

First Baptist Regina Weekly News

For the Week of June 21st, 2020

Who Are the People in Your Neighbourhood? Three Proposals for this Summer

- Prayer walks. Many of us are walking more often. Make a point of walking through your neighbourhood praying as you go: for the people, the businesses, the parks. Prayer is listening as well. What is God saying to you about what you see?
- Photograph what you see. Take your camera with you sometimes. Look for a picture of the smaller details around you, something you had not noticed before: a detail on a building, artwork, a plant, or whatever catches your eye. Read on the next page how Dean G did this during the height of Regina's shut down.
- Neighbour interviews. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you to at least three neighbours to speak with this summer. It could be that you know everyone, but try and find someone new. See what happens. Explain that your church is encouraging neighbourhood/ covid interviews. Ask if they have a few minutes to answer a few questions. Choose from these: 1. How long have they lived in the neighbourhood? 2. What do they like about it? 3. What is one concern they have with it? 4. How have the restrictions affected them? 5. Has anything good come of the changes? 6. What has been difficult? 7. Is there anything you can pray for in their life?



These exercises can help us to be more attentive to what is right in front of us. There is so much beauty, character, and individuality around us, all signs of God's ongoing creative presence in the world. These exercises also deepen our awareness that God has us living where we do for a reason.

Covid 19 has given us a unique opportunity to speak with our neighbours. First of all, with restrictions still in place, people are going to be around more than usual. Secondly, with the virus and the restrictions, we all have something in common now! Jesus said, "Love your neighbour". Jesus did expand "who is my neighbour" but that larger definition still includes your actual neighbour! If you find you have peace, joy, hope, and love through Jesus, know that many long to have a loving, hopeful person who will listen to them.

Trust the Spirit and who knows? Even if only a few of us are led to someone who opens up, that will be very meaningful.

Please share your pictures and stories with us. Call or email the church or Esther G, our newsletter editor, and let us know how it is going.

With love,
Pastor Joel

Dealing With the Shutdown—Creatively!

Over the past three months, Dean G's friends on Facebook have been treated to a great series of pictures. With so many stuck indoors, Dean had a brilliant idea. He took photos of his neighbourhood while out on his regular walks. Each photo was a detail or a smaller object in roughly a 5 x 5 frame but there were a few wide shots. He posted them on Facebook and then asked people to guess where the object was found. If you are on Facebook, make a friend request with Dean, then go online and take a look.



Lebanon Partnership Update

Our special missions offering for our Lebanon partnership has now passed \$9,000, so thank you very much to all who have given toward this worthy project. We are waiting until the end of the month to send the funds to CBM so if you would still like to make a donation, it would be most welcome, as conditions in Lebanon are extremely difficult for our partners, the refugees, and for all the people of Lebanon right now.

“You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us.” 2 Corinthians 9:11

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

Church Garden Request

Our head gardener has been working to beautify the church garden, and would like to add some day lilies to it. If anyone has plants to divide or donate, please call Rosemary or call and leave a message at (306) 359-1450 or send an email to main_fbcregina@sasktel.net. Rosemary will even come and dig them up!



Covid 19 Update

The provincial guidelines for places of worship were changed last week. However, the consensus among the board and pastors remains that we wait on re-opening our Sunday morning worship. For the time being, we will continue to meet online on Sundays. Learning for Life will continue all summer and the service start time will remain at 11. A committee has been created to plan the restart of in-person Sunday worship services. They are considering possibly September or earlier. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak with one of the board members or pastors.

Our phone team will be in touch as well. We wish to hear how everyone is doing and how many of us are ready to take part in in-person gatherings (following all the health guidelines).

This could also be an opportunity for us to grow in friendship and in prayer. Contact Pastor Richard if you would like to be part of a small group or take part in one of the studies that are underway.

Spiritual Disciplines Series: Devotional Reading

Why do we read our Bibles? In our spiritual disciplines series thus far we have looked at the habits of Bible study and Bible memorization, which are two great practices; yet, the Bible is not just a book to be learned in an academic or head sense – it is a book which is to be applied to one's life. In devotional reading we are not only reading to understand but to be impacted by the text. Rather than just reading for information we read for transformation – looking to meet God in the Bible and what he has for us in his Word. A few books I would recommend which encourage this sort of reading are: *Reading the Bible for the Love of God* by Alan Reynolds, *Reading the Bible with Heart and Mind* by Tremper Longman III, and *Life with God: Reading the Bible for Spiritual Transformation* by Richard Foster. One great practice to aid us in devotional reading is Lectio Divina. In Lectio one first reads a passage of scripture, then thinks about what it means; this is followed by praying about the text, asking God what he has for us in the text we have just read; this is followed by action – how do we live this text out in our own lives.

Another aspect of devotional reading is reading texts beyond the Bible which show us how others have applied the Bible in their own lives and ministries. These can be in the form of biographies or autobiographies in which we see how God has worked in someone's life. This type of devotional reading can not only provide us insight into how God works in the lives of others but can also inspire the work of God in our own lives as we seek to live out his Word in our own day to day lives. Two books to get you started in this sort of devotional reading would be: *131 Christians Everyone Should Know*

and *Devotional Classics: Selected Readings for Individuals and Groups* edited by Richard Foster and James Bryan Smith.

I encourage you to add the practice of devotional reading to your life on a regular basis. This practice will be aided by an understanding of our next spiritual discipline as well: what we call meditation or contemplation. Continue to study the Bible, gaining a proper understanding of what it means; memorize certain passages which will be helpful to carry with you throughout your day; and add to this the practice of devotional reading – moving the understanding of scripture from merely our head to our heart.

What else is happening at First?

Morning Prayer

Join us each morning, Monday to Friday at 7:15 am to begin your day with scripture and prayer, via Zoom. Visit our website at firstbaptistregina.ca for the link.

Children

The children are having a short break from meeting at this time.

Youth

For youth we will be hosting several face to face gatherings before July. We are excited to be able to visit with one another in person. Summer will see us reduce our gatherings but we will still plan to get together in smaller groups, or over Zoom, semi-regularly. Zoom has allowed us to be in contact, and will hopefully become a tool that we can continue to use both in the short and long term to stay connected and build relationships.

Gospel of Mark Small Group

In May we had a new small group get underway with two different meeting times: The 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month at 7pm and the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month at 10am. We are reading through the Gospel of Mark at about a chapter a week, discussing twice a month. This is not an in-depth study of Mark, but more a slow reading of Mark with informal discussion. We meet online via Zoom in light of the ongoing COVID situation and our conversation, along with highlights from Mark's Gospel, includes visiting to get to know each other better and we also take some time to pray together. We invite you to join us! Contact Pastor Richard Hovey (richard.fbcregina@sasktel.net) and he will get you connected.

A Notable Source of Inspiration

"There is something very wonderful in music.

Words are wonderful enough; but music is even more wonderful.

It speaks not to our thoughts as words do;

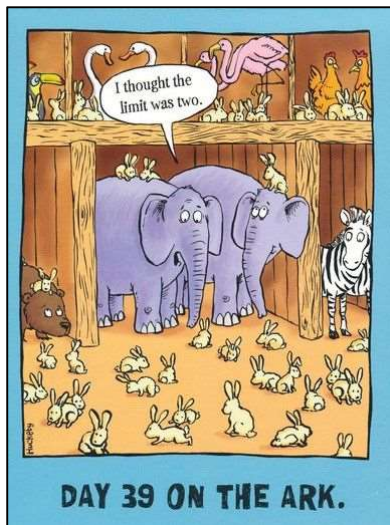
it speaks straight to our hearts and spirits, to the very core and root of our souls.

Music soothes us, stirs us up; it puts noble feelings in us;

it melts us to tears, we know not how: it is a language by itself,

just as perfect, just as divine, just as blessed." (Charles Kingley)

Pastor John



A doctor says to a patient, "I'm afraid you're going to have to stop drinking." The patient asks, "Why?" The doctor answers, "Because I'm trying to examine you."

A book just fell on my head. I've only got my shelf to blame.

Mother: "Anton, do you think I'm a bad mother?"

Child: "My name is Paul."

You know you're getting old when you stoop to tie your shoelaces and wonder what else you could do while you're down there. (George Burns)

Website

The COVID-19 crisis has impacted our church events and schedules in every way. The church website (firstbaptistregina.ca) is a valuable source of information that can be used to keep you connected and up to date with how our church leadership and pastors are responding.

We are currently holding Sunday worship and Learning for Life (L4L) via Zoom meeting. The links to these meetings can be found on the home/sermon page of our website. As well, there are bi-weekly small group meetings, and daily prayers that are utilizing Zoom.

You will also find links to our Facebook page and YouTube channel, where we are presenting video reflections and devotions by a number of our members and pastors.

“Never Weary”

Pastor Richard Hovey’s sermon from June 21, 2020

Galatians 6:1-10

Bear one another’s burdens!

At times we might understand this to be as was read for us in Matthew’s gospel, the caring for those who are lacking, those who are going without, those who are troubled or burdened by the cares of life, and this is true. This is one way that we are called to bear one another’s burdens.

Brennan Manning tells a story of two friends who were at a bar together, not a practice I will condone or encourage or discourage in this context. But this is where they were, the story goes, and they were well into the evening together, these two friends expressing how close of friends they were, how much they cared for each other, how important and special their friendship was, when one friend then stopped and asked the other: “Tell me what hurts me.” To which the other friend replied: “Well I’m not fully sure what hurts you.” To which the first friend said: “Then how can you saw you care for me?”

What does it mean to bear one another’s burdens? Part of it is knowing each other well enough to be able to bear the burdens that each one carries.

What made and makes Jesus the greatest lover, carer of our souls is that he knows what hurts us. He knows what hurts his people and he has done everything in his power to meet us in our pain! Whether that be pain caused by a broken world, or pain which, in a broken world and being broken beings, we have brought upon ourselves with our own sins and trespasses. But Jesus knows our pain and he has done everything possible to meet us in it.

I’ve noted this before—it’s one of the great truths I love about Jesus displayed and found within the gospels—is that Jesus is often noted, stated, shown, described, as looking at people with love or compassion. When Jesus looks at someone, he sees them!

You know the story of the irreputable woman who came to anoint Jesus, washing his feet with her tears. The onlookers in that meeting, in that house, were appalled, saying to themselves, “If Jesus knew what kind of woman this was who was touching him. If Jesus was aware, if Jesus had insight as to this woman’s past, he would not be letting her touch his feet.” I think part of the context and understanding in that situation was that, in the minds of the observers, this woman was “not like us. She’s not as good as, as clean as, as appropriate as us.”

Another account within the gospels that comes to mind is of the two men who went up into the temple to pray, one a publican and the other, a sinner. One of them thanked God that he was not like the other in the midst of his prayer. "I thank you that I'm not like this sinner over here." This publican read his Bible regularly, we can presume, or heard it read, and was often in church or synagogue. He kept the commandments, he did what was right, he lived a moral and good life, unlike this other person.

That woman's not like us, that man is not like us. Why would Jesus let someone like her touch him? Why would a man like that come in and approach God to pray? If you recall Jesus' response to these situations, with a comment to the thoughts about this woman was asked to those who were feeling this way: "Do you not see this woman?" Jesus saw her. A human being created in the image of God, broken and marred, but loved by a God whose grace is immense. And the sinner who had gone off into the temple to pray left justified because he brought himself honestly and openly before God.

Do we see people for whom God longs, and loves, or do we see them for their missteps and their mistakes? Jesus looked at this woman and loved her. Jesus looked at the sinner and loved him. Jesus looked at the leper and loved him. Jesus saw the crowds, in Matthew's gospel, harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd, and loved them. Jesus saw the crowds, hungry, destitute, and loved them. Jesus saw the children being children and loved them. Jesus, following Peter's denial of ever knowing him, three times Peter denied knowing the Lord. We have this wonderful account that in that moment of denial, Jesus looked at Peter, and we can assume, loved him. Jesus looked at the woman caught in the act of adultery and loved her. And he invited her accusers to do the same; "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone."

Do we know what hurts each other? Do we know the struggles and the pains deep inside each other's hearts? Do we know the abuses that each has suffered? The silent pain? The ongoing addiction? The loneliness? The trespass? The trials? The temptations? The battles with doubt and fear?

"Bear one another's burdens and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." As Christ acted in love and compassion for each, we are called to do the same.

I am encouraged and challenged by the words of Paul to the church at Colossae: "As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you."

Jesus has looked at my life, at your life, with all of our imperfections, with all of our brokenness. With all of the things that this world has done to us, and all of the things that

we have done to ourselves, and he offers forgiveness and grace. He looks at us and loves us. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you must also forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

At the end of the passage in Galatians that was read for us, we are encouraged to care and to share in each other's burden, especially within the family of faith. We are one body. Many members, but one body. We need to be mindful of each other.

Paul continues, "And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts, sing psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

As Christ has loved us, as Christ has looked at us with compassion and mercy, and bore the burden of our lives, individually, corporately, so we are to do the same for each other. As God has forgiven us, so we are to forgive. I think of the hymn:

God forgave my sin in Jesus' name.
I've been born again in Jesus' name.
And in Jesus' name I come to you
To share his love as he told me to.

He said "Freely, freely you have received; freely, freely give.
Go in my name, and because you believe, others will know that I live."

"My dear friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. Take care that you yourselves are not tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:1-2)

Specifically in this context, the bearing of the burden that we are called to bear, to share, to lift, is that of another's transgression. Do you know a sister or brother who is struggling with a sin? Do you know a brother or sister caught in a lifestyle which is pulling them away from the Lord rather than drawing them into the heart of God? You who have the Spirit, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness! Gentleness is a fruit of the Spirit which we have received. In Galatians chapter 5, we have Paul describing to us that "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." Those of you who have received the Spirit, those of you who have the Spirit, restore those who have been found to be walking in darkness!

I recall several years ago, going for a walk with a man I had just met at a conference we were both attending. He shared of a season in his own life when he was walking in darkness, when he was living in trespass or sin, and no one, for a long time, approached him about it. And the darkness grew darker, the sin grew greater. He shared how finally, a brother in the Lord confronted him in gentleness and in love, and bore with him the burden of his trespass, and brought him back into fellowship with the Lord, walking after the Spirit himself. And he encouraged me not only to guard my own heart and my own life when it comes to the temptations and the trespasses which I might enter into, but also to bear the burden of the brothers and sisters I have been called to serve in this way. This is, in part, how we love one another.

1 John 4 gives us the wonderful encouragement and the challenge to love one another. As God, in Christ, has loved us, that is how we also ought to love one another. John puts it quite directly. If we say that we love God but do not love our brothers and sisters, then the truth is not in us. We are liars.

How do we love our brothers and sisters? How do we bear the burden of the other when it comes, as Paul's teaching here in the Galatians, to a trespass? Or a sin, an error. We worry. They might not take it well. What if they don't talk to me again? It might cause a divide or dissension if I bring it up.

Here's one encouragement, an admonishment which Paul gives to guard against this happening. And the passage that was read for us, Galatians 6:3: "For if those who are nothing think they are something, they deceive themselves." Those of us who have the Spirit and go to approach, to correct, and encourage a brother or sister, recognize that the grace we have in our lives, the Spirit in which we walk, is a gift from God himself. We need to understand why it is that we are walking in the Spirit. It is because of the grace of God in our lives. Hear the words of Paul and the testimony about your own life, my own life, "Wretched person that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God, who has given us the victory through Jesus Christ, our Lord." (Romans 7:24-25)

Hear again the words of Paul to the church at Colossae, speaking about all of us: "You were dead through your trespasses and sins in you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh." And Paul is calling, here in Galatians, those of you who have found your footing in the Spirit, those of you who, by the grace of God, have found your place in walking after the Spirit. Those of you in whom the Spirit has taken a greater control over your flesh, watch out for your sisters and your brothers. Minister unto them as they learn to watch

according to the Spirit as opposed to the flesh. Recognize the grace that has been at work in your own life to bring you to the spot and to this place that you are at.

When we go to prayer for one another, when we think of a sister or a brother who is struggling, let us not be tempted to say, “God I thank you that I am not like them,” but recognize the grace that has been at work in our lives, and to pray, “Lord, might you restore them. Lord, might you fill them again with your Spirit. Lord, might you call them again to chase after your Spirit.” When we go to pray and think of a brother or sister who is struggling, let us thank God for the grace at work in our own lives and the gift of the Spirit, and thank God for rescuing us, and pray that he would use us in bringing them to him.

Another hymn that comes to mind:

I was sinking deep in sin, far from the peaceful shore,
Very deeply stained within, sinking to rise no more;

But the Master of the sea heard my despairing cry,
From the waters lifted me, now safe am I.

Love lifted me! Love lifted me!
When nothing else could help, love lifted me.
Love lifted me! Love lifted me!
When nothing else could help, love lifted me.

Might we recognize that we have no stones to cast, for we know our own pasts. A past for which we have been forgiven, redeemed, released. Now I come to you with the love of Christ in my heart, with eyes filled with compassion, to see you with the gentleness of the very Spirit of God as my guide, and I see you—my sister, my brother—and extend the grace of Christ to say that as Christ, though he had the authority to do so, chose not to condemn me, nor do I come to condemn you. Rather, I invite you, “Join me in the pursuit of the Spirit. Turn, confess, repent. Walk no longer after the flesh but rather in the Spirit of God. Sow no longer to the flesh which only reaps corruption, but sow to the Spirit and reap eternal life from the Spirit.

Let us not waste this gift of God in Christ. Let us not neglect the gift of God’s love poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.” I think of the words recorded in the book of Hebrews: The encouragement to look at those who had run the race well! Let us who, by the grace of God are running the race well, be an encouragement to others to lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely and run with perseverance the race that is set before us! Might we encourage each other to run. Might we bear the burden with each

other, of a broken world and broken lives, and challenge and admonish each other to run, with perseverance, the race that is set before us.

In the words of Paul that were read for us, “Let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. So then, whenever we have opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.” (Galatians 6:9-10)

Again from Hebrews 12, “Let us look to Jesus , the author and perfecter of our faith, who, for the sake of the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart.”

Let us see each other, and perhaps the burden we need to bear for one another is a practical need of food, finance, companionship, friendship, clothing, visitation. Or perhaps it’s a challenge in helping one come out of the weight of trespass and sin. But let us not grow weary in fulfilling the law of Christ in our midst to do that which is right, in loving God and loving one another. Let us not grow weary in running the race that is set before us, to the praise of our Lord and our Saviour, our Redeemer, and our Friend, who continues to look at us and love us. We ask in Jesus name, amen.



Ban pre-shredded cheese. Make America grate again!

What is a physicist’s favourite food? Fission chips.

There are two kinds of cruises - pleasure and with children. (George Burns)

He that has no children brings them up well. (Spanish Proverb)

So what if I can’t spell “Armageddon”? It’s not the end of the world.

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 the church:

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.