

First Baptist Regina Weekly News

For the Week of April 4th, 2021

The Easter sermon of John Chrysostom (circa 400 AD)

“Are there any who are devout lovers of God? Let them enjoy this beautiful bright festival! Are there any who are grateful servants? Let them rejoice and enter into the joy of their Lord! Are there any weary with fasting? Let them now receive their wages!



“If any have toiled from the first hour, let them receive their due reward; If any have come after the third hour, let him with gratitude join in the Feast! And any that arrived after the sixth hour, let them not doubt; for they too shall sustain no loss. And if any delayed until the ninth hour, let them not hesitate; but let them come too. And the one who arrived only at the eleventh hour, let them not be afraid by reason of their delay. For the Lord is gracious and receives the last even as the first. He gives rest to him that comes at the eleventh hour, as well as to him that toiled from the first. Let us all enter into the joy of the Lord!

“First and last alike receive your reward; rich and poor, rejoice together! Sober and slothful, celebrate the day! You that have kept the fast, and you that have not, rejoice today for the Table is richly laden! Feast royally on it, the calf is a fatted one. Let no one go away hungry. Partake, all, of the cup of faith. Enjoy all the riches of His goodness! Let no one grieve at his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one mourn that he has fallen again and again; for forgiveness has risen from the grave.

“Let no one fear death, for the Death of our Savior has set us free. He has destroyed it by enduring it. He destroyed hell when he descended into it. He put it into an uproar even as it tasted of his flesh.

“Hell took a body, and discovered God. It took earth, and encountered heaven. It took what it saw, and was overcome by what it did not see. O death, where is thy sting? O hell, where is thy victory? Christ is Risen, and you, o death, are annihilated! Christ is Risen, and the evil ones are cast down! Christ is Risen, and the angels rejoice! Christ is Risen, and life is liberated! Christ is Risen, and the tomb is emptied of its dead; for Christ having risen from the dead, is become the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep. To Him be Glory and Power forever and ever. Amen!”

With love,

Pastor Joel

Birth Announcement

Rob and Nicole Nelson welcomed a baby boy, James Perley Nelson, at 3:33 am on Friday, March 19, 2021. James is a little brother to sister Jaeleigh, brother Daniel, and four-legged brother, Gus.

Congratulations to proud grandparents, John and Debby Nelson.



Annual Missions Virtual Luncheon and Fundraiser – April 18th

Join us on Sunday, April 18th, for our annual missions fundraiser in support of our partnership with Canadian Baptist Ministries (CBM), the Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development, and the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS). Our CBM global field worker, Emad Botros, will be speaking in the morning service and answering your questions afterwards, during our virtual luncheon.



Emad is an assistant professor at the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS). He and his family are our missions partners in Lebanon. The family hosted members of First Baptist Regina during the [SENT team's visit to Lebanon](#) in June, 2019.

Find out more about how COVID-19 has affected the work happening in Lebanon, the shift to distance education at the ABTS, as well as the ongoing impact of the Beirut explosion (August, 2020) on the city and country. Please send your questions for Dr. Botros to [Pastor Joel](#) by Thursday, April 15th. We will also be showing some pictures from the SENT team's trip to Lebanon. Find out more on [our website](#).

You will also find, on [our website](#), some Lebanese recipes to help celebrate our luncheon!

AGM Report

Our congregation met for its Annual General Meeting on Sunday, March 21, 2021, following the morning worship service. This was the second consecutive year in which we met largely via Zoom, with only a few people present in the sanctuary. As is our custom, we began by reading our church Covenant, reminding us afresh, and committing us afresh, to being a particular kind of people under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Board chair, Ron P, advised the congregation that a “Music Futures” committee is being formed, with a two-fold task: To oversee an intentional interim period beginning this fall, and to lead the congregation in forming a vision for music ministry in the coming new chapter in the church’s life, following Pastor John’s retirement.

Our treasurer, Kevin R, reported on our 2020 finances, and moved the acceptance of the auditor’s report. We are grateful to God for the resources to do ministry and to maintain our beautiful building. We have received a rich heritage of being Jesus’ people in the heart of Regina, and we wish to be faithful in our day, and to pass on this heritage to future generations.

Bryan O, our new Missions Commission chair, gave a brief overview of the commission’s work, including our ongoing commitment to our partnership with the work in Lebanon. This was followed by brief reports from three associate pastors: Richard, Kayely, and Chris. For more details, please see our Annual Report, which is available on the church website. Copies are also available in the sanctuary. If you would like to receive a paper copy, please call the church at (306) 359-1450, or send an [email to the church](#).

Pastor Joel concluded the meeting with some reflections on the need for patience in the life of faith and ministry. Fruit will come, as we tend the garden of our lives and our life together as a church, for God is faithful.

We’re getting better at meeting together via Zoom, and there was considerable participation and interaction in the meeting. But how we long for the day when we can all be together in one place! Yet we trust the sovereignty and the providence of God, in Covid-19, and in all things. May we be faithful in the times and the place in which God has placed us. To God be the glory.

—Ron P, Chair of the Diaconate

What's happening at First?

Morning Prayer

Join us each morning, Monday to Thursday 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 taking a break over the Easter week. For more information, please contact [Pastor Kayely](#).

Youth

Our youth program is taking a break over the Easter week. For more information, contact [Pastor Chris](#).

Adults

Learning for Life, the Old Testament reading group, and the Gospel of John study group are taking a break over the Easter week.



I read that by law you must turn on your headlights when it's raining in Sweden. But how am I supposed to know when it is raining in Sweden?

I sit down and begin to read a horror novel in Braille. Something bad is about to happen, I can feel it.

Q. What's the least spoken language in the world?

A. Sign language.

Q. What do you call security guards working outside Samsung shops?

A. Guardians of the Galaxy.

Q. Why did the M&M go to school?

A. It wanted to be a Smartie.

The Political and the Personal

Pastor Joel's sermon from Sunday, March 28th, 2021 (A summary—to hear the whole sermon, dial (306) 992-1912.)

Scripture: Mark 10:46-11:10

We are all familiar with the scene of a popular leader making their way towards a key moment where they will be declared the victor. Cameras flash. The crowds press in. Everyone wants to see, touch, and shake their hand. The press conference is waiting and the TV crews are ready. The nation is watching. Those closest to the leader are just as excited for the moment that's just about to happen. Everyone is pushing the leader ahead. Why is it that the followers are so excited and so driven towards this moment? Isn't it that once you are in power, then you can make the changes that need to happen?

But among all the noise and fanfare, among all of the cheering and celebration, maybe you can hear one voice from behind the crowd, faintly calling out for help.

Do you think everything will suddenly come to a stop? Do you think everyone will pause and decide to wait quietly and patiently while the leader goes and sits down with the person who cried for help? How long would they allow that conversation to go on, that's if they allowed it to happen at all? I find it hard to imagine that happening. Yet that is the story of Jesus' entire ministry, in the Gospel According to Mark.

Often, I compare Jesus' patient attention to individuals with my own behaviour. Often, I let myself think I'm too busy to stop. Or I am short with people I care about.

Jesus had deadlines that God had set for him. Jesus had important tasks to do. And yet, somehow Jesus always managed to be free and to stop. Jesus had a cause, he had an "agenda," so to speak, but the cause was never more important than any person he might meet.

Jerusalem was the Jewish capital: As the home of the temple, it was their religious capital; as the home of David's throne, it was their political capital. Jesus chose to enter Jerusalem riding on a donkey, surrounded by a group of his disciples who were celebrating, waving palm branches, and throwing down their cloaks. To Jewish onlookers, this was unmistakably a political statement.

The scene around Jesus was like a royal victory parade, with symbols familiar to citizens of the Roman Empire, as well as the Jewish people.

The crowd may not have been huge. The Romans don't appear to have been alarmed or perhaps even aware of Jesus at this point. But at the street level, people understood that it was a political statement. Mark appears to have put this political event together with the healing of the blind man, Bartimaeus, in order to make a theological point about Jesus and politics.

The crowd of disciples and onlookers may have had physical sight, but they could not see Jesus clearly. Instead, it was a man without physical sight who saw Jesus for who he was.

Jesus had repeatedly explained that in Jerusalem, the Son of Man would be betrayed and arrested, would suffer and be killed, and, after three days, rise again. Jesus said this repeatedly, but repeatedly, we see that the disciples did not understand. They may have been doing their best, but they followed with mixed motives, with political causes and hopes on their mind, as they approached Jerusalem. At times they were incredulous at Jesus' teaching, but they do keep following. In the moment, as they came near their capital city, all of Jesus' warnings, all of Jesus' teaching that he would be arrested and put to death in Jerusalem, all of that simply evaporated from their minds. In the heat of this exciting moment, all of those grim forewarnings were gone. They are cheered and celebrated as they entered Jerusalem.

I wonder how much of their excitement was about Jesus and how much of their energy came from some cause or some agenda. Did they believe that Jesus would be arrested and killed? Or did they believe that Jesus would finally bring about all the changes they believed to be urgent and of utmost importance.

The person without physical sight saw Jesus clearly.

Mark offers us this theological caution. In your passion for a cause, for this or for that agenda, you may not be seeing Jesus clearly.

One way that we often get confused is in our definition of power, and how power is to be used. The disciples saw power as a means to rule over others, as something that is there to make people do what is right.

Jesus taught in word and deed that gaining institutional power in order to bring about change, is not the answer. Power which comes from position, is not the crucial ingredient to bring about change. True power arises from love, and is intended to be used to serve others.

Where did Jesus' power lay? God's chosen ruler chose to stop when he heard a cry for help.

The weight of the world was pressing down on Jesus, his own doom was just days away and yet, the cry of a lost sheep reached his ears. Jesus stopped everything for one person. Jesus' power is in the love that people have for him.

In his book, *"The Desire of Nations"* Oliver O'Donovan makes this observation about the way that the church has managed to bring about change, time and time again, over the centuries. He writes, "There were two frontiers within the Gentile mission: the church addressed society, and it addressed rulers. Its success with the first was the basis for the church's great confidence in confronting the second."

The church's great success at bringing about change has come not from gaining position, but from its success in converting individual people – not to a cause, not to an agenda, not to a code or a philosophy, but converting them to Jesus.

O'Donovan goes on to say, "Christ has conquered rulers from below – by drawing their subjects out from under their authority."

Let us return again to the scene of Jesus riding into Jerusalem.

One reason that I love Jesus is because I know that even though he is a leader – *the* leader – and even though he may be on his way right now to an event of national significance – actually it is of global and cosmic significance – even though this crowd surrounding him is pushing him towards this crucial event, even with all of that going on, I know I can call out to Jesus. I know this Jesus will stop, he will look at me, and he will call me to come to him.

How can you not love a leader like that?

When a week has passed and I hear that my Lord has been sentenced to death, when I see him carrying his cross, I may have some sense, some vague idea, that this itself is a political event. I may have some sense that this is a pivotal moment in my nation's history, maybe the history of the whole world. But as I watch this unfold, another thought sneaks in: Even now, in the midst of his own agony and terrible pain, I secretly believe that Jesus has still not forgotten me. I know that he is doing this for us, for all of us, for all of the world, and for all of creation. But I can't shake the feeling that he's also doing this for me, for an individual.

If we looked out across the crowd that stood around him as he carried his cross, I wonder if we would see others like us in the crowd watching him. Would we see the couple with the little girl that Jesus raised from the dead? Would we see the woman healed from her years of bleeding? Look, there's a former leper who was healed, and another. There's the man who had been paralyzed – he's here with his friends. There's Bartimaeus. There are people who were hungry in the wilderness and Jesus fed them. The Gerasene man who had once been wild and living among the dead, he is here, whole and calm.

What is the nature of the authority of Jesus, of the power of Jesus over all of us? How has Christ conquered us? Is it by drawing us to his power, with a promise to give us power over others? To sit on his right hand and on his left? No. Through Jesus, with love, God has conquered our hearts. May God help us to see Jesus clearly.

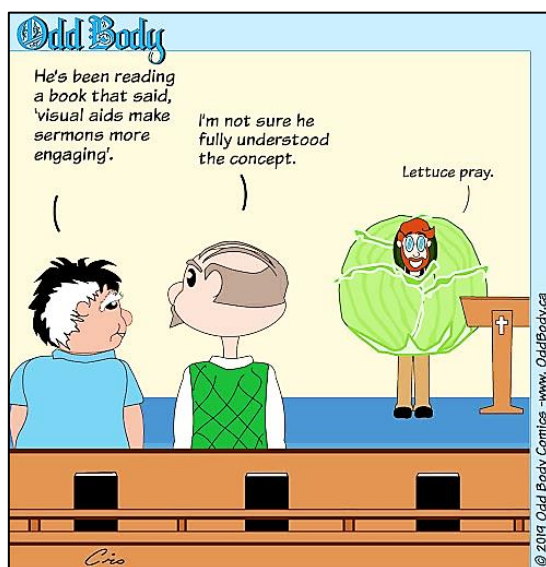
Tithing during the pandemic

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 college students had written the Bible...

The reason Cain killed Abel would be because they were roommates.

The place where the end of the world occurs would be Finals, not Armageddon.

The Last Supper would have cold leftovers for the next morning.

The reason why Moses and his followers wandered in the desert for 40 years would be because they didn't want to look like Freshmen by asking for directions.