



The Spire

First Baptist Church
Ames, Iowa

March 2021
Volume 67 No. 3

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
200 Lynn Avenue
Ames, Iowa 50014-7188
Worship Sundays 9:45 am

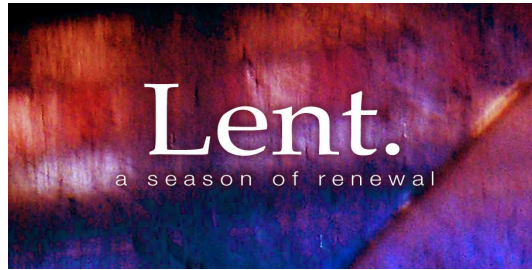
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First Baptist Church is an open and caring family of faith where worship is central and faith engages both heart and mind. We are warmly ecumenical, delight in our diversity, and cherish our Baptist heritage of freedom. We are called by Christ to share God's love with the campus, community, and the world.

As we seek to follow the way of Jesus, we welcome all people to fully participate in our fellowship: all ages, colors, backgrounds, political affiliations, and physical and mental abilities; male and female, gay and straight, rich and poor, single and married. We are all God's children, and all are welcome here.



Lent and Holy Week at FBC

Lenten Devotions

We are gathering on Thursday evenings February 25 - March 25, at 7 pm on Zoom. For this year's Lenten Study, we are having conversations around our daily readings from *On the Way: Walking with Jesus through the Season of Lent*, by Amy Julia Becker. You are welcome to participate whether or not you have the book. (If you would like an electronic copy of the devotional book, you may order one [here](#).)

Palm Sunday, March 28

You are invited to create your own palms with construction paper, etc. or to find a branch in your yard that you can wave during our second annual "virtual palm procession" in worship!

Maundy Thursday, April 1

Our worship service at 6:30 pm will include scripture, music, and communion. The service will be held on Zoom; you will need to provide your own elements.

Good Friday, April 2

You are invited to a virtual Community Good Friday service sponsored by the Ames Area Religious Leaders Association and the Ames chapter of the NAACP. The pre-recorded service includes meditations on the Seven Last Words of Christ. Pastor Dave will be one of the speakers. There will also be a virtual community choir, with FBC singers among the participants (if you would like to be in the virtual choir, contact Mindy.) The link for the service will be available later.

Easter Sunday, April 4

After months of online worship, we will have an in-person Easter Sunrise Service! Details including time and place will be announced soon. Our "regular" Easter worship service will be held on Zoom at 9:45 am.



Pastor's Word

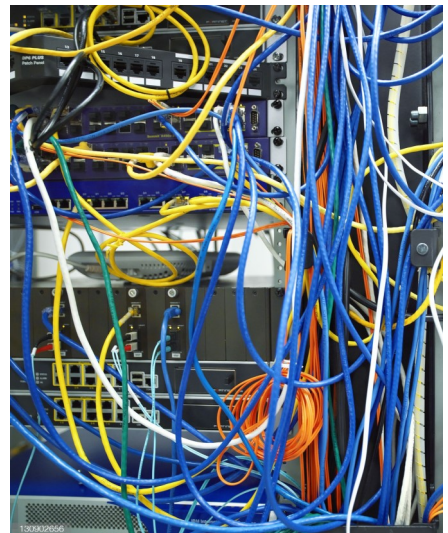
March 21 will mark one year of worship services held on Zoom - a milestone we would not have imagined. Other than a few outdoor services, all of our gatherings since March 22 of last year - worship, church school, committee meetings, choir, trivia nights, AMOS house meetings, a harvest festival and more - have been on Zoom. We have been nothing if not adaptable. Our worship service on March 21 will recognize this milestone. These have been difficult months and this has been a trying time. We will acknowledge these losses in worship.

Yet in the midst of this separated time, we have found many unexpected joys, and learned some things we may not have learned otherwise. This has been a time of growth, and we will celebrate this as well. We may not go for confetti and a balloon drop that morning, but God has been with us and God has blessed us. In Lamentations - a book filled with reflections on sadness, loss and devastation - we read these words: "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, God's mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness!"

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Our Re-Opening Committee met this week to continue to monitor the coronavirus in our state and our community and plan toward the time we can safely meet together in person. Many of our older members have received vaccinations or are scheduled to do so. (It was striking that in our virtual Fellowship Hall conversations last week, much of the conversation was on who has had a shot.) Yet many, including members with compromised health, have not been vaccinated, virus levels have plateaued, and variant virus strains are concerning. The Re-Opening Committee will continue to monitor conditions and public health recommendations even as we make preparations for meeting again in person. The current plan is to make an assessment after Easter with the expectation that we could begin meeting outside in May and if all goes well return to the sanctuary in early summer, with precautions.

We will continue to offer a live online worship option going forward, and we are making further technology improvements to facilitate this. Right now, if you were in the sanctuary on a Sunday morning you would see a multitude of cords and cables providing internet, audio, video, and power running between the office, sound board in back of the sanctuary, computer near the piano, camera in the middle of the center aisle, TV used as a monitor, a router, a small amp and speakers, power outlets and power strips. This setup works just fine when the sanctuary is essentially a studio, but in preparation for a return to the building, we will be running cable to have wired internet available in the back of the sanctuary and in the balcony, as well as making (reliable) Wi-Fi available in the sanctuary. For in-person worship, the camera and computer we are using for Zoom worship will be moved to the back of the sanctuary or the balcony. While we are at it, we will add wireless access points in the Fellowship Hall and possibly the lounge. We are looking at adding flat panel monitors on either side at the front of the sanctuary for video display. All of this is to better accommodate streaming worship and video conferencing capabilities.



approximation of our current setup

Now that they are in stock, we are ordering freestanding automatic hand sanitizer dispensers for the narthex, front sanctuary entrance, lounge, and fellowship hall in preparation for meeting in person again.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact a member of our Re-Opening Committee: Jere Maddux, Joyce Davidson, Wes Johnson, John Whitaker, Mindy Phomvisay, Elizabeth Stegemoller, Joe Parrish, Aaron Stegemöller, and myself.

I look forward to seeing you (online) on Sunday!

Blessings,
Dave



A Season of Growth!

On Ash Wednesday we planted seeds in the ash/dust/soil and have been watching as they grow. In this season of growth, we invite you to send photos of individuals holding their growing plants—we will put these into a slide show for worship. If you did not get a Lent at Home Kit with seeds and soil, feel free to send a photo of crocuses and daffodils coming up in your yard!



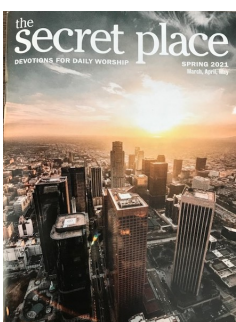
Mosaic Tiles

Our Lent at Home Kits included 8 1/2 x 11 sections of a large mosaic to color and return to the church. We will put these together to form a large display that we will feature at our Easter Service. We need all of the mosaic tiles returned to make this work! The finished product will look something like the design below.



March Birthdays

Jack Cleasby	1
Phyllis Schrag	5
Michelle Leininger	8
Caimbrie Parrish	8
Joseph Core	9
Pat Johnson	17
Gretchen Anderson	18
Wes Johnson	18
Stephanie Goodman	25



The Spring issue of **The Secret Place**, the daily devotional guide published by Judson Press, is now available. If you would like a copy please contact the church office. You can stop by to pick up a copy or we can deliver one to you.



Emma Phomvisay hands a Lent at Home Kit to Beth Douglass and Jere Maddux at our drive-through event on February 14. We distributed kits to 25 individuals/families that included a daily devotional book, soil and seeds to plant, and craft/activity projects.

March

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 2p Virtual Coffee Shop 7p Re-Opening Committee	3 6:30p Choir	4 7p Lenten Devotion	5	6
7 9:45a Worship with Communion 11a Church School	8	9 2p Virtual Coffee Shop 7p Trustees	10	11 7p Lenten Devotion	12	13
14 9:45a Worship 11a Church School	15	16 2p Virtual Coffee Shop	17  6:30p Choir	18 7p Lenten Devotion	19 	20
21 1 Year Anniversary of Zoom Worship 9:45a Worship 11a Church School	22	23 2p Virtual Coffee Shop	24 7p Deacons	25 7p Lenten Devotion	26 6:30p Trivia Night 	27
28 9:45a Worship 11a Church School  Palm Sunday	29	30 2p Virtual Coffee Shop	31			

America for Christ Offering

The America for Christ Offering (AFC) supports the work of the American Baptist Home Mission Societies, serving throughout the U.S. and Puerto Rico. Thanks to your contributions last year, we supported communities distressed by the devastation of COVID-19 as the pandemic swept our country. We helped families who lost homes to floods, wildfires and storms, along with children living on the edge because of poverty and seminarians preparing to devote their lives to sharing the Good News. We helped to start new churches and provide start-up grants to innovative ministry efforts. Our gifts help bring the healing Gospel to our hurting world, cultivate Christian leaders from all walks of life, and work on behalf of freedom, justice and the biblical ideals of Beloved Community. We will receive the AFC offering through the month of March.

www.abhms.org/afc

Summer Event Updates

Many of our usual summer events were canceled due to COVID-19 in 2020. Here are some updates on events for this summer.



ABC/USA Biennial: Originally scheduled to take place in San Juan, Puerto Rico, our denomination's biennial gathering will be a virtual event taking place June 24-26. The Biennial will include live and pre-recorded sessions, with opportunities to connect with other attendees. [Click here](#) for more information and registration. Please note that there is a discount for early registration.

Music Conference: The Fellowship of American Baptist Musicians announced last week that the annual Music Conference at Green Lake, Wisconsin would be held this year, with some adjustments from previous years because of the coronavirus. The dates are July 18-24. [Click here](#) for details.

Region Camps: [Forest Lake Camp](#) and [Dayton Oaks Camp](#) will hold camps this summer. Our church will pay half of the registration fee for any youth who attends camp (and will provide a full scholarship to those who need it.) Contact the church office for details.

Music Camp: We have not made a decision about our own Music Camp. There is hope that we may be able to hold an event later in the summer, but we will make a determination at a later date.



First Baptist Church

AMES

200 Lynn Avenue

Ames, Iowa 50014-7188

Our Church Staff:

Rev. Dr. David Russell	Pastor
Mindy Phomvisay	Director of Music
Emma Phomvisay	Music Intern
Office Manager	
Kathy Greiner	Custodian



Live Worship Sunday mornings 9:45 via ZOOM
Details for connecting on our church website at fbcames.org.



Our next monthly Trivia Night will be on Friday, March 26 at 6:30 pm, via Zoom. The questions come from a range of general knowledge topics, with a few “churchy” questions thrown in. We will form teams, and the teams can discuss their answers to each round’s questions in Zoom breakout rooms. We will use the same Zoom link that we use on Sunday mornings. Contact Pastor Dave for more information.