

First Presbyterian Church News

17 Royal Road South, Portage la Prairie, MB



John Zondag, Minister

December 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

As I write this, it seems unbelievable that the beginning of my retirement is just over a month away! For years, it has seemed far off in the future; but now, suddenly, it's just around the corner! I'm happy to report that I have enjoyed my twelve-and-a-half years with you. From the time that I read your congregational "profile" back in 2009, I felt that we would be a good "match" as minister and congregation; and, from my point of view, at least, we were.

My big disappointment as I conclude my ministry here, of course, is that we were not able to complete the "New Beginnings" process for congregational renewal. If it hadn't been for the disruption caused by the pandemic, we would have completed the New Beginnings process by now, and perhaps the congregation would have been in a stronger position than it is today.

My plans for my retirement are pretty much up in the air, except that I plan to remain in Portage la Prairie for the winter, and then sell my house in the spring and move back to southern Ontario, where the rest of my family is. I have enjoyed living in Portage la Prairie, but, having no family here, it doesn't make much sense for me to stay.

The Presbytery has appointed the Rev. Laura Hargrove, minister of First Church in Brandon, interim moderator for our congregation, as of the 1st of January. She has written an article introducing herself, which appears elsewhere in this issue of the newsletter. Beginning the 1st of January, Sunday services and other congregational activities will continue as normally as possible. It will be Laura's responsibility to arrange pulpit supply for our congregation each Sunday, among other things. Because of the large number of pulpit vacancies in our Presbytery, I have indicated that I will be available to provide pulpit supply for up to two Sundays per month in January, February, and March, so you may see me from time to time during those three months. During that time, my priority will be to prepare my house for selling, and to prepare for my move. Incidentally, seven out of the eight congregations in our



Presbytery will have no full-time ordained minister after the 31st of December; and, of them, one has a part-time lay supply minister.

Also, I will continue as clerk and treasurer of the Presbytery up to its meeting in February, and as interim moderator for Knox Church in Neepawa up to the end of March.

This fall, we have managed to carry on our life and work as close to normal as possible. It has certainly been a busy time for me! We look forward now to celebrating the birth of Jesus at Christmastime. Our annual **Hanging-of-the-Greens service** will be held on Sunday, 4 December; our **Advent Communion service** on Sunday the 11th, and our **Christmas Eve service** on Saturday, the 24th (at 7:00 p.m.). As noted elsewhere in this issue, the Session has decided that we will not have a service on Christmas morning, however (Sunday the 25th).

I wish you God's blessing for the Christmas Season and throughout the New Year, and I pray that God may guide your interim moderator and you, as you consider your options for the future, as a congregation.

THANK YOU!

Many thanks to:

- **Allan McLean** for mowing the church lawn this past spring, summer, and fall.
- **Rob McPherson** for cleaning up the leaves on the church lawn this fall, and to **Philip Dunn** and Rob for taking the bags of leaves to the City's composting site.
- **Bruce Sneesby** for putting new weather stripping on the door at the south entrance.

COMMUNION

Our Advent Communion service will be held on Sunday, 11 December. Following that day, John is available 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.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND MEETINGS**a) Regularly scheduled meetings:**

- Bible study - Tuesday evenings, at 7:00, by Zoom
- Finance & Maintenance Committee - the 2nd Wednesday of the month, at 6:30 p.m., by Zoom. The December meeting will be held on Tuesday the 13th, however.
- Session meetings - the 4th Thursday of the month, at 7:00 p.m. (except December), by Zoom
- Men's Breakfasts - Every other Saturday at 9:00 a.m. Check the weekly Announcements Sheet for dates.

b) One-time events:

- Sunday, 4 Dec., 10:30 a.m. - HANGING-OF-THE-GREENS SERVICE and POT-LUCK LUNCH
- Sunday, 11 Dec., 10:30 a.m. - COMMUNION SERVICE AND ANNIVERSARY SUNDAY
- Saturday, 24 Dec., 7:00 p.m. - CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE
- Sunday, 5 Feb. - PWS&D SUNDAY
- Sunday, 26 Feb., following the service - Annual Meeting
- Sunday, 26 Feb. - FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT
- Sunday, 12 Mar. - Daylight Saving Time begins
- Friday, 7 Apr. - GOOD FRIDAY
- Sunday, 9 Apr. - EASTER SUNDAY
- **Notes:** - There will not be a service on Sunday, 25 December (Christmas Day)
- Communion dates for March and June are not yet confirmed.

OUR SYMPATHY

We extend our sympathy to Debbi Miles and her extended family, in the death of Wally Kimpton on the 26th of November.

SESSION NEWS

Here are highlights of the September, October, and November Session meetings:

- It was decided to make highlights of the “New Beginnings” Assessment Report (written in October 2020) available to the congregation. A 9-page document was sent out by e-mail, and a few hard copies were set out at the back of the sanctuary for those who don’t have e-mail. The complete Assessment Report is 78 pages in length (!), and can be made available to anyone who would like a copy.
- A resource for congregations in transition, entitled “For Such a Time as This” was reviewed. It was decided to make it available to the congregation as well. It explains several options available to congregations that find themselves dealing with decreasing membership and financial constraints.
- At the recommendation of the Soup Kitchen Committee, Mardine Garnham was appointed treasurer of the Soup Kitchen, effective 1 January 2023. She will be taking the place of Henry Riendeau for the time being. Henry has served as treasurer since 2005, and had given notice earlier in the year that he wished to step down.
- A transfer certificate was issued for Pat Mullins, who moved to Lockport in the spring of 2020.
- It was decided that we will not have a service on Sunday, 25 December (Christmas Day).

CHRISTMAS OFFERING ENVELOPE

The annual **Christmas Offering** envelope is enclosed with this issue of Newsletter, for those who receive a hard copy. For those who receive their Newsletter by e-mail, the envelope will be mailed out separately. **Many thanks** to everyone who contributed to the annual Thanksgiving Offering in October, which totaled \$790.00.

INTRODUCTION from INTERIM MODERATOR

My name is Laura Hargrove. When your minister, the Rev. John Zondag retires, I will become the Interim Moderator of First Presbyterian Church in Portage La Prairie. John has been your minister for many years so perhaps you don’t remember what happens when a minister has left a congregation.

In The Presbyterian Church in Canada, a minister must always have responsibility for a congregation. So, when the pulpit is vacant, as it will be once John retires, another one (Me in this case) will be appointed by the Presbytery – the regional body of the church. As you might know, a minister is the Moderator of the Session – that means they have a role in guidance and oversight. So, I will mostly be working with the Session. From time to time, you will see me when I lead worship as well.

In case you want to get to know me a little bit, here are some fun facts and some boring ones, too. I was born and raised on the West Coast on Vancouver Island. Most of my family still lives on the Coast. I think of myself as a dog person but at the moment I live with Simba, an orange fluffy feline. He is not a pet – he is a working cat. I live in an old house and every fall it is invaded by mice. So Simba must work to earn his keep. I could give you a long list of hobbies but I am not sure that I do any of them very often or very well.

Before becoming a minister, I spent a lot of time at University trying to find my way. So I had a variety of short term jobs. I worked in a Pulp and Paper mill mostly as a labourer for four summers. I worked in the Sport Fishing industry as a maid in an all-inclusive fly in resort for two summers. Eventually, I earned a degree in Home Economics. It was a general degree with a specialization in Family Life Education – but not a teaching specialization so I was never a school teacher. Later I worked in the corporate office of a multinational mining company in Toronto but I got to visit mine and mill sites in northern Ontario and Quebec. After that, I started my studies at Knox College in Toronto getting ordained in 2005. I served the church in a few places. Most recently I have been in Brandon, Manitoba where I am the Minister at First Presbyterian Church there. It’s interesting to me that I have worked in forestry, fishery, and mining. Now I live in an agricultural area. All of these are primary industries that our country has relied upon economically.

I have been blessed to travel a fair bit in my life. I have visited all the provinces in Canada (but none of the Territories) by car. I have taken a few train journeys in the USA and some in the UK and Europe. International Ministries sent me to Kenya for the summer when I was a theological student. I worked with a local pastor in a three point charge in Ngong – an area west of Nairobi. The farthest south I have ever been is Nicaragua. The farthest north is Iceland. The farthest west is the Pacific Rim National Park. The farthest east is probably the former East Germany or maybe East Africa – I don't have a map handy. Through various travels and serendipity, I have seen various geological rifts – I visited the Great Rift Valley in Africa, the San Andreas Fault in California and the gap between the North American and European plates in Iceland.

Still and all, I'm not sure I like travel. I enjoy riding on trains and boats and especially float planes but I like to sleep in my own bed. I enjoy meeting new people but I like to take my time getting to know them. Most of the way we travel is too fast and fleeting. In fact, much of life is fleeting. I hope I will have some opportunities to get to know you slowly and well.

THE CHRISTMAS CYCLE

We are currently in the portion of the Christian Year called the “Christmas Cycle”. It consists of the following three seasons:

- **Advent** - a season of preparation for Christmas. It comprises four Sundays, the first of which is either the last Sunday in November or the first in December. The seasonal color is purple.
- **Christmas** - a season celebrating the birth of Jesus. It is only twelve days in length, beginning on Christmas Day. It is followed by Epiphany on the 6th of January. The seasonal color is white.
- **After Epiphany** - a season of ordinary time (meaning that there is no particular emphasis). It is of variable length, comprising four to eight Sundays, depending on whether Easter Sunday is “early” or “late”. This year, it includes seven Sundays, since Easter is relatively late. The final Sunday of the season is Transfiguration Sunday, which, this year, falls in February. The seasonal color is green.

The rest of the year is called the “Easter Cycle”, and consists of the seasons of Lent, Easter, and After Pentecost.

“X-MAS”

The abbreviation “X-mas” for Christmas is not an irreverent one, but is quite legitimate. The “X” is actually the Greek letter “khi”, the first letter of the Greek word Χριστός (Christos), meaning “Christ”.

TREASURER

Mardine Garnham has given notice of her desire 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.

PRESBYTERY NEWS

- The Presbytery's September meeting was held in Winnipegosis. Since the church members were unable to cater the lunch, the meeting was held at the Mossey River Inn, rather than at Knox Church.
- At its own request, the congregation of Knox-Zion Presbyterian Church in Carberry was dissolved by the Presbytery on Sunday, 16 October.
- In addition to John Zondag, Glenn Ball (St. Andrew's, Brandon) also will be retiring as of the 1st of January. That leaves just two non-retired ministers in the Presbytery: Laura Hargrove (First, Brandon) and David Chang (a chaplain at CFB Shilo).
- Dave Wilson was re-appointed moderator of the Presbytery for a second year, beginning in February, and Laura Hargrove was appointed clerk, taking the place of John Zondag, also beginning in February.
- The Presbytery is looking for someone to take John Zondag's place as treasurer.

SENIORS' SERVICES

John Zondag has been leading a Friday evening worship service once every other month at Dufferin Villa since August. The Douglas Campbell Lodge and Lions Prairie Manor re-started their weekly worship services on Thursday mornings in November. John leads one service per month at each place, accompanied by Margaret Dunn, who serves as pianist.

FINANCE & MAINTENANCE

Not a lot to report from the Finance and maintenance Committee. The boiler and furnace have been inspected and are ready for winter. Most of the snow clearing has been organized. Bruce Sneesby replaced the weather stripping on the South entrance. Thanks Bruce. Also, a big thank you to Lisa Sneesby, Margaret Reichelt, and Mardine Garnham for their work in organizing the fundraising suppers and Meal in a Bowl as well as their team of helpers. The added income has really helped the Church.

With the approaching holiday season, may everyone have a Merry Christmas and may God bless you.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH – 2022
JANUARY – OCTOBER 2022

FINANCES:

INCOME RECEIVED:	84,207.66
EXPENSES PAID:	<u>82,439.24</u>
SURPLUS (DEFICIT):	<u>1,768.42</u>

Included in the above income is:

\$2,430.96 from the Canada Employment Wage Subsidy (CEWS)
\$25,000.00 from the Endowment Fund

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

DONATIONS RECEIVED:	<u>2,920.00</u>
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FUNDRAISING:

INCOME:	5,620.00
EXPENSES:	<u>1,483.30</u>
SURPLUS:	<u>4,136.70</u>

The summary of the surplus from the following events:

Spring Dinner	1,794.95
Fall Supper	0.00
Meal In A Bowl	2,110.19
Catering	363.84

Thank you for your generous donations to our Thanksgiving Offering.
The total amount received was \$790.00

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

REVENUE:	MONTH	Y-T-D
High Interest Saving Account – Stride CU	20.68	40.35
Investment Interest – Stride CU	390.45	620.65
Share Dividend – Stride CU		18.53
Investment Redeemed – Stride CU	33,450.22	56,470.28
Memorial Gifts	121.25	390.00
Honour Gifts		100.00
Offering Envelopes		30.00
TOTAL REVENUE	33,982.60	57,791.06

EXPENSES:

Bank Charges – Stride CU		.75
Investment Purchase		
Finance & Maintenance	5,000.00	25,000.00
Miscellaneous		
TOTAL EXPENSES	5,000.00	25,000.75

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

Opening Balance: January 1, 2022	3,121.93
Total Revenue Year to Date	23,932.54
Total Expense Year to Date	<u>18,000.75</u>
Closing Balance: October 31, 2022	9,053.72

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

Opening Balance: January 1, 2022	11,695.80
Total Revenue – Year to Date	33,858.52
Total Expenses – Year to Date	<u>7,000.00</u>
Closing Balance: October 31, 2022	38,554.32 - Included below **

INVESTMENTS:

DATE	BANK	INVESTMENT	AMOUNT
PURCHASED			
April/19	SCU	High Interest Saving Account **	38,554.32 **
Oct 31/23	SCU	Westbourne Due Oct 31/23 @1.50% 400450	<u>1,500.00</u>
TOTAL INVESTMENTS			40,054.32

TD – Term Deposit

ENDOWMENT HAS GIVEN CHURCH \$25,000.00 to date in 2022

CONGRATULATIONS:



Congratulations to Ruth Buan who received three awards at the Portage Collegiate Institute. She received a cash award of \$50. for each. Well done Ruth!