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Volume 71 Issue 12
March 2024

Welcome

BEACON

Pastoral Staff

Pastors:

Senior Pastor: Dennis Strawn

Associate Pastor: Michael Agapito

Administrative Staff

Church Secretary: Kasey Bosler

Administrative Assistant: Susan Doty

Bookkeeper: Jeremy Waters

Custodian:

Sunday Custodian: Craig Henness

Music Ministries

Director of Praise and Worship:

Elijah Agapito

Director of Music & Fine Arts:

Carol Mausehund

Director of Worship:

Kim Henness

Organist: Carol Mausehund

Pianist: Rachel Warfel

Director of Handbells: Melissa Etchison

Support Ministries

Director of Children & Ignite:

Kim Henness

Director of Kingdom Kids:

Sherri Shepard

Wee Worship Director:

Rachel Doty

Nursery Director:

Kristen Henness

Director of Shut-in Visitation:

Robin Bennett

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A Pastor's Heart

Easter Is Coming

...“Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!...” (Luke 24:5-6 NIV)
As we prepare our hearts to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ on March 31, 2024, I wanted to share some lyrics to one of my favorite Easter songs, *His Heart Beats* by Andrew Peterson and Ben Shive.

His heart beats,
His blood begins to flow,
waking up what was dead a moment ago.
And His heart beats, now everything is changed,
'cause the blood that brought us peace with God
is racing through His veins.

And His heart beats,
He breathes in,
His living lungs expand.
The heavy air surrounding death turns to breath again.
He breathes out,
His word in flesh once more.
The Lamb of God slain for us is a Lion ready to roar.
And His heart beats.

His heart beats, He will never die again.
I know that death no longer has dominion over Him.
So, my heart beats with the rhythm of the saints
as I look for the seeds the King has sown
to burst up from their graves.

So, crown Him the Lord of Life,
crown Him the Lord of Love,
crown Him the Lord of All.
He took one breath
and put death to death.
Where is your sting, O grave?
How grave is your defeat.

1 Corinthians 15:55–58 NIV, “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

Love you and see you in Church, Pastor Dennis



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COME...to Worship God.
 GROW...in Christ. GO...in His Spirit.

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MEMORIALS HAVE BEEN GIVEN IN LOVING MEMORY:

Of Tary Blair from:
 Rosalee Myers, Judy Weiss, Jeanette Butler, Joe Fonner

Of David Woolever from:
 John & Susan Doty, Tim Woolever, Beverly Homann, Jean Rick, Janet Homann, Wayne & Donna McMorris, Lucy Perkins, Brad & Maura Voyles, Jackie Butler, Leland Eyrse, Gary & Karin Bright, Steve & Kathy Ferguson, Dave & Ardys Carpenter

Of Richard Kirk from:
 Norma Schussler, Libby & Mike Murray, Mike & Diana ZuHone, Patty & Mike Heinold, Paul & Julie Stranz, Joe & Peggy Kirk, Beverly Homann, Ed & Rosie Schniers, Janet Homann, Alan & Brenda Severson, Paul & Barb Daily, Debbie Roy, Rex Brown, Duane & Ada Seaman, Jill Rainey, Donna St. John, Dan & Marilyn Coleman, Sue Turner, John & Robin Bennett

Thank you for all the calls, cards, and prayers while I was in the hospital and nursing home. I am back home now and feeling much better.
 – Gene Himes

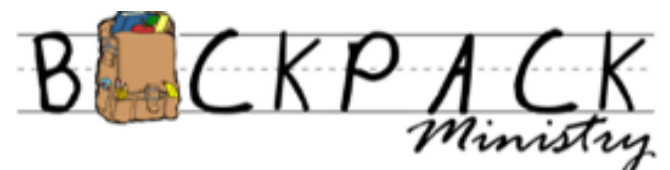
My family and I would like to thank everyone for the kind thoughts and gestures as we celebrated the life of David.
 – Shirley Woolever



Joy Givers will meet at noon on Tuesday, March 5th for a casserole luncheon. Bring your favorite casserole, vegetable, salad, or dessert to share. Board members try to bring a meat casserole, please. Kim Henness will present our program and Michael Agapito will bring our Easter Devotion. Invite a friend and come out to enjoy an afternoon of food, fun, and fellowship!



Men's Breakfast will meet Saturday, March 23rd at 8:00 am in the Fellowship Hall. All men are invited to attend.
 Spring is just around the corner, we are all anxious for warmer weather, and looking forward to the Easter



celebration of the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The backpack workers will be filling backpacks on Wednesday, March 20th at 11:30 am, after Bible Study. There is only one distribution in March due to Spring break and Easter vacation for the children in Mattoon Schools. Have a great Easter with your family and friends.



February has been a relatively quiet month in terms of youth ministry events because of Super Bowl Sunday and YMCA Family Night, but we were still able to fit in one youth group meeting and our monthly food pantry run. For our youth group meeting, we met on the 25th Michael and Amy's house and had another "Big Questions Night" in which students turned in anonymous questions about God, the Bible, life, etc., so that we could discuss them as a group. They had some really good and deep questions, such as, "Why would God send other people to hell that aren't Christians?" We discussed what the Bible says while always bringing it back to the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ alone.

Our Wednesday night "Prime Time" hangouts for 6-12th graders continues to be a bright spot and highlight. This is especially true because as a new development for the past several weeks we have been receiving a group of about 5 new high schoolers of relatively unchurched backgrounds who started coming out of curiosity because they heard about it. I was stunned at how God seemed to just deliver them to our doorstep. I have already had the privilege of having many spiritual conversations with them. I want to ask all of you that read this to pray with me that the Holy Spirit will guide and direct our conversations and work in their hearts to soften them toward the gospel. I have already seen a lot of openness toward the message of Jesus.

Looking ahead toward the month of March, we will have our monthly Food Pantry run on March 3rd; regular youth group meetings on March 10th, 17th, and 24th; and no youth group meeting on March 31st

due to Easter Sunday. Many thanks to Aaron and Courtney Ifft who have graciously volunteered to fill in for me on March 17th as we expect baby Agapito to come any day now!

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at magapito93@gmail.com. *Soli Deo gloria.*

Your servant in Christ,
 Michael



On the first Sunday of March, the Children and Youth of the church will present Youth & Children's Sunday at both services. The Chancel Choir plans to rehearse in the Choir Loft at 7:00 pm on the Wednesdays of this month. On Wednesday March 6th, 13th, and 20th they will be practicing anthems to present at the 10:00 am worship services on March 10th (**note that the time changes this weekend and we set our clocks an hour ahead as we Spring Forward**), March 17th, and 24th (Palm Sunday). There will be no Prime Time Wednesday activities on Wednesday March 27th due to that being Spring Break for Mattoon Schools, so **Chancel Choir will practice their Dress Rehearsal for Easter Sunday at 6:00 pm in the Choir Loft.**

The Maundy Thursday service will be on March 28th at 7:00 pm. You will not want to miss this meaningful service. Ballet Emmanuel will be interpreting *Via Dolorosa* at this time during Holy Week. On March 31st, First Baptist Church will celebrate the Resurrection of Our Lord all morning! The American Baptist Men will be serving a delicious breakfast from 7:00-9:00 am in the Fellowship Hall. Tickets will soon be available. The 8:00 am worship service is Youth-led and a wonderful celebration proclaiming that *He is Risen!* Discipleship Hour classes will meet at 9:00 am. At 10:00 am, the Chancel Choir, Praise Team, and Sacred Tones Bell Choir will lead in worship as we celebrate the Victory that Christ had over death and the grave.

A new musical entitled, *The Hope of the Cross* by Jay Rouse will be presented using several different styles of music. Solos, Choral numbers, and Narration will be a part of *Shout Hosanna, All Hail King Jesus, God of Calvary, I Believe He's Alive, Power to Redeem, The Hope of the Cross, and Here He Comes!* The music and narration will take us all from Palm Sunday to His Second Coming! Plan

to be blessed by all of the special things going on in the month of March and be a blessing by inviting someone to come with you and rejoice that He is Risen! Chancel Choir members will have the Wednesday of April 3rd off, but please plan to return to the Loft at 7:00 pm on April 10th.

-Carol Mausehund



BOARDS AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS: Monday, March 11th at 6:30 pm
 Diaconate in Library
 Finance room 4
 Trustees room 5
 Pastoral Relations room 7
 Board of Christian Ed room 3
 Missions Board room 8
 Music Committee room 10

7:30 pm -Church Council in Library

If you agreed to serve on a board or committee, please make every attempt to be there. Your attendance is needed.



OUR CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY is extended to the family of Richard Kirk.

OUR CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY is extended to the family of Bonnie Janes.

Operation Christmas Child

We recently received an email from 10-year-old Aaron from Guyana.



An excerpt from Aaron's email: "I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to express my deepest gratitude for the

Samaritan Box that I received from you. Your thoughtful gesture has touched my heart, and I am truly appreciative of the kindness and generosity you have shown."

Aaron was able to correspond with us because of a card included in his shoebox at our Packing Party last fall that included the church email address. His box was packed by Shoebox Crew member Karina Davis.

The purpose of every shoebox gift that we send is to share God's love with the child in a tangible way and to share the good news of Jesus.



Filled with Love will be wrapping up at the end of February. As of the time of writing this article, 14 shoebox gifts have been sponsored with a gift of \$30. The FBC Shoebox Crew will shop for items to fill these boxes, make sure they are packed full, and will include them in the Operation Christmas Child collection week in November.

We have inventoried the supplies we have available to use this year and hope to have the Shoebox Crew pack at least 80 shoebox gifts this year.

Watch for announcements of additional items needed; planned Shoebox Crew Worknights; and a "How to Pack a Shoebox" workshop planned for the fall. You can also start gathering items now to pack your own shoeboxes. Monetary gifts for Operation Christmas Child at First Baptist may be given year-round. Just mark your offering envelope "OCC", include a check, and place it in one of the offering boxes.

LENT--A TIME TO RENEW OUR FAITH AND TO SEE HIM AS HE REALLY IS – by Carol Idleman

Faith is believing not only that God exists, but also that He is Who He says He is and that He did, does and will always do everything out of His love for us. It's knowing that all things of God are real and true without being able to see it all through our physical eyes. Our faith needs to be that on which we base all that we are, do, feel, say and think in each moment of our lives. Lent is the time of year to consciously focus on that faith, looking within to determine whether or not it is truly on that faith that we rely as we live our daily lives. It's a time to renew that faith, to bring it back to the forefront of our hearts and minds, if we have lost our focus. It's important to reflect on all He is and all He's done for us. It's a time to look back at His working through the prophets and priests and judges of old to show mankind he needs a Savior in order to be all he can be for God. God allowed His Son to become human

and to walk this earth to show us Who He is and that it's only through Him that we can be reconciled to God. And His ultimate act of love for us was to allow Jesus to die the most excruciatingly painful, ugly, degrading of all human deaths FOR US—to pay the price for our sins and make us right with God. We were given not only forgiveness for ALL our sin, but also the same power God manifested in Jesus' resurrection, and the Fruit of the Spirit—EVERYTHING we need to be all we can be for Christ. Part of the renewing of our faith could include our looking at God more closely through our spiritual eyes and seeing all He is for us. Among those things are that He is our Lord, our Redeemer, our Confidante, our Comforter, our Rock, our Refuge and our Father. With our physical eyes, we can see His vast, amazing creation and can see the results of His healing and His transformation of those who had been lost—among other things. So, during this Lenten season, it's so important for us to remember Who God is and what He did/does for us. It's a time to search within ourselves to decide if we are truly walking out our faith in the way that is most pleasing to God. Because of this time of reflection and renewal, we can move forward with our faith as our basis for all we are-do-feel-say-think.

And after all the reflecting on and the renewing of our faith has led us to be where we need to be in Him, we **can openly and honestly proclaim to Him:**

HOW GREAT THOU ART!



W o m e n ' s

Connection's first event of the year was "Breakfast with Books." Breakfast was delicious; the book discussions were lively; and some of the ladies adopted books to take home to read.

It is the goal of Women's Connection to plan events that will meet the needs and interests of the women and girls of First Baptist Church. To help us better understand those needs and interests we are planning to conduct a survey in the next few weeks. Ladies, we really hope that you will complete the survey and give your answers some thought. We are currently working on a special praise and worship event for April. You can also be a part of Women's

Connection through Facebook at Women's Connection of First Baptist Mattoon. We hope you will join us!



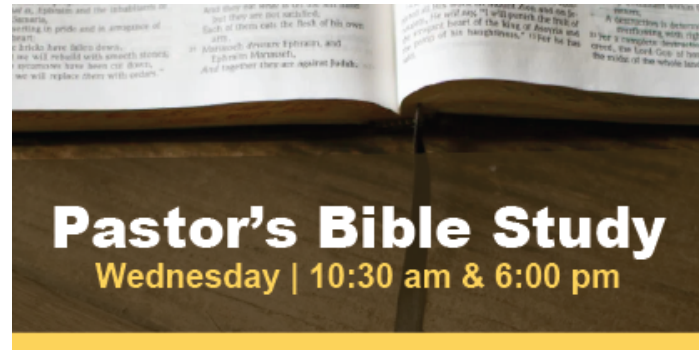
HOW TO REGISTER FOR **rightnow** MEDIA

Text Code:
Text the keyword
FBCMATTOON
to the number

49775



<https://app.rightnowmedia.org/join/fbcmattoon>



Prime Time Wednesdays meets each week from 5:15 to 7:00 pm. Dinner is served each week at 6:00 pm. Upcoming and important dates follow:

3/3 – Children/Youth Sunday – BOTH SERVICES!
Please arrive no later than 7:45 am. Breakfast served.

3/6 – Bible Study


3/13 – Willing Hands

3/20 – Games

3/27 – Spring Break

No activities! Enjoy your break!

3-year olds through Kindergarten students meet with Sherri Shepard upstairs in room 26 each week beginning at 5:15 pm. The students learn a bible story and enjoy fun activities to reinforce the story.

1st through 5th grade students meet with Kim Henness and Elijah Agapito  from 5:15 to 6:00 pm to work on music in room 28, followed by Bible Study, Willing Hands, or Games.

Joyful noise 6th through 12th grade students meet from 5:15 pm to 6:00 pm with Michael Agapito. Following dinner, Kim Henness and Elijah pito will meet with this group.



THIS SUNDAY!!!! Please invite your friends and family



to our youth and children Sunday Worship Service on March 3rd. All our children and youth, age 3 through 12th grade, have been given the opportunity to be

involved and many have answered the call. You don't want to miss this special service. Music, reader's theater, drama, scripture and more will be



presented! You will be blessed!



Please mark your calendar for this year's event, December 14, 2024. First Baptist Church will once again be heading up the GAME TABLE! We would love to have some more folks join our cause this year! Please keep your eye out for SALES! We love sales and we need many items: GAMES, toys, blankets, PJs, underwear, diapers, and cleaning supplies just to name a few! Stay tuned for more exciting information and ways you can be involved.