

## First Baptist Regina Weekly News

*For the Weeks of December 20th and 27th, 2020*

What is one image that comes to mind when you think of Christmas? I wish I could hear all your answers! In fact, if you would like, send me a note or call. I'd love to hear about the stories, songs, or images that mean something to you.

This isn't meant to be a test of your faith or of how cultured you are. I know for a fact that at least one person in the congregation has a soft spot for Burl Ives and shortbread at Christmas.



Can you also picture the Christmas story? On Mary's lap, or before her in the manger, lies a child: Jesus, our Lord. "The hopes and prayers of all the years, are met in thee tonight," as the carol says. God came, in answer to our prayers, to set things right. God also entered into creation to transform it from within.



God made the first human out of earth. The human was just soil until the Spirit breathed life into it. Mary gave birth to a new Adam. This time, it was human flesh that God transformed. Heaven and earth were united in Mary's child. Jesus came the first time, "veiled in flesh." He will come again, fully revealed as Messiah and Son of God. "Take courage," he said, "for I have conquered the world."

Each day, let us turn our eyes from our daily tasks or Christmas activities, to Jesus. Let us worship before him in our hearts. Let us remember that he has promised to come, and to be with us to the end.

Merry Christmas to each of you! May God have mercy on you and upon our world in the coming year. May the joy and peace of Jesus be yours as we celebrate Christmas as a church family.

With love and affection,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joel M. L.".

Pastor Joel



## First Baptist Church Regina Update

First Baptist Church Regina continues to offer in-person worship services. We are limiting attendance to 30 people. If you have access to the internet, a good alternative to attending in person is to join us on Zoom. Go to [our website](#) for the link.

## Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Our Christmas Eve service will be on December 24th at 6 pm, on Zoom and in person.

This is one of the most beautiful and meaningful services of the year. There will be scripture lessons and carols celebrating the Incarnation. Light some candles in your home and prepare communion and we will celebrate Jesus' birth together.

**Please note:** Due to the current restriction of thirty people, *registration will be required*. If you plan to come, please call (306) 359-1450 or send an email to [the church](#). Preference will be given to those who are unable to join over Zoom.

## Is Christmas a difficult time for you because of a loss?

On Monday, December 21, we will be having a Blue Christmas Service at 6:30 pm, over Zoom. In this service, we will take time to recognize that for some, Christmas is a difficult time of year, due to loss.

This year, with the pandemic, loss has been experienced in many ways. Not only in the loss of loved ones, but also in the loss of employment, family connections, and simply being together. Then there is also the loss of things left undone, and the unresolved areas of our lives.

Another component of this service is hope – the hope we have as we anticipate the coming of Christ, and what this means in light of our loss. The service will give us an opportunity to recognize loss in our lives this past year through select readings, candle lighting, song, and a short message.

If you know of someone not connected with First Baptist for whom this service might be helpful, please let them know about it and direct them to [our website](#) or our [Facebook page](#) for more information and the Zoom link.

—[Pastor Richard](#)

## Our Condolences

We extend our condolences to the family and friends of Susan Cowen, who passed away on Wednesday, December 9, 2020. Susan attended First Baptist for many years. A loving soul with a great sense of humour, she liked showing up early to church and visiting with friends. She helped with Achievers luncheon for several years. She had been struggling in recent weeks with her health, but never lost her positive attitude. She will be missed.



## Music@First

### Christmas Reflections

During Advent, a number of previous Christmas Glory concerts will be available to watch online. One or more will be uploaded each week. To view, go to [our website](#). Please share these with others!

### Christmas Music to prepare for worship

For the four Sundays of Advent, there will be 10 to 15 minutes of Christmas music before the worship service, beginning at 10:45 am. Featured will be both archival recordings performed in years past, plus LIVE selections from Christa W and Mark A. The archival recordings will feature Gifts of Music from the Sanctuary Choir, Exaltation, juBELLation, soloists, and instrumentalists. If you're joining the service via Zoom, be sure to tune in early to enjoy this special music.

*Our heartfelt thanks go out to Hilary R, Kevin R, and Music Minister, Pastor John Nelson, for the many hours of work they have put into preparing this music for our enjoyment.*

### Sermon Audio by Phone

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our church and affected many of us in different ways. Those of us without the devices, computers, and knowledge to connect to the Internet are feeling even more isolated. To help address this, First Baptist Church has implemented a service called "Dial-the-Sermon".

A recent sermon is available to listen to on your phone—any landline or cell phone—by dialing (306) 992-1912 (toll-free within the Regina area). This is an easy way for anyone who is limited to a telephone for communication, to hear the sermon from a recent worship service. This number takes you straight to the sermon recording—there are *no* menu or option choices that you will be required to make. If you know someone who might like to use this service, please pass this information on to them.

**Dial-the-Sermon (306) 992-1912**



Young Eddie was spending Christmas with his grandparents. On Christmas morning, the family went to church. While they were waiting to go in, Eddie checked all the announcements, and pictures along the walls. When he came to a group of pictures of men in uniform, he asked a nearby usher, "Who are all those men in the pictures?" The usher replied, "Why, those are our boys who died in the service." Dumbfounded, Jonathan asked, "Was that the carol service or the Christmas Day service?"

## 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](#) for the link.

### Children

Our children's ministry is online. For more information, see page 5.

### Youth

The youth met on Saturday, December 19, for a virtual meal together, some fun games along a Christmas theme, and a time of prayer for each another. Their next event will be in January, 2021.

Please continue to pray for the youth as they deal with the challenge of having to meet virtually rather than in person. For more information, please contact [Pastor Chris](#).

### Adults

**Learning for Life:** The class is taking a short break over Christmas/New Year's, resuming again on January 10, 2021. Ron P will be leading a mini-course on January 10 and 17: "Satan and the Christian." This will be followed by a course by Pastor Richard, starting on January 24, on the life and teachings of Jesus: "Jesus' Earthly Ministry: Revealing the Heart of God."

**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. Voice is taking a short break and will resume in January, 2021. 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, on Thursdays at 10:30 am.

**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. For more information about the last two groups, please contact [Pastor Richard](#).

### Offering Envelopes

If you wish to receive offering envelopes for 2021, please contact Tracy S, send an email to [the church](#), or call the church at (306) 359-1450.

Because many people have switched to online giving, envelopes will *not* be printed unless you request them. ***Regardless of your method of giving, you will receive a tax receipt for it, as long as your name is indicated on your donation.***



## Children's Ministry – A Journey through Advent

Our families continue their journey through Advent, following the "Jesse Tree" program, a way of preparing for Advent by journeying through the Bible stories about Jesus' family tree. Each day, the kids have a Bible story and short craft that reminds them of that day's story. (See photos.)

### An invite from FBC Kids to our whole FBC congregation:

While we are not able to make enough crafts for all the adults in the congregation, we would like to invite you to follow along with the Bible readings from December 1st to the 25th. Here are this week's readings:

Dec 20 – 2 Kings 17:7; Daniel 3:1-6,12, 19-29; Jeremiah 1:8

Dec 21 – Nehemiah 1:2b-3; 2:17-18; 6:15-16; Malachi 3:1

Dec 22 – Numbers 24:17a, Matthew 2:1-12

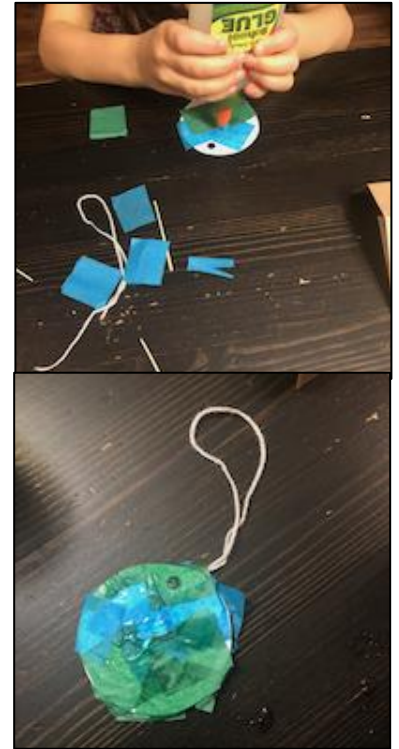
Dec 23 – Psalm 27:1-3, John 1:4-9, John 8:12

Dec 24 – Luke 1:26-38, Matthew 1:20-25

Dec 25 – Luke 2:1-21

For more information, please contact [Pastor Kayely](#) at or call (306) 359-1450.

—Pastor Kayely



## Finances

To the end of November, our revenue is around 11% below our YTD budget. We have also kept our expenses to about 11% below YTD budget, resulting in a current deficit of \$3,300 (spending more than our income). We have been paying back the loan from our Organ Fund, so the Restricted Reserve Balance has increased, while the outstanding loan amount has decreased.

### Approved Operating Budget for 2020:

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
|   | <b>\$ 427.6K</b> |
| Operating Budget to the end of November 2020:   | \$ 392.0K        |
| Operating Revenue to end of November 2020:      | \$ 346.9K        |
| Operating Expenses to end of November 2020:     | \$ 350.2K        |
| Restricted Reserve Balance:                     | \$ 112.2K        |
| (Benevolent, Building, Organ, and Legacy Funds) |                  |
| Organ Fund Loan                                 | \$ 194.2K        |
| CEBA (CRA) Loan                                 | \$ 40.0K         |
| ( \$30K to be paid back by end of 2022 )        |                  |

## Give & Take

For some time now, we have had a “Give & Take” section on our bulletin board where First Baptist folks can list items they would like to give away or items that they need. However, since very few have the opportunity to see the bulletin board these days, we will now include this information in the newsletter. Here are some items that folks would like to give away:

1. Hide-a-bed (Contact person: Pearl B)
2. Printer – Samsung ML-1710, Black & white, needs cartridge  
Coffee maker & filters – Sunbeam, 6 cups  
Ironing Board  
(Contact person: Enosh)
3. Winter coat – full length with hood, fur trim; wool/cashmere, dark plum, size 6  
(Contact person: Diane)
4. Two Metronomes – 1 wooden, 1 plastic cover  
Picture frames – many sizes, colors, materials  
(Contact person: Marilyn P)

Items needed:

1. Desk – only if in excellent condition please, approximately 54 in, preferably metal.  
(Contact person: Esther G)

If you can use or supply any of these items, please call the church at (306) 359-1450 or send an email to [the church](#), and we will notify the contact person. Or, if you have items either to “Give” or “Take” (something you need), please contact us and we will list your items here.



It was the Sunday after Christmas at St Peter and St Paul's Church in Borden, Kent, England. Father John was looking at the nativity scene prior to packing away the figures when he noticed the baby Jesus was missing from the scene. Immediately, Father John turned towards the vicarage in order to call the police. But as he was about to do so, he saw little Harry with a red wagon, and in the wagon was the figure of the little infant, Jesus. Father John walked up to Harry and said, 'Well, Harry, where did you get the little infant?' Harry replied honestly, 'I took him from the church,

Father John.' 'And why did you take him?' With a sheepish smile, Harry said, 'Well, about a week before Christmas I prayed to little Lord Jesus. I told him if he would bring me a red wagon for Christmas, I would give him a ride around the block in it.'

## Preparing Our Hearts for Joy

Pastor Kayely's sermon from December 13, 2020 (A summary)

Scripture: Luke 1:26-38; Mary's Song - Luke 1:46-56

Fear not. That's what the angel said to her.

I wonder what would have happened if Mary had remained in fear?

The angel, Gabriel, had come to Mary to reveal a wild and crazy plan. Gabriel explained to her how God had chosen her to bring about the LONG expected coming of the Messiah. Kind of like this year has felt...plus a few hundred more years.

I wonder what Mary felt as she listened to Gabriel. I wonder if she had thoughts and questions racing through her mind. Is this really happening? What will Joseph think? What will my family think? Will anyone believe me, that I, a virgin, am bearing the Messiah? I wonder if Mary was scared as she pondered how her life would change?

I wonder if she wanted to run from the angel, shouting "No, no, no, this is too much for me!"

I wonder how you are feeling as you prepare for Christmas this year? Are you or someone you care about wanting to run from this crazy year shouting "No, no, no, this is too much for me!"? Are you experiencing feelings of worry, fear, sadness, depression, frustration, exasperation and more? What do you do in response to these feelings?

Fear Not. God has not forgotten you either. Just as God had not forgotten the people of Israel who were awaiting the coming Messiah...God has not forgotten us in 2020. Though this past year has been challenging in a number of ways, fear not, for our brothers and sisters in Christ - across both time and the world - have been sustained by our Lord God and we will get through these challenges together.

Having heard all that the angel said, Mary was able to respond "May your word be fulfilled." I wonder what it was that helped Mary be able to say yes to God's plan even though it would be a mix of joy and challenges? I wonder how Mary felt joy as she said yes to God? Looking ahead to next week, I wonder how Mary knew that it would be good to go stay with her cousin Elizabeth as the baby grew in her womb? I wonder how she knew that good community was what she needed to prepare her for what was ahead?

What it is that helps you say yes to God in your life?

How it is that you prepare your heart to experience joy?

What it is that you need today so you can face challenges ahead of you?

How it is that we lean into community in the midst of current restrictions?

As a staff team, we've been talking about how we can care for the people of First Baptist and the people in our circles beyond the church. We have brainstormed an array of ideas, but we would love to know from you: What would you like to see? What would be most helpful to you and those around you? What do you need to face your current challenges and return to a place of joy? Would you please reach out to one of our pastoral staff if there is a way we can support your well-being or if there's a way we can help you reach out to others in your sphere of influence who are struggling right now?

To wrap up, I want to offer you a simple exercise—should you wish to try it—that is great for taking our whole bodies from a place of racing heart, butterfly stomach, tense muscles, and more to a place of calm, a place where you can experience the Hope, peace, joy and love of Christ.

Sticking with our Christmas theme, I want you to visualize a star, like the one pictured here. It has 5 points. Draw an imaginary line towards the first point. As you do, breathe in deeply and slowly through your nose. When you get to the point, hold your breath for just a moment, then draw the line away from the point as you breathe out through your mouth.



As you familiarize yourself with this activity, it is easy to add brief prayer lines as you breathe:

{breathe in} Come Lord Jesus {hold} {breathe out} Cast out fear

{breathe in} Come Lord Jesus {hold} {breathe out} Cast out worry

{breathe in} Come Lord Jesus {hold} {breathe out} Cast out sadness

{breathe in} Come Lord Jesus {hold} {breathe out} Cast out anger

{breathe in} Come Lord Jesus {hold} {breathe out} Cast out .... (choose whatever feels most appropriate to you here)

I encourage you to try this simple exercise, and hope you find it helpful to you in the moments where emotions become strong and you desire to bring your body to a place of calm. May the breaths and the prayers be comforting to you.



## 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.



Admiring the Christmas trees displayed in his neighbour's windows, Nathan asks his father, "Daddy, can we have a Hanukkah Tree?" "What? No, of course not," says his father. "Why not?" asks Nathan again. Bewildered, his father replies, "Well, Nathan, because the last time we had dealings with a lighted bush we spent 40 years in the wilderness."

Andrew was watching his father, a Vicar, write a sermon for the Christmas service. "How do you know what to say?" Andrew asked. "Why, God tells me," the father replied. "Oh, then why do you keep crossing things out?"