



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
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Growing the Family of God

Telling the Story

Serving the Community

Nurturing Believers

Coffee with Jim



When we were children I recall my mother reading the story, *If He Had Not Come*, by Nan F. Weeks. *If He Had Not Come* is the charming story of a young boy who discovers what his world would be like if Jesus had never come to earth.

Recalling this simple story now invites me to reflect on what it means that Jesus chose to put in an appearance on this small planet; that for a brief period of time he walked among the sons and daughters of men and women and, in fact identified with us by calling himself, “the Son of Man”.

John puts it powerfully and dramatically, “the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth (John 1:14). In that sentence, John encapsulates the preexistence and transcendence of Jesus the Christ. John continues by declaring that from Jesus we receive “grace upon grace.” Although John declares that “No one has ever seen God”; the evangelist proclaims that in Jesus the heart of the Father has been made known (1:16, 18).

When we see the exposed heart of God we get a glimpse of grace; grace that offers salvation, when it is totally undeserved and unearned. In the heart of God, we witness, not just the words “turn the other cheek,” but the reality of one who refused retaliation and accepted the will of the Father.

In Jesus, the ancient words of Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18-19) leap off the page in the reality of Jesus’ actions.

The gospels are replete with Jesus doing exactly what he declared in the synagogue at Nazareth. When questioned by the disciples of John the Baptist, Jesus replied, “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them” (Luke 7:22).

In Jesus, God opened God’s heart and made God’s own self vulnerable to the hatred, injustice, and abject depravity of human beings. In Jesus, God opened God’s heart and showed us how a

Father loves, forgives, and restores to wholeness recalcitrant, defiant children. If he had not come we would be bereft of hope; we could never understand forgiveness, peace, or justice.

In The Message Bible, Eugene Peterson paraphrases John 1:14 as: "The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood". Here's a suggestion for this Christmas season: Get to know the one who moved into the neighborhood. Drop by for coffee and conversation. Acknowledge God as wholly other, yet as intimate as your dearest friend, as vital as your next breath.

If you're looking for a Christmas gift, share this with your friends and your enemies alike, "do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

Did You Know?



Donations to the church and her specific ministries can make wonderful gifts for those hard to shop for people on your gift lists! Have a friend with a birthday and a heart for children? Make a donation on their behalf to the ABK or ABY programs. A relative with an anniversary and a heart for helping the needy? A donation in their name to the Food Pantry or Jubilee Christmas might be the perfect gift. Also, don't forget about those hard to shop for people on your Christmas list! It's coming up faster than you think!

When you make a gift donation to the church in a loved one's name the church will acknowledge your gift by sending a lovely thank you note letting your loved one know of the gift you made on their behalf.

If you would like to honor a friend or family member by making a gift to the church, please be sure to include the person's name and address as well as the specific ministry to which you'd like your gift applied.

Grief in the Holidays

The holidays are supposed to be a time of joy but they can be especially difficult if you've lost a loved one. If you're struggling with loss this holiday season, the grief support group will be meeting on December 7 at 10:30 am to study Julie Yarbrough's book "Beyond the Broken Heart", specifically chapter 9, "Grief in the Holidays".

Winter Weather

A reminder as we make our way into a season of unpredictable winter weather, *if Pontiac schools are closed or close early due to inclement weather, all church activities scheduled for that day will also be cancelled.*

To the best of our ability, church cancellation notices will be broadcast on 98.9 FM (WJEZ) and Pontiac Channel 13, posted on our Facebook page and made available on our voicemail system.

WE ENCOURAGE EVERYONE TO USE THEIR BEST JUDGMENT AND BE SAFE DURING HAZARDOUS WEATHER!

Mission Opportunity

We are exploring the possibility of a mission trip to Costa Rica April 24-May 3, 2017. The American Baptist Churches of the Great Rivers Region has a long-term relationship with the Baptist Federation in Costa Rica. If you are interested in participating in this experience please contact the pastor. This is only a preliminary conversation. More details will follow.



Prayer Chain Number

815.419.4454

Nursery Care Available

Nursery care is available during worship services for infants and toddlers through age 3.

The nursery is located across the hall from the sanctuary.



Children's Church

Dec. 4: Missy Hoover

Dec. 11: Lynn Battice and Vicki McBeath

Dec. 18: Lynn Battice and Vicki McBeath

Dec. 25: Patty Gray and Mary Frobish

Jubilee Christmas



It's beginning to look a lot like Jubilee Christmas! For those of you who are not familiar with our Jubilee Christmas program, it is an outreach ministry that helps provide a Christmas celebration to children and families who may otherwise be unable to afford one.

This year's Jubilee Christmas event will be hosted here at FBC on December 10th and it's never too early to start planning for this incredibly meaningful community ministry! If you'd like to support this amazingly festive ministry, you can make a donation by marking your check 'Jubilee Christmas' and dropping it in the offering plate.

You're Invited...

The Wolfe family invites you to join them for their annual Christmas open house on

Sunday, December 10th

2:00 - 4:00 pm
817 Cimмерon Dr.
Pontiac, Illinois



Thank You

My sincere appreciation to the church family for your thoughts, prayers, cards, e-mails, texts, and general concern and love. It was very meaningful for me over the last many months during the passing of my mother, father, and the illness of my wife. I am blessed to be a part of such a loving and devoted church family.

Don Schiff

Newsletter Deadline

All articles for inclusion in the January edition of the church newsletter must be submitted to the church office no later than Friday, December 16th.

You may submit your articles by phone (842.4321), fax (844.6943), by e-mail (Rhonda@fbcpontiac.org) or by leaving them in the black box outside the church office door.



Love Gift



As is our custom this time of year, we are collecting donations for a love gift to be presented to Pastor Jim.

If you would like to take this opportunity to express your gratitude for all that our Pastor does for us through the year, please leave your donation with Dale Newsome, Barb Tholen, Virginia Asper, or Harlin Dean no later than Saturday, December 18th.

Board of Ministries

The Board of Ministries met on Thursday, November 10th at 7:15 pm.

Youth Ministries: There have been discussions regarding attending the "Dare to Share" event in Springfield in spring 2017.

Sunday School: The average attendance for October was 63 with an average offering of \$37.00.

Fellowship: In October our food pantry served 92 fami-

lies representing a total of 285 individuals.

Diaconate Council: Members are working on Christmas gifts for our shut ins.

Facilities: The garage is nearly completion. They are going to install an apron in front of the garage to make driving in and out easier.

Ken Ferguson has donated a garage door opener for the garage.

Moderator: There will be no December Board meeting.

Looking at a leadership conference in Chicago for next year's Board retreat.

New Business: It was decided to accept a lower insurance quote from Country Companies for our church insurance needs.

Board members are encouraged to greet visitors and make them feel welcome.

A Special Thank - You!

The Esther and Ruth Circles would like to thank everyone who donated items for the Peoria Friendship House. Because of your help, we are able to support more ministries in our church and in the area.

Our next project will be rolling bandages for White Cross. If you have any old sheets (white or pastel color), we will be needing some for the bandages. We cannot use dark ones. Give them to Marian Dixon or myself.

Thank you so much for your support.
Brenda Dodd

Bloodmobile

The Red Cross will be holding their monthly bloodmobile drive at the Pontiac VFW on

Wednesday, December 28th
from
11:00 am - 5:00 pm.

For more information, please contact Dixie Vogel at 815.358.2444

Office Notes

In honor of the upcoming Christmas holiday our church office will be closing at noon on Friday, December 23rd and will be closed all day on Monday, December 26th. We will also close at noon on Friday, December 30th and will be closed on Monday, January 2nd.



December



- 2 Stevie Carroll
- 2 John Pohanka
- 2 Hope McKenna
- 4 Lindsey Flessner
- 4 Lindsey Lind
- 5 Roger Christianson
- 5 Erik Mitchey
- 7 Mikayla Stewart
- 7 Ron Ingram
- 7 Carol Toon
- 8 Debbie Carroll
- 9 Dale and Teri Newsome
- 9 Shai Nyi
- 10 Brittney Lundeen
- 11 Jo Zimmerman
- 12 Betty Riffey
- 14 Ryan Ingram
- 16 Jamie Beck
- 18 Judy Pohanka
- 19 Eric Hoover
- 24 Jane Kahn
- 25 Aaron Newsome
- 29 Chuck and Ruth Ann Peck
- 30 Vicki McBeath
- 30 Shirley Alltop
- 31 Jillian Christianson
- 31 Rick and Deb Golliday



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					2	3 7:30 am PK Fellowship at FBC 8:00 am PK Study at FBC
4 9:00 am Worship 10:15 am Sunday School 5:00 pm ABY 5:00 pm ABK 5:00 pm Koinonia Koffee	5	6	7  9:00 am Ruth Circle 9:00 am ROMEO Club 10:30 am Grief in the Holidays 1:00 pm Esther Circle 6:30 pm Grace Sm. Group	8 9:00 am BSF Women's Class	9	10 7:30 am PK Fellowship at FBC 8:00 am PK Study at FBC 1:00 pm Jubilee Christmas
11 9:00 am Worship 10:15 am Sunday School 2 - 4:00 pm Wolfe Open House 5:00 pm ABY 5:00 pm ABK	12 1:00 pm Single Women of Faith 7:00 pm Covered in Prayers	13	14 9:00 am ROMEO Club 6:30 pm Grace Sm. Group	15 9:00 am BSF Women's Class	16 	17 7:30 am PK Fellowship at FBC 8:00 am PK Study at FBC
18 9:00 am Worship 10:15 am Sunday School 5:00 pm ABY 5:00 pm ABK 5:00 pm Koinonia Koffee	19 	20	21 9:00 am ROMEO Club 6:30 pm Grace Sm. Group	22 9:00 am BSF Women's Class	23	24 Christmas Eve 7:30 am PK Fellowship at FBC 8:00 am PK Study at FBC 7:00 pm Christmas Eve Service
25 Christmas Day 9:00 am Worship No Sunday School No evening activities	26 Church Office Closed	27	28 9:00 am ROMEO Club 6:30 pm Grace Sm. Group	29 9:00 am BSF Women's Class 	30	31 New Year's Eve 7:30 am PK Fellowship at FBC 8:00 am PK Study at FBC