



Cross & Spire

Newsletter of First Baptist Church

Interim Pastor: Rick Pinilla

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February 2017 Volume 34, No. 2

Upcoming Events:

*Women 2 Women,
Saturday, February 4
at 2:00pm*

*Men's Breakfast,
Saturday, February
11 at 7:30am*

*Food Pantry
Wednesday, February
1 at 5:00pm &
Saturday, February
19 at 10:00am*

A Word from our Interim Pastor

Dear Friends,

I have been rereading the book of Acts, because it seems particularly relevant to my situation now. It begins with a statement that should arrest our attention, "in my first account O Theophilus I wrote to you about all that Jesus began to do and teach..." Luke intends for us to understand that what he is about to write is all that Jesus continues to do and to teach through his people. Jesus tells us the thrust of the work in 1:8. We are his witnesses beginning in Jerusalem and going to the ends of the earth. We do it by the power of the Holy Spirit. The rest of the book tells us how Jesus worked through the Spirit empowered Church.

With such a wide commission you can see immediately that the issue of guidance would be a big problem. Where to start, what to do next? Sometimes, the Holy Spirit works directly through dreams or visions, or an angel speaks, but these are very rare (Acts 8:26-40, 16:9). Sometimes he just gives the believers a prompting (16:6-8, 20:22). I'll bet if you asked the person who planted this church in Lebanon in the middle of the 19th Century he would talk about "a sense of call." This is more common.

There is a kind of guidance displayed in this book that is one of the secrets to understanding Acts and our situation as believers in this world. For instance Paul went to Philippi because of a vision, but when he got there he found out that there was no synagogue in the city; but some people gathered to pray by the river. He went there and that started his ministry in the city. While taking his regular walk to the river to preach he was accosted by a young woman who had a demon who enabled her to tell fortunes and earn her masters a good deal of money. Paul got so tired of her incessant yelling after them, that he commanded the demon to come out of her and the girl was delivered. The problem was that her owners didn't like the loss of income her deliverance produced; so they had Paul and his partner beaten with rods and thrown in prison. While in prison there was an earthquake, a frequent occurrence in that part of the world even today, and all the prison doors were opened. The prison keeper was an old Roman soldier. So when he thought the prisoners were loose, he did the honorable thing and prepared to kill himself. Paul stopped him by assuring him that they were all there. Paul's love and fearlessness led the prison keeper to recognize God's presence in Paul and so he heard and believed the Gospel along with his whole household. There's guidance for you, arrest, blows and imprisonment. Mix in an earthquake and the prison keeper is prepared to receive the message.

Paul was run out of town before he was ready to leave, but he went on to Thessalonica. The work started very well, but the opposition got ugly so Paul fled to a place he probably wouldn't have chosen to visit -- Berea. There he had a wonderful ministry until his enemies from Thessalonica found him, formed a mob and went to get him. He was spirited out of town and taken to Athens. My guess is that Paul had no intention of going to Greece on this trip, but there he was. He preached a little there, but the work was very slow. (Continued on Next Page)

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He did win some converts and left behind a brilliant work of apologetics because he was arrested and made to defend himself before the Areopagus. He was waiting around in Athens for his partners to finish in Thessalonica. Since the work was slow he wandered up to Corinth, where the ministry prospered greatly. In all of this he was "guided" in ways we wouldn't have chosen, but the results were clearly from Jesus.

We could also think about Paul's trip to Jerusalem. He went to take a gift from the churches he had planted to relieve the suffering of the poor Christians in Jerusalem. He felt a strong call from the Holy Spirit to do it (Acts 20:22). We learn from Romans that he planned to deliver the gift, then go off to Rome to build the church there. His idea was to prepare for taking the Gospel from Rome to Spain and the western part of the empire. He had all of his churches praying that he would get safely through Jerusalem, get on to Rome and then Spain. Well, he got falsely accused and arrested in Jerusalem and landed in jail in Caesarea for two years, despite the fact that everybody knew he was not guilty. While there, he preached the Gospel to a bunch of people who never would have given it a hearing. The only reason they did, is that they got a chance to be invited to an event sponsored by the Roman governor for King Agrippa. Then he was taken as a prisoner to Rome aboard a ship. It was caught in a storm driven way off course and wrecked in Malta -- an obscure, out of the way island. They got help from a wealthy man there, whose father just happened to be suffering from a serious sickness. Paul healed the man so the whole island became interested in him and so got a chance to hear the Gospel. If Paul hadn't "accidentally" landed there it would probably have been a generation before the island heard the Gospel.

Then he was jailed in Rome, even though he was not guilty, but there he wrote Philippians, Colossians and Ephesians. This was the only way to communicate to these churches, since a visit was impossible. Now we have those letters.

I think you get the idea. God gets us where he wants us to be and he puts us into situations that show his greatness through us. He does this in ways that, at the time, seem random. Our building burning was a great evil and a heart breaking loss; but I still think God knows what he is doing. Anne has to get to Sunday School, but I want to look over my sermon. I used to go to my office, but now..... last Sunday I found a chair in the corner of the meeting hall behind the screen. I have to admit that it is better than prison in Caesarea or Rome. On days I am in the office I take a walk up the hill while I pray. It always took me by the Mason's lodge. Every time I passed it I prayed that its members would get a chance to hear the Gospel. Our situation is no doubt part of His answer to my prayer and it is better than a shipwreck. I'm not real excited about the Middle School, but who knows what opportunities Jesus has in mind.

The Lord has something great to do through us in all of this and in all of life. Our job is to walk in faith. I think often that involves looking around for the opportunity in the trouble that comes our way.

NOTE OF THANKS

I wish to thank you, my church family, for the outpouring of love you have shown to Karl and me. This has been so much more than a few weeks of cards and meals, calls and visits, but years of continual prayer for Karl's health and strength. We were humbled by our own neediness and God's provision through you. Karl fought the good fight, but he didn't fight alone.

Your sister in Christ,
Tina Meagher

W2W

We are off to a good start with W2W this year and are excited to see new faces at our meetings!

Our February meeting will be focusing on the Greatest Love Story Ever and we will be celebrating in style with "High Tea" at the Parsonage:

Date: February 4th

Time: 2-4pm

Place: 16 Kimball Street, Lebanon

We invite you to bring your favorite book to share something from – what makes it your favorite or what impacted you about it!

We will also be doing a book swap at the end of the meeting and ask that you bring a book that you are willing to swap (could also be the one you already are bringing, if you want to give it away). You might just find that book you have always wanted! ☺

It can be any book (Cook book, DIY; Fiction, Non-fiction, etc.)

PS. *It is not mandatory to bring a book to join in the fun ☺*

New Adult Sunday School starting Feb. 5:

- You must be Broken to be Whole
- You must Mourn to be Happy
- You must be Authentic to be Accepted
- You must be Empty to be Filled

These truths of Jesus will be explored through four powerful testimonies in the video series, **The End of Me**, by Kyle Idleman (same guy who did "Not a Fan" and "Gods at War").

Join us for the month of February as we look at the question, "What does it really mean to die to yourself?" Learn how the "end of me" is the beginning of a deep and transforming relationship with Jesus.

Sunday mornings, 9 AM, at Lebanon Middle School, 3 Moulton Ave, Lebanon. We'll have the coffee on for you! :-)

MEN'S BREAKFAST

The next Men's breakfast will be held on Saturday, February 11 at 7:30. Please see Jim Newcomb or Chris Scholtz for more information. We hope to see you there.

CE BOARD UPDATE

The Christian Ed Committee extends a heartfelt thank you to the Nursery and Children's Church volunteers who have continued to bless our children after the fire. You have worked in less than perfect circumstances, giving up your own learning, often more than once a month to bring the Love of Christ to our youngest members. You are much appreciated!

We have received a generous gift of supplies for the Nursery and Children's Church. Please avail yourself of these items and inform the committee if there are other things that would help you care for and teach our children. The supplies are in bins which will be carried into the location of our services each week.

The Christian Ed Board also gives much deserved thanks to the Adult Discipleship Committee that has worked many hours to provide adult studies for our congregation (and very cheerfully too!). You have provided prayer, Bible teaching, and yummy snacks during the Sunday School hour. Many people can testify of the good conversation, teaching, and fellowship this opportunity has afforded.

The CE Board asks our church family to pray for direction and wisdom as we go forward with plans for children's and adult ministries. We wish to not only continue the good things that are happening, but to expand and explore new avenues of learning as much as we can about the Lord Jesus.

We even began conversation about Vacation Bible School. Only God knows what it will look like this year, but with His Hand on our path, it is going to be wonderful!!!

And let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. Galatians 6:9-10

In Jesus Name, Carol Rataj

DEACONS BOARD UPDATE

It is with great sadness that we said goodbye to one of our fellow deacons earlier this month. We lost our faithful servant and brother in Christ, Karl Meagher who went home to be with our Lord on January 19, 2017. His love and passion for our Lord and His word will be greatly missed. Please remember his family and friends and keep them in your prayers.

Due to the busy schedule of the Christmas season, the deacon board met only once in December. We focused on our regularly scheduled business, the planning (Continued on Insert)

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of our Christmas services followed by much discussion about finding a worship leader. The deacons also ran services at Genesis for the month of December. The services are held on Sunday afternoons from 2:30-3:00 and consist of singing, praying, visiting and a brief message. Our next scheduled month of service is April. All are welcome and encouraged to join us; it is a wonderful experience for all.

January was a shocking month with much to work through due to the tragic loss of our church building. Our meetings are now held in the parsonage and are back to two meetings a month. Our first meeting was Jan 10th where even working on our regularly scheduled business took longer than usual due to the magnitude of our loss.

We then spent quite a bit of time discussing available building options for our Sunday morning worship service, keeping in mind all of our physical needs and most importantly our mission needs. Jim had an extensive list of options but only the new Middle School best suits our needs at this point. A group of 8 from our church visited the school to view the potential space. Included in this group were members of the deacon board, the CE board, the Trustee board, the worship team and the pastor. Although no space will be perfect, we all felt we could make the space work and are willing to give it a try. We have signed a contract with the Middle School for a two-month period and will continue to assess the situation as we move forward. In addition to finding a place of worship, we also had the task of coming up with a list of lost items pertaining to worship such as hymnals, bibles, ect.

Lastly, we decided to move forward with our attempts to find a worship leader and finalize some steps that had been taken back in Dec. A public service announcement will play on the Light Radio once a day for the month of February. Please keep this in prayer that the Lord will send to us the right person to fill this need.

In our next meeting, we will be looking at and discussing scriptures given to us by

Pastor Rick to help start our ministry of vision clarification. We all seek to follow Christ and to serve him to the best of our abilities. Please keep all church leadership in prayer as well as our entire congregation; we have much ahead of us but as Philippians 4:16 tells us, we can do all things through Him who strengthens us.

Respectfully and prayerfully submitted by
Marjorie Olson

YOUTH GROUP NEWS

The Youth Group will be holding a Valentine's Day Buffet Fundraiser on Sunday, February 12. This will be to help raise funds for their annual Winter Retreat to Deep Freeze at Camp Berea. Please be on the lookout for more details.

The Youth Group will be attending Deep Freeze at Camp Berea the weekend of March 10-12.

COMMUNITY DINNER & FOOD PANTRY

The Community Dinner will be held each Wednesday at 5:30 at the Lebanon Senior Center.

The Food Pantry will be held the First Wednesday of every month from 5-6pm & the fourth Saturday of every month from 10-11am at the Lebanon Senior Center.