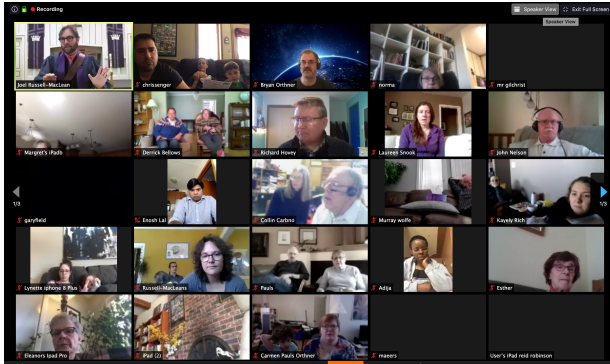


First Baptist Regina Weekly News

For The Week of March 22nd



On Sunday March 22, just over 100 people met using "Zoom"

Church was not cancelled. The church is not a building - it is the people!

Image: First Baptist Regina meeting live online for the first time

Dear Friends,

As you know we joined all churches in cancelling all our in-person gatherings and activities, including Sunday morning morning worship. It was the right thing to do but hard nonetheless.

For some people, these past few weeks have been full of change. Some are working longer hours with fewer coworkers. Some are working from home while trying to help children and teens cope with the loss of school and all activities outside of the home. Others are feeling more alone and isolated than ever.

Much may have changed but this congregation is still a place to belong. We are resolved to find ways to stay in touch and to encourage prayer, faith, hope and love. Here are some of the ways we are doing this:

For those without an Internet connection

- We have created a phone chain so we can keep in regular contact
- We will be mailing out letters regularly with reflections and church news throughout this period of isolation

Online

- Visit our website and our Facebook page for live events, daily reflections, and other updates
- Weekly email with links to live First Baptist gatherings and other resources. If you are not receiving email notifications and would like to, please contact one of the pastors or the church.
- Sundays, live on zoom: Learning for Life at 9:30 and Worhsip service at 11. We will record a simple service available on our website as well. Zoom is fairly easy to use. Give it a try. Call others to see if how it went for them.
- Youth and children are meeting using the internet as well with Chris and Joel

If you do get sick, please let us know. We have volunteers who will pick up groceries and other necessities. You are all constantly in our thoughts and prayers.

Although so much has changed, our calling has not changed: to live for God and to care for one another.

Let's pay attention as the Holy Spirit nudges us: phone calls or texts we should send, letters we should write, or prayers we should make. Let's use this time to solidify good habits of prayer and care.

God has not changed. This will come to an end. No matter how long it seems to take, it will end. God is good. God is faithful. Every night as you go to sleep know that God remains at work, carrying our burdens as we rest.

Relent, Lord! How long will it be?

Have compassion on your servants.

Satisfy us in the morning with your unending love,

that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days. - *Psalms 90.13-14*

With love, Pastor Joel

Deacons' Report

In these uncertain times, we followers of Jesus cling to the certainty that Christ is the world's true Lord, that the Kingdom of God will remake this troubled world, that nothing can separate us from God's love, and we have nothing to fear.

I find I have to remind myself - preach to myself? - these truths, when the uncertainty clouds my sight and threatens to overwhelm me. When fear, which I know in my head is needless, is all too real in my emotions.

Here are some suggestions as our church strives to be faithful in the time of pandemic:

1. Remember the gospel, the good news of Jesus.

Christ died for our sins, was buried, and was raised to life, a victor over death, over sin, and over evil. The Kingdom of God has been unleashed in our rebellious, troubled world. A terrible battle ensues as the god of this world (see John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 John 5:19) resists, but his doom is sure and the outcome not in doubt. To paraphrase the late Baptist theologian Stanley Grenz, 'when God is finished He will have a redeemed people, living in a redeemed creation with their Redeemer.'

2. Remember too, that, while suffering is inevitable after the Fall, and in this time of God reclaiming his world, and particularly for followers of Jesus (see Mark 13:13; John 16:33; Romans 8:17,18; 2 Corinthians 4:17,19; 1 Peter 4:12,13), suffering will not have the last word. Jesus will have the final word! And any suffering will then seem as nothing compared with Glory!

"Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life." Jesus,
Revelation 2:10

3. Remember that one of the ways God judges the world and shakes the world's arrogant defiance of Him is by allowing terrible things to happen. Of course these are not God's perfect will! But they are both the fruit of rebellion, and they are God's "giving us over" (Romans 1:24, 26, 28; Psalm 81:11,12) to what we have lusted after - being our own gods.

Pray that this time of the world being shaken will lead many home to God.

4. And perhaps God is shaking us and laying bare our idols. I have had to ask myself, 'Is my peace really grounded in Jesus? Or has it been grounded in all the other things that supposedly give me security - my pension plan and savings, my stable world, my prosperity, my sense of being in control? Is God showing me that these are idols and are no security at all?'

Is there some repentance needed? Can I say with Habakkuk, "Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vine. . . , yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will be joyful in God my Savior." (3:17-19)

Perhaps God is trying to get our attention. Will we listen?

5. Perhaps now, if we can grasp the above, we can demonstrate to the world what true Christianity looks like!

Can we show the world a community of Christ followers who clearly value Christ more than anything in this world? A community of Christ followers who truly believe that it is better to give than to receive? To serve, rather than to be served? Who love the world as God loved the world?

Let's not waste a pandemic! As we watch God shake our world, and as He prunes us, let's respond in such a way that the world, and even the dark powers, can only marvel at the God who alone is God.

Your pastors and deacons will do our best to lead you well.

Ron Phillips, Deacons Chair



Missions

A Different Journey – Terri Smith, CBM Executive Director

When two colleagues and I visited Goma, in the Democratic Republic of Congo last July, it was right at the apex of the Ebola outbreak in the Kivu Province. We were troubled and indeed, a bit afraid. I learnt many important lessons during the few days that we were there, but none more important than this: The local church is the very best means to help heal a broken world. Pastors and church leaders were looked to as role models. Vital support was being channeled to people who were isolated. Care was provided to the families of the sick. Communities of resilience grew and were known for their faithful (yet cautious) presence in the midst of darkness. The congregants didn't need to meet together to be the church. We learnt new communal disciplines.

Like most of our Christian communities, one of the disciplines we are practicing at CBM is to very intentionally ask ourselves how to care deeply and offer peace and hope to the "other" in these odd times. And we push our minds to think much more broadly – past the elderly folks in our churches. Or the single Mom across street. And the convalescing couple who had to rush back from their trip down south.

...But what about the "other" around the world? A family living in a refugee camp in northern Kenya whose aid has been stopped because the transport systems into the region have been suspended? The partners in Lebanon who are unable to access banks, even though they want so much to continue to implement their programmes. Or the pastor of the house-church in China who has courageously distributed rice and soap to his local community?

We have also been considering how to support and encourage our field staff during this time. Most are in self-isolation, whether in the Philippines, Thailand, Bolivia or Hong Kong. Their plans have been turned upside down as well. Some of them have adult children here in Canada. And they find themselves an ocean away. Others are trying to figure out how to minister

without the face-to-face contact they are used to, especially in places where internet access is non-existent or so unreliable. We are doing everything we can to support them and assure them in these uncertain times.

As disruptive and potentially threatening as COVID-19 may be, it will also be another means with which God can forge us into new levels of faithfulness, generosity, love and commitment.

To read the entire article, or listen to the video, go to:

<https://www.cbmin.org/a-different-journey/>

**Let's also be praying and talking about how to reach out to "the least of these" in Regina in these days of great need in our city!

Want to read an inspiring story from the "backwoods" of Lebanon to see one heart-warming and unexpected way God can use a short-term missions team for His Kingdom work?

<https://llesdlebanon.org/llesd/an-unexpected-answer-to-prayer/>



ChurchTrac

Our church management system (ChurchTrac) has a Congregation Access feature which allows members of our church to access their own profiles and view their contribution statements. If you have provided an email address to us for the system, you will be able to use this feature. In order to view your personal profile, please use the following link:

<http://firstbaptistregina.ca/get-connected/churchtrac/>

If you have not provided an email yet or are having problems accessing the system, please send a note to the Church Office (main_fbcregina@sasktel.net).

ChurchTrac also houses the church directory. If you haven't had a photo taken previously at church, you may submit a family photo to the Church Office for inclusion in the directory.

Financial Report

We were in a surplus position for the end of 2019, so this year is starting on a positive note. February 2020 revenue is above the monthly budgeted amount, while the expenses are again below budget. The annual meeting has been postponed due to the COVID-19 crisis.

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 still have salaries and bills to pay, which amount to around \$1,170 per day!

Approved Operating Budget for 2020:	\$ 427.6K
Operating Budget to the end of February 2020:	\$ 71.3K
Operating Revenue to end of February 2020:	\$ 73.5K
Operating Expenses to end of February 2020:	\$ 55.5K
Restricted Reserve Balance:	\$ 295.9K
(Benevolent, Building, Organ, and Legacy Funds)	
CBWC Loan Balance:	\$ 248.8K

The board has approved a plan to provide ourselves a loan from the Organ Fund to repay our outstanding debt to the CBWC. This plan will allow the church to finance our debt internally, while still maintaining the Organ Fund for the purposes it was established.

Reminders...

We have several ways to provide your regular tithes and donations to the church during Covid-19 isolation:

1. Mail in or in-person donation pickup.

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 or PayPal via the **PayPal Giving Fund** *(no fee or cost to the church)*
 - Use a credit card via **CanadaHelps** *(a fee of 3.75% is deducted from the donation)*

PLEASE refer to more specific information on these contribution methods that is available on the church website. You may email the church or contact the Treasurer for further details.

Gideon Church Partnership

As members of the Gideon Church Partnership Programme, members of First Baptist are invited to attend a one day Evangelism Workshop on Saturday the 27th of June at the Royal Hotel (corner of Albert and Parliament). Lunch will be provided. Contact Hilary Ryan if you would like more details.

First Baptist Prayers

Father God, we pray for world during the Coronavirus pandemic.

We ask that you would place your hands upon the governments of the world, giving them wisdom on how to best handle this situation.

We pray for those in Hospital with the virus, as well as those recovering at home around the world. Father, we ask that you would hear their prayers and the prayers of their families.

Guide the medical staff treating those with the virus, give them wisdom and guidance so that they can give their patients the best care. We pray for a vaccine.

We pray for connection during the isolation. Thank you Lord for allowing us the technology to remain in contact with each other, while still maintaining a safe distance and isolating ourselves to prevent the virus from spreading more quickly.

Father, we pray that you would ease the anxiety, depression and paranoia that can come at times like these. Fear spreads fast and often comes from misinformation and lack of knowing what is true and what is not.

We lift up Debby's mother in palliative care. Place your loving hands on her and her family.

Please pray for those recovering at home from recent hospital stays and surgeries.

For the family and friends of Katie Medgett who passed away recently. Cover them in your loving grace, giving them comfort, helping them to support one another during this difficult time.

We pray for those looking for work, those whose jobs are in jeopardy, and for those who are having to work very long hours. Lord we lift each of these situations up to you.

Father, we pray for Fran and Frank as they move to live near family. Bless them with safe travel and cover them in your grace as they settle into their new home.

If you or anyone you know has a prayer request please pass it along or speak with one of the pastors and it will be added to the next email. Urgent requests will be put out as soon as possible.

What Makes Someone a Baptist?

While teaching children about world religions, a teacher asked her students to bring a symbol of their family's faith to class. The next day, she asked each student to come forward and share the symbol with the class.

The 1st child said, "I'm Muslim, and this is my prayer rug."

The 2nd child said, "I'm Jewish, and this is my family's menorah."

The 3rd child said, "I'm Roman Catholic, and this is my Mom's rosary."

The 4th child said, "I'm Greek Orthodox, and this is an icon of my patron saint."

The 5th child said, "I'm a Baptist, and this is my casserole dish."