

# First Baptist Regina Weekly News

*For the Week of October 18th, 2020*

On my walks to the church building this past week, the weather seems to have changed rather too abruptly for my liking. We had a day with the temperature above 20 Celsius just over a week ago and now I'm looking for my toque and long johns. But, quickly or slowly, I guess I can't be surprised by the arrival of cold weather. I have been through this before, just a few times.

Scripture claims that the change of seasons are actually a sign of God's faithfulness. Do you think of God's faithfulness when you step out into the cold weather? That isn't the first thought that crosses my mind! However, the scripture says, "The Lord said in his heart, 'As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.'" (Genesis 8:21-22) So, it is going to happen, whether I'm ready or not. I suppose that means I should be ready.



Every year at this time, my wife and I have to get our garden and home ready for winter, and get the right clothing out of closets for our family, none of which is too demanding. However, even though the tasks do not change, I find some years harder than others. The real work is within me, in my heart and in my mind. Change is hard, as they say, and the change in seasons exposes what is going on inside me. Is it joy? Peace? Boredom? Restlessness? Gratitude? Weariness? Sadness? Excitement? If only maturing spiritually was as easy as raking leaves and emptying the eaves trough. It isn't, so now is the time to persist in the habits and practices of faith through which God feeds us.

If your heart is content this year, share it with others in your neighbourhood and church. This is likely to be an exceptionally challenging time for many. If, however, these days are not easy for you, give someone a call. I guarantee you, your pastors and many others at the church are thinking and praying for you. Take heart. All changes are in God's hands and he cares for you.

With love,

Pastor Joel

## **First Baptist Regina Re-Opening**

First Baptist Regina has re-opened its sanctuary for in-person worship services. If you are planning to attend this Sunday and it will be your first time back, please familiarize yourself with the [attendance guidelines](#), found on our website.

## **Birth Announcements**

Jonathan and Kim Ehmann welcomed a baby boy, Cruze Jonathan, on September 23rd. Cruze is a brother to Soleil, almost 5, and Kossette, 2.

David and Blair Ehmann welcomed a baby girl, Every Jane, on October 10th. Every is their first child.

Congratulations to proud grandparents, Drs. Barb Ziolkowski and Tom Chenn.

## **Jennifer Lau Appointed as CBM Executive Director – Mississauga, Ontario**

Canadian Baptist Ministries' (CBM) Board of Directors announces that, after an extensive search process, Jennifer Lau, CBM's current Associate Executive Director, has been appointed as the next Executive Director, effective November 1, 2020.

Jennifer has served with CBM since 2002 in various roles, primarily focusing on providing the marketing strategy and direction for all of CBM's endeavors in Canada. Most recently, Jennifer's appointment as Associate Executive Director in 2018 also gave her oversight of the organization's operations.

In her time at CBM, Jennifer...has traveled across Canada and to many countries around the world, seeking to connect Canadian Baptists to the people CBM serves globally. She has continued to bring her deep faith in the Lord, passion to serve the vulnerable, and commitment to excellence, integrity and skill in areas of communications, strategic management, marketing and fundraising to bear as a senior leader in the organization.

*Says Jennifer, "I am so excited to be part of this next phase of CBM's organizational development as its Executive Director. It is a gift to work with such a remarkable staff team, as we serve together to help meet the needs of the people and partners we work with globally. Being part of CBM is a privilege and I look forward to seeing how God's Spirit continues to move around the world as we faithfully serve him."*

Jennifer is married to Chun and they have two children. Please be in prayer for Jennifer and CBM's Board of Directors and staff, as they continue seeking God's leading for the organization.

To read the whole article, go to the [CBM website](#).

## Spiritual Disciplines Series: Communion

It is fascinating to reflect on who was served the first “communion” by Jesus when he broke the bread and poured the cup, saying, “Take, this is my body,” and gave them the cup saying, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.” The disciples, whom Jesus shared this bread and cup with, were far from perfect. They struggled in understanding who he was, and what this all meant; they struggled with belief itself. One would soon betray, another deny, and all would scatter – in disbelief, skeptical, doubting who Jesus, in fact, was. Communion. Communion was served to this group – by Jesus.

We come around the Lord’s table, we take the bread and the cup, not because we have it all figured out; not because we no longer have any doubts, skepticism, disbelief, nor because we have ceased making mistakes, nor because we are beyond the danger of betraying. We do this because we are invited: invited into belief, hope, new life – relationship with God through Christ by the power of the Spirit, and into true human fellowship with others. In communion, we are invited to taste redemption: The offer of pure love to the impure in heart; the offer of fellowship to those distanced from the presence; the offer of abundant life to those struggling to survive. And it is all grace.

Communion is an invitation to right relationship to those still trying to figure it out; right relationship with God and with one another. In his letter to the church at Corinth, Paul wrote: “The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread” (1 Corinthians 10:16-17). John Michael Talbot writes:

When you eat my body,  
You drink my blood,  
I will live in you,  
And you will live in my love.

We are one body, one body in Christ,  
And we do not stand alone.  
We are one body, one body in Christ,  
And he came that we might have life.

Let us, in all our brokenness, continue to commune with our perfect Lord and, through his grace, with one another.

—Pastor Richard

## Achievers' Virtual Luncheon

The next Achievers' Luncheon will be held on October 29, at 12:00 noon, over Zoom. Our guest speaker will be Rev. Dr. Mark McKim, whose theme will be "Where are They Now? My Life in Reflection." For further details about the luncheon and to access the Zoom link, visit the [church website](#). The link will also be included in the *First this week* email the weeks of October 18 and 25. For more information, please contact [Pastor John](#).

## Opportunity to Serve

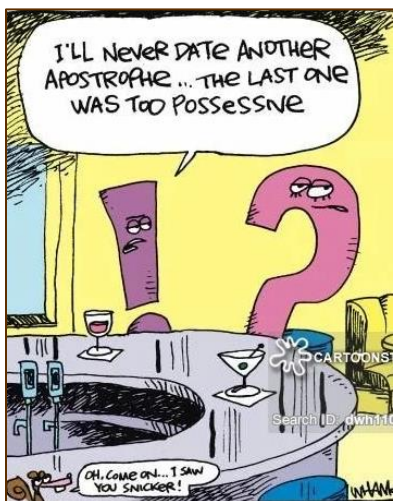
We are seeking to add people to help prepare communion. If this is something you could help with once a month, please speak with one of the pastors, email [the church](#), or call (306) 359-1450. Thank you.

## Website

As you know, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our church events and schedules in every way. The church website ([firstbaptistregina.ca](http://firstbaptistregina.ca)) is a valuable source of information that can help keep you connected and up to date with the various programs that are available.

One easy way to keep on top of upcoming events is to click on the calendar icon at the bottom of each page on the website. Each entry on the calendar provides a link to information about various events, such as Learning for Life, small group studies, and prayer times.

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.



Anne went away to college and promptly became an avid animal right activist. When she came home for the holidays she noticed her mother wearing a beautiful genuine fur coat. "Oh Mom," Anne said in a disapproving tone, "some animal must have suffered terribly just so you can get a fur coat." "ANNE!" exclaimed her Mom, aghast, "I SEND YOU AWAY TO COLLEGE AND YOU COME BACK TALKING LIKE THAT?! HOW DARE YOU TALK ABOUT YOUR FATHER THAT WAY!!!"

In my house, I'm the boss. My wife is just the decision maker. (Woody Allen)

## 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](#) for the link.

### Children

Our Sunday morning in-person kids' class, *Godly Play*, resumed on Sunday, September 27th. We are following health guidelines. For more information, please contact [Pastor Kayely](#).

### Youth

The youth will meet at the Johnston's farm on Saturday, October 24th, from 4:30 to 7:00 pm, for a hay wagon ride and campfire. For more information, please contact [Pastor Chris](#).

### Adults

**Learning for Life:** Annabel R. is facilitating an online series on the book of Romans. 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, send an email to [the church](#), or call (306) 359-1450.

**Voice** is a small group for women who like to read and enjoy lively conversation. Voice meets every second Wednesday from 7 to 9 pm, using Zoom. At present, the group is reading *Jesus Among Other Gods* by Ravi Zacharias. For more information, visit [our website](#), send an email to [the church](#), or call (306) 359-1450.

**Reading through the Old Testament:** In this online reading group, participants will read through the Old Testament chronologically. The group will be meeting weekly, via Zoom, at two different times: Sundays at 4 pm and Thursdays at 11 am. If you are interested in joining this group, please contact [Pastor Richard](#), and he will provide you with the reading schedule and Zoom link.

**Gospel of John small group study:** Pastor Richard is leading a small group online that is looking at the Gospel of John. This group is meeting, via Zoom, on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month at 7 pm, and the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month at 10 am. If you are interested in joining this group, please contact [Pastor Richard](#).

**Renovaré Canada** has a couple of online programs running this fall. There is an [Online Renewal Group](#) as well as a course (taught by Pastor Richard) entitled, [Wendell Berry: A Spirituality of Sustenance](#). For more information on either of these opportunities, please contact [Pastor Richard](#), or leave a message at (306) 359-1450.

## **“Next to the Word of God, Music...”**

Pastor John’s sermon from October 18, 2020

(My first sermon, preached 42 years ago, at Altadore Baptist Church, Calgary, Alberta)

Psalms 150; Ephesians 5:19, 2; 1 Corinthians 13; Colossians 3:16-17

The preacher’s evening discourse was dry and long, and the congregation gradually melted away. The custodian tiptoed up to the pulpit and slipped a note under one corner of the preacher’s Bible. It read: WHEN YOU ARE THROUGH, WILL YOU PLEASE TURN OFF THE LIGHTS, LOCK THE DOORS AND PUT THE KEY UNDER THE MAT.

It is notable that God’s people have offered up His praise in both psalm and song from the earliest days, as they participated in worship. Sadly, with the passing years, congregational singing of hymns has become increasingly less important. However, each new age has contributed its own rich expression and valued form, fortunately retaining the best of the past. (E.g, hymns, Sunday School choruses/songs, contemporary Christian music, and praise and worship).

When we speak of hymns, we are referring to those music elements that give expression to our deepest desire to “feel” our personal religion. There is an old hymn that has been sung for centuries, “Help Us to Feel that Thou Art Nigh.” This hymn reflects the believer’s faith that penetrates one’s inmost self, and we know that, for most of us, our feeling is more tangible than the logic of faith.

What are HYMNS? Hymns are so much more important than just to be sung for the purpose of pure entertainment or tradition. They are songs by which the heart of the worshipper communicates with the Great Musician – God. “They rank with prayers as an expression of humankind’s faith. They occupy a special place in our devotion, responding to that deep, inherent urge to praise God, to praise divinity musically.” (Author unknown)

Hymns cover a wide variety of aspects of our faith. There are hymns for every season, every mood, and to mark every festive moment. There are hymns that give expression to our hopes and sorrows, and hymns of thanksgiving and of exaltation.

Most of us know by heart at least a few of the 400,000 hymns written in English. Then there are those “personal” hymns that have left indelible impressions on our hearts. These hymns touch us deeply, striking a tender and responsive chord whenever we hear or give voice to them. “Vibrant with memories, they hold, with their slender frame, big chunks of our life.” (Author unknown) Yes, and in our moments of stress and turmoil, it is often a hymn that springs to mind. For example, when the Titanic sank in 1912 with a loss

of more than 1500 lives, the ship's orchestra struck up the hymn, "Nearer My God to thee." Passengers joined in, singing, as the ship went down.

It is a standing joke among the clergy and congregations that "half of the people come to church just for the singing." There is much truth radiating from that comment, for hymns DO teach doctrine. One unknown writer captured the essence of hymns in this quote, "behind hymns looms the ageless rock of scripture, from which they draw their living themes."

Many renowned figures such as St. Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, Rudyard Kipling, Fanny Crosby, and many others, have fathered/mothered some of our most well-known hymns. Among the composers, we have hymns from Bach, Handel, Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven. BUT, it is to Martin Luther, the strong and influential Reformation figure, who gave expression to the role and value of music in worship, when he said: "Next to the Word of God, MUSIC deserves the highest praise. The gift of language combined with the gift of song was given to man that he should proclaim the Word of God through Music."

I believe that there is a notable yearning to renew Martin Luther's concept of music, and to refrain from seeing music in the church as mere entertainment or tradition – a tradition that we have had a tendency to take for granted and deprive of any spiritual value or ministry.

Instead of allowing music programs to fall by the wayside, or "overloading music programs with mechanical schmaltz," we must challenge our churches to take a new look at what Martin Luther proclaimed, and offer worship that enriches believers through meaningful blended, contemporary, or traditional styles of worship.

Dr. Robert Webber, renowned worship writer, once said in this very sanctuary, "Worship styles change, but the Gospel message does not."

To be vital and meaningful, a church's ministry must consist of both theology *and* music as complimentary and compatible partners. Such a ministry will reflect that one element cannot survive without the other, if a true sense of worship is to be experienced. Yes, one could most definitely say that the WHOLE is much more important than any of its parts. However, one will discover that, on various occasions, "one might experience either part enhancing or furthering the effectiveness and overall ministry of the other." (Author unknown)

Do not get me wrong, it certainly is possible to worship without music, of course, for "any spoken or unspoken prayer or thought of God, done in love of God, is worship. It is a significant fact that the experience of the church through all ages has been that when the heart is filled and warm toward God, MUSIC IS HEARD." (Author unknown) If one needs examples of this, look at the life of David, and even the lonely Black slave. It is also very true of every mother who has sings a prayer to her child.

Our natural tendency seems to find that the human spirit will gravitate toward music when worshipping, because worship stimulates our deepest and strongest emotions – those emotions that demand greater expression than words can express.

When you study the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, you discover that there is hardly a book of the Old Testament or New Testament that is not mirrored in notable song. In the Old Testament, and occasionally in the New Testament, writers actually command believers to sing. For example, in Psalm 33:2-3, we are commanded to: *“Praise the Lord with the lyre; Make melody to him with the harp of ten strings.”*

The Bible reveals literally hundreds of references to some phrase of music in the Bible, and those references do not even include the Psalms. Well over three-quarters of the books of the Bible refer, in some way, to music.

To whom do we owe this mother lode of songs of praise?

It is ancient Jewry who gave us the songs of praise – the Book of Psalms. Yes, God’s chosen people were music lovers and made music, both vocal and instrumental. God presented to his people, a hymnal of the Bible, the Psalms (or songs), for use in worship and service.

One could say that the Book of Psalms was the first hymnal ever.

There are notations in ancient scripts that give the impression that portions of the Old Testament may have been sung by God’s people.

In this “hymn book,” the Book of Psalms, we find a mother lode of a wide variety of sacred songs known in the whole realm of hymnody today. It is a rich collection of 150 gems of the highest ideals and standards, given by inspiration and chosen to meet the need of every emotion of the soul.

Music in the Old Testament and New Testament had a definite place and role in the lives of God’s chosen people. Music was of utmost importance on occasions such as religious feasts, and played an important role in their social, economic and political life. The Psalms played a vital part in this role.

The Psalms were considered to be a “Little Bible” – a summary of the Old Testament.

In the New Testament, we have the four Gospels and Paul’s letters that provided an infinite variety of topics. We owe a debt of gratitude to the Apostle Paul who brought a militant strain that gives life and meaning to so many of our hymns. In Ephesians 5:19-20, Paul writes, “As you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”



What does Paul declare?

“Paul declares that one hallmark of the Spirit’s filling will be a desire to give vocal expression to the heart’s devotion to the Lord by the use of canticles and songs which the spirit inspires. In this way, Christians both edify one another (hence addressing one another) and give vent to their emotional stirrings by the spiritual exercise of thanksgiving to God.”

The Eerdman Bible Commentary states: “Paul seemed to visualize, in Colossians 3:16-17, music as a means by which to centre on, and communicate, the need for assimilating the Word. The word suggests more than presence and implies specific teaching by psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

“The RSV separates singing from the teaching, while the Greek would more naturally be understood to mean that the teaching was with the singing of the Psalms. What Paul may have meant here is that Christian assemblies’ teaching and admonition should be conveyed by means of various types of singing, as Ephesians 5: 19 explicitly states.”

What is Paul referring to when he writes, “Psalms?” Most theologians believe that Paul is referring to the Old Testament Psalms. However, as to how we discern the difference between hymns and spiritual songs is not clear. Possibly Christian canticles refer to songs like, “The Magnificat (Mary’ Song)”. As for the latter, we might interpret that to represent contemporary songs. This would include also the music we refer to as spirituals such as, “Go Down, Moses”, “Do Lord,” etc. As for hymns, most likely this refers to ascriptions to Christ.

Paul’s music exhortation enhances Martin Luther’s belief that, “Next to the Word of God, Music deserves highest praise, and man should use this GIFT to proclaim the Word of God.”

One would not be misinterpreting the Apostle Paul, if one was to say that he believed wholeheartedly that there was a purpose and condition of the heart for those taking part in worship:

“Singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord.”

“Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.

“Sing with the Spirit, giving thanks.”

When? ALWAYS.

Unto to whom? Unto God.

In whose name? In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Paul, in not so many words, implies that “our obligation is as great to what and how we sing or play, as it is that we sing or play at all.”

To be even more direct, God is deserving of more than our second best.

One of the many challenges that music faces in the church today, is to keep in mind that “every high moment of spiritual awakening in the history of the church has been accompanied by a revival of song, for singing is as close to worship as breathing is to life itself.” (Author unknown)

Once again, for any church to have an effective ministry, the church must involve both theology and music. Why? Because “both music and theology articulate a universal message. Music is a universal language, and although the words may be different, the music is a constant source of inspiration.” (Author unknown)

Many of us would find it very difficult, if not impossible, to shut music out. Have you ever found yourself whistling or humming a tune, and yet not being able to recall the words? Yes, music has a calming and peaceful effect, as one hymn so beautifully expresses, “Be still my soul.”

God uses music as an avenue to speak with His children. Fully understanding this, I would hope, will encourage and inspire all of us in the church today to reopen our hearts and minds to this reality.

God seeks to reach us through many avenues. What is required of us then? We must always be listening, seeking, and sensitive to these enriching and creative moments. Why? For then, and only then, will true worship be experienced in its full and wondrous glory. The music avenue functions as one of the avenues God uses to speak to us – the still small voice of the Great Musician, our Creator. Martin Luther expressed appreciation for music’s function when he wrote:

“I am heartily eager that the divine and heavenly gift of music be praised before all men. However, I am so overwhelmed by the multitude and greatness of its excellence and virtues that I can find neither beginning nor end, nor any adequate words to do it justice.

“One might also speak of the use of such a great thing, but its use is so infinitely various that it is beyond the eloquence of the greatest orators. We will mention only this one point now: Experience testifies that, after the Word of God, Music is deserving of highest recognition. A greater praise of music than this we cannot imagine. It is out of consideration for this power of music that the Fathers and Prophets willed, and not in vain that nothing be more closely bound up with the Word of God than Music.”

In conclusion, let me be clear that I am not saying, “Next to music, the Word deserves highest praise.” One writer captured the true essence of the function or role of music in worship, writing:

“MUSIC does not have the power to MAKE God’s love greater than it is. MUSIC can add nothing to God, as neither can preaching or architecture or painting; however, MUSIC does afford the most direct and effective avenue into the human heart of any of the arts, an avenue which God is pleased to use and encourage. MUSIC also has the power to lift the human heart to a sincere and healthy adoration of God and His works. It is in the realm of the Spirit that music makes its great and unique contribution. MUSIC is a communication medium by God, and is able to reach out to us and fill our cups to overflowing with His abundant love and teaching; thus increasing our faith in Him.” (Author unknown)

I believe with my whole heart and mind that MUSIC is a true GIFT of God. Religion still has much to learn from this GIFT. You see, “religion deals with life, and music is one of the perfect symbols of life. The church that neglects its music or assigns to it a purely pedestrian function, robs itself outrageously, and it flies in the face not only of the experience of the church, but also of the will of God.” (Author unknown)

In the words of the poet: “God is music’s author, and not man; He laid the keynote of all harmonies; He planned all perfect combinations, and He made us so that we could hear and understand that EVERYTHING that the sun shines upon, sings, and sings of the Great Musician.” (Author unknown)

Can we proclaim the Word of God through Music, the GIFT of song?

A thousand times, yes! To God be the glory!! Alleluia, Amen!!

Music is more than an art...more than entertainment...more than mere tradition. It is a matter of the heart and of our very faith. “We may not always be able to choose the music life plays for us, but we can choose how we sing and dance to it.” (Author unknown)

May God bless all of us and may God continue to guide us in this “Place to Belong” – First Baptist Church Regina...a church family that appreciates, encourages, loves, participates in, supports, and understands MUSIC. “Next to the Word of God, music deserves highest praise.”

Note: Apologies to any authors not given due credit (mention or quotation marks) for any material used in the preparation of this sermon from 42 years ago. The content of this sermon evolved from both my personal thoughts and from my previous course notes that I used in the teaching of Church Music at Baptist leadership Training School in Calgary, Alberta (1974-1986, Registrar & Music Director). These notes no longer exist.

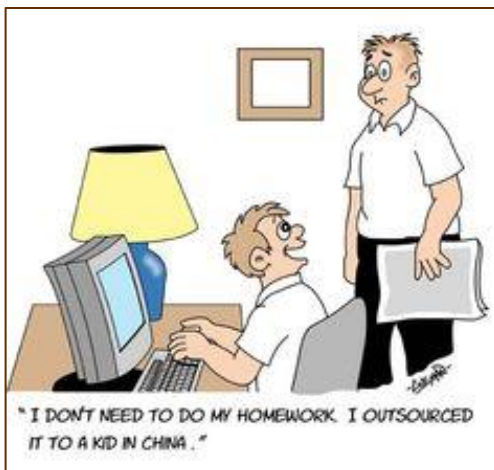
## Tithing during the pandemic

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: 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 pessimist may be right in the long run, but the optimist has a better time during the trip.

Always remember you're unique—just like everyone else.

I get enough exercise just pushing my luck!

Be nice to your children—they will be choosing your nursing home.

The best way to get a man to do something is to suggest he is too old for it.