

First Baptist Regina Weekly News

For the Weeks of September 18 & 25, 2022

My family and I are so grateful for the leave of absence this congregation granted me for sabbatical. Our children are old enough to remember this experience for years to come. There was so much life in the many churches we visited. There were so many beautiful places, great cities and towns, so much good food and lovely music. Thank you!

But we are happy to be home after our time away and happy to be with friends and our church family.



The Russell-MacLeans travelling by rail

When I returned to our church a week ago, I walked into an active place. I had just missed a fundraiser for our CBM partners in Lebanon (See a related article inside. Donations are still being accepted). Kickoff Sunday was ready with two Learning for life options, the children's program resuming, the choir in the loft, and Mark at the organ. A church retreat at Katepwa camp is all planned with a great speaker. The bells were practicing again with a few new faces. Rob, Tiffany, and Marvin are repainting a few offices just before new carpets are installed this week.



Heather seeing the sights from her hotel window.

Cheryl has started as our Children and Family Pastor. It is lovely to see her interacting with our children. Kayely's role will change but, after not having had a week off so far this year, she is about to take a few weeks of well-deserved rest with her family. Louise has jumped into her role with enthusiasm.

At the centre of all this work and all these relationships is Jesus. His love for us and his love for the world compel us. We have been given so much and we want to share it with the next generation and those around us.

There are still many of us who are not venturing out as much as we used to. May this little picture of our congregation's life encourage everyone to persevere in faith and prayer.



Maizy, are you sure that backpack isn't heavier than you are??

With love,

Pastor Joel

Fall 2022 Sermon Series – Ezra and Nehemiah

From now until Advent, we will be looking at the Old Testament Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Here is some background information on these two books. (See maps on page 4.)

Time Line

This time line will help you understand the context of the exile and restoration and the events described in Ezra and Nehemiah with related maps.

900 - 612 BC The Neo-Assyrian Empire

721 BC The fall of Israel, its end as a nation, the deportation of its people, and the resettlement of people from other conquered regions. Found in 2 Kings 17.

701 BC Assyria invades Judah but Jerusalem is not taken. Found in 2 Kings 18-19, and Isaiah 36-37.

612 BC Nineveh is sacked by armies led by Babylon and Medes

586 BC The fall of Jerusalem to Babylon, the destruction of the temple, the city and the walls, and the deportation of its people. Found in 2 Kings 24-25, and Jeremiah 37-43.

550 - 330 BC The Achaemenid (Persian) empire

539 BC The fall of Babylon and Cyrus' blessing for the Israelites to return and rebuild

559 - 530 BC Cyrus (Persian king) - The return of exiles, perhaps with Sheshbazzar

530 - 522 BC Cambyses II (Persian king)

522 - 486 BC Darius (Persian king) - The Return of exiles with Zerubbabel and Jeshua, Haggai and Zechariah

485 - 465 BC Xerxes (Persian king) - (perhaps King Ahasuerus in Esther)

465 - 424 Artaxerxes (Persian king) - The return of exiles with Ezra and Nehemiah

330 BC Alexander the Great (Greek king) conquers the Persian empire

Background Notes on Ezra and Nehemiah

Ezra and Nehemiah were originally treated as one "book." There are three distinct sections covering a long period of time, from around 530 to 424 BC.

Section One – Ezra 1 - 6

These chapters appear to cover two different periods when exiles returned to Judah. Chapter 1 covers King Cyrus' proclamation encouraging the return of exiles and the offer to pay for the rebuilding and restoration of worship (Persians did this for several groups exiled by Assyria and Babylon). Chapters 2 to 6 record the return of exiles with Zerubbabel and Jeshua during the reign of King Darius, and the efforts to rebuild the temple.

However, note that Ezra chapter 4 summarizes local threats and interference over a period of 100 years and through the reign of five Persian Kings (from Cyrus to Artaxerxes). If you read quickly from chapter 3 to 5, it is easy to miss that such a long time is being covered before, in chapter 5, the story goes back to the time of King Darius.

Section Two – Ezra 7 - 10

Ezra leads the return of a group of exiles during the reign of Artaxerxes.

Section Three – Nehemiah 1 - 14

Nehemiah takes a leave from his high ranking position before King Artaxerxes in order to help rebuild Jerusalem and to lead the people.

Some Further Observations

Ezra and Nehemiah at first seem like a straightforward story, with one event following another. But reading them through like this might be misleading. As you can see from the time line, these books cover about 100 years of activity, a succession of kings, and several generations of exiles.

As well, parts of Ezra and Nehemiah seem like bureaucratic government reports. Government edicts and commissions dominate each section. The official documents are included. The books then carefully record how these orders were fulfilled, by whom, how much was spent, what was purchased, who helped, and who resisted. The government letters seem authentic and parts of Ezra and Nehemiah might be reports they submitted to the government. Genealogies connected to inherited occupations and areas of residence are also meticulously recorded for posterity.

There appears to be more than one author. We find Ezra writing in the first person (“I”), Nehemiah writing in the first person, and sometimes both are written about as if by someone else.

The order of the books doesn’t seem to be chronological. Nehemiah 8-10 appear to be part of the story found in Ezra 9-10, while Nehemiah 11-12 fit better following the events of Nehemiah 6. Nehemiah 7:6-73 is a nearly exact copy of Ezra 2:1-3.1. An indefinite period of time appears to have passed between the events of Nehemiah 12 and 13, but it isn’t clear.

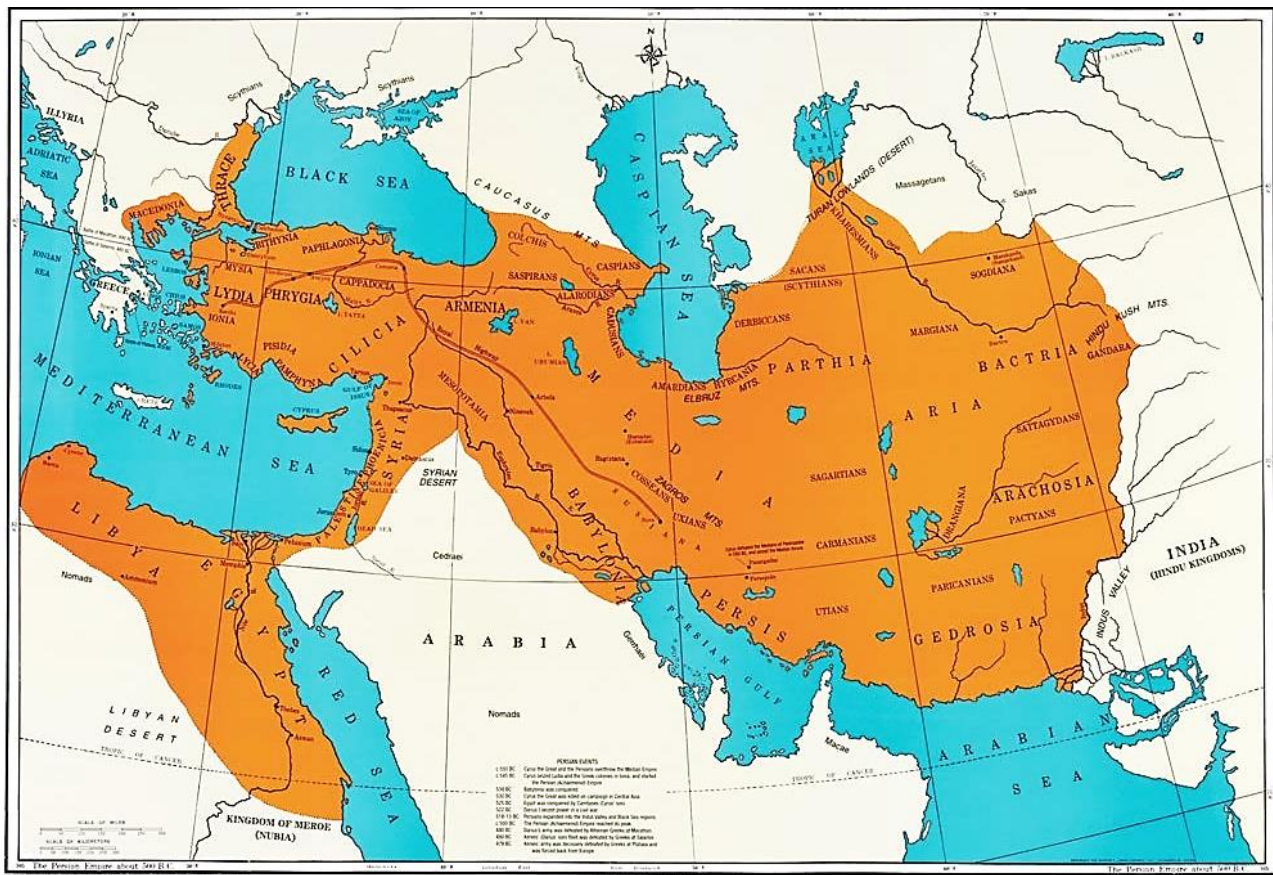
Finally, Ezra 10 and Nehemiah 13 are very strange conclusions to all these great stories of hard work, faith, and endurance.

A final author appears to have collected all these documents and stories and, with Spirit-inspired purpose, created a unified book. What do you think that purpose is? What lessons are we meant to learn from these stories? How should God’s people feel about these pagan kings and their global empires? What does it mean to return to the city of God? What all has to be rebuilt? What does purity look like? Can their vision ever succeed? Take some time to read these books again, along with Haggai and Zechariah (for a real challenge!) Let me know what you find discover!

THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE, 934 – 612 BC



THE PERSIAN EMPIRE ABOUT 500 BC



My Playground, a Wasteland

By Teresa Sfeir

Reprinted from Christianity Today: The Globe Issue

The following is an excerpt from an article in Christianity Today featuring our Canadian Baptist Ministries partners in Beirut Lebanon, including some people that folks from First Regina met when they visited the seminary in Beirut.

I was born to a Maronite Christian family, but it was at a small evangelical school that I met Christ. Whenever I think of that school, I can almost hear the faint screams of delight from children echoing through the winter playground, and the sound of their shoes squeaking on the slippery floor. I can almost hear the singing during morning chapels and the principal telling us about God's marvelous love.

In 2006, war was not the only thing that was ushered into my life. Amid the gnawing fear of airstrikes, a newfound peace glowed within me that summer. I had found Jesus. I meant to follow him even when my loved ones—and society at large—opposed me. As a young girl, that wasn't always an easy task.

The past two years have smothered many of the dreams I once had for this country. But I would like to believe that God is not yet done with Lebanon. My eyes have seen his followers' responses to the recent tragedies. I have seen it in my own workplace. The faithfulness and compassion of the people at the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS) have left an irreversible mark on me.

"I grew up during the Lebanese civil war when the Church was mostly silent and in hiding," ABTS President, Elie Haddad, shared in an article right after the 2020 Beirut explosion. "If you go to Beirut today, you don't have to look far to see the hands and feet of Jesus."

These healing hands and feet moved into action the Saturday after the Beirut explosion, when a taxi arrived on campus with the first traumatized family. The family's clothes were stained with blood and Betadine. They had nothing but their medicine in a small plastic bag. Elie listened to a woman as her hands trembled and her eyes welled with tears. He comforted her, and he assured her that the people at ABTS would do all they could to help.

"My mother often told the story of how she had fled her home at the start of the Lebanese civil war—a baby boy in her arms and a little girl tagging along," Elie shared in an interview. Although this encounter brought back recollections of war, in his words, "It

reminded me that we are here for a Divine cause. As long as God wants to use us, we must be ready to give our lives away.”

I cannot resort to false optimism and say that Lebanon will rise up from the dust. I cannot lecture about the need for repentance of lethargy, the need to withstand the pain so that life may spring from death. As high and resonant as it might sound, given our current circumstances, I fear that my words may border on the absurd and dismissive. Sometimes, one cannot help but think that, in our hapless state, something waits around the corner to pounce on Lebanon as soon as it becomes weak enough. When the Lebanese people have nowhere else to go, will they most willingly sell their souls to the first fraudulent voice that promises to save them? Or will they finally give their souls to the One who actually can?

What do people hold on to when everything is laid waste?

In 1922, modernist poet T. S. Eliot published his well-known poem, “The Waste Land.” The poem’s five sections portray life in London in the aftermath of World War I. “April is the cruellest month,” the poem opens, for spring reminds people of the stirrings of life that might rouse them from their dormancy.

Coming back to life is not without its own pain. The poem ends with the triple repetition of the Sanskrit word “Shantih,” which Eliot translates as “the peace which passeth understanding.”

I find myself clinging to this hope, both for myself and for my country.

Teresa Sfeir was born and raised in Lebanon. She graduated from the Lebanese University with a Master’s in English Literature in 2018. She worked as an English Language Teaching (ELT) textbook editor at Educational Research Center (Librairie du Liban Publishers) from 2011 to 2016, and since 2016, she has been working at the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary as a Communication and Editing Officer.

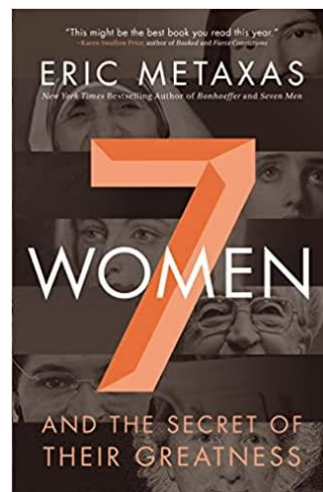


For the full article, see <https://globe.christianitytoday.com/playground-a-wasteland/>

Voice – A Women’s Book Club

The book chosen to launch Voice’s fall season is “7 Women: And the Secret of Their Greatness,” by Eric Metaxas. In this book, the author presents seven captivating portraits of some of history’s greatest women, each of whom changed the course of history by following God’s call upon their lives.

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 online, using Zoom. The first meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 21st. Women interested in joining the discussion, please contact Bonnie, [email the church](#), or call the church at (306) 359-1450. More information may also be found on [our website](#).



Lebanon Fundraiser Update



On Sunday, August 28th, 2022, we held our annual missions fundraiser at the home of Bryan and Carmen Orthner, in the form of a patio party. We were treated to a great meal of Lebanese food which Bryan and Carmen had prepared.

As of Sunday, September 11th, donations toward our Lebanon partnership are at just under \$6,000. A heartfelt thank you to all who have contributed! For more information on what

we learned at the luncheon and where your gift goes, see [our website](#).

It’s not too late to give! Here are some ways to do so:

1. Online with a credit card: <https://www.givetogo.org/team/FBCRegina>
2. Mail, or drop off, your donation to First Baptist Church, 2241 Victoria Ave, Regina SK S4P 0S4. (Please do not leave cash in the mailbox.) If you require an in-person pick up, call the church at (306) 359-1450.
 - Make cheques out to “CBM”
 - Note “SENT Lebanon” in the memo line or on the envelope
3. For information about other ways to give, such as by monthly automatic donation, please call Barb Keys at CBM at 1 (905) 821-3533.

“Our Summer in Europe” – October 2nd, 7:00 pm

On Sunday, October 2nd, at 7:00 pm in the lower hall, the Russell-MacLeans will show some pictures and share about their time in Europe this past summer. Please let [Joel](#) or [Heather](#) know if you plan to attend.

Saturday Lunch Program: An Opportunity to Serve Your Community

The weekly Saturday lunch program is consistently drawing a crowd and meeting a need in our community. The lunch program is hosted each week in the lower hall at First Baptist with different churches taking turns to prepare and serve the meal. It is exciting to see churches from around the city working together to make this ministry happen. And to those we serve, it is helpful to consistently offer one central location so there's no confusion about where to get lunch.



Louise Krueger, Barb Ziolkowski, and Tom Chen have been working hard all year as hosts both to the volunteers from the other churches involved, and to our guests. They ensure that our church building is open, coffee is made, visiting churches are supported in their volunteering each week, and that everything is locked up at the end. Ray Schultz greets people at the door and runs the elevator weekly for guests. *We are now looking for a few more volunteers that could commit to being hosts.*

Is this a ministry opportunity that resonates with you? If so, some practical details will be helpful to you. Hosts commit to being here from 10:00 am to 1:30 pm on the Saturdays when they are serving. The goal is to find enough volunteers so that hosts only need to be scheduled once every 4-6 weeks. If you are interested or have questions, please contact Barb, [email the church](#), or call the church at (306) 359-1450..

Heartland Baptist Women Annual Fall Gathering

When: Saturday, October 1, 2022 from 9 am to 1 pm SK time

Where: Filipino Evangelical Church, 977 Spruce St, Winnipeg, MB

Format: In person and online

Speaker: Pastor Charlene McAlpin

Theme: Celebrating Togetherness

A time to gather with other Christian Women over tea and coffee to share and connect and learn about the mission work we support through Canadian Baptist Ministries. A time to listen and learn from God's word through our speaker.

Gather as a group in your church or home and watch live streaming through Facebook.

RSVP to hbwnews2021@gmail.com to receive the link.

—Peggi Talbot, Heartland Baptist Team

“Give and Take”

Item to give away: Organ (see photo)

Must be picked up by September 21st. (Unable to deliver.) If interested, please contact Mary Jensen, [email the church](#), or call the church office at (306) 359-1450.



Dial-the-Sermon – (306) 992-1912



Know of someone with no computer and/or internet access and cannot come to church in person? Please let them know that there is an easy way to listen to a recent Sunday’s sermon. Simply dial (306) 992-1912 (toll-free within the Regina area) on a landline phone or cell phone. This number takes you straight to the sermon recording.

Covid Measures

Just a quick reminder that masks are now optional in the church, including during the Sunday morning worship service. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact [Pastor Kayely](#), Ron Phillips (board chair), or the church office [by email](#) or at (306) 359-1450.

Teacher to 9-year-old girl: I see you’re wearing a Fitbit watch. Are you tracking your steps?

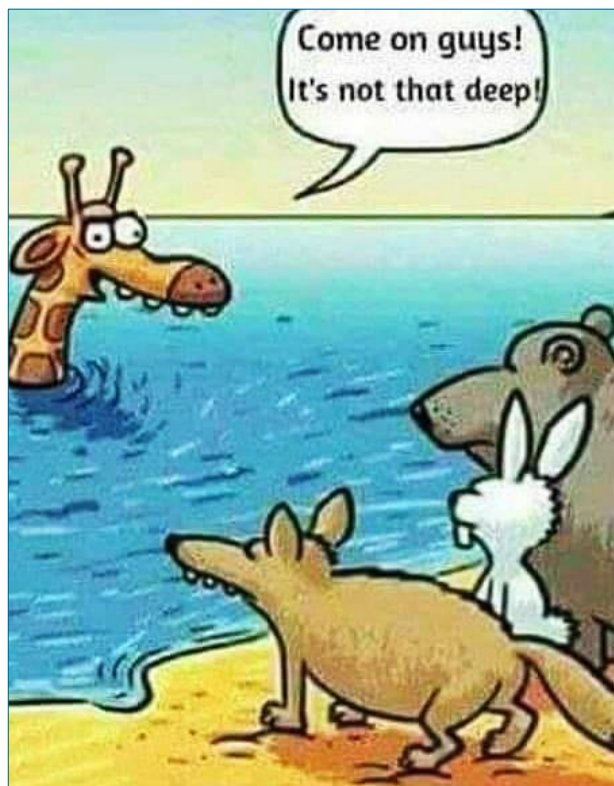
Girl: No. I wear this for Mommy so she can show Daddy when he gets home.”

Two seniors, Fred and Sam, went to the movies. A few minutes after it started, Fred heard Sam rustling around and he seemed to be searching on the floor under his seat.

“What are you doing?” asked Fred.

Sam, a little grumpy by this time, replied “I had a caramel in my mouth and it dropped out. I can’t find it.”

Fred told him to forget it because it would be too dirty by now. “But I’ve got to”, said Sam, “my teeth are in it!”



What's happening at First?

Morning Prayer

[Morning Prayer](#) will resume on September 6th. 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's Ministry

The Godly Play and Oasis classes, for children aged 3 – 6, resumed on Sunday, September 11th. For more information, please contact Pastor Cheryl [by email](#) or by calling the church office at (306) 359-1450.

Youth Ministry

The youth will started out their year on Friday, September 9th, at Pastor Chris' place. They had a BBQ and campfire, giving them time to hang out together and get caught up with each other's lives. They also spent some time planning for the upcoming year. For more information about our youth program, please contact [Pastor Chris](#).

Adult Ministries

Learning for Life (L4L): We are running two L4L classes at present, as follows:

"The Hymns we Love" – Sunday Mornings, 9:30-10:30 am

Have you ever wondered how some of our most beloved and recognizable hymns came to be? We hope you will join us for this L4L opportunity that will examine and discuss the words, music, and histories of a handful of the most iconic hymns of our faith. There also will be opportunity to listen to diverse sacred and secular recordings of these hymns, because "next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise" (Martin Luther).

Mark Anderson is teaching this in-person class in the lower hall. For more information, contact [Pastor Kayely](#).

"Understanding our Bible" – Sunday evenings, 7:30-9:00 pm

This class will look at—and wrestle with—things in the Bible that puzzling and difficult to understand, while seeking to understand and apply God's Word in our lives today. This class is led by Axel Schoeber and it is on Zoom. [Join "Understanding the Bible"](#). For more information, contact [Pastor Kayely](#).

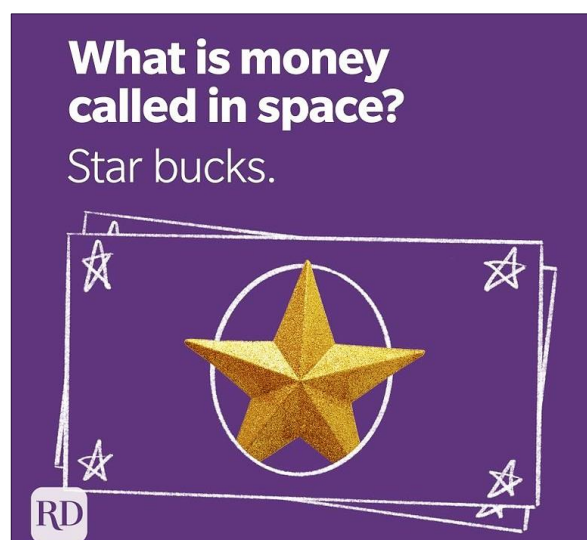
Reading through the Bible: This group, facilitated by Norma Holtslander, will resume meeting on September 14th, and will be reading from James to Revelation. The group meets every Wednesday, on Zoom, at 10:00 am. (Please note the new starting time.) For more information, contact Norma, [email the church](#), or call the church at (306) 359-1450. [Join Reading Through the Bible](#).

Tithes and Offerings

Whether you are attending Sunday services 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 a credit or debit card to make a donation from our website. (*The church is charged a small processing fee for each 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*)
 - Use a credit card or PayPal via **CanadaHelps** (*a 3.5% fee 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.



Q. What's the best way to study the Bible?

A. You Luke into it.

Q. Why did Noah have to discipline the chickens on the ark?

A. They were using fowl language.

Q. Who was the first tennis player in the bible?

A. Joseph because he served in Pharaoh's court.

Q. How do angels greet each other?

A. Halo!