




First Presbyterian Church
EDMONTON

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*The Search Committee of First Presbyterian Church
Edmonton welcomes and invites all prospective
candidates to review this Congregational Profile and
to give prayerful consideration to becoming First
Church's new minister of Word and Sacrament.*

Mission Statement

The church's strength comes from God and from the willingness of God's people to work together. We will respond to God's call for us to be a worshipping, studying, praying people who nurture and support each other so that we may come to experience the presence of God in our lives.

We do not exist for ourselves. We will actively communicate the caring presence of God in our lives and share our resources and talents with others in the larger community, thus following Christ's example of service to all.

Our mission comes from God's word in Mark 12: 29-31: "'The Lord Our God, the Lord is one: and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength' And, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Land Acknowledgment

As we seek to dismantle racism and attend to growing diversity, we lament current and historic injustices on this land. We acknowledge with gratitude and respect that First Presbyterian Church Edmonton is located on Treaty Six Territory, lands of many First Nations, including the Cree, Dene, Anishinaabe, Nakota Sioux and Blackfoot peoples, as well as the Métis. We live here not knowing the full story of the land and its people but seeking to learn more, and, by the grace of God, trying to walk a more hopeful and helpful path.

Welcome Statement

Our community is richer when we include people of all ages, gender identities, racial and cultural backgrounds, sexual orientations, abilities, economic circumstances and family configurations. No matter who you are, how you identify, whom you love, or where you are on life's journey, know you are welcome, and you are loved by God.



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Who We Are

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Congregational life at First Presbyterian Church is warm, welcoming, and grounded in a deep sense of community. The congregation values thoughtful faith, inclusivity, and meaningful relationships, creating a space where people of all ages and backgrounds are encouraged to explore their spiritual journeys. Opportunities for learning and reflection are offered through worship, study, and conversation, with an emphasis on engagement with Scripture, social justice, and contemporary issues of faith and life.

Pastoral care and mutual support are central to congregational life. Members are supported through prayer, visitation, and informal care networks that reflect the congregation's commitment to walking alongside one another in times of joy, challenge, and transition. The church also values shared leadership. Elders and volunteers actively nurture connections within the congregation and support ministry and outreach efforts.

First Presbyterian offers a variety of fellowship and community-building opportunities that encourage connection across generations. Music events, Bible study, and seasonal gatherings bring people together for worship, learning, and celebration. The congregation also hosts special services, concerts, and community events that welcome both members and the wider public, reflecting our desire to be an open and engaged presence in downtown Edmonton.

There are many ways for congregants to become involved and share their gifts. Volunteers contribute through outreach initiatives, committee work, music ministry, hospitality, and community service partnerships. Through these shared activities, First Presbyterian Church seeks to foster a vibrant congregational life rooted in faith, service, and a genuine spirit of welcome.



OUR HISTORY

The congregation of Edmonton Presbyterian Church, NWT came into being in 1881. On November 6th, 1881, the Reverend Andrew Baird conducted the first Presbyterian service ever to have been held in what is now the Province of Alberta. The congregation changed its name to First Presbyterian Church in 1905 when Alberta became a province. The present church building — the third one used by the congregation — has been used for worship since 1912. In 1987, it was declared an historic resource by the Province of Alberta; in 2000, it was granted historic designation by the City of Edmonton.



November 2006 marked the 125th anniversary of the beginnings of Presbyterian witness in our city and province, and in 2025 the church also celebrated the 150th anniversary of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. First Church has grown with the denomination; indeed, Reverend Doctor McQueen helped preserve the Presbyterian Church in Canada as a separate institution during the 1925 church union movement. Volunteers at First Church have put a great deal of effort into documenting and preserving key historic records, including recognition of the more challenging areas of First Church's history.



DIGITAL PRESENCE

First Presbyterian Church maintains an active and welcoming online presence through its official website, www.firstpresbyterian.ca, which serves as a central hub for worship information, congregational life, events, and community engagement. The website communicates the church's identity as an open, inclusive, and thoughtful Presbyterian congregation, grounded in historic Christian faith while seeking to respond meaningfully to contemporary spiritual and social realities. It provides information for both members and visitors, including worship times, ministry descriptions, contact information, and opportunities for involvement.



The website is regularly updated with announcements, newsletters, and an active calendar of events that reflect a vibrant congregational life. Online access to sermon archives and livestreamed services extends participation to those who connect virtually, supporting hybrid worship and engagement beyond the church building.





WORSHIP AT FIRST CHURCH

Engaging, liturgical, rhythmic, orderly, inspired by relational sermons, wide ranging musical offerings and guided by the seasons and the themes of the lectionary — this is worship, in a nutshell, at First Church! The Sunday morning Worship Service is the heart of our church community. It is a time of joining together through scripture, prayer, music and teaching. Sunday services are enhanced by the choir with an anthem or solo being performed every Sunday from September to June. Holy Communion is celebrated four times a year.

The Minister, our music directors and choir, lay readers, congregational participation in prayers and responses and focus time with children: everyone shares in our Worship Services.

Our hope and prayer is that all who come to church at First, whether in person or online, will be encouraged, challenged, strengthened and comforted.

Our sanctuary is where we worship, where all are welcome, and where we experience the grace and love of God.



MUSIC PROGRAM

First Presbyterian Church is renowned for its dynamic music program, which plays a vital role in the congregation's worship experience and broader community life. Rooted in a tradition of excellence, the program celebrates a wide range of musical expressions to inspire Christian faith, foster connection, and enrich the spiritual atmosphere of our church and city.

Choral Music

At the heart of the music program is our dedicated choir, who lead the congregation in singing praises and laments to God through hymns and responses. Participation is up to 30 members and the choir sings regularly during Sunday services, special celebrations, and liturgical seasons such as Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter. The hymns and service music express and amplify the liturgical texts and lectionary scriptural readings. Repertoire spans from classical sacred works—like those of Bach, Handel, and Mozart—to modern hymns and spirituals, ensuring a rich and diverse musical offering throughout the year.

The Fabric of Worship

We are proud to feature our 1909 historic Casavant pipe organ, an instrument that provides both grandeur and intimacy in worship. The church also houses a 7-foot Yamaha grand piano. These instruments lead congregational hymn singing from our hymnals, which helps form the faith of the worshipping community. Skilled organists lead congregational singing and present preludes, postludes, and offertories. In addition, guest musicians and instrumental ensembles—such as instrumental soloists, brass groups, and soloists—are regularly invited to participate, adding variety and depth to services.

Music Leadership and Volunteers

The program is guided by skilled music directors and supported by dedicated volunteers. This collaborative spirit fosters a welcoming environment for musicians of all backgrounds and abilities. Members are encouraged to contribute their talents, whether as singers, instrumentalists, or behind-the-scenes organizers.

Through its vibrant music program, First Presbyterian Church in Edmonton continues to uphold a tradition of excellence, inclusiveness, and joyful worship. Whether attending a service, joining the choir, or enjoying a concert, members and guests alike experience the transformative power of music in building community and deepening faith.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRY

Our Christian Education program continues to grow in exciting and meaningful ways. Each week, children, youth, and adults participate in opportunities designed to nurture faith, build community, and deepen their understanding of God's story. We are blessed with two dedicated staff members, our Sunday School teacher and our Christian Education Coordinator, whose leadership and creativity strengthen every part of this ministry.

Sunday School

Sunday School remains a vital part of our congregational life, with 8 to 12 children attending each week from a wide variety of backgrounds. Families are choosing First Presbyterian Church because they value the warmth, consistency, and quality of our children's ministry. Our Sunday School teacher's steady presence has helped create a welcoming environment where children feel comfortable, known, and excited to learn. We also celebrate the way our mixed-age Sunday School allows children to learn from one another and form friendships across age groups. Our goal is for children to be engaged in what is being taught, eager to ask questions, and entering into meaningful, God-centered conversations.

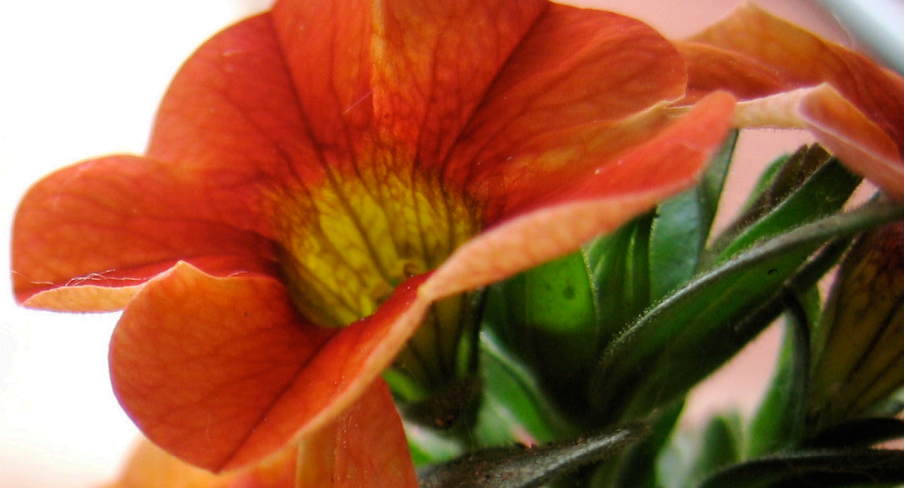
Youth Outreach

Our ministry with youth is developing as our children develop. Recent activities include a family and youth fun day at the Edmonton Corn Maze well as a young adult Worship Night, with attendance and reception that demonstrated how deeply young people in the church are seeking connection. Our Christian Education Coordinator has also been actively developing programming and social media initiatives to help youth stay connected and involved as they transition out of Sunday School.

Adult Learning

Christian Education for adults remains a valued part of our ministry. Our Wednesday evening Bible study, led by faithful leaders, continues to draw a committed group of participants, with





others joining seasonally as their schedules allow. The CE Committee is also exploring additional opportunities for adult learning in the months ahead, with the hope of offering more ways for people to grow in faith together.

Nurturing faith, building community, and deepening our understanding of God

Our Future in Christian Education

As these ministries continue to strengthen, we are also seeing new possibilities emerge. The enthusiasm of our children and youth, the diversity of our congregation, and the strong foundation of inclusivity at First Presbyterian naturally point us toward a future where more young families, teens, and young adults find a spiritual home here. Our Sunday School program, young adult initiatives, refugee sponsorship work, and welcoming atmosphere already resonate deeply with younger families, and we hope to build on that momentum.

We are also exploring ways to support the growing number of families from a variety of cultural backgrounds including many from Africa who enrich our community. Opportunities for youth groups, university-aged gatherings, and increased involvement of young people in worship are all areas where we see energy and potential. Family events like the corn maze trip have shown us how meaningful intergenerational connection can be, and we hope to continue offering activities that bring families together.

As we look ahead, we are excited to continue shaping a Christian Education program that reflects who we are becoming: a multigenerational, multicultural, welcoming congregation where children, youth, and adults grow in faith side by side.




OUR BUILDING

The congregation of First Church in Edmonton has recognized, as part of its mission and work, the maintenance and preservation of our building as both a Provincial and Municipal Historical Resource. The Board is dedicated to supporting all of the church's activities, including the operation and maintenance of the building. Our late-Victorian Gothic Revival structure has seating capacity for over 1000, and houses a Casavant organ in the sanctuary and an English carillon of tubular chimes in the tower. It is also in demand as one of Edmonton's most acoustically vibrant concert venues.

Throughout history, the Christian church has valued and supported human endeavours in the arts, including music and architecture, as worshipful reflections of God's creativity. Cultural artifacts are made available to the general public that nourish the spirit and build community not only with each other but with previous and future generations.

Maintaining a historical building can seem impractical, but we believe worship should be marked by beauty. The church's impractical worship reveals God's character to us, and teaches us to value God and others apart from their mere usefulness. It is a connection to Christians throughout the centuries. The sun streams in the south facing stained glass windows and the light glows on warm oak, carved in 1911. The choir and organ fill the sanctuary with a hymn published in 1529, and children born after the new millenium stand to sing. The work of days and hands is all around us.



AT HOME AND IN THE COMMUNITY

Pastoral Care and Fellowship

Our focus with pastoral care is on ensuring our 136+ members and adherents are nurtured and supported and that they feel Christ's love expressed through the care and concern of their Elders and from the whole congregation. This covers a broad range of activities, including hospitality and creating a welcoming space for visitors to the church, visitation and support for those not able to attend church due to illness or other concerns, and joining together in fellowship through music, teaching, and volunteering.

Ministry and Community Engagement

First Church has hosted a weekly distribution center for the Edmonton Food Bank for decades, staffed by church volunteers. Other ministry activities include preparation of community dinners which are free for all to attend, collection of donations for local shelters, and other support for the downtown unhoused population.

First Church has also played a vital role in refugee sponsorship for more than twenty years. The congregation has brought dozens of newcomers to new opportunity in Canada, including an ambitious recent sponsorship of more than 40 people from a refugee camp in Zambia. This was a true testament to the power of God's love and the dedication and support of the congregation. Many newcomers remain strongly connected with the church and are critical members of our community.

In addition to these ministries, First Presbyterian Church also provides a vital space for gathering for the wider Edmonton community by hosting workshops, classes, rehearsals, concerts, recitals, and special events. More than 5,000 people use the church annually. These events often feature local artists, choirs, and ensembles, making the church a hub for worship, cultural enrichment and community celebrations.

Finances

Our annual operating budget for 2023 and 2024 averaged \$497,000; our total income was an average of \$535,000. In addition to support for worship, ministry, and committee activities, the operation and maintenance of the building is a significant annual expense. First Church owes a debt of gratitude to those who have gone before, as the Memorial Fund grants us flexibility in our finances.

Staff

We are fortunate to have several talented and dedicated members of staff at First Presbyterian Church, including a full-time Sexton who is responsible for the care of the building, as well as two Christian Education staff, an Office Administrator, and our two Music Directors.

LOOKING FORWARD

As First Presbyterian Church looks ahead, the congregation recognizes both the opportunities and challenges that shape this next chapter of its life together. Grounded in meaningful worship, a strong music ministry, social justice engagement, and a warm sense of community, the church is well positioned to respond faithfully to changing needs and new opportunities.

A key opportunity lies in renewing engagement with youth, young adults, and families through relevant programming, welcoming spaces, and strengthened intergenerational relationships. By deepening discipleship through thoughtful, scripture-centred preaching and intentional pastoral care, the church seeks to nurture spiritual growth and stronger connections within

the congregation. Continued use of hybrid worship and digital tools also enables broader participation and engagement.

At the same time, the congregation is mindful of challenges, including an aging membership, post-pandemic shifts in participation, and the need to sustain volunteer contributions. Addressing these realities will require collaborative leadership, openness to change, and a shared commitment to inclusion, care, and renewal.

With hope and trust in God's guidance, First Presbyterian Church looks forward to building on its strengths while embracing new ways of worship, service, and community life — seeking to remain a welcoming, faithful, and vibrant presence for current and future generations.

Who You Are

OUR MINISTER

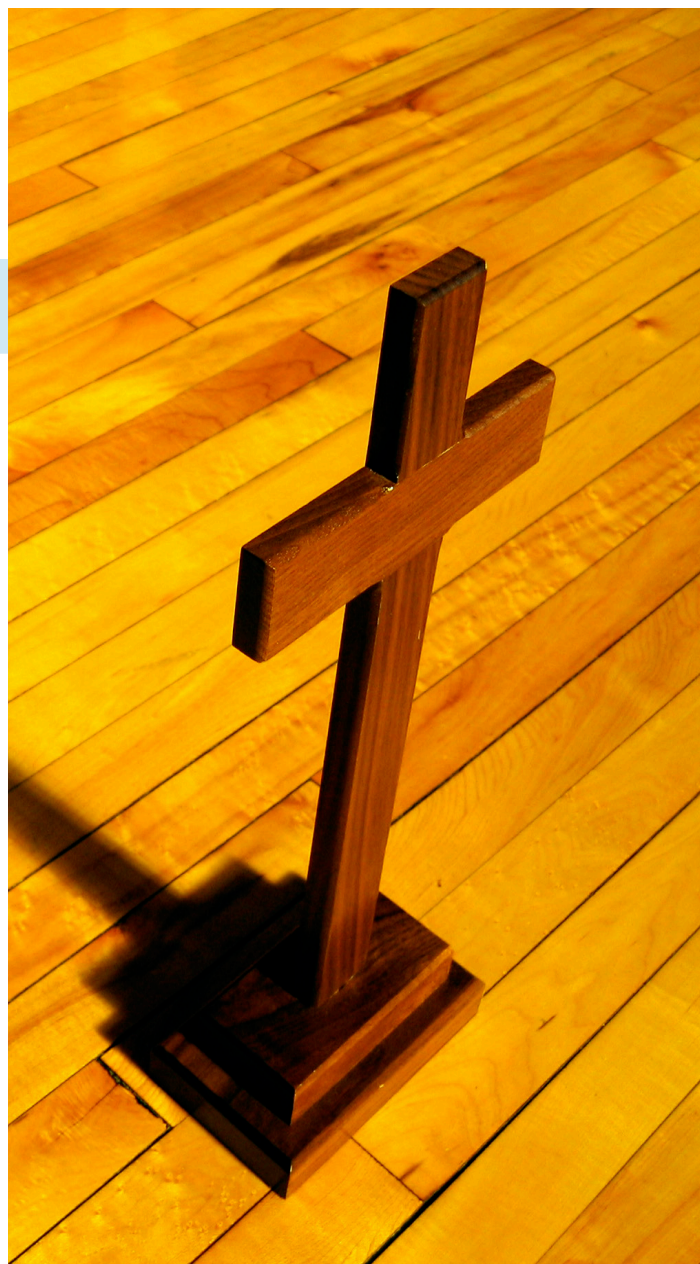
During the fall of 2025, the Members and Adherents of First Presbyterian Church were asked to identify and rank their most important expectations of the role of the Minister at First. They are listed here in order of importance:

- Leading Worship & Preaching
- Crisis Visiting
- Equipping Members (Faith-Life Integration)
- Leadership Development
- Christian Education

OUR LEADER

These expectations along with comments and suggestions from the Survey have informed the following. A full time minister of Word and Sacrament at First looks like this:

- A worship leader who will offer lectionary-based inspirational worship through biblical, Christ centred sermons, thoughtful prayers, our strong music ministry, structured liturgy, and respect for tradition.
- An empowering spiritual leader who supports and guides Christian Education across the generational spectrum at First.
- A respectful, inclusive leader who embraces diversity, culture, age, gender and identity.
- An outward-facing leader who will be engaged with youth and the community through outreach and ongoing adaptation to modern church realities.
- A caring leader who will provide pastoral care through personal visits and relational leadership and who will support us in times of crisis.



- A teaching leader who will help guide us on our spiritual journey through study, learning, reflection and prayer.
- A mentoring leader who will equip Elders and others to lead and foster growth, collaboration and understanding.
- A community-focused leader who will, with Elders and others, build on the strengths of our church and look for new opportunities for growth.
- A visionary leader who aligns with our goals, vision and mission.
- A Minister who will share in Ministry with us as we grow in faith and seek to understand God's path for us in the days and years ahead.

We are engaged in thoughtful contemplation and preparation to be ready for God's path for us as a congregation.





A Home in Edmonton

Edmonton is a city for living. It rises out of the Alberta prairies on approach with the characteristic sudden transition of Western Canadian cities, sprawling on either side of the North Saskatchewan River, full of industry and home to more than 1 million people. It's one of the fastest growing municipalities in Canada and it's building infrastructure to match, with billions of dollars of investment in new highways, recreation facilities, libraries, bridges, and LRT. Jobs are plentiful and Edmonton's economy is diverse and robust. The population is diverse as well, with residents of many ethnicities and backgrounds, speaking dozens of languages. The people of Edmonton are warm and kind. Edmonton is divided into 7 sectors and 375 neighbourhoods, with something for everyone. Housing is surprisingly affordable and there are many options. A single family home with a garage and yard within easy commuting range of downtown is as low as \$200,000-\$300,000.



parks

Schools in Edmonton are excellent and well-funded, and the city's innovative magnet program allows significant freedom for student choice. Immersion is available for French, Mandarin, Spanish, and German through both the Edmonton Public School and the Edmonton Catholic School Boards. Following high school, there are many strong trade programs, and the University of Alberta, MacEwan University, The King's University, Concordia University of Edmonton, and the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology offer internationally recognized post-secondary education.

The city is criss-crossed by bicycle and walking trails, with separated bike lanes and shared use pathways throughout much of the core. There are more than 400 parks ranging from small pocket parks and splash pads in most neighbourhoods to the largest district parks, home to sports fields and recreation facilities. The jewel of the park

playgrounds

network is the 48-km North Saskatchewan River Valley park system, the largest contiguous area of urban parkland in Canada. In the winter, there are multiple ski hills within city limits, as well as cross-country ski trails, skating rinks and the Victoria Park skating trail.

Winters in Edmonton are cold but dry and sunny. The ice fog sparkles in the air and the snow crunches underfoot. But the city is built for it and Edmontonians don't hide inside. World-class skiing is just a few hours away in Jasper. Winter sports and activities are hugely popular. For the less adventurous, the many malls and community centres offer indoor options, and Edmonton's cafes and coffee shops are warm and cozy on winter days. The Muttart Conservatory, a large municipal greenhouse complex, holds one of Canada's largest indoor plant collections and is easily accessible via LRT.

people

Summer in Edmonton is glorious: hot but not humid, with puffy clouds drifting across the huge western skies, and sunlight until 11 pm. In the summer, Edmonton bursts into life with festivals held throughout the city, including the world's largest celebration of multiculturalism, Heritage Days, the oldest Fringe Festival in North America, and one of Canada's oldest and most beloved music festivals, the Edmonton Folk Music Festival. There are more than

pools

network is the 48-km North Saskatchewan River Valley

parades



50 annual events. Even in the winter, the Flying Canoë Volant, the Silver Skate festival, farmers markets and craft fairs keep the city bustling.

The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra's home is the Winspear Centre, and the Northern Alberta Jubilee Theatre sees more than 200 events annually, including concerts, ballet, and Broadway shows. And of course, Edmonton is Oil City, with the brand-new Rogers Place housing the beloved Edmonton Oilers. The arena is a draw for major concerts and even home to the Canadian Finals Rodeo, and the new ICE district hosts large outdoor watch parties and tailgate events for playoff games and other big events.

We know Edmonton is a place people come to love after discovering it, because so many of the members of our own search committee are transplants to the region!

We Can't Wait to Meet You!

Thank you for taking the time to read this Congregational Profile for First Presbyterian Church. In this document, we share a hopeful picture of our life together as a congregation, rooted in faith, community, and service in the heart of our city. As we look to the future, we trust that God will lead us to the right spiritual guide and leader - one who will walk with us, inspire us, and help us grow as a community that reflects Christ's love, justice, and grace in all aspects of our life and ministry.

Please note:

We offer a housing allowance, stipend, and benefits in accordance with the Presbyterian Church of Canada guidelines. In addition, the Manse Fund will provide a \$44,000 interest-free loan for a down payment on a privately owned home.



If you are being led to respond to God's call to grow with us and to share our vision, we look forward to receiving your response.

For further information, please visit our website:

www.firstpresbyterian.ca

To submit your profile, please don't hesitate to contact our Interim Moderator, the Rev. John Dowds.

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