

# First Baptist Regina Weekly News

*For the Week of August 8th, 2021*

## Returning from Exile Isn't Easy

By Jonathan R. Wilson

As restrictions on church gatherings have eased in Canada, our initial euphoria may soon fade as we begin the hard work of rebuilding our congregations and our mission. Returning from exile wasn't easy for Israel; it won't be easy for us.

The life of many churches and Christians over the past year and more has felt something like "exile." We must be careful with this narrative: it's not clear that the pandemic was a direct judgment of God, nor is it only God's people who suffered. Moreover, most of us were not displaced geographically, a factor that we must take very seriously. Otherwise, we risk diminishing the suffering of those who have been geographically displaced.



Nevertheless, with that caution in mind, the narrative of "exile" may help us place our disorientation and displacement. Certainly, there is a displacement in moving from gathering for worship in one physical place to gathering online. And many have suffered various losses. So, the time of the pandemic has also been a kind of exilic time.

Now, we are gradually returning from the exilic-like time. As we do so, we may be prepared and guided by Judah's return from exile. Among many I could choose, I will observe six dimensions of their return.

First, there will be opposition. One might think that the opportunity to return from exile—to re-establish life in the promised land, to gather once again for in person worship and mission—would be so wonderful that unity would prevail. It does not. The returnees and rebuilders of Jerusalem faced opposition within and without. When that happens, we need to learn from Ezra and Nehemiah: set guards and keep rebuilding. That is, recognize the threats but keep focused on the main things.

Second, there will be nostalgia and regret. Returning from exile means things have changed and will continue to change. When the foundation of the new Temple was laid, Ezra tells us, "With praise and thanksgiving they sang to the Lord: 'He is good; His love toward Israel endures forever.' And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. But many of the older priests and Levites and family heads, who had seen the former temple, wept

aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid, while many others shouted for joy. No one could distinguish the sound of the shouts of joy from the sound of weeping, because the people made so much noise. And the sound was heard far away.” (Ezra 3: 11-13)

I imagine something like that happening among our people. Many will gather for worship and mission in person, but others will continue as they have—worshipping online in pyjamas and eating breakfast. Many will give thanks that we are together once again; others will give thanks that they don’t have to change the habits they’ve settled into during the pandemic.

Both groups may be right. It was right for a new generation to shout for joy at the laying of the Temple’s foundation. And it was right for the older generation to weep as they recalled the “former glory.”

But there is no going back after exile; yes, Judah needed to remember rightly the causes of their exile and their time in Babylon. But when we return from an exilic time, we must go forward.

Third, rebuilding takes a long time, and it won’t look like it did. The work of building the Second Temple took more than twenty years, and the people often lost motivation. We are in rebuilding from the pandemic for the long haul. We must not be discouraged by lack of progress, and we must patiently overcome any loss of motivation.

Fourth, the leaders of Judah, especially Nehemiah, had to watch for oppression and injustice as the people returned from exile. He was not so focused on “getting things back on track” that he failed to listen to and care for the people. (Nehemiah 5)

Fifth, we have cause to mark the return with special celebration and even a continuing practice of recalling the time when we “returned from our exilic-like time.” As the exiles returned to Jerusalem, they gathered to hear the reading of the Book of the Law. As the people began to weep, Nehemiah spoke these words, “Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.” (Nehemiah 8:10) It seems also that Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles, was intensified after the return from exile.

What might be an appropriate celebration and annual practice that would remind us of God’s goodness to us?

Sixth, the mission of God’s people is in danger. For the people returning from the Babylonian exile, survival and precise faithfulness to their understanding of the law meant the gradual erosion of the mission of God’s people and the severe reduction of the identity of God’s people to the “politics” of the world. This manifested itself most clearly in the various violent rebellions that attempted to throw off the yoke of the Roman empire.

However, from this time we also get the promise of a faithful remnant and YHWH's intervention to bring justice and free YHWH's people (Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi). These promises are fulfilled in the coming of Israel's Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, who is also the Saviour of all who believe and the One under whom all things are being brought into unity. The mission of God's people who return from "exile" is to be faithful followers of this Lord and bear witness to His reconciliation and peace in word and deed.

In this brief reflection, I have noted a few things that we might learn from Judah's return from exile. There is much more to learn from Ezra, Nehemiah, and the prophets of this time (Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi). May God grant us faithfulness in our continuing journey as God's people.

Reprinted from CBWC's August edition of "Making Connections." To sign up for this newsletter, email [the church](#), or call (306) 359-1450.



*Jonathan R. Wilson is Senior Consultant for Theological Integration with Canadian Baptist Ministries and Teaching Fellow at Regent College. Dr. Wilson taught for many years at Carey Theological Seminary.*

## Calling all Rider Fans!

Pastor Chris: "This Saturday, August 14th, everyone is invited to our place to watch the Saskatchewan Roughriders football game. The game starts at 8 pm, but feel free to come any time after 7:30. The plan is to watch the game outside using a projector and screen, and to hang out and visit. We will have some snacks, a fire, and some chairs available. If you prefer not to share snacks, please feel free to bring your own. If dropping by for just part of the game works best for you, feel free to do so.

"Please let us know if you plan to attend. Text me at (306) 216-5729 or send me [an email](#)."

Where: 3539 Pederson Crescent

Time: 7:30 to the end of the game

Who: Youth, parents of youth, and anyone else who is a football fan 😊

What to Bring: We will have some chairs, snacks, and drinks, but feel free to bring your own if you wish to.

## Summer Psalm Sermons from the CBWC

In addition to our sermon series on the Psalms over the summer, our denomination (Canadian Baptists of Western Canada) has also prepared a series on the Psalms. Four different churches are represented here, including Tim Coleman from Westhill Park Regina. Take some time today to reflect with others from our family of churches. Click Here: [CBWC's "Summer in the Psalms"](#) or visit [cbwc.ca](#) and click on "Summer in the Psalms" by moving through the sliding banners on the home page.

## Summer...in Full Bloom



Photos contributed by Dean Gilchrist

### Chapel Dedication at Katepwa Lake Camp (KLC)

KLC will be holding a brief ceremony to dedicate our outdoor Chapel as the McCall Chapel in memory of Neil McCall. The ceremony will be held at 3 pm on Sunday, August 15th at the camp. All are welcome.

Neil grew up at camp and served in every position from cabin leader through life guard, and on to director. Everyone at camp loved him and he dearly loved camp! He was serving as a pastor at Westhill Park Baptist Church when he passed away.

Come out to honour Neil, and see the camp in all its summer glory! For further information please contact Rosemary Ward [by email](#) or at (306)-501-6672.

### Family Fun at the Park – Sunday, August 15th

Families with children are invited to meet at the playground and spray pad by the Core Ritchie Neighbourhood Centre (2230 Lindsay St) this Sunday, August 15th, for some family fun time.

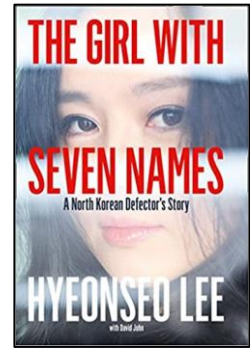
Time: 2 – 5 pm

What to bring: Bug spray, sunscreen, water bottles, snacks for your family, and gear for spray pad (swim suits, towels).

Questions? Please text or call Pastor Kayely's cell: (306) 737-0393.

## Voice Novel Study – Summer Edition

The novel chosen for the August 21st study is “The Girl with Seven Names: A North Korean Defector’s Story,” by Hyeonseo Lee. This book is an extraordinary insight into life under one of the world’s most ruthless and secretive dictatorships – and the story of one woman’s terrifying struggle to avoid capture/repatriation and guide her family to freedom. For more information, visit [our website](#), contact Lauren Snook [by email](#) or at (306) 529-2963, or call the church at (306) 359-1450. The discussion will take place at 10 am over Zoom.



## Dial-the-Sermon – (306) 992-1912

Just a reminder to those of you who do not have access to a computer and/or the internet and are unable to attend the worship service in person, there is an easy way to listen to the previous Sunday’s sermon. Simply dial (306) 992-1912 (toll-free within the Regina area) on your landline phone or cell phone. 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.



An exercise for people who are out of shape: Begin with a five-pound potato bag in each hand. Extend your arms straight out from your sides, hold them there for a full minute, and then relax. After a few weeks, move up to ten-pound potato bags. Then try 50-pound potato bags, and eventually try to get to where you can lift a 100-pound potato bag in each hand and hold your arms straight for more than a full minute. Once you feel confident at that level, put a potato in each bag.

Did you hear about the monkeys who shared an Amazon account? They were Prime mates.

I ate a clock yesterday. It was very time-consuming.

## **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 families met up a couple times in July for some family fun time in the park. Two more times are planned, for August 15th and August 29th. See page 4 for more information.

We invite families to enjoy the activity packs provided for those attending the Sunday worship service in person. It's so nice to have families in the worship service as we work towards rebuilding our volunteer base.

For more information, please contact [Pastor Kayely](#).

### **Youth**

Pastor Chris: "On Friday, July 23rd, the youth gathered for a barbecue and a game of football at the Senger residence. It continues to be a real blessing to connect with the youth face to face, hear how their summer is going and how God is working in their lives, and have some fun together. It was especially good to hear from those who have been attending or working at Katepwa Lake Camp this summer. Please continue to keep our youth and our youth program in your prayers." For more information, contact [Pastor Chris](#).

### **Adults**

Learning for Life and the other small groups will be taking a break for July and August. For more information, see [our website](#) or contact [Pastor Richard](#).

## **Health Guidelines for August**

Beginning on August 8th, 2021, masks and social distancing will be optional at all First Baptist Regina events, including Sunday morning services.

We have now had a chance, for several weeks, to re-adjust to being in public without the restrictions of the past year. There have been few new Covid cases. Several times recently, we have had a day where there were *no* new cases in Regina.

Let's continue to be attentive to the wishes of others when it comes to social distancing and hand shaking.

We will continue to watch cases numbers throughout the summer and fall.

## Tithes and Offerings

While many of you are coming to worship services in person now, there are also quite a number joining the service on Zoom or Facebook. Whether you are attending in person or online, there are several methods that you can use to give your 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.



What did the surgeon say to the patient who insisted on closing up their own incision? Suture self.

I've started telling everyone about the benefits of eating dried grapes. It's all about raisin awareness.

A commander walks into a bar and orders everyone around.

Why is 'dark' spelled with a k and not c? Because you can't see in the dark.

Dad, are we pyromaniacs? Yes, we arson.