

# Growing the Family of God

Telling the Story

Serving the Community

Nurturing Believers

*Coffee with Jim*



I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?  
Isaiah 43:19a

One of the key words in this verse is the word perceive. To perceive is to become aware or conscious of something; to come to realize or understand. A synonym is discern. As we move into a new year, I want to challenge all of us to perceive the ways in which God is working in our individual circumstances and in the corporate life of our church.

The original oracle found in Isaiah was written as an allusion to the exodus from Egypt, yet with the promise that the new exodus from Babylon will be without the difficulties that afflicted the Israelites during their previous journey. The prophet is providing hope to people held in captivity that there is promised relief from their bondage.

We are not held in physical bondage, but we are often bound by social, economic, and political circumstances, often beyond our control, that stymie our spiritual journey. The new thing that God is about is creatively freeing us from bondage to sin and failure and demonstrating forgiveness and love. The remainder of verse 19 declares: I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. We are challenged to discern the ways of God in the wildernesses of our own lives and circumstances.

Although God continues to castigate the children of Israel for their failures, God also promises to reverse the condemnation that God has declared and offer salvation. God promises in verse 25 to blot out their transgressions and forgive their sins.

We need to perceive in our individual lives and the life of this community of faith the directions in which God is leading us. Each year folks make resolutions and promises to modify their behaviors. I would like to suggest that we make a resolution to spend some quiet time listening for the gentle whisper of God's voice leading us along paths that God has already prepared for us. It is less that God is doing a "new" thing, and more that we fail to perceive God's direction and purpose in our lives. God wants to forgive and restore broken lives. Listen. God has something to say to you. Listen. God has direction and purpose for First Baptist Church.

Can we perceive the voice of God?

*Jim*

## Small Group Planning Survey

In an effort to ensure as many people as possible are able to participate in small group Bible studies, we're asking for your help! We need you to tell us what days and times are the best fit for your schedule. Maybe Mondays at 1:00 pm work best with your work schedule. Perhaps a study on Thursday evenings is best for working around your children's schedules. Whatever time and day works for you, stop by the informational center in the Narthex and indicate your preferences on the sign-up sheet.

While we might not be able to accommodate everyone's requests, this information will allow small group leaders to schedule their meetings at times that are convenient for a larger number of people.

## Office Notes



Are you starting a new small group meeting or has your small group ended? Planning an outing? Restarting a ministry? Don't forget to include to notify the office of your plans so that we may add your event to our calendar and help you spread the word! Our on-line Google calendar makes it easy to add events to personal calendars, track schedule changes, and set reminders, but we can't add it if we don't know about it!

You may submit your items via e-mail to: [rhonda@fbcpontiac.org](mailto:rhonda@fbcpontiac.org) or by calling the church office at 815.842.4321. Let's work together to ensure we all have the most accurate and up to date scheduling available!

## Covid-19 Response

As we work our way through the ongoing pandemic with a rising number of local cases, we continue to encourage you to wear a mask during worship, particularly if you are unvaccinated. Additionally, we've made hand sanitizing stations available just outside both entry doors to the sanctuary, in the Sunday School hallway, and in the gym.

Remember, if you feel ill, have any symptoms of Covid-19, or have been exposed to the virus, please worship with us via YouTube and rejoin us in person when you are recovered or have completed appropriate quarantine. Let's keep everyone safe and healthy!

## Noteworthy Information



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.

### Prayer Chain Reminder

**ALL** requests for the prayer chain must be made to the following number:

**815.419.4454**

- ⇒ Please DO NOT call, email, or text the church office or staff members with prayer chain requests. This phone number is the ONLY avenue to access the prayer chain.
- ⇒ Prayer chain calls will be made only between the hours of 9:00 am and 8:00 pm.
- ⇒ To the extent possible prayer chain calls will be made ONLY once per day.
- ⇒ “Unnamed” prayer requests will not be made.

*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.*






**Birthdays & Anniversaries**

- 1 Rosa Wing
- 2 Chayla Mitchey
- 3 Evelyn Durham
- 4 Gerald Shepherd
- 6 Alivia Waschle
- 8 Kenny and Tara Crawford 
- 8 Lynette Senter
- 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



# Jan

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
<b>2</b> 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>9</b> 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 6:00 pm Healing Hearts
<b>16</b> 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship	<b>17</b> MLK Day 	<b>18</b> 7:00 pm Board of Ministries
<b>23</b> 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>30</b> 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship	<b>31</b>	

# January



Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

**1** New Year's Day



**5**

9:00 am ROMEO Club  
10:30 am Prayer Meeting  
1:00 pm Esther Circle  
7:00 pm Prayer Meeting

**6** Epiphany



**7**

**8**

**12**

9:00 am ROMEO Club  
10:30 am Prayer Meeting  
7:00 pm Prayer Meeting

**13**

**14**

**15**

**19**

9:00 am ROMEO Club  
10:30 am Prayer Meeting  
7:00 pm Prayer Meeting

**20**

**21** Newsletter Deadline

**22**

**26**

9:00 am ROMEO Club  
10:30 am Prayer Meeting  
7:00 pm Prayer Meeting

**27**

**28**

**29**



## Thank You



We would like to take this opportunity to thank our entire church family for the many warm wishes, cards, and the generous Christmas Love Gift you shared with us during the Christmas season. We are incredibly grateful for your thoughtfulness and feel blessed to be part of this church family.

Jim and Janet Wolfe

Dear Church Family,

I sincerely appreciate the calls, cards, and prayers since my new experiences.

Thank you everyone,

Jim Perkins

Dear Family,

Hard to believe another year has passed already. I wanted to take a moment and thank you for your love gift this Christmas. Lisa and I appreciate all the love you show to us and our family. I pray that you had a blessed Christmas but I also pray that God will continue to show his plan for you in 2022.

Love

Pastor Jay

## 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 WEEK, WCIA, and posted to our Facebook page.

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

## 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 21st. 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.

## Visit Us on the Web!

*[fbcpontiac.org](http://fbcpontiac.org)*



## On-Line Giving



With on-line giving, it's easier than ever to tithe or make donations to special fundraising campaigns.

To make an on-line donation, simply visit our website [www.fbcpontiac.org](http://www.fbcpontiac.org) and follow the donation link near the top of the page. Our on-line giving is powered through PayPal and allows you to use an existing PayPal account or any debit or credit card you'd like. You'll have the opportunity to leave specific notes about your donation and you'll receive a donation receipt in your e-mail!



## Offering Envelopes

2022 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.





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