

August 13, 2020

I was reading Psalm 63 this week. It begins, "*O God, you are my God; I earnestly search for you. My soul thirsts for you; my whole body longs for you in this parched and weary land ...*" That resonated with me, this summer, as I seek to draw closer to God during this strange time. As I've been running around less, I have found myself reading Scripture more, praying more, and reflecting more on Jesus in this time ... those are good things. God can work in our lives even through the "unusual" times in our lives.

A **BIG thank you** to our summer interns – Emily, Hannah, and Kat – who finish up this Tuesday. They did an awesome job helping out with kids, youth, and worship.

At a special Council Meeting on August 4, we agreed to TRY an **in-person worship service**, in the sanctuary, on **Sunday, August 23**, probably at 11 a.m. (check next week's newsletter to confirm), local Covid case numbers permitting.

We will continue our online services, so if worshipping online works for you, please continue to do so! We have no plans to change our online ministries. You are welcome to continue worshipping online. Nothing will change.

Please read the details, below, under **Re-opening During Covid-19**. FYI, face masks WILL be mandatory (this will likely be mandated by the City after the August 24 Council Meeting anyway). Social distancing must be respected. If it all goes well, we will consider regular services in the Fall. If it does not go well or if people are not willing to follow the guidelines, we will hold off further in-person services for the time being.

In the meantime, please invite others to check our services and groups out online at www.firstb.net. We have a growing congregation of people from coast to coast and internationally! These services and groups will continue indefinitely.

One of the silver linings is also our growing archive of homegrown YouTube Videos. Check out our [Worship Music Video Library](#) and [Interviews](#) with missionaries, leaders, and more.

Services

- Our service this week is at <https://firstb.net/services/>
- This week Faye is looking at [Genesis 32:22-31](#): Jacob's journey from "faker" to "faith."
- If you are interested in contributing to the services, contact Matt (matt@firstb.net) for more information about our [Community Worship](#)

Video Project. We want to encourage you to be involved in worship, even during this time of isolation

- Feel free to give us constructive suggestions for how to improve each week

Daily Devotionals

Every day, Bruce prepares a new devotional reading, reflection, and prayer. If you would like the direct email version, sign up on www.firstb.net or email info@firstb.net.

Prefer paper? Drop by and they are just OUTSIDE the East Door of the Church in a box, Monday-Thursday, 8:30-2:30 (weather permitting). Or phone and we'll drop one in your mailbox or mail it to you. A new guide is now available, at the church and [online](#).

Rocky Railway Online Day Camp

Last week we had an awesome week of day camp. All of the videos are online so you can still take part! <https://firstb.net/daycamp/>. Much thanks to summer staff Kat and Emily and any and all volunteers who contributed.

If you participate – this week, next week, or in the Fall, you can still get a prize!

For more information, contact mark@firstb.net

Latrines for Life Bottle Drive: Watch this Sunday's Service for the total raised!

Kid's Kingdom

- **Sunday School** – This week we continue our Fresh Fruit Summer Program. Check out this week's lesson by Emily our new summer intern on **GENTLENESS** on the website or here: <https://youtu.be/9CNDdBzCO5U>
- **Your Turn** – Do you want to be a part of our Sunday School videos? Send in a picture or video of you practicing our challenge of the week and we will include it in the next weeks video. When you send your picture/video please include your permission for it to be used and posted on YouTube. (Example: I give permission for First Baptist Church to post this picture/ video as part of the Sunday school lesson on youtube.)
- **Worksheets** – If you are having your school aged children sit with you during the online service and would like some activities for them to work on while they

listen you can check out the pdf worksheets on the website or attached that connect with our lesson on **GENTLENESS**. <https://firstb.net/kidskingdom/>

YETI Youth

We're excited to offer an interactive online version of our youth ministry! Each week we have a teaching time, small group discussions, prayer, and fun games/activities we can all do together! Visit www.firstb.net/onlineyouth for more information, including how to connect with us on Zoom and on social media!

Be sure to also check out our weekly newsletter each Friday for event information, family activities, worship ideas, service projects, and a fun contest for a chance to win a prize! Find it at www.firstb.net/youthnewsletter

Young Adults

We are done for the summer. Have a wonderful summer and see you in the Fall!

Small Groups

Many of our current groups are still meeting using Zoom. Zoom can be downloaded onto your smart phone or computer (camera and microphone capabilities required). It gives everyone a chance to meet face to face and engage with one another. If you want to join a group, or need help setting up Zoom, contact Mark: 403-332-1919 or mark@firstb.net

Sunday Morning Prayer and Adult Sunday School continue Sunday mornings!

1. Join Troy for prayer from 9:00am-9:20am. Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/853736490>
2. Join our 9:30am class, "The Ten Peculiar Habits of Some Former Slaves" on the Ten Commandments. Marv Wirzba leads. Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/853736490>
3. Join our 10:00am class on the Book of Philippians. Gord Hunt leads this study. [Zoom link click here](#)

Here are a few other groups available this week:

- **Tuesday Evening Bible Study** with Troy Taylor. Every second Tuesday. Studying the book of Romans. Contact Troy to join: troy@firstb.net.
- **Wednesday Evening Bible Study** with Troy Taylor. Every second Wednesday. Studying the book of Mark. Contact Troy to join: troy@firstb.net.

Prayer with the Pastor

Sundays @ 9 am: <https://zoom.us/j/853736490>

Check-In and Chat

Tuesday afternoon from 2-3 pm. Bruce hosts a time to visit with others who join the meeting. It's an informal time to encourage and connect with others. Think of it as afternoon tea/coffee and prayer with friends 😊.

<https://zoom.us/j/682269711> Password: **chat**

Enchant Camping Trip, Friday & Saturday, September 11 & 12

We are planning our annual camping weekend in Enchant. With social distancing and proper protocols, of course! Join us for the weekend or for the day! Join us for appropriate activities, time outdoors, and sharing in life together. Registration forms and info to be released early next week. Registration deadline will be September 3. For any questions contact mark@firstb.net.

Re-opening During Covid-19

At a special Council Meeting on August 4, we agreed to TRY an **in-person worship service**, in the sanctuary, on **Sunday, August 23, 11 a.m.**, local Covid case numbers permitting. ***We will continue our online services, so if worshipping online works for you, please continue to do so! We have no plans to change our online ministries. If online is working for you – no problem – it will continue as "normal."***

We will follow all AHS and local guidelines and recommendations, including:

- **Masks will be mandatory** in the building at all times. Please bring your own. If you forget, you will be provided with one. This is NOT optional. (It will likely be mandated at the August 24 City Council Meeting, anyway)
- **Social distancing must be respected** at all times (no hugging, shaking hands, etc.)
- Do NOT come if in the past 14 days you have not had any of the following symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, runny nose, sore throat,
- Do NOT come if you have been in contact with a person with Covid-19 or been in contact with anyone from outside of the country in the past 14 days
- Do NOT come if you have been tested and are awaiting Covid test results

Please appreciate that our staff and other attendees may have respiratory issues, immune-compromised issues, or be caregivers for vulnerable people. Therefore, these guidelines MUST be followed by everyone attending or we simply cannot run services and keep people safe and healthy. We will NOT ask our staff to work in an environment that puts them or their loved ones at risk. Nor do we want people who attend - or their loved ones - to be put at risk.

If you feel you cannot adhere to the guidelines, you are welcome to continue worshipping online. Online services will continue as normal.

Some things that will be different:

- We will make a list of all attendees, in case someone who attends is later diagnosed with Covid, we can inform others who attended.
- For music, the service will use the same music videos that will be in the online service (no live worship team). The spoken parts (prayers, sermon) will be live. You are welcome to hum along or sing quietly to yourself, but [AHS discourages full congregational singing](#).
- Children will need to stay with their parents at all times. Our Sunday School rooms are too small to provide classes. Please bring quiet activities for your kids in the pews.
- There will be no indoor social time before or after the service.

If it all goes well, we will consider more regular services in the Fall. If it does not go well or if people are not willing to follow the guidelines, we will hold off further in-person services for the time being.

On an ongoing basis we will continue to reflect on the best options for us. Feel free to contact [Bruce or the office](#) for more information. Check out our [Reopening Page](#).

Our top priority is the health and safety of all, especially those most vulnerable.

Giving to First B

Even though we are not gathering together on Sundays, you can continue to financially support the ministry of Jesus through His church. As the Church of God, we still have bills to pay and staff to care for. This is a great opportunity for all of us to be the Church, to reflect the love of Jesus by having a greater call of generosity and servanthood. We CAN bless our community through your gifts. Call or email the church and we will help: 403-327-2082 or info@firstb.net.

- Donate at www.firstb.net ("DONATE" button in lower left corner)
- Sign up for automatic withdrawal (403-327-2082 or info@firstb.net)
- Give through e-transfer (giving@firstb.net, no password required)
- Mail in cheques
- Drop cheques through the mail slot (in the Steeple Door)
- Use the debit machine – call first – gloves and disinfectant will be available.

We know some of us are going through difficult financial times: we don't want to add to your stress. Those of us who have stable incomes may be able to give more generously at this time. If you do have a stable income, would you consider increasing your giving (even temporarily)? Many of us won't be spending money on travel, vacations, eating out, etc. for a while: could we make some that money available to help out? Thank you.

Office

Kathryn is in the Office Monday to Thursday. **Phone 403-327-2082 OR email info@firstb.net.** Please do not just drop by. The door is locked. Phone first.

Ways you can make a difference:

After the recent devastating explosion, in Beirut, our partners, the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS) and local Baptist churches, in Beirut, have been first responders. They are caring for people displaced by the disaster. Both Troy and Bruce have had the privilege of seeing firsthand the amazing relief work Lebanese Baptists in general, and ABTS in particular, do everyday. Even more so during this crisis. You are welcome to donate to Lebanese relief efforts through local Baptist churches and ABTS through Canadian Baptist Ministries: <https://www.cbmin.org/emergency-response-beirut-explosion/>. All gifts will go directly to Baptist ministries on the frontline. ***The Federal Government will match all contributions made by August 24.***

Check out the [Volunteer Lethbridge website](#) for volunteer opportunities.

The **Lethbridge Public Library** is looking for volunteers to help deliver books, DVDs, and audio items to customers who are unable to visit the Library for curbside pickup. If you're able, and have some time, call 403-359-6533.

COVID COMMUNITY DONATION DROP-OFF CENTRE: 100-10th Street S (Old Bibles-for-Missions Thrift Store) – West Door. They are accepting donations of clothing, household goods, kitchenware, furniture, and hygiene items. Donations will be

sorted and redistributed to agencies who need items. After health restrictions are lifted, all remaining items will be divided among the partnering agencies. They are also looking for volunteers to help SORT donations. You can contact Streets Alive for details. This is a partnership with Mission Thrift Store, MCC, Salvation Army, My City Care, and Streets Alive.

Check out the [**Lethbridge COVID-19 Community Support Circle**](#) on Facebook for other opportunities to make a difference.

Both the [**Lethbridge Food Bank**](#) and [**Interfaith Food Bank**](#) are looking for volunteers. They follow provincial guidelines to ensure safety and physical distancing.