

First Baptist Regina Weekly News

For the Weeks of November 27 & December 4, 2022

We are moving through the first weeks of Advent. The church building has a busy few weeks ahead. There are community concerts and our own Christmas concert. We are having our first Christmas dinner since before the pandemic. We are holding a reflective evening service early in the season for those who are grieving and those looking for a quieter time of worship. We are encouraging people to make Wednesdays a time of prayer and fasting and we are holding noon hour prayer times. Dennis Shierman from CBM is visiting us on Monday, November 28th. If for one reason or another you are not able to attend events any more, may the knowledge that the church ministry continues encourage you after your many years of work and prayer in the congregation.



In other news, a few of us have boxed up all the furnishings that had been collected in the library for the refugee family we are sponsoring with people from the community. The family's arrival seemed imminent this past spring. With that in mind, we had stored household items and furnishings in the library, a situation which was manageable for the summer. Now, it appears that this young family must face yet another winter in the Lebanese mountains. Please keep them in your prayers.



Finally, a quick reflection as we wait to celebrate the coming of Jesus. During morning prayer recently, we read 2 Peter 3:15, "Regard the patience of our Lord as salvation." Peter was responding to people in his day who were already wondering why Jesus was taking so long. He explained that God keeps giving us new days so that we can grow in repentance and holiness. He continued, "Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish."

People often say that each day is a gift from God to be thankful for. But I had never thought of every new day as given for my salvation and the salvation of others. I pray that God would be with you each day and that you would have a sense that you are drawing closer to Jesus.

With love,



Pastor Joel

Worship and Fellowship Opportunities in December

Fasting... at Christmas?!

We are approaching the Advent season, once again welcoming Jesus into our lives and remembering that one day, we will all see Jesus face to face. We are encouraged to let Advent be a time of prayer and preparation for Jesus' advent in our lives.

You may be seeking for something to help you slow down during the Christmas season or something to help you focus on Jesus. Some make use of daily advent reflections. A few are suggested below.

Fasting is also meant to be part of this season. As we read in Ezra and Nehemiah, God's people have always intentionally had times of fasting and times of celebration. Through fasting, we practice our conviction that we do not live by food alone but by God's word imparting life to us. It's impossible for Advent to be as somber a fast as Lent. Like all times of watching for a birth, the preparation and waiting is full of joy.

Perhaps you would consider fasting on the Wednesdays leading up to Christmas.

Fasting can mean taking nothing or sticking to just water. A more common approach is to limit yourself to small portions of whole foods, things like nuts, fruits and vegetables. It has also become common to turn off devices on these days, such as social media, TV, movies, or video games.

To help with all this, we will also offer a short time of scripture and prayer, every Wednesday at 12:30 pm, beginning Wednesday, November 30th, in person and over Zoom. Take a break from work, lunch, chores, and join others in prayer. If you come in person, please use the Lorne Street entryway.

If you have any questions, please speak with Pastor Joel.

"Christmas Together" Brunch



When: Sunday, December 4, 12:15 pm
(immediately following the service)

Where: Lower hall

Join your church family and friends for a Christmas Brunch! Invite your friends and family to come for the whole morning.

Please RSVP using this online form: [Christmas Brunch Registration Form](#), by calling the church at (306) 359-1450, or by speaking to any member of the church staff. (See the church directory for phone numbers.)

“The Story of Christmas”

Date: Sunday, December 11, 2022

Time: 7:00 pm

Place: First Baptist Church – In person and on Zoom

You are invited to join us on Sunday, December 11th at 7:00 pm, for a concert of music and carol singing. We will hear the Christmas story presented by the Sanctuary Choir, juBELLation (handbell choir), soloists, instrumentalists and special readings.

This is an opportunity to take a break from the hustle and bustle of the season, and reflect on the true meaning of Christmas. Come—and invite your friends as well!



A Service of Comfort & Hope – December 15th, 7:00 pm

On Thursday, December 15th, we will be having a Blue Christmas Service. It will be in person at the church and over Zoom. In this service, we will take time to recognize that Christmas can be a difficult time of year. We will remember the loss of loved ones but other kinds of losses as well.

This service is also a service of comfort and hope—the hope of the coming of Christ and the comfort of Immanuel, God with us. The service will give us an opportunity to face our losses together with others through scripture, prayer, and song.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service – December 24th, 6:00 pm

This is one of the most beautiful and meaningful services of the year. We will celebrate the Incarnation with scripture lessons and carols. The service will be in person and on Zoom.

Other Christmas Events of Note Coming Up in Our Community

Candlelight Services – Sunday, December 4, 2:00 pm & 7:00 pm

Luther College High School – Merlis Belsher Heritage Center, 1500 Royal Street.

Choirs, handbells, and instrumental ensembles. Freewill offering and online donations.

Tickets: Visit the [Luther College High School website](#).

“Carry the Light” – Friday, December 9, 7:30 pm. First Baptist Church.

Cantate Youth Choirs. Freewill offering.

“A Season of Song” – Saturday, December 10, 7:00 pm. First Baptist Church.

Vivace Chorale Ensemble. Tickets: Adults \$15. Purchase at www.vivace.ca.

“The Christmas Messiah” – December 5th and 6th, 7:30 pm. Knox Metropolitan United Church. Regina Philharmonic Chorus and Halcyon Chamber Choir. Admission by donation. Benefit concerts for the people of Ukraine. For more information, [see RPC website](#).

Christmas Carolling Opportunity

On Saturday, December 17th at 2:00 pm, our choir has been invited to the Renaissance Retirement Residence to sing a few anthems for the residents, and also to join them for a time of carolling. We are looking for singers to add to our numbers for the carolling time. If you like to sing (you don't have to have a voice like John's!), we would love to have you join us. If interested, please contact Louise Krueger, send an [email to the church](#), or call the church at (306) 359-1450.

Ladies Fellowship Breakfast – Saturday, December 17th

Time: 9:30 – 11:00 am

Place: First Baptist Board Room

The breakfast will be provided, so just come and enjoy. There will be an opportunity to do a Christmas craft as well as time to visit and relax. If you are able to come, please contact Julie Rich, Laurie McPherson, or Debby Nelson, [email the church](#), or call the church at (306) 359-1450, so that we know how many to prepare for.

Thank you!

A big thank you goes to Tom Chen, Marg and Marvin Fuller, Dean Gilchrist, Carol Hepting, Kevin and Julie Rich, Marion MacRobbie, Marilyn and Ron Phillips, Eleanor Russell, Tracy Sailor, Amy Warren, Barb Ziolkowski, and Brenda Ziolkowski, for decorating the sanctuary with the sights and colours of Christmas. Thank you for taking the time and energy to decorate the sanctuary, not only for our enjoyment, but also to bring alive the Advent and the Christmas message of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. Thank you one and all!



One thing that is hard to explain to teens is how legitimately exciting it used to be when someone would wheel in an overhead projector.

Karate: The ancient Japanese art of getting people to buy lots of belts.

Hear about the new restaurant called Karma? There's no menu— you get what you deserve.

A man won an \$8,000 settlement from Disneyland after he got stuck on the "It's a Small World" ride. He said he'll use the money to cut out the part of his brain that won't stop playing "It's a Small World After All."

Children's Ministry Update

During the Sunday morning services in December, the children are exploring the nativity story. The older children in Oasis are learning Luke's narrative of the birth of Christ through art, music, cooking and a movie. In Godly Play, our younger children are exploring the nativity story through the perspective of the Prophets, Mary and Joseph, the Shepherds, and the Magi. Thank you to our many helpers who make our children's programs possible. If you are interested in serving as a children's helper, please contact Pastor Cheryl.



An Advent calendar has been created and was distributed at the service on November 27. This calendar is your opportunity to go on an Advent Journey to discover the true meaning of Christmas. It is particularly geared to the children and families in our congregation, but is applicable to everyone. There is a laminated calendar to put up in your house. There are songs to listen to, scriptures to read and activities to do from November 27th (first Sunday of Advent) until January 6th (Epiphany).

The idea of this calendar is to give families ways to incorporate faith into their homes. Do not feel pressure to do everything. If you miss one or two or many of the activities, be gentle with yourself. This is meant to add fun and learning to Advent, not cause you more stress. More information and supplemental activities will be posted throughout the week on our First Baptist Church Facebook page. If you would like a calendar to provide to someone who doesn't regularly attend First Baptist Church, there will be extras available at the church, or you can contact Pastor Cheryl and she will get one to you or your loved one.

We look forward to all the learning we will do while we wait with expectation for the celebration of Christmas.

Saturday Lunch Ministry: Communal Gathering, Prayer, and Reflection

Time: Wednesday, November 30th, 7:00 pm

Place: Lower Hall

This will be a monthly opportunity for volunteers to debrief their experience through guided and prayerful reflection and discussion led by Tashia Toupin, one of the core team leaders and the social justice coordinator at the Archdiocese of Regina.

Every participating church has been invited, particularly the volunteers. All are welcome.

Fall Congregational Meeting

Our congregation held its Fall Congregational Meeting on Sunday, November 13. For the first time since COVID struck, we gathered in the lower hall and enjoyed a meal together before conducting our business. Folks at home were still able to follow along via Zoom, but the great majority of attendees were there in person. A big thank you to those who provided delicious soup, buns and squares for dessert. It was wonderful to feel like a family again.

Our main business was to receive a financial report from our treasurer, Kevin Rich, and to approve a budget for 2023. While we have our challenges, our financial position is relatively healthy.

Board chair Ron Phillips and Lead Pastor Joel Russell-MacLean gave reports. We have much to celebrate about our life together, and yet we face significant spiritual and societal challenges. We are an aging congregation in a rapidly changing society. But Jesus is Lord, and we hear his call to faithfulness.

I am completing my final year on the board, as are Tiffany Stafford-Lai and Barry Lyons. I am grateful to them, and to all members of the board for their faithful service.

—Ron Phillips, Board Chair

First Baptist Finances

Here's an update from our fall business meeting on First Baptist's current financial situation. The numbers show our income and expenses to the end of October 2022.

To the end of October, our total revenue is 17% below our YTD budget, reflecting a lower offering income year-to-date than in 2021. Over the same time period, we have kept our expenses to about 12% below YTD budget. Combining these two situations, we have a current deficit of \$18.9K (spending more than our income). We are using a surplus from recent years to offset this difference without requiring a line of credit and in order to continue paying back the loan from our Organ Fund.

Our goal is to achieve a balanced budget by year end so we can continue to focus our attention on the many wonderful ministry opportunities in front of us.

Approved Operating Budget for 2022:

\$ 447.1K

	Actual	YTD Budget
Operating Revenue to end of October 2022:	\$ 310.8K	\$ 372.6K
Operating Expenses to end of October 2022:	\$ 329.7K	\$ 372.6K
Restricted Reserve Balance:	\$ 100.4K	
(Benevolent, Building, Organ, and Legacy Funds)		
Organ Fund Loan	\$ 175.2K	
CEBA (CRA) Loan	\$ 40.0K	
(\$30K to be paid back by end of 2023)		

What's happening at First?

Children's Ministry

We have two classes that take place during the Sunday morning worship service, for children aged 3 to grade 6—Godly Play for the younger ones and Oasis for the older group. We also provide nursery supervision for babies and toddlers. See page 5 for an update on our children's ministries. For more information, please contact Pastor Cheryl [by email](#) or by calling the church at (306) 359-1450.

Youth Ministry

The youth meet weekly for various activities. For more information about our youth program, please contact [Pastor Chris](#).

Adult Ministries

Morning Prayer: Join us Monday to Thursday at 7:15 am to begin your day with scripture and prayer, via Zoom. For more information, visit [our website](#). [Join morning prayer](#).

Reading through the Bible: This group, facilitated by Norma Holtslander, is presently reading from James to Revelation. The group meets every Wednesday, on Zoom, at 10:00 am. For more information, contact Norma, [email the church](#), or call the church at (306) 359-1450. [Join Reading Through the Bible](#).

Noon Prayer: Join others every Wednesday at 12:30 pm for a short time of scripture and prayer. In person, in the main office, or over Zoom. If coming in person, please use the Lorne Street entryway. For more information, visit [our website](#), or contact [Pastor Joel](#). [Join Wednesday noon prayer](#).

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, contact Bonnie Astring-Winter or Laureen Snook, visit [our website](#), [email the church](#), or call the church at (306) 359-1450.

Learning for Life – Sunday Mornings, 9:30-10:30: Beginning Sunday, November 27th Annabel Robinson is leading a class on the Gospel of Luke. This class is in person and on Zoom. For more information, contact Annabel, email [Pastor Kayely](#), go to [our website](#), or call the church at (306) 359-1450. [Join "Gospel of Luke"](#).

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.

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.



I just got fired from my job at the keyboard factory. They told me I wasn't putting in enough shifts.

The closest I've been to a diet this year is erasing food searches from my browser history.

The cool part about naming your child is that you don't have to add six numbers to make sure the name is available.

I called up the spiritual leader of Tibet, and he sent me a large goat with a long neck. Turns out I phoned dial-a-llama.