

First Baptist Regina Weekly News

For the Week of September 13th, 2020

The news these days from around the world can leave us feeling helpless and weighed down. Many report feeling anxiety without knowing exactly where it is coming from.



Each week, we try to create a newsletter that is encouraging and meaningful. In the midst of difficult times, we want people to hear a little bit about what is happening at the church and how God is still at work. Also, a little humour never hurts. We will get through this together.

This past Sunday morning, a number of people gathered for the worship service and communion in our sanctuary, while many others joined in from their homes. It was visual reminder that we are connected together through the Holy Spirit even if we cannot see each other face to face.



Know that you are in the thoughts and prayers of others in the congregation. Let us continue to pray for one another, with thanksgiving to God.

With love,
Pastor Joel

Achievers Luncheon on Zoom

On Thursday, September 24, at 12:00 noon, we will hold our first Achievers Luncheon of the fall. It will be held online, and our guest speaker will be Julie Hovey. Julie will share with us: "My Life Journey on Reflection." If you would like to join the luncheon from your home, here is the link to the Zoom meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89576326645>. For more information, please contact Pastor John by email at john.fbcregina@sasktel.net, or leave a message at the church at (306) 359-1450.

Internship

Beginning this week, Julie Hovey, wife of Pastor Richard Hovey, will begin interning with us. Julie is nearing the completion of her Master's program in Christian Ministry at Briercrest Seminary. She will be working in the area of Children's Ministry at First Baptist.

Lebanon Update

Canadian Baptist Ministries (CBM) has released a new video which provides an inspiring update on ministry in the aftermath of the Beirut explosion. It is narrated by Nabil Costa, head of the Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development (LSESD).

The video, entitled *LSESD – Loving God, Loving our Neighbor*, reports on how the various ministries associated with the LSESD have been ministering to the thousands of people affected by the horrendous explosion of August 4th. This video may be found at:

<https://youtu.be/0xU5x63p2cQ>

Although the government's matching fund has ended, CBM is still receiving donations for emergency aid. Donations can be made by calling CBM at (905) 821-3533, or by mailing a cheque to:

Canadian Baptist Ministries
7185 Millcreek Dr
Mississauga ON L5N 5R4



Donations may also be made online through the CBM website: <https://www.cbmin.org>

First Baptist Regina Re-Opening

First Baptist Regina has re-opened its sanctuary for in-person worship services. On Sunday, September 13th, a total of 42 people gathered in the church for the service. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak with one of the board members or pastors, email the church at main_fbcregina@sasktel.net or leave a message at (306) 359-1450.

Opportunities for Fall

New Series in Learning for Life: A Study of the Epistle of Paul to the Romans

On Sunday, September 13th, Annabel R. began facilitating a new online series in Learning for Life. The class will explore how Paul's epistle to the Romans focuses on his message to the followers in Rome, who are under the shadow of Caesar. Paul states that God's plan for the world has been revealed through Jesus, and his message demonstrates that God has been faithful to his covenant with Israel. For more information, please contact Annabel, or leave a message at the church at (306) 359-1450.

A Study of the Gospel of John

Pastor Richard will be leading a small group online via Zoom on the second and fourth Wednesday at 7pm and Fridays at 10am of each month. We will be looking at the Gospel of John. If you are interested in joining this group, please contact Pastor Richard at richard.fbcregina@sasktel.net or by leaving a message at (306) 359-1450.

Reading Through the Old Testament

Pastor Richard will also be facilitating an online Old Testament Reading Group, in which we will be reading through the Old Testament chronologically. This group will be meeting weekly, via Zoom, at two different times: Sundays at 4pm and Thursdays at 11am. For more information, please contact Pastor Richard at richard.fbcregina@sasktel.net or by leaving a message at (306) 359-1450.

Renovaré

Pastor Richard's part time position with us allows him to continue to lead Renovaré Canada. Renovaré has a couple of online programs running this fall. The Online Renewal Group is a small group which focuses on spiritual formation into Christlikeness.

Secondly, Pastor Richard is offering an online course through Renovaré, entitled Wendell Berry: A Spirituality of Sustenance. Wendell Berry is a Christian author whose many writings include essays, fiction, and poetry.

For more information on either of these opportunities, please contact Pastor Richard at richard.fbcregina@sasktel.net, or leave a message at (306) 359-1450.

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 for the link.

Children

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

Youth

The youth are meeting on Saturday, September 19, at Pastor Chris' place for a campfire and Bible study. They plan to do outdoor, face-to-face events for as long as the weather permits and it appears safe enough to do so. For more information, please email Pastor Chris at chris.fbcregina@sasktel.net, or leave a message at (306) 359-1450.

Spiritual Disciplines Series:

As you have probably read before in the gospel accounts, Jesus shared this sentiment with his followers: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." Jesus calls us, as his followers, to lay down our lives – our own interests and hopes and plans – for the sake of the Kingdom of God. This is an act of submission – submission to one who is worthy of having our full service and attention.

Sincere submission comes out of a place of realization of all that God has done for us in Christ. That in Christ, God humbles himself to the point of death, even death on a cross, for us. Our submission to him is a response to this marvelous truth. In submission to God we are learning to love him with all of our heart, mind, strength and soul.

Thomas R. Kelly beautifully wrote: "Like Saint Augustine, one asks not for greater certainty of God, but only for more steadfastness in Him. There, beyond, in Him is the true Center, and we are reduced, as it were, to nothing, for He is all. . . Self is emptied into God, and God in-fills it. In glad, amazed humility we cast on Him our little lives in trusting obedience, in erect, serene, and smiling joy. And we say, with a writer of Psalms, 'Lo, I come: in the book of the law it is written of me, I delight to do Thy will, O my God' (40:7-8). For nothing else in all heaven or earth counts as much as His will, His slightest wish, His faintest breathing. And holy obedience sets in, sensitive as a shadow, obedient as a shadow, selfless as a shadow. . . Gladly, urgently, promptly one leaps to do His bidding, ready to run and not be weary and to walk and not faint."

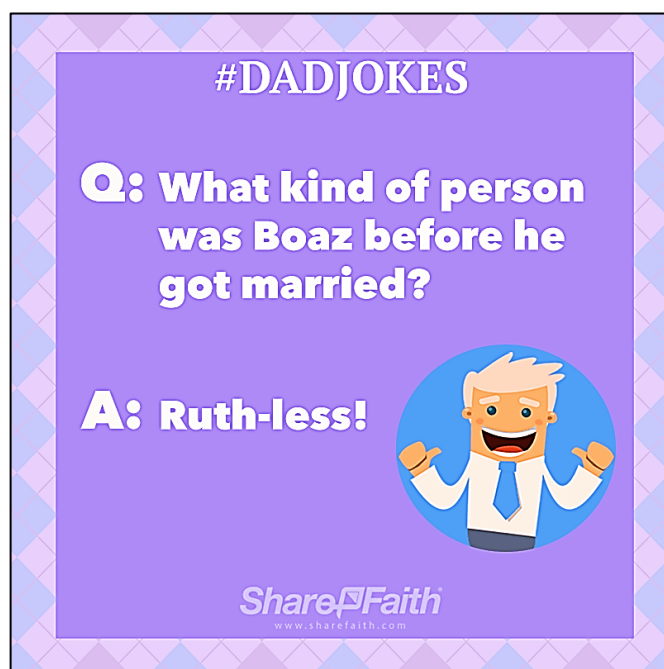
We are also called to submit to each other. Hear the words of Paul in his letter to the church at Philippi: “If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.”

Lacy Finn Borgo has defined submission this way: “My child-friendly definition of submission is, ‘giving up getting our own way.’”

In submitting to others, and loving our neighbour as ourselves, we gladly give up the desire to always have things go our way in the decisions that are being made. It is a taking into account the opinions of others and at times laying down our own preferences.

I encourage you this week to be mindful of two simple (but difficult) practices:

- Search your heart: are there areas in your life where God is not first? What are some practical ways you can increase loving God with all of your heart, mind, strength and soul?
- Are there ways that you can love your family - biological or spiritual - through letting go of having your own way? List some things you could let go of in order to put the interests of others before yourself.



Q: What time does a duck wake up?

A: At the quack of dawn.

Q: What do you get when you throw a piano down a mine shaft?

A: A flat miner.

Q: What does the man in the moon do when his hair gets too long?

A: Eclipse it!

Q: Why did the Dali Lama refuse to let the dentist give him anesthetic when they fixed his cavities?

A: He wanted to transcend dental medication.

Finances

As of the end of August, our revenue is 14% below our YTD budget. Our expenses are 11% below YTD budget. This results in a current deficit of \$8,500 (spending more than our income).

Approved Operating Budget for 2020:	\$ 427.6K
Operating Budget to the end of August 2020:	\$ 285.1K
Operating Revenue to end of August 2020:	\$ 244.9K
Operating Expenses to end of August 2020:	\$ 253.4K
Restricted Reserve Balance: (Benevolent, Building, Organ, and Legacy Funds)	\$ 101.6K
CBWC Loan Balance:	\$ 0.0K
Organ Fund Loan	\$ 201.0K
CEBA (CRA) Loan	\$ 40.0K

Website

As you know, the COVID-19 pandemic 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 the various programs that are available and how our church leadership and pastors are responding to the pandemic.

Click on the calendar icon (pictured on the right) at the bottom of any of our web pages to open the Calendar of Events page. Each entry on the calendar provides a link to information about various events, Learning for Life, small group studies, prayer times, etc. You can keep on top of upcoming events by visiting the calendar page regularly.



Also on our website are links to our Facebook page and YouTube channel, where you will find video reflections, devotions, and studies by a number of our members and pastors.

If you don't have a computer and/or internet access, the Regina Public Library has public computers on which you may access the church website. If you need assistance, one of the library staff members will be able to help you.

Did Paul Have Any Friends?

Pastor Joel's sermon from September 13, 2020

Colossians 1:1-4, 4:7-18

Our culture values close relationships. Children play a game where they rank their friends: you are someone I know, she's my friend-friend, he's my best friend, she's my very best friend. They play these games because they watch and listen to adults doing something similar. It is not just our culture.

The Greek philosopher, Aristotle, devoted two entire chapters of his philosophy on what a good life looks like to describe the ideal friendship: "A mutual love between equals in reciprocally seeking the well-being of the other in the pursuit of virtue."

Paul, the scholar, trained in Roman and Jewish schools, had most likely read Aristotle's Nicomachean ethics. Did Paul have friends? Did Paul value his friendships?

How do you picture Paul? I had never given it much thought until I heard Scot McKnight talking about it.

Do you see him as working alone most of the time? All the time? Do you picture him travelling alone?

Maybe it is just me, but I have this picture of him going from town to town alone or perhaps with someone who might be of use. I suppose I imagined him as the kind of single-minded, purpose-driven man who has a job to do and doesn't have time for the pleasure of friendship.

In his letters, Paul comes across as difficult, forceful, demanding, even harsh.

He doesn't seem like a guy who would have many friends.

This false image we have of Paul is one reason I thought we should read to the boring "list of names" from Colossians 4. The lists of names are easy to skim over when you read Paul. But almost every one of Paul's letters ends with a list of people who were with him and worked alongside him.

Who was with Paul when he wrote this letter? Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, and Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. Remember him? He is the young man that Acts tells us Paul refused to bring on his earliest journeys. They were obviously reconciled by this point. Jesus who is called Justus, Epaphras, Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas.

Note in Colossians 4: 15: “Nympha and the church in her house.” The plainest reading of this verse is that one of the leaders of this early church in Colossae was a woman.

This is not a small group of people. Paul has a crowd with him.

What does that say about him as a friend? We should remember as well how Paul described the challenges he faced in travel and evangelism in 2 Corinthians 11. Paul had been stoned, whipped, beaten on many occasions, and shipwrecked 3 times. And this letter is being written from prison. This long list of people risked their safety and sacrificed their comfort just to be with Paul.

Most of the time, Paul's letters do not even claim to be written by him alone.

Many of what we call Paul's letters begin with more than one name. The letter to the church in Colossae was from Paul and Timothy. Other letters include co-authors Titus and Silas. Romans includes this line: “I, Tertius, the writer of this letter, send you Christian greetings.”

And the churches Paul wrote to, he called the people, my loved ones, beloved.

These are not the words of the kind of man who is so singled mindedly focused on a vision or on the task at hand that he cannot develop close, loving relationships with the people around him. This is not the story of a man who only saw the people around him as a means to an end, as co-workers.

So, where does the idea of Paul the lonely, solo, leader come from? This picture is a total fiction. Paul is constantly surrounded by friends.

Scot McKnight suggests the image of Paul working alone comes from all the preaching and teaching the church has received from men who themselves have insisted on working alone. Men who never figured out how to work well with others, have misread Paul and, unconsciously, given this false picture of an individualistic, uncompromising figure.

Perhaps our North American culture is to blame as well. We are proud of our independence: “I can do it. I'll be fine. I don't want to be a bother. Don't trouble yourself. Sorry to have imposed. Sorry to have put you out.” Maybe I'm only speaking for myself, but I find it so hard not to say those words when someone reaches out to help me.

The one time Paul was nearly alone, he asked for company; he pleaded for company. In 2 Timothy 4:9, Paul wrote to Timothy, “Do your best to come to me soon.” Verse 10: “Demas...has deserted me...Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia.” Verse 11: “Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you.”

Paul never hints at being able to do things on his own and never suggests that he was okay without company.

I think seeing Paul as a close friend to many people who loved him so much they risked their lives to stay with him in prison is a powerful image when we then turn to the rest of his letter. I think it is powerful to see Paul as someone who knew he needed to be part of a group that loved each other. He needed friends.

Paul takes all of this one step further.

Given the importance of friendship in Greek scholarly philosophy, among the elite in Roman society, given the number of close friendships we have seen that Paul had, how often would you guess that Paul used the word “friend” or “friendship”? Just guess. More than 50? More than 100? The answer is zero.

Not once did Paul call any of these people friends. Not once did he even refer to friendship. Doesn't that undermine everything I've said?

Paul called the people he was with “my brother” and “my sister” exclusively. Hundreds of times, Paul called the people he was with and the people he was writing to, his family.

This was not part of Jewish culture. This was not part of Roman culture. This didn't come from Greek philosophy. It didn't come from the Old Testament. Paul's exclusive use of family words to describe friendships is something new.

It came directly from Jesus.

Jesus had changed Paul's heart. Paul's capacity for love had been transformed. Love tied the people of the church together.

Aristotle had said that unequals could not be friends. Men and women couldn't truly be friends; slaves and free really couldn't be friends. The closest friendships were between well to do, virtuous men.

Paul urged people to love each other in the church: male and female, slave and free, Greek and Jew. In all of his actions, in all of his letters, Paul said, “You are not just friends, you are family.”

Jesus not only transforms hearts and gives people in the church love for one another, Jesus began the church by calling family. As we read in Matthew 4:18-22, “As Jesus walked

by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, and he said to them, 'Follow me.' As he went from there, he saw two other brothers. He called them and they followed him."

Later in the Gospel, Jesus asks, "Who is my family?" "Anyone who follows me," he answers, "they are my sister or my brother."

And from the cross, pointing to one of his disciples, Jesus said to his mother, "Here is your son." And to his disciple, he said, "Here is your mother."

Jesus was creating not just a group of people who thought similarly or shared similar ideals or convictions. Jesus was creating a new family.

To be part of a church is to be part of a family. When we are baptized, God changes us in some way that we cannot see or fully understand. We cannot see the ties that unite us with our biological family, and yet they are there. It is the same with the church family.

It is easy to slip into bad habits, to treat the church as a place you go to. Sometimes we attend here, sometimes there. But this goes against our new God-given nature.

The church is a place you belong to. Whether you make the most of that or not, that is how God changed you when you were saved.

Paul wrote Colossians from prison. Being in prison must have heightened his sense of how much he loved his church family. In his *Letters From Prison*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer shared how he longed desperately to be able to worship and pray with his brothers and sisters.

What does Covid-19 reveal about what the church means to you?

We can nurture this gift, these relationships with our new God-given family, or we can neglect that part of our life.

We can let Covid-19, or busyness, or other priorities, or weariness, or just boredom come between us and our wellbeing in the church. We can let this part of our life die.

Today, we gather around the family table for the Lord's Supper. Through this meal, I'm convinced that God actually does something in our hearts when we take this meal with faith. Every time we share this meal, God feeds our hearts and unites us in love.

Let us Pray: Heavenly Father, for all of the times our church family has come alongside us, we give thanks to you, for you have made us part of this church family. For all of the times our hearts have been filled with affection or gratitude for the people of the church, we give you thanks, for we know that this love comes from you and we know that when we love, we are taking part in your presence in our midst. We pray for those who feel isolated

and alone. May they know that there is a church family here ready to welcome them and befriend them. For those who are no longer able to leave their home, we pray that they would know that they are in our prayers regularly. We pray that when we have hurt others, that you would forgive us, and that you give us a chance to be reconciled. We pray for those times that we have been hurt that you would help us to forgive. May all those who are in need know that they do not have to do this on their own, because you have made us a family so that we can carry each other. Amen

Benediction

As you go, may the Lord sustain you until the day when the clouds are rolled back, when you will see Jesus Christ, face to face, and hear, "Well done, my beloved servant." And as you go, may you know that you are a part of this church family, that you are loved, that we are knit together through the Holy Spirit. May the Lord bless you and keep you, and make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you, may the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you his peace. Go with the blessing of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The peace of Christ be with you all. Amen.

**I Cant Wait To Walk
Down The Aisle
Someday And Hear
Those Magical
Word's "This Is Your
Pilot 🍷 Speaking " ✈️**

I gave all my dead batteries away today...free of charge.

A teacher asked her students to use the word "beans" in a sentence. "My father grows beans," said one girl. "My mother cooks beans," said a boy. A third student spoke up, "We are all human beans."

I can't take my dog to the park because the ducks keep trying to bite him. I guess that's what I get for buying a pure bread dog.

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.