

## First Baptist Regina Weekly News

*For the Week of August 23rd, 2020*

On August 11th, dozens of Saskatchewan chiefs gathered for a news conference around a teepee in Wascana Park. They were sharing their support for Tristen Derocher, a young Metis man, who walked from north of La Ronge to Regina to raise awareness of the high suicide rate among Indigenous people. It is 4.5 times higher than that of the rest of



Saskatchewan. He is now in the midst of a 44-day tea fast outside the Legislative building.

Our province is in the news all too often for this reason, such as when the 10 year old child ended her life last November. Nearly every chief who spoke, had lost a family member or friend to suicide. This reflects on all of us.

Derocher is a gifted speaker and his talk was moving. Normally, Tristen travels through northern communities providing the music lessons which weren't available when he was young. He teaches 380 young people across the northern communities of Saskatchewan and Manitoba. He has lost count of the number of times he has been asked to play at the funerals of young people.

Tristen is a self-taught fiddler and has been invited four times to the Canadian Grand Masters fiddling competition. Most recently, he finished 9th and won the People's Choice Award.

What wasn't mentioned in the news articles the following day was that Pastors had also been invited to come to this event. Those of us who attended were asked to circle the teepee and pray before the news conference began. The teepee was surrounded with pictures of Indigenous people who had ended their life. We looked on their faces as we prayed for God to have mercy.

I encourage anyone who can get out, to visit Tristen, walk around the teepee with all its pictures, and be in prayer for the Indigenous people of our province.

With love,

Pastor Joel

## A Journey of Hope in Lebanon



It has been three weeks since the devastating explosion in Beirut. Our mission partners, the Lebanese Society for Education and Social Development (LSESD) are working hard to minister in the midst of the incredible challenges faced by the people in these days.

[LSESD](#)'s response to the disaster has included the following:

- 40+ families are being provided with temporary housing in the [ABTS](#) (Arab Baptist Theological Seminary) residences along with specialized on-site medical care, food and trauma counselling.
- [MERATH](#) (Middle East Revive & Thrive) has already provided food vouchers for 200 families, and will be increasing this number as funding allows. They have also:
  - Distributed 6000 ready meals to affected families in Beirut
  - Trained 20 partner churches/orgs on the ground in crisis management
- The [SKILD](#) (Smart Kids with Individual Learning Differences) team is preparing the play-ground space on the LSESD/ABTS campus to be used by traumatized children, thereby giving parents a break.
- [BCYM](#) (Baptist Children and Youth Ministries) is providing 15-day activity kits to kids affected by the disaster



Be sure to watch this new, inspiring video update from the LSESD on their work and their amazing faith!

[LSESD on a Journey of Hope](#)

## **Where is God in all of This?**

Elie Haddad, President of ABTS shares: “Part of the wonder of God is that, not only does He listen, His heart no doubt bleeds for Beirut and its people with unconditional compassion and love, and He reveals Himself in fresh new ways in the middle of our anguish. There isn’t enough space here to record all that God is doing, nor can we comprehend the vastness of God’s actions.

“Churches and ministries immediately sprang into action. If you go to Beirut today, you don’t have to look far to see the hands and feet of Jesus. I can see God in the goodness of countless Lebanese who took to the streets to clean, help, feed, and comfort the distressed. It’s easy for us to identify the evil in people who are away from God. However, we are now learning to see and recognize glimpses of the image of God in people all over the streets of Beirut. I can see God in the response of His people.”

If you would like to help alleviate the suffering of our Lebanese brothers and sisters and assist in rebuilding their ministries, donations can be made online through the [CBM Website](#), by calling CBM at 905.821.3533, or by mailing a cheque to:

Canadian Baptist Ministries  
7185 Millcreek Dr  
Mississauga ON L5N 5R4

## **LSESD Prayer Requests**

- Strength for our staff, provision for every need, wisdom and discernment to know how to prioritize among pressing needs.
- The families who have lost their homes and loved ones. The injured, the health workers who are caring for them, and the rescue teams who are looking for missing people.
- The overwhelmed hospitals across the country and especially for those that were partially destroyed.
- LSESD and ABTS staff and faculty who suffered from the consequences of the blast. We praise God that none of them are physically hurt, but they have suffered material loss to varying degrees, and some of their loved ones have been hurt.
- A new government. Leaders who are competent and transparent, serving the people rather than their own interests. Pray that they have wisdom and strength to manage the catastrophic human and economic consequences.

## Summer Neighbourhood Stories

Marilyn P: "Joel's stories inspired me and reminded me that I was going to share a couple at some point..."

- As I was riding my bike into our driveway one day in July, a young woman who had been chatting with a neighbor as I rode by, came running up to me excitedly, introduced herself, and asked if she could ride with me next time. She said she was a visiting post-doctoral student from China, was living just up the street, and was afraid to go alone. The neighbor she had been chatting with (a Christian friend of ours) had offered to lend her a bicycle. He was also doing Bible study with her via WeChat and had invited her to English classes at his church! She had already decided to believe in God, and that God was blessing her through so many new Christian friends! As we rode around the lake together early most mornings for a number of weeks, she exclaimed happily over the beautiful scenes of the lake: Geese, ducks, pelicans, and red-winged blackbirds in profusion, and the sun sparkling on the water. She also loved our big, clear sky – so different than her smoggy city in China, she said. And she became super excited when there were white clouds of any shape or size in the sky! It was delightful to share in her delight in our beautiful city as we rode each day. My new friend moved to an apartment on campus in early August, and was too busy to ride for a few weeks. But we have now started our daily rides again!
- On a sad note, our elderly next door neighbor whom we had known for 28 years, became ill and was in the hospital and then palliative care for some time before passing away. As she had no children and her husband also wasn't well, another neighbor, who had known her for much longer and was very close to her, was making health care arrangements for her and her husband, visiting them both, dealing with their household effects, and eventually made the funeral arrangements. She was quite stressed. Ron and I tried to help wherever we could with the house and yard, and also provided a listening ear for her to express her stress and grief. It was a sobering time for us all, but also drew us closer together as neighbors, for which I am thankful.
- Now on a fun note, a young girl on our street has been cheering up the neighborhood this spring and summer by writing "punny" jokes on a sandwich board each day, complete with hand-drawn illustrations! We always take time to read them and give her a "thumbs up" as we walk or ride by, and if the family is outside we stop to congratulate our new young friend and chat with the family. She loves it when I ask her to pose beside the board so I can take a photo to post on Facebook! (With parental permission, of course.)

## Spiritual Disciplines Series: Confession

St. Augustine has stated: “The confession of evil works is the first beginning of good works.” Do you confess your sin? Not in the sense of saying “Father forgive me for my sins” but in actually naming them, being specific about the ways in which you have fallen short (things you did that you should not have done; things you did not do that you should have done)? Gordon Smith argues that this is an important practice for Christians. He writes: “The practice of confession has virtually disappeared from the worship practices of evangelical Christians.” Smith sees this as a huge concern, based on an argument he makes that repentance is central to salvation – so confession is essential to the living of the Christian life. Repentance is to turn – a radical reorientation of one’s life. Confession is the continued expression of this repentance.

We want to be mindful, as 1 Timothy 2:5 tells us, that we have one mediator between us and God, and that is Jesus Christ. This is a Biblical teaching, understood and reclaimed in the Reformation. This reality (that one does not need a human mediator to break through to new life in the cross), Foster notes, “swept into the church like a breath of fresh air.” It became a trumpet call of liberation from the bondage and manipulation that had crept into the ecclesiastical confessional system. But we also need to remember that Luther himself believed in mutual brotherly confession. In the Large Catechism he writes, “Therefore when I admonish you to confession I am admonishing you to be a Christian.”

So, let us couple the message of 1 Timothy 2:5 with James 5:16 which states that “if we confess our sins to one another and pray for one another we will be healed.” Foster notes why this is difficult, but also why it is so important: “Confession is a difficult discipline for us because we all too often view the believing community as a fellowship of saints before we see it as a fellowship of sinners. We feel that everyone else has advanced so far to holiness that we are isolated and alone in our sin. We cannot bear to reveal our failures and shortcomings to others. We imagine that we are the only ones who have not stepped onto the high road to heaven. Therefore we hide ourselves from one another and live in veiled lies and hypocrisy, and the fear and pride that cling to us like barnacles, cling to others also. We are sinners together. In acts of mutual confession, we release the power that heals. Our humanity is no longer denied, but transformed.”

Spiritual friendships, or having an accountability partner (mentor), is important in knowing who you can practice confession with. I encourage you to maintain your confession before God, recognizing we have one mediator between us and God – Jesus Christ; but I also want to challenge you to consider the benefits of confessing your sin to a fellow Christian.

Pastor Richard

## **Tithes and Offerings**

We want to thank everyone for their faithfulness in maintaining their giving during this pandemic. We know that many of you have gone out of your way to mail in your offerings or bring them to the church, and it is appreciated *very much*.

If you'd like to have your offering picked up, you can leave a message at the church at (306) 359-1450, send an email to [main\\_fbcregina@sasktel.net](mailto:main_fbcregina@sasktel.net), or contact one of the pastors or board members to arrange for a pick-up.

## **Daily Bread Devotionals**

The Daily Bread devotionals for September, October, and November have been dropped off at the church. If anyone would like one (or more), please contact the church by email at [main\\_fbcregina@sasktel.net](mailto:main_fbcregina@sasktel.net) or by leaving a message at (306) 359-1450. We can leave them in the church's mailbox for you to pick up, or mail them to you.

## **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](http://firstbaptistregina.ca) for the link.

### **Children and Youth**

Planning for fall programs is underway. Watch here for updates.

## **New Small Group: Reading Through the Old Testament**

Beginning in September, Pastor Richard will be 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](mailto:richard.fbcregina@sasktel.net), or leave a message at (306) 359-1450, if you are interested in joining. Watch for updates!





My dentist told me I'm going to have to get a bridge. The price is the same as the one in Brooklyn.

Know what the difference is between a glass of bottled water and a glass of tap water? About two bucks.

My wife and I often laugh about how competitive we are. But I laugh more.

Q: What do you call a bull that likes to nap?

A: A bulldozer.

Q: How do trees go online?

A: They log in.

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## Covid 19 Update

This fall will be a challenging one as we seek to fulfill our calling to care for one another, to disciple one another at all ages, and to continue to minister to our city in the world.

Many of you have been asking about whether we will re-open and what that re-opening will look like. The leadership is meeting this week and they will be discussing the options put forward by the re-opening committee. From there, a plan will be formulated to present to you shortly. Any in-person services will follow all the health guidelines.

Please pray that God will direct the leadership in the decisions that need to be made. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak with one of the board members or pastors.

A valuable source of information about First Baptist is our website: [firstbaptistregina.ca](http://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. If you need assistance, one of the library staff members will be able to help you.

## Can God be Trusted?

Pastor Joel's sermon from August 23, 2020

Numbers 13

Please join me in prayer. Lord Jesus Christ, I am not worthy to have you into my home but only say the word and I shall be healed. And may the Holy Spirit bless the giving and receiving of the word. Amen.

When we follow God, when God calls us to do something, can we trust God? If you were to ask this of a thoughtful person who has been a Christian for a long time, there is a chance they might pause before answering.

We can trust God to be faithful. We can trust God to be good. But if by trusting God we mean trusting that everything will go well - that is not the experience of any Christian. We have only to remember that all of us will die one day. God, in his goodness and wisdom does not spare us from suffering or death.

The Israelites travelled through the wilderness, and time and time again, God helped them. And yet when the day came when they had to make a choice, when they stood at the gateway to the promised land and God said, "Follow me," they were terrified. They chose to rebel against God and God accepted their choice.

"Let us choose a captain," They said, "Let us go back to Egypt."

How could it come to this for Israel?

Go back to slavery?

Was the certainty that came with slavery that much more desirable than uncertainty that came with freedom?

While they were slaves in Egypt, they knew where to get their daily food and water. Nor were there wars to fight in Egypt. In a sense, Israel did not need to trust God in Egypt.

Every day in the desert, they had to trust God. They were hungry and thirsty at times. They were attacked by local armies.

However, they had also watched God defeat the Egyptian army. God had given them bread, meat and water. God was visible in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Why were they now afraid of the smaller armies of the promised land?

Most of the time, it is people who say to God, "how long?"



In today's scripture lesson, is it God who says, "How long? How long will you despise me?" After everything God had done for Israel, it wasn't enough. They could not love God enough to follow and trust.

The first five books of the Bible are called the "Torah" which means the "teaching". They are often called the "Books of the Law" and indeed there are lots of rules in these book. However, there are also lots of stories and long family trees.

Why are they all mixed together? What do these books teach?

These books teach that following the rules is just a start. God also calls people to something far more personal and all consuming.

Last week, we considered that obedience to God means more than following the rules obedience to God means to follow God.

This is illustrated often in Jesus' life. Remember the story of Jesus and the rich young man? "What must I do to live in God's kingdom?" He asked Jesus. "You know the law," Jesus answered, "You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honour your father and mother." The young man replied, "Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth." Jesus, looked at him, loved him and said, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me."

We start by obeying God's commandments but God is seeking people who will follow him each day.

There is a kind of recklessness to this kind of obedience to God. It requires trust.

These books teach that obedience to God means more than following the rules: obedience to God means trusting God.

Consider the different ways we trust:

I trust the grocery store will have some food to buy.

I trust there will be water when I turn on the tap.

I trust I will get paid for my work.

In these cases, I am counting on things to provide what they are designed to provide. If I trust my tap at home to provide chocolate milk, I will be disappointed.

My trust in those situations is impersonal. My trust is not based on mutual concern. If the store is out of something I need, it isn't because they hate me.

Compare that with another kind of trust:

I trust my spouse to listen.

I trust my colleagues to work together.

I trust my MLA to help me and our city.

This time, I am counting on a person with whom I have a relationship. They are not taps or stores that I can go to them and assume I will get what expect. In fact, sometimes things are not easy or don't go well in our relationships. And of course, the other person has a say in things. I may not get what I was hoping for. That is precisely when trust in a person becomes a choice.

My trust is more of a heart commitment on my part to these people.

For twenty years now my wife has never required a device to give her directions. Every time we get in the car, I save her all the trouble of having to think for herself about which is the fastest way or to consult her phone. She has actually warned me a few times that if I want, she can stop the car and we can switch places.

Surprisingly, when I trust her, we end up exactly where we were planning to go.

I have the same problem with God. I don't take the time to trust that God knows when we are going, how we will get there, and how we will get through any trouble on the way.

Many people who are part of this church have shared their testimony of trusting God. Some are no longer with us.

There was the farm couple with young children, where the husband was struck with polio before harvest. Things got so bad, she remembers walking to the end of her lane, crying, telling God that she wasn't going to make it. But God got us through it she told me.

There was the indigenous mother whose husband had left her and their little children. Then, word reached the reserve that in the morning, officials would be coming to remove all the children from the reserve and to place them in residential schools. She wasn't going to let anyone come and take her children away. With a prayer, she packed up her kids that night and started walking. They walked through the night and the coming days until they reached Regina, safely and together.

Some of us have trusted God when we've been without work, or through illness or grief.

Jesus said to the young man, "Sell everything you own, give it all away, and then come, follow me." That required a remarkable level of trust in Jesus.

In the Exodus, similarly, God said to the people of Israel, "Follow me ... into the desert!" Thousands of people and their livestock followed God where there was no water and no

food. Certainly, they were hungry and thirsty at times. They had to choose to trust God but again and again they could not.

And in today's story, God said, "Go into this occupied land and take it. I will give it to you." This was yet again a dangerous and risky plan.

But even now they could not trust God.

Following God requires courage. There is risk. "In this world," Jesus promised, "You will have trouble."

These books also carry a sobering and ominous warning. The Torah teaches that at some point, the hour of reckoning arrives.

There comes a time when, after we have refused to trust God over and over again, God finally accepts our "no", our refusal to trust, and allows us to we suffer the consequences of our choice.

Israel refused to trust and follow God into the land. Moses and Aaron fell down on their faces and prayed for God to forgive the people.

The Lord said, "I do forgive, just as you have asked; nevertheless none of the people who have seen my glory and the signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have tested me these ten times and have not obeyed my voice, shall see the land that I swore to give to their ancestors; none of those who despised me shall see it.

But your little ones, who you said would become plunder, I will bring in, and they shall know the land that you have despised.

And your children shall be shepherds in the wilderness for forty years, and shall suffer for your faithlessness, until the last of your dead bodies lies in the wilderness."

These are terrible words to hear coming from the God we know as gracious and patient. The God whose name is, "Slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love." How could God judge Israel in this way?

When people in our culture speak of God, it is not uncommon to hear two incompatible opinions.

On the one hand, we say, "If there is a God, he shouldn't be judgmental or demanding. God should be understanding and accepting of everyone."

And yet at the same time, we say, "If there is a God, how can he continue to allow all this suffering? How can God allow the powerful to continue to oppress the vulnerable? Why doesn't God do anything?"

We can't have it both ways.

For our sakes, God is patient and gives us chance after chance to choose to trust him and follow him.

But for the sake of the people crying out to God for help, for the sake of the earth, God does not allow suffering to go on forever. The day comes when we will lose our chance to say "yes".

Scripture, and countless other witness call to us, "Today, if you hear God's voice, do not harden your hearts as in the day of rebellion... hold your first confidence firm to the end."

Today, choose again to trust God and to follow him.

Benediction

It has been my experience that if you scratch the surface in someone's life, they have some experience of longing to trust God. I encourage us as a congregation to ask one another what our experience of trusting God has been, and to be amazed at the stories that we hear. We will be strengthened and encouraged in our own faith as we hear them, and likewise share our stories of God's faithfulness in our own life. We can then go a step further. Having shared with people we know and trust and love, we can be ready to share with our neighbours and with the people we work with that God can be trusted, that a life with God is the richest, most fulfilling life.

As you go, go with the blessing of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The lord lift up his countenance upon you and grant you peace. 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](http://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](mailto:main_fbcregina@sasktel.net) for further details.

## The Benefits of Online Giving (especially during the pandemic)

1. No mailing, dropping off, or picking up of tithes is required.
2. The church receives e-Transfers immediately...no waiting for the tellers to physically count and deposit the cash and cheques.
3. It is actually SAFER! Did you know that every cheque you write has ALL your bank account information on it (those computer-like numbers at the bottom)? As well as your name and address. Also, cash and cheques can be misplaced or lost in the mail.
4. Signing up for PAR means you don't have to remember to provide a weekly or monthly offering, and ensures the church has a steady source of revenue to cover expenses. Only the treasurer and the bank would initially see your banking information for registration.
5. Interac e-Transfers are easy to use and secure. Your money doesn't actually travel by email or text message – just the notifications and deposit instructions. The receiving and sending banks transfer the funds to each other using established and secure banking procedures with encryption and authentication. No one sees your banking information.

NOTE: Giving via CanadaHelps and PayPal Giving Fund are less attractive as they do not distribute the funds to us immediately. Depending on when the donation was made, we may wait until the following month to receive it. As well, CanadaHelps deducts a fee for every donation. However, the donor receives a tax receipt immediately, so the church does not have to issue one.

That being said, we will definitely accept your tithes and offerings by any method you choose. Please let the church know if we can assist in any possible way. THANK YOU!

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### The Spread of COVID-19 Is Based On Two Factors:

1. How Dense The  
Population is
2. How Dense The  
Population is

When you dream in colour, it's just a pigment  
of your imagination.

Financially, I'm set for life. Provided I don't live  
past next Wednesday.

Q: What did the buffalo say to his little boy  
when he dropped him off at school?

A: "Bison."

Q: What is small, red, and whispers?

A: A hoarse radish.

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