



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
515 N. LADD STREET
PONTIAC, IL 61764

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Growing the Family of God

Telling the Story

Serving the Community

Nurturing Believers

Coffee with Jim



On October 17, 2019 the Pew Research Center published the results of their most recent religious survey. The results of this survey require our attention.

- 65% of American adults describe themselves as Christians when asked about their religion, down 12 percentage points over the past decade.
- The religiously unaffiliated share of the population, consisting of people who describe their religious identity as atheist, agnostic or “nothing in particular,” now stands at @6%, up from 17% in 2009.
- The percent of people identifying as Christian in the U.S. has declined over the last decade.
- 65% of adults describe themselves as Christian, down from 77% in 2009
- 43% of adults identify as Protestant, down from 51% in 2009
- 20% of adults identify as Catholic, down from 23% in 2009
- 26% identify as atheist, agnostic or “nones”, up from 17% in 2009
- Church Attendance among Christians has remained stable
- 62% of those identifying as Christian attend services as least once or twice per month.
- Due to the decline in Christianity’s share of the population, a lower percent of the total U.S. population attends church regularly.
- Today, 17% of Americans say they never attend religious services, compared to 11% in 2009.

This national trend away from religion and participation in worship effects all aspects of religious life in the United States and we are no exception. Over the last decade our worship attendance has decreased by 34.5% and Sunday school (Sunday Morning Connection) attendance by 52.3%.

That, if you will, is the bad news. If that were all we had to report it would indeed be a bleak picture. However, numbers, charts, and surveys do not necessarily represent the life of a congregation.

In Isaiah 43:19 the Lord declares: I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

From the Pastor (cont.)

Let me suggest that the negative statistics indicate the wilderness journey of the church as she searches to find her way in an inhospitable and often hostile environment.

As we move through this wilderness some theological realities need to be stated. It is essential that we affirm that the church is the body of Christ (Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:12, 27). The church is not the building in which we gather to worship and study. We are responsible to be good stewards of the building and property entrusted to us.

The ministries of the church are informed and empowered by the Spirit of God. It requires discernment on the part of each member of the community to listen for the voice of God and accept the call to service that God places on our heart. We are not all called to the same ministry, but each act of service is equally vital to the health of Christ's body. This truth is clearly spelled out in I Corinthians 12:4-7:

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

In the body of Christ each gift is equally valued. We all have a service to perform in building up the body of Christ.

The statistics are intimidating and somewhat discouraging. However, these are not the only numbers we need to look at. For example:

All 'Bout Kids the averages 12 young people per week with 15 registered. Many of these young people are from outside the church community. We provide transportation for them to attend this ministry.

American Baptist Youth is averaging 15 youth.

404 children were given candy at the drive-in trick or treat.

The food pantry served 744 families representing 2,146 individuals through December 6, 2019.

The prayer ministry of the food pantry has reached more than 100 families and individuals over the last two years.

Meal program at Livingston County Housing Authority.

Small Groups.

Bible Study Fellowship.

Prayer Shawls.

Cursambri.

Jubilee Christmas

Homeless bags have been distributed through the Pontiac Township Supervisor's Office; blan-

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.

An Important Reminder...



If you have been to see a medical professional recently you no doubt were asked to sign a form indicating that you received information regarding HIPAA regulations. What you may not realize is that HIPAA regulations prohibit hospitals and other agencies from sharing your personal information with anyone **including your pastor.**

This means if you want us to know about your hospitalization you or a family member must contact the church office directly, or you must specifically ask the hospital chaplain to contact Pastor Jim and let him know that you have been hospitalized. This is the **only** way you can be sure that we will know you have been admitted to the hospital.



Office Notes



In honor of the New Year's holiday, the church office will be closed on December 31st and will be closed Jan. 1st and 2nd.

We wish our entire church family a happy and healthy New Year!

Newsletter Deadline

All articles for inclusion the February edition of our church newsletter must be submitted to the church office no later than Monday, January 17th. 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 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

We'd like to thank all of those who helped with the family feast on Sunday, December 1st. Two of the "regular" kitchen workers, Harlin and Diana, were both gone but many others stepped up to ensure that everything got done and went smoothly. From setting up and taking down all the tables to cleaning up afterwards, the group worked together and did a great job. We don't want to overlook anybody, so we won't try to name everyone but thank you to all. The meal was fantastic and everyone enjoyed themselves.

Gary and Peggie Boldt

It means so much to us to be remembered at Christmas time by the church family. We are very grateful for the gift Earl received.

Earl and Marilyn Coffey

Have you noticed our revitalized news and information center in the educational wing!?

It's a great centralized location for information on all the news and happenings here at FBC!

Happy New Year ♡ Happy New Year ♡ Happy New Year

kets, handwipes, soap, toothbrushes/toothpaste, Kleenex, socks, snacks, e.g.-cereal, jello, cups, forks, spoons. Our Daily Bread. Church Information.

Total funds dedicated to missions (local, regional, national) \$74,892.8 (22% of all giving rec'd).

Moving forward we need to take some things seriously. I've already touched on the first one and this is the constant need to remember that church is about GOD-not us. Our language and treatment of one another needs to be measured by God's yardstick which is quite simply love God with our whole heart and our neighbors as ourselves. Think of it this way. If you were a first-time visitor would the way, we treat each other cause you to want to return? The way we treat each other matters. The way we react and respond to one another matters.

We need to be serious about prayer. We need to be serious about participation in worship, Sunday morning connections, and small groups. We need to invite and make welcome.

I want to assure you that the state of the church is good. We are healthy church. Being healthy in no way means that we have arrived at a place God wants us to be. We have more ministry to complete. God has vision and purpose for this community of faith going forward.

Jim

Second Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast

The Pontiac Area Ministerial Association announces the Second Annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day breakfast. This ecumenical event is open to the public and will be held at St. Mary's Catholic Church Parish Hall on Howard Street in Pontiac, on Monday, January 20th, 2020 at 8:00 am. Tickets are just \$8.00 and can be purchased by contacting First United Methodist Church (815-842-1157) or any PAMA congregation.

Our keynote speaker will be Mr. Carl Cannon. Mr. Cannon is a United States Army veteran who has devoted his post-service career to working with youth, especially in the Peoria area. In 2006 he founded "Elite" a program focused on helping students graduate from high school and make their way into the world.

For more information please contact Tom Goodell, First United Methodist Church (tomsherrygoodell@gmail.com).



- 1 Rosa Wing
- 2 Chayla Mitchey
- 3 Evelyn Durham
- 4 Gerald Shepherd
- 6 Alivia Waschle
- 8 Kenny and Tara Crawford
- 8 Lynette Senter
- 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 Church Office Closed	3	4 7:30 am PK Fellowship at FBC 8:00 am PK Study at FBC
5 9:00 am SMC 10:00 am Worship	6 7:00 pm Ruth & Esther Sm. Gr.	7	8 9:00 am ROMEO Club 5:30 - 6:30 pm WYRED 6:00 pm ABK 6:30 pm Adult Choir	9	10	11 7:30 am PK Fellowship at FBC 8:00 am PK Study at FBC
12 9:00 am SMC 10:00 am Worship	13 1:00 pm Single Women of Faith 7:00 pm Ruth & Esther Sm. Gr.	14 6:00 pm Parents Grief Supp. Group	15 9:00 am ROMEO Club 10:30 am Grief Support Group 5:30 - 6:30 pm WYRED 6:00 pm ABK 6:30 pm Adult Choir	16	17 Newsletter Deadline	18 7:30 am PK Fellowship at FBC 8:00 am PK Study at FBC
19 9:00 am SMC 10:00 am Worship	20 MLK Day 8:00 am PAMA MLK Day breakfast 7:00 pm Ruth & Esther Sm. Gr.	21	22 9:00 am ROMEO Club 5:30 - 6:30 pm WYRED 6:00 pm ABK 6:30 pm Adult Choir	23	24	25 7:30 am PK Fellowship at FBC 8:00 am PK Study at FBC
26 9:00 am SMC 10:00 am Worship	27 1:00 pm Single Women of Faith 7:00 pm Ruth & Esther Sm. Gr.	28	29 9:00 am ROMEO Club 5:30 - 6:30 pm WYRED 6:00 pm ABK 6:30 pm Adult Choir	30	31	