

**FIRST THINGS FIRST
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, REGINA
March 2024**

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

This week in our Lenten Devotional Study, the theme is "Need." Each week we've been considering one of Jesus' last words (statements he made while dying on the cross) and the word this week is "I am thirsty." This has prompted us to think about what it meant for God to come to us as a human being and to experience all the vulnerability and needs that we experience as mortal creatures living in the world.

It has also led our study groups into some interesting conversations about what are our needs as people. What do we need to survive? What do we need to thrive and to live full and meaningful lives? How do we live out our lives as people of faith, recognizing our own needs and the needs of our neighbours near and far? We all need more than just food, water, clothing, and shelter. We also have needs for safety, love, belonging, education, meaningful work, and more.

As I think about our congregation at First Church, living in a community of worship, fellowship, service, and mission together, I think it's important that we remember that we all have needs. This means that we are all paying attention to others in the church community and watching out for folks who may not be having their needs met.

As a Presbyterian Church, we do have some structures and ways of doing ministry together that are intended to ensure that everyone's needs are met. We have a leadership group (The Session) made up of Elders who each have a list of families and individuals that they try to connect with regularly to offer pastoral support. We also have a Pastoral Care Committee and commissioned visitors who work together to support folks who are homebound, sick, grieving, or experiencing other challenges.

As the minister at First Church, I also work hard to support the pastoral and spiritual needs of our community through worship, prayer, study, service, and mission. I don't have a practice of

going through the membership list and inviting myself to come visit with you, but I am open to your invitations if you would like to visit in your home, at the church, on the phone, by Zoom, in a coffee shop, or on a walk (when the weather warms up again).

Although life in ministry is very full, I am not too busy to sit down with you to listen, care, and pray about whatever challenges you may be going through right now. Please don't assume that I or your Elder will figure out that you have a need for support, but please do ask for what you need. If you or a loved one finds yourself in hospital, if you experience a loss and need to talk, if you're trying to figure out your vocation, if you're struggling in your family or with your relationships, or you have questions about God, faith, or the church that you want to discuss, we want to be here for you.

Some of Jesus' words to his early followers in the Sermon on the Mount come to mind:

"Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snack? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!"

Yes, God loves you and hopes that you will ask for what you need. Your Church Family also loves you deeply and values your presence and participation in our community. Together, let's care for one another in our shared humanity, with all our needs.

Rev. Amanda Currie

LENT

During the Season of Lent, our worship begins with a short liturgy that introduces the theme of the service and prepares our hearts to worship God. At the conclusion of the liturgy, one candle is extinguished. On Good Friday the final candle will go out as we remember the death of Jesus our Lord. But Easter will bring a renewal of light, life, hope, and the joy of resurrection! Thank you to the folks who lead our Lent liturgies each Sunday.



Pockett Family & Nora Findlay



Shazia and Alfred Ferozdin



Taeyang No and Family & Gail Witherspoon

HOLY WEEK & EASTER SERVICES

There will be several special worship services during Holy Week again this year. Mark your calendar and plan to attend:



Maundy Thursday

Service – Mar. 28th at

5:30 pm. This will be a worship service & potluck supper combined together, including the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper and a hand-washing ritual in the gymnasium. Help us plan by signing up in the narthex to let us know you will be attending. (Note: This service will not be livestreamed.)

Good Friday Service – Mar. 29th at 10:30 am

Easter Sunday Service – Mar. 31st at 10:30 am

LUNCH BUNCH and Forever In Motion

First Church has hosted a gathering for lunch on Tuesdays in the gymnasium for many, many years. It has been through many transitions in leadership, members, name, and programs over the years. It had to move online during the Covid-19 Pandemic, but returned to meeting in the church and is still going strong.

Now called the "Lunch Bunch," it is a gathering of primarily seniors (though everyone is welcome) that meets for exercises, lunch, and a program of some kind every Tuesday. It is a self-directed group, with the participants suggesting programs, inviting speakers, and often taking turns to lead the group themselves.

More than a year ago, Heather Mazurak led a program in which she shared about the "Forever...in motion" exercise program for seniors in Saskatchewan. Heather is a certified instructor in the program, and she led the Lunch Bunch in a few exercises to give us an idea of what it is like. Shortly after, the group decided to add half an hour of exercises to the beginning of our gatherings every Tuesday! (See below for more about the "Forever... in motion" program.)

We are so grateful for Heather's skilled and enthusiastic leadership every Tuesday, and for Kathleen Bower who occasionally fills in when Heather is away. Over the last month, Bette

Kelly and I also took part in the training program with the Saskatchewan Health Authority so that we are also ready to lead the program when needed. It was a lot of fun, and we learned a lot through the process!

If you're already part of the Lunch Bunch group, please feel free to invite your friends and neighbours to join in, as we are happy for the group to grow. If you're not yet part of the group, please consider yourself warmly welcome to come. Whether you are free to attend every Tuesday or occasionally, the door is open. The Lunch Bunch strives to be a welcoming community that supports one another in body, mind, and spirit.

Rev. Amanda Currie

FOREVER . . . IN MOTION

Forever...in motion is a health promotion initiative that helps older adults become physically active through volunteer-led physical activity groups.

Promoting physical activity within the older adult community is a key strategy of Forever...in motion. As our older adult population increases so does the impact on our healthcare system.

One of the greatest health risks for older adults is sedentary living (WHO Guidelines on Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour, World Health Organization, 2020).

The Forever...in motion Older Adult strategy is to improve and maintain the health of older adults living in the community through support, education, research, partnerships, and the promotion of healthy lifestyles. The strategy is available to individuals living in seniors' congregate housing, condominiums or living in their own homes and is primarily offered in congregate housing buildings, churches, day programs and community association programs.

MISSION & OUTREACH COMMITTEE

First Church has committed to one community food assistance project each month for March, April and May. Can you volunteer for one or two hours on one of the dates below?

The sign-up board is in the Narthex now. You can also call the church office and let Shirley

know the date you are available to help. Here are the opportunities:

- Sunday March 17: 4 people to make 60 sandwiches after church for the Warm Welcome Centre (overnight warming space operated by Carmichael Outreach)
- Saturday, April 6: 14 people for Ecumenical Saturday Lunch project; 6 to make 200 sandwiches in our kitchen; 8 people to assemble lunch bags and serve guests at First Baptist Church
- Sunday May 12: 20 loaves of sandwiches needed for Waterston House; several people to bring 1 or 2 loaves to morning worship.

Thank you for your time, donations, and prayer as we work to respond to poverty in our city.

Easter Giving in Memoriam

As costs for rent, groceries, and daily living increase, access to daily food is a problem for many people in Regina. Your donations this Easter Season will allow First Church to participate more often in the Ecumenical Saturday Lunch program. Since Dec. 2021, several Regina congregations have served a simple lunch to marginalized Regina citizens each weekend. We use one central location, First Baptist Church, and congregations volunteer weekly to purchase groceries, assemble and serve the lunches to those who come. On average we serve 100 people. It has become a trusted and welcoming space for many folks who are tired and hungry.

Your gift of money makes a difference. Your gift of time to prepare and serve food makes an impact. Your prayers for this project, and for the people who come, are needed.

Names received by Wed., March 27 will be acknowledged on Easter Sunday, March 31. The forms are in the bulletin.

Mary Jesse
Mission & Outreach Convener

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.

- How to:
1. take donations to SARCAN
 2. enter through the “drop ’n go” door if there is one, or just go inside
 3. enter code FC1925 into computer and follow instructions - the printer will print out labels
 4. attach labels to bag of bottles/cans
 5. put donation in bin marked “drop ’n go” - done!



Please talk with Bette Kelly or Tammy MacDonald if you have any questions. If you would like to make arrangements for a pickup, please contact the church office.

COME TOGETHER ON THE WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Dear friends, I hope you are all keeping well! In this Lenten season I pray your spirits will be renewed and at peace.

The next Come Together event will be on the World Day of Prayer. This year, the writing committee is from Palestine. The theme is: “I Beg You... Bear With One Another in Love” (Ephesians 4:1-3). We are honoured to have Catherine MacKeil, Executive Director of the Women’s Inter-church Council of Canada, join us again this year.

Our event will be on Wednesday March 13th, 11:00 Am to 2:30 pm (SK time). Please e-mail Sarah for the Zoom link. As always, please join us for a time of virtual fellowship at 10:45 am (SK time).

Hope to see you all soon! Blessings,

Sarah Kim,
Executive Director,
Women’s Missionary Society,
Presbyterian Church in Canada

UPCOMING WEBINAR: PCC Decisions Regarding LGBTQI2+ Inclusion

The 2021 General Assembly marked a pivotal point in the approach of The Presbyterian Church in Canada to gender, sexuality and the denomination’s ministry with LGBTQI2+ people. In addition to changes to the PCC’s theology and practice regarding marriage and ordination, General Assembly adopted a set of recommendations to guide the whole church to acknowledge the harm caused due to homophobia, transphobia, heterosexism and hypocrisy, to respond appropriately to that harm and to ensure that harm does not continue.

This webinar is an opportunity to review and learn more about the decisions the church has made regarding LGBTQI2+ inclusion. Staff from the General Assembly Office and the Life and Mission Agency will give a short presentation about the church’s decisions, followed by time for participants to ask questions about how these decisions are applied in congregations, presbyteries, camps, colleges, national committees, and other contexts within The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Date: Wednesday, March 13, 2024

Time: 11:30 pm-12:30 pm (SK time)

Register:

<https://presbyterian.ca/2024/02/15/upcoming-webinar-pcc-decisions-regarding-lgbtqi2-inclusion/>

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.

CAMP CHRISTOPHER

We are getting ready for the summer of 2024 at Camp Christopher! In the narthex, you will find a variety of information about camp this summer: camper brochures, registration forms, and staff application forms. If you have questions please contact Donna Wilkinson at donnaw@sasktel.net.



CAMP CHRISTOPHER

Camp Is Hiring!

We are building our team for Summer 2024
Join us for a summer of celebration, exploration, growth and leadership.

Available Positions:

- Camp Director
- Program Lead
- Waterfront Director
- Wellness Person
- Kitchen Manager
- Maintenance Manager
- Cabin Leaders

APPLY TODAY @ www.campchristopher.ca

Questions Contact: info@campchristopher.ca



CAMP CHRISTOPHER

2024 CAMP DATES

Week	Grades	Group
July 14th -19th	Grade 9-12	LIT
July 14th - 18th	Grade 2-5	Junior
July 21st - 25th	Grade 4-7	Intermediate
July 28th - Aug 2	Grade 8-10	Junior Teen
August 11th-15th	Grade 2-9	Caterpillar

March Calendar

Mar. 10	10:30 am	Fourth Sunday in Lent (Sanctuary & Online) Sunday School
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour (Gym)
	12:00 pm	Christian Ed Cmt. (Morris Room)
Mar. 12	11:30 am	Forever-In-Motion Exercises
	12:00 pm	Lunch Bunch (Gym)
	7:00 pm	Lenten Study (Zoom)
Mar. 13	2:00 pm	Lenten Study (Morris Room)
	7:00 pm	Book Club (Zoom)
Mar. 14	7:00 pm	Choir
Mar. 16	9:30 am	Presbyterian of Assiniboia (Zoom)
Mar. 17	10:30 am	Fifth Sunday in Lent (Sanctuary & Online) Sunday School
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour (Gym)
	12:00 pm	Sandwich-Making for Carmichael Warming Centre (Kitchen)
Mar. 19	11:30 am	Forever-In-Motion Exercises
	12:00 pm	Lunch Bunch (Gym)
	7:00 pm	Lenten Study (Zoom)
Mar. 20	2:00 pm	Lenten Study (Morris Room)
	5:30 pm	Board of Managers (Zoom)
Mar. 21	7:00 pm	Choir
Mar. 23	10:00 am	Missional Leadership Course
Mar. 24	10:30 am	Palm/Passion Sunday (Sanctuary & Online) Sunday School
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour (Gym)
Mar. 26	11:30 am	Forever-In-Motion Exercises
	12:00 pm	Lunch Bunch (Gym)
	7:00 pm	Lenten Study (Zoom)
Mar. 27	2:00 pm	Lenten Study (Morris Room)
Mar. 28	5:30 pm	Maundy Thursday Worship & Potluck (Gym)
	7:30 pm	Choir

Mar. 29	10:30 am	Good Friday Service (Sanctuary & Online)
Mar. 31	10:30 am	Easter Sunday Intergenerational Service (Sanctuary & Online)
	11:45 am	Coffee Hour (Gym)
Apr. 2	11:30 am	Forever-In-Motion Exercises
	12:00 pm	Lunch Bunch (Gym)
Apr. 3	7:00 pm	Session Meeting
Apr. 4	7:00 pm	Choir
Apr. 5	10:00 am	Pastoral Care Committee
Apr. 6	morning	Saturday Lunch Program at First Baptist



*Up from the grave He arose;
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes;
He arose a Victor from the
dark domain,
And He lives forever,
with His saints to reign.
He arose! He arose!
Hallelujah! Christ arose!*
(Robert Lowry)