

The Messenger



A publication of The First Baptist Church of Westfield

April 2014

April has come! Aren't we all thankful to God for warm weather, greenery and flowers, birds chirping and most importantly, no more snow. We have indeed been snow weary!

This April also brings Holy Week when we celebrate Jesus' final entry to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the unbearable events of Good Friday when Jesus was crucified and the happiest of celebrations on Resurrection Sunday when Jesus triumphs over death and we declare: He is not dead! He is Alive! Needless to say, this is a most holy time for Christians everywhere! Or is it?

For some Easter Sunday may be the one time in the year when they go to church, the only other time being Christmas, or perhaps a wedding, a baptism, or funeral. I do often wonder why this is so?

Sociologists say that we are living in a post-Christian, non-religious society where more and more folks are choosing not to participate in any religious activities and don't go to church on Sunday, or any other day of the week. Many don't have any religious association whatsoever and are now known as "nones."

In an article in the Huffington Post by Gary Laderman, chair of the Department of Religion at Emory University, he writes, "...popular culture in America rules our spiritual lives and is a more important source of wisdom, morality, transcendence, and meaning, than the traditional institutions like the church that used to provide these religious elements. Films, music, the internet, television, literature--these now are just as im-

portant, if not more important, than the teachings found in sacred texts and theological pronouncements for the younger generation as well as baby boomers. Reality TV and rap, Harry Potter and the Super Bowl provide Americans with moral dramas and existential ideals these days, and can make a profound impact on the lives of followers. Organized religion is clearly losing its authority and relevancy in the day-to-day worlds of Americans, and so those forces that predominate in our culture, such as new media, entertainment, and information technologies are now shaping spiritual sensibilities and sacred values."

Laderman continues, "the rise of the 'nones' surely suggests it is the end of religion as we know it. Forget churches; forget priests and pastors; forget the Bible; forget organized religion generally. What is sacred are no longer conventional objects like a cross, a singular religious identity like being a Methodist, nor activities like going to church or prayer. Instead, the religious worlds in the contemporary and future United States are robust and capacious, providing an abundance of spiritual possibilities found in unexpected places like drum circles and meditation exercises, sports events and other expressions from popular culture."

So, given this seeming reality what is the church global and church local to do? What are we the gathered congregation of believers who with faithful consistency come to worship the Lord in community, who continue to uphold that Jesus Christ is Lord of all and savior for whosoever

believes, who give of our time and monies to sustain ministries and a church building, who gladly and with joy serve and love our neighbor as ourselves? What are we to do in the face of such seeming realities of folks who say they are spiritual but not religious? Not forget the "nones" but love them, care for them, and show them true happiness.

Be happy, like a room without a roof!!! I say we love Jesus more, we proclaim Jesus more, we serve Jesus more, we follow his example more until we are bursting with happiness and with vitality and with the power of the Holy Spirit to move hearts. We shout it from the mountaintops and we whisper it in people's ears. We embrace with big and long hugs of love. We smile. We believe it! We take off our outer robe, we tie a towel around our waist, we pour water into a basin and we wash feet...yes, smelly, stinky and dirty feet, we wash them in service and in devotion with happiness - heart joy! Now, clap along.

"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:34-35

Pastor Mayra

Happiness is the Truth! Clap along!

The church is invited to participate in its 3rd CHURCH GATHERED/CHURCH SCATTERED INITIATIVE event on **Sunday, April 27th**. There will be a shortened service on that day so we can serve other communities and lend a helping hand. We have some wonderful opportunities set up for you to choose from:

- * Prepare a dinner in the church kitchen and deliver it to a homeless shelter in Plainfield
- * Young Adults to visit with seniors at Manor Care in New Providence and play bingo and converse.
- * Families with young children to visit with seniors at Westfield Senior Housing; making a spring craft with them. A snack will be provided.
- * Preparing sustaining lunches for Bridges here at FBC
- * Set up a table in Westfield and hand out bottled water to feed those who are "thirsty" for Gods Word.
- * Help with jewelry making with women from various shelters, location to be determined.



More details and information will be forthcoming! Be on the lookout! Get EXCITED and make a difference! Invite friends TO come and SERVE with you! We have T-Shirts too! If you need one, please let the church know! \$10 donation :)

ALL YOUNG ADULTS ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO COME WATCH :

The Passion of the Christ

When: Saturday, April 12th at 6:30 p.m.

Where: The Movie Theatre at the AVE Residential Building, 1070 Morris Ave, Union 07083 (Enter through Greenline Street; parking available)

How Much: Nothing! Sirlene and Marcelo Roman live in the building and have arranged our use of the facility. ***Discussion and Food will follow in the cafeteria*** Please confirm your attendance by calling the office, or calling or texting Pastor Mayra @ 908-812-4655. (RSVP by April 10th!) Let me know if rides from the church are needed. Invite a friend or two. *Peace, Pastor Mayra*

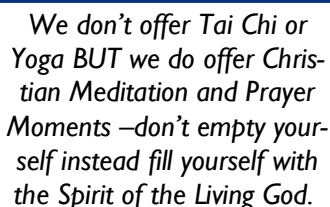


Our craft and hobby resumes on Thursday, **April 10 @1pm** in the church lounge.

It's a time of getting together too, so please stop by, even if you don't have a craft or hobby to work on—we would love it!

Have you sent your selfie in yet? We are still compiling pictures for a special bulletin board of our church family. If you don't have a picture to send, we can take one for you. Talk to Katie Virzi or the church office.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
APRIL	1	2 Evangelism 7pm; Jr. Musical Club Concert, 7:30pm	3	4 PJ's & Movie Night, 6-8pm	5 Council Mini Re- treat, 8:30am-2pm	
6	7 Deacons 7:30pm	8 F&F, 7:30pm	9 Musical Club Concert, 1:30p	10 Prayer/ Meditation, 7- 8pm	11	12 CE, 10am
13 	14	15	16 Agape Pot- luck Supper, 6:30pm	17 Prayer/ Meditation, 7- 8pm	18	19
20 Sunrise Ser- vice, 6am	21 Council, 7:30pm	22	23	24 Prayer/ Meditation, 7- 8pm	25	26 May Messenger Deadline
27 Church Gathered/ Scattered Initi- ative	28	29	30	Ongoing calendar on back page.		



Wednesday at Noon – Prayer in the Sanctuary; meditation on a Psalm – Come once or make it part of your midweek spiritual discipline. (We have read through 118 Psalms)

Every Thursday starting April 10th, between 7 p.m. and 8 p.m. -- come into the sanctuary to pray and meditate; guided prayers and Scripture passages will be available for you, if needed. Pay attention to your spirit, your body, your mind and your heart. You are one.



Invite a friend



Please bring a pillow and sleeping bag/blanket & wear comfy PJ's!

Sign up and get your tickets on the bulletin board outside the church office!

- - Matthew 18:20



April 20



First Baptist would love to know of your recent accomplishments. Would you kindly call or e-mail the office to let us know if you have completed your studies, whatever level of education you're at, so we may acknowledge them? Send name of school, degree, and date of graduation to the church. You can e-mail firstbaptist.westfield@verizon.net.



We would love to hear that many of our FBC children will have a meaningful week at Camp Lebanon and other Christian camps this summer. However, sometimes families

Join us on Wednesday, April 16
6:30pm, for our Agape Potluck
Supper!

Please bring a dish to share.

agape

Grace Lee Thompson Scholarship Applications are available on our website and in the narthex. Scholarship awards assist members of First Baptist Church in pursuit of higher education. Return the applications to the church office Attn: Grace Lee Thompson Scholarship Committee. Deadline is **May 19, 2014.**



Saturday, April 12 @8:30am

commitment

Pastor Mayra recently shared with council a humorous video on greeting visitors that was modeled on a couple going to a Starbucks "to get a cup of coffee". The wife in the video confessed being nervous because it was years since she had been to Starbucks, and the husband said he had never been to one, so had no idea what to expect. When they arrived, there were "greeters" at the door, but they were involved in a conversation with each other and ignored the couple. So they went in, and got on a line. Some of the folks on the line knew each other and were chatting. One man turned around, looked the couple up and down, and then turned back without saying anything to them. You could tell the couple was starting to get a little uncomfortable. At this point, someone at the counter steps up with a megaphone and says "Is anyone here for the first time? Please, raise your hand so we can know who you are!" The couple looks around hesitantly and then slowly raise their hands. Another person rushes up and says, "Welcome! Please come over here and fill in this form with all of your contact information so we can add you to our mailing list." He pulls them out of the line,

while the husband protests, saying, "All we want is a cup of coffee..." The employee says, "Oh we'll get to that soon, but first we want you to fill out the form..." So after filling out the form, the couple gets back on line. When they get to the counter, they are somewhat overwhelmed by all the choices and questions asked by the counterperson, as well as an offer to join a small coffee group, or sign up for a coffee class. The wife stammers, "All we wanted was a cup of coffee..." I've taken a little poetic license with the video, but you get the idea.

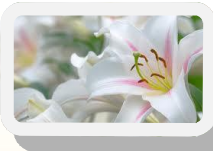


Sound familiar? The council was struck by how this parodied some of our well-meaning ways of greeting visitors here at FBC. We have a reputation as a friendly church, and that's great. A few questions are fine. But let's try to remember that visitors may just be here for that "cup of coffee", in our case the warmth and love of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Is that what we are "serving"?

Elaine Pratt

Chair, Evangelism Committee

Easter Lilies



We would love for you to participate in this long-standing tradition.

Order your Lily or Lilies in memory loved ones; they will be placed in a beautiful arrangement in front of the sanctuary on Easter Sunday, April 20. All those honored will be listed in the Easter bulletin.

Order forms will be available beginning March 10, and are **due back by Palm Sunday, April 13**. Drop your form in the office or give to Terry Wooster with payment. **No Cash please**. Checks can be made payable to First Baptist Church. Lilies can be taken home **after** the Postlude Easter Sunday.



...Matt Barton for hanging our outside banners

...Glen Brown for getting our laptop up and running

...Lee Romano, Dot Waugh, and Lil Wheeler for helping to mail the March Messenger.

The Beebe Memorial Fund enabled us to make donations to several organizations that are working to fight hunger – The Community Food Bank of New Jersey \$300, St. Joseph's Social Services of Elizabeth \$300 and Elijah Promise Soup Kitchen \$250.

In April, the focus will be on missions in several ways. This month we are completing a full year of partnership with Family Promise. The two teams will prepare dinner for the guests at Willow Grove during the week of April 6th.

The Easter Offering will be designated for several local organizations providing valuable services – Greater Plainfield Habitat for Humanity, Contact We Care, Emmanuel Cancer Foundation and Camp Lebanon.

The next Church Scattered will take place after worship on Sunday, April 27th. You will have an opportunity to participate in several service projects. Look for more details in the coming weeks and sign up.

Ray Schellinger, our ABC missionary in Tijuana, Mexico recently posted this message on Facebook. It is a clearly a directive for all of us to do mission work. "If you have the opportunity today, spread love, joy and grace, even if it seems that whole world appeals to hatred, anger and blame. P.S. You do have the opportunity, there are no ifs about it."

Missions On The Move

Janet Winey

Chair, Missions Committee



April Birthdays

April 1	Carl DellaPeruti
	Liz Klezer
April 2	Norm Lauritsen
April 6	Pastor Mayra
April 7	Evans Antoine
April 8	Deirdre Clark
April 11	Carleen Morris
April 13	Wendy Engel
April 15	Tyronne Singh
April 16	MaryAnn Friscia
	Dave Housel
April 20	Molly Engel
April 25	Jay Kakileti
April 28	Allison Johnson

Anniversaries

April 6	Warren & Beth Hanscom
April 17	Tom & Norma Jean McGuire
	Wendell & Trish Scott

If we missed a birthday or anniversary,
please let the office know.

Women's Book Club Saturday, April 19, 10am



We will discuss "The Man Who Loved Books Too Much" by Allison Hoover Bartlette. Joyce Jones will provide refreshments. Contact Bette Savage for add'l info. elzsvg@netscape.net

Christian Women's Conference, May 29-31

Harvey Cedars Bible Conference (on Long Beach Island) Speak with Jean Kellogg if interested in attending.

Music Ministry

April Music Schedule

April 6

Chancel Choir & Song Leaders

Palm Sunday, April 13

Chancel Choir & Song Leaders
Holy Week section from the cantata
Share the Good News! He is Risen!

Good Friday, April 18 @ 7:30pm

Chancel Choir & Song Leaders

Easter Sunday, April 20

Children's Choir
Chancel Choir & Song Leaders
FBC Brass Ensemble
"Ho-Ho-Ho Hosanna"
"Easter Joy" from the cantata
Share the Good News! He is Risen!

April 27

Song Leaders

Choir Notes

THANKS... to Glen Brown, bass & guitar, and Devin Araujo and Ricardo Ribeiro, drums, for playing during worship in March... to Katie Engel for playing flute during worship on March 9... to the members of our FBC Orchestra who played in worship on March 16: Katie Engel and Carleen Morris, flute; Trent Gabriel, Johnny Klikushin, and Maggie McGuire, clarinet; Owen Martin, tenor sax; Paul Koslowski, Tyler Martin, and Daniel Singh, trumpet; Carl, Joe, and Melanie Della Peruti, trombone; Kathy Briedis, Glen Brown, and Nova Spinner, violin; Linda Battle and Beth Hanscom, cello; Devin Araujo, drums, and Steve Lind conductor... and to Katie Engel and Carleen Morris, flute, and Glen Brown and Nova Spinner, violin, for playing during worship on March 30... CONGRATULATIONS to two of our HS Song Leaders who were in the casts of their school musicals during March: Devin Araujo, in Arthur Johnson HS's production of *Grease*, and Melanie Della Peruti, in Morristown HS's production of *Seussical*...



News from Sunday Morning Singles Discussion Group: The Sunday Morning Singles Group discussed the following topics in March.

- March 2nd Olympic Games. What are your thoughts?
- March 9th Dating. Who Pays?
- March 16th Words that empower.
- March 23rd Expectations, decisions and gratitude.

We invite you to come downstairs, have your second cup of coffee and join us for a lively discussion on a myriad of topics from 9 am to 10:15 am.

Submitted by Maryann Friscia



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Help spread good news
and help promote your
church!



ONGOING CALENDAR

Weekly, unless otherwise noted.

Sundays:

9:00 am Singles Gathering (Harvey Hall)
9-11:30am FBC Childcare
9:15 Adult Bible Study, led by Pastor Mayra
10:30 am Worship Service
10:45 am Children's Sunday School (pre-school-5th grades)
11:30 am Children's Choir & Youth Song Leaders rehearsals
11:30am Prayer Team meets (*monthly, April 6*)
5 p.m. Youth Group (6th-12th grades)

Tuesdays:

7 am GRUB w/ the Guys (*monthly, April 1, no kidding!*)

Wednesdays:

12Noon "Conversations with God" (prayer time)
7pm Teacher's Bible Study (*1st Wed, monthly*)

Thursdays:

10:30 am The Hearing Society (a non-profit org): Speech Reading Class
1-3pm Craft/Hobby Group (*monthly, April 10th*)
7:15/8 pm Chancel Ringers/ Choir Rehearsal

Saturdays:

10 :00 am Women's Book Club (*monthly, April 19*)

CHURCH STAFF

Rev. Mayra Castañeda, Senior Pastor

William R. Mathews, *Minister of Music*

Katie McGuire, *Director of Children's Ministries*

Nancy Lambros, *Church Administrator*

Adriana Rodriguez, *Custodian*

OUR PURPOSE

Coming together in joyful worship,
we're here...

- To share the reality of God's love,
- To connect our lifestyles to Christian truth,
- And to put our faith into action through responding to needs in our community, nation, and world.