

First Baptist Church

firstbaptistregina.ca



"Adoration of the Shepherds"
by Gerard van Honthorst

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There is something about walking home on a winter's night. The light in the windows seems more inviting. Inside, it seems warmer and cozier than usual. It's a different kind of light. I love how Wilf Perrault captures that light in his paintings.

Those scenes also remind me of paintings of Jesus' nativity. In the dark stable there is a warm, inviting light that seems to come from the baby held in Mary's arms.

Jesus came so that, in him, people could find a warm, welcoming, and safe home in the middle of the unending, desolate, and cold winter ruled by sin and death.

May Jesus bring you light, joy, and comfort this Advent and Christmas.

With love, Pastor Joel

Music at First

Regina and our First Baptist Church family become fully alive in the month of December:

Christmas Concerts

Dec 4-7	7:00pm	Rotary Carol Festival (Knox Metropolitan United Church)
Dec 10	2:00pm 7:00pm	Luther College High School's Candlelight Services (Merlis Belsher Heritage Centre)
Dec 15	7:30pm	Cantate Christmas Concert at FBC
Dec 16	7:00pm	Vivace Christmas Concert
Dec 17	7:00pm	Christmas Glory Concert, featuring handbells, choirs, instrumental/vocal numbers, plus more!
Dec 24	11:00am	Family Christmas Worship service, featuring many of our children and youth.
Dec 24	6:00pm	Our much-anticipated Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Mark your calendars! Invite your friends to attend! Celebrate the Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace of the season with friends and family!

Music at First

Sanctuary Choir

The Sanctuary Choir will take a well-deserved break on the Sundays of Dec. 24 & 31. They will return to the loft on Sunday, January 7 to lead us in worship. The first Thursday rehearsal for 2018 will take place on Thursday, January 11 at 7:00 p.m. Come and celebrate the New Year by joining the choir. "God is more concerned about your availability, than your ability."

JuBELLation

The JuBELLation Ringers will resume rehearsals on Tuesday, January 16 at 6:00 p.m.

Christmas Brunch Sunday, Dec. 3

Following the morning service

Join your church family and friends as we begin the season of Advent and the celebration of Christmas.

Let us count you in! Sign up today in the foyer, by leaving the sign in sheet in the offering plate or by calling Brenda 306-789-8555.

Congregational Care

Service of Comfort and Hope

Tuesday, December 12, 7 p.m. All are welcome.

This service will give us the chance to express our sorrow over the loss of a loved one, health struggles, employment concerns, or sadness over a broken relationship. We will also remember those who are part of our church who have fallen asleep in Christ this past year. In worship, we will ask God for healing, and to become again, ever-so-gently, ready to face a future sustained by hope and grace.

Visitation Ministry Team

Carol Hepting, John Nelson, Martha Pauls, Ron Phillips, and Eleanor Russell

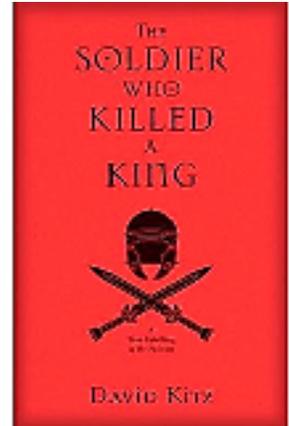
We have several people that visit members of our church family on a regular basis, but we could always use more volunteers. Winter presents a greater challenge for those who have difficulty getting out. It can be a lonely time. If you would like to offer friendship and brighten someone's day, please call John Nelson or Carol Hepting.

Also, please remember to let our pastors know if you are in hospital and would like a visit. They don't know you are ill unless someone tells them.

VOICE!

Last Meeting of the Year

The final pre-Christmas session of Voice will be on December 6/2017 @ 7 p.m. Location 77 Motherwell Cres. Completing book *The Soldier Who Killed a King* by author David Kitz.



January Novel Study



On January 13th, 10 a.m., a breakfast brunch is planned, aka the **Novel Study**, location TBA. The meal will be potluck, each person bringing her favourite breakfast dish. Please read and be prepared to discuss the novel. The book is *Surprised by Oxford* by Carolyn Weber. Paperback and ebooks are available at Amazon.

Weber is a Canadian woman from Ontario who went to Oxford on scholarship to study Romantic Literature. At that time, she felt no need for God. This book documents her experience in what Allister McGrath calls, “A hugely readable journey of cultural and spiritual discovery sparkling with wit and wisdom.” See www.pressingsave.com for more about the book.

Men’s Christmas Potluck Dinner!

December 11th, 6:30 p.m. at the home of Derrick Bellows, 3138 Hill Ave. Let Joel or Derrick know if you can make it. As always, friends and sons are welcome.

Missions

Christmas Shopping for Jesus...



The *Hopeful Gifts for Change* catalogue from Canadian Baptist Ministries features gifts that change lives for Jesus' sake. From school supplies to clean water, farming supplies, leader development and more, you can make a lasting difference in the lives of people around the world.

Order a FREE CARD with your gift. Note, special "teacher cards" are available this year for a unique "teacher gift!"

Catalogues are available on entryway tables. Online shopping information is found at www.cbmin.org.

Looking for "crafty" gifts? The "323 Collective" store features gifts by global craftspeople willing to contribute their handiwork of many kinds in service of those who need a hand-up. Shop at cbmin.org!

Or, simply give to the CBM Emergency Relief fund, or designate a gift "Where Needed Most"- perhaps the most effective way to give!



Muriel's Mittens

By Muriel Bert



The Iftin Scarf

By Iftin Women's Empowerment Group



The CBM Ornament

By CBM Staff

Tuesday Nights Together (TNT)

Please join us at 5:15 p.m. in the lower hall for a time of fellowship. We ask that you bring your own supper plus something to share. TNT will be studying some Christian DVDs; other options may be a Bible study or a movie night.

The last TNT for the year will be Tuesday, December 12. The meal starts at 5:15 p.m. and adult activities at 6 p.m. TNT will resume after a Christmas break on Tuesday, January 16.

Learning for Life

Sundays, 9:30 a.m.

Great Books

November 26 Reid Robinson on the works of C.S. Lewis

December 3 Esther Wiens on *The Holy Longing*, by Ronald Rolheiser

December 10 Brenda Beckman-Long on *Obasan* by Joy Kogawa

December 17 Ron Phillips on *Rescuing the Gospel From the Cowboys* by Richard Twiss

These presenters will share the impact that these books and authors have had on them. Come to learn about significant books/authors, and come to hear how God has touched a life through these books. God may well touch your life in a fresh way.

Learning for Life

Lord, Save us from a Proof-text Faith

Begins January 14 - Facilitated Annabel Robinson

Richard Hays is a Professor of Theology at Duke University, but started his career as a high school teacher of English. He has recently written two books, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* and *Reading Backwards*, challenging the way we traditionally read the New Testament and presenting us with new ways of seeing Jesus.

The Evangelists, Hays argues, summon readers to a conversion of the imagination. The Gospel writers conveyed the story of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, using the Old Testament to frame their message.

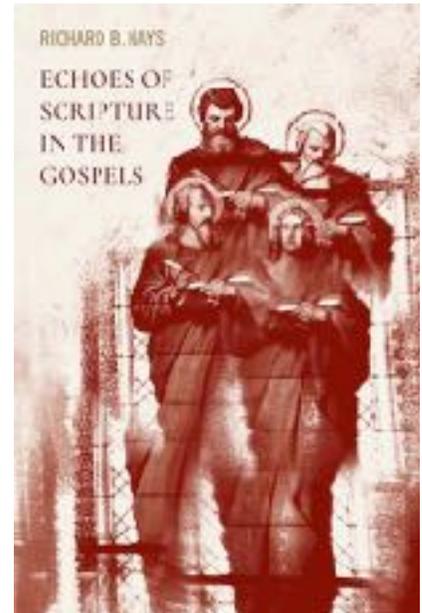
The Evangelists' use of scriptural echo beckons readers to believe the extraordinary: that Jesus was Israel's Messiah, that Jesus is Israel's God, and that contemporary believers are still on mission.

I will never read the Gospels the same way again.

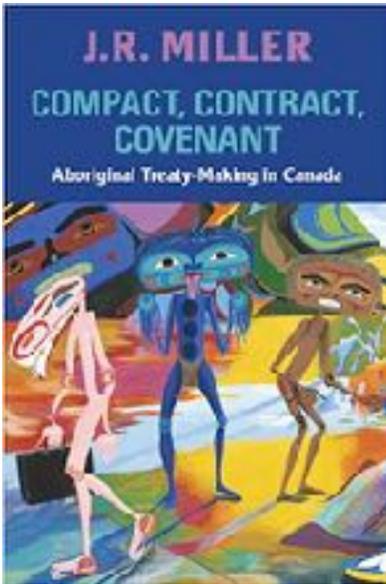
RJS in the JesusCreed writes of *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospe* "This is an outstanding book - well worth the time and effort to read and ponder."

Read more at:

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/jesuscreed/search/Prooftext+faith/#Tv8PFFToumjgTc7.99>



(re)Conciliation: Second Steps



In October our church hosted a seminar called First Steps, an effort sponsored by Canadian Baptists of Western Canada to honour the request of Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission; they ask that churches respond with openness and understanding to First Nations. We experienced Canadian history from a First Nations perspective in a “blanket” exercise, and heard the stories of First Nations people.

What might “Second Steps” look like?

Some good reading might help us to discern the way forward in a way that reflects the heart of God. Here are some suggestions:

A good place to start in understanding contact and treaties between First Nations and newcomers to this continent is J.R. Miller’s, *Compact, Contract, Covenant Aboriginal Treaty-Making in Canada*. Dr. Miller is a professor at the University of Saskatchewan. His book is largely descriptive rather than argumentative. It will give you a good overview of the facts of our history, and introduce you to Indigenous perspectives, alongside European/Canadian. The most important insight I received from this book was the knowledge of a vast chasm that exists between the two cultures in their understanding of what a treaty signified. For one, a treaty was a legal agreement. For the other, a way of making kin. Can you guess which perspective belongs to which side?

I have this book and would be happy to lend it to anyone interested.

(re)Conciliation: Second Steps

If you are wondering what to make of Indigenous spirituality, and how Christians are to respond, know there are two excellent books on the subject: Richard Twiss' *Rescuing the Gospel from the Cowboys*, and Chief John Snow's, *These Mountains Are Our Sacred Places*. I have the former; the latter is available through the public library. Both authors were proudly First Nations and proudly Christian. Their stories will tell you how they worked through the two identities, including First Nations spirituality, and will give you an understanding of and an appreciation for God at work among First Nations people.

If you are game for some of the toughest questions facing Christians, and for facing the anger that is out there among hurting First Nations people, I highly recommend *Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry*, edited by a young Mennonite Christian in Winnipeg, Steve Heinrich. This is a collection of essays, some by Christians, some by writers quite angry with Christians, that challenged me, humbled me, made me weep, made me angry, and left me nearer, I think, to the heart of God. It is available through the public library.

If you prefer fiction, consider the late Richard Wagamese's novels, *A Quality of Light* and *Indian Horse*; they are excellent. They will take you into the world of First Nations people and touch your heart. His memoir, *One Indian Life*, is also well worth reading. All of these are available through the library. Good reading, it is hoped, will serve a prophetic role, and prepare our hearts for action.

“Buffalo Weep, Salmon Cry...

*challenged me,
humbled me, made
me weep, made me
angry, and left me
nearer...to the heart
of God.”*

- Ron Phillips

Children and Youth

Nearly 40 children take part in our children's program, from the nursery through to Oasis. They are invited to go downstairs most Sundays.

Nursery

Hello all! I've had the opportunity to be involved in coordinating the nursery for the past 4 years, and just like the little ones themselves, the nursery is changing so quickly! From their first Sunday in the nursery, to their first Sunday in Godly play, there is an amazing change in our littlest ones as they grow into the people that God intends.

There is a great group of volunteers and helpers who have dedicated their time on Sunday mornings to being downstairs with the children. And although the number of children fluctuates all the time, anyone interested in being a part of this ministry is asked to contact Lynette Wollbaum via email at lynjrussell@hotmail.com, or at 306-520-4474. It's not a hard job, and it's well worth it!

Godly Play - ages 3 - 6

Godly Play is a method of Christian education and spiritual direction offered by First Baptist Church for children aged 3-6. The goal of Godly Play is to teach children the art of using religious language, parable, sacred story, silence and liturgical action to help them become more fully aware of the mystery of God's presence around them and in their lives.

Godly Play

During the month of December, Timothy Long and Randy Shumay will be guiding the children in their worship downstairs.

December Stories:

Dec. 3rd- Mary and Joseph

Dec. 10th- The Sheperds

Dec. 17th- The Magi

Dec. 24th- Family Service- Children are upstairs

Dec. 31st- Children are upstairs

We are in need of leaders and shepherds! If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Esther Maeers at emaegers@yahoo.ca.

Oasis - students ages 7 - 11

Our students spend 3 to 4 weeks reading through one bible story. Every Sunday is different: after reading from their bibles, the children explore the passage through painting, drama, quizzing games, cooking, science experiments, and any other way we dream up.

December's bible stories:

Jesus' Birth Through the Eyes of the Shepherds.

Youth

December 1 st	Meet at First Baptist for life sized Dutch Blitz - 7:00-9:00 - Please bring \$2 to cover the cost of the event.
December 8 th	Bible Study - Meet at the Senger house for study and hang out time and snacks.
December 15 th	Christmas Party, caroling and gift exchange! Meet at the Senger house at 7:00. We will go caroling and then come back and warm up with hot chocolate and snacks. Bring a small gift that is worth under \$10 for our gift exchange.
December 22 nd	WINTER BREAK - no youth
December 29 th	WINTER BREAK - no youth

Prayer times at First Baptist

Morning Prayer: 7:15 a.m. Monday to Friday

Wednesdays: 7:15 a.m., 12:15 (noon), 8:15 p.m.

Wednesdays: 8. A light breakfast, short bible study, and prayer for the needs of our church and the wider world.

Use the Victoria St doors. All are welcome. Each half hour prayer time will include psalms, scripture reading, and prayers.

Achievers

Achiever's Bible Study

The Achiever's Bible Study is for the 50+ adults. We meet at 10:00 AM in the Board Room in the office area of the church.

We are continuing with our study in the Book of Acts. It is a time of lively discussion, as well as educated input. There is no question or comment that is unwelcome. If you are available on Wednesday mornings we would love to have you join us. We will meet only ONCE in December—on December 6 at 10 a.m.

Achievers' Luncheon

An enthusiastic group for those 55+ years of age who are seeking warm fellowship, fabulous food, and spiritual connection. January's guest speaker will be Rev. Dennis D. Henriksen, lead pastor at Christ Lutheran Church and an amazing musician. Dennis will share his love of music and the impact that music has had on his life journey.

Cost of the Luncheon is \$10.00

Upcoming Speakers:

February 22 Rev. Joel Russell-MacLean

March 22 TBA

April 26 Rev. Tim Coleman, Associate Pastor Westhill Park
Baptist Church

For more information pertaining to the Achievers' Luncheons check out: www.achieversregina.ca or www.firstbaptistregina.ca

Diaconate

The end of 2017 marks the end of my term as chair of FBC deacons. It has been an honour to serve, and I have to say that I have gained more than I have given! Everyone has been kind enough to put up with my many shortcomings - really. Any one of you could do this job! Actually, every one of you should, because there aren't that many of us. Each of us needs to take a turn: we would be so much stronger for it!

I have served as a deacon for three years, and the experience has opened my eyes to things I did not see before. Stresses, changes, challenges, and workloads that I had not been aware of. We now have the opportunity to rebuild, but it is wise to first take stock of who we are, the talents we have been given, and how best to use them in God's plan.

The year 2018 promises to be exciting as we continue to seek God's will for our church. I am very much looking forward to working with Sam Breakey, and every one of you, to discern our direction!

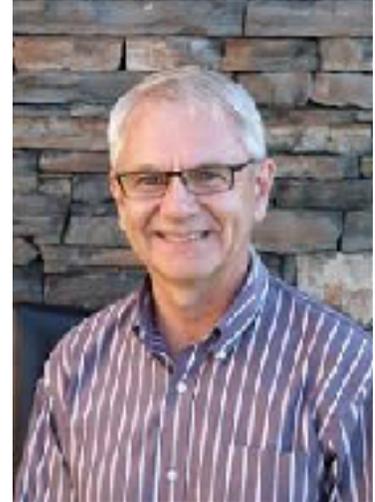
- *Rosemary Ward*

A heartfelt thank you from all of us:

- To Vi Maeers as she steps off the diaconate after her three year term. Vi played brought a wealth of experience in staff relationships and long term planning.
- To Derrick Bellows, as he steps down from the Treasurer position after over ten year, graciously overseeing the elimination of nearly 3/4s of our 1,000,000+ debt, while seeing roughly the same amount of money sent out from this church to support the growth of the kingdom.
- To Rosemary Ward, as she steps down as Chair of Deacons, during which we navigated significant transitions and began to set a new course.

Church Health and Renewal Church Wide Survey

We are calling in Sam Breakey to help us understand where we are now and the opportunities ahead so that we can develop a shared focus as a church.



Sam has been a CBWC pastor and Area Minister and currently helps CBWC churches with ministry review and renewal.

“The real power of this process is when congregations listen together to what the Lord is saying to their church, about their past, present and future. Sam is just one facilitator of Christ revitalizing the church.”

- Southwest Community Church

We will observe the season of Advent, enjoy the celebration of Christmas, and wait to begin the survey in mid-January.

The survey will be available in a variety of formats. We hope that everyone over the age of thirteen will take part!

Sam will travel to Regina to lead a town hall meeting in early February.

Please visit our website for more information. You will find comments from other churches and an article about Sam.

Finances

Entering the last month of this fiscal year, we are truly blessed. Those entrusted with church finances have been exceptional stewards and have accomplished much. This is a tribute to the skill, commitment, and efficiency of many in our congregation.

Our revenues are still down slightly from this period in 2016; however, our expenses continue to be even lower. The decreased revenue is mostly in Offerings, which are 8% lower than this time last year. The decreased expenses are mostly in personnel (36%) and property (23%). It is noteworthy that our spending on missions has increased about 20%, and this is a good thing!

Our net operating position is that we have money in the bank and no debt on our operating line of credit. The 2018 budget was discussed and approved at the Fall Congregational Meeting in November. For the first time in years, we are able to focus on the ministry objectives of our church with confidence in our financial resources.

Below are some figures to the end of October.

Approved Operating Budget (prorated):	\$372,800
Operating Revenue:	\$324,000
Operating Expenses:	\$269,000
Restricted Reserve Balance:	\$128,000

Notes: Not including bonds. The new Organ Fund is \$96,000 of the reserves and has decreased slightly with the final payment on the organ project.

125th Anniversary Fundraiser Update

Things picked up a bit in October. The total raised is about \$142,000, and the outstanding bonds payable are steady at \$388,000. However, we still have a way to go. On December 31 we will pay out all outstanding bonds. With current cash in bank we will have to mortgage about \$350,000. If you haven't yet joined the campaign, we encourage you to prayerfully consider helping to make that mortgage as small as possible.



Hi there! I'm just finishing up, and soon I'll retire. You probably know my brother, James Bond. I'm his older brother, Church Bond. I may not be as famous as my younger brother, but my work in His Majesty's Service is vital.

Offering envelopes

Offering envelopes are being printed and will be available in the mailboxes in the foyers in the coming weeks.

Some people choose to make their regular donations electronically, as they find this to be more convenient. Electronic donations also save us envelope and printing costs. As we commit ourselves to meet our 2018 financial goals for missions, ministry and stewardship in the 2018 budget, this may be a time to make this switch. Please contact our church office for more information.

Annabel Robinson Interviews Tiffany Lai

Could you tell us what brought you to First Baptist, and what is important to you here?

When I moved back to Regina in 2015, I knew I wanted to attend a church that was diverse, that had a certain degree of self-awareness about its historical and geographical context, and that encouraged discipleship and not just attendance. I think I was also looking for a different style of worship from the evangelical churches that I'd grown up in. I was initially attracted by how quiet First Baptist felt—there was space to think and reflect. I liked the solemn joy of the music, and appreciated the balance of liturgy, humour, depth, and humanness. I stayed because people made an effort to make me feel welcome.

I understand you grew up in Saskatchewan, though not Regina...

I was born in Radville although my family moved to Weyburn when I was in junior high. My parents are still there, although my sister and her family are here in Regina.

Then what did you do after leaving high school?

I spent a year at the Canadian Bible College in Regina because I wanted to “get grounded” in my faith before moving on to the scary and uncertain world of university. I attended the U of R after CBC and graduated with a BA in English literature. After university, I headed to Japan to teach English with the JET Programme.

Can you tell us a little bit more about your time in Japan?

I was an Assistant Language Teacher in Sendai, which is the largest northern city on the main island. As an ALT, I assisted junior high school English teachers in the classroom and encouraged the students to try out their English skills with a native English speaker.

It was in Sendai that I had the opportunity to become part of a local Japanese church as well as an English-speaking congregation made up mostly of other expats. Both were amazing experiences of belonging to a community of believers: in one, outsiders were brought into relationships within the church despite language barriers; in the other, a diverse group of individuals from different cultures and languages could be unified in worshipping the same God despite their differences. These communities had a significant impact on me. I'd only intended to live in Japan for a year; I wound up staying for three.

Someone mentioned to me that you also went to Regent College in Vancouver. Can you tell us what drew you there? What did you study? In what way do you think you grew as a Christian through that experience? Did you take any classes that made a particular impression on you?

I was mentally and spiritually restless. I still had all the questions I'd had during university. I wanted to know how I could talk about "truth" in a meaningful way when it's so often been used in conjunction with coercion and violence; how I could approach issues of gender and transgender theologically; how to talk about the gospel in a culture where pluralism and tolerance are the strongest values. Most of all, I wanted to become a Christian who could think well and could explain why she believed what she did.

I applied to Regent because I wanted to attend a school that was academically rigorous. I wound up studying very little systematic theology or biblical history. Instead, I was drawn to courses that looked at how Christianity and culture intersect and eventually finished my degree with a concentration in the arts.

It wasn't until I went to Regent that I learned that lots of people don't live out their faith the same way I do and that's okay; that I

don't have to have all the answers; and that building relationships is more important than being able to argue the finer points of theology.

I enjoyed so many of my classes there. Some of the courses that really made an impression on me were John Stackhouse's class on apologetics, Loren and Ruth Wilkinson's two-week intensive course on food and theology, Loren's seminar on science fiction and theology (yes, that's a thing!), and Gordon Smith's class on conversion. Fantastic thinkers and engaging teachers, every one of them.

I learned of a breadth and depth to Christianity that I hadn't been aware of. This changed some of the boxes into which I'd put God.

I used to teach in the Faculty of Arts, and I've always believed that an Arts degree is valuable quite apart from any job it might lead to. But you have a job that doesn't really involve your skills in English. Can you tell us something about that?

When I returned to Regina two years ago, I took a job as a liaison between heavy-duty truck drivers and the workshop they're bringing their trucks to for repair. This summer, however, I just started working for Service Canada. All the practice I've had writing essays for school is finally coming in handy because now I can type really, really fast.

I was delighted when I saw that you had agreed to serve on the diaconate. What particular gifts or skills do you think you bring to that?

I'd really wanted to be involved in the church, which is why I said yes to serving on the diaconate. I don't know if I have any particular gifts or skills to offer, but I want to help out wherever necessary in whatever capacity, and I suppose that's a gift. Of sorts.

I sometimes see you around the church with Rob. Would you like to share anything with us about him so that we can get to know both of you better?

Do you know what happens when someone fresh from finishing a theology degree winds up working at a truck repair shop and tells everyone that there's no way she's going to date a mechanic? She winds up having to admit her prejudices in the church newsletter! Rob came here as an auto-electrician from Ireland three years ago and is currently in the middle of the rather messy and protracted process of applying for permanent residency, which makes our long-term plans together somewhat complicated. He has some fascinating stories about meeting the wildlife while working in Australia, knows an awful lot about auto-guidance systems on farm machinery, is easily bribed with chocolate, and is learning that Canada's favourite sport is "hockey," not "ice-hockey." (Quiz him sometime. He'll love it).

First Baptist Church Staff

Joel Russell-MacLean, Lead Pastor
John Nelson, Associate Pastor
George Mackenzie, Caretaker

First Baptist Church Office hours: Monday - Thursday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The church office is closed on Fridays, because it is a day off for staff.

Website: firstbaptistregina.ca
Email: main_fbcregina@sasktel.net
Phone: 306-359-1450

Life Together

Sunday	9:30 a.m.	Learning for Life
	10:30 a.m.	77 Days of Prayer
	11:00 a.m.	Worship Service
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Monday	7:15 a.m.	Morning prayer
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Tuesday	7:15 a.m.	Morning prayer
	5:15 p.m.	Tuesday Nights Together
	6:00 p.m.	JuBELLation Practice
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Wednesday	7:15 a.m.	Morning prayer
	8:00 a.m.	Prayer breakfast
	10:00 a.m.	Achiever's Bible Study
	12:15 p.m.	Noon prayer
	8:15 p.m.	Evening prayer
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Thursday	7:15 a.m.	Morning Prayer
	7:00 p.m.	Choir/Seasonal Singers
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Friday	7:15 a.m.	Morning Prayer
	7:00 p.m.	Youth Event

December at a Glance

- Dec 3 First Sunday of Advent,
“Christmas Together Luncheon”
(immediately following the service)
- Dec 4-7 Rotary Carol Festival
- Dec 6 VOICE! *The Soldier Who Killed a King*
- Dec 10 Luther College High School’s Candlelight Services
- Dec 11 Men’s Christmas Dinner, 6:30, p.m.
- Dec 12 Last TNT
- Dec 12 Service of Comfort and Hope, 7 p.m.
- Dec 15 Cantate Christmas Concert
- Dec 16 Vivace Christmas Concert
- Dec 17 Christmas Glory Concert, 7 p.m.
- Dec 24 Baptism Service, 11 a.m.
- Dec 24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, 6 p.m.
- Jan 11 Choir rehearsal begins again
- Jan 13 VOICE! Breakfast Brunch, *Surprised by Oxford*
- Jan 16 TNT, JuBELLation rehearsals begin again
- Jan 25 Achievers’ Luncheon