



The Spire

First Baptist Church, Ames, Iowa



April 2020

Volume 66, No. 4

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
200 Lynn Ave.
Ames, IA 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.

In an effort to help slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus, we have canceled all in-person gatherings. The good news is that wherever we are, even if we are physically apart, we are still the church and God is still with us. We are finding ways to creatively worship together and care for each other and our community.

Our New Weekly Schedule

Sundays:

- 9:45 am- Worship via Zoom at <https://zoom.us/j/3020544990>
Or open the Zoom app and enter meeting 302 054 4990
Or join by phone at 312-626-6799, access code 302 054 4990#
- 11:00 am- Church School for children/youth via Zoom. Please contact Elizabeth Stegemöller for information on connecting.

Tuesdays:

- 2:00 pm- Virtual Coffee Shop. A chance to check in and visit with your church family.

Thursdays:

- 6:30 pm- Mid-Week Gathering. Devotion, sharing and prayer.

(note: all gatherings except for youth and children's activities will be via the Zoom link above.)



Palm Sunday, April 5

worship 9:45 am

Maundy Thursday, April 9

worship 6:30 pm

Easter Sunday, April 12

worship 9:45 am

Pastor's Word

It is possible that our church canceled worship services during the influenza outbreak of 1918. While working on our church's history, however, I read the annual reports for 1918 and 1919 and some business meeting minutes from that time. There was no mention of canceling services. I also know that some churches canceled worship services at times during the polio epidemics of the 1940's and 50's, but our church was not among them.

What I am trying to say is that the moment we are in is something we have never experienced as a church. We have held in the neighborhood of 7900 Sunday morning services over the last 152 years, and as far as I can tell, we have canceled exactly two of them because of a global pandemic.

It is hard to grasp the historic nature of all of this. I'm still working from my office (nobody is in the building). I look outside and it doesn't look like a time of crisis – the sun is shining and the birds are singing. But then I hear the heartbreaking stories and read the statistics. People I know along with well-known public figures have contracted the virus. But it really doesn't matter if a close friend or family member has the coronavirus; we have all been moved by heart-wrenching stories. And we know that it could be any of us. We are all in this together.

I think about the fact that schools are closed, businesses are closed, medical systems are struggling mightily, and we are all frightened. I think especially about folks who work in the medical field. I think about the courage and commitment of those who literally are putting their own life and health on the line to serve others. And I think of the many who are out of work and wondering how they will get by.

In worship, we began readings in the Gospel of Mark in January and we will continue through Easter. It is funny (*providential* might be a better word) how the scriptures each Sunday have spoken to the situation in which we find ourselves. Two Sundays ago, we read Jesus' words in Mark 12 to "love your neighbor as yourself." What a perfect time to practice love for neighbor as we act with kindness and compassion and patience and understanding toward one another in this difficult time.

And then last Sunday, we were in Mark 13 – known as the Little Apocalypse. (I had that late 80's hit "It's the End of the World as We Know It" running through my head all last week.) Reading about the world being turned upside down when it feels like our world is being turned upside down, right now, was somehow helpful. There is nothing like facing the reality of the situation head-on. It is helpful to know that God's people have faced trying times before, and to hear Jesus' words that the pain we are facing may be "birth pangs" – that new and life-giving things can emerge from such a scary and destructive time.

Maybe one of the reasons this time has seemed at least quasi-normal is that we have been able to continue to stay in touch. I am thankful for the ways that technology allows us to stay connected. An added bonus is that friends from out of town have been able to join us as we worship via Zoom. There was a time when quarantine meant that a person really was cut off from the outside world.

This time has made me even more thankful for our church family and more thankful for every one of you. Holy Week and Easter will be different this year. But we need to remember that Easter is a season, and when we are able to gather together in person again, we will certainly celebrate resurrection.

I look forward to "seeing" you on Sunday!
Dave



Welcome, New Members!

We are delighted to welcome Randall and Kay O'Brien as new members. They were received into our fellowship during worship on the last Sunday before we began meeting online.

Both Mississippi natives, Randall and Kay met while students at Mississippi College. Kay is a social worker who has served in a variety of settings. She has been a missionary in Louisiana, supervised a Foster Grandparent program, worked to establish day cares in high schools in Texas, and served on the faculty at Baylor University.

Randall is a Vietnam veteran and an ordained minister. He has served as a pastor and frequent interim pastor, religion professor, university administrator at Baylor, and most recently as president of Carson-Newman University, a Baptist school in Tennessee.



Randall and Kay are parents of three adult children. They recently retired and moved from Tennessee to Ames, where a daughter and her husband (and five grandchildren!) live.

On March 15 (in an unprecedented action!) we received the O'Briens as members by offering the Right Elbow of Christian Fellowship, just before even that action became untenable. If you have not already, please welcome Kay and Randall to our church – by phone, card, or Zoom!

April Birthdays and Anniversary

Zoe Russell	2
Lorene Hoover	5
Becca Whitaker	7
Jacelyn Rudderow	9
Rosemary Coffey	18
Elijah Phomvisay	20
Neil Logue	22
Alissa Parrish	26
Dawn Doerr-Johnson	28
Dianne and Fred Borgen	4



Congratulations to Jill and Dale Grauman on the birth of Clara Ilene Grauman! Clara arrived on Thursday, March 26. She was 8 lbs 1 oz and 20.5 inches long. Mother and baby are doing well. And Fern is now a big sister!

Congratulations, Dr. Izbicki!

Congratulations to our fabulous accompanist, Patricia Izbicki, who passed her oral defense of her doctoral dissertation with flying colors! Dr. Izbicki's dissertation is entitled *The behavioral and neurophysiological effects of music training on cognitive and motor inhibition in aging adults*. We are so proud of Patricia and so grateful for her ministry with us!

Library News

The Ames Public Library is now closed, but our church library is available if you need something to read. I am willing to get together a few books and drop them off for you. Give me a call and tell me the kinds of books you like to read and I'll bring several to choose from.



- Catherine Parrish, librarian

Stewardship Update

Please remember to support our church's ministry during this time apart. You can send tithes and gifts by check to First Baptist Church, 200 Lynn Ave., Ames IA 50014 (attention: Financial Secretary). You may also contribute via PayPal from the church website at fbcomes.org

Virtual Palm Sunday Procession

We will not be in the building and we will not distribute palms, but we will definitely have a virtual palm parade. According to Mark, the crowd met Jesus with coats and leafy branches. Basically, they used whatever they had on hand, and that is what we will do. You can make your own palm branch (a great project while you are at home), or wave a scarf or hat or jacket, or a branch you find in the backyard. We will wave our palms as our musicians play “Hosanna, Loud Hosanna” and have our virtual palm procession.

Our youth and children made plans for this in a Zoom meeting. Here are some prototype homemade palm branches made by Pastor Dave and Lucy Stegemöller. You can use a paint stick and construction paper; yard stick, brown packaging paper and markers; decorated cardboard tube and strips of newspaper attached with a glue gun (Lucy’s creation); or whatever you have around the house.



Event Cancellations/Postponements

The **Center for Creative Justice Chili Supper** scheduled for April 14 at our church will be rescheduled to this fall.

Our **Work Trip to Green Lake Conference Center** set for the first week of June has been canceled.

Music Camp was scheduled for July 6-10. We have decided to cancel the camp in July, but we may reschedule a mini-camp for a later date.

The **Fellowship of American Baptist Musicians Conference** at Green Lake is scheduled for July 19-25. A decision on the conference will be made by the end of April.

If You Need Assistance

Our deacons are calling members and friends to check on how we are all doing during this time. If you need assistance (groceries, etc.) please contact a deacon or Pastor Dave.

Spring Graduates

If you or someone in your family will be graduating this spring, please let the church office know. We will be recognizing our graduates in worship - even if that happens virtually! We will also highlight our graduates in next month's Spire.

April

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
			1	2 6:30p Mid-Week Gathering	3	4
5 Palm Sunday 9:45a Worship 11:00a Church School for youth and children	6	7 2:00p Virtual Coffee Shop	8	9 6:30p Maundy Thursday Worship/ Communion	10 Good Friday	11
12 Easter Sunday 9:45a Worship 11:00a Church School for youth and children	13	14 2:00p Virtual Coffee Shop	15	16 6:30p Mid-Week Gathering	17 6:30 Virtual Trivia Night	18
19 9:45a Worship 11:00a Church School for youth and children	20	21 2:00p Virtual Coffee Shop	22	23 6:30p Mid-Week Gathering	24	25
26 9:45a Worship 11:00a Church School for youth and children	27	28 2:00p Virtual Coffee Shop	29	30 6:30p Mid-Week Gathering		

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Our Church Staff:

Rev. Dr. David Russell	Pastor
Mindy Phomvisay	Director of Music
Dr. Patricia Izbicki	Accompanist
Hope Deets	Office Manager
Kathy Greiner	Custodian



TRIVIA
NIGHT

Virtual Trivia Night April 17

During this time of staying at home, we have nevertheless found a way to plan a church social activity. On April 17 at 6:30 pm, we will have a Virtual Trivia Night. Teams may consist of an individual or group of any size together at a location. You may also have a teammate(s) at another location and consult with one another by text or phone on your team's answers (make sure your Zoom microphone is muted!) We will be using our regular Zoom link for the Trivia Night.