

# First Baptist Regina Weekly News

*For the Week of January 10th, 2021*

Over the coming Sundays, we will be reading through the Gospel of Mark. Mark has an unrelenting pace. From the moment the heavens are ripped open at his baptism, Jesus is always on the move, in Mark. One paragraph after another begins, “and..., and then..., and then immediately...” and so on, to Jesus’ final days in Jerusalem. And then, Mark famously leads listeners off a cliff. (In what is considered to be the original ending by Bible scholars, the book of Mark ends at chapter 16, verse 8.) What really happened? What do you believe?



Imagine yourself inside the story. Step into the street and walk toward Jesus. What would you ask him? What would you ask of him? What is he doing? What are the



people around him doing and saying? Perhaps during your prayers, you might read one passage from Mark a few times over while imagining yourself in the story.

I also encourage you to sit down and read this book straight through. It will take an hour or two, but doing this will heighten the dramatic moments. Do write me and let me know what jumps out.

May your contemplation of Jesus, the strong one, bring you courage and peace.

In prayer,

Pastor Joel

## First Baptist Church Regina Update

First Baptist Church Regina continues to offer in-person worship services. According to provincial health guidelines, attendance is limited 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.

## Our Condolences

We extend our condolences to the family and friends of Bob Gilmour, who passed away on Monday, January 4, 2021. Bob and Lois have been a part of First Baptist for many years.

## JuBELLation

JuBELLation will resume weekly practices on January 19th.

Do you want to ring? Can you read music? 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](#).

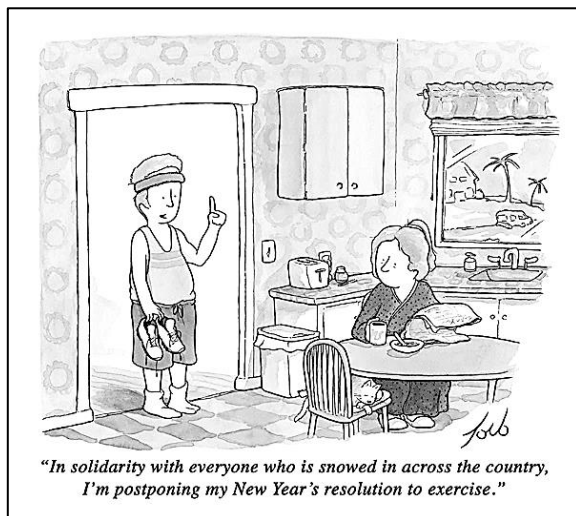
## Christmas Greetings from Johannesburg, South Africa

I greet you all in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I hope everyone is fine by the Grace of God. From our side we are fine as well.

By the Love, Grace and Mercy of God we are able to finish this year 2020, my family and I wish you all Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. May the year 2021 be a year of protection in your families by the blood of Jesus Christ, and I pray that the mighty hand of God be upon you all.

Thank you, we love and may God bless you all.

Your Brother and Sister in Christ,  
Nganga and Faida G



I was addicted to the song, hokey pokey...but I turned myself around.

Did you hear that Arnold Schwarzenegger will be doing a movie about classical music? He'll be Bach.

I was going to quit all my bad habits for the new year, but then I remembered that nobody likes a quitter.

Something to ponder...

"If you are not criticized, you may not be doing much." (Donald Rumsfeld)

## Children's Ministry

2020 was a strange year for children's ministry as so much of what we do with the kids is very hands on. I was on maternity leave when the pandemic began. Joel and Julie both did a great job of leading our kids through online classes throughout the spring while we were all in lockdown.

In the summer, kids and adults alike took a much needed break from screens while enjoying the wonderful warm weather. As fall approached, we began to piece together socially-distanced in-person programming and were so glad to see some of our kids in person.

In September, we happily welcomed Julie as an intern for children's ministry in order to meet her degree requirements at Briercrest.

Once again, we adjusted plans as restrictions were again increasing. In November, we quickly became little elves preparing packages for the families of the church, and were excited to deliver a box filled with daily readings and crafts throughout Advent. It's been great to have our kids reading Bible stories that trace a path from creation to the birth of Christ showing how God's plan led to Jesus!

While we eagerly look forward to one day being able to gather with all of our kids in person again, we are grateful for the moments of connection that we have had and ask for your continued prayers for the children of First Baptist (and their parents too) during these uncertain times. We hope you enjoy this picture of the advent ornaments.



—Pastor Kayely

## Voice

The votes are in! The book chosen for Voice's novel study is "Becoming Mrs. Lewis" by Patti Callahan. Our discussion will be held online on Saturday, January 16th at 10 am. For more information, visit [our website](#).

Voice is a small group for women who like to read and enjoy lively conversation. The group meets every second Wednesday from 7 to 9 pm, using Zoom. Bi-weekly meetings will resume on January 27th. If you'd like to join us, contact Lauren S or Bonnie AW, call the church at (306) 359-1450, or send an email to [the church](#).

## **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 3 or contact [Pastor Kayely](#).

### **Youth**

The youth met on Friday, January 8th at 7 pm, over Zoom, to talk about, reflect on, and journal about the new year, have some fun with a game, and share a devotional. For more information, please contact [Pastor Chris](#).

### **Adults**

**Learning for Life:** Ron P is leading a mini-course on January 10th and 17th: "Satan and the Christian." This course is an overview of the Bible's teaching on Satan, or, the evil one. In week one, we will look at how the Bible describes Satan, and related questions such as: Where did Satan come from? How does he operate? In week two, we will look at how we Christians can fight this foe. For more information, please visit [our website](#).

This will be followed by a course by Pastor Richard, starting on January 24th, on the life and teachings of Jesus: "Jesus' Earthly Ministry: Revealing the Heart of God."

**Reading through the Old Testament:** The group meets weekly, via Zoom. Day and time are to be determined. For more information, please visit [our website](#) or contact [Pastor Richard](#).

**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, please visit [our website](#) or contact [Pastor Richard](#).

### **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. If you know someone who might like to use this service, please pass this information on to them.

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

## **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**

### **Celebrating 2021 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in Canada**

Every year, Christians around the world are invited to celebrate a Week of Prayer for the unity of all Christians, to reflect on scripture together, to participate in jointly-organized ecumenical services, and to share fellowship.

The theme for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2021 is “Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit” (John 15:5-9). This theme is developed through a series of reflections which extend over eight days and will be the basis of the Bible study. Each day will be led by a different denominational leader.

The international resources for 2021 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity have been prepared by the Monastic Community of Grandchamp in Switzerland, a group of religious sisters from different church traditions brought together by a common vocation of prayer, community life and hospitality, and by their commitment to Christian unity.

Daily Bible Studies are being led by and for the churches of Regina. *First Baptist is leading Tuesday’s Bible study.* The Zoom link will be provided closer to the event.

Day 1 – Monday, January 18th: Called by God: “You did not choose me but I chose you” (John 15:16a)

Day 2 – Tuesday, January 19th: Maturing Internally: “Abide in me as I abide in you” (John 15:4)

Day 3 – Wednesday, January 20th: Forming One Body: “Love one another as I have loved you” (John 15:12b)

Day 4 – Thursday, January 21st: Praying Together: “I do not call you servants any longer...but I have called you friends” (John 15:15)

Day 5 – Friday, January 22nd: Letting Oneself Be Transformed by the Word: “You have already been pruned by the word...” (John 15:3)

Day 6 – Saturday, January 23rd: Welcoming Others: “Go and bear fruit, fruit that will last” (John 15:16b)

Day 7 – Sunday, January 24th: Growing in Unity: “I am the vine, you are the branches” (John 15:5a)

Day 8 – Monday, January 25th: Reconciling with all Creation: “So that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete” (John 15:11)

For further information, please call the church at (306) 359-1450, or send an email to [main\\_fbcregina@sasktel.net](mailto:main_fbcregina@sasktel.net).



## Searching for Jesus: The Journey of the Magi

Pastor Joel's sermon from Sunday, January 3, 2021 (A summary)

Scripture: Matthew 2:1-12; Isaiah 60

The journey of the Magi was a search for Jesus which ended with joy – indeed, joyfulness with very great joy.

The story of the Magi is memorable. The Magi are mysterious characters. We don't know who they were or where they came from – only that they came from the east. We're not sure what happened to them afterwards.

The story also has fantastic events: the Magi being led by a star (whatever that means), and being warned, by God, in a dream.

The story is memorable for these reasons and yet for these very reasons it's easy to dismiss. It is tempting to decide the story is made up or is just a myth. We should not underestimate the importance of the Magi. The Magi are one of the most common symbols we have found in early churches and in catacombs.

Matthew opens with the Magi – from the Gentile nations – coming to worship Jesus. As we heard last week, Matthew next retells the story of Jesus being sent to live in Egypt. Matthew closes with this commandment to the disciples, “Go, therefore, to all the nations.”

Matthew emphasizes that Jesus' birth was revealed to other nations as well as Israel, just as the prophets had said he would be. Paul put it this way: Salvation comes from the Jews but by God's grace, all nations are welcomed equally into God's salvation.

Salvation for the nations is not merely a standing invitation. God sent Jesus to Egypt. God called the Magi to come to Jesus, and he led them there. God was actively seeking out the nations. This is what we celebrate at Epiphany: The revelation of Jesus, not just to his own people, but to all the nations, so that, together with the Jews, we might be made into a new family, a new people of God.

The Magi are also a symbol of endurance for us. How long did the Magi search for Jesus? How long would you search for something before giving up? How long before despair or frustration would take over?

We have been enduring Covid-19 and the related restrictions for nine months now. It is taking a toll on us, on our city, and on our world. It is taking a toll on mental health, marriages, businesses, and front line workers.

I can't help but take this experience of hardship and think back to World War I and II. Year after year, people had to endure and persevere in taking care of each other, and making the best of life. Daily, they would hear reports of deaths and destruction. There was no end to the rationing of food and all supplies. Yet, the wars did end.

Good *can* come out of the hardship we are experiencing at the moment. We have already seen signs of some of that as we search for the end of the virus. Let us be faithful to one another and to God; we can do this.

How long did the Magi search? Was it more than nine months?

Few Christians go through life without experiencing at least one time, if not many times, when it seems like God is absent. Sometimes church, prayer, and Bible reading feel like an empty routine with nothing there. Or sometimes God does not answer a concern or burden in life, after many years of prayer.

How long did the Magi search for Jesus? From Matthew 2:16, we can guess that it was upwards of two years, according to the time that Herod had learned from the Magi when the star first appeared.

We don't know what hardships or obstacles they endured in their travels from outside of the Roman Empire. We don't know if they ever questioned whether they had been mistaken, or if they would ever reach their goal.

Some parts of their journey were clear. They had guidance from God through a star, a dream, and the clear words of the prophets. We know there was also uncertainty, ambiguity, and perhaps the silence of God. Their very first appearance in the story, their very first words, are a question, "Where is he?" They had come all this way and yet they still did not know where they were going or where to look next. Then they were sent off with these words: "Go and search for him." These were not clear directions.

Rather, these are words that could be applied in our lives, or in anyone's life, about Jesus: "Go and search for him."

I wonder about their discovery itself – just how unmistakable could it have been? What did they find in the end? Just a child with his parents. How clear was it that this was the king they had been looking for?

Did they ever question their experience later? Did they ever wonder if they had been wrong? Did anyone else ever believe them? All of the events in their story, when you put them together, make for compelling evidence that this child was the Messiah, the one that they were looking for.

But none of it was repeatable. There wasn't anything they could show anyone else to prove what they had found. All they had was their own testimony – which is just like it is for us.

I know for myself, what I have experienced in life has led me to Jesus and to joyfulness with very great joy. But I can't prove it. I can't even guarantee to other people that if they just do this, or take these steps, they will meet Jesus in the way that I have.

It seems like God requires of all of us that we make this journey on our own. There is hardship. Sometimes it seems to take longer. Sometimes there are clear signs, but other times, we are lost.

Always, in the end, when we meet Jesus, it is marked by joy.

We are on a journey ourselves. Many of us are carrying grief and are enduring hardship. All of us are enduring through this season of Covid.

Some are searching for Jesus and maybe it seems like he is not there, that the signs are not clear. But Jesus *is* there and God *is* leading.

Meeting Jesus in this life is a hint of the joy that we will experience one day when we meet Jesus face to face. All the sorrow and grief and hardship will be caught up together with joy – the joyfulness of very great joy that we will have when we see Jesus for ourselves.

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## 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 L)
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 very good 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.



## 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 couldn't anyone find the famous music composer?

A: Because he was Haydn.

Q: What did one shrub say to the other shrub?

A: Am I bushed!

Q: What's a digital camera's New Year's resolution?

A: 1080p.

Q: What kind of clothes do lawyers wear?

A: Law suits.