

First Baptist Regina Weekly News

For the Week of May 23rd, 2021

Sometimes we unconsciously default to looking at nature as a machine-like process that runs on its own, in which God has no role. The sun rises, seeds sprout, and songbirds hatch all on their own. There's no need for a life-giving Spirit in that natural process. We are tempted to believe that the universe has no centre.



On a more personal level, sometimes it is hard to recognize the Spirit's life and grace at work around you, when you yourself are suffering. Our world can seem empty of God's presence.

Our universe, and all the life within this cosmic "garden," originates and continues to revolve around the Creator of heaven and earth. The Spirit renews the earth moment by moment. And God became part of creation in Jesus, and Jesus came so that God the Holy Spirit, the very source of life, might come and live within us.

As you look around this spring, do you see any growth? This is God at work. The Holy Spirit is here. And this same Spirit is within you.

There's a famous poem that captures the glory of the Holy Spirit's faithful work throughout the millennia. G.M. Hopkins is one of Esther Wiens' favourite poets, and this is one of his most beloved poems. In Esther's words, "It alludes to the powerful dynamic of new birth in spring."

"God's Grandeur" by Gerard Manley Hopkins

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.

It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;

It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil

Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?*

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;

And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;

And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil

Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;

There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;

And though the last lights off the black West went

Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs—

Because the Holy Ghost over the bent

World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

**Recognize his rule*

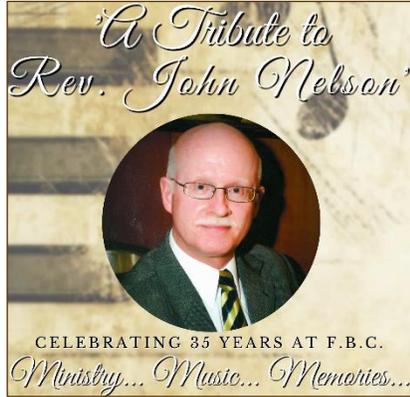
May you recognize and remember each day, this same life and grace at work in you and around you.

With my love and prayers,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joel M. M. L." with a flourish at the end.

Pastor Joel

Notable Words & Music: *A Tribute to John Nelson*



When: Sunday, May 30, 2021 at 7 pm

Where: On Zoom

Join us for a virtual celebration in gratitude for 35 years of faithful ministry to First Baptist Church, the Regina community, and beyond.

“With God’s Blessings, Best Wishes on Your Retirement, John.” (See [John Nelson Tribute](#) on our website.)

Some of you have been asking if we will be collecting a love offering for John. The answer is, YES! This will be presented to him on June 27th – his last Sunday in his official capacity as Music Minister.

For anyone wishing to contribute, gifts must be cash only. Please note that we are not able to issue receipts for income tax purposes. If you are attending a Sunday worship service, you may leave your gift in the offering basket at the entrance to the sanctuary, or give it to any staff member (except John, of course! 😊) *Be sure to mark your envelope clearly* with “Love offering for John Nelson.” If you plan to come by the church with your gift, please call ahead to make sure someone will be there.

Benevolent Fund

First Baptist maintains a benevolent fund from which it helps folks from inside and outside our congregation in times of crisis. Pastors, in discussion with the diaconate, disperse money as needs arise.

Over the past few months, we have helped different folks with various needs. We have used all the money given to us to date. If you wish to help replenish this fund, please indicate “benevolent fund” on your donation.

Laptop Needed

Do you have a usable laptop in good condition that you no longer need? The church is looking for one for Gibril’s brother Rashidi, who has recently arrived from Burundi, East Africa. If you can help, please contact Ron P, call the church at (306) 359-1450, or send an email to [the church](#).

Our Condolences

We extend our condolences and prayers to the family and friends of Regina Haroun, who passed away in Regina on Monday, May 3rd, 2021.

Increasing Capacity at Sunday Worship Services

Due to declining infection rates, our government has recently announced changes to the maximum gathering size allowed for places of worship, beginning May 30th. We plan to increase our capacity level on June 6th, if, and only if, the following two conditions are in place:

1. Infection rates in Saskatchewan have continued to decline.
2. We are able to find volunteers to do the additional work involved in meeting the health guidelines for a larger number of people.

As you are probably aware, we are all at different places regarding our comfort level in joining a public gathering. Some are already very comfortable being out in public. On the other hand, some have hardly ventured out of their homes for quite some time. In light of this, we can care for each other by being patient and gentle with those whose comfort level is different than ours.

While progress is being made in our goal of returning to a more normal way of life, the pandemic is not over yet. In order to keep each other safe, we will continue to follow the health guidelines for public gatherings. As a reminder, here are the main ones:

1. Everyone is required to wear a mask that covers their mouth and nose for the entire time they are at the church.
2. Everyone is required to wash their hands with sanitizer when they enter the building.
3. Everyone is required to follow the arrows on the floor. The ushers are there to help you. Please look to them for guidance.
4. A distance of 6 feet/2 metres is required between households.

For a complete list of the Worship Service Guidelines, please visit [our website](#).

Please note that, now that the weather is milder, you are asked to head straight outside to visit, rather than using the foyer or aisles for that purpose.

Also note that Zoom participants will continue to be fully included as part of Sunday morning worship at 11 am.

Plans for in-person children and youth programming are underway.

Katepwa Lake Camp (KLC) Volunteer Day – June 5th

June 5th, from 10 am to 4 pm, will be our spring “All Hands on Deck” volunteer day. Our camp needs a lot of year-round upkeep, so we’ll use this day to get the camp beautified for summer! Regardless of your skill level, we’d love for you to join us. Please wear a mask, as health guidelines will be followed. (If you are unable to bring a mask, PPE will be provided.) For more information and to RSVP, visit the [KLC website](#) or email [the camp](#). See you there!

Finances

At the 2020 Fall Business Meeting, a one-time deficit budget was approved for 2021. This included total revenues of \$414K and total expenditures of \$431K for an overall deficit of \$17K.

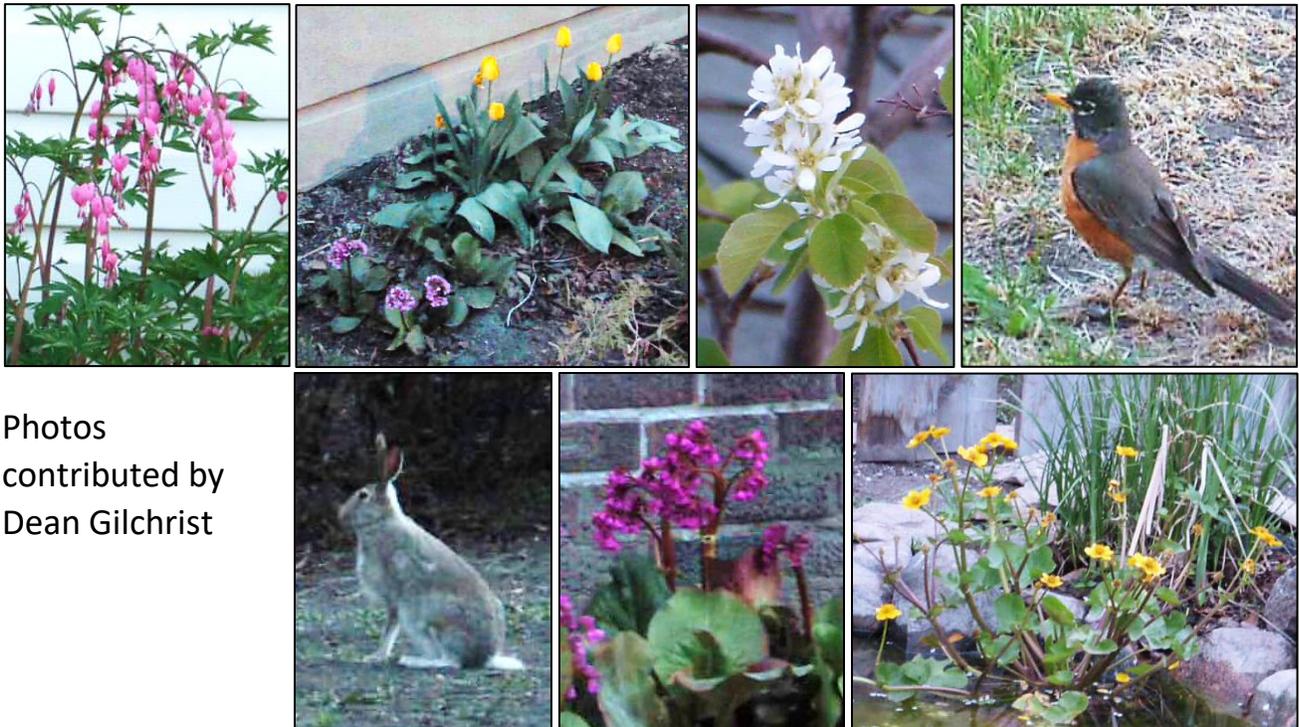
To the end of April, our revenue is around 16% above our YTD budget. We have kept our expenses to about 7% below the YTD budget, resulting in a current surplus of \$27.1K (spending less than our income). We have been paying back the loan from our Organ Fund, so the Restricted Reserve Balance has increased, while the outstanding loan amount has decreased.

Approved Operating Budget for 2021:

\$ 431.0K

	Actual	Budget
Operating Expenses to end of April 2021:	\$ 133.1K	\$ 143.7K
Operating Revenue to end of April 2021:	\$ 160.2K	\$ 138.0K
Restricted Reserve Balance:	\$ 128.0K	
(Benevolent, Building, Organ, and Legacy Funds)		
Organ Fund loan	\$ 187.7K	
CEBA (CRA) Loan	\$ 40.0K	
(\$30K to be paid back by end of 2022)		

More Signs of Spring...



Photos
contributed by
Dean Gilchrist

Lebanon Fundraiser 2021 Giving Update

As of Sunday, May 16th, donations toward our Lebanon partnership are at \$18,675. This will be matched with \$9,000 from our Missions budget, adding up to a total of \$27,675. A heartfelt thank you to all who have contributed! For more information on what we learned at the luncheon and where your gift goes, see [our website](#).



L to R: Timothy (Timmy, 15), Almess, Emad, Nathaniel (13)

Ways to give:

1. Online with a credit card: <https://www.givetogo.org/team/FBCRegina>
2. Mail, or drop off, your donation to First Baptist Church, 2241 Victoria Ave, Regina SK S4P 0S4. (Please do not leave cash in the mailbox.) If you require an in-person pick up, call the church at (306) 359-1450.
 - Make cheques out to “CBM.”
 - Note “SENT Lebanon” in the memo line or on the envelope.

Report from the Board

Your church board held its monthly meeting on May 8. We recognize we are in a time of transition, both because of COVID and John's retirement, and are entering a new chapter in our worship and music ministry.

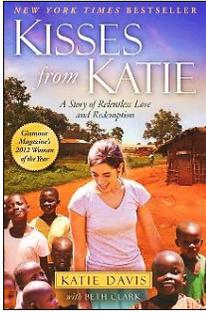
Further, we recognize that we are in a new period culturally, here in Canada. We are giving much thought and prayer to these issues. We are grateful that church finances have held up well, and we were able to send a special gift to the Canadian Baptist Ministries emergency aid fund.

We continue to ask the big questions: what should ministry look like post-COVID? What is God asking of us, as a downtown church? What is the best use of the financial and human gifts the Lord has entrusted us with? What will a faithful church focus on? How can we best evangelize and disciple (Matthew 28:18-20)?

Please pray about these things, and pray for your board. We long to be faithful, and we trust the Lord Jesus to lead us.

—Ron P, Board Chair

Novel Study



Voice is holding a novel study on Saturday, June 5, 2021. The book chosen for the study is “Kisses from Katie: A Story of Relentless Love and Redemption,” by Katie Davis. It is the inspirational, true story of a young woman and her journey to Uganda to live and work with some of the poorest people in the world. For more information, visit our website, call Lauren S, or call the church at (306) 359-1450. The discussion will take place at 10 am over Zoom.

Website Update

On Sunday, April 25th, we transitioned over to our new website. The address has not changed (firstbaptistregina.ca). While it looks somewhat different, we have attempted to maintain an appearance that reflects the traditional aspects of our church, while at the same time, simplifying pages and improving site navigation.

For help in navigating the website or for technical difficulties, please visit [this page](#) on the website. You may also send an email to [the church](#) or call (306) 359-1450.

My boss always laughed at my jokes at work. But since the pandemic began, and we always communicate on Zoom, she doesn't laugh at them anymore. I asked her why.

She replied, “Because your jokes aren't remotely funny.”

My therapist told me that the way to achieve true inner peace is to finish what I start. So far I've finished two bags of M&Ms and a chocolate cake. I feel better already.

A police officer came to my house and asked me where I was between 5 and 6. For some reason he seemed irritated when I answered, “Kindergarten.”

Did you know that Stephen King has a son named Joe? I'm not joking...but *he* is.



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

Our children's program is online at this time. For more information, contact [Pastor Kayely](#).

Youth

The youth are meeting alternate Friday evenings at 7:00 pm via Zoom. For more information, contact [Pastor Chris](#).

Adults

Learning for Life: On Sunday, May 16th, Pastor Richard began a new series: "Christ's Letters to the Church." This 7-week course will look at the letters of Christ to the seven churches in the book of Revelation.

In Revelation chapters 2 and 3, we find a letter, from Christ, to each of seven different churches. These letters contain, generally speaking, both words of commendation and condemnation. They lead us to ask: What is Christ looking for in his Church? What are considered strengths in a local church? What are considered weaknesses? We will work through one letter a week, asking, as well, what elements of each letter contain significance as we reflect upon our own church (of which we are each individually a part). For more information, see [our website](#) or contact [Pastor Richard](#).

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](#), contact Laureen S or Bonnie AW, email [the church](#), or call (306) 359-1450.

Reading through the Old Testament: In this online reading group, participants are reading through the Old Testament chronologically. The group meets every Thursday at 10:30 am, via Zoom. For more information, please call the church at (306) 359-1450, visit our website, or contact [Pastor Richard](#).

Gospel of John small group study: Pastor Richard is leading a small group online that is looking at the Gospel of John. There are two groups meeting, via Zoom. The first group meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month at 7 pm, and the second, on the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month at 10 am. For more information, please visit [our website](#), contact [Pastor Richard](#), or call the church at (306) 359-1450.

Tithing during the pandemic

With the COVID-19 crisis limiting contact with others and restricting meetings of groups, please do not neglect the financial needs of our church.

We have several ways to provide your regular 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.



Q. What do you call a short mother?

A. Minimum.

Q. How did the bullet end up losing his job?

A. He got fired.

Q. Why are toilets always so good at poker?

A. They always get a flush

Q. Why did the Oreo go to the dentist?

A. Because he lost his filling.