

**FIRST THINGS FIRST
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, REGINA
December 2025**

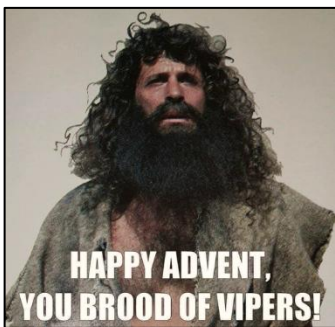
MINISTER'S MESSAGE

I usually think of Lent as the penitential season in the Church Year. During the weeks leading up to Easter, Christians traditionally practice prayer, fasting, and almsgiving as we turn our hearts and our lives towards God once again. But did you know that Advent is also a penitential season? The similar purpose that these two seasons share is part of the reason why we use the same colour, purple, as the liturgical colour.

Last Sunday I preached about the Second Coming of Christ and the promised fullness of the Reign of God, and I pointed out that Jesus tells us that we should be getting ready for it. Getting ready involves turning towards Jesus' ways, practicing kindness, patience, generosity, forgiveness, and more. We need to be doing this throughout the year, of course, but Advent is a good time to be intentional about our repentance.

Almost every year around the 2nd Sunday of Advent, at least one of my clergy friends posts a meme with an image of John the Baptist and the words, "Happy Advent, You Brood of Vipers!" It's a reference to the lectionary text about John preaching and baptizing in the wilderness as he prepared the way for the ministry of Jesus that was about to begin.

In Matthew's version of the story (Matt. 3:1-12) John the Baptist does actually call some of the religious leaders a "brood of vipers" as he challenges them to change their ways and to put their pious words and beliefs into action for goodness and kindness.



When you come to church on the 2nd Sunday of Advent (Dec. 7th) I promise not to yell at you like an angry prophet. After all, I'm just like you – an imperfect person who finds it easier to talk about

kindness than to enact it, who speaks harshly and causes hurt to others, who could give more for the sake of the poor, and who could do more for the work of justice in the world.

But I will invite you to lean into the penitential aspect of this Advent season. The word "repent" that John the Baptist uses is the Greek word "metanoia" that simply means to turn around and go in a new direction. Are there changes you need to make in your life to live more intentionally as a follower of Jesus? This is a good time to consider and to make those changes.

John suggests to the religious leaders of his time that it's not just about having a spiritual conversion (e.g. getting baptized) but it's about a changed way of life going forward. He says that the point is that when we turn, when we change, our lives will bear good fruit.

Friends, I look forward to continuing through this Advent season with you and finding our way to the great celebration of Christ's birth among us at Christmas. With faith and hope in the power of God working in and among us, I also look forward to the good fruit that our lives will produce in the coming year for the good of the church and the world that God loves.

God bless you this Advent, and may you enjoy a merry Christmas and a happy New Year!

Rev. Amanda Currie

SESSION

The Presbytery of Assiniboia has approved the intent of our feasibility project and our grant application. Our grant has been approved by the New and Renewing Ministries Redevelopment Fund, so the cost of our feasibility study will be covered by the grant.

The Directions Task Force had an initial meeting with 1080 Architecture last week, to do some brainstorming about what we "Must have" and

what would be "Nice to have" in a solution for our building. We also talked about our hopes for the project and our fears. 1080 will be working on assessing the condition of our buildings currently, over the next month, as well as getting a property appraisal done. In the new year, we will be inviting interested people in the congregation to participate in the next step of the process, so watch for the January newsletter!

December will be a busy month, with lots of special events for Christmas. Check through the newsletter for more news. And be sure to attend the Advent Party following worship on Dec. 7.

Have a blessed Christmas season and all the best in 2026!

Jo Szostak
Clerk of Session

YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRIES

On Sunday, Dec. 14, the First Church Sunday School's Christmas Presentation will be part of our worship service. The play is based on the book of Luke 2:1-20 with the title '**Christmas Eve at Angel School**'. We hope that most of our youth and children will take part in this unforgettable experience!



The Rehearsals will be on
Saturday Dec. 6, at 11 AM, (Sanctuary)
Sunday Dec. 7, during Sunday School,
Saturday Dec. 13, at 2 PM, (Sanctuary)
Sunday Dec. 14, at 10 AM. (Kennedy Room)

On Saturday, Dec. 13, from 10 am to 12 noon,
SPY Youth Christmas Online Gathering:
SPY (Saskatchewan Presbyterian Youth) invites youth - ages 12+ to A Merry Little Christmas Online Gathering on Saturday, Dec. 13, from 10 am to 12 noon. Advent Bible Study & Worship, Christmas Games, Christmas Songs, etc. For more information contact: Rev. Devon Pattemore (sasksynodyouth@gmail.com) or Rev. Sumi Jung (sumi5447@gmail.com) Zoom Meeting ID: 891 8345 5170 Passcode: 780160



On Sunday, Dec. 21, from 12:15 PM to 2:30 PM, All Grade 7 - 12 Students are invited to enjoy an afternoon of food, fellowship, Bible discussions, and Christmas Activities (**Christmas Gift Exchange!** – bring a wrapped present under \$5).



On Wednesday, Dec. 24, at 7 PM,
'Away in a Manger' and 'Joy to the World' will
 be presented by our Sunday School Choir as
 part of the special music during the Christmas
 Eve Candlelight Service! During presentation
 practice, this choir also practices. The final
 rehearsals will be on December 21 during the
 Sunday School and December 24th at 6:30 pm.



Rev. Sumi Jung

WORSHIP COMMITTEE



*"For unto us a Child is born,
 to us a Son is given,
 and the government shall be
 upon his shoulder,
 and His name shall be called
 Wonderful Counselor, Mighty
 God, Everlasting
 Father, Prince of Peace."*

– Isaiah 9:6

Thank you to all of our Church "Families" who
 are participating in the Advent Readings, as well
 as our December Lectors. Please contact
 Marianne at 306-541-9358 or
mariannewoods1955@gmail.com if you are
 interested in reading in the New Year. New
 readers are always welcome!

Two greeters are always each week from 10:00
 10:30 am, to welcome those attending and make
 them feel 'at home'. If you would be willing to
 lend a hand, please contact Wendy Prior at
kwprior@gmail.com . Your help would be
 appreciated.

On behalf of your Worship Committee – Andrew
 Donovan, Doug Stewart, Ron Pugsley, Wendy
 Prior, Ruth Adema, Chloe Golden, Heather
 Mazurak, Rev. Amanda Currie and myself, we
 wish you Hope, Joy, Love, and Peace during
 this Advent and Christmas Season. Many
 Blessings to you in 2026!

Marianne Woods
 Worship Committee Convener

CELEBRATING OUR YOUNGEST MEMBER

On Sunday, November 23rd, we were pleased
 to baptize Ariel Arawatigi and to welcome her as
 a new covenant member of First Presbyterian
 Church. Congratulations to Ariel's parents,
 Vinuta and Stephen Arawatigi! We are blessed
 to have you in our church family.



Rev. Amanda with Ariel





Steven, Rev. Amanda, Vinuta, Ariel, and Nick

CHRISTMAS MISSION PROJECT 2025

Each Advent season our congregation supports a worthy cause through our Christmas Mission Project. This year's project is the Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry, a mission of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. SNCM provides a welcoming space for marginalized people in the city, many of whom are Indigenous. The centre's outreach includes weekly worship that honours Indigenous ways, prayer, a listening ear, food, clothing, and a strong sense of connection.

Your gifts in honour of a loved one are welcomed. You can donate financially, or bring adult sized mitts, gloves, and toques to church until Dec 21. Include your donation and name of loved one in the offering on Sunday, Dec. 7 or 14, OR e-transfer to firstpresreginaoffering@gmail.com including name of loved one by Wed, Dec 17. We will have a box in the narthex to receive your physical gifts all month.

Your gifts to this vital project are greatly appreciated!

Mary Jesse
Mission & Outreach Convener

WALK TO BETHLEHEM: An Advent Pilgrimage

Mary and Joseph walked from Nazareth to Bethlehem (about 111 km) where Jesus was born in a manger. This Advent, you are invited to join this journey towards Christmas. Pick up a guide for the walk in the narthex today. It

includes a Scripture verse for reflection each day, as well as a chart to track your distance or steps if you choose to do so. (If you walk 4 km per day, you will cover the full distance of the first Advent journey.)

You can walk on your own or choose to walk with Rev. Amanda and others in the gymnasium at the church from Monday to Friday, 11:30 am – 12:30 pm.

ADVENT PARTY

Plan to stay after church on December 7th for our annual Advent Party. We will be serving our usual delicious chili and mac 'n cheese.

Christmas Bingo will be back this year along with carol singing and "Guess That Christmas Carol". You don't want to miss it. See you there!



Sheila Wilson
Fellowship Committee Convener

BLUE CHRISTMAS AND CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Blue Christmas Service – This season of the year is not always a happy and joyous time for those among us who are grieving, experiencing depression, or dealing with other life struggles. Our annual Blue Christmas Service provides a gentle time of prayer, music, and reflection that aims to make space for all the feelings we are having at this time of year.



There will be an opportunity to light a candle in memory of a loved one if you wish to do so. Everyone is welcome, and feel free to invite a friend who may find comfort in this gathering.

We will meet in the sanctuary on Tuesday, December 16th at 7:00 pm.

Christmas Eve Service – On Wednesday, December 24th at 7:00 pm we will gather to celebrate the Birth of Christ. This year's worship will be a Service of Lessons & Carols with readings and lots of music. We hope you will bring your whole family and invite your friends.



THE PCC WALL CALENDAR

We have 11 copies left of the 2026 Wall Calendar produced by our denomination. If a wall calendar would be useful for you, this one will keep you connected with our church throughout the year. It also includes a local photo highlighted for the month of June. Check out the calendars at the FundScrip table during coffee hour today. They are available for \$6 each.

FUNDSCRIP

The final order Sunday of 2025 will be Dec. 7. Orders placed Sunday will be available for pickup Sunday, Dec. 14th. Thanks for your support!

PLANNED GIVING

Planned Giving funds available: Do you have an idea for a project that supports one or more aspects of our First Church mission to be:

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

Help may be available to support your initiative. Our Planned Giving Program is accepting applications for funding. **The deadline for applications is January 15, 2026.** Applications will be considered by the congregation at the Annual General Meeting in spring 2026.

If you have received this church newsletter by email, we have attached a Planned Giving application form to the last page of the newsletter. Application forms are also available from Shirley in the office and will be available on the table in the Narthex. Once you have completed your application, please submit it to Shirley, either by

- email to firstpresregina@sasktel.net or,
- by dropping your application off at the church during office hours. Sunday mornings, you can leave your application in the mail holder on the outside of the office door.

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

Stewardship Committee

FROM THE MODERATOR

The Rev. Jeff Murray, Moderator of the 150th General Assembly, visited Palestine in September 2024. Each Monday he shares reflections on his experience on the PCC website presbyterian.ca. Here is his most recent post.

When entering specific areas of the Occupied West Bank, you encounter a large red sign



bearing a threatening warning in Hebrew, Arabic, and English: “This Road leads To Area “A” Under the Palestinian Authority The Entrance For Israeli Citizens Is Forbidden, Dangerous To Your Lives And is Against The Israeli Law”.

Although this is Palestinian territory, the State of Israel has posted these signs and placed gates that it can close, preventing Palestinians from free travel on their land. The language of the sign conveys the exact opposite of the welcome we received while travelling in the West Bank from Palestinians, whom Israel warns as so dangerous.

Elana Kaminka, an Israeli, travels often into “Area A” to the Palestinian office for Parent Circle – Families Forum in Beit Jala, near Bethlehem, where we met up with her and Mohammad Awwad. Both volunteer with Parent Circle – Families Forum, an organization that was the recipient of the Cutting Edge of Mission Award at the 2023 General Assembly. During our visit to The Parent Circle, Mohammad shared with us the difficult story of his cousin, Amjad Awwad, who was 17 when he was killed on July 1 this year. Amjad was shot in the chest by an Israeli soldier sitting in an armoured military vehicle about 50 metres away, while travelling through a roundabout in Ramallah. The heartbreaking loss of his cousin has left a deep wound in Mohammad’s life, yet it has also strengthened his resolve to pursue peacebuilding and dialogue. Mohammad

provides leadership in a summer camp for Israeli and Palestinian youth to build friendships and foster peaceful relationships.



After we heard Mohammad's story, Elana shared hers. Her son, Yannai Kaminka, a 20-year-old Israeli soldier, was on duty when he was killed during the October 7 attack by Hamas. Elana was active in groups committed to fostering empathy and dialogue between Israeli Jews and Palestinians before and since the death of Yannai. Since the heartbreaking event, Elana has increased her engagement in working towards peaceful co-existence in her work with Parents Circle – Families Forum. She told us how horrified and dismayed she was over the State of Israel's wholesale killing of Gazans who were not responsible for the October 7 attack. She protests the Netanyahu government, which she holds accountable for her son's death.

Elena wears a t-shirt that conveys one of the messages the Parents Circle often conveys – "Enough" written in Hebrew, Arabic, and English.

A LETTER FROM THE MODERATOR TO THE MAYOR OF BEIT SAHOUR ABOUT ILLEGAL SETTLEMENTS

Dear Dr. Elias Iseed, Mayor of Beit Sahour,
Your letter of November 26, 2025, to Mr. Rifat Kassis describing the major ramifications surrounding the imminent threat of an illegal settlement established on the border of Beit Sahour behind Osh Ghurab, on Palestinian land is extremely distressing.

My visit to the city of the Shepherds' Field this past September with a delegation of other members of The Presbyterian Church in Canada was an eye-opening pilgrimage where I saw personally the violent occupation under which Palestinians suffer daily. This visit gave me an opportunity to meet with people working for justice and to see with my own eyes the crimes that are taking place. Since my return these experiences have empowered me to speak to the churches in Canada about working with Palestinians for a just and lasting peace.

Standing in the Shepherd's Field, I could see how much land had been stolen, carved up by settler roads and the ever-creeping encroachment of illegal settlements. Our group heard about the almost daily increase in the number of checkpoints erected in the Bethlehem area to restrict Palestinian movement in and around the fields where the angels brought the shepherds songs of peace on the first Christmas.

We could see how the settlements, illegal according to international law, are part of a violent and intentional plan to steal land, destroy livelihoods, and disrupt family and community life. Standing in Shepherds' fields it became even more obvious to us how settlements are a key part of the movement to secure Israeli dominance, to engage in ethnic cleansing and removing every evidence of a Palestinian presence thus preventing the reality of a Palestinian state and illegally securing the entire West Bank for the state of Israel.

In response to the alarming escalation in the number of deadly settler attacks reported weekly by OCHA, and the thousands of Palestinians already displaced in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, I am writing the Government of Canada to demand that it reaffirms its commitment to the illegality of the settlements under international law and expand its existing sanctions on settler violence in the West Bank. In that letter, I will draw upon what we saw in September in Beit Sahour and what we read in your letter. Additionally, I will ask all members of The Presbyterian Church to write letters and call their local elected officials.

Be assured not only of our prayers, but our solidarity and commitment to actions that support Palestinians under threat in their own land.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Jeffery Murray
Moderator of the General Assembly
The Presbyterian Church in Canada

COME TOGETHER NOVEMBER MEETING

In this Advent season how wonderful it is to prepare for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ! In the busy-ness of the season, let us take time out and remember the gift of Jesus Christ.

On December 10th, 2025, 12 pm (SK) to 1:30 pm) come join the WMS and worship Jesus Christ, as the shepherds did over 2000 years ago. We are pleased to have Donna McIlveen, writer of the worship resource, give the message.

Please contact me at skim@presbyterian.ca if you would like the Zoom link, and I will be glad to send it to you.

Sarah Kim, Executive Director
Women's Missionary Society

EARTHSHOT

Climate Change and the Earthshot Prize

The Synod Mission Focus for November was Climate Change and the 2025 Earthshot Prize winners. There were 15 finalists in 5 categories, and a winner in each category won one million pounds to advance their project. These projects are absolutely amazing and are having a tremendous impact on the environmental issues that challenge our world.

The website is <https://earthshotprize.org/>.

Please have a look and be aware of the important work that is being done to counteract climate change.

Jo Szostak
Congregation and Mission Development
Coordinator
Synod of Saskatchewan

SCENES OF WONDER EVENT

Come and see a large display of nativity scenes at Norman Kennedy Church (5303 Sherwood Dr.) - December 6, 7, and 8, from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm, with evening hours on Saturday and Monday.



SCENES OF WONDER
A Unique, Large Display of Nativity Scenes
December 6th, 7th, and 8th, 2025

When	Where	
Saturday, Dec. 6 th	1:00 pm – 5:00 pm 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm	Norman Kennedy Presbyterian Church 5303 Sherwood Drive Phone: (306) 543-9080 https://nkpchurchregina.ca Facebook – NKP Church FREE ADMISSION
Sunday, Dec. 7 th	1:00 pm – 5:00 pm	
Monday, Dec. 8 th	1:00 pm – 5:00 pm 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm	

QR code and accessibility icon



Everything for pets and pet lovers

CHRISTMAS PET MARKET

DECEMBER 6TH - 10 AM - 4 PM
First Presbyterian Church Gym
2170 Albert Street

Illustration of various pets (cat, dog, bird, lizard) wearing Christmas hats and surrounded by gifts.

Presented by Excalipurr Cat Cafe

December Calendar

Dec 7	10:30 am	2nd Sunday of Advent
		Sunday School
	11:45 am	Advent Party (Gym)
Dec. 8-12	11:30 am	Advent Walk (Gym)
Dec. 9	8:00 pm	Board (Investment update)
Dec. 10	12:30 pm	Advent Bible Study (Morris Room)
Dec. 11	7:00 pm	Choir (Sanctuary)
Dec. 13	10:00 am	Pastoral Care Cmt. (Morris Room)
	10:00 am	SPY Youth Online Gathering
	2:00 pm	Sunday School Play Practice
Dec. 14	10:30 am	3rd Sunday of Advent
		Sunday School
		Christmas Play
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour (Gym)
Dec. 15-19	11:30 am	Advent Walk (Gym)
Dec. 16	7:00 pm	Blue Christmas Service
Dec. 17	12:30 pm	Advent Bible Study (Morris Room)
	7:00 pm	Board of Managers (Zoom)
Dec. 18	7:00 pm	Choir (Sanctuary)
Dec. 21	10:30 am	4th Sunday of Advent
		Sunday School
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour (Gym)
	12:15 pm	Youth Gathering (Kennedy Room)
Dec. 21-24	11:30 am	Advent Walk (Gym)
Dec. 24	7:00 pm	Christmas Eve Service
<i>Church office is closed Dec. 25-Jan. 4</i>		
<i>Rev. Sumi Jung is on holidays Dec. 25-Jan. 4</i>		
Dec. 28	10:30 am	1st Sunday after Christmas
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour (Gym)

SARCAN Donations for Youth The church has set up a “drop ‘n go” account so people can make donations for the First Church youth group at SARCAN without having to wait for bottles and cans to be counted. The church’s code is **FC1925**. You need this code to make sure that the church gets credit for your donation.

Beginning of the January Calendar

Jan. 4	10:30 am	2nd Sunday after Christmas
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour (Gym)
<i>Rev. Amanda Currie is on holidays Jan. 5-12</i>		
Jan. 7	7:00 pm	Book Club (Zoom)
Jan. 8	7:00 pm	Choir (Sanctuary)
Jan. 11	10:30 am	Baptism of the Lord Sunday
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour (Gym)
Jan. 13	11:30 am	Forever-In-Motion (Gym)
	12:00 pm	Lunch Bunch
Jan. 14	7:00 pm	Session Meeting (Zoom)
Jan. 15	7:00 pm	Choir (Sanctuary)



“The Work of Christmas”

*When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back
with their flocks,
the work of Christmas begins:*

*to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among the people,
to make music in the heart.*

by Howard Thurman, an African-American theologian, educator, and civil rights leader.

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 January 15, 2026.
- 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 early 2026.
- All applications are forwarded from the joint Board/Session meeting, with recommendations, to the congregational Annual General Meeting (AGM) in spring 2026.
- 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 January 15, 2026, to the office of First Presbyterian Church,
2170 Albert Street, Regina SK S4P 2T9. Completed forms can also be emailed
to firstpresregina@sasktel.net