



February 15 - March 15, 2020

First Things

A Monthly Newsletter for Members and Friends

Who We Are: FBC: Where every person matters and relationships with God and neighbors grow.

What We Do: We are learning to live the life that Jesus would live if Jesus were living our life through:

- *meaningful worship and study*
- *valuing and loving others through service*
- *embracing God's created diversity*
- *intentional connections to our community*
- *caring for one another through all of life*



Rev. Lara Escoffre

joined our pastoral staff, in December 2012, as the Pastor of Preaching and Teaching; in June 2015, Lara transitioned into the role of **Lead Pastor**. Lara has a passion for preaching and teaching God's word and for walking with people as they discover who God has created them to be. Lara is active in the Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force, Mid-Michigan Health Advisory Council, and Faithwalking. She and her husband, Laurent, have three children: Lola, Chloe and Devin.

PRAYER PARTNERS

For those that grieve: The Kelly Hodge family, the Verda Rider family, and Cindy Houghtaling Family (Louise Bergman's sister-in-law).

For the health needs of many of our church family: Rayshell Anderson, Dan Brinker, Kathy Burch, David & Hitchcock, Ruthie O'Dell, Nate Poland, Joyce Phillips, Bruce Rogers, Andrea Ross, Preston & Karolea Streeter, Marcia Williams, Bob Winchester

And the needs of loved ones: Acacia (Walter's granddaughter), David & Susan Brown (missions opportunity), Cam Lippoldt (recovery), Ed Sperry, Ginger Coon/Carol Duncan (relatives of Skyler S. seizures/heart problems), Lewis King (cancer/hopsice), Joe Mortensen, Olivia & Emma (preemie twins/great-granddaughters of Mary Lou Sperry), Tim Richard (leukemia), Tristan (granddaughter of John & Marcia Williams), Ben Schultz' mom (cancer), John Yuill

And the needs of Friends: Arlie McMahon (heart attack), Brady and Courtney (pregnancy stabilized/Pat McCourt's nephew/wife), Lee Pastor (cancer), Fran Pepin's brother in law (cancer)

Praises: Rick Raetz is cancer free!

If you know of other folks in our church who need special prayer, please contact the church office by phone: 835-6731 or by email: office@midlandfbc.com.

LEAD PASTOR

What an annual meeting! There are so many exciting things happening at First Baptist Church right now as we continue toward our goal for this year of “living out our Christ-formed lives in God’s kingdom within our community.” We can feel the anticipation in the mission team’s call for us to champion existing and new outreach opportunities. We see movement toward this goal in the lessons we have learned from the community story study which invite us to think differently about Midland and to dream about meaningful ways we can connect with our neighbors as they seek relationships and partnership in life’s struggles. We see fresh glimmers of God’s kingdom among us in a growing, active youth program.

These are all examples of how we, as a church, are focused on this year’s theme. But they are also illustrations of how we are intentionally living into our “What We Do” statement as a congregation. We heard in the annual meeting about opportunities to serve others inside and outside our church. We have been challenged to consider ways we can facilitate and develop new intentional connections with our community. These opportunities, when viewed “in light of” our guiding principle of stewardship which Roger (Bergmann, through his report on stewardship and finance) and Allen (Ross, through his report on membership) have presented, should inspire us to consider how we, as a church and as individuals, might “step out” in new ways!

There is perhaps no greater example of this invitation to our congregation to “step out” than the upcoming pastoral sabbatical. In years past, the sabbatical pastor’s duties would have been picked up by other full-time paid ministers of FBC. FBC members have the exciting, and perhaps challenging, opportunity to take on new tasks in the life of the church. Kathy Pellegrom, on behalf of the Sabbatical Team, spoke about a few people who have accepted this call to lead already: Lois Crosby, Jenn Hitchcock, Karen Walker Freeburg, Karen Boucher, Barb Neil, Shelley Page, and Dave Pellegrom. I am so grateful for these individuals and their willingness to live into our shared values of service and Christ Centered caring.

But these individuals will need assistance! As Baptists, we believe in the “priesthood of all believers,” meaning that each one of us has been called by God to serve the mission of the Church. So today I ask: “How is it that you have been uniquely gifted to serve during this time?” Could it be that you are being called to share your testimony, your story of faith, and in doing so live into and to be part of helping others live into our church’s goal of having “meaningful worship” in a new way? Have you been called to reach out to other members for fellowship this summer, and in doing so live into our focus on “caring for one another in all of life”? As your pastor, I am excited to hear the stories that come from the period of sabbatical.

As I reflected on the 2019 year in my annual report, I was taken by how well this community lives into who we say we want to be: “FBC: Where every person matters and relationships with God and neighbors grow.” It is no wonder that my desire in the doctoral work I am beginning is on developing leadership. I clearly see the passion this congregation has: to serve and be all that God has called us to be. My desire is to grow in my own ability to lead the way for that passion to continue. Thank you for that opportunity. My prayers and thoughts WILL be with you this summer; and I know that yours will be with me and my family as well.

~Rev. Lara Escoffre

Christian Education

“We strive to make disciples of Christ, at every stage of life, through intentional, spiritual growth opportunities.”

This is the new Mission Statement for the Christian Education Team! The team has been working together to offer the best education and care possible for our children, youth, and adults. A key goal for the team is to equip teachers and volunteers to continue to offer their best in loving and teaching our children and youth as well as those from the community who also enjoy the ministries of FBC.

This goal has us working on the following, which we feel are required for a sound Christian Education program:

- Background checks for all volunteers who work with children and youth

- Driving requirements for transporting children and youth
- Child and Youth Safety Training
- Teacher Training

Our goal is to equip our teachers and volunteers to continue to offer their best in loving and teaching our children, youth and including those from our community who also enjoy the ministry benefits of FBC. We will offer a team approach to what has been listed and ask you to attend this event. The training is appropriate for all who volunteer and participate in multi-generational activities of our church and community. It will be held on a Saturday morning from 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. A tentative date has been scheduled and will be confirmed and communicated once the team has worked out all the logistics.

We look forward to sharing with you all that is available in keeping our children and youth in a safe, loving, and educational environment.

Serving you together,
Louise Bergman, Dave Hitchcock, Deb Hitt, Mark Neal, and Rev. Karen Boucher

MISSIONS & MINISTRY

Jesus teaches us to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:39). Our church follows the teaching of Jesus by reaching out to the community and providing for our neighbors’ needs, physical and spiritual alike.

Our church’s efforts are supported by American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS), which provides resources for cultivating leaders, equipping disciples, and healing and transforming communities. Through ABHMS, we serve neighbors in Puerto Rico and other places in the United States in long-term recovery after natural disasters. Indeed, ABHMS provides many ways to help our church love our many neighbors, near and far!

Our church supports this work through our generous gifts to the America for Christ (AFC) Offering. Each dollar given increases the ministry and impact of ABHMS to serve neighbors with ministries incarnating Christ’s love, justice and compassion. Further, a portion of this offering (28%) will be shared with our American Baptist Churches region for strengthening local church leaders through programming, pastoral search support and other efforts to help our local church thrive, especially in these times when North America is its own challenging mission field! Our target is \$2,000. Please give generously.

~Cindy Wong, Missions and Ministry Team Chair



We'd like to send Warm Birthday & Anniversary Wishes

February BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Jeff Richards
- 2 John Holmes
- 12 Thayer Bradish
- 18 Sharon Houghton-Ross
Emily Richards
True Rogers
- 20 Marci Rogers
- 25 Rena Walker
- 26 Kelly Bishop Kloha
- 27 Corinne Bishop
- 28 Louise Bergman

March BIRTHDAYS

- 2 Elaine Poindexter
- 4 Shawna Elmore
Tyler Steib
- 23 Ruth O'Dell
- 24 Bobbie Baker
- 26 Barb Neil
Preston Streeter
- 27 Nadine Collins
Mark Neil
- 29 Sheridan Seamster
- 31 David Pellegrom
- 31 Emersyn Seamster



February ANNIVERSARIES

- 7 Dave & Bunny Mitchell
- 15 Thomas & Margie Seamster

March ANNIVERSARIES

- 23 Jim & Debbie Hitt
Chris & Michell Moe
- 30 Roland & Janice Wallace



CALENDAR - 2020

Regular Schedule

Sundays	9:30 AM 11:00 AM
Mondays	10-11:30AM 2:45-5:30PM 6:30 PM 6:30 PM
Tuesdays	7:30 AM 5:30 PM
Wednesdays	6:15 PM 7:00 PM
Saturdays	9AM-2PM

ABIDING SCRIPTURES

FEBRUARY - MARK 7:1-13
MARCH - MATTHEW 5:13-14

Worship Service - Communion Service is the 1st Sunday of each month
 Sunday School - **Sunday School: January - June 14**
 Staff Meeting (2nd Monday staff meeting is on Wednesday @ 11:00AM)
Take-Note Children & Youth Choir & Chimes
Team Network Mtg-Media Rm - 2nd Monday - February 17 / March 9
Monday Night Bible Study - Media Rm (Every Monday but the 2nd)
 Men's Breakfast at M's Café at 5103 Eastman Rd.
Stewardship & Finance Meeting - 3rd Tuesday - February 18 / March 17
Property Management Meeting - Media Rm - March 4
Enhanced Spiritual Care (Stephen Min.) - Media Rm - 3rd Wed - Feb 19
FBC Serves at Open Door - 2nd Saturday - March 14

Date Time Special Event

Feb 18	6:30 PM	Christian Education Meeting - Harmony Room
Feb 21	6:30-8:30PM	Kids' Night Out / Parents' Night Off
Feb 23	12NOON-2PM	Youth Fellowship - details to come
Feb 26	6:30 PM	Ash Wednesday Service in the Chapel
Mar 8	-	Move Clocks FORWARD 1 hour
Mar 12	9AM-5PM	Scrapbookers in the Hearthside Rm
Mar 13	9AM-5PM	Scrapbookers in the Hearthside Rm
Mar 20	6:30-8:30PM	Kids' Night Out / Parents' Night Off

USHERS

FEBRUARY Rhonda Vance
Larry Root
MARCH David Bussell
Kathy Pellegrom
Mike Walker

KIDS' NIGHT

What: An evening activity for kids in a safe place
When: Friday, February 21, 2020, 6:30 – 8:30 pm
Where: First Baptist Church, 915 E. Sugnet, next to Plymouth Elementary School.
Who: Kids Age 4-12th grade, with those G7th -12th helping younger kids/assisting adult volunteers
Why: For kids to have fun, and parents to have a free night, or a night out!!
Cost: \$0.00 -- Zero -- Free!! (You DO have to plan ahead and get them there!)

Here's the Plan: Now Call FBC Office to RSVP (989-835-6731) – give names & ages



Mon-Thurs, 9:00 am – 2:00 pm – Office staff will take your info
 Non-Office Hours – Leave message for Office with your info
 Feb 20, Noon Deadline to RSVP
 Feb 21, 6:30 pm Sign your kids in at FBC, entering through the red kitchen door
 While you are out, kids will enjoy free play and organized activities.
 Snacks will be provided.

Invite friends to RSVP too, and come join the fun! We hope to see you!
 Reserve Fridays, March 20 and April 17 for future Kid's Nights!

Interested in helping? Contact Louise Bergman (989-430-8907, Louise.C.Bergman@gmail.com)

Rev. Lara Escoffre's Sabbatical Proposal

Executive Summary:

Starting May 1-August 9, 2020 Rev. Lara Escoffre will take a sabbatical to develop a resource which will grow the church leadership. Pastor Lara will also have a time of personal renewal and growth. This will be an opportunity for Rev. Escoffre to develop resources which will prepare FBC's leadership for the next stage of our church's journey as FBC discerns and begins to live out the church's "Who We Are" statement, "What We Do" statement, and the recommendations of the Community Story Study. In Rev. Escoffre's absence, others are assuming leadership so that the mission and ministry of the church continues effectively.

- 1.) Sabbatical Purpose
 - a. Research and develop a resource to assist church leaders' growth
 - b. Provide renewal and growth for the pastor
 - c. Develop a resource for the process of affirming FBC's guiding principles, development of "Who We Are" and "What We Do" statements, and Community Story Study.
- 2.) Proposed Timing of sabbatical
 - a. May-August 2020,
 - i. Two weeks of regular annual vacation will occur during this time frame and will not be part of the three-month sabbatical
- 3.) Description of the Proposed Activities
 - a. Spiritual retreat to start sabbatical
 - i. Time of renewal and reflection on pastor's mission, call, ministry and personal goal.
 - b. Research and development of a doctoral project centering around leadership development within the church
 - c. Coaching with Rev. Dr. Steve Langford (twice a month)
 - i. Purpose: Spiritual and emotional renewal and growth
 - ii. Bowen Family Systems work
 - d. Attendance at American Baptist of Michigan Minister's Leadership Group and Midland Women's Clergy Cluster
 - e. Worship at other Midland community churches in order to provide the pastor with an opportunity to receive God's word and ministry from colleagues
 - f. Spiritual retreat to prepare for shifting back into full-time ministry
- 4.) Ministry benefits from the sabbatical
 - a. Rejuvenation of the pastor for ministry
 - b. Leadership development stemming from doctoral project
- 5.) Plan for the pastoral duties
 - a. Staffing
 - i. Staff meeting will be led by Shelley Page
 - ii. Worship Planning will be done by the worship chair along with the week's "preacher"

- iii. Care visits to elderly/shut-ins, regular members, visitors and members in hospital will be coordinated by:
 - a. Hospital and Shut-In visits: Lois Crosby
 - b. Celebration Receptions: Jo Clarke and Jenn Hitchcock
 - c. Funeral meals and meals for the sick: Barb Neil
 - d. Connection with Visitors: Karen Walker-Freeburg
- iv. Any funerals which happen during this time will be planned and officiated by Rev. Dr. Karen Walker-Freeburg or Rev. Dr. Karen Boucher. If the deceased person's family wishes to request that Rev. David Brown do the funeral, they will be asked to use the regular protocol of asking Rev. Dr. Karen Walker Freeburg or Rev. Dr. Karen Boucher's blessing to do so.
- v. Connecting with leadership (Team Network) will be done by the Moderator and the Chair of LDT
- vi. The sermon series during the sabbatical will be individuals sharing their stories of faith. These people will be asked to participate in this by March 15, 2019.
- vii. Sunday School Teaching will be developed by CE Team
- viii. Enhanced Spiritual Care team will continue to be directed by Mark Neil and Lois Crosby
- ix. Shelley will be the contact person for the Christian Care Fund. She will then direct the individual to Cheri King.
- x. Rev. Dr. Karen Boucher and Rev. Dr. Karen Walker Freeburg will be available for one to two meetings with individuals who feel they need pastoral care. If more care is needed or if they feel that they are not equipped to deal with the situation, they will refer the person(s) to Fresh Aire Samaritan Counseling Center.
- xi. Concerns about the life of the congregation will be referred to the church moderator and addressed by the appropriate Team Network chair and team

6.) Communication Plan

- a. February
 - i. At the Annual Meeting: The Sabbatical plan will be released to the congregation
 - ii. Information will be put in the February First Things Newsletter
- b. April: Sabbatical Information about the sabbatical will be placed in weekly bulletin

FBC Church Services and Functions may be Videotaped for Shut-in distribution and broadcast on MCTV. If you are interested in viewing our services, they will be broadcast on Charter Cable MCTV digital box Channel 191 on Wednesdays at 5:30PM and on Thursdays at 2:00PM. Church services in video format may also be viewed at <http://www.awincom.com/church-movies/>

March-April Newsletter deadline is March 10.