



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
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september

Growing the Family of God

Telling the Story

Serving the Community

Nurturing Believers

The conference was called Rhythms of the Spirit. It was held at the Green Lake Conference Center in Green Lake Wisconsin. For three days participants sang, prayed, read scripture, meditated, joined a spiritual pilgrimage, and walked a prayer labyrinth. There were extended periods of silence which encouraged pilgrims to be still in the presence of God.



Ariel view of Green Lake Conference Center

On the last evening of the event I found a small flat rock and wrote a single word on it. It was the word “crap.” In that word I intended to sum up all the self-loathing, disappointment, and frustration that was the existential baggage I had chosen to carry. I carried my little rock to the edge of the lake and tossed it as far as I could. The rock sailed into the air and struck the water with barely a ripple. For a moment I felt freed of the burdens of depression and disappointment that seemed part and parcel of a troubled soul. It sank to the bottom of the lake and was therefore completely gone. So, I thought.

However, spiritual highs do not always survive in the valleys of life. The most difficult thing for all of us to deal with is the baggage that we accept from other people and choose to carry. It may not seem like a choice; but it is. The challenge to becoming emotionally healthy is to refocus our thoughts away from the negative garbage that encumbers our spirit.

John Locke, a noted English philosopher, posited in “An Essay Concerning Human Understanding” that the newborn human brain is a ‘tabula rasa’ – a blank slate. On it will be written the totality of our experiences, both good and bad. The things that are said to us, the praise along with the criticisms, the insults, the doubts, fears, and failures. We look to those around us for affirmation, especially as children. We need guidance. We need to know we’re doing things correctly; we need feedback on our behavior in unfamiliar

From the Pastor (cont.)

situations. This trend continues through adulthood and we tend to base our value on the perceived evaluations of other people. A casual word, an unanswered text, an unintended glance are all occasions for negative self-analysis. Not being invited to a party or being the last one picked for a team can be a brutal blow in terms of how we value ourselves.

As children we heard the saying “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me.” As adults we acknowledge the fallacy of that sentiment. In time broken bones heal but broken hearts and spirits aren’t as easily mended. The insults and even well-meaning criticisms that find their marks when we are children, especially those by caregivers and siblings, result in wounds that too often are picked and reopened, like a scab, causing a lifetime of frustration and pain.

I want to insist that each one of us has intrinsic worth because we are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). Since we are created in the image of God, it is arguable that we have worth and dignity in the eyes and heart of God. We are worthy of love and need to see ourselves as having value in God’s creation. In the vernacular, “God don’t make junk.” Cliché but true.

Sadly, Christian theology has not always been helpful in building self-esteem. Christian theology that focuses on the sinful nature of human beings and uses phrases such as the “total depravity of man” may not be terribly helpful in building up one’s sense of worth.

However, I would argue that the image of God opens the path for us to consider seriously the fact that God loves us enough to provide a way out of the sin and depravity that surrounds us and infiltrates our soul. “For God so loved the world...” (John 3:16) means God loves you. God loves me. That is worth everything to us. It matters not that I am the last one picked for the team or that I am not invited to that party. 1 John 3:1 says it well, “See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are.” Hence, we are persons of worth and value.

God created us in God’s image and entrusted us to be stewards of the created order. God’s love and trust should be enough to allow us to see ourselves as worthwhile individuals. But, we are human and we live in a broken and shattered world that proclaims loudly and compellingly that value is found in the superficialities of life. What matters is not who we are but what we have and how we look. Tossing a rock in the lake may feel good for a while, but self-loathing is a difficult beast to tame.

Reprogramming a lifetime of negative perceptions is not an easy task. We can easily give intellectual assent to the proposition that our self-worth does not rely on the assessments of others. However, intellectual assent does not satisfy the deep longing each of us has for love and acceptance.

Ephesians 4:29 has a word of admonition regarding how we speak to one another. “Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear.” 4:31 provides practical advice for dealing with one another in attitude that builds up rather than destroys. “be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in

Thank You

Dear Friends at First Baptist,

Thank you for all the wonderful items you collected for Mosaic. The people we support have very little spending money, but now they will not have to spend it on necessities because you all are so generous.

Thank you!
Mosaic in Pontiac & Dwight

Thank you to the church family for all the cards, calls, prayers, love and support during Danny’s illness and since his passing. Thanks to Harlin, Janice, and helpers for the funeral lunch. Special thank to Jim for the wonderful funeral service.

We are blessed,
The Family of Danny Grider

Back Into the Swing of Things

Grief Support Group

The Grief Support Group will begin meeting again on Wednesday, September 19th at 10:30 am and will meet the third Wednesday of each month.

Their fall session will begin with the study of a new book, “Hearing Jesus Speak into Your Sorrow”, by Nancy Guthrie.

In times of deep sorrow and disappointment, everything we believe can be called into question. Nancy Guthrie gently invites readers to

lean in along with her to hear Jesus speak understanding and insight into the lingering questions we all have about the hurts of life.

The grief support group is led by Mary Frobish and there are books available for those who wish to join the group.

Unbinding the Gospel

Small Group led by Ken Ferguson and Harlin Dean. Meets every Wednesday night at

6:00 pm at the church starting September 12th.

Study on Revelation

Virginia Asper’s Monday night Bible study will begin again on Monday, September 10th at 7:00 pm at the church.

30 Principles to Live By

This small group led by Barb Tholen will meet on Thursdays at 6:30 pm at the church beginning September 6th.

Men’s Night Out

The next Men’s Night Out is scheduled for 6:00 pm on Thursday, September 20th.

The location is to be determined but food, fellowship, and laughter is guaranteed! All men are invited to join in the fun!

ABY and ABK Changes!

Our ABY and ABK programs will be moving from Sunday to Wednesday nights starting Wednesday, September 19th!

ABK - for kids in grades K-5 will meet from 6 - 7:00 pm. Transportation is available.

ABY - for kids in 6th - 12th grades will meet from 5:30 - 6:30 pm.

Circle News

Dear Church Family,

Since September 23rd is American Baptist Women's Sunday, we thought this would be a good time to update you on what the Ruth and Esther Circles do. The Ruth Circle meets the first Wednesday of each month at 9:00 am and the Esther Circle meets at 1:00 pm the first Wednesday. We welcome anyone who would like to come and join us or check us out.

On September 23rd there will be a regular service with Pastor Jim bringing us a message. As we always do, there will be an envelope with the bulletin if you would like to help us with our projects.

We are discontinuing the special food pantry items each month so that we can work more in helping the homeless and the needy. A new project we are starting is taking baked goods to nursing homes. Of course, we will continue collecting items for the Peoria Friendship House. We will also continue to bag up items for the homeless as needed and as the seasons change. We are also open to any other needs we can help with. Six of our ladies volunteer in our church food pantry, one person volunteers for the Salvation Army, one person volunteers at the hospital, and two serve on the church board.

Last year we donated to the Mississippi Mission Trip, Jubilee Christmas, One Great Hour of Sharing, Home Sweet Home Ministries, American Bible Society, TeenServe, Peoria Friendship House, and the Battleson family.

We rolled 98 bandages for the White Cross; purchased an external defibrillator for our church; collected non-food items for the food pantry; adopted shut-ins; bagged up food and hygiene items for the homeless people in Pontiac (14 bags for men, women, and children) and we helped a homeless lady and her son by donating items and food to help her furnish her apartment and get started on her own.

I am not bragging about what we have done, because it is God who is leading us and telling us what He wants us to do. We have fun doing our projects and have gotten to know each other well and know when someone needs extra prayer. There is a lot of laughter as we work. We also could not have done most all of this without our wonderful church family. You have been there for us whenever we have asked. The bake sale for the external defibrillator would not have been success if it hadn't been for you and Harlin. We had to work pretty hard painting his laundry room to get his donation. The ROMEO fellas helped us get items to the homeless lady's apartment. Lori Pemberton, the Township Supervisor, told me about the lady and her son on a Monday morning and on Wednesday morning we drove up to her new apartment with cars and trucks loaded for her. So, you see, it is all of us working together and that is what a church family does. We love you all and thank you with all our hearts.

In Christ,

Brenda Dodd, Chairman
Ruth Circle

Esther Circle Meeting

Please note that the September Esther Circle meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 5th at Edinger's Filling Station at 1:00 pm.

Christ has forgiven you." What a different place our own hearts would be if we spoke to ourselves as kindly as we're instructed to speak to and of others. What different places our churches would be if we took these words to heart and lived them rather than just reading them.

Reprogramming the way we see ourselves will have a profound effect on the way we see and treat other people. Being kind to ourselves will prepare us to treat other people with kindness. Forgiving ourselves for the mistakes inherent in all human beings will train us to practice forgiveness for others. Treating ourselves with tenderness will enable us to treat others with compassion.

To purge the hurtful thoughts, we need to replace them with healthy, positive virtues. Here's a suggestion from the letter to the Philippians: "whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. (4:8, italics added).

Throwing a rock in a lake is a metaphor for throwing away the garbage that impacts our lives. Perhaps writing a note on paper and burning the paper will accomplish the same thing for you. Remember that the symbol is just that, a symbol. The metamorphosis from being a beaten, broken person to one who understands him or herself to be of great worth takes time and work. It requires that old thought patterns be challenged and replaced with new concepts. You are the beloved child of God. God would rather die than live without you. That is worth everything.

Jim

Outdoor Worship!

It's time once again for our annual outdoor worship service. We invite everyone to join us on:

**Sunday, September 16th
at 10:00 am**

for this very special time of praise and worship followed by plenty of fun and games and an old fashioned church family picnic! Dress comfortably, bring your lawn chair, invite a friend, and come celebrate the mission and ministry of our church!

Missionary Visit!

On Sunday, September 9th, we're excited to welcome American Baptist Missionary, Ruth Mooney, as she joins us during Sunday Morning Connections and worship. Ruth Mooney lives in Costa Rica, where she serves on the faculty of the Latin American Biblical University (UBL), a seminary founded in 1923 that prepares pastors and leaders to serve in churches throughout Latin America.



Prayer Chain Number:
815.419.4454



September



- 8 Samantha Patterson
- 10 Les Amdor
- 10 Debbie Verdun ♥
- 12 Robert and Donna Brackney
- 13 Griffin Nyi
- 13 James Perkins
- 16 Reva Johnson
- 20 Heather Battice
- 20 Leah Crawford ♥
- 20 Ed and Diana Rich ♥
- 21 Maria Poshard
- 22 Inge Watson Telford
- 26 James Bohm ♥
- 26 Roger and Karen Christianson
- 26 Robert and Rosa Wing ♥
- 29 Brad and Marcia Harder ♥
- 30 Wayne Verdun

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 7:30 am PK Fellowship at FBC 8:00 am PK Study at FBC
2 9:00 am SMC 10:00 am Worship	3 Labor Day Church Office Closed	4	5 9:00 am ROMEO Club 9:00 am Ruth Circle 1:00 pm Esther Circle	6 6:30 pm Principles Sm. Group	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 7:00 pm Revelation Sm. Group	11	12 9:00 am ROMEO Club 6:00 pm Unbinding the Gospel	13 6:00 pm Diaconate Council 7:00 pm Board of Ministries 6:30 pm Principles Sm. Group	14	15 7:30 am PK Fellowship at FBC 8:00 am PK Study at FBC
16 9:00 am SMC 10:00 am Outdoor Worship	17 7:00 pm Revelation Sm. Group	18	19 Newsletter Deadline 9:00 am ROMEO Club 10:30 am Grief Support Group 5:30 pm ABY 6:00 pm ABK 6:00 pm Unbinding the Gospel	20 6:00 pm Men's Night Out 6:30 pm Principles Sm. Group	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 7:00 pm Revelation Sm. Group	25	26 9:00 am ROMEO Club 5:30 pm ABY 6:00 pm ABK 6:00 pm Unbinding the Gospel	27 6:30 pm Principles Sm. Group	28	29 7:30 am PK Fellowship at FBC 8:00 am PK Study at FBC
30 9:00 am SMC 10:00 am Worship						

