

Growing the Family of God

September 2020

Telling the Story

Serving the Community

Nurturing Believers

Coffee with Jim



Plans are underway that will allow us to once again worship in the beauty of our church sanctuary. We long to be together in worship and praise. As we contemplate that joyous moment when we can come home, I want to offer two theological reflections.

The first of these thoughts concerns the place in which we worship. When Paul visited Athens, he toured the city and observed altars to many and various gods. There was one altar that bore the inscription, “to an unknown god”. It was this god hitherto unknown, that Paul proclaimed to the Greeks of Athens. In describing that god Paul declared, “The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands” Acts 17:24.

As we reenter the sanctuary, we need to do so remembering that God is not limited to a specific space or time. A word of caution is necessary: Are we worshipping God or the building? The building is beautiful, and we all have deep attachment to it. The windows are more than 100 years old and represent the history of First Baptist Church as a place of mission and service for 163 years. It is a history of service of which we are justifiably proud. The architect who designed the room has created many worship spaces and made deliberate effort to assure the design was conducive to worship and meditation. These are all important points to reflect upon as we reenter the sanctuary.

As we worship together in this sacred space let’s take the time to remember that God is not limited to time and space, but rather is the Lord of our lives in the building, in our homes, and our workplaces. Worship is a matter of the heart.

The second point that I would like to ask you to think about is found in the letter to the Ephesians. “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all”. Ephesians 4:4-6. This fundamental proclamation is one that binds the body of Christ together in Christian unity and fellowship. During the time that we have been absent from one another some of us have forgotten that as the children of God we are inextricably bound to one another by this confession of faith. It is unfortunate that we have politicized Jesus to suit our partisan ideologies, forgetting that we are the body of Christ. The Spirit of God binds together, it does not divide.

Welcome Home! Welcome to the worship of a God who does not need a building, but encourages open hearts, spirit-led praise, mission and ministry in the name and power of Jesus the Christ.

Jim

WELCOME HOME!

We are excited to announce that we have developed a timeline for rejoining one another in our “family room” for worship on Sunday, September 20th! As is true with many activities during the time of Covid, worship will look a bit different than what we might have been used to prior to the pandemic.

- We will offer one service at 10:00 am.
- Capacity will be limited to 100 persons and **reservations will be required!** Reservations may be made by calling the church office (815.842.4321) or via the church’s webpage (fbcpontiac.org) beginning Wednesday, September 9th.
- Reservations must be submitted no later than noon on the Wednesday prior to the worship service you wish to attend and must be reconfirmed each week.
- **Facemasks will be required.** Facemasks and hand sanitizer will be made available for your convenience.
- To minimize cross traffic, you will only be able to enter via the gymnasium and exit via the main front door.
- Offering plates will not be passed. Nor will children be called forward for Children’s Church or Time With the Children.
- Family/household units are encouraged to sit together in a group.
- You are encouraged to practice social distancing as much as possible from those not in your immediate family group. Please respect your neighbors need for distancing.
- **If you are feeling unwell, PLEASE STAY HOME!**
- Any Reported case of Covid-19 within the church family will result in the church being immediately closed for a minimum of two weeks. In which case, on-line broadcasts will resume until such time as the church can be safely reopened.
- If you do not feel comfortable joining us for in person worship, we invite you to join us in worship on-line. We will be streaming our services live via our YouTube channel (you can easily find the link at our website: www.fbcpontiac.org)!



- 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



Thank you for practicing social distancing!



We ask for your continued patience as we move forward into a “new normal” and remind you that these plans are subject to change at any point in light of new information or state/federal health guidelines. Your pastors and church leadership continue to carefully monitor this situation as it progresses and are in prayer for wisdom and guidance moving forward.



Joyful Giving

God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. (2 Corinthians 9:7-8)

I want to commend and encourage you for your faithfulness in sharing your tithes and offerings during an uncertain and trying time. I'm delighted to inform you that in 2019 our church ranked 26th in giving to United Mission. United Mission provides basic support for regional ministry as well as American Baptist Churches/USA. It is important that we continue to be faithful in our giving especially in uncertain times. The mission and ministries of the church locally, nationally, and globally continue even though we find ourselves in the throes of a global pandemic. Thank you for your generosity! Please continue to support your church through PayPal, online banking, or mailing your gift to the church office.

During this time, we have postponed two special offerings. We customarily receive the America for Christ offering in March and One Great Hour of Sharing in June. Since we did not meet during those months, we did not receive these two offerings.

America for Christ supports the ministries of the American Baptist Home Mission Societies and One Great Hour of Sharing is used for disaster relief. We have a history of significant giving to both offerings. If you would like to contribute to these vital ministries, please use PayPal, online banking, or the United States Postal Service and mark your check for either America for Christ or One Great Hour of Sharing.

Again, I want to thank you for your generosity and encourage you to continue to financially support the ministries of our church.

High School Movie Night!

Jurassic Park

We're excited to announce an outdoor movie night for area high school students on:

September 11 • 7:30 PM

Group social distancing will be observed at this event. Each social group that arrives together (up to 10 individuals) will share a 'circle'. This will allow for social distancing from other groups. Masks will be required if you leave your social circle.

This event is free and open to all area high school students. We'll even provide the popcorn!

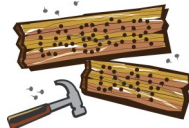
IMPORTANT Schedule Notes



Worship services for Sunday, September 6th and Sunday, September 13th will be *online experiences ONLY*.

We will not be meeting for our outdoor worship services on September 6th or 13th. Instead we will make an on-line worship opportunity available via our YouTube page at 10:00am.

Office Notes



Please note that the church office will be closed on Monday, September 7 in honor of the Labor Day holiday.

We wish our entire church family a safe and healthy holiday weekend!

October Newsletter



Any information or articles for inclusion in the October edition of our church newsletter must be submitted to the church office no later than Friday, September 18th. You may submit your items via e-mail: Rhonda@fbcpontiac.org; USPS, or phone (842.4321).