

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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Organist: **Margaret McNutt-Reichelt**
Clerk of Session: **Raymond Reichelt**

We acknowledge that we are in Treaty 1 territory, and that the land is the traditional lands of the Anishinabe and Dakota Nations, and the homeland of the Métis Nation

ANNOUNCEMENTS SHEET

THE 2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

6 December 2020

Due to current pandemic restrictions, our in-person Sunday services are **suspended** until the status of our Health Region returns to Orange. An abbreviated service will continue to be available on YouTube each Sunday, however. John will send out the link as soon as the service has been uploaded each week, hopefully in time for our usual 10:30 service time. Along with the link, he will continue sending out a full script of the service.

Scripture Readings - The readings for today's service are
- Isaiah 40.1-11 - "Prepare the way of the LORD!"
- Psalm 85 - "You, LORD, showed favor to your land"
- 1 Corinthians 1.3-9 - "Blameless on the day of our Lord"
- Mark 1.1-8 - The ministry of John the Baptist

If we're unable to have the Hanging-of-the-Greens service next Sunday, the readings for that service will be

- Isaiah 61.1-4, 8-11 - "Good news to the poor"
- Psalm 126 - "When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion ..."
- 1 Thessalonians 5.16-24 - "Blameless at the coming of our Lord"
- John 1.6-8, 19-28 - "Are you the Messiah?"

This Week in First Church:

- Tuesday, 7:00 p.m. - Bible study, by Zoom
- Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. - F&M Committee meeting, by Zoom

Coming Up:

- Sunday, 13 December (tentative) - Hanging-of-the-Greens service (see below)
- Thursday, 17 December - Service of Remembrance and Hope, by Zoom

Newsletter - The December issue of the Newsletter has been sent out by e-mail to everyone on our e-mail list, and hard copies have been mailed to those who don't have e-mail. Many thanks to Lisa Sneesby for putting the Newsletter together, and to Mardine Garnham for printing and mailing the hard copies! If you haven't received a copy of the Newsletter, please speak to John.

New Beginnings - We have just been assigned a new **coach**, to lead us through the remaining phases of the New Beginnings process. He is **Ian Fraser**, one of the ministers of the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul in Montréal.

Advent and Christmas - The current pandemic restrictions are leaving our worship plans for Advent and Christmas up in the air:

- The **Hanging-of-the-Greens** service was originally scheduled for today. If we are able to resume in-person services in time for either next Sunday or the 20th, we'll have the Hanging-of-the-Greens service on the first possible Sunday. Otherwise, we'll have to forego it altogether this year, since it doesn't lend itself to the recorded service format.
- There will not be a **Communion** service this month; it was originally scheduled for next Sunday (the 13th), so we will have a non-Communion service that day instead.
- **Christmas Eve** (Thursday, 24 December) - If we are still not able to resume in-person services by then, a recorded Christmas Eve service will be offered via YouTube, as we do for our Sunday services.

Help Wanted - Our Presbytery is still looking for a new **treasurer**, to take over from its current treasurer as of the first of January. The treasurer does not need to be a member of the Presbytery, but should be a professing member of one of our congregations. In addition to handling the Presbytery's money, the treasurer's responsibilities include preparing a financial statement for each of the Presbytery's four regular meetings each year, and drawing up a budget for the following year. If you are interested, or have questions, please speak to John. If someone from our congregation is appointed, we would also need one or two other members of the congregation to have signing authority on the Presbytery's bank account.

Election Postponed - The Session has decided to **postpone** the biennial election of elders that was originally planned for February. It will be held once the pandemic restrictions have been sufficiently eased to allow us to carry it out safely.

Gifts of Change - Copies of the annual **Gifts of Change catalogue** are now available, and have been set out on the stairs just inside the office entrance. The catalogue lists a whole variety of projects sponsored by our national church — both in Canada and overseas — toward which people can make direct donations. The description of each project specifies what can be accomplished with donations of various amounts. Donations can be made at any time of the year, by sending a cheque, by phone, or online. See the back cover and the page inside the front cover for directions. Feel free to stop by the church to pick up a copy anytime during office hours.

Year B - The first Sunday of Advent marks the beginning of a new year in the worship life of the church. This year, we will be using scripture readings from "Year B" of the Revised Common Lectionary, in which the Gospel readings are mainly (although not exclusively) from the Gospel of Mark. In Year A, they are mainly from Matthew, and in Year C, mainly from Luke. Readings from the Gospel of John are used occasionally in all three years. During the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter, as well as on certain special Sundays, the scripture readings for each Sunday are chosen with the theme of the season or day in mind. During the seasons of Ordinary Time, on the other hand (after Epiphany and after Pentecost), the readings are semi-continuous, and don't necessarily have a common theme.

St. Nicholas - Today, the 6th of December, is **St. Nicholas' Day**, a Lesser Festival in the Christian Year commemorating the life of a man named Nicholas, who lived in the Fourth Century, and served as bishop of Myra, in what is today southwestern Turkey. Other than that, almost nothing is known for certain about his life; but stories about his generosity to people in need are abundant. The best-known is the one in which he is credited for saving three girls from a life of prostitution by secretly throwing three bags of gold into their window on three successive nights. The gold provided a dowry for each one, making it possible for each of them to be married. An extremely popular saint in the Middle Ages, Nicholas gradually “metamorphosed” over the centuries into our modern Santa Claus. One significant development in this process was a poem written in 1823 by an American professor named Clement Moore. Its original title is “A Visit from St. Nicholas”, and it begins with the words “’Twas the night before Christmas ...”. The man who comes down the chimney in the poem is called “St. Nicholas” and “St. Nick”, never “Santa Claus”. The 6th of December is the anniversary of the death of the historical Nicholas.

Service of Remembrance and Hope - Our annual ecumenical “Service of Remembrance and Hope” will be held by Zoom on Thursday, 17 December. It will be led by the ministers of St. Mary’s Anglican Church, McKenzie United Church, Trinity United Church, and our church. Directions for joining the Zoom meeting will be e-mailed out prior to the event. This service is for anyone who finds Christmas a difficult time of year because of the death of a loved one, or any other kind of loss or misfortune.

Salvation Army - Pandemic restrictions have meant the cancellation of the usual fundraising events, e.g. the **Kettle Campaign**. If you would like to help, donations can be made:

- on the Facebook page
- on the website: salvationarmy.ca
- by mailing a cheque to:
Salvation Army
220 Duke Avenue
Portage la Prairie MB
R1N 0S6

Mission Moment

Youth Clubs Make a Difference

In Malawi, 20-year-old Layton had been engaging in unsafe sexual behaviours. Several of Layton’s friends attended Presbyterian World Service & Development-supported youth clubs, where they would get together and discuss how to achieve a world without AIDS. His friends warned him about the consequences of his actions and shared information they learned at the youth club. Layton never thought to attend these meetings until one day when his friends persuaded him to get an HIV test. Anxious about the results—which eventually came back negative—Layton knew he needed to change his life. Deciding to join the youth club himself, he reflected, “I think my friends from youth club saved my life. I joined them so that we can save many from such behaviours.”