FIRST THINGS FIRST MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, REGINA OCTOBER 2021

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

One week after we celebrate Thanksgiving Sunday, the calendar includes the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on Sunday, October 17th. We may still be feeling full from all the feasting we enjoyed last weekend, and now our attention is drawn to those whose bellies ache for a different reason. We remember and pray for those who are poor, hungry, or homeless, and as we pray our hearts are bent towards generosity, advocacy, and care for those who are struggling.

In Regina at this time, we can hardly be unaware of the deep poverty and need of people in our community. A tent city has grown up in the last couple of weeks in Pepsi Park (11th & Quebec), partly in memory of a woman named Marjorie who died of an overdose in Victoria Park recently, and partly to draw attention to the housing crisis in our city. People working with Carmichael Outreach and other social programs tell us that a major reason for the worsening situation is the transition to the Saskatchewan Income Support (SIS) program which is failing, with vulnerable people falling through the cracks.

This week I attended an "Emergency Consultation on Homelessness in Regina," organized by Meara Conway, MLA for Regina Elphinstone-Centre. People in attendance included folks from a cross-section of community organizations, anti-poverty groups, concerned citizens, and quite a few Christian clergy. The aim was to listen to the wisdom of people on the front lines of the homelessness crisis, and to search for possible solutions. By the end of the meeting, I had learned a lot about the severity and complexity of the crisis, heard some interesting ideas about what needs to change, but certainly not a clear way forward.

As a Christian minister in the downtown area, I'll be paying attention to developments in this work, watching for ways that the churches might lend our voices, support, or resources to assist with the situation, and staying connected with the

other churches and faith groups that could cooperate in any future efforts.

I'm also going to keep praying. With the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty this Sunday, October 17th, we'll pray in our worship for the safety, health, and well-being of folks living in the tent city. We'll pray for creative and wise solutions to be conceived quickly, and for generous and compassionate responses from the Provincial Government and others who have the power to effect changes for the better.

We've also been invited to join some of our Christian neighbours in prayer for the elimination of poverty this Sunday, October 17th after our morning worship services. Folks from Knox-Met United and First Baptist will be gathering in Victoria Park for a time of prayer, and we're invited to join them around 12:00 pm. (I'll personally be in Zoom Sunday School at that time, but I do encourage First Church folk to join in if you are able.)

Here's a helpful prayer written by the 144th Moderator of the General Assembly, the Rev. Daniel Cho:

Compassionate God of all people, you are the One who blesses and loves us and we give you our thanks and praise. On this International Day for the Eradication of Poverty we recall how we are joined together with all people through your Son Jesus Christ. And by the light of your Spirit we embrace our brothers and sisters — those who suffer in poverty and from a lack of dignity and who struggle to survive.

Lord of generosity and bounty, we commit ourselves to the effort to eradicate poverty across this land. In this nation of prosperity and plenty we are disturbed and saddened that too many subsist on so little; we acknowledge the efforts by the federal government to reduce poverty in Canada and we pray that the government continues to develop poverty reduction strategies to

help those in need live economically dignified and socially empowered lives.

As the people of God, we are called to fulfill your will for the sake of the kingdom and pray for the men, women, and families that need our help the most. Fill our hearts with compassion, mercy and your justice, O Lord. We pray that the church would take up this call with integrity, commitment and passion so that together we can end poverty in Canada. By your Spirit we stand in solidarity with the vulnerable and we pray that we may work towards the blessings of justice for all.

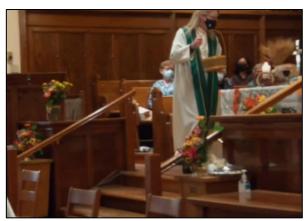
Through the loving and merciful name of Christ Jesus our Lord we pray. Amen.

~ The Rev. Daniel Cho, Moderator of the 144th General Assembly

Rev. Amanda Currie

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

October is the time when as Christians we give thanks for the bounty of God's blessing we receive. Although the official day of Thanksgiving has passed, the Worship Committee hopes that each one of you had a meaningful day to celebrate all the blessings we have.



The Committee met on Zoom September 25th. Although we were a very small group as some had other commitments, we spent our time reviewing plans for the upcoming fall season. Will Ireton sent his report for us to review his plans for the choir and special presentations. Whether you are able to come to church in person or worship on YouTube, you will enjoy the contribution that music plays in our weekly Worship services.

Presbyterians Sharing Sunday was celebrated on Sunday, October 3. Thanks to the lay leadership provided for worship by Mary Jesse, Andrew Donovan, Alfred Ferozdin, Sheila Wilson, and Jo Szostak. Communion was celebrated on Sunday, October 10.

Marianne reported that lectors are needed for November and December. If you wish to offer your services, please contact her. Our Welcome Team has done a splendid job since it was instituted to take care of all our welcoming needs. However, if anyone would like to offer their services either as a Lector or part of the Welcome Team if someone is unable to assist on a particular Sunday, please give it consideration and contact Marianne. It's not a big job, but rather a time to connect with old and new friends. Depending on your task, duties consist of having congregation members sign-in, offer the hand sanitizer, assist with the lifts and welcome those attending. Everyone attending worship at church has so graciously been observing all the rules making our time together safe. We are blessed with a large area in the church to physical distance.

Our thanks go out to Nick Jesson, who has given so much of his time ironing out all the wrinkles and getting our YouTube services up and running. It has taken a bit of time and issues are being sorted out one by one. Thanks Nick, great job! We are pleased to know there are many viewing services from Regina, in other areas of the province and further afield.

In closing, we feel very safe in the confines of our sanctuary and hope you will consider coming to church as God moves each one of you. Let us give thanks in all things.

Marianne Woods Worship Committee Convener

KEEP CONNECTED WITH FIRST CHURCH ONLINE

While we have returned to worship in the building at First Church again, most of our other programs and meetings are continuing to happen by Zoom video conference. We are finding that we often get better attendance online. Older folks can avoid driving at night. Parents don't need to arrange child-care while they attend a church meeting. And none of us

need to go out in the cold, as the cooler seasons begin to return once again.

If you haven't already joined us by Zoom, please consider doing so. We can arrange for some support to get the Zoom application (free) downloaded to your computer, tablet, or phone, and after a few practice sessions, most people find Zoom pretty easy to use.

Here are some of the things you might considering attending on Zoom at First Church:

<u>Sunday School</u> – This one's just for kids, but we're sticking on Zoom for the moment, meeting most Sundays from 12:15 – 1:00 pm. (The Zoom link is sent out directly to the parents.)

<u>Coffee Hour</u> – I'm afraid you need to supply your own coffee and treats, but the company is just as nourishing. Folks gathering and share informal conversation and connection between 1 – 2 pm most Sunday afternoons:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8084662666

Bible Study – Every Wednesday from 12 – 1 pm, join us for an exploration of one of the biblical texts for the upcoming Sunday. Keep in mind that this group's comments and conversations often influence the preacher's message on Sunday morning. And I think for those who participate, it adds to the meaningfulness of Sunday worship as well:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8084662666

Young Adult Gatherings – This group is aimed at First Church folks in their 20s and 30s. We do a little informal Bible study too, plus share about our lives and experiences, reflect on current events, issues of justice, and consider our responses as disciples of Jesus. We typically meet about once a month, with the next gathering planned for Tuesday, Nov. 9th at 7:00 pm. (Be in touch with Rev. Amanda for the Zoom link.)

Book Club – Every month folks from First Church get together to discuss a book that we've all read that month. Often we read fiction, but sometimes choose books that are a little more serious too. We always make interesting connections to our lives, values, and faith. This month we are reading Jesse Thistle's book "From the Ashes: My Story of Being Métis, Homeless, and Finding My Way" in preparation for our discussion on

Wednesday, Oct. 27th at 7:00 pm. (Be in touch with Rev. Amanda if you would like to join.)

Mark your calendars now for the next "Presbyterians Read" book study which we will be doing by Zoom on Tuesdays at 7:00 pm on Nov. 30, Dec. 7, 14, & 21. The book this year is Adam Hamilton's "Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas." Let Rev. Amanda know if you would like a copy of the book, either to participate in the Tuesday evening sessions or for your own personal reading and reflection during Advent. The cost of the books will be about \$12, which the church will pay for. You're welcome to make a donation to cover the cost of your book if you wish.

Here's a description of the book:

Learn the meaning behind the names of Christ and the difference He makes in our lives this Christmas. His parents gave him the name Jesus. But the prophets, the shepherds, the wise men, and the angels addressed him by other names. They called him Lord, Messiah, Savior, Emmanuel, Light of the World, and Word Made Flesh. In Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas, best-selling author Adam Hamilton examines the names of Christ used by the gospel writers, exploring the historical and personal significance of his birth.

This Advent season church families will come together to remember what's important. In the face of uncertainty and conflict, Christians reclaim the Christ child who brings us together, heals our hearts, and calls us to bring light into the darkness. Now more than ever, we invite you to reflect upon the significance of the Christ child for our lives and world today! Incarnation is a standalone book but works beautifully as a fourweek Bible study experience perfect for all age groups during the Advent season.

Rev. Amanda Currie

REFUGEE UPDATE

We have received news through Elijah that Nyabani's mom is currently "stable". She is staying in Khartoum, along with family members, as medical assistance is available if needed, instead of in the refugee camp where medical assistance is unreliable. Elijah and Nyabani took their children to Khartoum for a visit with their

grandmother, as her health was precarious at that time. We're pleased to hear that she is now doing okay. There are continued expenses related to living in Khartoum, so Elijah has been sending money to support them. If you are able to help, please send a donation to Jo, either by e-transfer to jszostak@accesscomm.ca or mail a cheque to 1-2338 Assiniboine Ave E, Regina, SK. S4V 2E9. All contributions are appreciated.

Our second refugee family is in Malaysia. Saleem Ullah (Asghari Ferozdin's brother) passed away July 3 from COVID. We had to complete new forms for Doris to become the principal applicant, and we recently received word that the new forms were approved by IRCC.

In both situations, we continue to wait while forms are processed... and we're not sure if the offices in those countries are operational again yet. We look forward to the day when we can welcome these families to Regina!

Jo Szostak

A REFLECTION ON GIVING THANKS FROM THE MODERATOR



Two recent incidents reminded me of the importance of giving thanks.

The first occurred in early September when I was on Prince Edward Island for the celebration of the 200th Anniversary of the Presbytery of P.E.I. It was good to be there and meet with so many people.

The anniversary service began with everyone singing "All people that on earth do dwell." We were able to "sing to the Lord with cheerful voice" without masks and as the organ and choir

led us. I don't think I have ever been so moved by "Auld 100th" as I was that evening in Zion Presbyterian Church in Charlottetown. Before that night, the most crowded room I had been in last was months ago when I had my second Covid vaccination in the Bob Fallis arena across the street from St. John's Presbyterian Church.

The psalm upon which the opening hymn for the anniversary service was based says, "Enter into God's gates with thanksgiving" and "be thankful."

Not everyone in Canada is able to gather as freely as we did in P.E.I. that night. Perhaps this Thanksgiving will be the first time you return in person to your faith community. As you enter into your church building, enter with thanksgiving to God.

The second event that reminded me of the importance of giving thanks was a ceremony in Bradford West Gwillimbury, Ontario, for the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation (Orange Shirt Day). An Indigenous Elder named White Eagle, whose mother was a Residential School Survivor, led us in a series of activities and reflections. When a bird flew by in full voice, White Eagle invited us to listen to the song of the raven. When a bee flew around his chair and drum, he urged us to hear the message of the bee saying to us, "just be...just be thankful."

White Eagle urged us to say "thank you" using the Indigenous word *Meegwetch*. And he encouraged us to say *Meegwetch* to the Creator, the earth and sky, the elders and newborns, our town councillors, and our community.

For what do we have to be thankful for during the fourth wave of the pandemic?

Here is a partial list:

- 1. For health and strength and daily food.
- 2. For a public health-care system that doesn't always get it right but is working hard to ensure we are all safe.
- 3. For scientific research that has developed vaccines.
- 4. For the love of families, friends and congregations.
- 5. For God's protection, care and presence.

Perhaps, like me, you have had incidents that have encouraged you to be thankful even in the midst of these difficult days.

May you have a blessed Thanksgiving.

A prayer of thanksgiving written by John Bradford, Martyr, 1555 (updated and edited): Honour and praise be given to you, O Lord God Almighty, for all your mercies and loving-kindness. These benefits, most merciful God, like as we do acknowledge that we have received of your only goodness, even so we ask you, for your dear Son Jesus Christ's sake, to grant us always your Holy Spirit, whereby we may continually grow in thankfulness towards you, to be "led into all truth," and comforted in our adversities. O Lord, strengthen our faith: kindle it more in ferventness and love towards you, and our neighbours for your sake.

The Rev. Dr. Daniel Scott
Moderator of the 2021 General Assembly

40 DAYS OF ENGAGEMENT ON ANTI-RACISM



Delve deeply into anti-racism work with a 40-day time of learning, reflection, and advocacy!

Each day from Tuesday, October 12 to Friday, November 26 (with the exception of Sundays) there will be a new reflection on anti-racism, as well as activities suitable for adults and children. These activities can be done alone, as a family, or in groups. For every day, during the 40 Days, all of this content will be available as a PDF that you can review, download, or print and distribute! Writers from across the United Church have offered these daily contributions about different kinds of racism in church and in the broader society. Some draw on their personal experiences to share their insights about racial injustices. All invite the reader to explore ways to transform themselves and the denomination. During the 40 days, there will be different online events where you can gather and engage with the content from that day. Sign up for the

newsletter(opens in a new tab) to keep up-todate with the latest developments! For more information, see https://united-church.ca/social-action/justice-initiatives/anti-racism/40-days-engagement-anti-racism

MULTI-RELIGIOUS CLIMATE ACTION DAYS: Faithful Energy

October 18th from 12-1pm (Sask and Alberta time/1-2pm in Manitoba/2-3pm Eastern and 11am-Noon in BC)

You are invited to take part in an online event to mark the second global multi-religious climate action days in advance of COP26. Communities Inspired for Environmental Action, which is a local central Saskatchewan organization and chapter of Faith & the Common Good, in partnership with St. Thomas More College's Centre for Faith, Reason, Peace, and Justice, will be hosting an event focused on energy and how people of faith can positively influence Sask Power's policies. Guest speakers will include Peter Prebble and Rev. Karen Fraser Gitlitz.

Register now! For more information, contact Myron Rogal, mrogal@rcdos.ca or Christopher Hrynkow, chrynkow@stmcollege.ca

FALL SYMPOSIUM

Join us for the 2021 For the Love of Creation's Fall Symposium! This gathering will mark a key moment in our journey, in Canada's climate plan, and in global climate action as we engage with COP 26 (November 2021). We will hear the collective theological reflections in the Letter of the Faithful, learn about how our advocacy goals have evolved, and engage with faith leaders, theologians, climate organizers including:

- Sister Eva Solomon, csi
- Councillor Christine Boyle, Vancouver City Council
- Dr. Sylvia Keesmaat
- Dr. David K. Goodin
- Mueni Mutinda, Canadian Foodgrains Bank
- Jennifer Preston, Canadian Friends Service Committee (Quakers)
- and more!



Register now! Event fees have been set to help cover the costs of this event (Student = \$5; Non-Student = \$10). Please note that there is a barrier-free option (\$0). If you have any questions about this event, please email flc.pac@gmail.com.

THE CALL OF CREATION: Responding to "A Joint Message for the Protection of Creation"



Friday, October 22, 2021, 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm EDT Register Now!

... we call on everyone, whatever their belief or worldview, to endeavour to listen to the cry of the earth and of people who are poor, examining their behaviour and pledging meaningful sacrifices for the sake of the earth which God has given us. – from "A Joint Message for the Protection of Creation"

On September 1, 2021, Pope Francis, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, and Archbishop Justin of Canterbury issued "A Joint Message for the Protection of Creation," calling on the world to address the current crisis of global climate change. The message was issued at the beginning of the 2021 Season of Creation and in advance of the UN Climate Change Conference set to gather in Glasgow, Scotland, in November.

Join us for a webinar on October 22, 2021, from 4:00 to 5:30 pm (Eastern Time USA) as a panel of scholars explore the significance and implications of "A Message" for the churches and for the world.

Panelists:

- José Casanova (Senior Fellow, The Berkley Center and Professor Emeritus, Georgetown University)
- John Chryssavgis (Archdeacon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate)
- Elaine Padilla (Associate Professor of Philosophy and Religion/Latinx and Latin American Studies, University of La Verne)
- Peter C. Phan (Ignacio Ellacuría Chair of Catholic Social Thought, Georgetown University; Faculty Fellow, Berkley Center)
- Anne Marie Reijnen (Professor of Systematic Theology, La Faculté Universitaire de Théologie Protestante de Bruxelles and Theologicum of the Institut Catholique de Paris)

Moderated by Brian Flanagan (Associate Professor of Theology and Religious Studies, Marymount University; President, College Theology Society)

TREASURER WANTED

Multifaith Saskatchewan is seeking a volunteer treasurer. At Multifaith Saskatchewan, we aim to initiate, foster, and assist in the development and operation of multifaith groups in Saskatchewan.

We want to help these groups understand, appreciate, and accept the diverse faith

communities in their area. We want to help multifaith groups increase awareness in their communities of the beliefs and special needs of all faiths as well as help these groups to work for a just and peaceful society by moderating and eliminating prejudices that hinder the development of such a society. Learn more about us at https://multifaithsask.org/

Duties: issuing payments, receiving deposits, and maintaining the financial records of this provincial non-profit organization. The finances of the organization are small and the workload of the treasurer is minimal.

Other responsibilities: reporting to the Board and AGM on a regular basis. The treasurer is an executive officer and member of the MFS Board. Qualifications: a basic knowledge of accounting. Familiarity with accounting software would be an asset. The treasurer should be a participating member of one of the faith communities in Saskatchewan.

Remuneration: this is a volunteer position. For further information, contact Nicholas Jesson, MFS president at 306-580-8094 or njesson@archregina.sk.ca

KAIROS GATHERING: 20 years of spirited action for justice



Join us in celebrating KAIROS' 20th anniversary, October 26 to 28. Register now!

KAIROS is commemorating 20 years of spirited action for justice during this kairos time, when multiple crises have converged and opportunities arise for transformational change. We are inviting the KAIROS network, domestic and global partners and friends to reflect on KAIROS' accomplishments and struggles, to embrace this kairos moment and to envision a 2041 that is more hopeful, just and sustainable than the present time.

The virtual KAIROS Gathering, October 26-28 will feature a daily plenary session, anchored by a panel discussion with partners and participants who have played an important role in making

KAIROS what it is today. Using the theme of time, plenary sessions will explore *Where we have come from, Where we are at now*, and *Where we are headed to*.

While the plenary sessions will accentuate the cross-cutting nature of KAIROS work, drawing speakers from many different areas of concern, the workshops will each highlight one current area of KAIROS program. Hear first-hand from program coordinators and partners about KAIROS' current work to advance social and ecological justice.

For the full program schedule, see https://www.kairoscanada.org/kairos20/gathering

EXPLORING OUR SACRED TEXTS: A conversation about stewarding our common life



All are invited to join this online series with Jewish, Christian, and Muslim panelists to discuss the scriptural sources

for understanding generosity, hospitality, and compassion.

Thurs., Oct. 21 @ 3pm - Generosity Thurs., Oct. 28 @ 3pm - Hospitality Thurs., Nov. 4 @ 3pm - Compassion

In these days of increased social polarization and intolerance, where racism, antisemitism, and Islamophobia appear to be increasing daily, dialogue between faith communities is an antidote to ignorance and hatred. Generosity, hospitality, and compassion are social virtues that can heal the wounds of our society.

Register in advance for this free series: https://bit.ly/3iwyPfm

 Rabbi Jeremy Parnes is the spiritual leader of Beth Jacob Synagogue in Regina. His long involvement in multifaith and community organizations includes Regina Multifaith Forum, Habitat for Humanity, numerous City of Regina committees on social housing and homelessness, and several inner-city boards, including Youth Connexions and The Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada.

- Rev. Amanda Currie has been minister of First Presbyterian Church in Regina since 2017. She previously ministered in Saskatoon for 14 years and has recently completed a two-year term as Moderator of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. She is vice president of the Canadian Council of Churches, where she has served on the Governing Board for the past 7 years. She has convened the Ecumenical & Interfaith Committee of the Presbyterian Church and is active in numerous national and local ecumenical and interfaith initiatives.
- Imam Dr. Mohamed Masloh is the leader of the Islamic Association of Saskatchewan in Regina, an RCMP chaplain, and a teaching assistant at the University of Regina. He studied at the prestigious Al-Azhar University in Cairo and the Graduate Theological Foundation in Indiana, where he earned a Ph.D. in Islamic Studies.

For further information, contact Archdeacon Cheryl Toth at stewardship@sasktel.net.

PSYCHOLOGY STUDY



Adults needed for research study on physical activity and goal setting.

Are you between the ages of 35 and 65 years old? Do you live in Saskatchewan? We are looking for middle-aged adults living in Saskatchewan to participate in a study to investigate the influence of psychological and social factors on physical activity levels.

What does the study involve? You will be asked to complete a series of questionnaires on social support, resilience, emotion regulation, and control beliefs and invited to set a goal related to physical activity.

How do I participate in the study? Please go to https://uregina.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV afc5 bwUuEi6svu6 or scan the QR code below to see if you are eligible to participate in this research study.

Please contact us for more information:

Principal Investigator: Kelsey Haczkewicz kmh978@uregina.ca Psychology of Aging Laboratory University of Regina, Regina, SK



Supervisor:
Natasha Gallant
natasha.gallant@uregina.ca
Psychology of Aging Laboratory
University of Regina, Regina, SK

OCTOBER EVENTS

Oct. 17	10:30 am	Worship
		(Online and In-Person)
	12:15 pm	Sunday School (Zoom)
Oct. 20	12:00 pm	Bible Study (Zoom)
	7:00 pm	Board of Managers
Oct. 21	7:00 pm	Music Team
Oct. 24	10:30 am	Worship
		(Online and In-Person)
	12:15 pm	Sunday School (Zoom)
Oct. 26	1:00 pm	Pastoral Care Committee
Oct. 27	12:00 pm	Bible Study (Zoom)
	7:00 pm	Book Club (Zoom)
Oct. 28	7:00 pm	Choir
Oct. 30	10:00 am	Worship Committee
Oct. 31	10:30 am	Worship
		(Online and In-Person)
	12:15 pm	Sunday School (Zoom)
Nov. 3	12:00 pm	Bible Study
Nov. 7	10:30 am	Worship with Act of
		Remembrance
		(Online and In-Person)
Nov. 9	7:00 pm	Young Adult Gathering
		(Zoom)
Nov. 10	12:00 pm	Bible Study (Zoom)
	7:00 pm	Session

MODERATOR OF THE 146TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY The Rev. Daniel D. Scott, B.A., M.C.S., M.Div., D.Min.

September 16, 2021

First Presbyterian Church 2170 Albert St Regina SK S4P 2T9

Dear friends,

I write to you on behalf of the 2021 General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and convey to you sincere greetings. It is my pleasure to inform you that during the course of our meetings online this June, the following recommendation was presented to the Assembly and adopted.

Recommendation ADV-002 (A&P 2021, p. 201, 12)

That the gratitude of the Assembly be expressed to the congregation of First Church, Regina, Saskatchewan, for their support, prayers and encouragement for their minister, the Rev. Amanda Currie.

Your congregation exhibited a double commitment to be supportive of Amanda as she carried out her duties over two years, in an historic first for our church. Amanda has often spoken fondly of the people and ministry at Frist Church and how supportive the congregation has been of her during the moderatorial years. Thank you for that extraordinary contribution. This comes wishing you God's blessing in your ministry.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Kendall Principal Clerk

Clerks of Assembly: The Rev. Stephen Kendall and The Rev. Donald Muir