

First Baptist Regina Weekly News

For the Week of February 7th, 2021

This past Sunday in Regina, we awoke to a thick layer of frost covering everything. White tree limbs and fingers reached up into the sky, a brilliant contrast with the cold and clear blue sky.



God gifts the prairies with mornings like these several times every winter, but they never get old for me. They are spectacular.

I remember one such morning, years ago. My children were much younger and we had to drive them to school. Some mornings during the drive, I would say the names of things we passed, “Sleeping animals and trees” or “squirrels and chickadees,” and then “encourage” my kids to respond with me, “Praise the Lord” (like Psalm 148). Sometimes, they would join in with the names of things on their own. “Children on their way to school and people out for walks. Praise the Lord.” Ah, the lives of pastors’ kids.



One occasion stands out. It was one of those stunning, frost-filled dawns, with an orange-rose horizon, deep blue sky, and all the world clothed in white frost. The kids started the Psalm all on their own as we drove. “Sunrise and blue sky, frost and snow, praise the Lord.”

There are moments when people and nature are unmistakably, naively, and

wonderfully caught up together into God’s presence. These shared epiphanies are fleeting. Thankfully, somehow, even remembering such memories is nourishing.

May God grace you with many such moments during these winter days of isolation. May God bring to your mind, treasures from your past. May God place within you the joy and peace of Jesus.

With love,



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.

The Marriage Course – by Alpha

Are you married? Would you like to strengthen your marriage? If so, this course is for you!

When: Thursday evenings 7 to 9 pm, on Zoom

Dates: February 11 - March 25

The course has been recently updated with well-done video clips that offer teaching, share couples' experiences from around the world, and then guide each couple's discussion times.



The discussion times are set up so that each couple can chat privately. Group discussion comes at the beginning and end as we greet one another. No one will be asked to share their marital struggles with the group, so please, do consider joining even if you tend to be a private person. The learning from other couples on the video provides some great examples of how other couples are navigating their relationships.

Topics include: Strengthening Connection, The Art of Communication, Resolving Conflict, The Power of Forgiveness, The Impact of Family, Good Sex, and Love in Action. Please feel free to invite neighbours, friends and family – Christian and non-Christian alike.

Thanks to a generous donor to Alpha, the course videos are free. All that is needed is one course journal per person (that is, 2 per couple). The journal ("The Marriage Course Study Journal" by Nicky and Sila Lee) is available through [Chapters](#) for \$15 each. If finances are an issue, the PDF version of the journal can be printed out for free.

If you have questions, or to sign up, email [Pastor Kayely](#).

Website

Just a reminder that, as the Covid-19 pandemic stretches on and, with it, provincial health restrictions, the [church website](#) 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 the event listed. 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.

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 program is online. Here is what they are learning about at present:

Godly Play (ages 4-6) – The Life of Jesus

Oasis (ages 7-11) – Shalom Around the World

For more information or for the Zoom link, please contact [Pastor Kayely](#).

Youth

Pastor Chris: “[At their last meeting,] the youth met over Zoom for a game and devotional. It was good to share how we are each doing and to have fun together. The game we played was called ‘Boomer Say What?’ It was a game where you had to guess what a popular “boomer” (someone from the baby boom generation) phrase would mean today. It was fun...and educational. We all understand Pastor Joel much better now. 😊

“Our devotional focused on practising ‘simple prayer.’ We looked at the life of Symeon the Porter, a Greek who said a simple prayer to Christ each morning and evening, as an example of how we can also learn to pray simply.” For more information, contact [Pastor Chris](#).

Adults

Learning for Life: Pastor Richard is facilitating an online series: “Jesus’ Earthly Ministry: Revealing the Heart of God.” This class is focusing on the four Gospels, allowing them to shape the account of Jesus’ life and teachings, and discovering how Jesus revealed not only God’s heart toward humanity, but also how our hearts ought to be toward one another. For more information, visit [our website](#) or contact [Pastor Richard](#).

Voice: 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. For more information, visit [our website](#), send an email to [the church](#), or contact Laureen S or Bonnie AW.

Reading through the Old Testament: In this online reading group, participants are reading through the Old Testament chronologically. The group meets every Thursday at 10:30 am, via Zoom. 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](#).

Lebanon Needs Our Prayers

The country of Lebanon faces an uncertain future, as it struggles to deal with a crippling economic and financial crisis, growing poverty, and violent protests over strict pandemic lockdowns.

Our Lebanese mission partner, Emad Botros, was featured on the CBM (Canadian Baptist Ministries) Prayerline on January 26th. In light of the serious issues that his country is facing, he prays for God's blessing on the CBM ministries and other ministries they are affiliated with in the region. Let's join Emad in praying for this beleaguered nation. To view this video, [click here](#). Emad's prayer may also be printed out.



Give & Take

Items to give away:

1. 54-inch bed frame and mattress in perfect condition. Pick-up only.
(Contact person: Diane Z)

Items needed:

1. Piano Light – bright and wide.
(Contact person: Marilyn P)

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



- Q. Why didn't the skeleton want to celebrate Valentine's Day?
A. His heart wasn't in it.
- Q. What did the artist say to her sweetheart?
A. I love you with all my art.
- Q. What did the valentine card say to the stamp?
A. Stick with me and we'll go places.
- Q. What did the refrigerator say to the magnet?
A. I find you very attractive.
- Q. What did the artist say to her sweetheart?
A. I love you with all my art.
- Q. How did the doorbell propose to his sweetheart?
A. He gave her a ring.

The Cleansing Power of Jesus' Words

Pastor Joel's sermon from Sunday, January 31st, 2021 (A summary—to hear the complete sermon, dial (306) 992-1912.)

Scripture: Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Psalm 111; Mark 1:21-28

The Gospel of Mark emphasizes Jesus' authority over sin, illness, health, and even over nature itself. Jesus began teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum. In this story, Mark connects Jesus' authority over unclean spirits with the power of his word, which brings cleansing, healing, and new life.

There are only two kinds of people who appear before Jesus in Mark's Gospel. There are the people who come to him in need and there are people who come to oppose him. People are either opposed to Jesus and quickly become part of a plot to undermine or arrest him, or they ask Jesus to have mercy on them.

Consider the disciples. They did not have to earn their place, it was a gift. They are honoured when Jesus invites them to become his students, but to the very end, they fail to understand Jesus' plans. A few times, they even try to change Jesus' mind or rebuke him. By Jesus' mercy, they continue to be his disciples. Jesus continues to love them and teach them to the end, even though he knows one of them will betray him and the rest will abandon him.

Consider all the others who come seeking forgiveness, freedom, healing, or teaching, such as the people who came to hear him teach, and the man with the unclean spirit in the synagogue in Capernaum.

Mark is making a biographical point about Jesus' character. He has compassion for the people he meets, he loves them, and helps each person who comes to him. He never gives in to arrogance or condescension. He never takes advantage of others. He remains humble, honest and pure, self-controlled, and forgiving.

Mark is also making a theological point. No one is an equal to Jesus. Jesus really stands alone. This true in all the gospels, but it is something that Mark emphasizes. Everyone who comes to Jesus, comes in need of *his* help.

We make a point of praying each Sunday as a group, and daily in our homes, for specific needs. We bring to him urgent concerns, and it is our conviction and our experience that God listens and acts.

However, by praying publicly for our needs every Sunday, and daily in our homes, we declare that weakness and neediness are part of our Christian identity. By confessing our sins on Sunday and every day, we publicly humble ourselves, and declare that we continue as disciples only because of Jesus' mercy.

Mark did not provide any examples of a person who came before Jesus without need of forgiveness, healing, freedom from unclean spirits, teaching, or understanding. The only ones who do not ask for Jesus' mercy are those who reject him.

Therefore, it is not as if some of us are weak and needy and others are fine. In fact, centuries of Christian teaching suggests that the closer a person is drawn toward Jesus, the more dependent they become, they more they become aware of their weaknesses.

Even though our strength is an unhelpful illusion, the temptation for independence is strong. Whether it is sinful behaviours, health issues, or knowledge and awareness, it is common for people to feel like something is wrong with them in particular when they are weak in one of these areas. We can't do anything about genetics, accidents, or aging, and yet sometimes we are proud that we are healthy or ashamed that we are struggling, whether it be physically or mentally. Similarly, we are sometimes proud of our knowledge, of knowing something that most people do not know, and sometimes we are ashamed that we do not understand or know what others seem to know. When it comes to our behaviour, who among us can say they are without sin? Yet often we veer back and forth between complacency and shame.

And what would it be like for a person to discover that they had an unclean spirit in them? What if that came to light before the congregation? Would we instinctively think less of that person? If it was me, would I feel greater shame?

Mark places everyone on the same level. We are all vulnerable to unclean spirits who accuse us and seek to control us. No person is better than another.

People seek ways to control their lives. We seek things to help us feel as if we have some say over how things are going, that we have access to strength and power on our own terms. The truth is, like the man with the unclean spirit, we are all at the mercy of Jesus. Every day, we are vulnerable and we are under attack by unclean spirits that we cannot see.

Jesus is with us. If we turn to him, Jesus is compassionate and merciful.

Jesus very words are cleansing, and healing, and powerful. Like the people who gathered in the synagogue at Capernaum, we gather every Sunday to listen to Jesus' words so that they might cleanse us and give us new strength. Daily, we open up our Bibles and, once again, listen to the words of Jesus. We are weak and needy and his words heal and cleanse us once again. Day after day, we can stop, listen, and ask Jesus for mercy.

We should also keep in mind Pastor Richard's words from last week. We are called to come to Jesus, and then to go and help others believe. We come in weakness and experience Jesus' cleansing, forgiving, and healing. This is a tangible and real experience we can share with others.

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 for more specific information on these contribution methods. You may also contact the treasurer at (306) 775-1497 or email the church at main_fbcregina@sasktel.net for further details.



"If I sold my house and my car, had a big garage sale, and gave all my money to the church, would I get into heaven?" a teacher asked the children in her Sunday school class.

"No!" the children all answered.

"If I cleaned the church every day, mowed the yard, and kept everything neat and tidy, would I get into Heaven?"

Again the answer was, "No!"

Now the teacher was smiling. Hey, they're getting it, she thought! "Well, then, if I was kind to animals and loved my husband, would that get me into Heaven?" she asked.

Again, they all answered, "NO!"

"Well," she continued, "then how can I get to heaven?"

A five-year-old boy shouted out, "YOU GOTTA BE DEAD!"