

FIRST BAPTIST Muskogee

The Challenger

Volume 102, Issue 3

MARCH 2013





From our Pastor - Lance Sawyer

Once a hunter spied a flock of quail who were feasting in the tall grass at the edge of the forest. With one swift movement he had caught them all in his net. He took the birds home and put them in a cage at the back of his house. The poor birds walked around and around the cage crying and crying. But whenever the man came and tossed in seeds they greedily pecked them up. All but one bird, that is. There was one bird in the cage who refused to eat, and grew thinner and thinner.

At last the day came when the man planned to bring the fattened birds to the market to sell. He looked carefully into the cage inspecting the quality of his flock. When he noticed the thin bird, he opened the cage and took it out to examine it more closely.

"Why, you're nothing but bones," he said. No sooner had he spoken than the bird flew from his hand to the safety of a branch just out of his reach.

The other birds looked at their free sister and cooed sadly. The free bird sang sadly back, "You ate your captor's food and soon you will die. I refused my captor's food, and now I am free."



Minister to Students - Corey Seitz

What a joy it has been serving as the interim Youth Pastor for the last several months. My wife, Tara, and I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know and minister to the students here at FBC. It is very encouraging to see young men and women in our youth ministry studying God's Word, praying for one another, and serving our community through various forms of service. My aim is to make Christ central in all we do through Christ-centered preaching, Christ-centered Worship, Christ-centered service, and Christ-centered community. We have seen several students become transformed by the work of the Holy Spirit through Christ's finished work on the cross. These students are falling in love with Jesus and seeing their schools, sports teams, and clubs as mission fields where they can live out what they believe and proclaim to others the good news of Jesus Christ. Please be in prayer for the young men and women in our student ministry as they continue to stand firm on the truth of God's Word through every part of their lives.



Missionaries - Don & Jane Jones

After spending several days in Zambia the end of January and the entire month of February in Uganda, we are hoping to stay at our home in Nairobi for, well, most of, March. We do have a conference scheduled for the last week of March with some of our coworkers from all across Africa. Pray that we will be able to encourage many Ms during that meeting. Also, DO NOT FORGET, Monday, March 4 is the election of the new president in Kenya.

There is much worry that there will be violence the days following the election. Pray for the safety of Ms, but more, pray for the safety of Kenyans. Also pray that this will be an opportunity to share the Gospel in troubled times. Blessings, Don and Jane Jones

Minister to Children - Debbie Miller

According to statistics reported at valuedopinions.com, Easter in America is becoming alarmingly less about Jesus and more about candy and egg hunts. When asked about Easter celebration plans, a mere 26% of those surveyed reported “going to church’ as something they planned to do at Easter time” and only 7% said “church attendance on Easter took top priority.” (Quik Stat from the March 2013 issue of Parent Link distributed each month by Kidville Ministry.)

God gave your child an incredibly imaginative mind and as his parent, you get to decide how much of the secular Easter traditions you want to allow in your home. However, as Christian parents, it is important that you don’t allow the secular traditions to overshadow or take the place of the true meaning of Easter. Infants and toddlers can understand God loves them. Preschoolers hear about Jesus dying on the cross, but don’t completely grasp the meaning, but you can teach “God loves you and wants you to love Him”. School-age children are presented the gospel through the scriptural teaching of Easter and as they mature in their understanding many are ready to respond to the gospel and become Christians. If your child is ready to respond to the gospel and you need information on leading your child in this very important decision, I would be glad to share with you. May God bless you and your family as you celebrate Easter together.

Blessings, Debbie Miller

Minister of Music - Randy Holt

10,000 Reasons *"For all Your goodness I will keep on singing...Ten thousands reasons for my heart to find."*

I am truly loving this song that Matt Redman wrote in 2011. It is being sung across the country and around the world. Listen to a Christian radio station and you will hear it quite often. It sure has seemed to connect with our church as we use it in worship!

Oh how the Lord is blessing us. If you are not enjoying the blessings of God, I am quite confident the problem is not on God’s end. He wants to bless us!

Matt Redman actually admits that saying there are *"ten thousand reasons for my heart to find"* is a huge poetic understatement. The reasons for the praise of God are so wide and wonderful that we could sing from now until forever and never run out of ideas as to why He is quite so worthy.

As the song says, when the sun comes up, I want to be singing. When my time on earth comes to an end, I want to be singing. I want to be searching for all of God’s goodness. When we come on Sundays to join our worship together, I want to bless the Lord and sing like never before!

"...my heart may sing to You and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give you thanks forever." (Psalm 30:12)

It is a blessing to journey with you at First Muskogee! *Randy*

Associate Pastor - Mark R. Hall

EASTER MATTERS

What do Johann Sebastian Bach, Albert Einstein and Michelangelo have in common?

J. S. Bach’s Lutheran faith greatly influenced his music. Bach once said, “The aim and final end of all music should be none other than the glory of God and the refreshment of the soul.” Einstein, the greatest scientist of the twentieth century, believed that “Before God, we are all equally wise – and equally foolish.” Michelangelo, the most famous painter, sculptor, architect and poet of the Renaissance period, gave us a hint of where his talent came from when he said, “I live and love in God’s peculiar light.”

Each of these individuals acknowledged the influence of God upon his daily life and work. God’s presence is not restricted to our church buildings on Sunday morning. As the Easter season approaches, I encourage you to acknowledge the importance of following Jesus every day of the week. On Sundays we “recharge” so that on Monday we can begin anew our weekly call to live and serve daily through the power of Christ.

There is one other thing the three individuals mentioned above have in common. If you think you know, email the answer to me at apastor@fbcuskogee.org. The first correct answer wins a Sunday lunch with Vicki and me...our treat.

Easter blessings to you all, Mark

FIRST BAPTIST Muskogee

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Broadcasting live on KTFX
Muskogee 101.7 FM on
Sunday mornings at 11:00 a.m.

*Reaching People to
Become Fully Devoted
Followers of Christ*

Our Church Staff

Lance Sawyer.....Pastor
Bill Crow.....Minister of Pastoral Care
Eric Fletcher.....Minister of Education
Mark R. Hall.....Associate Pastor
Randy Holt.....Music Minister
Debbie Miller.....Minister to Children
Corey Seitz.....Interim Minister to Students

Christian Life Center Hours

Monday.....6:30 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Tuesday.....8:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Wednesday.....6:30 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Thursday.....8:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Friday.....6:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Saturday.....9:00 a.m. - 12 noon

Food Pantry Hours

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday
10:00 a.m. - 12 noon

Free Health Clinic

Mondays, 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
1605 E. Okmulgee

BETH MOORE IS COMING TO TULSA!!!

Living Proof Live is September 27 & 28 at the BOK Center and we have purchased 50 tickets. This will enable our group to have **reserved** seats together. Our church will provide transportation on Friday evening and Saturday morning to the event or you can make your own arrangements to stay in Tulsa overnight. Tickets are \$69 per person and are available through the church office. Your ticket is reserved when you make payment. Another great opportunity is the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma (BGCO) Women's Retreat **April 19 & 20** at Falls Creek. This year, Lisa Harper and Angie Smith are the guest speakers. The retreat theme is "A Love That Never Let's Go." We have never attended as a group, but I would like to know if there is interest this year. The BGCO takes care of everything and we will be housed together as a group. The cost is \$75 and covers the cost of lodging and three meals. The deadline is March 15 before the price rises. Please let me or the church office know if you would be interested in attending. *Gwen*

Support Group Ministry Meetings

Grief Share:

Each Tuesday, 7-8:30 p.m. at
First Presbyterian Church

Care Giver's Support:

Every last Wednesday, at
1:00 p.m. in the Parlor

Minister of Education - Eric Fletcher

God is moving in our Bible Study ministry! We launched our first new class of 2013! Catherine Jones and Christy Skinner have started a new Bible Study class for women Sunday mornings at 10:55 in room 221. We will also be launching a new Sunday night Bible Study class led by Phil Pack and Travis Sloat on February 17. We have decided to launch some Sunday night classes for people who serve, or will be serving on Sunday mornings, but are unable to connect with a Bible Study class during that time. I am excited about these new classes. In order to grow and reach more people, we still need to begin more incredible Bible Study classes. So, as Jesus said, "please pray to the Lord of the harvest to send more workers into the field" (Matt 9:38). The Holy Spirit is leading us in the right direction. I am so very excited and thankful about what He is doing in and through our Bible Study ministry!

Lives are being TRANSFORMED!
Eric

Journey To Easter

**Every Wednesday through the month
of March. They begin at 12:05 p.m. and
are followed with lunch for \$3.00.**

March 6

Host Church: Antioch Baptist Church
636 North 4th Street

Speaker: The Rev. Mark Jardine
St. Paul United Methodist Church

March 13

Host Church: First United Methodist Church
600 East Okmulgee

Speaker: The Rev. Lance Sawyer
First Baptist Church

March 20

Host Church: First Presbyterian Church
500 West Broadway

Speaker: Fr. Mike Knipe
St. Joseph Catholic Church

March 27

Host Church: Grace Episcopal Church
218 N. 6th St.

Speaker: The Rev. Ann Brizendine
First Presbyterian Church

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Christian Sympathy is Extended to:

Billy & Elizabeth Howard, Cliff & Brenda Wheeler, Louis & Ann Wheeler, Kenneth & Denna Wheeler and their family, in the death of Billy & Elizabeth's daughter, Cliff & Brenda's granddaughter, Louis & Ann's great granddaughter and Kenneth & Denna's niece, **Clara Howard;**

Don & Cordie Wilson and their family, in the death of Cordie's sister, Iva Gann;

Tony & Barb Armstrong and family in the death of Tony's father, T. L. Armstrong.