

# First Baptist Regina Weekly News

*For the Week of October 4th, 2020*



The city is putting the final touches on the Victoria Avenue renewal as the fall season arrives in full. They've done a nice job with new, wider sidewalks and many more trees in the boulevard. We've included photos for those who are not able to get out and see it for themselves.

Inside the church, Pastor John has the bell tables set up for the first practice in six months, with everything spread out to allow for safe distancing. Our Sunday morning children's program has resumed, thanks to Pastor Kayely and Julie H. In a few weeks, our church will be hosting a polling station.

These are just a few signs of life in the midst of this unusual fall. May you see signs of God's grace around you, today and every day.



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 Sunday morning precautions, found on page 3 of the attachment: *First Baptist Regina Re-Opening Plan*, or see the [Letter from our Board and Pastor](#) on our website. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak with one of the board members or pastors, email [the church](#), or call (306) 359-1450.

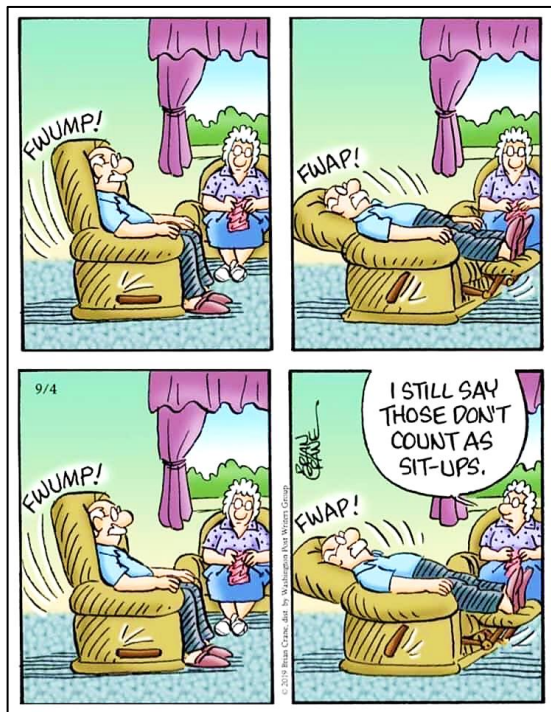
## Opportunity to Serve

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.

## JuBELLation Rings Again!

Excitement was in the air and bells rang out in the First Baptist Church sanctuary, as JuBELLation held its first rehearsal in six months, on October 6th.

Do you want to ring? Give JuBELLation some thought! Practices are held Tuesday evenings from 6:00 to 7:00 pm. Masks and physical distancing are being observed. For more information, please contact [Pastor John](#).



In a Catholic school cafeteria, a nun places a note in front of a pile of apples, "Only take one. God is watching." Further down the line is a pile of cookies. A little boy makes his own note, "Take all you want. God is watching the apples."

Teacher: "Which book has helped you the most in your life?"

Student: "My father's cheque book!"

Some people just don't know how to drive! I call these people "everybody except me."

Fall is half over, so if the wind hasn't blown your leaves into your neighbour's yard by now, you might have to actually rake them.

## Katepwa Lake Camp (KLC) Fall Update

The pandemic has changed everything for everyone, but we Christians know that all things work together for good for those who love the Lord – even COVID-19!

We began the year with great optimism – hiring staff, preparing for rentals, and putting programming together. Then as the reality of Covid hit home, we realized that we would have to cancel the rentals (leaving us short of much needed revenue), and eventually were told that traditional summer camps would not be allowed.

We stepped out in faith to honor our commitment to hire the core staff and invited the cabin staff and our Leaders in Training (LIT) participants to come and volunteer for a week or two in July. We were overwhelmed by the response and welcomed 20 staff and 25 LIT for varying periods through the month. Cam M. and Ethan H. planned out a very successful combination of spiritual development, Camp mentorship and challenging labour skills to refurbish KLC. Our faithful donors responded generously to provide funds to cover the cost of food for the month. Through this unique program we felt we could still fulfill our commitment *to ensure that each participant could know we saw their unique worth and potential – the way God sees them!*

August brought a new venture – “Family Getaway” holidays which quickly were filled to capacity. Following COVID safety rules we hosted a limited number of families with full services – food, accommodation and activities.

Through the summer we welcomed the efforts of volunteers to bring our camp property into better shape. Two cabins were re-shingled, and one bathroom repaired and brought back into service. September 26 and 27 brought out a number of volunteers with a cavalcade of pickup trucks to clear rubbish out and take many loads to the landfill. We will have another work day October 17th to continue some painting, renovate another two rooms in the lodge, and winterize the facilities.

Over the winter we have great plans to renew the dishwashing area and (if we raise enough money!) purchase a new dishwasher! If you can help with financial donations or volunteer labour, please contact Rosemary W, email [the church](#), or call (306) 359-1450.

We rejoice and praise God for giving us everything we need, and are confident that he is always with us!

—Submitted by Rosemary W.

## Spiritual Disciplines Series: Fellowship

What does Christian fellowship look like? And what makes this fellowship Christian? Well, first, it is a fellowship that is centered and grounded in Christ and our relationship with him.

John writes: "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). This fellowship is one which recognizes grace at its core, and operates out of a love for one another which is a response to the work of Christ in our midst. We recognize that we "are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that [we] may declare the praises of him who called [us] out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once [we] were not a people, but now [we] are the people of God; once [we] had not received mercy, but now [we] have received mercy" (1 Peter 2:9-10). Jesus, in light of this fellowship we now share, calls us to love one another; true fellowship calls us to love one another under God as we identify (fellowship) with Christ in our midst.

This is a different way of relating than what we see in the world. Henri Nouwen writes: "As long as we relate primarily to each other's wealth, health, stability, intelligence, and soul strength, we cannot develop true community. Community is not a talent show in which we dazzle the world with our combined gifts. Community is the place where our poverty is acknowledged and accepted, not as something we have to learn to cope with as best as we can, but as a true source of new life."

Christian fellowship works for the good of all, spurring one another on to good works, while facing our weaknesses together. Ronald Rolheiser writes: "Christianity will have power when we have vital communities which can, concretely, offer an alternative to the second-best compensations that our world offers. When the touch of human warmth, genuine community, is withheld, we will always have a lot of unbelievers and a lot of struggling believers."

Hear these words from C. S. Lewis: "To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket—safe, dark, motionless, airless—it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable."

This description is the opposite of Christian fellowship, in which we are called to "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). This carrying of each others' burdens, if genuine, will require a deep love for one another. As noted in Proverbs 17:17, "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity."

Might we learn this week that fellowship is more than showing up at a service together; it is more than individually believing the right things. Yes, Christian fellowship is a deep, mysterious, entering into one another's lives, which includes the mystery that our fellowship is also with Christ in our midst. This is a fellowship which calls us to reflect Christ as a community.

## What 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

We are excited to announce that our Sunday morning in-person kids' class resumed on Sunday, September 27th. We are following health guidelines. You will find all the details in a separate attachment: *FBC Families Reopening Letter*.

### Youth

There will be no youth event this weekend, due to the Thanksgiving Day holiday.

### 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. The next meeting will be on October 7th. 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.

## The Seal of Authority

Pastor Joel's sermon from October 4, 2020

Colossians 1:13-23

It might help if you want to open your Bibles, if you have them, to Colossians chapter one. We'll be walking through these verses one at a time.

I have often thought of these verses as primarily speaking about Jesus' pre-existence. That Jesus was God, that Jesus was with God at the beginning of creation, and that that is what Paul has in mind in these verses. But I would like to suggest to you that what is being described here is not Jesus' divinity, not his presence at the beginning of creation, but that what is being affirmed is Jesus' authority: his kingdom, his rule over all things.

Let's pray. Lord Jesus, we understand only in part, but we know this much: That you have been placed at the head of everything, and that all things are under your control. So we lift up our words and our reflection this morning, and pray that it would be your will to speak to us, to accomplish your purpose in our hearts and in our minds, that we might continue to be shaped into your representatives within creation. In your name we pray, Amen.

If you look at verses 13 and 14 of Colossians 1, Paul wrote, "God the father has rescued us from the power of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son."

So right away, the context for all of these verses is a competition between two kingdoms. On the one hand we have the power of darkness, and on the other, we have the power of Jesus. On the one hand we have the kingdom of darkness, and on the other hand, we have the kingdom of God's beloved Son, Jesus.

But if we move on, we get right away into the verse that I think trips us all up, or at least for those of us who have tended to think about these verses in one way. Verse 15 says, "The Son is the image of the invisible God." And it is natural for us to think of that as a physical representation of what is invisible. It is natural for us to remember Genesis 1 and to hear God saying, "I create you male and female in my likeness and in my image." And it's natural for us to think that there's some sort of resemblance that God has in mind there. That, in some way, we look like God as human beings.

In 1979, a Syrian farmer was enlarging his field. Farmers do that, right? There's never enough land. We're going to make it bigger. And while he was digging, he came across an archaeological artifact. I suppose here in the farms, we find arrowheads and buffalo-rubbed stones. There, they find ancient statues.

This one was thousands of years old. It was a statue of a King named Haddad Yisi, and there was an Arabic inscription on this statue: "This is my image. This is my likeness."

Now these words, in Aramaic, are identical to the Hebrew words when God said, "I create you...in my likeness and in my image." Was the point that this was a portrait? Was the King letting people know what he looked like? Was that what he was trying to communicate?

This was a marker, a landmark. When we come to the border of our country now, we say, "Welcome to Canada. Step this way. You can't pass unless you're willing to acknowledge the authority of this land, unless you're willing to comply with the rules."

This statue stood there saying, "This is the representation of my authority. This land is mine. It is under my authority. This land is under my rules. This land is under my protection, and the people within it, the animals, everything that is here, is under my protection. And this, my image, is here to remind you of that."

Humanity, in Genesis 1, is called God's image and likeness. And the point there, is that we are to represent God within creation. God's authority to one another, God's authority to animals and to the land, and we failed.

Immediately, in Genesis, we see the disastrous results. Creation, in just a few short chapters, is completely undone in the flood. All of the order and fullness of life that God had brought and asked humanity to take dominion over, was undone.

And so we come to Jesus Christ. In some ways, he was the first true human. he first who was able to fulfill this calling of having dominion, in the way that truly represents God.

And so all authority in heaven and on earth all of creation is given to Jesus. He is the image of the invisible God. Verse 15 also has this phrase, the "firstborn of all creation." This has caused heresy in the past where some have said, "You see, Jesus was one of the created beings."

That is not at all what firstborn means in the Old Testament. Just as "image" is a title and an office, so "firstborn" is also an office and a title. Now, in our Children's Moment, we saw Luke, a young man, fulfilling his calling as firstborn, being responsible for his family and choosing, or charting, the responsible course.

But in the Old Testament, it was not always simply by being born first that you were the firstborn. If you think about the stories, more often than not, it was someone born later who was given the office of firstborn.

Judah, amongst his twelve brothers, was not the firstborn, but he was the one given headship. Then there was Ephraim, and David. And of course we have that classic story of Jacob and Esau, with Esau being born first and yet, giving up his firstborn rights, and Jacob taking up all of that office.

So, to call Jesus the firstborn of creation, is not to say that he was there in the beginning, but rather that, once again, authority and responsibility have been entrusted into Jesus care.

In verse 16, if we carry on, it says, “For in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, thrones and dominions, rulers and powers. All things have been created through him and for him.

Now here maybe you're saying, “There, you see Joel, how are you going to get around that? All things were created through him and all things were created for him.”

Let's back up again to that idea of Jesus as the image of God, considering how that represents kingship. In the Old Testament and in the ancient near east, to be the king, meant to be the first, the head, the order of things, the safety of all things, and to be, therefore, the source of life. This was the language used of kings in Egypt, it was a language used of kings in Babylon. They were the origin of the life of the people. They were the means of the life of the land itself. The land was healthy, the animals were healthy, the people were healthy because the king was there, and healthy.

If we think of image, though, we can think of our own nation and some examples of where we use the word, “image.” If I had been organized and my laptop hadn't died this week, I would have a picture up here of Julie Payette and Michaëlle Jean, and other governors general of Canada, and I would say, “Who are these people?” They are the image of the Queen.

Now they weren't chosen, especially the men who've been governors general, they weren't chosen because of any resemblance to the head of state. But rather, they were called, they were appointed to an office. The Queen says, “You will be my image in Canada, and all my authority and power will be given to you.” The image is a role that a Canadian is asked to take up.

Now through the governor general, through the image of the Queen, our government is formed. Through the image of the Queen, parliament is called into action. Through the image of the Queen, all our laws are signed into being.

If you ever have the misfortune of having to appear in court or if that's where you work, when you enter, you bow towards the image of the Queen—the one who secures our peace and order and rules. If you go to pay with cash—if anyone still has cash anymore—and you pull one of those bills out, if it's missing the image of the Queen, you're not going to get very far with it.

Through the Queen's image, our economy functions. So could we therefore say, if it is through the Queen's image that we have our very laws, the order of life, if we have our government and our economy, if all of that comes through the image of the Queen, could we say that we are created through the Queen? It's a stretch, but this is the idea. Could

we say that, through the Queen, we live? And that, inasmuch as we are all contributing to the life of Canada, that it is for the Queen that we live as well? Could we say that she is before all things, that, in her, all things hold together? That she is the head of the nation, the beginning? And in this sense, she is the firstborn of Canada.

These are the words that are used to describe Jesus: the “image of God.” The one in whom all authority on heaven and earth now rests. All things are created and brought into being through him. Everything holds together now, through Jesus. In this way, he is before everything and he is the head of the body, the church, he's the beginning.

But he is not just the beginning of this present world that we see. More importantly, he is the head of a rival kingdom. A kingdom where those who have died, will be raised to new life. He was the first in this way as well.

When we come to verse 19, it says, “For in Jesus all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.” Now if all the preceding verses were assuming that Jesus was God, and if all the proceeding verses are describing his divinity, then what point would there be to say that in Jesus, the fullness of God came and dwelt? We’d be saying that God came to dwell in God.

So what? We have decisions before us, all of us, all of humanity. All of heaven has a decision before it. All of creation has a decision before it. Will we recognize the authority of Jesus Christ?

There are these two kingdoms. Will you submit to the power of darkness? Is that the authority that you will allow to reign in your life and in this world? Or will you acknowledge Jesus Christ, the one who was born of Mary as God's chosen King?

How many times do we have to decide this? I'm sure I'm preaching to the choir here. How many times do we need to decide this? Maybe you're thinking, “Yeah we did that, Joel.” Is it a lifelong decision, a journey? Is it a one-time decision?

Well, whose life are you living today? Every morning, this is a question we ask ourselves. Is it my life? Is it for myself that I live? Am I in charge of my life? Or does my life belong to Jesus Christ? What will Jesus have me do today?

How long do we have to continue this decision? Well, we have a few hints in this passage. If you look down to verse 22, Paul writes that God has now reconciled us, in Jesus’ fleshly body, through death. We who were once estranged, have now been reconciled “in his fleshly body, through death”.

Now whose death is Paul talking about? Certainly, it seems to make sense that he's referring to Jesus’ death. But he doesn't write, “through his death.” Paul writes, “his fleshly body”, so it's the body of Jesus, but “through death” is missing ‘his’. I think it's

possible to read this as *our* death. That our lifelong journey from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of Jesus, doesn't end until our death. That it is a struggle. That it requires exertion and work, to the end.

Those of you who were here to take part with Rod Eliason's family, yesterday at his funeral, would have heard the story of a man who embodied this lifelong struggle. A man who had to decide, day after day, to acknowledge that Jesus was Lord.

When it came to the end of his life, the last 10 years, Rod was permanently on oxygen, and simple tasks like walking to a meal, would exhaust him and he would gasp for breath. But his mind was sharp and his heart was full of love. Every day, he had to exert himself to acknowledge Jesus as Lord. To be faithful in the midst of that suffering through to his death. And now he is with Jesus, awaiting the day of resurrection. That is how long we must exert ourselves to acknowledge Jesus as Lord in our lives.

But acknowledging Jesus as Lord isn't just about taking orders. It isn't just about doing what you're told. If you look at these verses, they aren't just telling us, "Jesus is in charge, so listen to him." What is it telling us? Life comes through Jesus.

Paul doesn't stop with Jesus now being in charge. But rather, Paul connects Jesus' authority with the source of life. And so, our energy, our liveliness, our life itself, our love, our minds, they come from this person who has been given all authority. They depend upon Jesus. God has put him in charge of all things, and our life depends on him. In this other kingdom, this kingdom of darkness, when we follow those rules, we know that it robs us of life. In the moment, perhaps, it seems the easiest way, but afterwards we have been robbed of life.

Here are some very simple everyday examples that I struggle with day after day. As I've mentioned to the children, when I'm feeling worn out and sorry for myself, I think, "I will sleep." I think of seeking comfort food. I think of seeking out entertainment and relaxation. I just need "me" time now—to rebuild myself, to feed myself, as if I was convinced that life came from food and sleep, excitement and pleasure. The truth is, in those hardest times when I turn to those things, what I find is, I don't feel any better afterward. But rather, when I force myself—sometimes it's forcing myself—to go to prayer, to meditate, to read scripture, to listen to praise music, to sing a song in my own heart, when I force myself to go and to serve others, when I force myself to gather with other believers, and there, encounter Jesus, I come away having encountered life. When I obey, I find that leads, in my experience, to life.

It is not just Jesus who is called the image. We are now being shaped into the image of Jesus Christ. And so, who is in charge of your life? Is it your emotions? Your work? Is there someone in your life who has a hold on you? Is it addictions? Is it food, or sleep?

If we are to live out our calling to be God's authority in the likeness and in following Jesus, if we are called to be that, then the first step is, every day, to acknowledge Jesus as Lord, and then to carry out our authority in our own lives and in our world. To take responsibility for our actions, to repent of those things that are wrong, to examine ourselves, to study and to meditate on Jesus, that we might know him better, that we might be transformed, and so better represent him within creation and to one another. In doing this, we find that the fullness of God comes and dwells within us, and we begin that journey, through death, toward becoming fully human ourselves. Amen.

Benediction: And now as you go, may you be aware of God's love for you. May you know that Christ came to unite himself to you in love. May Jesus nourish and tenderly care for you. Go with the blessing of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The peace of Christ be with you all. Amen.

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## **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." The Zoom link can be found on the [church website](#). It will also be published in the *First this week* email the weeks of October 18 and 25. For more information, please contact Pastor John

## **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.

## 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.



Q. Why don't ants ever get sick?

A. Because they have little anty bodies.

Q. Why did the pirates go to the movie?

A. Because it was rated Rrrrr...

Q: How do you make antifreeze?

A: You steal all her blankets.

Q: Why shouldn't you write with a broken pencil?

A: Because it's pointless.