

# FIRST PRESS

## FALL NEWSLETTER

### 2020



#### **FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

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Tue, Wed, and Fri

9:00 am to 1:00 pm

### **MINISTER'S MESSAGE**

Greetings, Friends:

I've stared at this page a long time, wondering what to write; wondering where to even start with unpacking these last 7 months. It's been said many times, but we are living in challenging times!

We've been experiencing a world-wide pandemic that has killed more than a million people across the globe and has completely changed our lives. We've seen a 'Black Lives Matter' movement that launched protests across the US, Canada, and Europe. And now we find ourselves watching a volatile US Presidential Election race. Our personal lives continue to be touched by illness and medical procedures, death and grief, strained relationships, financial stress, and mental health challenges. Of course, all these things are made even more complicated by Covid-19 restrictions.

You may be surprised to learn that grief can be a reaction to events other than death. We don't just grieve when someone dies; we grieve whenever we lose something. Covid-19 has brought dramatic changes to our lives, including many losses such as: economic security, health, food security, friends, ceremonies (such as graduations, weddings, funerals), stability/safety, sense of personal freedom, future dreams, academic stability, and death. The Canadian Mental Health Association explains that our emotional reactions may include shock, numbness, denial, anger, fear, anxiety, panic, and guilt as we learn to live with loss. It feels like a rollercoaster or a "wilderness of grief"—a journey that is unpredictable and difficult to navigate. Some of us may even be feeling "ambiguous grief". The Canadian Mental Health Association defines this as "loss that occurs without closure or clear understanding and often results in unresolved feelings. The rapidness of our lives

changing during the pandemic has caused many to be left with a real sense of unease. The losses we are experiencing are not typically acknowledged as losses by our friends and families, such as losing our confidence in the future, losing our security that we'll graduate by a specific date or losing our feelings of control over our own lives. All of these are losses that we may grieve, but we have no rituals or even language to acknowledge them as such."

As followers of Christ, we know that we are not alone in this journey of grief. Time and time again, the Bible shows God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—powerfully present in situations of intense challenge, pain, and suffering. Is there a particular Bible story that reminds you of your life right now? Maybe you feel like the Israelites wandering through the dessert (Exodus); or a disciple with Jesus in the storm-tossed boat (Matthew 8:23-27); or Paul under house arrest in Rome, writing letters instead of being physically present with his brothers and sisters in Christ (*Ephesians, Philipians, Colossians, and Philemon*). I invite you to give it some thought: what Bible story reminds you of your life right now? Spend some time reading and reflecting on that scripture. Receive the wisdom God provides to you through that scripture for your own journey.

I hope that in these past months you have found yourself diving deeper into times of scripture reading and prayer, and that you have been finding our church's online devotional videos helpful and encouraging! As we travel through this constantly-changing landscape of Covid-19 restrictions, may the solid foundation of Jesus Christ keep you anchored to God's truth and love and may the Holy Spirit move you to (safely) reach out to others through faith!

Grace and Peace,



## **CHURCH EVENTS**

All events and worship services are being held subject to changes in health restrictions and may be limited or cancelled with very little notice. Please contact the church office with any questions or concerns.

### **Advent and Christmas Services:**

Nov. 29 - First Sunday of Advent

Dec. 6 - Second Sunday of Advent

Dec. 13 - Third Sunday of Advent

Dec. 20 - Fourth Sunday of Advent

Dec. 24 - 7pm Family Service and 9pm Communion Service

Dec. 27 - Worship Service

Jan. 3, 2021 - Epiphany Sunday

## **CARDS AFTERNOON**

Very sadly, when Covid-19 took over the world, our Cards Afternoons got cancelled.....along with most other activities. We have decided that we will not start up before year-end. In the new year, we will re-evaluate the situation and make a decision. We will keep you posted. Stay safe!

## **CRAFTS AND CONVERSATION**

Are you a **CRAFTY** person? Do you enjoy knitting, crocheting, cross-stitching or sewing? Or just enjoy an afternoon of conversation with friends? The Craft and Conversation group at First Presbyterian has resumed our meetings. We meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of each month in the John Currie Room at 1 p.m. We would love to have you join us!

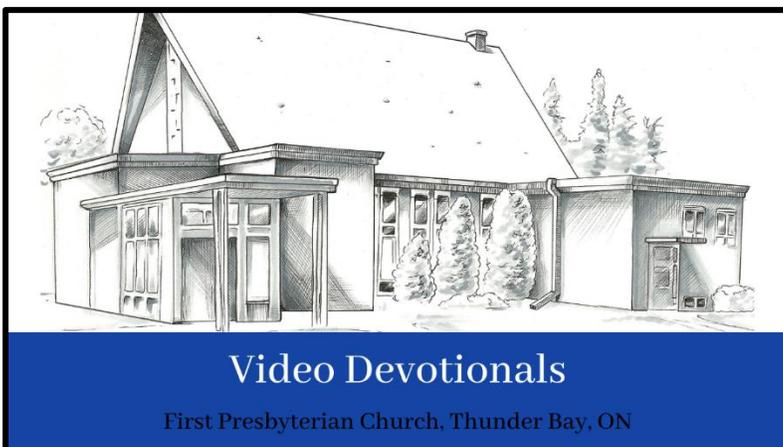
Some of us begin making our crafts of choice after the Christmas holiday season is over. We accumulate our items and in the Fall share with the Seafarers organization (scarves and hats), various charities and schools with items of warmth (hats/mitts/socks/sweaters etc.). Unfortunately, we are not able to have our usual tea and goodies at this time. We also ask that you wear a mask and we will practice social distancing. The room will be sanitized before and after our meeting.

## **SHARE THE WARMTH**

Craft & Conversation will be collecting items of warmth until December 13<sup>th</sup>. Donations of socks, hats, underwear, mittens and gloves can be placed in the box in the library. They will be shared with agencies in the community.

## **BIBLE STUDY**

Bible study will commence on Thursday Oct 29<sup>th</sup> at 10am and every Thursday after.



## **ONLINE WORSHIP SERVICES**

You are always welcome to watch an online version of our worship services! The video devotionals use the same prayers, scripture readings, and sermon text as our in-person services, but are recorded ahead of time to ensure a high quality of audio and video. You can find videos on our church website ([fpresbyterian.ca](http://fpresbyterian.ca)) or our Facebook page ([facebook.com/firstchurchtbay](https://facebook.com/firstchurchtbay)), or directly on [youtube.com](https://youtube.com) (search "First Presbyterian Church Thunder Bay")

## **PRESBYTERIAN CONNECTION**

A quarterly newspaper is published by the national office of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Keep in touch with events happening in the church and around the world. The newspaper is free of charge. To subscribe, please contact the national office at 1-800-619-7301 or go to [presbyterian.ca/connection](http://presbyterian.ca/connection).

## **FOOD BANK**

Items are collected on the last Sunday of each month. Donations of canned goods, juice, pasta, cereal and baby food are always needed to stock shelves at the food bank. Thank you to everyone who contributes to this mission activity in support of our own community.

## **MOVING?**

Have you or a family member moved recently? Please let the church know the new address and phone number so our address list can be kept up to date.

## **FINANCIAL UPDATE:**

The church roof repair was completed in a timely manner (in 2019 before fall/winter weather conditions) by utilizing roof donations and additional funds from our Memorial Fund, which we are now replenishing by continuing to accept donations towards the roof. Thank you to everyone who has contributed and continues to contribute to this vital project!

However, our general operating funds are not doing so well.

To meet expenses, our revenues should be approximately \$9,000 per month. Currently, only about \$7,000 per month is coming in. If we continue to use savings to help pay expenses, our savings will be depleted within a year.

A number of options are being explored, including advertising widely that we have church space regularly available for use by community groups in exchange for monetary donations to our church. If you know of any community groups looking for a space in which to meet, please point them in our direction. We already have Covid-19 policies in place for user groups that reflect the most up-to-date federal, provincial, and city-specific health policies.

You are also invited to take this opportunity to review your financial giving and discern if God might be leading you to increase your financial contributions to our church.

May God guide us in our financial stewardship in the months ahead, as well as bless and multiply our gifts!

## **Offering Envelopes**

### Trying Something Different in 2021

To reduce some of the operating costs in the new year, we will be trying something different.

Rather than paying for box sets with envelopes already numbered and dated for each Sunday, we will be using un-numbered, non-dated First Presbyterian Church envelopes already on hand.

Volunteers will hand stamp numbers on envelopes and collate them according to the number of envelopes each person used last year. For people who do use all 52 envelopes, we will also hand stamp the date on each envelope.

As well, there will be extras in the foyer to use as needed (remember to write your number or name on these envelopes).

If you like keeping your envelopes in a box, you might want to retain the 2020 box!

The reason for the change:

- 1) Many/most of the boxed sets are not entirely used.
- 2) Unused sets cannot be used the following year because of the pre-numbering and pre-dating
- 3) Although there is a special envelope in the box to cover the \$6.20 cost of a set, it is not routinely used.
- 4) If we eliminate the boxed sets, we reduce our costs, particularly in 2021, as we have a supply of an alternative on hand. Although it seems like a small savings, the \$300+ cost is equivalent to the hydro bill for the two buildings, or the cost of manse heating in February, for example.

Please remember that the **PreAuthorized Remittance (PAR)** is also an option, as well.

## **CUBS/SCOUTS/VENTURERS**

We are now meeting outdoors only at the Church.

**Beavers 6pm to 7pm**

**Cubs, Scouts, Venturers 6pm to 7:30pm**

Social Distancing and Covid Rules will apply – Outdoor Meetings Only

For more information go to [www.scouts.ca](http://www.scouts.ca) or contact Kelly Hilton at 623-0894

Thank You  
Kelly Hilton

## **The following is an excerpt from a 'Thank You' letter to us from Laura Rutherford:**

Hello to my church family at First Presbyterian Church.

This letter is long overdue. Hearing from you through cards and encouragement, has meant so much to me, especially as I move from Thunder Bay 15 years ago now. Your prayers each Sunday comforts me knowing God is beside me and He has surrounded me with warm and caring people in my life. This has given me strengths and positivity to carry me forward in my journey.

*Jeremiah 29: 11-12: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*

God has a plan, so must trust in Him. Definitely learning patience in this journey, as things are revealed in His time. Of course, we never seem to be on the same timeline. Thank you 🙏 again for your prayers and encouragement since my diagnosis. Last year, I decided to go back blogging to document my journey for myself and through sharing my story could help someone else - pay it forward. My blog site is called [www.journeywithgbs.blogspot.com](http://www.journeywithgbs.blogspot.com).

Love Laura Jean Rutherford

Through the eyes of a child...

## **The Children's Bible in a Nutshell:**

In the beginning, which occurred near the start, there was nothing but God, darkness, and some gas. The Bible says, "The Lord thy God is one," but I think He must be a lot older than that.

Anyway, God said, "Give me a light!" and someone did.

Then God made the world.

He split Adam and made Eve. Adam and Eve were naked, but they weren't embarrassed because mirrors hadn't been invented yet.

Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating one bad apple, so they were driven from the Garden of Eden...not sure what they were driven in, though, because they didn't have cars.

Adam and Eve had a son, Cain, who hated his brother as long as he was Abel.

Pretty soon, all of the early people died off, except for Methuselah, who lived to be like a million or something.

One of the most important people was Noah, who was a good guy, but one of his kids was kind of a Ham. Noah built a large boat and put his family and some animals on it. He asked some other people to join him, but they said they would have to take a rain check.

After Noah came Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jacob was more famous than his brother, Esau, because Esau sold Jacob his birthmark in exchange for some pot roast. Jacob had a son named Joseph who wore a really loud sports coat.

Another important Bible guy is Moses, whose real name was Charlton Heston. Moses led the Israel Lights out of Egypt and away from the evil Pharaoh after God sent ten plagues on Pharaoh's people. These plagues included frogs, mice, lice, bowels, and no cable.

God fed the Israel Lights every day with manicotti. Then he gave them His Top Ten Commandments. These include: don't lie, cheat, smoke, dance, or covet your neighbour's stuff. Oh, yeah, I just thought of one more: Humour thy father and thy mother.

One of Moses' best helpers was Joshua who was the first Bible guy to use spies. Joshua fought the battle of Geritol and the fence fell over on the town.

After Joshua came David. He got to be a king by killing a giant with a slingshot. He had a son named Solomon who had about 300 wives and 500 porcupines. My teacher says he was wise, but that doesn't sound very wise to me!

After Solomon there were a bunch of major league prophets. One of these was Jonah, who was swallowed by a big whale and then barfed up on the shore.

There were also some minor league prophets, but I guess we don't have to worry about them.

After the Old Testament came the New Testament. Jesus is the star of The New. He was born in Bethlehem in a barn. (I wish I had been born in a barn, too, because my mom is always saying to me, "Close the door! Were you born in a barn?" It would be nice to say, "As a matter of fact, I was.")

During his life, Jesus had many arguments with sinners like the Pharisees and the Democrats.

Jesus also had twelve opossums.

The worse one was Judas Asparagus. Judas was so evil that they named a terrible vegetable after him.

Jesus was a great man. He healed many leopards and even preached to some Germans on the Mount.

But the Democrats and all those guys put Jesus on trial before Pontius the Pilot. Pilot didn't stick up for Jesus. He just washed his hands instead.

Anyways, Jesus died for our sins, then came back to life again. He went up to Heaven but will be back at the end of the Aluminum. His return is foretold in the book of Revolution.

Written by Unknown Author  
Submitted by Joan Anderson