



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
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# Growing the Family of God

Telling the Story

Serving the Community

Nurturing Believers

*Coffee with Jim*



In 1949 the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical “South Pacific” opened on Broadway. The show’s plot centers on an American nurse stationed on a South Pacific island during World War II, who falls in love with a middle-aged expatriate French plantation owner but struggles to accept his mixed-race children. A secondary romance, between a U.S. lieutenant and a young Tonkinese woman, explores his fears of the social consequences should he marry his Asian sweetheart. The issue of racial prejudice is candidly explored throughout the musical, most controversially in the lieutenant's song, "You've Got to Be Carefully Taught". The song is preceded by a line saying racism is "not born in you! It happens after you're born..."

You've got to be taught to hate and fear,  
You've got to be taught from year to year,  
It's got to be drummed in your dear little ear  
You've got to be carefully taught;  
You've got to be taught to be afraid of people whose  
eyes are oddly made,  
And people whose skin is a different shade;  
You've got to be carefully taught,  
You've got to be taught before it's too late, before  
you are six, or seven, or eight,  
To hate all the people your relatives, hate  
You've got to be carefully taught  
You've got to be carefully taught

The song describes a curriculum for the promulgation of hate and racial intolerance. It was considered controversial when the show opened, but its confrontation of racism and intolerance is as crucially important today as it was 70 years ago. There is today a demoralizing acceptance of the rhetoric of

hate and bigotry. Sadly, there are many who claim to be Christian who support and even articulate the language of racism. We may sing, “Jesus Loves the Little Children” but what we mean is the children who look like us.

I’m sorry to admit that my grandfather was an example of just such a person. He was a charter member of our home church and served as church treasurer. He was never shy however, in voicing his dislike for African Americans. As a child I never heard him refer to African Americans by anything other than the “N” word. By his words he was teaching his grandsons the language of bigotry. As the song says he was teaching us to hate people whose skin was a different shade, or whose eyes were oddly made. Thankfully, that language was not used in our home where our parents modeled for us an attitude of tolerance and love.

Words have power. The adage “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never harm me” is wholly wrong. Words have power. They have the power to soothe or to cause lasting damage to the people around us. The words we use reflect the attitudes we hold in our hearts and their impact can be far greater than a physical blow. A broken bone can heal, but epithets and the attitudes that spawn them can spark generations of pain.

Hatred and racism are morally reprehensible and incompatible with Biblical teaching. That statement shouldn’t have to be made; it should be obvious to any thinking person. There is nothing in scripture that allows those who bear the name of Christ to practice hatred toward another person or race of persons. Unfortunately, the lines have be-

## From the Pastor (cont)

come so blurred, the language so pervasive, and the bigotry so blatant that those of us who bear the name of Christ need to be reminded of the life and teachings of the one we claim to follow.

The beginning of the biblical narrative states that God created women and men in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). There is no indication that one is subservient to the other. Both bear the image of the creator. Further, there is no indication in scripture that God considers one race to be superior to another. There is no "master race" mentioned in the biblical record.

Probably the best-known verse in all of scripture is John 3:16. It is visible at major sporting events and on the back of eighteen wheelers. The message of John 3:16 is that "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life" (italics added). Note that it does not say white Anglo Saxon Protestants or white Americans. It says "the world". It is meant to be inclusive. We need to embrace that truth and our neighbors regardless of race, creed, culture, or whatever else our differences, and live it in our daily lives.

We cannot bear the name of Christ and also bear hatred, disgust, or disdain for another person. "Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also" (1 John 4:20-21). We cannot speak, teach, and live the language and practice of hatred and bigotry and claim the name Christian.

It is time to dramatically change the curriculum that is being taught in our homes, public arena, and yes,

even in the church. Prejudice isn't learned overnight and it will not be unlearned without a conscious effort.

In the words of the Old Testament prophet Isaiah we need to "Sing to the Lord a new song" (42:10). The first step is to change the lyrics. All racial epithets need to be excised from our language. Words and attitudes of bigotry and intolerance need to be expunged.

Parents and grandparents need to pay attention to the language and behavior we model for our children. Don't use racially pejorative language and don't tolerate it when you hear it from others. Correct the negative perceptions regarding other people that your children may hear in the media or from their peers. They must be carefully taught.

Changing the language is the first step to changing the heart. If we excise words of bigotry and intolerance from our vocabulary, if we take the time to examine our own attitudes and prejudices, we will incrementally change the way we see other people. This is true not only in our interactions with persons of different ethnicities but will lead to more humane interactions with everyone we meet. There is a serious dearth of human compassion and common courtesy in our culture. Learning the simple act of speaking respectfully to one another is a positive step toward treating others as we would like to be treated.

*We must change the lyrics.* The folks at the Mother Emmanuel church in Atlanta were having Bible study when they welcomed a stranger who opened fire on them. The Jews in Pittsburgh were worshipping on the Sabbath when they were attacked. Shooters in El Paso and Akron targeted racial minorities as the objects of their hatred. Children returning to school are now forced to practice ac-

## Back Into the Swing of Things!

### ABK

Remember how much fun the kids had at Vacation Bible School? Well, our ABK program (for kids in K - 5th grade) keeps the fun going through the year with songs, crafts, Bible stories, and activities that engage their minds as well as their bodies. ABK will begin meeting again on Wednesday, September 11th at 6:00 pm.

### WYRED

Through Wyred, FBC is dedicated to providing meaningful Bible study and lessons that are relevant to the difficulties and challenges faced by students in 6th - 12th grades. The 2019 - 2020 Wyred season begins meeting on Wednesday, September 11th from 5:30 - 6:30 pm.

## Outdoor Worship!

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

**Sunday, September 8th  
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!

## Esther Circle Notes

The Esther Circle will be meeting at the Filling Station at 1:00 pm on Wed. Sept. 4th. If you'd like to come early, there is a group that meets for lunch before the meeting around noon.

## Men's Night Out

September 26th - Meet at the church at 5:30 pm.  
Itinerary to be determined but food, fun, and fellowship guaranteed!!

## Attention Board and Diaconate Members!

The September meetings have been scheduled for

**Thursday,  
September 19th**

with the Diaconate Council meeting at 6:00 pm and the Board of Ministries meeting at 7:00 pm.

*Please make sure to mark these meetings in your calendars.*

## Newsletter Deadline

All articles for inclusion the October edition of our church newsletter must be submitted to the church office no later than Friday, Sept. 20th. 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

Dear Church Family,

We don't know all the right words to say thank you for everything you all have done for our family. From all the prayers, hugs, and kind uplifting words, you all have been wonderful to us. But we knew it would be this way because we are family, and this is what our church does.

Everyone made the days a little easier to get through because everything went so smoothly that we didn't have to worry about a thing. To all that prepared food for the dinner, set everything up and cleaned up, we thank you for making sure we were taken care of.

And to Pastor...from the bottom of our hearts we appreciate everything you have done for us. I know you don't think you did anything special, but you did. Your visits and praying with Bob were special to him and us.

Love,  
Shirley and the family of Bob Carroll

I would like to thank all of the volunteers that helped with the Meadowview Lunch Program this summer. At the appreciation luncheon they held for us, we heard that the program was successful not just because we fed kids a meal every day (almost 900 meals!), but because they had a positive interaction with an adult and, for some of them, that might be the only time it happens. To put it another way, we helped to feed their souls as well as their tummies. It was a bonus to see so many of them at VBS. Thank you for helping to be the hands and feet of Christ.

Peggie Boldt

Church Family,  
We would like to thank you for your care and

concerns these past few weeks. It means a lot to know that you are praying for us. May God bless all of you.

In Christ,  
Dorley and Brenda

Dear Church Family,  
I am truly grateful for your prayers, words of encouragement, cards, kind deeds, and help these past weeks and months. The visits to see Rich were really appreciated as well. Thanks to those who provided food or just helped in any way the week of the funeral. Pastor Jim and Janet, thanks for your wonderful support, prayers, and the very nice service.

My family commented to me several times about the love and hospitality show to us from all of you. That says a lot!

God bless you all,  
Janet

Thank you to Carol Jones for her many years of dedicated service to the Secret Sister Program. While we are taking hiatus for a little while, we appreciate all your efforts in keeping this wonderful opportunity available for 10 years, so that First Baptist Ladies could pray for and bless each other in so many ways. We hope that at some point in the near future, we will be able to revive this program. It has been a wonderful way to not only bless and pray for one another, but also a way to learn a little more about some of the very special women in our church congregation.

Secret Sisters Participants

## From the Pastor (cont)

tive shooter drills and parents can purchase bullet proof backpacks.

Really? This is the United States of America a nation whose founding documents declare all men (women) to be created equal. We must ask ourselves what we have become and why. The pledge which declares "one nation under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all" has little meaning in the rhetoric of intolerance and bigotry that permeates our contemporary society.

The recent mass shootings in California, Texas, and Ohio have sparked the usual conversation about gun laws. Unfortunately, we collectively have a short memory and the politically savvy among us know that if they make a couple of comments for the media and then bide their time the ruckus will quickly die down until the next shooting. And the next. *And the next.*

We need reasonable gun laws that restrict persons with criminal backgrounds and mental issues from legally purchasing firearms. I am aware of the second amendment's assurance of the right to keep and bear arms but believe we need laws that balance protecting our right to bear arms with protecting our citizens from persons who are not deemed capable of safely possessing such deadly weapons. However, this issue is a complicated one that will take more than just legislation to solve and we cannot legislate the attitudes and prejudices that motivate such horrendous acts of violence.

*It is time to change the lyrics.* Let's start in the church. The new song needs to contain the words of Christ: "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-35). It is increasingly

difficult to recognize the disciples of Jesus because we look so much like the disciples of the world and sing the same song.

I want to suggest that the present decline in participation in the church by millennials may be due in part to the harsh reality that many who bear the name of Christ have readily succumbed to the political rhetoric of the culture, buried our heads in the sand, and prayed for safety. We ignore the pervasive racism of our society, the labeling of those with eyes differently shaped and those whose skin is a different shade; while at best turning our heads and at worst participating by inaction in the violence inflicted on those unlike ourselves. In short, we don't act like the one we profess to serve.

Stephen Sondheim provides us with challenging lyrics as we move forward into the future at the Creator intended for us.

Careful the things you say, Children will listen  
Careful the things you do, Children will see  
And learn  
Children may not obey, but children will listen  
Children will look to you, for which way to turn  
To learn what to be  
Careful before you say, "Listen to me"  
Children will listen.

*It is time to sing a new song* . . . the lyrics of the new song teach children to love, accept, embrace, and welcome into the faith community and the national community those who are not like us.  
Children will listen.

Peace be with you all,

*Jim*



# 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
<b>1</b> 9:00 am SMC 10:00 am Worship	<b>2 Labor Day</b> <b>Church Office Closed</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 9:00 am ROMEO Club 9:00 am Ruth Circle 1:00 pm Esther Circle	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 7:30 am PK Fellowship at FBC 8:00 am PK Study at FBC
<b>8</b> 10:00 am Outdoor worship and family picnic!	<b>9</b> 1:00 pm Single Women of Faith 7:00 pm Spiritual Gifts Study	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 9:00 am ROMEO Club 5:30 pm WYRED 6:00 pm ABK	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 7:30 am PK Fellowship at FBC 8:00 am PK Study at FBC
<b>15</b> 9:00 am SMC 10:00 am Worship	<b>16</b> 7:00 pm Spiritual Gifts Study	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 9:00 am ROMEO Club 10:00 am Grief Support Group 5:30 - 6:30 pm WYRED 6:00 pm ABK	<b>19</b> 6:00 pm Diaconate Council 7:00 pm Board of Ministries	<b>20 Newsletter Deadline</b>	<b>21</b> 7:30 am PK Fellowship at FBC 8:00 am PK Study at FBC
<b>22</b> 9:00 am SMC 10:00 am Worship	<b>23</b> 1:00 pm Single Women of Faith	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 9:00 am ROMEO Club 5:30 - 6:30 pm WYRED 6:00 pm ABK	<b>26</b> 5:30 pm Men's Night Out	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 7:30 am PK Fellowship at FBC 8:00 am PK Study at FBC
<b>29</b> 9:00 am SMC 10:00 am Worship	<b>30</b>					

