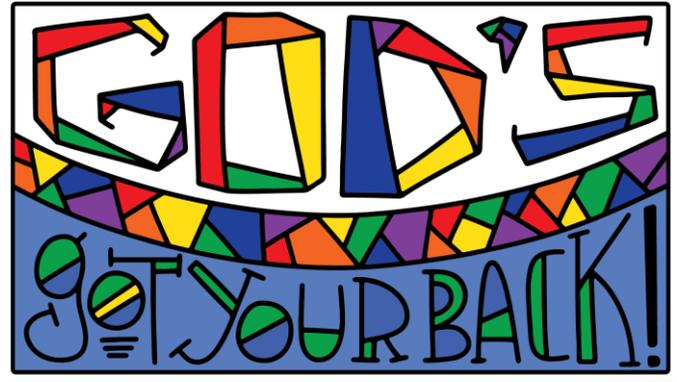
Jo Szostak
Clerk of Session

SUPER SEPTEMBER AT FIRST CHURCH

Sun., September 9th - Blessing of the Backpacks

Our Sunday School program begins on this date immediately following the children's story. To start off the school year well, we will have a "Blessing of the Backpacks" and so the children are invited to bring their school bags with them this Sunday. In fact, anyone who carries a backpack or other bag to school or work is invited to bring it to church on September 9. Let's

ask for God's blessing on the work that we will do during this school year, and invite God to be with us and help us with all the challenges and joys that we will experience. We are encouraged because we know that no matter what joys and challenges we may encounter at school and at work this year, God's "got our backs"!



Tues., September 11th - Bible Study & 55ers

Everyone is welcome to attend our weekly Bible Study on Tuesday mornings at 10:30 am in the Kennedy Room, beginning September 11. We usually explore one of the passages that will be highlighted in worship the following Sunday. No preparation is required, and you can come every Tuesday or whenever it suits your schedule to join us. Bring your own Bible or use one of the church copies. Hope to see you there!

Freedom 55'ers begins on September 11th at noon. Throughout the year we have special entertainment, guest speakers, and celebrate birthdays once a month. Bring a bag lunch and enjoy the fellowship.

Sun., September 16th - Celebrating Teachers Sunday

CELEBRATING TEACHERS SUNDAY
September 16, 2018, 10:30 am
First Presbyterian Church
2170 Albert Street, Regina
Come and worship with us at First Church,
and let us pray for you and the important
work that you do with the children and youth
of our community. www.firstpresregina.ca

On Sunday, September 16th, we will be celebrating the gift of teachers in our community during the worship service. Whether they are teaching at the preschool, elementary, secondary, college or university levels, our teachers have a challenging vocation and make an important difference in the lives of our families. If you are a teacher, please plan to attend as we give thanks to God for your ministry. If you have a friend or family member who is a teacher, please also consider inviting him/her to join us for worship that Sunday; or if you or your child has a teacher, please pass along an invitation. Help us to celebrate teachers and ask for God's blessing on their work as they begin the new school year.

Sunday, September 16th - Welcome Back Potluck

Hope everyone has had a wonderful summer-- relaxing, travelling, getting together with friends and family, reading a good book or just enjoying the great summer weather we have had this year.



It's now the time to catch up on our church family's summer activities and adventures and so the Fellowship Committee is hosting a potluck supper on **September 16th at 5:30pm.**

Signup sheets are posted in the Narthex and in the gymnasium so that you can let us know how many in your family will be joining us as well as any of your friends you may want to invite

Don't miss out on this opportunity for a great feast, great friends and great fellowship.

Sheila Wilson
Fellowship Committee Convener

Sun, September 23rd - Meet Your Elder

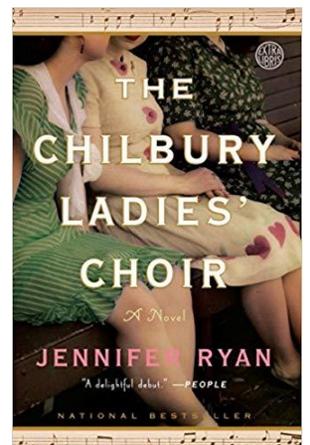
Plan to stay for coffee, Timbits, and fellowship after worship. It will be an opportunity to meet your First Church elder and other members in your district. If you didn't know that you have an elder assigned to you, if you don't know who your elder is, or if you don't know what an elder does, then you should definitely plan to attend and find out the answers to your questions.

Presbyterian congregations elect and ordain elders to serve on the Session of their church. Together with the minister, elders provide leadership for the congregation's ministry, discerning God's direction and making decisions. Each elder is assigned a district - a list of church members and adherents - to whom he/she is responsible for providing pastoral care through visiting, for connecting, encouraging, hearing concerns, etc. We hope you'll take advantage of this opportunity to meet your elder!

Wed., September 26th - First Church Book Club

This past summer, Rev. Amanda started an informal Book Club and had a lovely group take part in two evening discussions. Those who participated were interested in continuing to meet, and a few others have indicated they might like to join in. So, the "First Church Book Club" is born! We'll be continuing to meet in people's homes about once a month, each time discussing a book (normally fiction), sharing our lives, laughter, and reflections on literature. We will use the Regina Public Library's "Book Club in a Bag" program so that you don't need to buy a lot of books in order to take part. Although the books we're reading are not explicitly "religious books" we are already finding that questions of faith intersect with the lives of fictional characters and our own lives in wonderful and interesting ways. Let Amanda know if you are interested in joining this group. Our next gathering will be Wednesday, September 26th at 7:00 pm at Heather Mazurak's house where we will be discussing *The Chilbury Ladies' Choir* by Jennifer Ryan.

Synopsis: As England becomes enmeshed in the early days of World War II, and the men are away fighting, the women of Chilbury village forge an uncommon bond. They defy the Vicar's stuffy edict to dissolve the choir and instead "carry on singing," resurrecting themselves as the Chilbury Ladies' Choir. We come to know the



home-front struggles of five unforgettable choir members: a timid widow devastated when her only son goes to fight; the older daughter of a local scion drawn to a mysterious artist; her younger sister pining over an impossible crush; a Jewish refugee from Czechoslovakia hiding a family secret; and a conniving midwife plotting to outrun her seedy past.

An enchanting ensemble story that shuttles from village intrigue to romance to the heartbreaking matters of life and death, Jennifer Ryan's debut novel thrillingly illuminates the true strength of the women on the home front in a village of indomitable spirit.

September 29th - Rory Allen Concert



Mark your calendars and plan to attend a special fundraising concert for First Church on Saturday, September 29th at 7:00 pm. Rory Allen is a word-class entertainer and Elvis Presley tribute artist. His incredible show has been extremely well-received by even the most faithful Elvis fans and friends. Born and raised in Saskatchewan, Rory has always enjoyed entertaining people and, from an early age, has thrived on stage. Gospel music and singing in church played a huge part in developing his rich, clear, and powerful singing voice. Come and enjoy a fun evening, and support the ministry of First Church! Tickets are \$25. Please support this fundraising effort by helping us to promote this concert, and by selling tickets to others beyond First Church. Thanks!

September 30th - Presbyterians Sharing Sunday and Orange Shirt Day

You may know that September 30th each year has been declared Orange Shirt Day in recognition of the harm the residential school system did to Indigenous children's sense of self-esteem and well being, and as an affirmation of our commitment to ensure that everyone around us matters. (See also "Orange Shirt Day" below)



The last Sunday in September is also Presbyterians Sharing Sunday, a service when we highlight and celebrate the ministry and mission that we do together as Presbyterians across our nation through The Presbyterian Church in Canada. This year, the service will highlight the ministries of Healing and Reconciliation that we support through our gifts to Presbyterians Sharing. In small, but significant ways, our church is working together with other Presbyterians, other churches, and Indigenous communities towards healing of the harm done by the residential school system. Wear an orange shirt to worship on September 30th as we affirm our commitment to ensure that everyone around us matters.

MUSIC NOTES

We are delighted to have Gabe Omolida and Will Ireton return as members of our music team this year. Gabe will continue as our Music Scholar. He is currently pursuing an undergraduate degree in music education at the University of Regina. Will graduated from the University of Regina (Luther College) earlier this year with a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Fine Arts (Music Concentration). This year, he will serve as Assistant Music Director at First Church and will continue to gain experience in conducting and in organ while he considers options for graduate

studies in sacred music, conducting, voice, organ and composition. Will wrote the following article for this month's newsletter.

* * * * *

As Assistant Music Director, I would like to focus on further developing my abilities in several areas related to music at First church in the coming year. I am fortunate to work with a group of singers at First who are not only talented, but very supportive. In this environment I aim to experiment with and develop effective rehearsal techniques. I also hope to become more mindful of my own physical gestures as a conductor. I would like my conducting to be clear and concise while maintaining a level of sensitivity that allows for ensemble members to express their own musical ideas as well.

After taking part in our pipe organ restoration project this past summer, I am excited to have the opportunity to play an instrument with all of its new colours and textures. I plan to further my organ repertoire of preludes, offertories and postludes. However, my main focus in the next few months will be to gain more experience in playing hymns during services.

Over the past few years, I have become interested in writing music. Considering the strength and momentum of our music program and the fine condition of our organ, I would like to experiment with writing choral and organ music. As a first step, I will write some music for services including perhaps a new choral response and organ preludes.

In recent months I have been giving serious consideration to pursuing graduate studies in music. Many graduate programs, with a focus in sacred music, offer instruction in conducting, voice, organ, and composition. In the next year or so, I plan to explore such programs that will build on my musical interests at the church.

Respectfully submitted,
William (Bill) Sgrazzutti and Will Ireton

STEWARDSHIP

There will be no Value Village FUNDrive this fall. The Regina store, having received so many donations, is overstocked and as a result there will be fund drives this fall. We will consider this project again next year. Thanks to those of you who have been saving donations!

If you have any items that would be useful for our refugee family – eg., dishes, kitchenware, sheets, towels, and other basic houseware items -- please bring them to the church and we will place them in storage. We do not yet know when our refugee family will be able to come, but we are starting to prepare. Thanks!

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

First Church has three scholarship funds for post-secondary studies and makes awards to students each year. Application deadline is September 30; criteria and award amounts vary. Applications are available on the church website at www.firstpresregina.ca (click "Who We Serve" and then "Scholarships"). For further information please contact Jim Doolittle.

Jim Doolittle
Scholarship Committee Convener

50th ANNIVERSARY OF ORDINATION

On Sunday, August 19th, we celebrated the Rev. Bob Wilson's 50th anniversary of ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacraments. Thanks be to God for calling, gifting, and making fruitful his ministry along with Sheila Wilson. This is a portion of Rev. Amanda's introduction to the litany of thanksgiving for their ministry:

Fifty years ago, on July 8th, Bob Wilson was ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacraments within The Presbyterian Church in Canada. And so began a new and different life of ministry and service for Bob and Sheila. Their faithfulness to God's call took them to congregations in rural areas and cities, overseas to Africa as missionaries, to Synod staff positions, interim moderatorships, Presbytery leadership, and lots and lots of congregational groups, missions, choirs, children's programs, potluck suppers,

outreach projects, and so many pastoral relationships.

We are grateful for God's call to Bob and Sheila, and for their openness to hear that voice calling and to following it where it led them. We are grateful for the way that God gifted them with wisdom and understanding to proclaim in their words and lives the simple message of God's love for us all in Jesus Christ.

Today, we remember and celebrate 50 years of ministry, thankful for God's faithfulness to them through those years. And knowing, that even in official retirement, that ministry continues today.



FUNDSCRIP

The order dates for September will be September 9 and 23. Promotions in September include: Shell 3%, The Bay 5% and Ultimate Dining Card 6% (includes Swiss Chalet, Montanas, East Side Marios, and New York Fries). Thanks for your continued support of this project! In 7 years, we have raised \$12,500. Stop by the table at coffee time and place an order or purchase gas and grocery cards.

BIBLE FUN CAMP in Regina & White City

During the week of August 20-23 First Church folk were busy running two Bible Fun Camp (VBS) programs - in Regina and White City. Twelve children participated in the program at First Church in the mornings and had a wonderful time together! Thanks to Synod Staff Martha Fergusson (Youth Co-ordinator) and Guy

Laberge (Summer Student Minister) for providing leadership. Our leaders from First Church included Matthew Yakemchuk, Bob Wilson, Jo Szostak, and Amanda Currie. Thanks also to Kaye Hunchuk for providing an extra delicious snack.

During the afternoons, most of the leaders went to White City to run the same program for the children in that community. We had 14 children participate there, and so it was a great week for us all!



Bob Wilson the Storyteller



Singing at First



Parachute Fun



REGINA INDIAN INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL CEMETERY DESIGNATED A PROVINCIAL HERITAGE PROPERTY

The following article was published on the website of The Presbyterian Church in Canada:

On August 14, a plaque was unveiled at the Regina Indian Industrial School (RIIS) Cemetery in recognition of the Saskatchewan government’s official designation of the site as a provincial heritage property.

This dedication was preceded by years of work by the RIIS Commemorative Association, which also resulted in the cemetery receiving municipal heritage status in September 2016.

The cemetery contains the graves of at least 35 Indigenous children from communities across Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba who died while attending the RIIS.

The RIIS was operated by The Presbyterian Church in Canada between 1891 and 1910.

Preservation work will continue at the cemetery site. The fence around the cemetery is falling apart in sections, and a new one will be built. There are plans to perform further searches for grave sites beyond the fence’s boundaries as well.

The RIIS Commemorative Association will also continue their efforts to identify those who are buried in the cemetery. Currently, they believe they have identified around 20 of the children buried there.

We give thanks for the RIIS Commemorative Association’s work to ensure that the cemetery is always protected, and the children are never forgotten.

ORANGE SHIRT DAY

September 30th has been declared Orange Shirt Day annually, in recognition of the harm the residential school system did to children's sense of self-esteem and well-being, and as an affirmation of our commitment to ensure that everyone around us matters.

Here is the true story of Phyllis (Jack) Webstad that inspired “Orange Shirt Day” as told in her own words. (Source: orangeshirtday.net)



I went to the Mission for one school year in 1973/1974. I had just turned 6 years old. I lived with my grandmother on the Dog Creek reserve. We never had very much money, and there was no welfare, but somehow my granny managed to buy me a new outfit to go to the Mission school. I remember going to Robinson’s store and picking out a shiny orange shirt. It had string laced up in front, and was so bright and exciting – just like I felt to be going to school!

When I got to the Mission, they stripped me, and took away my clothes, including the orange shirt! I never saw it again. I didn’t understand why they wouldn’t give it back to me, it was mine! The colour orange has always reminded

me of that and how my feelings didn't matter, how no one cared and how I felt like I was worth nothing. All of us little children were crying and no one cared.

I was 13.8 years old and in grade 8 when my son Jeremy was born. Because my grandmother and mother both attended residential school for 10 years each, I never knew what a parent was supposed to be like. With the help of my aunt, Agness Jack, I was able to raise my son and have him know me as his mother.

I went to a treatment centre for healing when I was 27 and have been on this healing journey since then. I finally get it, that the feeling of worthlessness and insignificance, ingrained in me from my first day at the mission, affected the way I lived my life for many years. Even now, when I know nothing could be further than the truth, I still sometimes feel that I don't matter. Even with all the work I've done!

I am honored to be able to tell my story so that others may benefit and understand, and maybe other survivors will feel comfortable enough to share their stories.

Today... Phyllis is married, has one son and two grandsons aged nine and five. She is Northern Secwepemc (Shuswap) from the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation (Canoe Creek Indian Band). She comes from mixed Secwepemc and Irish/French heritage, was born in Dog Creek, and lives in Williams Lake, BC.

She earned diplomas in Business Administration from the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology; and in Accounting from Thompson Rivers University.

SEPTEMBER EVENTS

9	10:30 AM	Worship Service Sunday School Resumes Blessing of the Backpacks Presbytery Visitation to First
10	1:00 PM	Funeral for Mac MacDonald
10	7:00 PM	Stewardship Committee
11	10:30 AM	Bible Study
11	Noon	Freedom 55ers
13	7:00 PM	Choir
15	10:00 AM	Presbytery @ Grenfell
16	10:30 AM	Worship Service Celebrating Teachers Sunday
16	5:30 PM	Welcome Back Potluck
18	10:30 AM	Bible Study
18	Noon	Freedom 55ers
19	7:00 PM	Board of Managers
20	7:00 PM	Choir
22	10:00 AM	Worship Committee
23	10:30 AM	Worship Service Meet Your Elder Sunday
25	10:30 AM	Bible Study
25	Noon	Freedom 55ers
26	7:00 PM	Book Club
27	7:00 PM	Choir
29	7:00 PM	Rory Allen Concert
30	10:30 AM	Worship Service Presbyterians Sharing Sunday Orange Shirt Day