

First Baptist Regina Weekly News

For the Weeks of December 19th and 26th, 2021



"The Adoration of the Shepherds, with the lamp"

Rembrandt van Rijn, Leiden 1606–1669 Amsterdam

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I doubt there's much risk of this, but don't mistake me for someone who knows what they are talking about. I like this etching by Rembrandt. It seems at once so simple and yet so full.

The lamp on the wall creates a circle of brilliant natural light, more than seems possible for a single candle. I suppose when you've just come in from total darkness, the light does appear brighter. The stable also looks warm and inviting, as if everyone has just arrived in from the cold. And the folks are just walking in as we begin to look. These are not shepherds, but perhaps they too are poor folk. A musician is mid-step as he peers respectfully around the wood beam. Another man has started to remove his cap, with a gesture that captures both wonder and the movement of a labourer accustomed to wiping sweat from his brow. Joseph is beginning to stand to welcome his company with kind eyes and a gentle smile, his hands almost lifting Jesus up to them. Mary also smiles and lifts her shawl away to reveal Jesus to all of us.

The lamp shines in the room, but it should be casting a shadow over Jesus, fast asleep, snuggled up next to his mother. Instead, Jesus appears to be a second source of light underneath Mary and her shawl. There is both natural and divine light mingled together here.

The lamp's light makes a kind of halo. Often, paintings of the nativity of Jesus show three circles of heavenly light exclusively around the heads of the holy family. Here, the sacred light enfolds the holy family, several couples, a child, a musician, and cattle, as if Jesus is drawing all people and all creation in.

At the same time, one can also see the shape of a cross in the wood beams, and that circle of light could easily be an enormous stone covering a tomb. Rembrandt hints that the light and the warmth come at a great price.

The musician and Joseph both have their backs partially turned toward us. In this way, the group almost makes a circle. There's still room for you to join in.

The musician looks at Jesus, but Mary appears to be gazing at him - is it knowingly or questioning? What is going through his heart? What is happening in his soul as he looks at the word become flesh with his own eyes? We can't see his expression. Is he hiding behind the beam? This little moment of drama can raise the same question for us. What is happening in my soul? Will I step closer into the circle of people, and the warmth, and light?

God sees us as we step toward Jesus, even if we are tentative, half-hidden, and holding back. God stands and kindly and eagerly welcomes us. God unveils Jesus, the light of the world, and, I pray, a light in your heart.

May you be confident that God delights to see you in the circle of warmth and light around Jesus. May we find opportunities to widen the circle and encourage others to draw closer.

Yours with love,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J. M. L.' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Pastor Joel

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Our Christmas Eve service will be on December 24th at 6 pm, on Zoom and in person.

This is one of the most beautiful and meaningful services of the year. There will be scripture lessons and carols celebrating the Incarnation. If you're joining the service on Zoom, light some candles in your home and prepare communion, and we will celebrate Jesus' birth together.

Our Condolences

We extend our condolences and prayers to the family and friends of Alfred Gordon "Gordie" Fuller, who passed away on Wednesday, December 1, 2021. Many of you will remember Gordon as the father of Natalie, Maria, Alice, Abby, and Nolan, who have shared their musical gifts with us on their trumpets.



We were also saddened, last week, to hear of the passing of Chris Senger's grandmother, Victoria "Vicky" McMillan on Tuesday, December 7, 2021. A funeral was held on Tuesday, December 14th. We extend our prayers and condolences to friends and family at this difficult time.

Your Journey Through Advent...

The Jesse Tree program is a tradition that helps tell the Christmas story from creation through to the birth of Jesus. It shows us how the coming of Jesus was being anticipated throughout the Old Testament. To lead us through the story, a scripture reading is provided for each day from December 1 to Christmas.

Last year, the families with children in our congregation made an ornament each day to go along with the Scripture readings. This year, families will have the opportunity to hang the ornaments in their homes once again. (See photo.)



*Jesse Tree craft
December, 2020*

If you're looking for a meaningful way to prepare yourself for Christmas, these daily readings offer a beautiful journey to Christmas morning. Here are this week's readings:

December 20 - 2 Kings 17:7; Daniel 3:1-6, 12, 19-29; Jeremiah 1:8

December 21 - Nehemiah 1:2b-3; 2:17-18; 6:15-16; Malachi 3:1

December 22 - Numbers 24:17a, Matthew 2:1-12

December 23 - Psalm 27:1-3, John 1:4-9, John 8:12

December 24 - Luke 1:26-38, Matthew 1:20-25

December 25 - Luke 2:1-21

New Learning for Life Series Beginning January: The Gospel of John

Are you discouraged? Is Covid getting you down? Do you long for a fresh understanding of Jesus? What if he spoke to you, personally?

If you've never attended Learning for Life before, come! We're going to do things a little differently this time. Starts January 9th.

You can prepare for it by reading the Gospel of John straight through, as though you are reading it for the first time. You can do that in an afternoon. It is helpful to use a different translation from the one you usually use, and if possible, one that has no chapter or verse numbers. Don't get bogged down by things you don't understand—just keep going. I have a software version of the Bible in all sorts of translations which I can print out without chapters and verses. If you would like a copy, any translation, formatted as a PDF file that you can print out if you wish (31 pages), send me an email at annabel.robinson@uregina.ca or call me at (306) 761-1458. If you'd like a printed copy, please let me know and I'll get one to you.

Please note that on January 16th, Dr. Wil Rogan, from Carey Theological Seminary, will be the guest teacher at Learning for Life.

—Annabel Robinson

Poinsettias for Christmas

We would like to give away our poinsettias during the week of December 26th. We are looking volunteers to deliver 10 poinsettias to folks who have not been able to get out as much (or at all) this year. If you have time to help that week, please email the church at main_fbc Regina@sasktel.net or call the office at (306) 359-1450 in order to coordinate our efforts.

Regina Christmas Wish List

Are you looking for a way to help the poor in our city? The Regina Christmas Wish List is a Christmas gift program for people living in poverty in Regina. On their [website](#), you will find stories of individuals and families from several charities, including the Good News Chapel – an inner city ministry that we blessed last year with a \$500 donation and muffins for their lunch program.

Note: Good News Chapel also needs food donations and volunteers to serve and wash dishes for their Sunday Potluck lunches. If you can help, please contact Pastor Murray Hack at (306) 580-0112.

—Marilyn Phillips



“Christmas Presence”

This play, presented by the Burnt Thicket Theatre, promises to be a “rich tapestry of stories and songs reflecting on Jesus’ first coming and our longing for God’s renewal of all things.” It will be presented online from December 17 to 31. There is no charge, but donations will be accepted. For more information, visit www.burntthicket.com.



Offering Envelopes

If you wish to receive offering envelopes for 2022, please send Tracy Sailor an email at tsailor2013@gmail.com or call her at (306) 537-9228.

Because many people have switched to online giving, envelopes will *not* be printed unless you request them. ***Regardless of your method of giving, you will receive a tax receipt for it, as long as your name is indicated on your donation.***



Bulletin announcement: Remember the Christmas cleaning of the church this Saturday. We need lots volunteers to join the work crew, as there is a long list of items to be cleaned. The widows will need extra attention.

Why is there mistletoe hanging over the baggage counter?” asked the airline passenger, amid the Christmas holiday rush.

The clerk replied, “It’s so you can kiss your luggage good-bye.”

First man: I can’t think what to get my wife for Christmas. If I give her something practical, I know she’ll burst into tears.

Second man: In that case, buy her some handkerchiefs.

What's happening at First?

Morning Prayer

Join us each morning, Monday to Thursday at 7:15 am to begin your day with scripture and prayer, via Zoom. Visit our [website](#) for the link.

Children's Ministry

There are now in-person classes for children up to Grade 6 – “Godly Play” for the younger children and “Oasis” for the older ones.

Throughout Advent, the children have been participating in an activity where they have been looking at different people who have shown us the way to Bethlehem. For more information, please contact [Pastor Kayely](#).

Youth Ministry

For information about our youth program, please contact [Pastor Chris](#).

Adult Ministries

Learning for Life (L4L) is taking a break until the new year and will resume on January 9th. See page 4 for information on the new series.

Voice: A small group for women who like to read and enjoy lively conversation. The group meets every second Wednesday from 7 to 9 pm, using Zoom. The next meeting will be on January 12, 2022. For more information, send an email to [Bonnie Austring-Winter](#) or [Laureen Snook](#), or visit [our website](#).

Reading through the Old Testament: This group is taking a break until the new year, at which time they will begin reading through the Pauline Epistles. For more information, contact [Norma Holtslander](#) or call the church at (306) 359-1450.

Gospel of John small group study: This group is taking a break until the new year. For more information, contact [Norma Holtslander](#), or call the church at (306) 359-1450.

First Baptist Facility Renewal

At present, we are repairing and painting the elevator entryway, the Lorne Street stairwell and landing, and the library. The project may be completed by Christmas. Thank you to Julie Rich and Shirley Wolfe for coming up with the designs. Thank you to Eric Warren and Glen Larson for helping to prepare the areas ahead of time. Thanks also to Collin Carbno, Bryden Yeo and Susan Bornowski for coming and tidying up a few places in the church that have been neglected during Covid.

Dial-the-Sermon – (306) 992-1912

Know of someone with no computer and/or internet access and cannot come to church in person? Please let them know that there is an easy way to listen to the sermon from a recent Sunday service. Simply dial: (306) 992-1912, (toll-free within the Regina area).

Tithes and Offerings

While many of you are coming to worship services in person now, there are also quite a number joining the service on Zoom or Facebook. Whether you are attending in person or online, there are several methods that you can use to give your tithes and donations to the church:

1. Mail your gifts to the church or call and leave a message at (306) 359-1450 to arrange for an in-person pick-up. Please place your cheque in your regular offering envelope (or any envelope marked "Offering"), and seal that inside another envelope addressed to: First Baptist Church, 2241 Victoria Ave, Regina, SK S4P 0S4.
2. Establish a **Pre-authorized Remittance (PAR) Plan**. This will automatically transfer funds from your account into the FBC Regina account on a regular basis. Please email the church or contact the Treasurer if you would like to set up PAR, or change your commitment.
3. Make an online donation:
 - Use **Interac e-Transfer** to donate from your phone or computer to FBCRegina@gmail.com (*no fee or cost to the church*)
 - Use a credit card with a PayPal account via the **PayPal Giving Fund** (*no fee or cost to the church... 100% of your donation reaches us and contributes to our mission*)
 - Use a credit card or PayPal via **CanadaHelps** (*a fee of 4% is deducted from the donation*)
 - Use a credit or debit card via **FBC ChurchTrac** (*the church is charged a fee of approximately 3% for each donation*)

PLEASE refer to our website at firstbaptistregina.ca for more specific information on these contribution methods. You may also contact the treasurer at (306) 775-1497 or email the church at main_fbcregina@sasktel.net for further details.



Why did the Christmas tree go to the barber?
It needed to be trimmed.

Why are Christmas trees so bad at knitting?
They drop all their needles.

What is a parent's favorite Christmas carol?
Silent Night.

What do senior gingerbread men use to help them walk?
Candy canes.

What's the difference between the Christmas alphabet and the regular alphabet?
The Christmas alphabet has "No el"!