



AT FIRST BAPTIST

DAN MCDOWELL
Senior Pastor

MILLARD COOK
Asst. Pastor Senior/Adult
Ministries

SUE NEELY VANBRUNT
Minister of Music

BRUCE LAVERTY
Director of Family Ministries

ROBERT FAULDS
Organist

BONNIE KETTLE
Financial Secretary

PENNY SOROKES
Church Secretary

MICKI ELLIS
Audio Visual Specialist

GERALD NUTT
Custodian

GO LOCAL FOR CHRIST OFFERING in March

Each year we choose a local organization that we feel is worthy of our support. This year's offering will be divided between Interfaith Caregivers and the Miriam Counseling Services (Mental Health Counseling) with facilities located at the St. Stephens Episcopal Church in Olean.

The Interfaith Caregiver's office coordinates volunteer drivers and people in need of rides to doctor appointments, etc. This is a much needed service in our area as there are many people unable to drive themselves.

St. Stephen's church has offered space for the Miriam Center. This is a counseling service for all ages in need of help to deal with problems in their lives such as broken relationships, abuse, low self-esteem, conflicts, etc. The counselors help to get to the root of the problem so it can be dealt with and the client feels better in mind, body and spirit.

Contributions may be made anytime during the month of March. Envelopes for this offering will be available throughout the month in the church lounge and in the pew holders in the sanctuary for your convenience. Also, please indicate that your offering is to go to the **GO LOCAL FOR CHRIST OFFERING**, if you do not use one of these special envelopes.



NINTH ANNUAL FBC COMMUNITY EASTER DINNER MARCH 27, 2016

12:45 – 1:30 P.M.

The First Baptist Church and the Olean Food Pantry are once again teaming together to offer a Community Easter Dinner to those in need. The dinner will be "free of charge" and will be served as "dine-in" in our fellowship hall. Take outs will be available by reservation. Seating is limited and reservations will be required prior to March 17. This is a wonderful opportunity for First Baptist to work together with the Olean Food Pantry and assist those less fortunate or those that may be alone on this most joyous day!

Items Needed for Donations: fruit pies (no cream or custard). Cash donations and checks made to First Baptist Church (please note Easter Dinner on your check or envelope) are also appreciated to assist in defraying the cost of this event. Please make all donations to FBC by Sunday, March 20. Call Penny or Pastor Dan at 372-5151 in the church office if you are able to donate, would like to make reservations, or need more information.

Volunteers – We need you! Volunteers are needed in the following areas: set-up and decorating of dining hall; cooking; serving; deliveries, and clean-up.

**THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR
TIME – TALENTS – AND MONETARY GIFTS!**



Contributions for Easter Flowers will be received in the Church office until Tuesday, March 15. Along with your check, please indicate for who your gift is in honor or remembrance. Also indicate if your plant may be given to a shut-in member of our church family.

A \$10 donation is suggested.

commemoration of the Lord's Supper on Maundy Thursday (March 24 – the day before Good Friday). We will gather in the church foyer at 7 pm to share a light snack and time of fellowship, followed by devotions, communion and a time of concentrated silent prayer.



WALK THE WAY OF THE CROSS begins at noon on Friday, March 25. The planning process is still underway, so stay tuned for more details!



PALM SUNDAY CELEBRATION

Our Palm Sunday 9:30 a.m. Worship on March 20 will include a powerful celebration of the Resurrection story presented

by our Senior Choir titled **"I Know My Redeemer Lives!"** This musical brings us together to praise the name of Jesus and share His story: The story of His cross and His resurrection. He could have stopped the painful parade up to Calvary with a word, but He never uttered it. Instead, He opened His arms to the beam, He opened His hands to the nails and He allowed Himself to be crucified. What is the best part of this story? It's the part we, as believers, tell about the truth of who Jesus is, what He did, and how He penetrated our hearts and changed our lives forever. Through His death and resurrection, the sacrifice had been made. The debt has been satisfied. Our redemption has been secured. Christ has been raised. Our hope is real. Our future with Him is certain. We know our Redeemer lives! What a perfect opportunity to invite family and friends to hear the story of salvation and to realize that each of us is "A Sinner Saved by Grace". Congregational hymns, a children's sermon and receiving palms will be part of this meaningful start to Holy Week.



"BACH'S LUNCH" CONCERT Beginning at 11:30 a.m. on the Tuesday, March 22, an ensemble from the Southern Tier Symphony presents a classical

instrumental program at St. Mary of the Angels church. There is no admission fee and all are welcome. A free will offering will be taken.

MAUNDY THURSDAY, One of the most memorable services we hold every year is our annual



The sanctuary will be blooming with spring flowers when our **RESURRECTION CELEBRATION** begins at 9:30 a.m. on March 27. Easter music will fill the sanctuary as the Senior Choir lifts their voices with Resurrection Anthems, our In One A'Chord Handbell Choir rings praises to the Risen King, and the congregation sings together "Up From the Grave He Arose"! Plan now to make your Easter morning a special time of reflection and celebration by joining us for our 9:30 worship and our annual Community Easter Dinner at 12:45 or volunteer your efforts to help with the dinner prepared and served at First Baptist.

PASTOR DAN'S SERMON SERIES DURING LENT: 3/6: "How to Properly Welcome a King" (Luke 19:28-44)

Some of the people that first Palm Sunday thought that they were witnessing a blooper. In their minds, the script wasn't followed the way they thought it should have been but Jesus followed the script perfectly.

3/13: "Getting Real About the Cross" (Luke 23:44-49)

The reality, results and responses to the death of Jesus on the cross.

3/20: (Palm Sunday) Cantata: "I Know My Redeemer Lives"

3/27: (Easter Sunday) "What We Find at the Resurrection" (1 Corinthians 6:14, 15:14)

Four things we find in the fact that Jesus is Alive - life, love, hope, and power.

The Family of God



We extend our **LOVE AND SYMPATHY** to the family of Gloria Button who went Home to her Lord and Savior on February 1. Gloria was an active member of FBC for

68 years serving faithfully in the Senior Choir and on several boards and committees.

DIRECTORY CHANGES

Tim Sherlock
119 Brooklyn Ave.
Wellsville, NY 14895!
(585) 596-9074

CONGRATULATIONS!!!



Katie DeGroff has been swimming for two years with the Enchanted Mountain Aquatics Club and has qualified to swim at the area championships that will be held at Fredonia State University on March 5.

She has qualified for the 50 yard breast stroke, 50 yard back stroke, and 50 yard freestyle. Good Luck Katie!!



Attention High School Seniors and College Students!

If you are graduating this year, please let us know in the office so we can make sure to include you in our graduation recognitions and in the June At First Baptist. Green information forms are available in the lobby rack and are due to the office by May 15. FBC Scholarships are also available to help with those college expenses! Check with the church office for more details. May 15 will be here soon!!



MARCH BOARD MEETINGS

Monday, March 7:

6:00 Board of Christian Education

Sunday, March 13:

Noon Board of Christian Missions

Tuesday, March 15:

6:30 Diaconate

7:00 Board of Trustees



THANK YOU'S

Many thanks to the Board of Trustees, Fellowship Committee, and Church Family at Olean First Baptist for the Staff Appreciation Sunday on January 24.

Your thoughtful words and the gift certificate are much appreciated.

~Penny Sorokes

Thank you for your generous gift of \$550.00. Donations such as yours enable Genesis House to continue ministering to temporarily homeless people. Blessings to you, Linore Lounsberry

Thank you for your monetary donation of \$207.50 from your New Year's Eve concert.

The Olean Food Pantry, Inc.

I just wish to send this heartfelt thank you. I was so excited after receiving your generous donation. I truly believe your generous donation will go a long way in serving all those who enter our doors for assistance. This will include all individuals and families alike. May our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ richly bless you and yours.

Captain Anna Hawkins, Salvation Army



Update your contact info!

If you've made any changes to your mailing address, home phone or cellphone number, or email address.....

Please call the church office to update your information





FROM THE PASTOR'S HEART

As I write this I am in my final preparations to leave for Pakistan. By the time it gets to the

printer and in the mail, I will probably be back in my office preparing for worship on communion Sunday... Or being held captive by the Taliban... or looking down on you from heaven.

I say those things lightheartedly because I have full confidence that my adventure in Pakistan will be well protected and cautiously orchestrated but I must say this is the first time I have left on a vacation thinking to myself, "I can't wait until this is over." Some of that is due to the threat of Muslim extremism so prevalent in Pakistan and some of it is just my fear that I will do something culturally insensitive that would embarrass my daughter and offend my son in law's family.

I am always honored when I am given the opportunity to preach and teach the gospel. It is my highest calling no matter where I am and (since I originally thought my call into the ministry was a call to mission work) going to another culture to share the greatest message ever created is literally a dream come true.

If something were to happen to me over there I can honestly say that I would die a fulfilled man. Recently I have been reminded more and more that I am not a spring chicken. Losing my sister and my mother in recent years drove that home but I'm at the point where I check the obituaries regularly to see if any of my friends are listed there. And they often are. I'm not used to that yet but it does make me think about how I want to die... not to mention how I want to live!

I told someone recently that I hope I die *doing* something. I was reflecting on the death of Supreme Justice Scalia in his sleep and (while there are certainly some attractive things to such a departure) I would much rather go out "with my boots on" so to speak; serving my Lord.

I don't get to choose that of course. As the writer of Ecclesiastes says, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die... There is a time to be born and a time to die. My only focus is to fulfill my purpose under heaven, the Lord chooses when I "have finished my course" (as Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:7) My

highest hope is that like Paul told Timothy I too will be able to say "I fought a good fight... I have kept the faith." Actually, I would rather be able to say I gave my faith away rather than "kept" it.

As Lent makes its way toward Easter this is the wonder that we celebrate; freedom from fear – even the fear of death. I realize that any anxiety I have about Pakistan is based as much on the unknown as it is on known threats. I don't know what it is like there. I don't know that many Pakistani people so I don't really understand their culture or what makes them tick. I certainly won't know my way around and I know that getting lost over there could be dangerous. I'm probably the most obviously American guy in our group. Hard to hide a lily-white 6'4" 300 lb "bigbaldpastor" (my email address if you didn't already know that...)

Paul said "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain." (Philippians 1:21) Those weren't just inspirational prose to the Apostle. He wrote them from a jail cell shortly before his execution. And he wrote them toward the beginning of arguably the most joyful epistle in the entire Bible. I think I have captured a glimmer of what he was thinking and feeling (though I am not under armed guard as I write this like Paul was!)

As you approach Easter this year are you mentally and spiritually prepared for your death? More importantly are you prepared in such a way for the life you have left? What could be more important than that?

We spend most of the time in our live-long-days "carrying on"; earning money, mowing the grass, shoveling snow, paying bills, cooking and cleaning and finding ways to entertain ourselves. Every once in a while (usually a funeral or some other crisis) we are reminded that there are things more important than the priorities that absorb most of our day to day attention; our loved ones, our friends and our eternal destiny (hopefully not in that order).

Lent, reminds us that we are on a journey toward a destination. And it is a journey that matters to you and to all who are in your circle of influence. I hope you will attend to the spiritual part of that journey during worship, the remaining Lenten Lunches and the very special things we have planned for you on Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter. There are opportunities to learn, to give (like the Go Local Offering), and to serve! (like the Easter Dinner).

~Pastor Dan



THE PATIENCE, COMFORT AND HOPE OF THE SCRIPTURES

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.
(Romans 15:4)

I am sure that most of you have, by this point in your lives, come to the realization that the race of life is a marathon and not a hundred- yard dash. Paul told us “*Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.*” (I Cor. 9:24) Yet many times it seems as if we are running in a foot of mud. It takes a lot of effort to keep pushing forward and seems like the easy way would be to just give up. So if we are to be in the race of the Christian life for the long haul what are we to do in order to finish right? Well, the short answer for that, and as our text shows us, is to have our saturated by the Word of God.

I. First we see that the Bible was written for our instruction.

This Word was written aforetime that is its antiquity and shows the Divine origin. It is strictly because this Book is Divine that it is able to instruct us. For those who do not recognize the Divine inspiration the Word of God they have no guidance. There are no absolutes there is the in no right and wrong only what seems right at the moment. But we who know the Bible to be God- Breathed (II Pet. 1:21) have a source of eternal wisdom to teach us how to run the race.

Have you noticed, as I have, that seldom does a student desire to take a test? Why is that? For fear that they have not really learned the material that was given to them. So it is with us. We must learn what the teacher (Holy Spirit) wants us to know from a passage not just to know a story. This is what makes the leaning process a life- long endeavor. He will teach me new things today from passages that I have read hundreds of times before.

II. Second we see we must run with patience

Another word that is used is endurance. Must keep on keeping on. It is discipline and not desire that will determine outcome. The trials and tribulations of life will come upon all of us. It is how we react to them that will determine if or how we finish our race of life.

So often it will happen like this. A trial comes, my usual routine is out the window, my life is focused upon the trial. All too often the thing that is sacrificed is our time with God. And this happens right at the time that we need it most. Patience or endurance says I will keep up my relationship with the Lord, my prayer and study time no matter what else is going on. As we plow on faithfully we find that we will receive the necessary things to continue are run successfully.

III. Third the Bible gives us comfort

As we face the trials and the fatigue of this long race of life the only real comfort we will have comes from God's ministry to us by His Word. For in it we will see how He has comforted, cared for and delivered His faithful servant's time and time again.

The Greek word used here for comfort is “paraklesis” and means to comfort or consolation. A variant of this word is used to describe the Holy Spirit as our comforter. But yesterday's comfort does not relieve today's pain. We must stay in the Word daily for we need daily comfort. Some will only read a verse and will receive a little comfort. While others will meditate upon the Word and truly bath themselves in it. They will receive a hundred times more comfort from the Word.

IV. The Bible give us hope

It is only because of the Bible that we have any hope at all. For by it we know that God is in control of all things. And that He loves us and has a plan for our lives. Then we can look beyond this temporary world to see the great hope that lies before us: A world with no death and pain and a world with no end.

If I choose to look at my life and the trials I face (as we all do) in my own wisdom and my own strength then I can often say there is no hope. Only as I bath myself in the Word can I see the hope in the midst of trials. For I must be constantly reminded that God is in control and He will never leave me or forsake me.

So as you look at the time that you spend in the Word do not see it only as a duty? Rather realize that it is in the Word that you will be instructed on how to run your race. It is in the Word that you will find comfort and hope for whatever you face in this life. So never forsake it. But run with patience the race that is set before you.

~Pastor Millard

funds2orgs™

SHOE COLLECTION DRIVE

Olean FBC's Board of Christian Missions is conducting a shoe collection drive through Funds2Orgs from March 1 thru April 15 to raise funds for the Olean Food Pantry. FBC will earn funds based on the number of pairs collected as Funds2Orgs will purchase all of the donated goods; those dollars will benefit the Food Pantry. Anyone can help by donating gently worn, used or new shoes at FBC.

All donated shoes will then be redistributed throughout the Funds2Orgs network of microenterprise partners in developing nations. Funds2Orgs helps impoverished people start, maintain and grow businesses in countries such as Haiti, Honduras and other nations in Central America and Africa. Proceeds from the shoe sales are used to feed, clothe and house their families. One budding entrepreneur in Haiti even earned enough to send to her son to law school.

Most people have extra shoes in their closets they can donate and help those less fortunate become self-sufficient. It's a win-win for everyone.

Through your donations, the shoes will be given a second chance and make a difference in people's lives.

Check your closets for shoes that you don't need or wear often. . . .those that still have plenty of "miles" left in them. . . .and help us make a difference in many lives and help our local food pantry!

DONATE MARCH 1 – APRIL 15



Check your closets for shoes that you don't need or wear often. . . .those that still have plenty of "miles" left in them. . . .and help us make a difference in many lives and help our local food pantry!

GOAC UNITY SERVICE A SOUL-STIRRING EXPERIENCE

By Deb Wuethrich

I have to confess I attended this year's GOAC (Greater Olean Association of Churches) Unity Service at Epic Church because it was an assignment to cover for the Times Herald. But I will also say that it was a thoroughly enjoyable experience. I was happy to see a few familiar faces there: our Pastor Dan McDowell, of course, who is on the GOAC Executive Board and his wife, Terri; Faith Boyce and Maunie Ketchner. Perhaps there were others.

"Wasn't that an inspiring service?" Faith asked me during Sunday School last week. I had to agree that it was. We both were impressed by the tremendous spread of food afterward. Pastors of several churches came together to speak and provide Scripture readings. The Rev. Vickie Hedlund shared what the GOAC support has meant to the Pastoral Care Chaplaincy at Olean General Hospital and told heartwarming, as well as heartbreaking, stories about the work there. The Rev. Kim Rossi, GOAC President, conferred the Ecumen Award upon two deserving individuals who work tirelessly for the benefit of the Greater Olean community: Father Greg Dobson of St. Mary of the Angels Roman Catholic Church and Maureen Curry of the Olean Food Pantry humbly and graciously accepted and pointed toward the contributions of others rather than themselves. A man named Mark Sabella led the music, mostly Christian contemporary songs many in the audience knew. We were reminded that we should worship in our own way, whether it was to stand up, raise our hands heavenward in praise and thanksgiving or to bow our heads—whatever we were comfortable with. But it was during the chorus of Chris Tomlin's "How Great Is Our God" that I really felt the Spirit moving in the room. The voices in the room declared the **unity** of those gathered there, no matter the denomination or lack of one.

The past few weeks have led me to some encounters with the GOAC and its many interactions in the community. I am beginning to see why Pastor Dan is so passionate about his involvement with this group. Members don't focus on their differences—they band together so more can be done in the community than one church could do alone. Realizing this has made me more likely to contribute funds, time and effort toward future GOAC projects. I hope others will take the time to notice all the good this uniquely cohesive group is doing in this area as well, whether it is providing holiday meals, supporting local ministries or the upcoming shoe collection during Lent to not only help locally, but provide footwear and jobs for developing countries.



LITTLE BOOK EXPLAINS BIG CONCEPT OF SPIRITUAL LIFE

By Deb Wuethrich

When First Baptist was passing along tables full of books a few months ago, my vision-troubled eyes caught on a small volume in large print. The title was, “Making All Things New: An Invitation to the Spiritual Life,” by Dutch priest and author Henri J.M. Nouwen.

I had encountered thoughtful quotes by this author before so added this little book to my big armful that I hoped to be able to read again after cataract surgery.

On the inside flap, Nouwen said he wrote the book in response to the question: “What do you mean when you speak about the spiritual life?” The premise is in the midst of a troubled world, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, appears to each of us, offering new life, the life of the Spirit of God.

In the introduction, Nouwen reminds us we are not to worry and that it is even a command of Jesus. Instead, we are to set our hearts on his kingdom first. In subsequent chapters, the author offers some disciplines that can cause worries to slowly “lose their grip on us,” and “allow the Spirit of God to do his recreating work.” Right away, Nouwen points out that the “spiritual life can only be real when it is lived in the midst of the pains and joys of the here and now,” and that we need to be aware—and cautious—of how we think, speak, feel and act so we may become more aware of our hunger for the Spirit. He talks of characteristics in our feeling “filled” and “unfulfilled,” and how we can approach these.

In the chapter entitled, “His Kingdom First,” Nouwen says Jesus doesn’t tell us what we do in the world isn’t important. He asks us to shift our priorities, putting the kingdom of God first, enabling us to live life by the Spirit. The book contains reminders of how Jesus lived *His* life, in obedience to His Father. He was busy and involved in ministry, but He took time go off and pray, listen and open Himself up to what His Father wanted. This is a spiritual discipline where learning to discern God’s voice is not only possible, but desirable in order to live a spiritual life. To become like Jesus is a

“radical transformation and the work of the Holy Spirit.” It is relationship with God.

One of the hard things for me is discipline, and when I read “a spiritual life without discipline is impossible,” I worry that I might never achieve it. But the author points out that as we gradually practice spiritual disciplines (whether this is setting aside time to read the Bible, pray or meditate), we develop more sensitivity toward what the Spirit is wanting to share with us. He said such discipline comes not only from solitude, but from community, such as taking part in gatherings and ministries here at First Baptist. “The mystery of community,” Nouwen says, “is precisely that it embraces all people, whatever their individual differences may be, and allows them to live together as brothers and sisters of Christ and sons and daughters of His heavenly Father.” He concludes by saying that by the disciplines of solitude and community, “we slowly create some free inner space in our filled lives and so allow God’s Spirit to become manifest to us.”

The book I picked up was reprinted as a classic, so I’m sure can be found in libraries. It’s a pretty quick read with a lot of punch, and leaves readers with something to think about.



YOU’VE GOT MAIL!!!!

Recently, we re-purposed a slotted cabinet to serve as a mailbox for our church family.

You may have noticed it near the front entrance. While the location may not be permanent, it will be located somewhere in the church lobby....perhaps closer to the office door. Be sure to check it out and find the slot with your name. You’ll be able to find your copy of the At First Baptist there as well as other messages and mailings.

Also, remember that the revolving tower near the office window contains copies of recent board minutes and Pastor Dan’s recent sermons, as well as forms for building use, scholarship applications, and more. Be sure to pick up copies of the minutes to stay in-tune with the board discussions and decisions.



Terri McDowell is the contact person for our church **PRAYER CHAIN**. If you would like to be included in the circulation or if you have a prayer concern to share, please contact Terri at terri0254@yahoo.com or 716-307-1327.

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 2 Maxine Amore Lucas
- 4 Bob Brookins
Bayli Pascucci
David Torrey
- 5 Gail Crowley
- 8 Jeanette Butler
- 10 Donna DeLong
- 11 Vi Pettigrew
Lindsay Cummings
- 13 Matthew Butler
- 14 Heather Schultz-Piche
- 15 Ted Norton
Mike Nutt
Anastasia Peck
- 18 Carol Nenno
- 19 Caitlin Davenport
- 24 Jim Bartlett
- 25 Leah O'Dell
- 30 Dale Anderson
Alli Armstrong
Casey DeGroff
- 31 Gordon Olson



The Trustees have designated the 2016 **EASTER OFFERING** to benefit the Community Easter Dinner held at FBC on March 27.

MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

- 2 Frank & Pat Sherry
- 16 David & Nancy Taylor
- 31 Ed and Sue Neely VanBrunt



COPY IS DUE BY THURSDAY, MARCH 17, FOR THE APRIL AT FIRST BAPTIST



March 13
(Turn your clocks AHEAD one hour at bedtime on Saturday, March 12)

