

# FIRST THINGS FIRST MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, REGINA

April 2024

## MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Christ is risen! Christ is risen, indeed! On Easter Sunday at First Church, we joined in this proclamation many times. It is the heart of our faith as Christians – that Christ has been raised; God wins over hatred, violence, fear, and death; and the Lord is present and active in the world and through the church, Christ's body today.

During the intergenerational service that we shared on Sunday, we also celebrated Mary Magdalene's proclamation to the other disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and I invited you to share with one another some of the ways that you have seen the Lord also. Thank you for your openness to engage with one another and participate in worship in a new way!

I am feeling tired this week, after all the busyness of Lent and Holy Week activities and worship, but it's a good tired. It's not the kind of weariness that comes from working hard and not seeing any results. It's not the kind of exhaustion that comes from anxiety or fear about the future. It's the kind of tiredness that an introvert feels after an intense time of lots of engagement in an active community of faith where many good things are happening. (One of the ushers counted 149 people in the sanctuary on Easter Sunday, plus there were more of you participating online!)

I am grateful this week for all the ways that you have been participating in our church's ministries over the last many weeks. **I have seen the Lord...**

- In people sharing personal struggles, questions, and hopes in our Lenten devotional studies.
- In the community of the First Church Choir, as folks work hard together to prepare beautiful and uplifting music for worship.

- In people gently washing each other's hands on Maundy Thursday.
- In volunteers continuing to support our two refugee families as they settle in our community.
- In parents and grandparents bringing their little children to church, and the loving welcome of the community.
- In people giving and helping to support food programs in our neighbourhood.
- In young people using their dramatic gifts to share the gospel message in our worship.
- In all the time and commitment of leaders and volunteers to organize worship, fellowship, mission, and service opportunities in our church.
- In the growing diversity, welcome, and inclusion we are embodying in our congregation.

I am also looking forward with expectation for the ways that we will continue to see the Lord present and active in our church and in our world in the coming weeks and months. I hope that you will continue to worship with us and engage in the mission of the church throughout the Season of Easter and towards our next major celebration which will be Pentecost Sunday on May 19<sup>th</sup>.

Rev. Amanda Currie

## HOLY WEEK AT FIRST IN PICTURES



*Children's Time on Palm Sunday*



*Rodolfo Omolida sharing a song on Palm Sunday*



*Chloe Golden and the Choir on Easter Sunday*



*Kooger/Vixamar/MacLean Family on Easter Sunday*



*Abiel Saleem and Rev. Amanda on Easter Sunday*



*Youth Group Easter Sunday Skit:  
The Rock that Rolled*



*The Tomb was Empty! (Yes, we checked!)*

## SESSION

It's hard to believe that it's already April!

- ◆ Be sure to mark your calendar for April 28 as we will hold our congregational annual meeting that day following worship. Annual reports will be ready for April 14 so that you can pick one up and read it before the meeting. We will be holding an elder election and having table group discussions about the future of our church building. Lunch will be provided, so be sure to stay for this important meeting.
- ◆ Birthday Sunday will be held April 21 - see the promo included in this newsletter.
- ◆ Our national church is holding a youth event in July. This event used to be known as Canada Youth, or just CY, but there has been a name change. It's now known as UpLIFT (Living in Faith Together). We have a number of young people who will be attending this exciting event! We have a growing youth group in our congregation and the Christian Education committee is making plans to hire a new youth director. Watch for the advertisement next month and encourage any young people you know who might be interested.
- ◆ The 100th anniversary of First Church will be January 11, 2025. A committee is making plans to celebrate, including a birthday party on January 11 and a catered dinner after worship on January 12. We will be producing a new photo directory of the congregation. Pictures will be taken on Sept. 13, 14, 15 and we plan to distribute the directories on the anniversary weekend. You'll also see "Remember when" stories and pictures appearing in the newsletter. If you have photos or stories to share of First Church history, please contact the church office.

Enjoy the beautiful spring weather!

Jo Szostak  
Clerk of Session

## MISSION & OUTREACH COMMITTEE

**Food assistance projects:** A big **THANK YOU** to all who have taken part by volunteering for one or more events, donating money, and offering your prayers. An efficient group of four

made a big batch of sandwiches for the Warm Welcome overnight warming centre in March, and on Saturday a large group will prepare and serve 200 bag lunches at the Ecumenical Saturday Lunch program at First Baptist Church. \$205 was donated for the Warm Welcome Centre groceries, and the recent Easter In Memoriam project raised \$1,725 for the Saturday Lunch Program. This will allow us to host a few more Saturdays in 2024. Between 75 and 125 marginalized people come to this program for a nutritious lunch each weekend.

We have one remaining commitment before summer; to provide Waterston House with 20 loaves of prepared sandwiches on **Sunday, May 12**. Several people have committed, but we need a few more. Let Mary Jesse know if you can bring one or two loaves of sandwiches to church that morning.

**Healing and Reconciliation Service:** On Sunday, April 21, Dylon Nippi, Director of Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry will be our guest speaker. SNCM is one of the Indigenous ministries of our denomination and Dylon has been involved in several capacities for many years. SNCM provides prayer, crisis counselling, nourishment, clothing, a weekly worship Circle and an art program to people on the margins of society, while upholding Indigenous cultural practices. Some who seek refuge at SNCM face poverty, abuse, alcoholism, and street life. The ministry honours those stories, while sharing the good news of Jesus' love and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

**Earth Day Learning Opportunity:** Enhance your Earth Day reflections by attending a PCC-hosted webinar "*Climate Change, Eco-anxiety and Habits of Hope*" on Thursday, April 25 (11am-12:30 pm CST) offered just a few days after Earth Day. Here is a summary: Forest fires, floods, droughts, severe storms, deforestation, pollution. Across Canada, people face the terrible impacts of ecological destruction and climate crises. No matter how different people are impacted by environmental destruction or the climate crisis, these experiences can cause high levels of anxiety for everyone. What are faithful responses to eco-anxiety?

The speaker is Rev. Dr. Pamela McCarroll, a Presbyterian minister and faculty member at Emmanuel College. Use link below to register. <https://presbyterian.ca/2024/03/12/upcoming-webinar-climate-change-eco-anxiety-and-habits-of-hope/>

Mary Jesse  
Mission & Outreach Convener

**FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE**

The Sweetest Sunday of the year! YEAH!!!



Mark your calendars - April 21st is Birthday Sunday and we need 10 cakes. If you are able to make/supply a cake for that day please sign the sheet in the narthex. We

are doing things a little differently this year. There will be a freewill offering for you to “buy” a piece of your favourite cake. All proceeds from this will go towards helping several members of our youth group attend UPLIFT (formerly Canada Youth) which is happening this summer for the first time since COVID!

Don't miss this opportunity to enjoy a delicious piece (or pieces) of cake and help our young people to attend this great event.

Sheila Wilson  
Fellowship Committee Convener

**UPLIFT 2024**

Youth, young adults, and their leaders are invited to participate in a new national gathering of Presbyterians at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario this summer - July 3-7, 2024.



As in the past with previous Canada Youth (now known as UPLIFT) gatherings, there will be three streams at the conference: Youth (Completed grade 9-18 years of age), Young Adults (19-25 years of age) and Leadership (18 years+). Each stream will focus on that group's unique needs and faith expression, exploring Audacious Hope through activities, learning, worship, prayer, relationship building and fun. The whole gathering will worship, play, and dine together.

Pick up a copy of the UPLIFT brochure in the narthex, check out the website <https://presbyterian.ca/canadian-ministries/lift-2024/>, and speak to Rev. Amanda about your interest in attending. Travel will be coordinated together with others going from Saskatchewan, and we have been saving up funding at First Church and in the Synod to cover registrations and travel expenses.

**SASKATCHEWAN PRESBYTERIAN YOUTH**

**SPY 2024 SPRING GATHERING**

**WHEN?**

Friday, April 26th @ 7pm- Sunday, April 28th @ Noon



**WHERE?**

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church  
436 Spadina Crescent E.  
Saskatoon, SK.

**WHAT?**

Join us for some pre-UPLIFT fun including games, crafts, Bible study, and more!

**REGISTRATION**

To register, ask for a form from your church or use the QR code below. Ages 14 + \$50 per youth.

With that kind of hope to excite us, nothing holds us back.

2 Corinthians 3:12



For more information please contact Rev. Devon at [sasksynodyouth@gmail.com](mailto:sasksynodyouth@gmail.com)

**NOMINEE FOR MODERATOR OF THE 2024 GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

The Committee to Advise with the Moderator will present the Rev. Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls as the nominee for Moderator of the 2024 General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

In addition to this short biography below, where you can get to know Pat, you can also learn more about her faith, her most memorable experiences in serving the church, her image

and vision for the church at its best, and how she understands the role of moderator.

Pat has been involved in service to the church throughout her career.

She is an active session member and minister-in-associate with Trinity Church, a three-congregation amalgamation and transformational ministry in New Westminster and Burnaby, British Columbia. She retired



as Professor of Hebrew Bible and Dean of the Faculty at Vancouver School of Theology on July 1, 2021. Several decades of The Presbyterian Church in Canada students—first at Knox College and then at Vancouver School of Theology—began their study of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, drawing a map of ancient Israel and figuring out their “interpretive principles” in her introductory year-long course. During her vocation as a professor, Pat published five books on the social world and interpretation of the Old Testament, authored several scholarly articles and presented numerous papers at academic conferences. Academic administration became a consistent part of her work, and she found a happy balance as a teaching administrator, including becoming Dean of the Faculty at VST from 2013-2020.

Beyond the colleges of the church, Pat has had an active teaching and preaching ministry across the country, offering numerous sermons, adult education courses, retreats, workshops and lectures for congregations, synods, women’s groups and conferences. Other offerings for the church include articles in the Presbyterian Record and Presbyterian Connection and, more recently, web series and podcasts. Many lay people have participated in her Bible studies, using the approach of underlining biblical texts with pencil crayons to discover theological themes and share in small discussion groups, all to search out new insights

of wisdom and interpretation for God’s people today.

Pat has been active in the courts and committees of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, including serving on the Church Doctrine Committee, as president of the Board of Directors of Evangel Hall, as convener with Hummingbird Ministries Council and Moderator of the Presbytery of Westminster 2020-2021. Her most recent project has been the 2023 Presbyterian Reads Advent study guide on Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s God is in the Manger Advent devotions. Pat continues as convener of the General Assembly Design Team and chair of the Strategy and Leadership Committee of the Presbyter of Westminster.

### **EASTER REFLECTION: “BE AGENTS OF PEACE, JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION”**

Three months ago, it was dark in Bethlehem at Christmas, and the city was in darkness and fear. The angels’ song, “Peace on earth, goodwill to all people,” was hard to fathom amid the violence.

This is Holy Week, and our attention shifts from Bethlehem and its surrounding hills to Jerusalem, the Mount of Olives, and the place called Golgotha. And the violence continues.

For centuries, pilgrims have come to Jerusalem to mark the events of Holy Week, wave palm branches, pray at Gethsemane, lament on the Mount of Olives, and trace Jesus’s steps along the stations of the cross.

This year, Palestinian Christians from the West Bank were prevented by Israeli authorities from entering the occupied city of Jerusalem to participate in Palm Sunday devotions. Christian Palestinians are required to obtain special permits to pass through military checkpoints surrounding Jerusalem and go to places of worship, especially the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

In the Kairos Palestine Easter Message, His Beatitude, the (Latin) Patriarch of Jerusalem Emeritus, Michel Sabbah, writes, “Pray with us and work and be agents of peace, justice and reconciliation in this holy land.”

Patriarch Michel Sabbah and Rifat Kassis, Secretary General of Kairos Palestine, offer this prayer:

*O God, in this time of darkness and despair, we lift our hearts to You in prayer. We pray for an end to the war and bloodshed in Gaza, and we ask for Your mercy to spare the lives of innocent civilians caught in this genocide war.*

*Grant wisdom to world leaders and decision-makers to seek peaceful resolutions and to prioritize the safety, well-being, and dignity of all people. Comfort those who mourn the loss of loved ones and strengthen those who are working tirelessly for justice and those who work to provide humanitarian assistance to the people in need.*

*We entrust the lives of the people of Gaza into Your loving hands, trusting in Your grace and mercy to bring an end to their suffering in a new era of peace, justice, equality, free of occupation, oppression, and dispossession.*

Visit <https://www.kairopalestine.ps/index.php/resources/alerts/kairos-palestine-easter-alert-2024> to read the Kairos Palestine Easter Appeal 2024. The Appeal includes updates on the situation in Gaza and a meditation by Latin Patriarch Emeritus Michel Sabbah.

### **Prayer and Advocacy**

- **Wear white**, symbolizing peace.
- **Participate** in the [Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage initiative](#).
- **Affirm** the eight core convictions of the [Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage](#)
- **Donate to** [Gaza Relief through PWS&D](#)

### **PRESBYTERIAN CONNECTION NEWSPAPER**

The *Presbyterian Connection* newspaper is distributed four times per year in print and electronically. Use the <https://form.jotform.com/63184686465973> to subscribe to either format. An email notification will go out when each digital version is available. And remember, your contact information is safe—the PCC will never rent, trade, or sell the distribution list.

The latest issue of the *Presbyterian Connection* newspaper was sent out to all congregations and subscribers in early March. This is another edition packed with amazing articles and photos from Presbyterian congregations, individuals, and groups across the country.

### **ABLAZE & IGNITE POPCORN FUNDRAISER**

Rev. Amanda Currie, Will Ireton, Arthur Jack, and Anne Hwang are current members of the Ignite Choir. Would you like to support this really great choir in our community by enjoying some delicious popcorn? You can try out a free sample during coffee hour at First Church this Sunday, April 7th. If you want to order a bag, Amanda will have an order form available on Sundays April 7th and 14th.

contactus@ablazevae.ca to get your snack on!'. The bottom corners feature stylized flame logos in red and yellow." data-bbox="526 368 950 779"/&gt;

## April Calendar

Apr. 6 9:30 – 1:30 Ecumenical Lunch Program

**Apr. 7 10:30 am 2nd Sunday of Easter**  
 Worship with Holy Communion  
 (Sanctuary & Online)  
 Sunday School  
 11:45 am Coffee Hour (Gym)

Apr. 9 11:30 am Forever-In-Motion Exercises  
 12:00 pm Lunch Bunch (Gym)

Apr. 10 7:00 pm Book Club (Zoom)

Apr. 11 7:00 pm Choir

Apr. 13 2:00 pm Funeral for Helen Pugsley

**Apr. 14 10:30 am 3rd Sunday of Easter**  
 (Sanctuary & Online)  
 Sunday School  
 11:45 am Coffee Hour (Gym)

Apr. 16 11:30 am Forever-In-Motion Exercises  
 12:00 pm Lunch Bunch (Gym)

Apr. 17 7:00 pm Board of Managers (Zoom)

Apr. 18 7:00 pm Choir

**Apr. 21 10:30 am Healing & Reconciliation Sunday**  
 Guest Speaker: Dylon Nippi,  
 Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry  
 (Sanctuary & Online)  
 Sunday School  
 11:45 am Coffee Hour (Gym)  
 Birthday Sunday!!!

Apr. 23 11:30 am Forever-In-Motion Exercises  
 12:00 pm Lunch Bunch (Gym)

Apr. 25 7:00 pm Choir

**Apr. 28 10:30 am 5th Sunday of Easter**  
 (Sanctuary & Online)  
 Sunday School  
 11:45 am Lunch & Annual Meeting (Gym)

Apr. 30 11:30 am Forever-In-Motion Exercises  
 12:00 pm Lunch Bunch (Gym)

May 1 7:00 pm Session Meeting

May 2 7:00 pm Choir

**May 5 10:30 am 6th Sunday of Easter**  
 Intergenerational Service & Communion  
 (Sanctuary & Online)  
 Sunday School  
 11:45 am Coffee Hour (Gym)

