



Cross & Spire

Newsletter of First Baptist Church

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Upcoming Events:

*Women 2 Women
Tuesday, March 7 at
6:30pm*

*Men's Breakfast
Saturday, March 11
at 7:30pm*

*Daylight Savings
Time begins Sunday,
March 12*

A Word from our Interim Pastor

Dear Friends,

One of the strange things about the Gospels, the records of Jesus' life and ministry, is their lack of balance. As biographies they are exceedingly strange. In all four of them the last week of Jesus' life is scrutinized and presented with an amount of detail that is way out of proportion with the rest of his life. What kind of biography spends so much time with the hero's arrest, trial and execution as a criminal? What makes this stranger is that there is good evidence that after the first Gospel was written each of the authors had that Gospel and probably any others that had been written in his hands. They each had material in common. They each had material that others left out, but all alike spent by far the most ink on Jesus' last week of life. All the Gospels read like fast moving narratives focusing on a person with a clear sense of mission. Then they slow down to a crawl for the end.

Whatever else we may say about this, we must see that the writers of the Gospels thought that what is traditionally called the passion of Christ was exceedingly important. The historian's art is not just telling a story accurately and artistically. It is not even primarily these things, though they are certainly important. His or her art is primarily selection. What do I include, and what do I leave out so people understand the importance and meaning of this story? All of the Gospel writers thought that we should think through those last days. To judge by the amount of space given, they thought they were the most important for understanding Jesus' life and mission and his meaning for our lives.

This really shouldn't surprise us. Jesus' own words about his mission invite us to take this view of his life: "Just as the Son of Man (Son of Man is Jesus' normal self-designation), did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for the many." He came to die for us. In fact, he told us explicitly to remember him. When he did this, he gave us a memorial ritual, the Lord's Supper. In it his only focus is his death. It is for his death above all things that Jesus wants to be remembered. For this reason, I am going to do something I have wanted to do for a long time. As we approach Easter, I will be preaching through the end of Jesus' life beginning with Matthew 26:1-5. My hope and prayer is that we will come to share the Gospel writers' perspective. That we will see that God's love is real, concrete and immeasurable and we will, like Paul, be "held captive by the love of Christ, since we have concluded that One died for all..."

I want to invite you in the days approaching Easter, to spend some time in these passages of Scripture. The passion narrative begins with the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. Take one of the Gospels and read this section of it reflectively. Then join us as we think through those hours leading up to Jesus' death. I think this will make our celebration of his resurrection very special.

WOMEN 2 WOMEN

Our next Women 2 Women meeting will be on Tuesday, March 7 at 6:30pm. Please see Karen Scholtz for more details.

MEN'S BREAKFAST

Our next Men's Breakfast will be held on Saturday, March 11 at 7:30am. Please see Chris Scholtz for more details.

NURSERY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We are in need of volunteers for the Nursery, if you are interesting in helping serve in the nursery; please see Tina Meagher or Rachel Lawrence.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR CHILDREN'S CHURCH

We are in need of volunteers for Children's Church. If you are interested in helping with this vital ministry in our church, please see Shelby Hawks or Rachel Lawrence.

DON'T BE LATE FOR CHURCH - SPRING AHEAD! Daylight Saving Time begins Sunday, March 12! Turn your clocks ahead 1 hour!

**February Update
Board of Deacons**

Greetings from the board of deacons; I pray you have all enjoyed our streak of warm weather. It is unusual for this time of year but I think most of us welcome the temporary relief from the cold winter temps and the constant shoveling of fresh snow.

The deacons continue to be busy during the month of February. The month began with moving our Sunday morning worship from the Mason Lodge to the new Middle School. The move has gone smoothly thus far thanks to Jim Newcomb and all the wonderful signage he has provided indicating where to park and where to worship. As of today, we have heard nothing but positive remarks regarding

our new space however, if you have any concerns, please let one of the deacons know. We also want to thank the worship team and anyone else involved with setting up and breaking down on Sunday mornings; your devotion and service to the Lord makes worship more meaningful for the rest of us.

In addition to our regularly scheduled meeting on Feb. 14th, the deacons also met on Feb. 9th to work through the Pastor's ministry vision clarification. The purpose of this ministry clarification is to establish a congregation wide consensus of our ministry priorities that will drive our building design. We brainstormed on what ministries we at FBC are good at and what our dreams for the future are. We then met (or will meet) with the other boards to go through the same process of questions as well as members of the congregation. We met with the CE board on 2/21, the mission board on 2/24 and members of the congregation on 2/26. A second meeting for members of the congregation is scheduled for 3/1 and the worship team is scheduled to meet on 3/5. We are still in the process of setting a date to meet with the trustees board. If you have not already met with us to go through this process, please join us at the parsonage on 3/1 at 7:00 pm; we would love to hear your input. The deacons will then collate the results of all the sessions and produce a document that best represents our understanding of our ministry identity and vision. A copy of the Vision Clarification document has been available during Sunday morning worship; please contact the church office if you are in need of a copy.

I would also like to take this time to thank Dave Cole for his wonderful and powerful message he gave while filling in for Pastor Rick who was on vacation. We truly have a great deal of talent here at FBC and I praise the Lord for everyone who is so willing to share of their talents and to serve our Lord and Savior.

Please keep our congregation and all church leadership in prayer as we work through the important process of identifying our ministry and our vision for the future of FBC.

Respectfully and prayerfully submitted by Marjorie Olson

New Adult Sunday School Starting March 5

“A Journey Through Lent”

Reflecting on Christ’s Sacrifice for Us

What is Lent? The word “Lent” comes from the Old English word “lengthen” which simply means “spring”—when the days lengthen and new life springs forth. It is a time in which we anticipate the victory of the light and life of Christ over the darkness of sin and death.

Just as we carefully prepare for big events in our personal lives, such as a wedding or commencement, Lent invites us to make our hearts ready for remembering Jesus’ death and resurrection. These studies will be fresh reminders of the truth we need to continually speak to our own souls. We will journey through a few Psalms which address the reality of our broken humanity and recognize the world is not as it should be. But even as the days lengthen and grow brighter, these prayers point to the end of the story—Easter Sunday and the ultimate restoration of all things.

Please join us in the journey, starting March 5 at 9:00 sharp.

Steve and Deb have opened their home and hearts each week by giving the youth a place to hang out, a chance to learn about God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and to just talk about life in a safe place. Since the fire, some meetings take place at the Senior Center. They also plan fun activities which teens love to do such as mini golf. Steve and Deb need others to help. The time has come for someone to come alongside the Girdwoods to learn from them what it means to lead the Youth Group. If the Lord is speaking to your heart, please prayerfully consider this ministry. It is important for our teens that the Youth Group stay the vibrant, active outreach it is that gives them light and security in an ever changing world.

If you feel the Lord calling you, please contact Steve or Deb directly, or email me at carolrataj3@gmail.com
Grace and Peace to you,
Carol Rataj

CE BOARD UPDATE

What could be better than a table laden with Valentine treats and chocolates? - Our wonderful youth tending those tables! Excited teens encouraging and helping us choose just the right dessert. Thanks to Steve and Deb Girdwood for organizing this delicious affair.

They have provided many opportunities over the years for the Youth Group members to help finance their own camp experiences and fun activities. Steve and