

First Presbyterian Church News

17 Royal Road South, Portage la Prairie, MB



John Zondag, Minister

September 2022

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

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Church Website: 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

This fall, as the COVID-19 pandemic appears to be abating, and as most pandemic-related restrictions have been lifted, more and more events are returning to normal, for the first time since the spring of 2020. Here at First Church, we have already had in-person services again for a full year, although for most of the past year, we did so while taking a number of pandemic-related precautions. We began to ease those precautions back in May, and at its meeting in August, the Session decided to drop the remaining ones. Now we are hoping that regular Sunday attendance will pick up! This past year, our average Sunday attendance was just 13 people, half of what it was in 2018-19, our last “regular” year prior to the pandemic.

The “big news” this fall is my decision to retire at the end of December. This was necessitated by our congregation’s current financial situation. Government grants during the pandemic enabled us to operate “in the black” for the past two years; but now that those grants have ceased, we are no longer able to cover all our operating expenses - including the expense of having a minister. If I were younger, I would now be searching for a call to another congregation. However, since I turn 64 this fall, I’m eligible to retire with a full pension from the national church, and that is what I have opted to do. My application to retire was approved by the Presbytery in early September.

The combined realities of financial difficulties, the departures of a few members over the past couple of years, and my impending retirement led the Session in the spring to make the decision to withdraw from the New Beginnings program. It no longer seemed feasible to continue. Although I agree with the decision that was made, it was a huge disappointment to me, since I had pinned my hopes for the congregation’s future on going through the New Beginnings process, and seeing what God might be leading us to do. It’s too bad that New Beginnings wasn’t available to us ten years ago!

This, of course, raises the question as to what will happen to our congregation after the end of December. If our financial situation were stronger, the congregation would simply begin the process of searching for a new minister, but this is not feasible under the current circumstances.



For the foreseeable future, then, we will probably have pulpit supply provided by various retired ministers as well as lay people. An “interim moderator” will be appointed by the Presbytery, effective the 1st of January, and it will be his/her responsibility to arrange pulpit supply.

Within the next couple of months, the Presbytery will conduct an “exit visit” with the members of the Session and me, to begin the process of assessing where the congregation is at, and what the possibilities for the future are.

Unfortunately, our congregation isn’t alone in this situation. The Neepawa congregation has been without a minister since the fall of 2019, and the Carberry congregation lost theirs in the summer of 2020. In fact, the Carberry congregation has now requested that it be dissolved, and that will happen in mid-October. St. Andrew’s, Brandon, also will be without a minister as of the 1st of January, since Glenn Ball has applied to retire at the same time as me. That will leave just one congregation in the Presbytery with a full-time ordained minister for the time being: First Church in Brandon.

In the meantime, we will continue as usual, as much as possible, with our regular schedule of services and activities. Soon we will be celebrating Thanksgiving, at which time we celebrate this year's harvest, and give thanks to God for providing the food we need each year. Other upcoming special events and Sundays are listed below.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND MEETINGS

a) Regularly scheduled events:

- Bible study - Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m., by Zoom
- Men's Breakfasts - every other Saturday at 9:00 a.m.; check the weekly Announcements Sheet for dates.
- Finance and Maintenance Committee meetings - the 2nd Wednesday of the month, at 6:30 p.m., by Zoom
- Session meetings - the 4th Thursday of the month, at 7:00 p.m., by Zoom

b) One-time events:

- Wednesday, 28 Sept., 5:00 p.m. - Meal-in-a-Bowl Supper (take-out only)
- Sunday, 2 Oct. - COMMUNION SUNDAY
- Sunday, 9 Oct. - HARVEST (THANKSGIVING) SUNDAY
- Sunday, 16 Oct. - STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY
- Wednesday, 19 Oct., 5:00 p.m. - Meal-in-a-Bowl Supper
- Sunday, 30 Oct. - REFORMATION SUNDAY
- Sunday, 6 Nov. - REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY; Daylight Saving Time ends
- Sunday, 6 Nov., 5:00 p.m. - Fall Supper
- Sunday, 13 Nov. - SOUP KITCHEN SUNDAY
- Wednesday, 23 Nov., 5:00 p.m. - Meal-in-a-Bowl Supper
- Sunday, 27 Nov. - FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
- Sunday, 27 Nov. - Deadline for submissions for the December Newsletter
- Sunday, 4 Dec. - HANGING-OF-THE-GREENS SERVICE
- Sunday, 11 Dec. - COMMUNION SUNDAY and ANNIVERSARY SUNDAY

COMMUNION

Our October Communion service will be held on Sunday, 2 October. Following that day, John is once again offering to conduct Communion services at home for those who are homebound. If you would like to have a Communion service at home, either speak to your elder, or call the church office, and John will arrange a suitable time with you.



OUR SYMPATHY

We extend our sympathy to

- Marg Clark and family, in the death of Garry Clark on the 10th of August.
- Judy DeJersey and family, in the death of Les DeJersey on the 1st of August. Les and Judy were members of our congregation until Les retired, at which time they moved to Holland, Man.

SESSION NEWS

Here are highlights of decisions made at the May, June, and August Session meetings:

- In response to a note from the Finance and Maintenance Committee regarding the congregation's financial situation, the Session held a joint meeting with the F&M Committee on the 16th of June. John had already been contemplating taking early retirement as soon as the 1st of October, in order to relieve financial pressure on the congregation, but at that meeting it was agreed that 1 January 2023 would be a suitable date for his retirement.
- Plans were made for the resumption of our annual Outdoor Service and Barbecue. However, when the day came, wet weather forced us to have the service and barbecue at the church!
- In discussing the congregation's current situation with our New Beginnings coach, Ian Fraser, it was decided to withdraw from the New Beginnings program. The possibility of sharing with the congregation the highlights of Mark Lewis's Assessment Report, written in the fall of 2020, was discussed, but a decision has not yet been made.
- It was decided to write a letter to the Presbytery requesting its input as the congregation considers its options for the future.
- It was decided to have a "Sundae Sunday" on the 25th of September — that is, having make-your-own sundaes following the service, in place of the usual coffee and cookies — hosted by the Session.
- It was decided to hold a Stewardship Sunday on the 16th of October, although not a full-scale Stewardship Visitation. The possibility of having a lunch following the service was discussed.
- It was decided to continue holding Session meetings by Zoom for the foreseeable future.

THANKSGIVING

Harvest festivals have been celebrated around the world for as long as people have been practising agriculture. Thanksgiving, our own Canadian version of the annual harvest festival, is essentially an import from the United States, having been brought to British North America by Loyalists during and after the American Revolution. Thanksgiving Day became an official annual observance in Canada in 1879, twelve years after Confederation, although the date and focus of the occasion varied over the next several decades. From 1921 to 1930, Thanksgiving was celebrated on the same day as Armistice Day (commemorating the end of World War 1), on the Monday in the week of the 11th of November. In 1931, the two observances were separated, Armistice Day being renamed Remembrance Day, and Thanksgiving typically (although not always) being celebrated on the second Monday of October. Finally, in 1957, the date of Thanksgiving was fixed on the second Monday of October, and the purpose of the day was proclaimed by Parliament as being "a day of General Thanksgiving to Almighty God for the bountiful harvest with which Canada has been blessed".

THANKSGIVING OFFERING

For those who receive a printed copy of the Newsletter, the annual **Thanksgiving Offering** envelope is enclosed with it; for those who receive their Newsletter by e-mail, the Thanksgiving envelope is being mailed out separately. **Many thanks** to those who contributed to the annual Easter Offering (which totaled \$1,125) and the Summer Offering (which totaled \$1,145)!

SOUP KITCHEN REPORT

The Soup Kitchen saw a gradual increase in meals served over the summer months. Kitchen staff was bolstered by students working for Portage La Prairie Community Revitalization Corporation (PCRC) and people doing community service time through The Youth for Christ justice program. This was quite timely as volunteers took out time for holidays. There is a continuing need for volunteers to assist in the kitchen as both Soup Kitchen leaders and helpers. Anyone wanting to help is asked to call Shelley at 204-470-9386. Because of monetary donations Shelley has been able to have special meal days, eg. burgers, wieners, during the summer. One concern that has arisen lately is the loss of items from the kitchen and storage areas.

PROTOCOLS DROPPED

At its meeting in August, the Session decided to discontinue the remaining pandemic protocols for our Sunday services, unless the situation changes. Among other things, this means that we have gone back to using hymnbooks and pew Bibles, and gathering the Offering the way we used to do. Those who wish to continue wearing a mask and/or using hand sanitizer should feel free to do so, however. Similarly, those who feel uncomfortable shaking hands with others should feel free not to do so.

Also, we have gone back to having our weekly Fellowship Time in the Church Hall following the service, which we were already doing before the summer.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Rob McPherson celebrated his 65th birthday on June 26th. Everyone was able to enjoy a piece of cake following the church service.

FINANCE & MAINTENANCE

The Finance & Maintenance Committee has started meetings again following the summer break. Hopefully everyone enjoyed a very pleasant summer this year. As you are all aware, due to the Church finances, Rev. John Zondag is retiring. I would like to thank John for his years of service with us and wish him all the best as he retires.

Two people have come to the end of their terms on the committee. Marg Clark is one and has agreed to stay on as secretary. Mardine Garnham is the other. She has agreed to stay on the committee but would like to retire from the treasurer position. She has agreed to stay on as treasurer until we find someone to take-over. If anyone has any interest in that position, please let myself or Mardine know. Thank you to both Marg and Mardine for staying with the committee.

As winter approaches we will be having the boiler and furnace inspected to ensure they are in good working order for the coming winter.

Please continue to pray for our congregation and the church at large.
May God bless you all.

PWS&D

To mark its 75th anniversary this year, Presbyterian World Service & Development has created a book of photographs chronicling its work in emergency relief, development, and refugee sponsorship since 1947. The book is entitled *Practical Compassion*, and can be ordered online from PWS&D's website (www.WeRespond.ca) for \$25.00. See also the flyer posted on the bulletin board in the Church Hall.

FOOD BANK

As we have in the past few years, we are giving everyone an opportunity to donate items of non-perishable food for the Food Bank on Harvest (Thanksgiving) Sunday, the 9th of October. The ten most-wanted items are canned fish and poultry; canned fruit and vegetables; canned stew, chili, or brown beans; baby food and formula; peanut butter; whole grain or whole wheat pasta; rice; canned spaghetti sauce or tomatoes; cereal (high fiber, non-sugar-coated); and canned soup.

TREASURER

Mardine Garnham has given notice of her intention to step down as treasurer of our congregation. We are therefore looking for someone to take over the position from her. Financial records are kept on the church's computer, so the new treasurer would need computer skills as well as knowledge about creating financial statements, etc. If you're interested, or have questions, please speak to either Mardine herself (239-0497) or Keith Kelly (857-5712), the convener of the Finance and Maintenance Committee.

PRESBYTERIANS SHARING

Good news! Givings to *Presbyterians Sharing* as of the end of August have totaled \$2,545, which is nearly 80% of the allocation that we accepted at our Annual Meeting in February (\$3,200)! **Many thanks** to everyone who has contributed to *Presbyterians Sharing* so far this year! *Presbyterians Sharing* is the largest source of funding for the work of the national church, including missions, theological colleges, national church staff, and the work of committees and agencies of the General Assembly.

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR - AFTER PENTECOST

We are still in the **Season after Pentecost**, the sixth and final season of the Christian year. It begins the day after Pentecost, and lasts until the day before the First Sunday of Advent. It is therefore the longest of the seasons, being roughly 6 months in length. Like the Season after Epiphany, the Season after Pentecost is a season of "**ordinary time**", which means it has no particular focus or emphasis. Also like the Season after Epiphany, the Season after Pentecost has a variable number of Sundays, since the date of Easter changes each year (and with it, the dates of Ash Wednesday and Pentecost). This year, since Easter was late, the Season after Epiphany was longer than usual (8 weeks), and the Season after Pentecost is shorter than usual (24 weeks). The symbolic color for this season is **green** (signifying life), the color for ordinary time.

The first and last Sundays of this season are special days: **Trinity Sunday** (the First Sunday after Pentecost) highlights the doctrine of the Trinity, and **Christ-the-King Sunday** (the Last Sunday after Pentecost) celebrates the kingship of Jesus. The color for both of these Sundays is **white**, which signifies joy and celebration.

CARBERRY

As mentioned in the minister's column, the congregation of Knox-Zion Church in Carberry has requested that it be dissolved. The Presbytery approved the request at a special meeting held on the 31st of August, and the Presbytery will therefore hold a Service of Dissolution at Knox-Zion Church on Sunday, 16 October, at 2:00 p.m.

WICM

Winnipeg Inner City Missions is undertaking a renovation of its Anishinaabe Fellowship Centre building at 287 Laura St. in Winnipeg. The total cost will be \$500,000, and they expect to raise some of that money by selling their Flora House building on Flora Av. The renovation project will renew an old building, transforming it into spaces for physical activity and cooking classes, as well as room for arts, crafts, computers, and books. Children in the after-school program and summer day camp, adults in the First Steps program, and families living in the surrounding community will all benefit from this renovation. For details, see the **full-color flyer** posted on the bulletin board in the Church Hall. If you would like to donate toward this project, **donation cards** have been set out at the back of the sanctuary, which you can pick up, starting next Sunday. Donations can be made by cheque (sent to WICM at 415 Logan Av., Winnipeg, Man. R3A 0A4) or by e-transfer to wicm@wicm.ca. For more information on WICM, you can visit their website at www.wicm.ca.

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ENDOWMENT
FINANCIAL STATEMENT – August 31, 2022**

REVENUE:	MONTH	Y-T-D
High Interest Saving Account – Stride CU	4.00	15.80
Investment Interest – Stride CU		230.20
Share Dividend – Stride CU		18.53
Investment Redeemed – Stride CU		23,020.06
Memorial Gifts		380.00
Honour Gifts		100.00
Offering Envelopes	20.00	30.00
TOTAL REVENUE	24.00	23,794.59

EXPENSES:

Bank Charges – Stride CU		.75
Investment Purchase		
Finance & Maintenance	5,000.00	20,000.00
Miscellaneous		
TOTAL EXPENSES	5,000.00	20,000.75

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

Opening Balance: January 1, 2022	\$ 3,121.93
Total Revenue Year to Date	23,778.79
Total Expense Year to Date	13,000.75
Closing Balance: August 31, 2022	\$13,899.97

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

Opening Balance: January 1, 2022	\$ 11,695.80
Total Revenue – Year to Date	15.80
Total Expenses – Year to Date	7,000.00
Closing Balance: August 31, 2022	4,711.60 - Included below **

INVESTMENTS:

DATE	BANK	INVESTMENT AMOUNT	
PURCHASED			
April/19	SCU	High Interest Saving Account **	\$ 4,711.60 **
Oct 14/21	SCU TD	Due Oct 14/22 @1.100% 307879	33,450.22
Oct 31/17		Westbourne Due Oct 31/23 @1.50% 400450	1,500.00
TOTAL INVESTMENTS			\$39,661.82

TD – Term Deposit

ENDOWMENT HAS GIVEN CHURCH \$20,000.00 to date in 2022

FINANCES:**JANUARY – AUGUST 2022****FINANCES:**

INCOME RECEIVED:	66,929.92
EXPENSES PAID:	<u>66,575.10</u>
SURPLUS (DEFICIT):	<u>354.82</u>

Included in the above income is:

\$2,430.96 from the Canada Employment Wage Subsidy (CEWS)

\$20,000.00 from the Endowment Fund

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

DONATIONS RECEIVED:	<u>2,545.00</u>
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FUNDRAISING:

INCOME:	4,285.00
EXPENSES:	<u>1,054.05</u>
SURPLUS:	<u>3,230.95</u>

The summary of the surplus from the following events:

Spring Dinner	1,794.95
Fall Supper	0.00
Meal In A Bowl	1,122.42
Catering	363.84

Thank you for your generous donations to our Summer Offering.

The total amount received was \$1,145.00

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
17 ROYAL ROAD SOUTH**

**“MEAL – IN – A – BOWL” SUPPER
WEDNESDAY: SEPTEMBER 28, 2022**

**Meat, Potatoes & Veggies all in a bowl of
THICK HOMEMADE SOUP
Served With
Homemade Breads, Biscuits,**

SOUPS:

CREAM OF CAULIFLOWER

or

CHIPPIER SOUP

(Hamburger, Pasta, Beans, & Vegetables)

DESSERTS:

CHOCOLATE ZUCCHINI CAKE

or

APPLE SAUCE CAKE

\$10.00 AT THE DOOR

TAKE OUT or DELIVERY ONLY

PICK UP FROM 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

TO PLACE YOUR ORDER

PLEASE PHONE LISA SNEESBY (204) 385-2847

PLEASE LEAVE A MESSAGE

PLEASE ORDER BY SEPTEMBER 26, 2022



Turkey Fall Supper

Take-out

Sunday, November 6th, 2022

5:00 - 6:30 p.m.

****Must pre-order by Saturday, Oct. 29th ****

Call 204-385-2847 to order – leave a
message if no answer

First Presbyterian Church

17 Royal Road South

\$15.00 each

Deliveries can be arranged for those who
cannot pick up.