

## **Annual Report 2022**

### **First Baptist Church Regina, SK Annual General Meeting March 19, 2023, 12:00**

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**First Baptist Church  
Annual General Meeting Agenda  
March 19, 2023**

1. Call to Order - Derrick Bellows
2. The Church Covenant & Prayer - Pastor Joel
3. Consent Agenda: MOTION:
  1. That we approve today's meeting agenda
  2. That we approve the minutes of the November, 2022 congregational meeting
4. Board Chair Report
5. Treasurer's Report
  1. Motion: That we receive the 2022 audited church financial statements
6. Staff Reports
  1. Cheryl Johnston
  2. Louise Krueger
7. Organ Committee Report
8. Lead Pastor's Report
9. Other Business
10. Adjournment

A covenant of Fellowship of First Baptist Church  
Regina, Saskatchewan

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**We**, members of First Baptist Church, Regina, covenant together to walk with Christ and each other in fellowship of holy love, to gather together regularly for united worship, to look to God daily for grace and guidance, to search the scriptures for understanding of the Christian way of life, to serve God and each other in love and humility.

We will recognize the worth of each individual within our community, regardless of age or circumstances, recognizing that we are all precious in God's sight.

We will uphold each other in prayer and will offer kindness, forgiveness and mercy to each other as Christ has offered to us.

We will give cheerfully of our time, talents and finances so that God's work would prosper in this place.

We will recognize Christ's presence in every aspect of our lives and will seek to honour Him in all that we say and do – at church, in our homes, and at our places of employment. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we will seek to follow Christ throughout our lives.

“What does the Lord require of you, but to seek justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.” Micah 6:8

First Baptist Church  
Fall Congregational Meeting  
November 13, 2022  
12:43 PM – 1:30 PM

1. Call to order – Ron Philips, Board Chair
2. First Baptist Covenant and Prayer – Joel Russell-MacLean
3. Consent Agenda:
  - a. Motion to approve the agenda
  - b. Motion to approve the minutes of the of the AGM March 27, 2022
  - c. Motion to approve auditor
  - d. Correction on date on the 2002 > 2022
    - i. MOVED: Carmen Orthner, seconded: Hillary Ryan CARRIED
4. Motion to recommend Cheryl Johnston for licensing
  - a. MOVED: Bryden Yeo, seconded: Carol Hepting CARRIED
  - b. Discussion of being excited
5. Report of the Board Chair (verbal highlights)
  - a. Grateful that lead pastor and family were able to go away
  - b. Grateful for the summer, with Kayely Rich taking lead role, different people taking on leadership roles and the congregation working together differently and effectively
  - c. Grateful for strong leadership and pastoral care team (Louise Kreuger, Cheryl Johnston joining)
  - d. Grateful for finances and giving, despite a time of considerable change
  - e. Grateful for board and meaningful time together
  - f. Grateful for positive spirit within FBC. Not without challenges, but we are always FOR one another
  - g. Challenge is to learn how to witness and evangelize in the day in which we live. Church is not looked at in a positive light anymore. How to have a winsome evangelistic approach
  - h. Challenge of no baptisms

- i. Challenge of vision, as church ages. What is FBC being called to do IN THIS AGE. What are we positioned to do?
  - i. Questions? *Hillary Ryan*: thought that the Gideons have been providing evangelistic training. If the board is interested, Hillary can arrange. *John Hillmer*: are we making any headway on the minister for music? (will be part of Lead Pastor Report)
6. Report of the Lead Pastor (verbal highlights)
  - a. Mark Anderson's resignation, effective Spring 2023. Also resigned at Luther High School
  - b. Norma Holtslander's resignation from First Baptist Place as chaplain, effective November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022 (food is allowed, cautiously, at the residence, for her last service)
  - c. Organist replacement, at least 1 more year for Xavier Russell-MacLean, as he continues his studies. Pianist replacement, yet God continues to provide musicians for us. Allison Purdy, Grace Liu.
  - d. Larger question of a Music Minister... Still searching. Search committee is still in place. Who/how we look at the role knowing the needs, is still being explored.
    - i. Questions: *Annabelle Robinson*: will Norma stay on pastoral staff? No. But she is not going anywhere. She will still be relied on. *Veronica Klebuc*: blessed and overjoyed that Xavier is at the organ.
  - e. Structure for the next year: only recently that core staff has been in the office together. Focus on getting back to regular pastoral visits. How do we grow, and we need to think about staff.
  - f. Grateful for the time for the trip. Once in a lifetime opportunity. Mont St. Michel experience and hearing noon prayers and message about the treasure in the field and church being a place of life in our community. (Bryden Yeo: trust the Holy Spirit!).
    - i. Questions: none
7. Treasurer's Report
  - a. Financial Report: numbers as presented, as of the end of October 2022. See treasurer's report

- i. Questions: *Merv Hepting*: regarding the refugee family, do we know the status of their needs? Joel explained the bank account and how it will be used once the existing family and their needs are covered.

## 8. 2023 Budget

- a. Personal/property/admin have gone up a bit, but other line items have remained largely consistent for expenses
  - i. Questions: *Laureen Snook*: does personal line item include music minister? Yes, but it is not so straightforward. The line item represents what it costs to run the things that we currently run. It is trying to be flexible.
- b. Income reflects what we have been running for the previous years. Chaplaincy services simply reflects what FBP pays us.
- c. \$1K a month for rentals (KLC/CCF)
- d. Youth Centre gets a line item on the missions budget
  - i. Questions: *Derrick Bellows*: aside from operating donations, are the rest of the income line items stable? Yes. *Rosemary Ward*: what are the grounds for expecting an extra \$50K in donations? *Ron Philips* answer: difficult decision and predicated on 2 different things: operating donations and actuals from the end of last year. *Rosemary* replies: what is the process, looking at the average donations and extrapolate that through the months, donations MOM are down, it is not unreasonable to anticipate still less even in December 2022. *Kevin Rich*: should we forecast a deficit budget? *Rosemary*: does the budget take into account the December bump? *Kevin*: yes it does, we bring in roughly 13 months, but we can't forecast 3X giving in December. Good news/bad news, we have a healthy bank account and investments, no external debt either. It is a good time to make a mistake, this year. *Bryan Orthner*: at budget meeting, should we budget for a deficit? Plan for it or just let it happen. Overall feelings were to plan for the balanced budget, and is aspirational, but not overly aspirational. This is presenting a balanced budget. *Kevin*

replies: this is the number we need, but there are challenges we are seeing.

- e. Budget is a “best guess” for 2023
- f. Expenses have been slightly increased, and our utilities have gone up, and insurance as gone up
- g. Loan payments will continue at \$1K
- h. Transfers to capital fund at \$5K/year
  - i. Questions: *Tracy Sailor*: can we increase rental rates to cover raise in utilities? *Joel R-M* replies: short answer is yes. However, YFC is based on older assessment of fair market rental rates, and right now might not be the best time to revisit that (rentals in downtown are going down).
  - ii. *Laureen Snook*: loan to ourselves, was that original re-payment commitment \$1K changed? *Kevin Rich*: we have moved it from \$2.5K/month to \$1K, interest rate remains the same
  - iii. *Derrick Bellows*: we dug ourselves out of the hole for bond redemptions and line of credit. His memory is that it has never been a problem, we have always come in around budget. Decrease expenses, etc. He likes the budget, we can afford a bit of a deficit. He supports the budget.
  - iv. *Carmen Orthner*: are there discussions of YFC leaving? *Joel R-M*: no. We have committed to doing some projects and we are good with them.
  - v. *Len Pauls*: we give them a donation back, though. Do they count on that donation remaining static, so that their effective rent is lower? *Kevin Rich*: if we start reducing that, they would start looking at something else. In order to help them stay, they are counting on that. They are paying about \$25K/year in rent.
  - vi. *Rob Stafford*: no projects planned for 2023 for the church. *Kevin Rich*: we are still going to build up the capital fund
  - vii. *Joel R-M*: observation about missions budget, most of the local funds being given is going to the lunch program but a bulk is going to the CBM. 20% of our income is going to others.
  - viii. MOTION: Kevin Rich, seconded: Bryan Orthner CARRIED

9. 2023 Board Nominations

- a. Returning: Brenda Ziolkowski, Roger Bellows, Heather Russell-MacLean, Adija Pusi, Derrick Bellows, and Kevin Rich (treasurer)
  - i. Joel R-M: Ron Philips stayed on as chair for 1 more year.  
Appreciation for Ron expressed
  - ii. We have 1 more then we need
- b. Nominees for 2023 board

10. Motion to adjourn

- a. Derrick Bellows moved to adjourn



## Board Chair Report

2022 was a year of emerging out of covid, and of rebuilding. Pastor Joel helped us think this through theologically and practically by taking us through Ezra and Nehemiah this fall, so that we might learn from the Hebrew people's experience of returning from exile. The world we have emerged into is not the same as the world we once knew, and rebuilding our life and ministries is a challenge. One of the hardest things is that not everyone has returned with us. At the same time, we know God's faithfulness and his presence in this place and time. And it is so good to be back at Time for Friends and at meals together, and doing in person ministry.

Your church board continually wrestles with the issues facing our church, both large and small. We read a book together, *Plunging into the Kingdom Way*, by Tim Dickau, who pastored Grandview Calvary Baptist Church in Vancouver for many years. This helped us wrestle with our own particular challenges and opportunities here in Regina.

We saw more pastoral staff changes in 2022. While a sub-committee worked hard at finding a full time music person, this did not work out. However, Louise Krueger stepped up and has been leading our music ministry since late summer. We are so grateful for her. And we did find just the right person to lead our children and families' ministries - Cheryl Johnston! Cheryl began her ministry in late August and has fit in wonderfully. Kayely is now doing more administration and pastoral care, after having led us so well during Joel's sabbatical. But it is so good to have Joel and his family back home, leading and caring for us. And of course Chris Senger continues to lead our youth. We have a strong and cohesive pastoral staff. They have also picked up the chaplaincy responsibilities at First Baptist Place, since Norma's retirement after so many years of faithful and fruitful ministry.

I'm thankful too for Esther Gurnsey, who leads our communications efforts.

A significant ministry investment this year has been the weekly Saturday lunches, where, with the help of churches around the city, we provide food and a warm space for people in our city who need such. And we have also invested time and

energy on the issue of refugees, though the Syrian family we had hoped to welcome continues to be stuck in a refugee camp in Lebanon. We are also looking at sending another team to visit our partners in Lebanon. These efforts, I think, reflect our church's heart, a heart for our city and for our world. Still, the board wrestles with how to be a faithful gospel witness in our time and place.

I wish to thank Barry Lyons and Tiffany Stafford-Lai for their faithful work on the board these past six years. They have now completed their terms. Others carry on: Brenda Ziolkowski, Adijah Pusi, Kevin Rich, Derrick Bellows, Heather Russell-Maclean, and Roger Bellows.

I am grateful too, for the many people who do all the things that make a church function. You are noticed and appreciated. And I'm grateful for every single person, young and old, who enriches us all simply by being who they are. You are loved. We are a family.

I leave the board now, after almost seven years, the last three as chair, with a sense of gratitude for the privilege of serving the people of First Baptist Church. We are a flawed and imperfect group (me above all!), but a people nonetheless whom Jesus delights in, and delights to use to build his kingdom.

Respectfully submitted,

Ron Phillips,  
Outgoing Board Chair

## **Treasurer Report**

First Baptist Church is active in a great many ministries, and follows the CRA standards for charities in reporting and tracking our finances. In addition to financing the normal day-to-day activities necessary for our church life (operating expenses), we have a number of restricted reserves that are dedicated to specific purposes.

The FBC community was very conscientious in maintaining a healthy giving effort in 2022, although our general offerings decreased by 4% over the previous year. Thanks to extraordinary December giving, our overall revenue again exceeded our yearly expenses, which provided us with a surplus and an excellent beginning to 2023.

We continue to make monthly payments against both principle and interest for the internal loan from our own Organ Fund. This loan was supplemented with the CEBA interest-free loan, a program provided by the government for COVID relief. We plan to pay back CEBA loan by the end of 2023, and the Organ Fund loan is expected to be paid off in 2045 at our current rate.

Detailed financial information follows in the audited statements, but highlights are presented below.

### **Operations**

Church staff and leadership manage the operating expenses of the various operations and ministries. Personnel accounted for 53% of the operating expense in 2022. Property, Administration and Missions also had significant budgets. The church staff and leadership continue to carefully monitor all expenses.

### **Restricted Reserves**

Separate Restricted Reserve fund accounts were established in 2017 for special long-term financial items. Expenses and revenue related to these funds were managed separately from the operating budget.

The Building Fund is for larger capital expenses related to building repair. During 2022 we had several larger projects that were funded. This fund had just over \$2,225 at year-end.

The Organ Fund is for expenses related to the maintenance and use of the pipe organ. This fund has had significant donations through estate bequests over the years. In 2020, the Organ Fund provided the church with a loan of \$215,000,

which we used to pay off the CBWC loan. This allowed the church to reduce the interest paid on debt from 5.65% to 2%. As a result, the church has no external debt. The fund account had a total of about \$77,400 at year-end, with a current loan balance owed to the fund of about \$173,700.

The Benevolent Fund is for special financial aid to individuals and families. It is administered by the pastoral staff with accountability to the Board. This is part of our approved budget and donations are requested when the fund is low. During 2022, this fund provided over \$4,000 in support. This fund had \$546 at year-end.

The Legacy Fund was created a number of years ago to hold funds to support special outreach projects from our church that were not part of the annual budget. The main source of money to this fund is intended to be from estates and special gifts. The fund had \$17,169 at year-end.

We have also initiated a Refugee Fund to assist in the financial support of refugees in their first full year in Canada. We have a current balance of \$1,184 in the fund, however no assistance to refugee families has yet been provided.

### **General**

About 12% of our revenue came from property use, not donations. The largest is the facility agreement with Regina Youth for Christ who pay market value rent of the Youth Center. We do return about 38% of that rent as part of our missions support to their ministry. We also received payments from the Christ's Commission Fellowship for the use of the sanctuary for services.

Through 2022, Shelly Pippin CPA Prof. Corp. continued to provide bookkeeping services. We are very appreciative of the work and assistance that Shelly and Jenn are providing. The Finance Committee continued with the same membership of Marv Fuller, Gloria Toews and Tom Chen, who assisted me in ensuring that our financials were properly managed through the year. I thank them for their commitment over the past year. I also thank the Board and staff for their diligence in managing the financial resources entrusted to them.

This was my fifth year as Treasurer, and I thank you, the family of First Baptist, who continue to provide the finances for the work of our church.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Rich

## Church Clerk Report

What does it mean to be a member of First Baptist Church? To me, it is a bit like citizenship- full of rights and responsibilities and a desire to declare my intention of who I am and where I stand. It does not mean that I agree exactly with all other members, but it means that I agree with the foundational principles, I agree to work in community with my fellow members toward common goals, and I publicly declare that intent. In this report, we count members and adherents – adherents are people who are part of our community but who have not formally sought membership. First Baptist now has almost as many adherents as we have members. I would encourage any adherents interested in making this formal commitment (through baptism, transfer, or profession of faith) to speak to one of our pastors and become a member of First Baptist Church.

Total membership- 115

Members: # active = 111

active adherents (including children) = 109

New members admitted by baptism: 1 - Kristopher Sotropa

New members admitted by transfer of membership or other: 2 -Cheryl Johnston, Chris Senger

Members lost through death: 10 - Eileen Hutton, Kristopher Sotropa, Carol Oxelgren, Audrey St. Louis, Winnie Kelm, Lamona Hartt, Ralph Bryanton, Javonne Miller, Al Basky, Susan Quinn

Members lost through transfer of membership: 5 (transferred to First Karen Baptist Church)

Member names archived: 62

This past year I have gone through the membership list attempting to make it more accurate and current. If it was possible, inactive members were contacted to see if they wanted to keep their name on the list. Those names we could not contact or who did not wish to keep their membership were archived but can be reactivated easily at any time.

Respectfully submitted, Rosemary Ward, church clerk

## **Lead Pastor Report**

Last year, in his report, our board chair expressed our desire to remain in step with the Spirit. We therefore moved forward with careful and prayerful attention to what matters with a readiness for the unforeseeable.

Attention to what matters meant trying a few new ideas while caring diligently for what we already have in fellowship, care, discipleship, and mission.

The unforeseeable came as well. Louise and Cheryl both applied to join our staff out of our congregation. We have a front pew full of children once again. We were blessed by the baptism of a young man and his powerful testimony.

It was also a heavy year of losses. We said farewell for now to a number of long time members and good friends.

On a more personal note, the wind of the Spirit blew me and my family across the UK and France while on Sabbatical. I enjoyed reading “The City of God” while passing through many different kinds of cities, attending church on Sunday and during the week. It was an unexpected blessing to discover, in so many places, resilient congregations and monasteries, freely and clearly sharing the Good News. My family and I are so grateful to the congregation for the gift of this leave.

### **Renewing Our Ministries**

We returned cautiously to ever larger gatherings Sunday morning and at concerts and then to meals together, first outdoors on Willow Island, then in our lower hall. We renewed our commitment to make regular visits to shut-ins with a full pastoral staff and fewer restrictions in care homes. We held a fall retreat at our camp.

We also maintained our online connections. People continued to join bible studies, worship services, and meetings online through Covid’s ongoing activity and a big return in the fall of colds and respiratory viruses. Others have been relieved to be able to take part online where, previously, winter storms, dangerously icy commutes, and age-related mobility challenges would have meant missing out entirely. We will continue to invest in this area of ministry. Thank you so much to over a dozen volunteers who make this possible, week after week.

## **Local Outreach**

All last year, Louise Krueger and Barb Ziolkowski helped an ecumenical committee organize free lunches from the lower hall in partnership with other churches. 18 different churches are now taking turns. We have received calls and notes of thanks from these churches because it is such a joyful time. Coming alongside those who are hungry or homeless can be contentious and divisive, as we have seen in our city council, the Legislature, and across the country. While we pray for those in government, we are grateful for the unity we have experienced as The Church working together.

## **Music**

We continued to navigate an epochal transition in our music ministry following the retirement of Rev John Nelson, Pastor Emeritus. He has continued to support our congregation and staff in prayer, in leading, and friendship.

The music search committee put in hours of work seeking a permanent replacement and came to the point of inviting a candidate which in the end, did not work out.

Instead of what we planned, Dr Melissa Morgan helped to lead us in music through January on top her duties as a U of R professor. We were then blessed to have Maria Fuller offer to step into the role for a few months during a break in her conducting contracts. She composed a number of choral pieces for us and prepared a beautiful and challenging Easter concert. Maria continues to conduct a number of symphonies and operas across Canada.

Through the summer months, a variety of musicians and volunteer song leaders stepped forward from among our own ranks. We tested our own strengths in this area and found much to be grateful for. Thank you to everyone who helped out.

Over the summer, Louise Krueger approached us and asked to be considered for the role of temporary choir director. She then dived in, selecting choir anthems for the entire year, finding an accompanist, and drawing up drafts of the Christmas and Easter concerts. She quickly put her stamp on the choir and led a lovely Christmas concert.

### **Many Hands Make Light Work**

Thank you to Chris Senger, Norma Holtslander, and Esther Gurnsey for faithfulness and hard work this past year. Thanks to Ron Phillips, in his final year as board chair, to Tiffany Stafford-Lai and Barry Lyons after their six years of service, to Rob Stafford, who helps before and after most events and oversees the care of our building, and to Kevin Rich our Treasurer.

A warm welcome to Louise Krueger and Cheryl Johnston. You have both stepped into your role with great skill, love for people and attention to the details.

A special thank you to Kayely Rich for stepping into the role of interim Lead Pastor during my sabbatical. She led pastoral care well, especially during the passing of two of our long term members. She completely oversaw the addition to our staff of Louise Krueger and Cheryl Johnston. She managed weekly affairs with such ability and grace.

Finally, thank you to everyone at our church for continuing to pray and care for one another. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you for another year.

The Spirit is still leading, generation after generation. The new challenges may seem daunting but perhaps that makes the unexpected gifts all the more precious.

Prosper the work of our hands, O Lord.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Joel Russell-MacLean



## Interim Lead Pastor Report

Thank you so much for entrusting me with the role of leading our staff and congregation during Pastor Joel's Sabbatical this summer. It was an honour and a privilege to step into this role and to be surrounded by such an amazing team, paid and unpaid, who leaned in to ensure that our ministries would thrive in a very uncertain time. We were already short-staffed before Joel's temporary departure and were discerning how to come out of pandemic restrictions in a way that honoured our relationships with one another, even when we had different comfort levels about gathering together. The summer months could have been a very difficult time, but thanks be to God for leading us through in a way that prepared us for an exciting Fall.

I moved from a part-time to full-time role on May 1 so that Joel and I would have two weeks to pass the torch before his Sabbatical leave. Esther, Norma and Chris continued in their regular duties and were quick to pitch in where extra help was needed. I am deeply appreciative of my husband, Gerald, for his support on the home front to make the increased hours possible. And thank you to those of you who took our 3 kids under their wings on Sunday mornings when Gerald had to work.

Many people pitched in throughout the summer and it was a treat to watch so many people share their various gifts: the guest preachers, pianists, song leaders, tech team, ushers and children's volunteers kept Sunday mornings operating like clock-work. The hospitality leaders coordinated outdoor meals and cold drinks at a time where food service took extra thought. Others took the initiative to visit congregants. Ron Phillips, Kevin Rich, Rob Stafford and John Nelson were always a call away. Thank you!

Not one, but two search committees were instrumental in ensuring we would be adequately staffed in time for Fall. At the same time, God's Spirit was nudging two people from our congregation to apply - one for each position. Brenda Ziolkowski, Lauren Snook, Amy Warren and I sat on the music committee that hired Louise Krueger. Ron Phillips, Christie Senger and I sat on the children and family minister committee that hired Cheryl Johnston. Joel sat on both of these committees prior to leaving on his Sabbatical.

Several people have asked about my role following Joel's return. Prior to May, I had been serving PT as Associate Pastor with a focus on children's ministry. From May until August, I served as Interim Lead Pastor, during which time we hired Cheryl as FT Children and Family Minister. In September, I returned to my role as Associate Pastor, with a change in duties. You could now describe my key duties as pastoral care, teaching, spiritual formation and administrative leadership. It is a pleasure to continue to serve this congregation with this staff team.

May God's Kingdom come,  
Rev. Kayely Rich

## **First Baptist Place Chaplaincy Report**

We are so grateful for the very caring and capable leadership of Rev Norma Holtslander over the last decade as Chaplain at First Baptist Place (FBP). Before her retirement from the role at the end of November, Norma coordinated the Wednesday evening chapel service, offered pastoral care to individuals living at First Baptist Place and, broadly speaking, sought to help the building tenants navigate the realities of covid together.

Norma also regularly attended staff meetings at our church. Her insights and friendship with others were much appreciated. This was of particular note during Joel's Sabbatical when Norma went the extra mile to support both Esther and Kayely in their roles.

Following Norma's retirement, Joel and Kayely, in consultation with the FBP board, agreed to share the leadership of the Wednesday evening chapel service at FBP for the time being by leading on alternate weeks. Seeking to incorporate tenants who come from a variety of Christian denominations, we continue to have a time of singing, a Scripture reading, short reflection and prayer time each week. We are currently using the lectionary's Gospel reading to give shape to our times together. We are grateful to have several pianists who live at FBP that we can call on to accompany our singing times each week.

Pastor Joel and Pastor Kayely

## Missions Commission Report

Commission Members: Bryan Orthner (chair), Barb Ziolkowski, Carmen Pauls Orthner, Heather Russell-MacLean. Pastoral liaison: Joel Russell-MacLean.

Our mandate:

- Provide vision, direction and management for our “missions” ministry, including: financial, relational and practical involvement in missions
- local AND global involvement in missions

In 2022, the Missions Commission budget financially supported YFC (\$15,684), Katepwa Lake Camp (\$6,000), IVCF (\$3,000), and the local inter-church Saturday feeding program (\$1810). In addition, the Commission budget provided \$10,500 for our church partnership with Canadian Baptist Ministries in Lebanon. 2022 started with a missions focus, as our first service of the year included having Lebanon missionaries speak remotely with Joe Bridi and Eli Haddad both speaking, as well as having our Lebanon staff’s children read the scriptures for the service.

In May, the church held a meeting to discuss ways to assist the Syrian refugee family which FBC is formally sponsoring with the support of a local group of families.

The Missions Commission hosted a Lebanon dinner at Bryan and Carmen Orthner’s home in August as the kick-off for our annual Lebanon fundraiser. By the close of the fundraiser in November, the people of the church had contributed \$12,650 above our budgeted commitment towards the support of our Lebanon partnership.

In the fall, we were also able to hear from the Russell-MacLean family about their summer travels in Europe, including their experiences with churches in England, Scotland, and France. We hosted a meeting with Rachele Low and Maryann Gibson. A number of FBC people came out to meet Maryann and to hear about her new role as the part-time staff worker with IVCF at the University of Regina. In late November, we also hosted a meeting with Dennis Shierman, our CBM Western Canada Regional Representative, who talked to us about the ministries of CBM around the world and in Lebanon.

Looking forward to 2023, we hope once more to promote the Lebanon partnership through our annual fundraiser, as well as support a SENT team return to Lebanon. We continue to anticipate the arrival of our Syrian refugee family and hope that this will open doors for FBC people to minister the love of Christ to this family.

Respectfully submitted,

Bryan Orthner, Missions Commission Chair

## **Property Report**

We have completed a number of jobs both in the church and the Youth for Christ centre, from updating a number of the offices and re-flooring and painting the Youth Centre. With the increase in costs, it has been a trying year but we got through this with the help of a few people donating their time and skills. A big thank you to Marvin and Len for their wonderful work on the sound board and Marvin's continued work around the church. It is great to see the church getting back to normal again with Time for Friends, Learning for Life and other church groups using the church. We have a busy year ahead as we will be hosting concerts and Open Door's child drop-in-centre once again. We are always looking for help around the church with minor repairs and with the property operations so if you think you could help talk to either myself or Joel.

This winter has been difficult for everyone with large amounts of snow and colder temperatures. We have seen an increase in snow removal. To manage costs, we are working with a start-up company and are ironing out issues as they learn.

We have a few ongoing projects that we are working on, including lighting, AV upgrade, lower hall floor and chair repair. We had investigated the repointing and repair to the brick work on the exterior of the church on the east, west and south sides to prevent water damage to the walls and ceiling, the dome inspection was carried out and after a minor leak over the stage was found we (Marvin) was able to carry out repairs to prevent ceiling damage.

We hope to carry out painting projects around the church over the next three years, but we feel there are a number of other projects that should be carried out before we start these.

### **Outstanding Church Projects**

- Outside garden
- Cleaning of windows
- Cleaning pews and sanctuary floor
- Cleaning of sanctuary lights and fans
- Repair basement floor including library or replace.
- Deep clean of kitchen / nursery / Godly play / library
- History Wall (ongoing)
- Painting Projects
- Painting project #1: Front entrance including reception east/west (on hold)
- Painting project #2: Offices (including meeting rooms) and kitchen.
- Painting project #5: Sanctuary
- Misc. Projects
- Lower hall floor repair/renewal
- Bird prevention (front of the church)
- Window cleaning (interior and exterior)
- Pendulum lights upgrade
- Repair to stained glass windows (west side)

I would like to thank the Board and Joel for the support over the past year and I look forward to 2023. The workload of the Property is heavy, but made a little easier with the help of Marv, Len, Kayely and Joel. We need more help with property issues and can always use another handy person. Any help you can offer would be great.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Stafford

## First Baptist Regina Communications Report

One of the blessings in 2022 was that, after being affected by Covid in various ways for more than two years, we were able to return to a full slate of activities. With more going on both within and outside the church walls, there has been a lot more information to communicate to the church community. One of my top priorities has been to get complete and accurate information about events and activities out to the congregation in a timely fashion. This has been done both through online communication and printed materials.

For those with computers and internet access, our main online communication piece is the “First This Week” email, to which is attached the bi-weekly newsletter. Judging by the responses we’ve had, and by the good number of folk who have asked to be added to the email list this past year, these emails have become a staple way for many to keep connected to the church. We are also grateful that using email enables us to provide links for people to easily join meetings or services on Zoom, and also to sign up for upcoming events. One of the challenges we encountered with email in 2022 was periodic issues with email spam filters that have, at times, prevented our emails from reaching people’s inboxes. SaskTel has been helpful in resolving these issues.

My areas of responsibility in 2022 included the following:

- Preparing and sending out the “First this week” email each week.
- Preparing and distributing a bi-weekly newsletter in both print and digital formats
- Preparing the weekly bulletin for Sunday worship services.
- Preparing posters and other promotional materials for our Christmas and Easter concerts.
- Posting announcements and events on our Facebook page.
- Assisting with updating our church database, ChurchTrac.
- Proofing and editing various communication pieces.
- Assisting in ensuring that the information on all media is up to date.

Respectfully submitted,

Esther Gurnsey, Communication Lead

## Youth Group Report

Our Youth program and ministry had a year that was defined by the challenges of what it means to “emerge from Covid” and attempt to evaluate what is worth preserving and what is worth reevaluating as a ministry. Last June, we began to meet fully face to face, and while we had a summer with no programming, we kicked things off with a BBQ in the fall. While there has been a good energy and excitement about meeting together again, there is also a noticeable change in the needs that our youth have, and how our ministry and community attempts to meet those needs.

Right now, I can identify two significant changes or progressing changes in what we are doing as a youth ministry: First, we are alternating weekly meetings between Wednesdays (bible study and food) and Fridays (youth event). Second, we are trying to re-establish some of the collaborative ministry opportunities, or local based partnerships, that exist in Regina. This was a strong component of our ministry pre-Covid. An example of this is our recent joint Youth Event with Our Saviour’s youth group, and our conversation around joining “Merge” which is an initiative to have multiple churches meet on a regular basis for youth activities, events, and ministry gatherings. To some extent, this is about remembering what was good and helpful before, and considering how we build relationships again that re-establish those patterns and priorities in a way that also recognizes that there has been significant change. An example of this is how we are attempting to establish relationships with churches, and youth groups, but there are now new pastors or leaders in place. So, not only are we navigating how to build those partnerships again (or find new ones, such as with Our Saviour’s), but also developing new relationships.

Re-establishing communication has also been a major focal point this past fall, and one that needs significant improvement. The realities of Covid created a pattern where it was more difficult to do long range planning. This has bled over into how we/I have communicated events on more of a week-to-week basis. The hope and goal is to create patterns of communication where we communicate well in advance what youth events are, and what parents can expect, without the worry that those will need to be cancelled or changed due to outside regulations or changes in Covid policies.

I am grateful to be part of a team at FBC where people continue to prioritize the importance of meeting people's needs, while also encouraging them to grow in their faith. Please pray that the Spirit will lead us and shape us, and that we will better understand how to meet the needs of our youth while also encouraging them, and supporting them, in their faith journey that calls them to be the transformed into the Image of Christ in this world.

Yours In Christ,

Pastor Chris

## **Children's Ministries Report**

What an exciting year for children's ministries at First! The year started off with Sunday morning kids programming that was reminiscent of a one-room school. Children of all ages were together in one class as children and volunteer attendance were still impacted by pandemic realities. Gradually we began to offer 2 classes: Godly play for the younger kids and a simple Bible reading + art time for the older kids since we lacked the numbers required to restart Oasis at this point. We had volunteers periodically for nursery. Then as winter turned to spring, we enjoyed a growing number of kids and volunteers taking part.

This growth in volunteer numbers came just in time as Pastor Kayely prepared to step into the role of Interim Lead Pastor during Joel's sabbatical and couldn't be downstairs with the kids as often. Many thanks to the volunteers who ensured the children's ministry continued to flourish throughout the spring and summer!

We were excited to offer the first summer kids program since covid started throughout July & August. A big thank you to Jennifer Holtslander who took on the role of coordinating lessons and leaders as the kids spent Sunday mornings studying the books of the Bible. It was a special treat to have members of the congregation come and share their favourite Bible stories or passages with the kids.



In September, Cheryl Johnston began as the Children & Family Pastor. We started the Fall with a training session for all children's volunteers to review safety and protocol expectations. Later, Jennifer Holtslander led a Godly Play training session to teach the volunteers the how to facilitate a godly play lesson, explaining the philosophy and the format.

We have had three ministries happening during Sunday morning services:

Nursery is for ages newborn up to 3 years. This has had one volunteer weekly. There have been 1-2 babies most weeks.

Godly Play is for ages 2.5-6 years. It has had 2 to 6 children each week. This is based on a Montessori method of learning Bible stories and liturgy. The Biblical stories follow the church calendar and the children are led through the story with "wonder questions" (ex. I wonder how it felt when God led the Israelites through the water to freedom?). A Leader and a Shepherd walk the children through the lesson, snack and response activities. We are so grateful for a team of about 8 people who serve in Godly Play one week a month.

Pastor Cheryl has been teaching the Oasis group (grade 1 to 6) throughout the Fall with a different helper each week. We have been grateful for these helpers who share their gifts with the children as we learn about the Bible stories through activities based on "multiple intelligences". We read the passage from the Bible then we do activities such as drama, art, music, games, cooking and science. We focus on one Bible passage each month. The children often say the lessons are fun and are able to retell the stories well after spending 3-4 weeks with the same passage of scripture. We have been working to incorporate some Bible memorization.

Approximately once a month the children are upstairs with the adults so they can be involved in the service and be part of our wider congregation. Generally, the children sit at the front with activities to do based on the sermon topic. Sometimes the children help by reading scripture, leading the prayers and bringing forward some of our worship elements (ex. cup and bread for communion, the large Bible or the light for the Paschal Candle). We also had fun

acting out the story of Ezra/Nehemiah in place of the sermon one week in October.

During Advent, a calendar was created with activities, songs and Bible readings that focused on the meaning of Christmas. Families were invited to post the calendars in their home and do the activities as they were able.

We have now seen our numbers in the children's program return to pre-pandemic levels. We give thanks to God for faithfulness to our families and look forward to God's continuing work in their lives.

We are so grateful for the people who have volunteered in our children's programs, especially during the uncertainties of the last few years. If you are interested in helping with any of our programs, please contact Pastor Cheryl. We could use a few more helpers.

Pastor Kayely & Pastor Cheryl

An extra note from Cheryl Johnston:

I have loved joining the First Baptist Church staff. I work with a fantastic group of people who truly have a team mentality and a heart for God. I thank the congregation for welcoming me in this position and being so encouraging. It has been a great transition into ministry, and I am so grateful to be part of the leadership team of this congregation.