

December 2017



December 1, 2017

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 Freeburg 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 has two children: Lola and Devin.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE OF THE MONTH

LOCAL AUTONOMY OF THE CHURCH --- Each church is free to govern itself. It must be free from outside authority. Each church is free to partner with others with the belief we can do more together than alone.

Annual Report Deadline - It is almost THAT time again! Please keep in mind that annual report information needs to be submitted to Shelley Page by December 31. All Ministry Teams are required & many committees are requested to submit a report. (Missions, History, Personnel, Scholarship, Christian Care Fund, Memorial Garden & Rose Garden, etc.)

PRAYER PARTNERS

For the health needs of many of our church family: Elva Blymyer (fell), Thayer Bradish (health needs), Kathy Burch, David Bussell, Ed Clark, Mel Collins, Dale Green, Pastor Lara and her children, Betty King, Emma Mantel, Dave Mitchell, Ruthie O'Dell, Elaine Parsons, Joyce Poland, Joyce Phillips, Anne Poindexter, Shirley Sevener, Betty Spiker, Lou Stickney, Alex Sutherland and Family, Marilyn Walker, Kathy Williams (health), Bob Winchester (surgery recovery), and Judy Zeiss (cancer).

And the needs of loved ones: Acacia (Walter's granddaughter); The Baker Family: Seth, Emily, Sienna, Andrew & baby Lillian; Bobby Baker (Bobbie's nephew); Mike Dahley (surgery recovery); Kim & Randy Francisco (cancer); Gaylene's dad (stroke - friend of Sharon Cooper-Bussell); Steven Gibson (E. Poindexter's nephew); Dr. Harris (Kathy Burch's doctor); Tyler Jenkins (great-grandson of Don & Lorraine Raetz - epilepsy); Lewis King (health); Kathy Moe (surgery recovery - Don Raetz' sister); Peter Mortensen (cancer); Mary Pietenpol; Gary Poindexter; Rick Raetz; Tim Richard (leukemia); Kelly Vance (surgery recovery - Etheljean's daughter); and Audrey Yost (Streeter's friend).

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

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.+(Isaiah 9:6) The promise of Isaiah to the nation of Judah was that God would one day send a king who would restore God's people once and for all. Can you imagine the excitement and anticipation of the people in hearing this promise for the first time?!

For today's church, the advent season is supposed to help bring about in us the same hope God's people had in hearing these messianic prophecies so long ago. It is to raise within us an expectation that God will indeed fulfill His promises to us as He did to them. In my case, this describes my feelings going into this advent season perfectly, as I have this deep seated sense that God is at work in the life of our church. This sense comes from the fact that I see us striving to live out our new purpose statement %FBC: Where every person matters and relationships with God and neighbors grow+by truly looking into ways that we can %learn to live the life that Jesus would live if Jesus were living our life through: intentional connections to our community and caring for one another through all of life.+Here are three new ways we will be doing this in 2018!

Part of making connections and caring for one another is communication. In the five years I have been at First Baptist, there has not been a consistent process for how we communicate within the church or to the community. As such, I have witnessed some opportunities we had to make connections fall through the cracks. So, in October the staff (Jan Sutherland, Shelley Page, and myself) took on the task of looking into how we use the tools at our disposal to communicate with the congregation. Through much discussion, we decided to use the website as our %hub+of communication from which all other communication tools would take their information. This is not a perfect place to store information, admittedly, because there is a portion of the congregation

that does not use the internet. But the team felt that by giving the newsletter the purpose of making the information from the website available in a different format, everyone would be able to still feel connected.

What is the most exciting thing to me is that since all communications will be taken from the information on the website, the church will have access to any information they need at any time! Information will be shared through other methods of communication based on the purpose of the communication tool was given by the staff. So for instance, if there is a Block Party coming up, the information about the event will be: on the website, the televisions in the narthex, and the electronic sign, because these are the tools that the staff decided would be used to communicate with the community. Information in the bulletin would be taken from the website as well, but geared toward those within the church who would be volunteering. I am excited to try out this system for the next year. I hope to hear stories about how the church and the community are more able to get involved and excited about what it happening because there is simply more information readily available!

With better communication, it is my hope that we as a church will be able to focus on those two convictions of how we live out our purpose which were stated above: intentional connections with our community and caring for one another through all of life. One way we are already going about doing this is through the re-instatement of the Stephen Ministry, which has been a real answer to prayer. Over the past year I have been burdened by the limitations of being a single mother and sole pastor. I have felt that there have been times when I would have liked to walk more closely with individuals in crisis. This need was felt by another in the congregation who asked that we consider reinstating this incredible program which offers congregants the opportunity to have confidential meetings with trained lay leaders during times in their lives when they feel they need consistent spiritual care.

I am happy to say that there are already those in the congregation receiving this care! It makes me proud to say that we as a church have found a way that we can better live into our conviction to care for one another through all of life. Times of difficulty and crisis are holy moments; as such it is an honor to walk beside one another in these moments. It is a gift not only for the person receiving care, but also the person offering it, and the community as a whole. If that sounds like something you would like to take part in as a minister or care receiver please let me know. Please contact me by email (pastor@midlandfbc.com) or telephone (989-835-6731).

The final thing that I want to share about how we are going to be living out our purpose and conviction to live like Jesus through intentional connections with our community, is through what I am calling a Community Story Study (previously referred to as an Ethnographic study). Over the next year we are going to send a small team of people into our community to listen to the stories of our neighbors. What is it like living in Midland? What resources do you wish this city had? We are going to seek to learn about our neighbors and to see our city from their perspective.

You may be asking yourself, Why? Too often churches try to make connections with their community by meeting the needs and desires that they perceive the community has. These endeavors often fail because the church soon realizes either the need they perceived was there, wasn't, or that someone else is already meeting the need better. What is sad is that sometimes the church has already changed their whole focus. For instance, we can believe that a fully contemporary service with lights and a

killer band would bring in millennials; but what if we asked them before we tried to make that change? What if instead of asking what do we need to grow, we ask where does who we are intersect with the needs and desires of the community? The %Community Story Study+gives us the chance to do this! It gives us the information we need to truly make those intentional connections with our community that we so desire to have.

As I look at these three incredible opportunities, I can't help but feel like we are headed into a season of growth as a church. The thing is, growth can come in a few different forms. Sometimes it's growth in things that we can quantify: people, dollars, families, etc. Sometimes it is in living into our identity. In a perfect world, it's both and it's now! But, often growth starts small; and because of that we can get discouraged.

My prayer for us in this season is that God would give us patience as we faithfully move toward the vision that He gave us in our new purpose. I pray that we would be given moments when our eyes would be open and we can clearly see the growth in our church, in whatever form that takes. I pray that we would be a people who continue to faithfully learn to live like Jesus and that others would come to know Him through our faithfulness.

~Rev. Lara Freeburg



Scrapbooker's

Friday & Saturday

9AM – 5PM

**Ladies: Bring your craft project,
knitting, etc., and join us!**

December 7 & 8, 2017

MISSION & MINISTRY TEAM

The FBC Mission Ministry Team have been meeting on a monthly basis to focus on our yearly process of revisiting our local community mission engagement for 2018. This year, due to limited resources, we have decided to look at which organizations we have engaged in the past would allow us the most opportunities to engage in missions work as a congregation and have the greatest need for the resources we can offer.

Organization Selection Process Team went through each organization on the four criteria listed below, survey results from Sponsor's input, vote sheet by MM team, and discussed in detail on which organizations to keep and to discontinue our support for 2018 budget year.

Four criteria identified for evaluation:

- Have they received donation through United Way campaign?
 - What are the other sources of funding they received?
 - What is the impact IF they don't receive \$250 donation from FBC?
- Does this organization align with FBC new Vision and Mission statement?
- How could FBC be more impactful to them?
- Any other creative ways to support other than financial support?

2018 Budget Proposal

- Maintain last year budget at \$12,550
- Reallocation of funding between Local Community vs. World Mission
- Maintain "on-site" event budget

Submitted by Cindy Kwok-Wong, Chair, on behalf of the M& M team . Beverly Babb, Elaine Parsons, Janice Wallace, Victor Atiemo-Obeng and Cindy Kwok-Wong.

As almost 50% of our Mission Ministry goes to ABC-USA, you may be interested in seeing where the monies go.

<http://www.abc-usa.org/abcusa-eneewsletter/>



**We'd like to send Warm Birthday Wishes
to all who have birthdays in December!**

January's Newsletter deadline is December 18, at Noon.

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.awincan.com/church-movies/>



MUSIC NOTES FROM THE MUSIC MINISTER

DECEMBER 2017

As we enter the Christmas season, we sing familiar carols and hear the familiar words of scripture. **Greetings favored one. The Lord is with you!** the angel Gabriel told Mary. **Glory to God in the highest and peace to all people on earth,** sang the angels. **Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place!** the shepherds rejoiced. **Where is the child who has been born King of the Jews?** asked the magi. **Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.**

This year's Take Note! Christmas musical, *The Nativity*, has the usual cast of characters, the usual words, but with a few twists. Did you know that there were bees in the barn with the donkey, cow and sheep? Did you know that there was a littlest shepherd who knew something very special was going to happen that night? Did you know that the magi arrived in a Honda? Yes, really, they all came in one *accord!*

Bad jokes aside, please join us Sunday evening, December 3 at 6 pm for our Christmas musical. Come earlier at 4 to be a part of the Hanging of the Greens activities and stay for soup supper at 5. At 6:30 pm, after the musical, we will hold our annual Hanging of the Greens Talent show. Sign up to share your talent with the congregation. All in all, December 3 plans to be a fun filled night for all ages.

CALENDAR Take Note! Elementary and Middle School Choir and Bell Ensemble continue to meet Monday evenings from 3:30-6. Our **dress rehearsal** for the Christmas musical is Saturday Dec. 2 from 10-12. Our last Monday time together is Dec. 4 when we will take our musical to Stratford Pines and have a pizza and cookie decorating party. All kids ages K-8 are invited to take part in choir, handbells, devotions, games and snacks. Almost 2/3 of children attending are either unchurched or attend another church in Midland. Take Note! is truly an outreach of love that just happens to focus on music making. **Chancel Choir** and **Chancel Bells** continue to meet on Wednesday evenings. **Praise Team** rehearses Sunday mornings before worship.

MANY THANKS to our PowerPoint team- Dave Hitchcock, Cindy Kwok, Joey Meilink, Alex and Amelia Sutherland. We will have a special PowerPoint presentation each Sunday in Advent as part of the Advent candle lighting at the beginning of worship.

MAKING CONTACT Please contact me via email, jant@tm.net, or by office phone. My winter office hours are Monday and Wednesday, and Tuesday and Thursday after 12.

~Soli Deo Gloria, Jan Sutherland, Music Minister



Halloween Hallway: Thank you all for the effort that went into making the Halloween Hallway a success! Many in the community have commented on how much their little ones enjoy it and parents appreciate our church for our community involvement. Special Kudos to Ceonni Williams and Lauren Gray for organizing this year's event.

Rose Garden: The roses have an adequate supply of leaf protection. Thank you to all who supplied bags of leaves for this purpose. ~Bob & Jo Clarke

Salvation Army Bell Ringers: Thank you to everyone who volunteered to help make Christmas a bit brighter for others by taking a one-hour shift ringing bells for the Salvation Army Red Kettle Drive on Saturday, December 2. All nine slots are filled! I hope this cheers the hearts of those spending an hour in the cold as it will surely help others in our community. Many thanks!
~Elaine Parsons, Project Coordinator



December 10 from 3-5:00PM!!!
Meet in the Chapel at 3:00PM!

DECEMBER CALENDAR - 2017

Regular Schedule

Sundays	9:30 AM 11:00 AM	Worship Service - Communion Service is the 1 st Sunday of each month Sunday School
Mondays	10-11:30AM 6:30 PM	Staff Meeting (2 nd Monday staff meeting is on Tuesday @ 12:30PM) Team Network Meeting - Media Rm - December 11 - <u>All church is invited!</u>
Tuesdays	7:30 AM	Men's Breakfast at M's Café at 5103 Eastman Rd.
Wednesdays	5:30 PM 6-7:00PM 6:15 PM 7:15-8:30PM	Stewardship & Finance Meeting - Media Room - December 20 Chancel Bells Practice Property Management Meeting - Media Room - December 6 Chancel Choir Practice
Saturdays	10AM-2PM	FBC Serves at Open Door - December 9 (2nd Saturday of Every Month)

ABIDING SCRIPTURES DECEMBER — ISAIAH 9:2-7

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Special Event</u>
Dec 3	9:00 AM	Communion Service
	10:45 AM	December Business Meeting
	11:00 AM	Sunday School
	4:00 PM	Decorating
	5:00 PM	Soup Supper (Bring salad/dessert to share)
	6:00 PM 6:30 PM	Take-Note! Christmas Musical Hanging of the Greens Talent Show
Dec 8	9AM-5PM	Scrapbookers in the Hearthside Room
Dec 9	9AM-5PM	Scrapbookers in the Hearthside Room
	6-8:00PM	Youth Christmas Party @ the Steib's
Dec 12	9:30 AM	Worship Service
	11:00 AM	Sunday School
	3-5:00 PM	Christmas Caroling - meet in Kitchen
Dec 18	-	January Newsletter Deadline
Dec 24	9:30 AM	Sunday Worship Service
	6:30 PM	Christmas Eve - Prelude
	7:00 PM	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Dec 25-28	-	Office Closed for Christmas
Jan 1	-	Office Closed for New Year's Day



**Hanging of the Greens
Program**

USHERS
Dave Hitchcock
Jenn Hitchcock

CHURCH GREETERS
3 Leona S. & Sue Funk
10 D. Pellegrom & Kathy W.
17 Keith & Karen Freeburg
24 Allen & Sharon Ross
31 John & Vicki Walter

[CLICK HERE to Connect to Church Calendar](#)



CONGREGATIONAL CARE

Serving with Love



H.O.P.E. LUNCHEON - December 17 @ Noon:

Raising a Dream!

Many of us have a huge heart for Lacey, Ben, and Noah Schultz. We have watched them during the past 2 years in their journey to bring a baby into their family. About a year ago they began a journey to discover why they were struggling with infertility. It came as a blow when they learned that they are dealing with Klinefelter Syndrome. (More details, below). After much prayer, counsel, and investigation, they have felt led to pursue donorship.

Upon learning of their dream, several of us approached Ben and Lacey asking if we might assist them in raising needed funds. We felt there would be others, like us, who would like to be a part of raising this dream with the Schultz'.

On December 17, we are hosting a Hope Luncheon. Lunch will be served from Noon-1pm. Come enjoy Fellowship and Brunch! A free will offering will be accepted in support of the Schultz Family dream to bring a baby into their family. Enjoy reading their story, below.

Dear First Baptist Friends: Ben and I met in the Fall of 2011. Both of us had been in previous marriages that did not work out. From the moment we met, it was easy to be with each other. What started as a good friendship soon turned into much more.

We had been dating for over a year when Ben proposed on Christmas day in 2012. We were married at First Baptist on August 24th of 2013. For several years we have had the dream to extend our family of three and to have more children. But, after years of trying we felt something was holding us back. Therefore, we decided it was time to look into what was stopping our dream from coming true.

After much bloodwork, genetic testing, and time, we finally had some answers, but it was not the answer for which we had hoped. We have learned that Ben was born with a genetic disorder, Klinefelter Syndrome, also known as the XXY condition. This condition causes infertility.

We have gone through a rough few months, coming to terms with what this diagnosis means for us as a family and our hopes. The dream of having a baby has not gone away for us. Therefore, after many conversations, consultation, and research, we have decided to try to have another child through donorship.

We are excited that God has given us this option for expanding our family. One day, soon, we may see our dream of having a baby come true.

Being able to have another child means the world to us. We cannot begin to thank you for praying for us, and considering the opportunity (you will read about, below) to make this dream feasible!

Thank you for your care over our family,
Lacey and Ben

SHUT-INS

Have an hour free this month? Consider visiting one of our Shut-Ins!

(Another list will be printed in next month's Newsletter)

Elva Blymyer

Stone Crest Assisted Living, 255 N. Main St (M-47) #14A, Freeland, MI 48623

Dale Green

1919 Pinesboro Drive, Sanford, MI 48657

Emma Mantel

Stratford, 2121 Rockwell Drive, Midland, MI 48642

Ruth O'Dell

521 N. Rustic Drive, Midland, MI 48640

Lou Stickney (On Hospice)

Stratford - Woodbridge Wing #251 - 2121 Rockwell Drive, Midland, MI 48642

Date: December 1, 2017

Newsletter for Friends and Members
First Baptist Church
915 E. Sugnet Road
Midland MI 48642-3772

Sunday Schedule

9:30AM Worship Service
11:00AM Sunday School



First Baptist Church
915 E. Sugnet Rd.
Midland, MI 48642
Phone: (989) 835-6731
Email: office@midlandfbc.com
Website: www.midlandfbc.com

Communion served 1st Sunday of the Month

In the spirit of our compassionate Christ, we are a family of growing believers serving all of God's people in an ever-changing world!

If you do not wish to receive this mailing, please contact us to remove your name: 989-835-6731 or Email: office@midlandfbc.com

Website: <http://www.midlandfbc.com>

Lara Heise: Lead Pastor (Cell: 815-690-8476)

Jan Sutherland: Music Minister

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