



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
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PONTIAC, IL 61764

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Growing the Family of God

Telling the Story

Serving the Community

Nurturing Believers



The dawn of a new year encourages a time of reflection on the past and envisioning for the future. At the annual church business meeting we ask officers and board members to report on the work they have done in their areas of responsibilities; adopt a budget and elect officers for the coming terms.

As we listen to the various reports we experience a sense of gratitude for what has been accomplished and appreciation to the persons who have devoted their time to the mission and ministry of our church. The church is more than a volunteer organization. At its core the church is the body of Christ and as such the labors we give are indicative of our personal commitment.

A few months ago I was given a copy of a book titled, For a New Generation. The author, Lee Kircher, is the pastor of Amplify Church just outside of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Kircher was founding pastor of the church, but left to pursue a career in business. Time passed and the church was experiencing serious decline. Kircher was called to return to the pastoral role with the mandate to revitalize the church. For a New Generation is the story of how that revitalization occurred.

The key learning in his experience of revitalizing the church is: a new generation church is a church with attendees whose average age is at least as young as the average of the community in which the church exists. Kircher writes that any church can become a new generation church by reaching those persons in the community who are younger than the average age of the community in which the church exists. In Livingston County the average age of our population is 41.2 years. If we follow Kircher's assessment we need to be reaching a demographic in our community of persons under 41 years of age.

The church officers and board members read, For a New Generation, discussed the book at length, and spent an overnight retreat focusing on the salient points that the author put forth as a means of revitalizing a church. This is not an overnight process. Kircher describes a three-year process, but it must be clearly understood that that template cannot simply be cut and pasted over any church at any time with guaranteed results.

Kircher discovered five practical strategies that made a positive impact on the revitalization of Amplify Church:

1. Adopt a New Mindset
2. Identify the Essentials
3. Reduce the Distractions

From the Pastor... (cont)

4. Elevate Your Standards
5. Build a Mentoring Culture

Moving forward I want to share with you that I believe we have taken important steps toward realizing some of these strategies. For example, Miracle Sunday is a powerful example of adopting a new mindset. The very fact that you were willing to undertake such a huge project indicates an openness to realizing what God can do. Change is hard for all of us and the older we grow that more difficult it is to embrace new ways of doing things. When we wanted to bring Jay Hurd on board as associate pastor we did not have the financial resources to do so. However, a number of people were willing to underwrite that ministry until it could be self-sustaining. It is now self-sustaining and we are beginning to see the results of that ministry. A small change such as the time of worship caused some ripples on the water, but that change is now part of our corporate life and indicates that we can change if we choose to do so.

Self-assessment is an important ongoing element in any effort of revitalization. It is not enough to simply work the plan and then say, "we did it" and walk off. There is much, much to accomplish. The work is unending.

We affirm as absolutely essential the message of Jesus Christ. This is the bedrock teaching on which we build the community of faith. We seek to reduce distractions. That means that we eliminate anything that keeps us from focusing on the ministry of Christ to which we have been called. It may mean less time spent making announcements and a newsletter which is provided via email, rather than traditional mail. Smaller boards and fewer committees allow persons to share time with family while maintaining a committed role in ministry.

As the church seeks to renew itself we are always striving for excellence. This means we pay attention to the quality of our teaching, music, audio and video presentations. Our worship is meant to honor God. That means that we strive for excellence in everything we do.

It is important that we build a mentoring culture. It is asking for failure to assume that there will always be a pool of capable leaders without mentoring people to be leaders. The best training I had for ministry in the local church came from being mentored by a wonderful, caring pastor. Life-long Christian leaders need to take new Christians under their wing and share their experiences and vision with the next generation. Sunday Morning Connections leaders need to be mindful of their role in mentoring the next generation to be leaders and teachers. Small group leaders can discern those in their sphere who may demonstrate leadership capabilities. Having discerned those with leadership gifts, then open the door to opportunities for them to exercise their gifts.

I assure you that God has vision and purpose for our church. We are intentional in our pursuit of Growing the Family of God. We will live into the future that God has planned for us.

Jim

Thank You

Words can't express how thankful we are for our church family for the prayers, cards, memorials, food, and other acts of kindness shown to us during Mark's hospitalization and passing. We will be forever grateful for the support we received during this difficult time. Thank you to Jim for the many hours spent with us at the hospital and the wonderful funeral service. And thanks to all who helped with the lunch.

The Family of Mark Verdun

Dear Church Family,

Thank you so much for remembering Earl with the lovely Christmas gift. We are very grateful for your thoughtfulness.

Marilyn and Earl Coffey

We would like to thank our entire church family for the many cards, warm wishes and the generous Christmas gift you shared with us during this Christmas season. We are deeply touched by your thoughtfulness. We love you all very much and feel blessed to be a part of this loving church family.

Jim and Janet Wolfe

Hello Family,

Lisa, Micah, Aiden and I would like to thank you for your generous love gift. The love you have shown and continue to show our family is a true blessing! Wishing you all a very Happy New Year. I am excited to see what God's plan for us as this New Year begins.

Love
Jay

ABK Snacks Needed

Want to support our children's ministries but don't have a lot of time to donate? Why not volunteer to provide a week of snacks for our ABK program!? A sign up sheet is available in the Narthex - just sign up for a week that is convenient for you! Please contact Barb Tholen if you have any questions.

Newsletter Deadline

All articles for inclusion the February edition of our church newsletter must be submitted to the church office no later than Friday, January 18th. 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.



**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.



**1st ANNUAL PONTIAC AREA
INTERFAITH
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR
PRAYER BREAKFAST**

8:00 a.m. January 21, 2019
St. Mary's Catholic Church
119 E. Howard Street, Pontiac, IL

Special Speaker: Coach Durrell Robinson
Pontiac Township High School

Sponsored by
Pontiac Area Ministerial Association
Tickets: \$10.00 Donation

Did You Notice?

Last month our LITTLE FREE LIBRARY was installed at the north entrance of the church parking lot. My friend, Cindy, and I bought the library and our husbands made the support post and set it up for us. The original books are from our bookshelves. It is free to anyone who wishes to stop and pick out a book. Take a book to read and either return it or donate a book you have already read. We have dozens of books to rotate when these are read or new books are needed. They are for all ages; adult and children. There is a guest book for you to leave a note or share about a book. We invite all of you to enjoy reading from our LFL. The mission of Little Free Libraries is to inspire reading, build community, and spark creativity by fostering neighborhood book exchanges around the world. So come and enjoy a new book and share a book with the neighborhood! Share this information with your friends. Happy reading!

Karen Meister

A Special Thank You

Harlin Dean and Dan Gray volunteer to drive our church van every Wednesday evening to transport kids for our ABY and ABK programs.

Each week they bring 5 - 8 kids who don't attend church anywhere else. We are very grateful for the time and effort they give each week to ensure that these children are able to be involved in a church ministry and hear the word.

Offering Envelopes

2019 offering envelopes are now available in the Narthex. Please stop by and pick yours up on Sunday morning. If you need a set of envelopes and there isn't one out there for you, please contact Sue Schell or Debbie Verdun and let them know.

TURNING YOUR STRUGGLES INTO STRENGTHS

How do you turn your struggles into strengths?

Beloved Bible teacher Sheila Walsh teaches women how the daily spiritual practices of confession, meditation on God's Word, and prayer result in fresh freedom in Christ.

Janet Wolfe will be leading a new small group for women based on Sheila Walsh's best seller; *In the Middle of the Mess*

In *In the Middle of the Mess*, Walsh reveals the hardened defenses that kept her from allowing God into her deepest hurts and shares how entering into a safe place with God and practicing this daily connection with him have saved her from the devil's prowling attacks. Though we will never be completely "fixed" on earth, we are continually held by Jesus, whatever our circumstances.

This is a Six Week Study that will meet weekly on Sundays 6:00pm-7:00pm; beginning January 20, 2019 and ending February 24, 2019. Participants will need a study guide. The book is not required reading; however it is a profound read and helpful to the overall study. Please contact Janet Wolfe for more details.

You are the Branches



Name: Janice Staley

Favorite toy as a child? Paper dolls. We lived on a farm - no shopping like people do today.

Favorite ice cream? Butter pecan

Do you have a nickname? Jan

First "paying" job? Babysitting

What makes you happy? Family gatherings and great grandkids

Favorite pet? A little terrier named Freddie

Who would you like to talk to in the Bible? Esther

Favorite meal? Country fried chicken and biscuits

In school what was your favorite class? Home Ec. I've always loved to cook.

Favorite grandparent memory? Standing on a stool, "helping" my grandmother cook. We would sing together and she taught me Bible verses. Grandpa would let me ride on the farm tractor a few rounds after I took him lunch and fresh water while he was working in the fields.



January



- 1 Rosa Wing
- 2 Chayla Mitchey
- 3 Evelyn Durham
- 4 Gerald Shepherd
- 6 Alivia Waschle
- 8 Kenny and Tara Crawford
- 8 Lynette Senter
- 9 Rich Halford
- 13 Darrell Shoop
- 13 Jennifer Borders
- 14 Gwen Battice
- 15 Jardin James
- 15 Barbara Tholen
- 17 James and Joanne Perkins
- 20 Jim Hodges
- 20 Janet Wolfe
- 21 Jeana Boase
- 21 Steve Carroll
- 23 Sharon Colclasure
- 23 Ron Watson
- 24 Brad Harder
- 24 Kelly Ingram
- 24 Steve McBride
- 25 Steven C. McBride
- 25 Austin Pohanka
- 25 Charles Watson
- 25 Rebecca Bohm
- 27 Edward Bonnivier
- 28 Kathy Zehr
- 29 Christopher Tull



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 New Year's Day Church Office Closed	2 9:00 am ROMEO Club 9:00 am Ruth Circle 1:00 pm Esther Circle 5:30 pm ABY 6:00 pm ABK	3	4	5 7:30 am PK Fellowship at FBC 8:00 am PK Study at FBC
6 9:00 am SMC 10:00 am Worship	7 7:00 pm Revelation Small Group	8	9 9:00 am ROMEO Club 5:30 pm ABY 6:00 pm ABK	10 6:30 pm Principles Sm. Group	11	12 7:30 am PK Fellowship at FBC 8:00 am PK Study at FBC
13 9:00 am SMC 10:00 am Worship	14 7:00 pm Revelation Small Group	15	16 9:00 am ROMEO Club 10:30 am Grief Support Group 5:30 pm ABY 6:00 pm ABK	17 6:30 pm Principles Sm. Group	18 Newsletter Deadline	19 7:30 am PK Fellowship at FBC 8:00 am PK Study at FBC
20 9:00 am SMC 10:00 am Worship 6:00 pm Struggles to Strength Sm. Group	21 7:00 pm Revelation Small Group	22	23 9:00 am ROMEO Club 5:30 pm ABY 6:00 pm ABK	24 6:30 pm Principles Sm. Group	25	26 7:30 am PK Fellowship at FBC 8:00 am PK Study at FBC
27 9:00 am SMC 10:00 am Worship 6:00 pm Struggles to Strength Sm. Group	28 7:00 pm Revelation Small Group	29	30 9:00 am ROMEO Club 5:30 pm ABY 6:00 pm ABK	31 6:30 pm Principles Sm. Group		