

# First Presbyterian Church News

17 Royal Road South, Portage la Prairie, MB



**John Zondag, Minister**

**May 2022**

**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**

For the past couple of years, my “From the Minister” columns have been dominated by discussions of the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences. Now that the crisis appears to be easing, life is slowly beginning to return to normal. At its April meeting, for example, the Session decided to re-instate our after-service fellowship time as of the first of May, to plan on holding an outdoor service and barbecue in June, and to participate once again in joint services with the two United Church congregations in town in July and August. Also, by the time you read this, we’ll have had two Meal-in-a-Bowl Suppers, as well as our Spring Dinner. Similarly, the Presbytery began holding its meetings in person again, starting in April. We are all looking forward to a low-risk summer, and we earnestly hope that there will not be a new COVID variant in the fall, as there was last year! However, the experts caution us that the pandemic is not over yet, so it’s important that we remain cautious and vigilant.

I’m very grateful for the opportunity I had in April to travel to southern Ontario to celebrate my mother’s 100th birthday in person. It was the first time in over two and a half years that I’d been able to make that trip, and see my family face to face. I thank the Session and congregation for not protesting my being absent for Holy Week and Easter! Also, I thank Charlie Clifford, Keith Kelly, and Raymond Reichelt for providing pulpit supply for the three services for which I was absent. As much as I appreciated the opportunity to visit with my family, however, I also missed the opportunity to be on hand for those special services here in First Church.

This is the time of year when congregational life normally begins to wind down, as we go into “summer mode”. I hope that circumstances will allow things to pick up again in the fall. For example, Raymond and I were talking the other day about the possibility of resuming the bi-weekly men’s breakfasts in the fall. It would be nice also if we could go back to having meetings in person, rather than by Zoom - even though Zoom has been a very useful means of getting together while remaining apart.

The Session will soon be making a decision as to when we may be able to resume the New Beginnings process, which we began two years ago. If it hadn’t been for the pandemic, we would’ve worked our way through the entire process by now, and have made some decisions as to the future direction of our congregation’s life and work. Instead, things are still very much up in the air. We’ve lost a lot of time and momentum, and it will take a concerted effort to get ourselves going again.

On the first Sunday of June, we will celebrate Pentecost, the festival commemorating God’s giving of the Holy Spirit to the entire community of Jesus’ disciples and followers. The Book of Acts tells of how the Holy Spirit guided, equipped, and energized the community of believers to take on the task that Jesus had assigned them prior to his ascension. May the Spirit likewise guide, equip, and energize us as we begin a new “program year” in September.

## VACATION

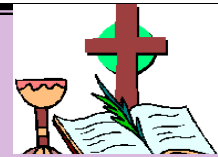
John will be taking his remaining three weeks of vacation time in the summer. The dates will likely be 27 June to 17 July, although they remain to be confirmed — keep an eye on the weekly Announcements Sheet. If a pastoral need should arise while he is away, please call your elder to find out which ministers are available to assist you.

## SESSION NEWS

The Session continues to meet by Zoom on the fourth Thursday evening of the month. Here are some highlights of the March and April Session meetings:

- In light of the “advisory vote” taken at the Annual Meeting, the Session created a Wedding Policy for the congregation that employs the definition of marriage as “a covenant relationship between a man and a woman”. It was decided to review the policy in a year.
- Changes were made to our congregation’s Rental Policy (see the separate announcement for details).
- Pandemic protocols were revised, in light of the decision of the provincial government to ease restrictions as of the 15th of March.
- Margaret Dunn was appointed Roll Clerk (the person who keeps track of the Session’s official membership roll for the congregation).
- It was decided that there will be no requirement for people to be vaccinated in order to volunteer at any of our fundraising dinners.
- A contract was drawn up with Citizens on Patrol for the use of the Church Hall one Tuesday evening per month for its monthly meetings.
- It was decided that our congregation would again participate in joint services with McKenzie United Church and Trinity United Church this summer, after a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic (see the separate announcement for details).
- It was decided not to have a pictorial directory done this year.
- It was decided to resume our weekly coffee-and-fellowship time in the Church Hall following the service, beginning the 1st of May.
- It was decided to have an Outdoor Service and Barbecue once again; following a two-year hiatus (see the separate announcement for details).

## COMMUNION



Our June Communion service will be held on Sunday, 5 June. The procedure that we followed for our past three Communion services (people going forward to receive the elements either individually or in family groups) worked well, so, unless the Session decides differently, we will follow the same procedure again this time.

## EASTER OFFERING

Many thanks to everyone who contributed toward our annual **Easter Offering!** The amount contributed totaled **\$1,025.00** as of the end of April. The regular Summer Offering envelope will be mailed out in July.

### **PRESBYTERY VISITATION**

At its February meeting, our Presbytery decided to do informal visitations with the three congregations that currently have a full-time minister — which includes ours — to see how things are going after two years of pandemic-related challenges. Each congregation was to be visited by a minister and an elder from another congregation, prior to the May meeting of the Presbytery, which was held on the 18th of May. Obviously, though, our visit has not yet taken place! Keep an eye on the weekly Announcements Sheet for further news on this.

### **GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

John Zondag will be a “commissioner” to this year’s General Assembly, which will be held from Sunday, 5 June, to Wednesday, 8 June. Earlier in the year, the decision was made that the Assembly would again be held online, as it was last year. This means that, although John will not need to travel to attend the Assembly, he will be “tied up” for the four days that the Assembly is held. It will begin on the afternoon of the 5th, so it will not interfere with our service that day. To avoid interruptions and distractions, John will probably participate in the proceedings from home rather than from the church office. However, he will check the church’s voicemail for messages each evening, and will be checking his e-mail daily as well.

Commissioners (or delegates) to the General Assembly are chosen by each Presbytery — one sixth of all actively-serving ministers and diaconal ministers, plus an equal number of elders. Because of the small number of ministers in our Presbytery (the Presbytery of Brandon), we send only one minister and one elder to the General Assembly each year. Unfortunately, we weren’t able to find an elder willing or available to serve as a commissioner this year, so John will be representing our Presbytery by himself.

### **BIRTHDAYS, ANNIVERSARIES, ETC.**

At one time, we used to list everyone’s birthdays and anniversary dates in the Newsletter. The suggestion has been made that we start doing so again. So we will start listing birthdays and anniversaries in the September-October issue of the Newsletter (just the month and day, of course; not the year). If you would like your date(s) listed, please let Lisa Sneesby know what they are ([bsneesby@mymts.net](mailto:bsneesby@mymts.net)). Also, if you have a photo of a significant family occasion, event, or accomplishment that you would like to share, please give or send it to Lisa, and it will be included in the next issue of the Newsletter.

### **SUMMER SERVICE SCHEDULE**

This summer, we will resume our normal practice of holding joint services with **McKenzie United Church** and **Trinity United Church**, beginning the first Sunday in July. The theme for our summer services will be “Miracle Stories”. As usual, each congregation will host three services in a row, as follows:

- 3, 10, 17 July - McKenzie United Church
- 24, 31 July; 7 August - First Presbyterian Church
- 14, 21, 28 August - Trinity United Church

This year, all services will be led by the minister of the host congregation.

Regular services will resume in all three congregations beginning the Labor Day weekend (4 September).

**FINANCES:****FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH – 2022  
JANUARY – APRIL 2022****FINANCES:**

INCOME RECEIVED:	30,736.04
EXPENSES PAID:	<u>33,701.39</u>
<b>SURPLUS (DEFICIT):</b>	<b><u>(2,965.35)</u></b>

**Included in the above income is:**

**\$2,430.96 from the Canada Employment Wage Subsidy (CEWS) as well as \$10,000.00 from the Endowment Fund**

**PRESBYTERIANS SHARING – Total Allocation for 2022 is \$3,200.00**

DONATIONS RECEIVED:	<u>540.00</u>
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**FUNDRAISING:**

INCOME:	365.00
EXPENSES:	<u>81.95</u>
<b>SURPLUS:</b>	<b><u>283.05</u></b>

**The summary of the surplus from the following events:**

Spring Dinner	0.00
Fall Supper	0.00
Meal In A Bowl	283.05

**Thank you for your donations to our Special Appeal offering. The total amount received to date is \$950.00**

**Thank you for your generous donations to our Easter Offering. The total amount received was \$1,025.00**

**UPCOMING EVENTS AND MEETINGS**

We are gradually resuming a number of our regular activities, although some continue to be held by Zoom.

**a) Regularly-scheduled events:**

- Bible study - Tuesday evenings at 7:00 - by Zoom (until the current study concludes)
- Finance & Maintenance Committee - 2nd Wednesday of the month, 6:30 p.m. - by Zoom (except July and August)
- Session meetings - 4th Thursday of the month, 7:00 p.m. - by Zoom (except July)

**b) One-time events:**

- Communion Sunday - 5 June
- Outdoor Service and Barbecue - Sunday, 12 June, 10:30 a.m.
- Joint summer services begin - Sunday, 3 July
- Regular services resume - Sunday, 4 September

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ENDOWMENT  
FINANCIAL STATEMENT – April 30, 2022**

<b>REVENUE:</b>	<b>MONTH</b>	<b>Y-T-D</b>
High Interest Saving Account – Stride CU	.97	7.07
Investment Interest – Stride CU		
Share Dividend – Stride CU	18.53	18.53
Investment Redeemed – Stride CU		
Memorial Gifts		380.00
Honour Gifts		
Offering Envelopes		10.00
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>19.50</b>	<b>415.60</b>

**EXPENSES:**

Bank Charges – Stride CU		.75
Investment Purchase		
Finance & Maintenance		10,000.00
Miscellaneous		
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>10,000.75</b>

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

Opening Balance: January 1, 2022	\$ 3,121.93
Total Revenue Year to Date	408.53
Total Expense Year to Date	3,000.75
Closing Balance: April 30, 2022	\$ 529.71

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

Opening Balance: January 1, 2022	\$ 11,695.80
Total Revenue – Year to Date	7.07
Total Expenses – Year to Date	7,000.00
Closing Balance: April 30, 2022	4,702.87 - Included below **

**INVESTMENTS:**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>BANK</b>	<b>INVESTMENT AMOUNT</b>	
<b>PURCHASED</b>			
April/19	SCU High Interest Saving Account**		\$ 4,702.87 **
Oct 14/21	SCU TD Due Oct 14/22 @1.100% 307879		33,450.22
May 25/18	SCU TD Due May 25/22 @1.00% 370687		23,020.06
Oct 31/17	Westbourne Due Oct 31/23 @1.50% 400450		1,500.00
<b>TOTAL INVESTMENTS</b>			<b>\$62,673.15</b>

TD – Term Deposit

**ENDOWMENT HAS GIVEN CHURCH \$10,000.00 to date in 2022**

## **RENTAL POLICY**

When the Session was drawing up a Wedding Policy for the congregation in March, it discovered that there should be no difference between the fees charged to members of the congregation and non-members for the use of the church. This is a requirement, not of the national church, but of the **Canada Revenue Agency**, which stipulates that members who receive charitable receipts from an organization may not receive any personal benefit as a result of their contributions. Our rental policy has therefore been changed accordingly. At the same time, the refundable cleanup/damage deposit was raised from \$75 to \$125. Please take note.

## **PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HERITAGE CENTRE**

The National Presbyterian Museum, formerly housed in a church in Toronto, has been forced to relocate, due to redevelopment of the church building. It is in the process of moving to a small United Church (which was a Presbyterian Church prior to 1925) in Carlisle, Ont., northwest of London. At the same time, its name has been changed to the **Presbyterian Church Heritage Centre**. It is scheduled to re-open in 2023, and is seeking financial support from the church at large. For more information, and/or to make a donation, you can visit the PCHC's website, which is [www.pcheritagecentre.ca](http://www.pcheritagecentre.ca). Donations can also be made by cheque, payable to The Presbyterian Church in Canada / PCHC, and mailed to PCHC, RR 3, Denfield, Ont. N0M 1P0.

## **OUTDOOR SERVICE**

We will once again be holding an **Outdoor Service and Barbecue**, following a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic. The date is Sunday, 12 June, and Bruce and Lisa Sneesby have invited us once again to hold it at their farm (78115 Highway 50, just north of Highway 16, past Westbourne). The service will begin at our regular time of 10:30 a.m., and will be followed by a barbecue.

## **SPRING DINNER**

The Spring Dinner – take-out style – went very well! We sold 129 meals. We served turkey, ham and all the fixings. 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., Penny Dufresne 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.

Approximate profit for the meal was \$1786.00

Thank you to everyone who helped me, who donated cash, and all those that worked on Saturday as well as Sunday. Every bit helps keep the doors open of First Presbyterian Church.

Thank you all again!

Lisa Sneesby

## **FINANCE & MAINTENANCE**

Not a lot to report from the Finance and Maintenance Committee. The committee would like to thank all those who contributed to the Special Appeal that went out. You managed to raise a total of \$950. Thank you so much.

Now that spring is here, someone finally showed up to inspect the furnace for us. It is in good shape. The new boiler seems to be working ok. We are going to have the air conditioner inspected to ensure it works well throughout the summer months.

Unfortunately with our shrinking congregation and COVID our finances continue to be a problem for the church. We will most likely have to rely on the Endowment Fund more than expected. Please continue to pray for our church, our Minister and the wider Christian church. May God continue to bless you.

~ Keith Kelly ~

**HAPPENINGS in FIRST CHURCH**



**CONGRATULATIONS!**

Congratulations to Maggie Muirhead, daughter of Roberta Kelly, for graduating with a Bachelor of Education with honors. She has started her teaching career in Bangkok, Thailand, teaching a Kindergarten class in an International English School, for a term of one year, most likely longer. She arrived safely after a 24 hour flight, has settled right in with lots of new friends and loving it so far!



**100<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY**

John Zondag's mother, Johanna, celebrated her 100th birthday in mid-April. John thanks the congregation for being willing to let him be away for a couple of weeks for the occasion (right at Easter, no less!). However, due to pandemic restrictions at her nursing home, the celebration had to be a modest one, since only John and his sister, Flo, were allowed to be present for it. The nursing home staff baked a nice birthday cake, and Johanna's fellow residents sang "Happy Birthday". Johanna also received an attractive flower arrangement from the Presbytery, which was much appreciated.