

First Baptist Regina Weekly News

For the Week of June 7th, 2020

Just the Tonic!



Many years ago, my wife Heather and I took my grandmother to the Toronto Opera Company's season opening concert. My grandmother enjoyed opera but was no longer able to get out, becoming increasingly housebound.

The concert was outdoors right on the shore of Lake Ontario. The breeze from the lake was just right for the warm evening. The moon and Mars were both very bright in the sky along with the city lights. In short, it was about as nice an evening as we could have asked for. When we dropped my grandmother off at the end,

she said with satisfaction, "That was just the tonic." Sometimes medicine we need comes in another form.

That evening brought together relationship, nature, and music in a way that was good for all of us. They are of course things that are easy to enjoy. On the other hand, there are things that are good for us that we resist. Once we do them though, we feel so much better. Either way, it is God who is reaching us to restore and heal us through these things.

Inside the newsletter, you find a note from Pastor Richard about a new series of videos he will be preparing each week. Each one will introduce a Christian habit that is a tonic for us. Give them a try and let us know how it goes.

With love,

Pastor Joel



AGM 2020 – Online



Our spring Annual General Meeting has been delayed due to COVID-19 but is now scheduled for Sunday, June 14th, 2020. It will be held online via Zoom meeting immediately following the morning service. You may wish to prepare some lunch for yourselves so that we can eat together.

Be sure to attend: we have much to celebrate and much to discuss!

The 2019 Annual Report and other related information may be found on our website:
www.firstbaptistregina.ca

If you need a printed copy of the agenda and annual report sent or delivered to you, please call the church at (306) 359-1450.

Please Note: Although churches have been given the go-ahead by the province to re-open in Phase 3 of its re-opening plan, the board and staff are recommending that we not hold in-person worship services during this phase. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak with one of the pastors or deacons. (By phone at (306) 359-1450 or by email at fbc_main@sasktel.net.)

What have YOU got growing?



Do you like to grow things? If so, this is certainly the time of the year to do it! We invite you to take a photo (or two) of you and/or your family with whatever you have growing in your yard, balcony, deck, or wherever,



and send it to fbc_main@sasktel.net. We will share them with your church family in a future newsletter so that we can rejoice in the miracle of spring together!

Katepwa Lake Camp AGM

As members of First Baptist Church, and especially as supporters of the ministry at KLC, you are invited to attend our virtual AGM. Please join us Tuesday June 16 at 7 pm. To get the Zoom link, please RSVP to Cam Mohan (cammohan@katepwalakecamp.com). We will send the information package and instructions about how to connect via Zoom.

After 70 years of camping ministry, we have seen over and over again that all things work together for good for those that love the Lord, and we have learned to rely on God. This is especially true in times of change and uncertainty. 2019 was full of challenges and change, but the camp had a very good year, and we are convinced that in the midst of worldwide changes in how we interact, God has great plans for 2020. Come hear stories and information about last year, opportunities for this summer, and join with us to shape this vital ministry for the future.

NEW: Online Spiritual Disciplines Series

We are made to worship! Our fallen humanity, however, often leads us into worship of things that lead us further away from our true purpose in life as human beings created in the image of God – to worship God by loving him with all of our heart, mind, strength and soul, and loving our neighbours as ourselves. In this video series on the spiritual disciplines we will be looking at ways we can reorient our lives around what ought to be our first love (God) and from there to live with love for all others in this world. We will reason together via some spiritual disciplines on the truths that should guide us; through other disciplines we'll reflect on the implications of these truths for our personal lives; thirdly we will practice disciplines that will carry truth into our relationships with all others; lastly, we will reach for the ideal of the Kingdom of God in our world as we train ourselves to live in love, faithfully resting in our God, and practicing peace. This series can be found online via our church website: <https://firstbaptistregina.ca/spiritualdisciplines/>. Join us!

What's been 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 and Youth

In case you missed it last week, the following is a glimpse into what is happening with our children and youth.

Children Up to Age 7

Pastor Joel: Each week, the children share some of the work they've been doing, or a favourite stuffy or toy. We sing, tell a Bible story using our wood figures, pray, and eat together. Our children are bright and full of life and joy which they share freely with each other.

Children Ages 8 and up

Julie H: This group is called Breakout, and we meet weekly on Thursday at 3:30 pm. Each week we reflect on a scripture passage by reading it and responding with a craft or activity. We have taken over the kitchen twice to make playdough and cake in a cup. We have also made several creative crafts such as catapult airplanes, origami bookmarks, and stamping with potatoes. I have especially loved getting to know the kids who have been attending. They are all so talented and are exceptionally creative.

All FBC Kids: Tuesday, June 16, and Thursday, June 18, will be our last times together before we take a short break. Don't miss it!

Youth

Pastor Chris: One of the first meetings that I had on Zoom when we began to go into lockdown, someone said that this was an incredible opportunity; an opportunity to deepen relationships, talk with our youth about different topics, and to be pastoral and loving in a way that I had not been before. I wasn't so sure that this was true. I love being with the youth face to face; bugging them, seeing them interact, and carrying our communal journey of discipleship together. I wasn't sure how this would happen online. But I would argue, that in many ways our interactions have been deeper on some levels. Different for sure, but God has continued to be present in what we do.

We meet once a week and take time to play different online games over Zoom, or have a reflection together, and pray with one another. I have been very blessed every time we get to meet. Whether it is preparing for the devotional lessons, or the Zoom activities, I have truly enjoyed having something to look forward to each week, and being able to see the faces of our youth. This past week was a highlight for me as we played a game where we had to "meow" a popular song that others might know. Each person chooses a song and sings it replacing the words with "meows" instead. I laughed so much, and had real joy seeing the youth interact and do something that will be so good to show at future weddings (since it was recorded).

Another highlight has been dropping off small care packages to the youth. Being able to see people face to face, visit, and say hello, has been very uplifting. We know that we

have wonderful youth and people in this Church, but there is a different sense and appreciation of that reality in a time like this.

In short, we continue to meet, love one another, and have meaningful connection. While I cannot wait for when we can again meet face to face, I recognize that there has been good that has come of this different form of interaction. And for that I am so grateful.

Gospel of Mark Small Group

In May we had a new small group get underway with two different meeting times: the second and fourth Wednesday of each month at 7pm and the second and fourth 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! If you are interested, contact Pastor Richard Hovey (richard.fbcregina@sasktel.net) and he will get you connected.

Live From Lebanon

Thank you to all who have given so far to our "Live from Lebanon" fundraiser. Currently, \$7,553 has been received toward our goal of \$8,500. There is still time if you would like to help support our Lebanese mission partners and Syrian refugee children in Lebanon.

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

A Music Ministry of Memories

Over the past many years, the music ministry of FBC has existed to enhance the worship experience. It has been and continues to be an exciting and diverse ministry that involves people of all ages, abilities and interests to make a joyful noise TOGETHER in a “caring music family environment.”

Even though our worship experience has been challenged by many covid-19 restrictions, a wide range of musical expressions continue to enrich our worship time together through wonderful recordings of past music ministry memories. Over the years our church has become known as “the music church”. The gifts of music have been a blessing to not only our church family, but to the community at large as well. People have noted that FBC is focused upon PEOPLE rather than on PROGRAMS. Yes, people participating in music-making, experience music as one of the great ingredients of their faith, life, health, strength and happiness! “Music is to the mind as air is to the body.” (Plato)

Over the past few weeks, our church family has enjoyed the "live" music ministries of Xavier Russell-Maclean, Adoniram Holtslander, Rob Nelson and Karen Martin. Along with the "live" music, we have enjoyed the past Gifts of Music of, Carolyn Talbot, Christa Walsh, Mark Anderson, Gwen Bergman, Melissa Morgan, JuBELLation, Exaltation, Sanctuary Choir, Fuller Brass, Vivace Choral Ensemble, Lorna Gorman, Megan Zak, and so many more. When you mix in the very special Meet Your Musician guest musicians like Joseph Martin, Lloyd Larson, Pepper Choplin, and Joel Raney, you have an extraordinary music ministry of note.

There is a melody in the heart and mind of every person yearning to be sung or played. Through our Caring Music Community at FBC, even in the midst of Covid-19 challenges, we attempt to give wings to this music. “Second to the Word of God, Music deserves highest praise.” (Martin Luther) Be of good cheer, for even confronted by the present-day challenges of not being able to be together and sing, remember....

“Until we sing again, when the world bent you low, may you rise and always know that you are loved.

May the wonder of each morning bring laughter, and may the close of ev'ry day bring rest.

May precious memories surround you and harmony of friends be ever true,

UNTIL WE SING AGAIN! Amen!” (Joseph Martin)

Pastor John



A guy phones the local hospital and yells, "You have to send help! My wife's in labour!" The nurse says, "Calm down. Is this her first child?" The man replies, "No! This is her husband!"

Husband: "Remember, dear – it takes two to make a quarrel."

Wife: "Only if you're an amateur."

Bob: "Holy moly, I just fell off a 30-foot ladder."

Jim: "Are you okay?"

Bob: "Yeah, luckily I was just on the first step."

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.

“The People of the Triune God: Paul’s Letter to the Galatians”

Pastor Joel Russell MacLean’s sermon from June 7, 2020

Galatians 3:23 – 4:7

We find something surprising at the centre of the letter to the church in Galatia: the family table.

And this is the question: can we eat together?

Maybe you are thinking, yes! We love to eat together. Christian potluck is pretty close to a Baptist sacrament around the world.

But what does this have to do with Trinity Sunday?

First, let’s remember that eating together was a serious question in the early church.

Paul gave us an example of this conflict in Galatians 2:11-13. “When Peter came to Antioch he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when certain Jewish men from Jerusalem arrived, Peter began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him...”

The debate back then was obviously confusing, hurtful, and passionate. It was Christian arguing with Christian and the church was only a few years old.

At first, Jewish Christians could not eat with Gentile Christians. We encounter this practice many times in the Gospels and again in Acts. They were trying to do the right thing. This practice is why Paul kept bringing up the “law” in his letter.

But now, Paul went on to argue, something has changed.

Jew and Gentile are all being adopted by God through Jesus and are each being filled with the one Holy Spirit, Paul explained. Paul repeats this in Galatians 4:4-7, and I’ll simply highlight what he says, but follow along in your Bibles. “God sent Jesus who was born... so that we could be adopted... And since we are God’s children, the Spirit comes into our hearts and hearts cry out, ‘Daddy! Father!’ We are all children of God.”

I know I skipped over a number of words in these verses but I didn't want us to miss that Paul spoke of three persons playing a role in our adoption: God, Jesus who was sent, and the Spirit.

Now this is remarkable. Jews were, and remain, strict, very, very strict monotheists. Every day, they might repeat this verse from Deuteronomy, "Behold O Israel the Lord your God is one."

And yet this passage from Galatians is just one example out of many throughout the New Testament where God's triune nature was visible long before the church understood what it was they were seeing.

The Trinity was visible in this story, in the actions Paul described, but it took hundreds of years for the church to be faithful to God by sorting out what it meant that God could be one and three. To this day, it remains beyond human ability to comprehend how this is possible.

Now imagine with me that we are gathered at a table. It is the family dinner table. As we approach this table, we see our host, the Trinity, seated at its head: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and they invite us as God's adopted children to take our seats.

If the head of this table, the head of this family is both one and three, what does that mean for the nature of the family?

We have a song-creed handed down to us from at least the 6th century, sometimes called the Athanasian creed.

"We worship one God in trinity and the trinity in unity,
Neither blending their persons
Nor dividing their essence.

For the person of the Father is a distinct person,
The person of the Son is another,
And that of the Holy Spirit still another.

But the divinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one,
Their glory equal, their majesty coeternal.

Nothing in this trinity is before or after,

Nothing is greater or smaller;

So in everything, we worship their trinity in their unity
And their unity in their trinity."

Notice this about the triune God Christians worship. In God we celebrate and preserve both diversity and unity.

Within the unity of God, the persons are not erased. The distinction that exist between Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not wiped away. God is not made up of three God "blobs". There is only one God but the Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Spirit, and the Spirit is not the Father. There is a distinction in how the persons are revealed to us in the story of creation and redemption.

But at the same time God is not divided. There are not three Gods, but only one.

So both distinction and unity is the nature the host seated at this holy table that we are invited to join.

We are each taking our seat at a table with the Trinity who loves each of us distinctly. This is not a love that merely covers all humanity but a love for each person, known by name.

Who else is sitting down at this table with us? The table is immense but look up and down it. How much diversity do you see?

When we sit down at this table, when we are adopted into God's family, the chosen people, are our differences erased or they preserved? Are our differences ignored or are they celebrated as we celebrate the distinctions within the Trinity?

Paul wrote about this tension in Galatians 3:28, "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus."

Paul did not mean that all of those differences, all of those distinctions, should disappear but that our differences should no longer keep us apart. God has made us one as God is one.

The gift of the Trinity is the life of the Trinity. We are united but we are diverse, we are distinct persons. We celebrate the diversity of the Trinity and we celebrate our diversity as a new family.

Now we can idealize this vision and simply enjoy the thought of this happy future that is coming when Jesus returns to earth, of all of us sitting down together in peace. It will happen.

But look at the communion table: we are at the table right now. This is not just a future event, it is right now.

If you sit down for a meal with family, week after week, year after year, how long could you go without resolving conflict? Without forgiving? Without repenting, without trying to change yourself? Some manage this. Some are able to spend their whole life in a family or in a community without seeking unity.

If you sit down at this table, the people that you sit with are your sisters and your brothers. Are you ready to listen to their stories?

We are watching and listening in the news as nations tear themselves apart because of their differences.

This is my simplistic answer to sin. This is how I view salvation. God is saving us by making us one family: baptizing us into Jesus and filling us with the Holy Spirit.

I don't think our unity wipes away gender or sex. I don't think our unity eliminates culture, language, or "race". I believe salvation will heal and transform them.

So who is at the table?

Is it just the Jewish people? No wait, here come some Palestinian Christians. Like the young Muslim Background Believer we met a few weeks ago. The church is growing in Palestine so now Jews and Palestinians together are God's chosen people, and they are invited to take their seats together.

Here come: Chin, Karen, and Burmese; Huttu and Tutsi; Dinka and Nuer; Russian and Ukrainian... There's just too many to name.

So let's look closer to home.

Here come Cree, Ojibwe, Saulteaux, Dakota, Nakota, Lakota, and the Métis Nation. Here come white people from many backgrounds, black people from many backgrounds.

Gosh! And you think your family gatherings can be awkward and tense sometimes.

Again, I know this is naive and simplistic but I sincerely believe that one of the most important things we can do is learn each others' names and hear firsthand one another's stories.

I'll take the blame if you think it is silly idea. But if you think it is a useful idea, know that it comes from North American Christian Indigenous leaders like Ray Aldred and from Lebanese Christian leaders like Martin Accad, among others.

As we hear one another's stories, how can we help but feel dismayed, perhaps helpless, that our brothers and sisters are too often treated with suspicion and even violence.

I was speaking this week with Pastor Tim Coleman from Westhill, Ugandan by birth, and he encouraged us to be in touch with the visible minorities in our congregation, and to see how they are doing.

On my mind as well, is a good friend of my wife and I, who is visibly indigenous. He said he learned as a young man out of university in a successful job, not to buy too nice a car as he ended up pulled over too often.

Our indigenous nanny told us about the time her family was driving home in their van and was surprised to get pulled over. She and her sister watched in horror as their father was taken away in handcuff. It turns out he matched a description of someone the police were looking for, an indigenous male.

I remember hearing the former president of First Nations University share how she is often followed by security guards when she enters a store, as many indigenous people can similarly testify.

We could go on and on, not even touching history, or provincial statistics. Maybe we could explain one or two stories but eventually it is overwhelming.

How many of you read the story this week in the Leader Post, of a young black school teacher? He left his home to go for a ride but stopped outside to grab something from his car first before going on his way. Shortly afterwards, friends began contacting him. A

neighbour had videotaped him entering his own car and posted the video on the internet along with this warning, “I just watched this happen. Lock your doors!”

And yet prominent Canada politicians can still say how fortunate we are not to have deep systemic racism here in Canada.

I have sat with black priests and ministers from across Saskatchewan who have stood up and gently said, there is indeed deep systemic racism here. They are treated differently.

It is so painful and it is so terrible but those are the stories we will hear if we sit down at the table and listen.

Along with many more. We will also hear that there are those among us

This is our hope?

I believe in the power of the communion table because it is God’s table, the God who is three and who is one. It is the table of the creator of this world, the creator of its peoples, its languages and its cultures.

The communion table is therefore a place where we must come to listen and repent, to listen and forgive, to listen and find that in the midst of the listening and eating that the Holy Spirit has filled our hearts with love for one another.

God is making us into a family, diverse and yet one. We are sitting at the table this morning in our homes but we are communing with God, we are communing with one another, we are communing with Christians celebrating this meal around the world in every language and culture, we are communing with those who have died in Christ and await the day of resurrection.

Titheing 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.

DOES ANYONE KNOW IF WE CAN TAKE SHOWERS YET OR SHOULD WE JUST KEEP WASHING OUR HANDS

- Why was the horse so happy?
Because he lived in a stable environment.
- There was an explosion at a cheese factory
in France. De brie...everywhere.
- What did the grape say when it got stepped on?
Nothing. It just gave a little whine.
- Why did the can crusher quit his job?
Because it was soda pressing.