Summer is gone and fall is around the corner. Students are back to school, folks are back from vacation to regular jobs and the church will renew programmatic activities and launch new initiatives.

While during the summer months we have continued faithful ministries here at the church, it is true that many are now returning to back to life and back to reality. As reality sets in and life ebbs and flows that which is most important ought to take precedence. There ought to be essential connections, disciplines, activities and routines that are important to do and not skip lest you find that they are no longer vital or needed along your journey. And usually if we skip out on these, we tend to pick up other not so important habits that in the end hurt us more than help. The essentials of faith, family, friends and fun ought to be very much part of a Christian’s daily life.

I therefore encourage all to make belonging and actively participating in the life of the church an important back to life, back to reality check of that which is an essential for a daily connection to the Lord and to His church. If you’ve ever experienced how vastly different life is led when you are connected to the Lord through consistent Bible study, prayer and worship in community, then you realize its importance! Remember we all have only one life to live and then there’s eternity.

I therefore also encourage you to take note of all the ways you can connect and actively participate. The doors are wide open, the arms and the hearts are too for you to join. There are no closed circles in the church!

So welcome back to life in the Spirit of God in the church!

➤ If you want your children to grow up to have faith and be God-loving then bring them faithfully to children’s Sunday school as they continue their Faith, Friends and Fun curriculum. In October we’ll launch a new Stepping Stones Family Center for elementary-age children and their parents.

➤ If you have youth and they need a safe, fun and faith-growing group, encourage their participation in our youth group which meets every Sunday at 5 p.m. Consider offering to be a chaperone and/or bringing dinner to their gatherings.

➤ If you enjoy singing then you’ll want to join the chancel choir which will resume practice each Thursday and lead us during Sunday worship. The bell choir and children’s choir will also begin to practice and soon we’ll be inspired by their special gifts of music. All instrumentalists are also welcome!

➤ If you want to make a difference in someone’s life, consider becoming a tutor in our ESL program which will begin mid-September.

➤ If you’ve been wanting to make changes to your eating and exercise habits; if you’ve lacked focused and you don’t have a group that will keep you accountable and if your faith needs a boost, then consider signing up for the 6-week session of the Daniel Plan.

➤ If you want help to interpret Scripture, then come to the adult Bible study resuming in September.

➤ If you want to serve in the community, look for all the ways you’ll be able to do that through our mission initiatives this fall.

➤ And as we look forward to a grand celebration of the church’s 150th year of faithful and life-transforming you’ll want to be a part of this and not want to miss any of the festivities commencing the first weekend of December!
Wanted – Your Ideas for Celebrating FBC’s 150th Anniversary!!

Records show that December 2015 marks the 150th anniversary of First Baptist Church in Westfield! We will be planning a year-long celebration of this milestone beginning the first weekend in December.

How can you get involved? We need your ideas on how we should celebrate! There have already been suggestions for a church-wide dinner in December, artistic displays representing the decades the church has been in existence, hearing from former pastors, a capital campaign to upgrade our building for the future of the church, monthly events celebrating significant people, programs and goals of the church, setting a goal of 150 of something specific such as 150 community outreach opportunities, 150 hours of prayer, or 150 random acts of kindness. Other churches have created memorial quilts and history books. What do you think? I asked you to think over the summer how you would like us to celebrate – well, now’s the time to start the real discussion and planning.

We want everyone to be involved. Watch the bulletin and listen for announcements for information on a planning meeting soon – you can provide ideas and hopefully join our task force to brainstorm and plan what we decide to do. You don’t have to do it all – but if everyone volunteers to help with one event or one task, we can have a fantastic year of celebration. We can also use these events to bring greater community awareness to FBC, and hopefully encourage new people to join our church family. It’s a wonderful opportunity!

Remember to mark your calendars now with a “save the date” for the first weekend in December. We want to honor our heritage and look to the future – all for the glory of God!

Elaine Pratt
Moderator of Council

A huge Thank You to Tyler Martin for volunteering for Youth Group for the entire summer! In July and August we had dinners provided by the Branagans, Browns, Blaires, Steinfelds, Wineys, and Klochkovas.

In addition to a varied list of awesome games and activities, we have been doing a series of devotions based upon 15 min segments of the Karate Kid. We recently had a great time in Asbury Park. We painted a room in the dungeon and are looking forward to more service projects in the fall. We need volunteers both to provide dinners and to chaperone. Let me know if you are willing to participate.

In Christian Fellowship,
Glen Brown

I define intimacy in a relationship as the ability of one party to be transparent and vulnerable and the other party to listen and respond without judgement or criticism. While that certainly should be the goal between spouses or life-partners, it should also be our goal with our relationship with God. We should strive for that intimate relationship when we pray and meditate upon God’s word as well as when we enter into worship.

The Deacons of First Baptist are here to facilitate that experience. We strive to ensure that on every Sunday, you can have the kind of worship experience that leads to an intimate relationship for that one hour and beyond. We encourage you to pray and initiate communication with God during the Prelude. We encourage you to praise God during the opening songs. We encourage you to meditate upon God’s word during the Scripture readings and the sermon, seeking God’s individual message for you and your life. And once a month, we encourage you to share a meal with the Lord on an intimate basis.

Such intimacy with God will only lead to a more rich relationship that can continue beyond the walls of the church and throughout the week. We should strive to maintain that intimate walk with God throughout our lives.

Lastly, I’m going to put the Deacons on the spot. I’m starting a campaign for sharing God’s love through a hug. If you need a hug, for any reason, all you have to do is ask. The hug should be consensual on both sides; just ask, “Can I have a hug?” And the Deacons are encouraged, if they think someone could use a hug, to ask, “Would you like a hug?” Anyone is free to say “No, thank you” without causing offense; we are all “at choice.” I am always willing to give anyone a hug. And when you do get a hug, allow your hearts to connect. Relax into the hug and share that moment of connection. God’s love is just a hug away!

Steve Lind
Chair, Deacons
ESL (English as a Second Language) will be offered as part of the church’s community program beginning Tuesday, September 15, 2015.

They run for **8 weeks**, every **Tuesday from Sept 15 - Nov 3rd**

We invite volunteers with a heart to teach English; need not have any teaching experience

Volunteers will be given training prior to commencement of classes

Volunteers may speak to the tutors of the last session - Pastor Mayra, Bob Gotham, Cherie Parker, Kathy Briedis, Natasha Klochkova, Nancy Lambros, Rintu Mathew - for any details.

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**Supermarket Gift Card Program**

**How It Works:**
Cards can be ordered in denominations of $5, $10, $20, $25, $50 and $100. FBC collects the money (checks made payable to First Baptist Church) and the denominations wanted and places the order with the store.

For FBC to receive a donation equal to 5% of the total order placed, there is a minimum order requirement for each store:
- Shop Rite $1,000
- Kings $1,000
- Stop & Shop $500

FBC will place an order once a month. All requests for cards need to be received by the 3rd Sunday of each month. Cards will be delivered to the purchaser the following Sunday.

**Why Are We Doing It?:**
- It is a way to make a contribution to the church.
- It is simple and costs no more than what is already spent on food – and we all have to eat.

**What Do You Need To Do?:**
- Decide how much you want to spend on gift cards.
- Decide what denominations you would like. It is a great gift idea for friends and family. If you are going to use the card yourself you can get the largest denomination and use it until the balance on the card reaches zero.
- Complete an order form which can be found in the manila envelope on the bulletin board outside the church office.
- Checks and order forms can be dropped off at the church office.

Thank you to all who have participated in the program since January. We have purchased cards valued at $13,260 bringing donations of $663 to the church. We have had seventeen participants; five on a consistent monthly basis. The more who participate in the program the more opportunity we have to bring additional funds to the church.

- Finance Committee

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**Singles Fellowship**

The following topics ignited lively discussion at Sunday Morning Singles meetings in August.

**How do I fit in?: How impulsive are you?: Do you agree Presidential Candidates should resign from their office within ten days?: Privacy as it relates to the Internet and Drones?: Where are you on a scale from one to ten as a work in progress?**

We invite everyone to come downstairs, have a second cup of coffee, and join the discussion. The Singles Discussion Group meets every Sunday in Harvey Hall from 9 - 10:15 am. **All are welcome.**

Submitted by Maryann Friscia
Stepping Stones Family Learning Center

Faith develops over a life time and faith is caught not taught. But, what is taught are basic tenets of our Christian faith and these we learn together in a fun, safe and purposeful space.

We are excited to announce the Stepping Stones Family Learning Center starting this October for children and parents alike. Our goal is for children, age 11 and under, and their parents to have a 1 hour time (6:30-7:30) the Second and Third Fridays of each month (October-December) to come together in separate classes to be guided through stepping stones of faith and life-long discipleship. Childcare with an environment infused with music, songs and games will be provided for children 5 and under.

Parents will have opportunity to grow their faith and improve parenting skills through the insight, wisdom and knowledge as revealed through Scripture.

Children will be guided through the tenets of Christian faith that will teach them about the Bible, the Old and New Testaments, Christ Jesus, Baptism, the Lord’s Supper and life as a child of God.

Look for more information soon – for now put it in your calendar and make plans to invite friends and neighbors!
The Messenger

Sept 2
Sarah Housel

Sept 5
Ann Hinman

Sept 8
Terry Wooster

Sept 8
Terry Housel

Sept 10
Tom Ball, Jr.

Sept 12
Bette Savage

Sept 16
Dee Dee Turlington

Sept 20
Olivia Rosario

Sept 21
Mary Foster

Sept 21
Marcelo Roman

Sept 27
Norma Jean McGuire

Sept 28
Ricardo Ribeiro

Sept 29
Suleima Rosario-Diaz

ANNIVERSARIES

Sept 2
Christopher & Nova Spinner

Sept 11
Dwight & Wendy Engel

Sept 17
Dave & Terry Housel

Sept 20
Tyronne & Chitra Singh

Sept 25
Larry & Cheryl Rosario

Women’s Book Club
Saturday, September 19th, 10am, Church Lounge
Join us for a general discussion of summer reads. Refreshments served.

The Daniel Plan
What is 40 days in a span of a life time? Really, it’s very little time. 40 days (6 week, 1 hour and ½ per week) is what it will take for you to go through the Daniel Plan starting on Wednesday, September 16th and ending on Wednesday, October 21 at 7 p.m.

Prayerfully consider signing up for this journey of delving into faith, food, fitness, focus and friends. Together we will help each other take better care of our body, our mind, and our overall lifestyle choices with the foundation of doing it to honor God.

Many in the congregation have already participated and continue to reap its benefits. Sign-up sheets are in the narthex of the church, or you can call the church office. Sign-up by September 9th! Come and become Daniel Strong! We can do it with God’s help and each other’s support.

At FBC we love all children! We understand that they are at the center of Jesus’ heart and they are in the center of our hearts too!

The beautiful mural designed and painted by Leonard Gabriel (as above) which adorns the wall of our children’s area in the narthex confirms the above statement. Thank you Leonard for this beautiful gift unto the church.

Thank you Carleen Morris for all the beautiful stencils and bible verses in the stairwell that leads to the children’s classrooms. These too communicate our love and care for our little ones.

Dustin Alexander Barton was born on August 13th; 9lbs, 14oz! Congratulations to Matt & Jaime Barton and big brother Jeremy!!

to Ben and Linda Johnson, who were married at FBC by Pastor Mayra on Sunday, August 2nd!
ONGOING CALENDAR
Weekly, unless otherwise noted.

Sundays:
- 9:00 a.m. Singles
- 9:15 *Adult Bible Study
- 9:55 Chancel Choir/Song Leaders rehearsal
- 10:30 a.m. Worship Service
  Children’s Sunday School (pre-school-5th grades)
  (children join us for worship and leave for Sunday school after a children’s message)
- 11:30 a.m. Children’s Choir & Youth Song Leaders rehearsals
- 5 p.m. Youth Group (6th-12th grades)

Wednesdays:
- 12 Noon “Conversations with God” (prayer time) in sanctuary

Thursdays:
- 10:30 a.m. The Hearing Society (a non-profit org): Speech Reading Class: (begins Sept 10)
- 7/8:15pm Chancel Ringers/Choir rehearsals (begins Sept 10)

Saturdays:
- 10:00 a.m. Women’s Book Club (monthly, Sept 19)

*ADULT BIBLE STUDY RESUMES SEPTEMBER 6
We’ll begin with a study on the Parables of Jesus.
Take time to study God’s Word with others and deepen your faith.
Class is taught by Pastor Mayra. Church lounge.

Church Staff
Rev. Mayra Castañeda, Senior Pastor
Glen Brown, Youth Ministry Coordinator
Nancy Lambros, Church Administrator
Monica Cano, Custodian
Matt Barton, Nightly Sexton

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.