

Good News Letter

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FROM THE INTERIM PASTOR'S DESK

We had a great workshop with Dr. Jeff Woods and learned some interesting facts about the relationship between church health and potential growth. We were also encouraged by what we heard as we continue to move ahead.

The following article was recently shared with me by another pastor, which reiterates some of what we learned at the workshop. Eugene Blair, a United Methodist District Superintendent, has identified ten common myths that prevent congregations from growing and becoming healthy. Blair is interested in two common denominators, which he calls *attendance growth* and *spiritual vitality*, both of which are important to the health of a church and both of which are relevant to us.

**Myth #1:
Let's just keep doing worship
the same way we've done it since
1960, and people will come.**

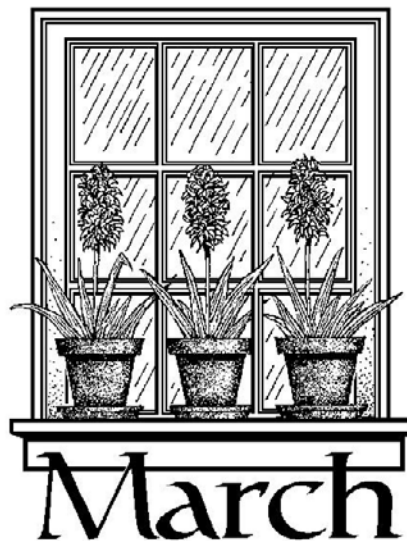
That simply isn't the case. We live in a very different environment than we did 50 years ago. While many of today's generation truly appreciate liturgical worship, traditional-worshipping churches (like ours) that add a contemporary worship service find an increase in attendance growth. At the same time, though,

Next Month's Newsletter

The deadline for the April newsletter will be a week earlier than usual so we can include information on Holy Week.

the quality of worship seems to matter more than anything else to those who don't currently have a church home.

That's why it's important that our worship be uplifting, of the highest quality, and fully engaging, no matter what style(s) we have.



**Myth #2:
We've always done it that way
before, so let's keep doing it
that way.**

Interestingly, church growth has little to do with current practices and traditions, conservative or liberal theology, or the quality of member relationships. The truth is that churches with a clear identity and purpose tend to grow in attendance and spiritual vitality.

As part of our ongoing discernment process, we, as a congregation, are looking at why we are here, considering the depth of our spiritual

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Bertha Van Brimmer

Bertha Fay Van Brimmer, 85, of Delaware passed away Monday afternoon February 16, 2015 at the Sarah Moore Home.

She was born a coal miner's daughter on May 7, 1929 in Van Lear, Kentucky to the late William H. and Hattie M. (Harris) Sparks, but lived most of her life in Central Ohio.



Several family members moved to Sunbury, Ohio when she was 16, and she lived there until her marriage to James "Jim" R. Van Brimmer on September 15, 1950. They met while working at Ranco Manufacturing and resided in Delaware the rest of their lives.

Bertha was a longtime member of the First Baptist Church where she served on numerous committees and boards through the years.

She was an avid reader and her hobbies included card and board games, sewing and quilting, pottery, tending to her roses, baking, and feeding and watching the birds out her window. She had a soft heart and a gentle soul and she enjoyed exploring Appalachian history and historical locations and traveling on many car vacations with Jim and her family.

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Bertha Van Brimmer continued

Left to cherish her memory are daughters Karen F. (Steven) Stoner of Sagamore Hills, OH and Susan K. (Jeffrey) Leonard of Port Royal, PA; son Richard A. (Sandra) Van Brimmer of Columbus, OH; grandchildren Stefanie Heizer, Micah Stoner, Casey and Ryan Leonard and Tonya Claar; great grandchildren Alexandria, Gladrielle and Natasha Leonard, Ethan Stoner and Erin Niemeyer; brother Eugene Sparks of Johnstown, OH; sister Betty Stauch of Sunbury, OH; numerous nieces and nephews.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband James R. Van Brimmer, five brothers Theodore, Edward, Benjamin, Ocheal and Lon Douglas Sparks and six sisters Ida and Berletta Sparks, Sylvia Hensey, Geneva Chandler, Gloria Huddleston and Harva Lee Spangler.

On Saturday February 21 the family received friends at the Snyder-Rodman Funeral Center in Delaware, followed by the memorial service. Private family graveside services were held at Oak Grove Cemetery.

Contributions in Bertha's memory may be made to First Baptist Church or Sarah Moore Home (26 N. Union St., Delaware, OH 43015).

Our deepest sympathy goes to her family and friends.



Bertha and her husband Jim, who died in 2010.

Pastor's message continued

disciplines and health, and charting where we are headed.

**Myth #3:
If we get more youth,
everything will be all right.**

In actuality, a strong youth ministry, while important, is not in itself, strongly equated with attendance growth. However, there is a strong relationship between youth ministry and spiritual vitality and a healthier congregation overall.

We continue to look for ways we can reach out to the youth in our church and community.

**Myth #4:
We are a friendly church, and
guests should know we want them
to come back.**

Actually, guests don't automatically know that they are welcomed to return. They need personal contact and personal relationships with members.

For that reason, it is important that we develop an intentional ministry to guests and newcomers, using a variety of methods of following up with them.

**Myth #5:
It's the pastor's job to get
new members.**

The truth is that the more lay members who are involved in inviting new people, the greater will be our attendance growth. Spiritual vitality also increases the more members see themselves as having responsibility for reaching out and inviting others. Statistics show that a personal invitation is more effective than anything else we can do.

Who might you invite to church?

**Myth #6:
Our members know we care,
so we don't have to call on them
or reach out if they are absent.**

Actually, the opposite has been shown to be true. Contacting those who have stopped coming is directly related to attendance growth and

spiritual vitality. This practice has been clearly demonstrated for churches with over 300 in worship.

If you know people you haven't seen in a while, why not get in touch with them and let them know you've missed seeing them.

**Myth #7:
Where two or three are gathered
together, there will be conflict and
fights, so we just have to learn to
live with it.**

The truth is that *clear organizational direction and purpose* coupled with strong interpersonal relationships decrease the likelihood of conflict. That's because when clear purpose and quality relationships are present, conflict is more easily resolved. Yes, we're always going to disagree on minor irritations and the best way forward, but those disagreements never have to lead to unresolved conflict. That is to say that the unity of the congregation in mind, heart, and purpose is essential to deep spiritual vitality, and there isn't any reason why we can't passionately but respectfully carry on our common work together. That's why clear and consistent communication is so important. When we work through disagreements, it brings greater unity in our mission and ministry, and that unity leads to deeper health and spiritual vitality.

Our leadership is committed to offering opportunities (like the Town Hall Meetings) for the congregation to ask questions and share concerns in an open forum.

**Myth #8:
It's all about money. We just need
more money and all our problems
will go away.**

In actuality, a clear relationship between spiritual vitality and financial health has been shown.

We do well in money matters, but increasing our regular financial support of the church (which we need to do as we anticipate new pastoral leadership) goes hand in hand with an overall climate of spiritual health.

**Myth #9:
Because the world is our parish,
we are going to lead everyone to
Jesus.**

Actually, we can't reach everybody, and it confuses our focus when we try to do so. Instead, it's been demonstrated that attendance growth and spiritual vitality are directly related to being clear and specific about *whom we want to reach and why*.

We continue to look for ways to reach out into our community.

**Myth #10:
Church growth is a matter of
having an ideal pastor.**

While we'd like to believe this myth, no research shows it to be the case. The truth is that a team of spirit-led, accountable, and committed lay people always trumps the pastor's influence. So, instead of expecting your new pastor to build the church, it is far more important that you, as church members, be trained in discipleship and outreach.

Everyone is encouraged to be involved in some form of discipleship whether it be a Sunday School class or Bible study because we never stop growing. We are also looking for individuals to serve on our newly formed Mission & Outreach Team.

We are a welcoming and caring congregation, but we've still got lots of work to do, especially as we continue to prepare for the exciting day when a new pastor will be with us!

Ellen

Pastor Ellen



PRAYER LIST

This list is prepared by the Deacons. Prayer requests will be removed after 2 months unless "renewed". Please send changes to Larry Faulk (Lfaulk01@aol.com).

Church Contact	Name	Reason for Prayer
The Deacons	Van Brimmer Family	Condolences
	Carol Serviss	Surgery recovery
	Alvin & Bev Cox's Granddaughter	Chemotherapy for Hodgkins
	Don Elliott	Health issues
	Ken Frische	Surgery recovery
	Christina Kilhefner	Transplant recovery
	Penny Hagaman	Health issues
	Steve Baker	Health issues
	Bora Porter (Janet's daughter)	A patient at Childrens' Hospital
	Betty Porter	Health issues
The Faulks	Mary Anderson	Health Issues

Remember daily all the men and women in the military — those stationed in the USA and those deployed throughout the world. GOD BLESS AMERICA!

Lenten Bible Study Continues

Our weekly Bible Study for Lent meets Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. We continue to look at *Jesus' Final Week*, which takes us through some of the events of Holy Week. Here are the topics for this month.

- March 3 Plot to Betray
- March 10 Betrayal & Arrest
- March 17 Trial: Part 1
- March 24 Trial: Part 2
- March 31 Crucifixion

Lenten Devotional

If you haven't downloaded or bookmarked the Lenten devotional mentioned in last month's newsletter, here's the URL:

<http://tinyurl.com/o76nu48>

A link is also on the home page of our church website.

If you don't have computer access, please talk to one of our Deacons to obtain a printed copy.

Change Your Clock and Bring Your Change To Church

I know it has only been 4 months since we last did this and you probably have not accumulated much change, but we are going to do collect change anyway.

On Sunday, March 8, we will be setting our clocks forward one hour. That is a reminder to bring all your loose change to church that Sunday. We will take up a loose change offering. The money will go to help combat childhood hunger in our local area.

Piano Prelude

Each Communion Sunday, Peter White has agreed to provide piano prelude music before our worship service begins. We all appreciated

Peter's playing during Advent, so plan to arrive by 10:30 a.m. on the first Sunday of every month to enjoy this wonderful addition to our worship experience.



Easter Lilies

Easter lilies can be ordered to decorate our church on Easter Sunday. They can be given in someone's memory or honor, and you can take them home after the service.

The price is \$7 each. Place your orders with Melissa Mercer or Jim Stephenson. The last day to place orders is Palm Sunday, March 29.



Volunteers For March

Sunday School Opening

- March 1 Pam Shears
- March 8 Palmers
- March 15 Randy Turner
- March 22 Lovells
- March 29 Debbie Fogle

Kid Connection

- March 1 Erin Faulk/
Bowen Nace
- March 8 Lana Palmer
- March 15 Pat Gosser/
Claire Turner
- March 22 Debbie Fogle/
Aidan Ferguson
- March 29 Pam Faulk/
Alec Ferguson

Thank you all for volunteering. It is very much appreciated.

America For Christ

Isn't it amazing how quickly our major offering promotions roll around! The frequency bothers some — others are encouraged by the opportunity to share their bounty with those in need. This offering is a means to help those in America who are having a difficult time right now.

Our theme — "Discipleship: A Journey of Grace," is based on Titus 2:11-13. It is a wonderful reminder that Jesus' public ministry was all

about connecting and caring for people in need. Our contributions will become the hands, the feet and the prophetic voice of Jesus Christ in our town, and as we connect with people every day.

Our goal — once again — is \$600! We've shown we can do it!

— Jane Moore-Snyder
Mission Coordinator

New Ministry Team Being Formed

Two important aspects of lay ministry include taking an active role in promoting and supporting missions as well as the planning and implementing of outreach projects. On February 15th, nine men and women met with Pastor Ellen to discuss the possibility of forming a Mission & Outreach Team. Pastor Ellen said, "We are at a place where we need to take some specific steps and make plans in the areas of mission and outreach. These two ministries overlap in many areas. We have already completed some significant outreach projects, but where do we go from here and how do we sustain continuing efforts?" An outline which included three areas of concern was provided as a basis for discussion.

The first was **Missions**. Focus on a local agency (Andrews House, Restart, Helpline, etc.) will continue on a monthly basis, however team responsibilities would include contacting the organization for specific needs and inquiring whether or not a representative could provide a Mission Moment for us. Responsibilities would also include articles for the newsletter, announcements for the bulletins and perhaps other promotional activities. All of the special offerings would also be promoted in a similar fashion.

The second area of concern was doing more for our **visitors** to First Baptist. Such things as making sure we get contact information from them, watching to see if they might

Birthdays and Anniversaries



- March 5 Ben Turner
- 6 Nancy Via Summers
- 7 Robert Foor
- 11 Rick & Sandy Van
Brimmer
- 12 Evan Trigg
Sydney Kauf
- 13 Amy Pfarr
- 18 Dave Lovell
- 27 George Riedmiller
- 28 Becky Sykes

*Please report any errors or omissions
to Jim Stephenson.*

March Sermon Titles and Scripture

March 1

Rebel with Cause
Mark 11:1-11

March 8

The Easter Chicken
Matthew 23:37-39

March 15

We Wish to See Jesus
John 12:20-33

March 22

What's Your Response?
Mark 14:32-42, 15:33-37

March 29

Sunday is Coming!
Romans 6:3-11

need help with the order of worship and providing a small welcome gift would encourage repeat visits. In addition, follow-up would include

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a letter from the pastor and a note or phone call from a team member. These actions would assure that our visitors would feel welcome and that we WANT them to become a part of our church family.

The last area discussed was that of **outreach**. First Fridays could continue to be utilized with participation being in conjunction with special events or services at the church. Handouts, a craft table for children or other creative ideas could be planned in order to "put a face on First Baptist" and to encourage visitors to attend our services. More importantly, a specific area of need in our community could be researched and addressed. Ideas might include meeting with principals of local schools where parents are unable to supply all the items needed for the classrooms (such as tissues, paper towels, pencils, etc.), which are depleted throughout the school year. We could also recognize the faculty and a staff of that school by showing our appreciation in some way.

Working with other churches would be of special interest as well. Examples could be reinstating summer vacation Bible school as a joint effort or volunteering to assist an already established outreach program, such as the River Church's safe house for women rescued from trafficking. Other ideas might be investigating ways our facility might meet a community need, or a "Faith in Action Day" might be planned.

The possibilities for mission and outreach are endless and can become as big as our dreams can make them. The impact could be tremendous for our church, our community and even beyond. Becoming a member of the Mission & Outreach Team is an opportunity to serve God in vital new ways. The team approach does not put the burden for any of these things on the shoulders of just one or two people. The responsibilities would

be spread among those with specific interest in one of these areas but there would also be the support of the whole. The congregation will also be invited to participate in appropriate ways to help support any efforts.

An organizational meeting will be held **Sunday, March 8 at 2:30 p.m.** All adults (the Youth of FBC are planning their own outreach projects!) are encouraged to attend. The more who participate...the more that can be accomplished. Discussion will center on the "nuts and bolts" of establishing the team, identifying personal areas of interest and looking seriously at the issues herein outlined. Please mark your calendars and plan to come be part of planning for this new ministry team. With prayer and His guidance, WE CAN MAKE AN EVEN BIGGER DIFFERENCE THAN WE ALREADY ARE!!!

— Lana Palmer

Personals

- Former member Bob Foor recently had surgery to install a pacemaker.
- Carol Serviss had reconstructive surgery on her ear and is healing.
- Phyllis Beasley recently had surgery to repair a cut tendon in her thumb. She is doing well and getting physical therapy.
- On February 8, Frances Jo Hamilton spoke about the Restart program in Delaware.
- Pastor Ellen has a new grandson, Caius Brown, who was born in Philadelphia on February 7. Ellen and her husband Dave were able to be there for the birth.

— Pam Faulk, Personals Editor

5 Years Ago

March 2010 Newsletter

Bernice Turney, 94, mother of Lana Palmer and a former church member, died in Cincinnati.

15 Years Ago

March 2000 Newsletter

The pastoral search committee thanked members for filling out surveys. Our interim was Rev. Kim Keethler Ball.

Rev. Bertie Dell became Zion UCC's first female pastor.

20 Years Ago

March 1995 Newsletter

Meagan Fogle was born.

Ben Turney, 80, father of Lana Palmer and a church member, passed away. He had been a house painter and painted our sanctuary at age 70.

The dates were announced for our annual retreat at Judson Hills.

Andrews House will open soon. The building is being renovated and partners are being chosen.

25 Years Ago

March 1990 Newsletter

Former pastor Rev. James B. Stephenson, 71, died from a stroke.

Choir director Wilbur Wickum said the choir had grown to 13 members.

40 Years Ago

March 1975 Newsletter

Former pastor Rev. Morgan Williams, 85, father of Don Williams, died in Michigan.

Hospital patients included Dorothy Brown, David Byerly, Nellie Dick, Adelene Titsworth, and Fred Via.