

First Baptist Regina Weekly News

For the Week of December 5th, 2021

Immanuel Shall Come to You

by Dr. Wil Rogan

When I was a child, I learned never to turn my back on the ocean for fear that the shore break would billow, break, and sweep me away. Even so, I found myself drawn to the ocean, exhilarated at learning to glide along its blue-green swells. Without me knowing, the ocean taught me to pray my first Psalm: “Do not let a tempest of water overwhelm me or a deep swallow me up!” (Psalm 69:15).



The Psalmist’s ambivalent relationship to water is perhaps best captured in praise of the Lord who both subdues the roaring, raging sea and showers the earth with water (Psalm 65:7, 9). We need water for life, but mighty waters are wild and unwieldy. Water gives us life but threatens us with tempest and flood, so water becomes a biblical image for the vulnerability and fragility of human life in the world. Israel’s God, the Psalmist effuses, rules the sea’s chaotic expanse and sustains the land with the life-giving water of snow, river, and rain.

If we had only Mark’s Gospel, we might not have Christmas. Like John’s Gospel, it has no nativity, no virgin birth, no shepherds, no magi. Like Matthew and Luke, it has no prologue disclosing Jesus as the Word made flesh. But we do have Christmas, so what happens if we read Mark’s opening as his rendition of Christmas’ joy?

According to Mark, the beginning of the gospel is that Jesus is Isaiah’s Lord, come to bring a new exodus (1:1-3), come to despoil the devil (1:12-13), come to proclaim joyful news of God’s kingdom (1:14-15). Central to Mark’s prelude is a revelation as John the Baptist baptizes Jesus in the River Jordan. With the heavens torn open, the Spirit—dovelike—descends on Jesus and the heavenly voice sounds: “You are my Son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased” (Mark 1:9-11). The Psalmist’s question “Why is it, O Jordan, that you turn back?” is answered by the earth’s trembling at the Lord’s presence. (Psalm 114:5, 7). Jesus, entering the Jordan River, subdues the mighty waters and deep abyss. By his baptism, Jesus is revealed to be God’s Son and Lord of creation.

Mark’s view of Jesus, however, is variegated, irreducible to a single color or shade. Mark also identifies Jesus as the truly human one, David’s son (Psalm 2:7) and God’s servant (Isaiah 42:1; cf. Mark 1:11). As the human one, Jesus descends into the mighty waters in his baptism by John, just as He would descend all the way down into the chaotic depths of human suffering in what He called “the baptism with which I am baptized”—His death

on the cross (Mark 10:38). Jesus is revealed to be as fully human as He is fully divine—at once in complete solidarity with human affliction and in perfect unity with Father and Spirit—in His baptism(s).

Affliction overwhelms the world and sin has swept us away, but God has not turned away from us. Christ the King has come. The Lord enters the mighty waters with us, rescues us from the flood of sin and affliction, and floats us on the river of the water of life. Because this Lord has come, we can inhabit the world with joyful longing and sing: “O come, O come, O Branch of Jesse’s stem, unto your own and rescue them! From depths of hell your people save, and give them victory o’er the grave. Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel shall come to you, O Israel.”

Reprinted from the CBWC (Canadian Baptists of Western Canada) monthly newsletter, [“Making Connections December 2021.”](#)



Wil Rogan has been an assistant professor of biblical studies at Carey Theological College since August 2020. He has a Ph.D. in New Testament from Fuller Theological Seminary, and has articles published in *New Testament Studies*, *Currents in Biblical Research*, and *Journal of Theological Interpretation*. Dr. Rogan has been invited to be a guest preacher and Learning for Life teacher here at First, this coming January.

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, will 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 both in person (December 10th, in Saskatoon; Pay-What-You-Choose) and online (December 17 - 31; no charge, donations accepted). For more information, visit the [Burnt Thicket Theatre website](#).

We will miss you...

Last Sunday, November 28th, was Richard and Julie Hovey's last Sunday with us. During the service, we prayed with Richard (Julie was downstairs working with the children!) and commissioned them for the new areas of service that God has called them to. We also presented them with your love offering and a small gift.

Richard and Julie, we will miss you, but our prayers go with you, for God's richest blessings on your ministries and on the lives of each member of your family.



We Would Like to Try Something New in the New Year...

If you do *not* normally attend "Learning for Life (L4L)" Sunday mornings, would you consider attending at a different time or in a different format? If so, please contact the church, choosing whichever options would work for you. If more than one option would work, please list them in the order of your preference. Your feedback will help us plan our classes for the new year. You can contact the church [by email](#) or at (306) 359-1450.

1. A weekday evening, online and in person
2. Bi-weekly sessions, online and in person
3. Recorded and watched at your own convenience
4. A weekend seminar
5. Other

Please note: We will continue to offer L4L at 9:30 Sunday mornings. See the newsletter for information on the upcoming session.

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.

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:



*The Rich Family's Jesse Tree
December, 2020*

December 6 - Genesis 28:10-22

December 7 - Genesis 37-50; or short reading - Genesis 37:3-4, 12-24, 28, Genesis 50:18-21

December 8 - Deuteronomy 5:1-22

December 9 - Genesis 17:7-8; Numbers 13:1-2, 17-27

December 10 - Book of Ruth; or short reading - Ruth 1:16; 2:5-17, 22-23; 4:13-14

December 11 - 1 Samuel 16-17; or short reading - 1 Samuel 16:1, 13; 17:40-50

December 12 - 2 Kings 22:1-23:3

December 13 - Isaiah 11:1-5

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

John's Gospel has proved to be both accessible to those reading it for the first time, and increasingly challenging the more it is read. The whole Gospel is centred on Jesus and who he is. When John the Baptist is asked "Who are you" (1:19) his answer points to Jesus. Fast forward to 21:12: "Now none of the disciples dared to ask Jesus, 'Who are you?' because they knew it was the Lord." (21:12). Our reading of John will turn this question on each one of us. Who, in your experience, is Jesus?

You can prepare for it by reading the Gospel of John right 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. 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 simple PDF file that you can print out if you wish (31 pages), send an email to [the church](#) or call the church at (306) 359-1450. If you'd like a printed copy, please indicate such in your email.

—Annabel Robinson

Upcoming Christmas Events of Note (Held at First Baptist unless otherwise noted)

“Love’s Pure Light” – December 10, 7:30 pm

Cantate Senior Choir.

Tickets: Freewill offering. Masks and proof of vaccination required.

“The Colours of Christmas” – December 11, 7:00 pm

Vivace Chorale Ensemble.

Tickets: Adults \$15, Children 12 & under free; purchase at www.vivace.ca or from Vivace singers. Masks and proof of vaccination required.

Christmas Worship Concert – December 19, 7:00 pm

First Baptist and Guest musicians, featuring the First Baptist Sanctuary Choir, JuBELLation, vocalists, instrumentalists, carol singing, and more.

Tickets: Freewill offering. Masks required.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service – December 24, 6:00 pm

All are welcome. Masks required.

Offering Envelopes

If you wish to receive offering envelopes for 2022, please contact Tracy S, call the church at (306) 359-1450, or send an email to [the church](mailto:thechurch@firstbaptist.org).

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.***

“911 what is your emergency”
Dog: My owner has been gone for
.02 seconds
911: Have you tried eating the
couch?



The driving instructor was giving lessons to an extremely nervous student who panicked whenever another car approached on a particular two-lane road. One day, however, they got to the same stretch of road, and the student remained completely calm.

“This time you’re doing fine!” exclaimed the instructor.

“Yes,” the novice driver agreed. “Now when I see another car coming, I shut my eyes.”

A traffic cop pulled over a speeding motorist and asked, “Do you have any ID?”

The motorist replied, “About what?”

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.

On Sunday, November 28th, the children began participating in an Advent activity. 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): Dr. Kelvin Friebel is leading a series: “Lament Psalms: Asking God the Hard Questions.” This series is about learning to approach God in prayer during difficulty. This class is in person, but also available through Zoom. For more information, please go to [our website](#). Please note that next Sunday, December 12th, will be the last class in this series and L4L will then take a break until the new year.

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. For more information, visit [our website](#), call the church office at (306) 359-1450, or send an email to [the church](#).

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, please contact Norma H, email [the church](#), 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 H, email [the church](#), or call the church at (306) 359-1450.

A Note of Thanks...

Carol Oxelgren would like to thank everyone—groups and individuals—who have been praying for her and her family. It is *greatly* appreciated.

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. On a landline phone or cell phone, simply dial this number: (306) 992-1912 (toll-free within the Regina area). It will take you straight to the sermon recording.

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.



Four engineers get into a car. The car won't start.

The mechanical engineer says: "It's a broken starter."

The electrical engineer says: "Dead Battery."

The chemical engineer says: "Impurities in the gasoline."

The IT engineer says: "Hey guys, I have an idea. How about we all get out of the car and then get back in again."