

First Baptist Regina Weekly News

For the Week of July 12th, 2020

In a season of ongoing distance and isolation, let us be mindful to take notice (in whatever ways we can) of each other. This will sometimes require looking beyond what initially presents itself to our eyes, listening beyond what is presented to our ears. I think of the words of Jesus, as recorded in Luke 7, in reference to the sinful woman who washed his feet with her tears (much to the indignation of the others present): “Do you see this woman?”

Please touch this heart of mine
Feel its' joy and deepest pain
And know for what it pines
What it's lost and longs to gain
Please touch this heart of mine.

My heart's hard from neglect
Perhaps touch could help it heal
Froze by need to protect
Perhaps touch could help it feel
My heart's hard from neglect.

Please touch this heart of mine
Let me not keep you at bay
Touch is for what it pines
As you turn to walk away
PLEASE TOUCH THIS HEART OF MINE.

(my thoughts in silence shout)

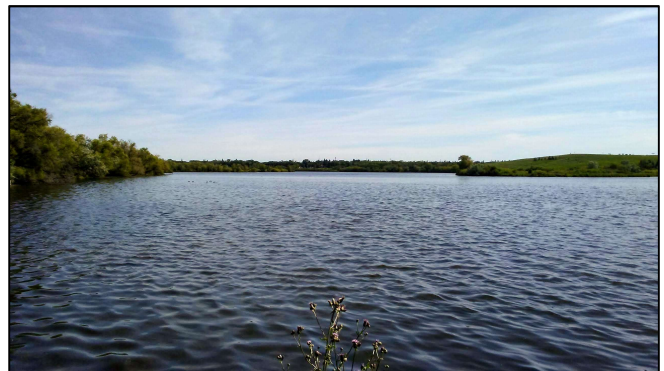
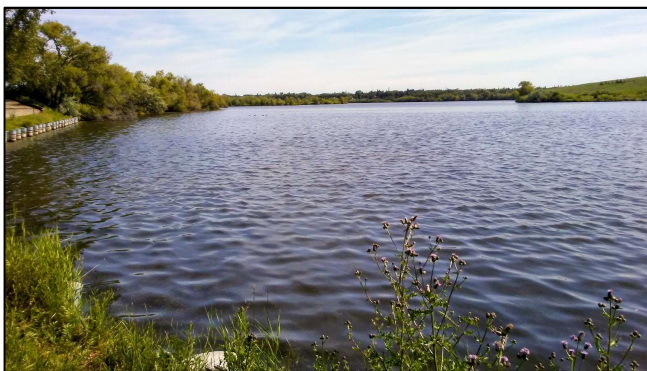
Lord, grant us the grace of your presence that we may see what you see, hear what you hear, feel what you feel as we go about our day to day activities.

Pastor Richard



Neighbourhood Photos

Sunday morning bike ride:



Evening walk by Wascana Lake:



(Submitted by Marilyn Phillips, July 12, 2020)

“Lebanon Live” Fundraiser Results

Thank you to all who gave so generously to our annual Lebanon Partnership fundraiser throughout the month of June. Our goal was to match our Missions budget of \$8,500, and the total raised as of June 30th is \$9,103! (It is never too late to give, so if you still wish to help, see a previous newsletter or the Lebanon link on our FBC website: firstbaptistregina.ca). The economic and political situation in Lebanon is dire, and our partners are extremely grateful for our ongoing prayer and financial support.

New Small Group: Reading Through the Old Testament

In the not-too-distant future, Pastor Richard will be setting up and facilitating a new small group: “Reading Through the Old Testament.” This group will meet online, using Zoom. A schedule will be provided with weekly readings. We will plan to connect once a week to discuss what we have read, share anything that has stood out to us, and ask any questions we may have. Please contact Pastor Richard at richard.fbcregina@sasktel.net, or leave a message at (306) 359-1450, Ext. 222, if you are interested in joining. Watch for updates!

Spiritual Disciplines Series: The Daily Examen

The Prayer of Examen is a daily exercise where we pause toward the end of our day and, in a spirit of prayer, seek to recognize the following:

- The presence of God in our day. God is with us in every moment of every day, his presence readily available; we often just don’t notice it or take time to recognize this truth. In our Prayer of Examen, we want to recognize this truth and ask God to shed light on the day we have just lived.
- We want to reflect on our day with gratitude – being thankful for the things that God has given to us this day, from the sunshine or the rain shower, a conversation with a friend or a few moments of silence by ourselves with a cup of coffee.
- Thirdly, we really want to review our day. What conversations did we have? Where did we go? How did we feel? Were there moments when we felt really alive? Were there moments of discouragement? These have been termed moments of *consolation* and *desolation*.
- Recognize the shortcomings of the day. Were there conversations you wish had gone better? Is there something you should have done that you didn’t? Or something you shouldn’t have done that you did? Lift these things up to God in a prayer of confession while also seeking insight as to why you acted the way you did.
- Lastly, look ahead to the next day with anticipation. Anticipate God meeting you in tomorrow, both in the things you are looking forward to and the things that concern you. Ask God to help you do better in the areas you fell short today, that tomorrow may be lived more fully for God.

What's 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. Watch for updates.

Youth

We will have fewer gatherings over the summer, but still plan to get together in smaller groups, or over Zoom, semi-regularly, so that we can stay connected and continue to build relationships.

Gospel of Mark Small Group

In May we had a new small group get underway via Zoom 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 and meeting to discuss what we've read twice a month. This is not an in-depth study of Mark, but more a slow reading of Mark with informal discussion. 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 (richard.fbcregina@sasktel.net) and he will get you connected.



I recently decided to sell my vacuum cleaner, as all it was doing was gathering dust.

I wanted to tell a boxing joke, but I couldn't remember the punch line.

I asked a Frenchman if he played video games. He said, "Wii."

I've just written a song about tortillas. Actually, it's more of a rap.

Nature abhors a vacuum, but not as much as a cat does.

Finances

To the end of June, our revenue has fallen to 12% below our Year-to-Date budget. Our expenses are 8% below YTD budget. This results in a current deficit of \$9,100 (spending more than our income).

Approved Operating Budget for 2020:	\$ 427.6K
Operating Budget to the end of June 2020:	\$ 213.8K
Operating Revenue to end of June 2020:	\$ 188.6K
Operating Expenses to end of June 2020:	\$ 197.7K
Restricted Reserve Balance:	\$ 98.5K
(Benevolent, Building, Organ, and Legacy Funds)	
CBWC Loan Balance:	\$ 0K
Organ Fund Loan	\$ 205K
CEBA (CRA) Loan	\$ 40K

The board had approved a plan to provide ourselves a loan from the Organ Fund to repay our outstanding debt to the CBWC (Canadian Baptists of Western Canada). This proposal allows the church to finance our debt internally, while still maintaining the Organ Fund for the purposes for which it was established.

We have also taken advantage of the CEBA (Canada Emergency Business Account) no-interest loan from the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). This will be paid back by the end of 2022. Of the original \$40K amount, \$10K will be forgiven.

Covid 19 Update

The provincial guidelines for places of worship were changed about three weeks ago. However, the consensus among the board and pastors remains that we wait on re-opening our Sunday morning in-person worship services. For the time being, we will continue to meet online on Sundays. *Learning for Life* will continue all summer at 9:30 a.m. and the service start time will remain at 11 a.m.

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).

A valuable source of information about First Baptist is our website: firstbaptistregina.ca. If you don't have a computer and/or internet access, the Regina Public Library has now re-opened, and you may access the website on one of their public computers.

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.

“Graves of Cravings”

Pastor Richard Hovey’s sermon from July 12, 2020

Exodus 16:1-15; Number 11:4-6; 31-35; Psalm 78

Let me pray for us as we take some time to ponder the Word of God read for us this morning: “Father we do thank you for your word, we thank you for your spirit to guide us and to teach us. Lord we ask that your blessing would rest. Be with my thoughts and my words. Open our hearts to receive from you, our minds to comprehend, our will, to do. Lord to your praise and to your glory, we ask in your holy name, amen.”

In what was read for us already this morning, we have this encouragement and I'm just going to read a few verses here and there throughout what was read. But in the opening of Exodus 16 we have the whole community or the whole congregation of the Israelites who set out from Elam. They’re in the wilderness and in verse 2 it notes again this whole community or this whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and against Aaron in the wilderness.

I don't know if there's ever been much complaining in this congregation. I've only been here a year, but in most congregations there can be issues that flare up, discontentment that arises.

Here, the community of God's people the congregation that God has called out of Egypt has a complaint. There's a recognition twice in these opening verses, of this people as a community, as a congregation of Israel. A recognition, if you will, of the new identity that they had received through God's redemptive act. They have been delivered. But their perceptions do not correspond to this new reality. They have not yet become who they are and this is part of the reason for the wilderness. That they might learn what it is that the Lord their God has done for them. That they might learn more about the Lord their God as their, as their deliverer, as their Redeemer, as their ever present help in trouble, as their Shepherd, as their God.

In Deuteronomy chapter 8 we read, “Remember the long way the Lord your God has led you these 40 years in the wilderness.” I don't know if it ever seems, in your life, that the Lord is taking you the long way round. Couldn't there have been a quicker solution? Couldn't there have been an easier journey? Couldn't there have been a faster way? And maybe for some, in the midst of this pandemic, we are thinking the same things. Why so long? Why such a duration?

We do have some answers unpacked for us for the Israelites as to why their journey took as long as it did. But the Lord here is calling them to remember the long way that the Lord your God has led you these 40 years in the wilderness. Why? Deuteronomy 8 continues:

“In order to humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart.” Whether or not you would keep his commandments.

God is forming a people of this community, of this congregation. The long journey through the wilderness was to see if they would become the people God delivered them to be. A people not reliant on their own abilities. A people not reliant on their own strength, their own might, their own power, but a people that would recognize that it is the Lord their God who has delivered them and made them what they are.

Congregation! The Lord may be leading some of us, if not all of us, through a bit of a wilderness journey. Perhaps to help us become the people he delivered us to be. A people not reliant on our own abilities, our own power, our own strength, our own wisdom. But rather a people fully reliant upon the Lord our God who has delivered us.

Deuteronomy goes on in chapter 8, “He humbled you by letting you hunger.” Why did God not provide the manna earlier? Why did they come to the point where they were fearing they were out of food? He humbled you by letting you hunger, then by feeding you with manna in order to make you understand that one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Your thoughts probably go to Jesus in his wilderness time, where he was led out by the spirit into the desert and he was tempted by Satan. Satan said, “If you are hungry, turn these stones to bread.” And Jesus said, “Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

At times, the Lord our God will allow us to journey in a wilderness. He will allow us to journey in a dry desert season. He will allow trials and temptations to come, in order for us to get our heads around this truth. We do not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. God has led a congregation, a community of people out into the wilderness to form them into a people who will be his people and follow his word.

Congregation, we are not in Egypt anymore. Congregation, community of God, we have a new identity given us by God's redemptive act in and through Christ. Congregation, you have been delivered, transferred from darkness to light. From captivity to freedom. From chasing the passions of the flesh to living according to the spirit. Do your perceptions correspond to this new reality? Have you become who you are in God? Or is there yet a lesson for us here in this wilderness experience?

Verse 3 of Exodus 16 reads, “The Israelites said to them, to Aaron and to Moses, ‘If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt. God has sent all of the other plagues. God has sent all of the pestilences. God had done all of these great works in the

land of Egypt, which stopped the Egyptians. If only we too had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt. When we sat by the fleshpots, the stew pots, and ate our fill of bread. For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

We already read in Deuteronomy why he allowed them to hunger. Things were better before. We're here as the people of God. We're here as a community, delivered and set free and redeemed by God from slavery. We've crossed the Red Sea onto high ground. We've been journeying with the presence of God, the cloud and the pillar of fire with us, and the Word of God spoken to us through the prophets, through Moses, through Aaron. But boy, that stew was good! We're hungry. What is God doing in our midst?

Paul, in his letter to the church at Philippi, speaks of those who live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Paul warned the church at Philippi about those who had set their minds on earthly things. Paul said of them, "Their belly is their God." Let us not be like those in John 6, who sought out Jesus in order that their bellies may be filled with physical food.

When things are tough, when hunger comes, let us not lose faith in the God who has called us. The God who has made us a community, a congregation, a people. For how common it is among the people of God that when a crisis, whether a daily need or physical suffering, occurs, it occasions a crisis of faith.

The discernment of the people of God has been so clouded by physical difficulties, that they cannot see that God is much involved in providential ways in their everyday life, creating for himself a people. A people for his own possession.

We continue to read in verse 4 of Exodus 16, "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'I am going to rain down bread from heaven for you, and each day, the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way, I will test them whether they will follow my instructions or not.' Verse 5: 'On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days.'

Each day, there's a call here to restrain one's natural tendency when they see all of the abundant manna covering the ground, enough that they did not or could not collect at all. When the sun came out, it would evaporate and disappear. There was more manna each day than they could possibly need to collect, but it was there. Collect what you need each day. Not more. And trust that it'll be there again in the morning.

There's a call here to trust God each day. Trust God afresh every day. That's the plan. But there's extra manna sitting there. Maybe I'll take some for tomorrow. God said don't. Yeah, but, what if God forgets. What if there's not enough tomorrow. What if, what if, what if. God said, "Collect what you need today."

I think of the Lord's Prayer which we pray every week and maybe more times throughout the week in your homes, "Give us this day our daily bread." There's a trust for God to provide for the day, and the plan is to trust that what God gives today will be enough for today, and tomorrow, he will give what we need for tomorrow.

You may know the story of George Mueller in the orphanage that he started, in seeing a need of children that had no home. The story is told the children are dressed and ready for school, but there is no food for them to eat. The house mother of the orphanage informs George Mueller. George asked her to take the 300 children into the dining room and have them sit at the tables. He thanked God for the food and waited. George knew God would provide food for the children, as he always did. Within minutes, a baker knocked on the door. "Mr. Mueller," he said, "Last night I could not sleep. Somehow I knew that you would need bread this morning. I got up and baked three batches for you. I will bring it in. Soon, there was another knock at the door. It was the milkman. His cart had broken down in front of the orphanage. The milk would spoil by the time the wheel was fixed. He asked George if he could use some free milk. George smiled as the milkman brought in ten large cans of milk. It was just enough for the three hundred thirsty children.

"Give us this day our daily bread." That's what God has promised he would do. But then we read this in chapter 16, verses 19 and 20: "And Moses said to them, 'Let no one leave any of it over until morning.' " They were putting aside a little bit in case they would need it the next day. Verse 20: "They did not listen to Moses. Some left part of it until morning and it bred worms and became foul, and Moses was angry with them."

Then down to verse 22, "On the sixth day, they gathered twice as much—two omers for each person." When all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, he said to them, "This is what the Lord has commanded: 'Tomorrow is to be a day of solemn rest. A holy Sabbath to the Lord. So bake what you want to bake and boil what you want to boil. Save whatever is left and keep it until morning.' " This time, the promise was that it would not go bad. So they put it aside until morning as was commanded, and it did not become foul and there were no worms in it. "Eat it today," Moses said, "because today is a Sabbath to the Lord." Today, you will not find manna in the field. Six days, you shall gather it, but not on the seventh, which is a Sabbath. There will be none. On the seventh day, some of the people went out to gather and they found none. "And the Lord said, 'How long will you refuse to keep my commands and my instructions?'"

In this wilderness time, God was shaping and forming a people who would recognize that one does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. "Do not worry about tomorrow." "Seek first the kingdom of God." "Love your enemies." "Bless those who persecute you." "Forgive those who sin against you." "Don't look back." "Take up your cross," says Jesus, "and follow me." "Deny yourself." "Give to those in

need.” “Let your light shine before others.” “Give to everyone who begs from you and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.” “Fast.” “Pray.” Do not store up for yourself treasures on earth, but rather in heaven, fixing your eyes on a heavenly city.

Congregation, we are not in Egypt anymore. Let us be a people of faith, even in crisis. A people who pass the test and keep the commands of God, living as strangers and foreigners on the earth. Seeking a homeland, not thinking of what we've left behind in order to create opportunity to return. Remember what we had before. That stew was good. I could use a cucumber. We have the Word of God. We have his presence. We are his people.

Numbers 11 notes that the rabble among them had a strong craving and the Israelites wept again for meat to eat. They wept again for more than what they presently had. They desired more than what the Lord was giving to them. We remember the fish we used to eat, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, the garlic. But now our strength is dried up and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at.

Those of you who have children, or know some children, or have had children in your house—or maybe you have adults in your house who do this. Do they ever open the fridge which is full of food and say, “There's nothing to eat.” We have that experience sometimes. There's nothing I want here.

God has given them the manna. God has given them their daily bread. Each morning when they get up, it is there! There's nothing but this manna. There's not the food that we want. There's not the food that we desire. There is nothing to eat from this God who has delivered us, but the manna.

Psalm 78, verses 18 and 19: “They tested God in their hearts by demanding the food they craved. They spoke against God, saying, “Can God spread a table in the wilderness?” What God has given is not enough. What God has done is not enough. What God is doing is not enough. We want a table spread before us with the cucumbers and the onions and the fish and the stew and everything else. We want more than what God has given. We want more.

In Exodus 16, verse 15: “When the Israelites saw the manna they said, ‘What is it is?’ They didn't know what it was or how to describe it. What is it is? It's manna. It's bread from heaven. It's the food of angels. It's a provision—a daily provision from the Lord your God who has delivered you.

In Psalm 78:27, we read that God rained down flesh upon them like dust, winged birds like the sand of the seas. He let them fall within their camp, all around their dwellings. And they ate and were filled, for he gave them what they craved. But before they had

satisfied their craving, while the food was still in their mouths, the anger of the Lord rose against them. He killed the strongest of them, and he laid low the flower of Israel.

Is God enough? Let us not be laid low. Let our God not be our belly. Let our desire not be for the things we used to have which God in His wisdom and Providence has chosen not to give us today. Let our contentment and our joy and our life be in God and what he has given, what he has provided.

Numbers picks up on what Psalm 78 was talking about. In Numbers 11:33: "While the meat was still between their teeth, before it was consumed, the anger of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord struck the people with a very great plague." "Oh that the Lord had let us die in Egypt rather than here in the wilderness."

Fascinating. God was not going to let them die in the wilderness. They said, "God, you're not enough. We crave more than what you are giving. So the Lord lets the plague come so that the place was called the graves of craving, because there they buried the people who had the craving.

Let us not look to Jesus, congregation, because we ate our fill of loaves once. Congregation, let us not work for food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life.

There's another story told about Mueller and his children. Over the years, ten thousand children, it is told, lived in the orphanage. When each child was old enough to leave, Mueller would pray with them and he would put a Bible in their right hand and a coin in their left. And he explained to them that if he held on to what was in their right hand, if he held on to the Word of God, that there would always be something in their left hand as well.

What do we crave? What do we desire? What do we hold onto? Hear the words of Christ, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry. Whoever believes in me will never thirst." Our complaints come from cravings that are off the mark. Cravings at war within us. What are we to do?

James instructs us to draw near to God. Jesus instructs us to eat the bread of life, the Living bread that came down from heaven. For whoever eats this bread will live forever.

Congregation, this is the narrow road, and the road is hard that leads to life. We read a little later in John 6 that because of this, many of Jesus disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. And Jesus turned to his disciples, and he said, "You also wish to go away." Would you rather have the stew pots in Egypt than my word and my presence? And Peter, this time wisely, responds, "Lord to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life." The manna is enough. Your word makes up the rest.

The Lord has led the people out into the wilderness to create for himself a people who would be a people after him and his heart. Deuteronomy 8 goes on to note, 'When you have eaten your fill and have built fine houses to live in, this is a promise of what is to come in the good land. Then do not exalt yourself, forgetting the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

The breaking in the wilderness is for our betterment as a people of God. The crisis is an order that we might know how to be the congregation. The alternative is to find ourselves in graves of craving where there is no life, where there is no hope.

Let me close by sharing the words to a song by Jimmy Needham which came out a number of years back it's called, "Clear the Stage," and he writes:

Clear the stage and set the sound and lights ablaze
If that's the measure you must take to crush the idols
Jerk the pews and all the decorations too
Until the congregations few then have revival

Tell your friends that this is where the party ends
Until you're broken for your sins you can't be social
Then seek the Lord and wait for what He has in store
And know that great is your reward so just be hopeful

Take a break from all the plans that you have made
And sit at home alone and wait for God to whisper
Beg Him please to open up His mouth and speak
And pray for real upon your knees until they blister

Shine the light on every corner of your life
Until the pride and lust and lies are in the open
Then read the Word and put to test the things you've heard
Until your heart and soul are stirred and rocked and broken.

Father, break us in this time as needed. In this time of isolation, in this time of separation, in this time which we might, at some level, equate to a desert or wilderness experience. Lord, break us, in order to form us. Point out our cravings which are saying that you are not enough. Help us to realize the wonder of the gift of manna, the provisions that you give each day. And help us to have faith each day that you will be here again in the morning, your presence to guide us, to cheer us, to love us. Lord I give you praise for your faithfulness. In the midst of our weakness, renew us again in the season we ask. We pray in Jesus holy name, amen.

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.

A few riddles, perhaps?

What did the woman say when she got a big phone bill?

"Who said talk is cheap?"

What did the daddy spider say to his son?

You spend too much time on the web.

Why was the writer in agony?

Because the editor removed her colon.

Why couldn't the leopard play hide and seek?

He was always spotted.

