

# First Presbyterian Church News

17 Royal Road South, Portage la Prairie, MB



**John Zondag, Minister**

**May 2021**

**Raymond Reichelt, Clerk of Session**  
**Margaret McNutt-Reichelt, Organist**

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**Church e-mail address:** [firstpc@mymts.net](mailto:firstpc@mymts.net)

**Church Website:** [www.firstpcportage.com](http://www.firstpcportage.com)

**Sunday Worship at 10:30 a.m.**

*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.*

## **FROM THE MINISTER**

It's amazing how life continues to be dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic! It has gone on for much longer than we expected a year ago that it would. At least people are now receiving vaccinations, and we are truly beginning to see the proverbial "light at the end of the tunnel". I received my first vaccination (AstraZeneca) on the 12th of April, and I know that many others in the congregation also have received at least one vaccination by now. We look forward to getting our second vaccinations, and hopefully to being able to let down our guard, and start getting back to normal. In the meantime, though, we are dealing with the "third wave" of the pandemic, which, a month ago, we here in Manitoba were hoping we might be able to avoid.

Life has become extremely unpredictable for all of us. In our congregation, for example, we are now in our third period in which in-person services are suspended. This suspension was initially expected to end after the 23rd of May, but I suspect that it will go on for a few weeks more, yet. Fortunately, we were able to have our Good Friday and Easter Sunday services in person this year, at least! Fortunately also, we have been able to hold our services by Zoom, which allows us to hold them live, giving us a chance actually to see others who also are able to participate, and to feel a little less disconnected from each other. It's too bad we didn't think of using Zoom sooner. Fortunately as well, we were able to hold a second take-out dinner at the beginning of May. Not only did it serve as a fundraiser, but it gave us a chance to work together at something again, and to see people we haven't seen for awhile. Many thanks to Mardine Garnham, Margaret McNutt-Reichelt, and Lisa Sneesby for their efforts in organizing the dinner!

Arrangements for our summer services are still up in the air. If we're able to resume in-person services by the end of June, we may try holding services on our own throughout the summer, with pulpit supply for the Sundays when I will be on vacation. If we still have to hold services online, we may see if we can do something similar to the joint services we participated in with the two Presbyterian congregations in Brandon last year.

We're cautiously optimistic at this point that we may be able to resume regular congregational activities in the fall. We also hoped the same thing at this time last year, of course, but this year, with vaccines, it seems a more likely possibility.

We hear a lot about "pandemic fatigue" these days. We're all tired of the restrictions, the unpredictability, the anxiety, and the isolation. Unfortunately, though, it's too soon to let our guard down. We're going to have to "hang in there" for another few months before we can start getting back to our regular routines. Let's continue to keep in touch with each other, then, and to encourage each other. Let's continue to seek strength and encouragement from God as well.

## VACATION

John Zondag will be taking five weeks' vacation this summer, although the dates have not yet been set. Keep an eye on the weekly Announcements Sheet for details.

## SESSION NEWS

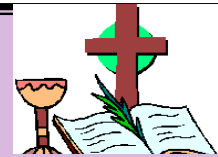
Highlights of the March and April Session meetings:

- The Session continued its discussion of the book *Twelve Dynamic Shifts for Transforming Your Church*. Eleven of the twelve "shifts" have now been discussed.
- It was agreed not to have a Communion service on Sunday, 21 March, and to cancel the Maundy Thursday pot-luck supper and Communion service.
- It was decided to resume in-person services beginning the 14th of March. New restrictions that came into effect at the end of April then forced us to suspend in-person services again, starting the 2nd of May.
- At the suggestion of our New Beginnings coach, Ian Fraser, it was agreed that we would plan to resume the New Beginnings process in the fall, since current pandemic restrictions make it difficult to proceed in the present. New Beginnings remains on hold for the time being, then.
- Arrangements for our services in the summer were discussed at both the March and April meetings, but, because of the unpredictability of the pandemic situation, it has been impossible so far to make any definite plans.

## THE ANNUAL MEETING

After having been postponed twice, our Annual Meeting was finally held on Sunday, 18 April. Since we couldn't have a lunch, the meeting was held immediately following the service, in the sanctuary. Twenty people were present, and the meeting was finished in about half an hour. The business was routine, and there were no surprises. The proposed budget for 2021 was adopted. An allocation of \$3,200 for *Presbyterians Sharing* for 2021 was accepted (the same as what we accepted for 2020). Margo Nichol was appointed to the Endowment Committee for a three-year term, and Raymond Reichelt and Bruce Sneesby were both re-appointed Congregational Trustees for an additional two-year term.

## COMMUNION



We would normally have a Communion service on the first Sunday in June (the 6th), but, once again, that's probably *not* going to happen, on account of the pandemic. Our next regular Communion service is scheduled for the 3rd of October.

## EASTER OFFERING

Many thanks to everyone who contributed toward our annual **Easter Offering!** The amount contributed totaled **\$1,900.00** as of the end of April, which is more than twice what was given in 2020! Your generous support is much appreciated! The regular Summer Offering envelope will be sent out sometime in the summer.

**TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION CALLS TO ACTION - 71-76**

These 6 calls deal with the deaths of Aboriginal students at residential schools. Records were not kept well, including where they may have been buried.

**71 - Records on the deaths of Aboriginal children in residential schools to go to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation - in progress - projects proposed**

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation has not yet received the death records from most chief coroners and vital statistics agencies.

**72 - Develop and maintain the National Residential School Student Death Register created by the TRC - in progress - projects underway**

A series of community visits have been undertaken so that shareholders will have input into the project's design. Monies have been allocated to establish and maintain the registry.

**73 - Establish and maintain an online registry of residential school cemeteries - in progress - projects proposed**

Money was included in the 2019 budget to establish this registry. It was to begin with a pilot project at a former school site and begin to identify unmarked graves.

**74 - Inform the families of children who died at residential schools of the child's burial location - in progress - projects proposed**

The government in 2019's budget committed money in part, to provide opportunities for commemoration. To date, it has been more provincial government, notably Ontario, that has been working to return remains to Indigenous communities and arrange memorial ceremonies and/or markers. Alberta is working to identify unmarked graves. Some families have also done fundraising to return remains to home communities.

**75 - Develop and implement procedures for the identification and maintenance of residential school cemeteries - not started****76 - Aboriginal communities should lead development of residential school cemetery identification and maintenance strategies - in progress - projects proposed**

There are a few parties engaged in protecting residential school cemeteries. In Alberta, starting in 2011, volunteers from Indigenous communities, the United Church of Canada and Sunnybrook United Church worked together to preserve the cemetery of Red Deer Industrial School. Since then, the **Remembering the Children Society** has expanded throughout the province and works to preserve cemeteries, identify unmarked graves and hold commemoration ceremonies.

**AS OF APRIL 12, 2021**

<b>NOT STARTED -</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>PROJECTS PROPOSED -</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>PROJECTS UNDERWAY -</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>COMPLETE -</b>	<b>10</b>

**SUMMER SERVICE SCHEDULE**

Once again, it will not be possible to hold joint services with McKenzie United Church and Trinity United Church this summer. Alternative arrangements are still being figured out. Hopefully, we'll be able to resume in-person services before the end of June. Keep an eye on the weekly Announcements Sheet.

**FINANCES:****FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH – 2021****JAN – APRIL 2021****FINANCES:**

INCOME RECEIVED:	33,913.55
EXPENSES PAID:	29,890.45
<b>SURPLUS (DEFICIT):</b>	<b><u>4,023.10</u></b>

Included in the above income are 10,000.00 from the Manitoba Bridge Grant and 6,822.23 from the Canada Employment Wage Subsidy (CEWS)

**PRESBYTERIANS SHARING – Total Allocation for 2021 is \$3,200.00**

DONATIONS RECEIVED:	<u>675.00</u>
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**FUNDRAISING:**

INCOME:	0.00
EXPENSES:	<u>0.00</u>
<b>SURPLUS:</b>	<b><u>0.00</u></b>

**UPCOMING EVENTS AND MEETINGS**

Most of our congregational activities and events remain suspended indefinitely, due to the pandemic, except for meetings that can be held by Zoom, including:

- Bible study - Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m.
- F&M Committee meetings - the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month, at 6:30 p.m. (except July and August)
- Session meetings - the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month, at 7:00 p.m. (except July)

Our Presbytery also continues holding its meetings (four regular meetings per year) by Zoom.

**FINANCE & MAINTENANCE**

Hello from Finance and Maintenance. I'm glad to see everyone still rolling with the punches when it comes to Zoom services and then in person services and back to Zoom. Through it all your contributions to the church whether financial or helping out with the suppers have helped to keep us afloat. Nothing big to report; we will be replacing a burnt out light bulb in the sanctuary, replacing a worn out mat in the office entrance and getting some drywall repaired in the South entrance (any volunteers for painting?). The dishwasher and kitchen air conditioner aren't working properly, but the Soup Kitchen has been advised and will be looking into getting them serviced.

We continue to get the Bridge grant and CEWS from the government, so that really helps us out financially.

Please continue to pray for our church and churches around the world as we struggle to get through these difficult days. I pray the Lord will continue to keep you safe.

Keith Kelly, Chairman

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ENDOWMENT  
FINANCIAL STATEMENT – April 30, 2021**

<b>REVENUE:</b>	<b>MONTH</b>	<b>Y-T-D</b>
High Interest Saving Account – Stride CU	1.17	7.07
Investment Interest – Stride CU		
Share Dividend – Stride CU	13.86	13.86
Investment Redeemed – Stride CU		
Memorial Gifts		5.00
Honour Gifts		
Offering Envelopes	<u>15.00</u>	<u>35.00</u>
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>30.03</b>	<b>60.93</b>

**EXPENSES:**

Bank Charges – Stride CU	
Investment Purchase	
Finance & Maintenance	
Miscellaneous	
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	

**BANK: STRIDE CREDIT UNION (SCU) (Chequing Account)**

Opening Balance: January 1, 2021	\$ 2,820.58
Total Revenue – Year to Date	53.86
Total Expenses – Year to Date	
Closing Balance: April 30, 2021	\$ 2,874.44

**BANK: STRIDE CREDIT UNION (High Interest Saving Account) – Included Below \*\***

Opening Balance: January 1, 2021	\$ 5,706.81
Total Revenue – Year to Date	7.07
Total Expenses – Year to Date	
Closing Balance: April 30, 2021	\$ 5,713.88 - Included below **

**INVESTMENTS:**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>BANK</b>	<b>INVESTMENT AMOUNT</b>	
<b>PURCHASED</b>			
April/19	SCU	High Interest Saving Account**	\$ 5,713.88 **
Oct 14/15	SCU	TD Due Oct 14/21 @2.650% 307879	33,450.22
May 25/18	SCU	TD Due May 25/21 @1.60% 370687	22,658.13
Oct 31/17	Westbourne	Due Oct 31/23 @1.50% 400450	1,500.00
Sept 24/20	SCU	TD Due Sept 24/21 @1.70% 620792	5,000.00
<b>TOTAL INVESTMENTS</b>			<b>\$68,322.23</b>

TD – Term Deposit

May 15, 2021

## Virtual Fundraising Opportunity

**"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear."  
Psalm 46:1 and 2a NIV**

Hi, to all of the First Presbyterian Church family.

I have missed seeing each of you on Sunday mornings. It is nice to know that all are doing well - considering all the issues you have to deal with; health, isolation, grieving and many others of which only you are aware. You are all in my prayers.

I'm sure if you have looked, there are many positive things about all of these issues. It certainly has given us time to think. Often in my thinking, the First Presbyterian Church, and its family, comes to mind, as well as, the financial condition of the church.

God has been good to us and with the help of many people, their ideas, their energy, their resources and the spirit of giving, the church has done well. As well as ever, and even better, considering all the capital issues such as the roof, heating, general maintenance and lost revenue. Praise God for blessing us.

That being said, COVID-19 has taken away fund raising opportunities, one being the High School Prom, our single largest fundraiser. Last year we did a virtual fundraiser that encompassed all of our lost fundraisers. The Virtual Fundraiser raised \$2,365.00, thanks to your participation. We also had Ria Zwiep's card fundraiser.

We are going to try the Virtual Fundraiser again this year. This is how it works virtually: You donate the amount that you normally would give if you were attending the event, or the price of ingredients for something that you would make for the event, or just what you would donate to the event.

Our Spring Fundraisers and other losses: 1. Ten Meals in a Bowl, 2. The Spaghetti Supper, 3. The High School Prom, 4. Money you saved on gas by not being able to use your vehicle during isolation, 5. Coffee meetings, 6. You may consider other savings you have experienced due to COVID-19.

E.g. This will be Charlie's donation: 1. \$100.00 2. \$15 + \$10; 3. \$35; 4. \$140; 5. no coffee, 6. \$100.00

This total is \$400.00, so Charlie sends a cheque to the Church for that amount. This is all separate from regular church givings.

You can make your donations electronically by going to our website and using the DONATE button. [www.firstpcportage.com](http://www.firstpcportage.com) or send a cheque to **First Presbyterian Church, 17 Royal Road South R1N 1T8**

So that's Charlie's virtual fund raiser idea. The fund raiser is virtual, but the cash is real.

Yours in Christ,  
Charlie Clifford

### Spring Dinner

The Spring Dinner – take-out style – went very well. We sold 243 meals. People liked having the time slots for pickup. They didn't have to stand in line.

I want to thank – Winnie Duncan from Queen's Court Apts., Doug Blyth from Lakeshore Apts., Sheila Riendeau from Windsor Apts., Jocelyn Warren from Dalton Estates, Brenda Moorhouse from Meighen Estates for taking the orders and delivering them to the residents in their buildings.

We ran out of ham, so gave out more meatballs and reduced the price for those affected. It was about 5-6 meals to the general public and about 6-8 of congregation members that were affected.

Total profit for the meal was \$2,801.21

Mardine, Margaret R., Shauna and I made over 1200 meatballs on Saturday.

Thank you to everyone who helped me, who donated desserts, corn, cash, and all those that worked on Saturday as well as Sunday.

Thank you all again!

Lisa Sneesby



Serving up desserts -  
Jacquie Forbes & Shari  
Saunders



Kitchen Crew -  
Shauna-Lei Leslie,  
Margaret McNutt-Reichelt,  
Mardine Garnham



Getting buns packaged up!  
Margaret Dunn,  
Carlee Sneesby