



**January 1, 2018**

## First Things

A Monthly Newsletter for Members and Friends

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

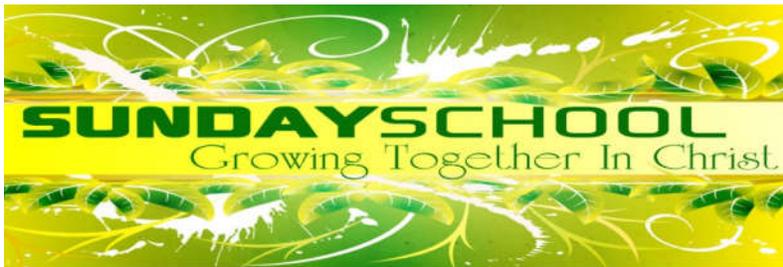
*What We Do: We are learning to live the life that Jesus would live if Jesus were living our life through:*

- *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.



### **ADULT CLASSES:**

- **MESSAGE ENGAGEMENT**  
Facilitated by Rev. Karen Walker-Freeburg ~ Chapel ~
- **MISSING THE POINT**  
Led by Victor Atiemo-Obeng, Mark Neil ~ Harmony Room ~
- **KNIT, PRAY, LOVE**  
Led by Elaine Parsons ~ Room 16, North Wing ~

## PRAYER PARTNERS

**For those that grieve:** The Townsend/Raetz Families (Lorraine's brother Jim passed).

**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 (cancer), Ruthie O'Dell, Elaine Parsons, Joyce Poland, Joyce Phillips, Anne Poindexter, Andrea Ross (numbness/chemo), Chris Seamster (fighting forest fires), Shirley Sevenser, Betty Spiker, Lou Stickney, Alex Sutherland and Family, Marilyn Walker, 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); 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; and Tim Richard (leukemia).

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](mailto:office@midlandfbc.com).

## LEAD PASTOR

I will never forget my first Christmas here in Midland, an unbelievable five years ago! We had chosen to move into our new home the weekend after Thanksgiving, so the joy of the Christmas season mixed with the excitement of our new life here in Michigan. It was that joy and excitement that inspired me to step out of my comfort zone, by taking active steps to get to know my neighbors by baking them Christmas cookies and personally delivering them. What you may not know about me is that I am much shyer than I appear! It can be hard for me to step out and meet new people, so it took some effort for me to make this decision.

I spent hours over several days baking a variety of cookies. I bought cute Christmas platters to act as another gift for my soon to be friends. Finally, the time had come to make the deliveries. We bundled up and headed out the door cookies in hand. Sadly, those two five minute conversations would be the only ones that I had with my neighbors in three years. I would not become friends with them, as I had hoped. Instead we would live quietly side by side with an occasional wave.

When I moved in August, I was nervous that I would, again, experience a lack of connection with my neighbors. While I am happy to say that we have already made friends with some of our new neighbors, I have to admit that I have not had much contact with them lately and that there are still many more I could meet. I am realizing that I am probably going to have to take active steps if I want to make those regular connections.

While I see this effort to reach out as one for me personally, I also see it as right where God is calling First Baptist to focus for the 2018 year. As you may recall, I often set a yearly

focus which guides the leadership for the year. In previous years we have focused on “Who we are” or “Living out who we are”; this year our focus is going to be **“Growing as Neighbors.”**

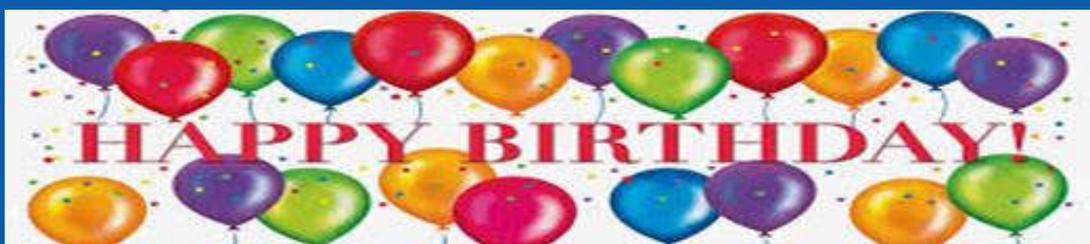
I talked last month about the “Community Story Study.” This study is going to be crucial for this year’s focus, as it will help us grow in our knowledge of our neighbors, who they are and what their experiences are. The goal of the study is to help us grow in how we live out our relationship with our neighbors. This is the same goal I identified for the sermon series for the 2018 year.

To begin, growth often times requires a shift in thinking or understanding. This is the foundation of the first of these series, which will start January 7, “New Beginnings.” This series will focus on revivals and paradox shifts which have taken place inside the church from the “Wisemen” who visited the infant Jesus to the shifts in the church in the last fifty years. From there, during Lent, our series “The Saints Before Us” will focus on those within the church who have laid the foundation of our faith. Moving forward is best built on an understanding of the past, so the series will offer us the chance to look back at where we have come from and how that affects where we are going.

In the Spring, our sermon series “A Fellowship of Different” will tie this understanding of the history of the church together with our guiding principle of “A church for all” by focusing on what it means for us to be a fellowship of those who are so different. What a great discussion as we begin to look at adding more people to our body! This will be followed by the summer sermon series, “Founded on Faith” which will focus on the stories found in Hebrews 11, about the Old Testament fathers and mothers of faith who overcame much by their trust in the Lord. Then, we will end the year with three back-to-back series which will focus on what we have, where the needs are around us, and what are we going to do about it.

I am so excited about where God is leading us in 2018. I have this sense that this will be a year of growth for us personally, as a church, and in the community. Please join me in praying for our church in this season!

~Rev. Lara Freeburg



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

February's Newsletter deadline is January 24, at Noon.



## MUSIC NOTES FROM THE MUSIC MINISTER WINTER 2018

As we enjoy the journey to and through the Christmas season, to the celebration of Christ's birth, 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.**

But we have also heard many unfamiliar words on our journey this December.

Christmas, the actual date of December 25, is preceded by a journey to that date. In church history, and still today in many denominations of our faith, this is referred to as Advent. During Advent, we hear the voices of the prophets **calling out from the wilderness.** The prophets, Haggai, Zephaniah, Malachi and others call us out of our Christmas comfort at a cuddly babe in a manger, and ask us to look not only at ourselves and our worshipping communities, but to look to the future, Easter, when this babe is grown and is killed on a cross. While this may be disconcerting to some, it explains why, this December, Christmas carols such as **Hark! The Herald Angels Sing** and **Joy to the World**, extolling the birth of Jesus, are paired with Advent carols such as **O Come, O Come Emmanuel** and **Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus** asking for God's divine presence, and songs such as **Refiners Fire** and **The Heart of Worship** that remind us to get ready for the birth by being in right relationship with God and others!

I invite you to open your hymnal in worship and look at the diversity of Advent and Christmas carols in our own hymnal. Read past the first stanzas we are all familiar with and you will find words that speak of prophecy, refined lives and Easter resurrection.

Would you ever bake a cake without gathering the ingredients and reading the directions? Even if you have baked a cake a thousand times, you still need to wash your hands, gather the utensils, and start the oven. You know what the results will be, what the cake is going to look like, how it will smell, how it will taste, but you still must take the time to get ready to make it happen. The cake is Christmas. The preparation is Advent. These are the prophets making ready the way. Yes, you can get a premade cake at Kroger, but isn't the time spent in preparation worth it to get something made with love? Why jump right to the birth, Christmas and the prepackaged popular culture that wants you to spend more time worrying about temporal gifts and running your fool head off to get a bargain, when you can experience the true gift, the real bargain, the richness of the preparation, and the remembrance of why Jesus was born?

May God's blessings of peace and joy live in your hearts throughout this season and into the new year.

~Soli Deo Gloria, Jan Sutherland, Music Minister

## GUIDING PRINCIPLE OF THE MONTH

**ORDINANCES** --- The Believer's Baptism and The Lord's Supper are two "ordinances" that we believe we have received from Jesus. We believe that we should follow these.



### Salvation Army Bell Ringers:

Thank you so much to Cindy Kwok, Dave and Jenn Hitchcock, Gale Bradish, Patrick, Lilly and Claire Caldwell, Allen Ross, Dale Moore, Gerald Bruce, Kathy Williams, Rick and Mona Imhoff for ringing bells Saturday, December 2, for Salvation Army on behalf First Baptist Church. Thank you Lacey Schultz for coordinating subs and Bob Clarke for volunteering to sub if needed. You all did a great job getting this project done!

~Elaine Parsons, Coordinator

### HOPE Luncheon:

A heart-felt thank you is extended to everyone for your participation in the successful December HOPE Luncheon, which was held in support of the Schultz families' hope for a baby.

We are excited that people responded so well. Barb Neil led a great group of loving volunteers. It took cooks, set-up people, decorators, and a clean-up team to create the fun Luncheon. How exciting that we met the goal and raised just over \$4,900 for Lacey and Ben's Dream!!!! (Details regarding their journey are in the December First Things Newsletter.)

Again, thank you for your generosity and continued prayers. This was a beautiful example of the FBC community "caring for one another through all of life."

~Karen Walker-Freeburg, on behalf of the Schultz family.

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/>

## **STEWARDSHIP & FINANCE: December 2017 - Financial Report**

General Fund Income	\$ 264,555	99.80%
General Fund Expenses	\$ 245,849	92.74%
Surplus/Deficit	\$ 18,706	

**Annual Report Deadline** - It is THAT time again! Please send all Annual Report Information to Shelley Page ASAP!

## **JANUARY CALENDAR - 2018**

### Regular Schedule

		<b>ABIDING SCRIPTURES JANUARY — EPHESIANS 2:1-10</b>
Sundays	9:30 AM 11:00 AM	Worship Service - Communion Service is the 1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month Sunday School
Mondays	10-11:30AM 6:30 PM	Staff Meeting (2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday staff meeting is on Tuesday @ 12:30PM) <b>Team Network Meeting - Media Rm - January 8 - <u>All church is invited!</u></b>
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	<b>Stewardship &amp; Finance Meeting - Media Room - January 17</b> <b>Chancel Bells Practice</b> <b>Property Management Meeting - Media Room - January 3</b> <b>Chancel Choir Practice</b>
Saturdays	10AM-2PM	<b>FBC Serves at Open Door - January 13</b> (2 <sup>nd</sup> Saturday of Every Month)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Special Event</u>
Jan 1	-	Office Closed for New Year's Day
Jan 3	6:00 PM 7:15 PM	Chancel Bells Resumes Chancel Choir Resumes
Jan 8	3:45-5:30PM	Take-Note! Children's Choir & Chimes Resumes
Jan 19	9AM-5PM	Scrapbookers in the Hearthside Room
Jan 20	9AM-5PM	Scrapbookers in the Hearthside Room
Jan 21	-	February Newsletter Deadline
Jan 25-28	-	Possible Youth Escape Weekend - details to come

### USHERS

Jim Hitt  
Bob Clarke  
Jo Clarke



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

**SAVE THE DATE!!!**

**FEBRUARY 4, 2018**  
**Annual Business Meeting**



## Scrapbooker's

**Friday & Saturday**

**9AM – 5PM**

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

**January 19 & 20, 2018**



**CONGREGATIONAL CARE**

*Sewing with Love*



**Prayer Update for Peter Mortensen:**

Peter had his first treatment, November 28, with no unpleasant side effects. His next one will be in two weeks. He is part of a clinical study so cost is minimal. Thanks to FBC friends for your concern and prayers.

**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)

**Joyce Phillips**

40 Rosemary Court, Midland, MI 48640

**Verda Rider**

1400 Eastlawn, Midland, MI 48642

**Mercedes Ross**

350 Dick Street, Midland, MI 48642

**Shirley Sevener**

4815 Russell St, Midland, MI 48640

**Dorothy Trask**

800 W Meadowbrook, Midland, MI 48640

**Marilyn Walker**

4015 Washington, Midland, MI 48642

Date: January 4, 2018

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](mailto:office@midlandfbc.com)  
Website: [www.midlandfbc.com](http://www.midlandfbc.com)

Communion served 1<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto:office@midlandfbc.com)**

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

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

Jan Sutherland: Music Minister

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