



First Baptist Church

Of Traverse City

Bringing Hope by Sharing God's Love

February 2018

244 WASHINGTON STREET

(231) 946-4727

February Church Calendar

Join us for Worship each Sunday at 10:30 a.m.

Copies of the new FBC Directory of Members and Friends are on the narthex table.

Sun., Feb. 4 – Communion shared and February birthdays celebrated

Mon., Feb. 5 Pinterest Crafting Gathering, with snacks at 5:30 and Valentine crafts beginning at 6 p.m.

Tues., Feb. 6 – Before, During & After Incarceration fellowship and meal begins at 5:30 p.m.

Sun., Feb. 11 – Church Council to meet following worship

Wed., Feb. 14 – Ash Wednesday and beginning of Lent

Beginning Thurs., Feb. 15 – Church Women United Lenten Lunch Series, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church

Coming in March . . . helping people in need through America for Christ offerings

Sun., Mar. 4 – Communion shared and March birthdays and anniversaries celebrated

Sun., Mar. 4 – 9:15 a.m. - Adult Sunday School resumes

AB Women's Mission Group meetings resume in April



Loving God

*A Word from
Pastor MaryBeth Robertson*

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind."
Luke 10:27

Valentine's Day: What comes to mind? If you visit any grocery store (as well as many other stores), you can't miss the Valentine's Day displays. Candy, small gifts, flowers all call out, "Buy us; buy something to demonstrate your love to that someone special." Sometimes, we think that the size or cost of the gift we buy will prove how much this loved one means in our lives: the bigger the gift, the more expensive the gift, the more my loved one will know how important he/she is to me.

If we are to love the Lord our God, what can we buy to demonstrate our love? I think we all can answer that question: nothing. There is nothing we can purchase, no object or service or "thing," that embodies our love for the Lord God. All right, if we can't buy something to "prove" we love God, how will God know we love Him? How will others know we love God?

Jesus says to love God with all our strength. Maybe that means we just have to try harder, do more. But wait, Jesus also says we are to love with our heart and with our soul. In other words, we are to love God from the very depths of our being; we are to love God with all we are and all we hold dear. And Jesus says we are to love God with all our minds. Love is an emotion, a passion,



"Whoever wishes to be my follower must deny his very self, take up his cross each day, and follow in my steps." -- Luke 9:2

for sure. But love of God also engages our rational, thought process. We are made in the image of God and we know God is “pretty smart” (OK, way smarter than any human!) We also have the ability to think, to reason and to choose to love. Our love of the Lord God engages all we are, all we do, all we say.

Throughout the month of February, we’ll be exploring the theme of Obedience to God. What does God want from us? Why does God love us so much? God loves us because God created us to be in relationship with our Creator. God wants us to listen and obey because God wants the very best for us. A poem written by Christina Rossetti, often used at Christmas, includes this reminder of what God wants from us:

What can I give Him, poor as I am....

What can I give Him? Give him my heart.

God wants us to put Him first in all we love, all we think, all we do and all we are.

In Christ,

Pastor MaryBeth



February Birthdays

Feb. 3 – Joe Underwood

Feb. 5 – Mary Fleet

Feb. 8 – Sallie Nelson

Feb. 22 – Donna Mansfield

FBC Financial Update (through January)

YTD General Fund Income: \$4,571.35

YTD Expenses: \$1,012.03

YTD Missions: \$256

February Sermon Messages and Scripture

Join us every Sunday at 10:30 a.m.



February 4 *Called to Obedience*

Mark 12:30-31; Mark 14:32-36

February 11 *Obedience is Better than Sacrifice*

1 Samuel 15:1-26 Hebrews 10:5-10

February 18 *Obedience is Better than Approval*

Acts 5:1-11; Acts 5:27-32

February 25 *Obedience is Better than Riches*

Numbers 22:1-21; Luke 12:32-34

Good Gifts

By Marian Larson

The past couple months have been a time of giving and receiving gifts, and that seems to be continuing into February.

I appreciate those moments in church when the congregation is asked to share how God has been working in their lives, or as they share concerns, and I have wished occasionally to say something. Because I write minimally better than I talk, I decided to take this route to relate one of my blessings.

I had been concerned about the “check-engine” light being on in my car. Then, while I had been out one day, apparently my car had disappeared from its parking spot but then it somehow returned. The next time I drove it, I noticed that the driver’s seat had been slid back. Then, I noticed the check-engine light was no longer on. Later, while on the road, I found that my gas tank had been filled. Someone had supplied my needs, dealt with my concerns, and given me a surprise gift, and I thank that person.

I received this clipping in a letter and I pass it along to you:

"You give the best gifts anyone could give. On an average day you share good advice, much-needed encouragement, a shoulder to lean on or a smile to light the way. You lift someone up or keep someone going. Life is blessed with 'ordinary' heroes. You are one of them."

Living for Christ in 2018

By Velma Wiebe



WOW! We've each been given a brand-new year to live for Christ! What a privilege! We can live it well – with God's help.

Philippians 4:13 tells us that "We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us." We can have the Fruit of Spirit in our life (love, joy, peace, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness), as we abide in Him, (Galatians 5:22). Jesus says, "For without Me, you can do nothing."

In this troubled world, we need to pray as we seek to know Him more intimately. Also, that we should obey His word and seek to better know what His plan is for our lives (Jeremiah 29:11-14).

Let's not forget that "His power is great for those who believe." Jeremiah 32:17. God has given us a job to do, which includes making His word known by what we say and by our actions.

Scripture tells us to "Do onto others as you would have them do unto you." John 15:11-12. Another good verse is from Psalm 16:11, "In thy presence is fullness of joy; at the right hand there are pleasures forevermore."

In this new year we can rely on this message based on James 4:14-15:

"Only one life twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last."

A Look Back at **2017** At First Baptist Church

A special **THANKS** for your faithful contributions to First Baptist Church in 2017. The gifts of your time, talents and resources are MUCH appreciated! Here's a partial summary of God's blessings in 2017:

- We're very blessed to have MaryBeth as our spiritual leader in 2017. Thanks to those who have contributed to this ministry and helped her move from Portland, MI to the parsonage.
- Many useful amendments of our church bylaws and constitution were approved.
- Capital projects included hot water installation in the church restrooms, front and rear entrance renovations, new exterior parking lot light installation, drywall repairs in the sanctuary, and laundry appliances were purchased, bath renovations were made and a storm door was installed at the parsonage.
- Jo Panter assumed the role of church organist.
- Pastor MaryBeth hosted several "get-acquainted" meals at the parsonage.
- We implemented a program to welcome church attendees each Sunday morning.
- We participated in the Love INC/Jubilee House pantry supplies project, and hosted two families for the Love INC Adopt-A-Family program.
- Our AB Women's Missions group helped support world-wide and local missions, and our congregation was most generous in their 2017 missions giving. Missionaries Jon and Amanda Good shared their story with us on May 14.
- Thanks to you, we welcomed many people through the door at the Easter Baked Goods and Craft Fair on April 15, and at the Craft, Baked Goods and Rummage Sale on Oct. 14.
- We partnered with other groups to host the Before, During, and After Incarceration program.
- Adult Sunday School classes have continued.
- Pastor MaryBeth attended the ABC Biennial Mission Summit in Portland, OR.
- We again hosted Beach Bums baseball games that supported missions and served as an outreach opportunity.



Planning for 2018 and Beyond

By Zeke Fleet

What is God calling FBC to do that requires us to depend on God's Holy Spirit?

What will FBC look like three years from now?

To what ministry/ministries is God leading FBC?

The FBC church council addressed these and other questions as they convened January 13 for a planning session. Pastor MaryBeth led the meeting as the group talked about possible ideas for 2018 and beyond, and how we can all work to position ourselves and our church as we seek to discern God's direction for FBC.

Led by Pastor MaryBeth, council members talked about today's dynamics and demographics of church attendance, the strengths, weaknesses, threats and

possible opportunities for FBC, and the need to be aware of outreach opportunities in our own community.

The best options are opportunities to fill missional gaps that no other groups or churches are filling, and to not attempt to replicate programs that are already in place in the community. The long-term health of our church is at stake and participation of ALL church attendees is needed.

- Our initial response is to pray for God's guidance.
- We need to think of ways to reach people where they are, and of ways to establish relationships that may blossom into outreach programs. Ideas might include programs that begin within our church and can be shared/expanded to include others.
- Please share your outreach ideas with Pastor MaryBeth or church council members.

Church Council will meet on Feb. 11. Each member is asked to bring at least two ideas for outreach options and we'll include ideas from our congregation.

Thank you (in advance) for your prayers and support!



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