



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
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Growing the Family of God

Telling the Story

Serving the Community

Nurturing Believers



As pastor and congregation, we have been together for almost thirty years. As we approach that milestone, I have something on my heart that I want to share with you. It is the simple phrase “thank you”. Thank you for your patience and understanding. Thank you for your love and support. Thank you for always stepping up when there is a call for help. I am always awed by your willingness to pitch in and do whatever needs to be done. I am proud and impressed with your passion for mission and outreach. We do family well. This is a good church.

When Pastor Jay and I outlined our vision for the coming year and beyond, one of the emphases of that vision is the call to be a more praying church. It is impossible to over stress the importance of prayer in our faith walk. As disciples of Jesus Christ everything we do is informed and directed by prayer. When we gather for corporate worship the music, readings, and message are all undergirded and planned with prayer. The writer to the Hebrews declares, without faith it is impossible to please God, (Hebrews 11:6). I don’t believe it is too much of a stretch to say that without prayer we cannot have faith; the discipline of prayer strengthens faith. The partnership of prayer and faith leads us to greater works.

At our annual congregational meeting in December we reviewed some sobering facts as we discussed significant declines in participation in both worship and Sunday Morning Connections. I want to emphasize that statistics do not define who we are as the people of God. Our ministry and mission are not characterized by lines on a graph. However, the numbers do challenge us to discern where God is leading us in ministry. The command of Jesus is to make disciples (Matthew 28:19). It stands to reason therefore, that to make disciples we need to be reaching out beyond the walls of the building into the community with the story of Jesus.

We claim that we want to Grow the Family of God. If that is our intention, then we must be a praying church. A praying church does not rush heedlessly into a plethora of programs simply for the sake of programming. Rather, a praying church takes the time necessary to pray for God’s direction in the planning and execution of ministries. Doing more is not necessarily doing God’s will. Jesus spent three years training the Twelve to do ministry. It’s ok to take time to discern God’s will. Before any great revival or awakening God’s people were committed to praying for renewal. If we are concerned about declining participation the first step in stemming that downward spiral is prayer, prayer, and more prayer. God will work when we are totally commit-

From the Pastor (cont.)

ted to giving our ministries to the One in whose name we pray.

I want to make two suggestions:

First, commit to a personal prayer covenant.

As part of my personal commitment to discipleship I will pray not less than fifteen (15) minutes twice a day for the ministries of First Baptist Church.

Specifically, I will pray for the following ministries:

- That God will lead persons to our church who need a relationship with Jesus Christ.
- That I will be bold in inviting and welcoming persons to our church family.
- That I will pray for opportunities to share my faith.
- That I will practice personal devotions.
- That I will pray for the pastors and others who share in leadership.
- That I will make a personal commitment to a small group.
- That I will find and join a Prayer Partner with whom I can meet regularly for mutual support and accountability.

Second, commit to a prayer partner. There is great strength and joy in the practice of meeting with another person once a week, or as often as possible, to share life's experiences and to pray for one another. Bonds of friendship are formed with a prayer partner that extend beyond the boundaries of time and location. Praying specifically for the joys and concerns of a prayer partner is exhilarating and renewing.

We are a good church. Good is the enemy of best. To be the best that God is calling us to be demands a commitment to pray. Paul commanded the Ephesians to pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. (Ephesians 6:18).

Jim

Winter Weather



A reminder as we make our way through 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 WEEK, WCIA, and posted to our Facebook page.

We encourage everyone to use their best judgment and be safe during hazardous weather!



**Prayer Chain
Number**

815.419.4454

If you wish to receive prayer chain calls, please contact the church office at 815.842.4321 and request that your name and number be added to the list.

Ash Wednesday



We are pleased to announce that we will offer three Ash Wednesday services again this year. In addition to our traditional Ash Wednesday service on February 26th at 6:30 p.m., we will also be offering a brief service of Ashes at 6:30 a.m. and at 12:00 Noon.

We encourage everyone to join us at one of these services for a time of meaningful reflection as we make our way into the Lenten Season.



SECURITY UPDATE

Due to malfunctions in the keypad entry system at the front entrance to the church the keypad has been replaced with a card security system. The card system allows us to monitor access to the building more efficiently. It will allow persons to access the building on an "as needed" basis for special events such as weddings and funerals and provide a method to cancel access when the event is concluded.

While there may be some initial inconvenience, this system will create a more efficient procedure to protect persons and property. Keys will still work for the foreseeable future.

Newsletter Deadline

All articles for inclusion the March edition of our church newsletter must be submitted to the church office no later than Wednesday, February 19th. 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

Thank You

We would like to thank everyone for their thoughts, prayers, calls, cards, and visits during the time of our mother's illness and passing. Our special thanks to Pastor Wolfe for always being there to offer a prayer - just like mom always wanted. It means more than you know to have received such an outpouring of love and support for her and for us.

The family of Vickie Jaime

To all the precious people who prayed for me as I have gone down this road with breast cancer, chemo, and radiation, I am so thankful for your prayers. May the love of Christ always be in your heart,

Gayle McBeath

First Baptist Church,

Thank you so much for the gift certificate to Bernardi's. I feel very blessed that I am able to serve the church by playing the piano. I appreciate you giving me the chance to share with you.

Love,
Lynn Rodino

Pastor Wolfe's Anniversary!



March 1st 2020 will mark the 30th anniversary of Pastor Wolfe and his family joining us here at FBC Pontiac! That's 30 years of sermons, of comfort, of prayer, of learning and growing, of sharing, of friendship, of midnight hospital visits, of weddings and baby dedications, and of family.

In celebration of this momentous anniversary we are collecting donations for an anniversary gift for Pastor Wolfe to show him just how much we appreciate everything he's done and continues to do for us here at FBC! If you would like to take this opportunity to express your gratitude for everything Jim has done for us over the past 30 years, please see Shai Nyi before March 1.

TOWARD JERUSALEM

Ash Wednesday is February 26 and as is our practice, we will conduct three services that day, 6:30 am, 12 noon, and 6:30 pm. Ash Wednesday is the beginning of the 40-day period of prayer, fasting, and meditation leading to Easter. The 40-day period is based on the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness temptation. It is important individually and corporately as we strive for personal and corporate spiritual renewal.

As we journey through Lent you are encouraged to participate in a Bible study titled "Toward Jerusalem". The booklet will be available for you on Sunday February 23. This devotional booklet contains meditations and scriptural suggestions to guide you on your journey into spiritual transformation. This journey may be taken individually or with your prayer partner. Ideally, you will have already done the work before meeting with your prayer partner. If you do not have a prayer partner, I want to encourage you in the strongest possible terms to invite someone to join you in prayer through this journey. Lent presents a wonderful opportunity to build a strong relationship through prayer with another person. Let me offer the following suggestions for finding a prayer partner:

- Pray for direction in selecting a prayer partner. Invite that one to join you in a mutual prayer journey.
- Meet regularly. Once per week is preferable. You may meet in person or by phone.
- Share what is happening in your life, at work or at home. Joys and concerns.
- *Maintain absolute confidentiality.*
- At the close of each session ask the question, "How can I pray for you?" As you become comfortable pray aloud for each other.

As you meet claim the promise of Matthew 18:20: *For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.* Try it for 40 days. You will discover that praying with another person is transformational, for you, and for our community of faith.

"Toward Jerusalem" will be available on Sunday February 23.







February

- 1 Michael Poshard
- 2 Mason Christianson
- 2 Jan Jolynn Staley
- 2 John and Michelle Bohm
- 3 Trinity Miller
- 3 Neisha Hibbs
- 4 Tyler Lind
- 4 Gary Brill
- 6 Bill Battice
- 9 Aiden Hurd
- 9 Barbara Sancken
- 10 Patty Gray
- 10 Leon Gray
- 10 Peggie Boldt
- 11 Caiti Henson
- 12 Maxine Zytrowski
- 13 Claire Nyi
- 13 Joanne Perkins
- 13 Margaret Turner
- 14 Barry and Barbara Highland
- 15 Cheyle Herman
- 17 Lisa Hurd
- 19 Calvin Krueger
- 19 Dean and Kay Sidfrids
- 20 Karen Gilmoure
- 20 Alana Christianson
- 20 John Bohm
- 22 Marcia Harder
- 27 Bob and Sharon Matteson
- 28 Skip and Carol Jones

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 7:30 am PK Fellowship at FBC 8:00 am PK Study at FBC
2 Groundhog Day 9:00 am SMC 10:00 am Worship 	3	4	5 9:00 am ROMEO Club 5:30 - 6:30 pm WYRED 6:00 pm ABK	6	7	8 7:30 am PK Fellowship at FBC 8:00 am PK Study at FBC
9 9:00 am SMC 10:00 am Worship	10 1:00 pm Single Women of Faith	11 6:00 pm Parents Grief Supp. Group	12 9:00 am ROMEO Club 10:30 am Grief Support Group 5:30 - 6:30 pm WYRED 6:00 pm ABK	13 7:00 pm Board of Ministries	14 Valentine's Day 	15 7:30 am PK Fellowship at FBC 8:00 am PK Study at FBC
16 9:00 am SMC 10:00 am Worship	17 Presidents Day 	18	19 Newsletter Deadline 9:00 am ROMEO Club 5:30 - 6:30 pm WYRED 6:00 pm ABK	20	21	22 7:30 am PK Fellowship at FBC 8:00 am PK Study at FBC
23 9:00 am SMC 10:00 am Worship	24 1:00 pm Single Women of Faith	25	26 Ash Wednesday 6:30 am Service of Ashes 9:00 am ROMEO Club 12:00 Noon Service of Ashes 6:30 pm Ash Wed. Service 	27	28	29 7:30 am PK Fellowship at FBC 8:00 am PK Study at FBC