



The Spire

First Baptist Church, Ames, Iowa

March 2023
Volume 69, 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.

COVID-19(ish) UPDATE

Three years ago this month, life changed drastically because of COVID. The pandemic changed things for our church both in the short term and long term, and we continue to make changes and adjust.

First, COVID continues to be a concern. Northcrest just had a large outbreak of cases, and the recent variants are very transmissible. Several of our members (at Northcrest and elsewhere) have had COVID in recent weeks.

Some of our congregants continue to wear masks to protect themselves and vulnerable family members. Others will wear masks on occasion – when they are getting over a cold or have been in close contact with someone who is ill (COVID or otherwise). I have done this myself. I appreciate all of the efforts to protect others. (And of course, if you are ill, please stay home!)

Fortunately, all of the vaccinations have made a big difference both in our susceptibility to the virus and especially in how severe cases are, and effective antiviral medications are now available. Things are thankfully nothing like the early days of COVID.

As we all know, a number of things have changed about our worship services since March of 2020, and worship practices continue to evolve. One of the most significant changes is that we now have a large contingent who worship on Zoom each week – both folks in town unable to attend in person and a number of folks who join us from around the country. Around 40-45% of our attendance continues to be via Zoom. We are so blessed to have these folks join us who could not otherwise. One of the “silver linings” of the pandemic is that our worship is now more accessible in this way.

I want to specifically mention a couple of worship practices that will be changing in the near future. When the pandemic began, we all shared together in the Lord's Supper from our own homes (and the 40-45% of our worshipers who are at home still supply their own bread and juice - or something similar). Since we resumed in-person worship, we have used individual pre-packaged communion cups that include a wafer and juice.

Beginning on April 2, which happens to be Palm Sunday, we will go back to our pre-COVID tradition of the deacons distributing the elements to the congregation. Since we have resumed meals together, this seems to make sense. Please note that pre-packaged communion cups will continue to be an option for those who prefer that and will be available at each entrance to the sanctuary.

After we shut down in-person worship because of COVID, offerings were received via mail or online for more than a year, with no decrease in giving. Since going back to in-person worship, we have continued

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to receive offerings in these ways, and worshipers have also placed offerings in the plates at each entrance. This has seemed to work well. The way that individuals contribute to churches has changed, and this is certainly true for us. Some give online through our website, some use their bank's Bill Pay option and some have set up regular payments through their bank or PayPal. Some give annually through an IRA distribution or gift of stock. The pandemic served to speed up changes that were already happening when it comes to giving.

I do believe that giving as an act of worship is important and meaningful, and a part of me misses "the old way." But the fact is, we may give as an act of worship when we drop our gift in the offering plate before or after the service, put our check in the mail, or click "confirm" on a website. However we give, it is in response to God's generosity and graciousness toward us.

At our deacons meeting, we determined that we will continue with our current practice for the foreseeable future. In other words, we will not be going back to "passing the plates" at this time. The change here is that this may not just be a temporary measure but an ongoing practice. (And of course if we have learned nothing else, we can change this if it seems helpful.)

I appreciate the flexibility, concern, and commitment that all of you have shown in the last three years as we seek to worship and serve in a changing time.

Blessings,
Dave

Summer Camp News

Our region has two camps: Forest Lake, just south of Ottumwa, and Dayton Oaks, near Dayton (45 minutes northwest of Ames). Both offer a variety of summer camps for children, youth, and families. Last summer we had youth attending both camps. Our church will pay half the cost of camp for any youth, or more if there is a financial need. See Pastor Dave or a Christian Education Committee member if you are planning to go.



You are invited to attend the ABC Biennial meeting this summer in San Juan, Puerto Rico! The gathering will be June 23-25, with other events before and after the biennial. This is the family gathering for American Baptists held every two years. Information is posted on the bulletin board or visit www.americanbaptists2023.com to learn more.

Cook-Off 2023

Our 14th annual Cookoff was held on Sunday evening, March 5. We had a wonderful time with all kinds of delicious and creative entries! Our theme was "Quick Fix Foods" - each entry was to be a quick and easy dish in the "semi-homemade" style, using some kind of already prepared ingredient in the dish. We had a wide variety of main dishes, salads, appetizers, and desserts, with around 30 entries.

Those in attendance voted for their favorites with cash. Certificates were given to the top vote-getters, along with a few special recognition awards. Congratulations to Greg Goodman as our Cookoff Champion!

Grand Prize - Greg Goodman, Quick Chicken Ramen
2nd Place - Becca Whitaker, Cherry Pineapple Dump Cake
3rd Place - Buckley Peterson, Sausage Potato Balls
4th place - Stephanie Goodman, Gumbo Sloppy Joes

Child Friendly Award - Phyllis Schrag for her Irish Stew (green jello); Holiday Spirit - Marilyn Peterson for her Thanksgiving Casserole; Fraudulent Voting Award - Pastor Dave made Pretty Good Brownies and an IOU for \$999,999 was found in his voting container. (The suspect has confessed.) The judges felt that this was worth special recognition.

A total of \$404.60 was raised! These funds will go toward earthquake relief in Turkey and Syria through the ABC One Great Hour of Sharing offering. Thank you to all of our great cooks and to everyone who helped make this a fun and tasty evening! And thank you to our youth who volunteered to wash dishes!



VIRTUAL TRIVIA NIGHT FRIDAY, MARCH 31 – 6:30 pm

All are welcome to join us for trivia on Zoom! We will create teams and each team will discuss answers to each round's questions in breakout rooms. You can join us on our regular Sunday morning Zoom link. Not necessary, but helpful for planning: if you plan to play, send an email to Pastor Dave.

March

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
			1 <i>2p PD Singing</i> 6p Lenten Study 	2 10a Virtual Coffee Shop <i>2p PD Dance/ Exercise</i> 5-8p Women United	3	4	
5 9:45a Worship/ Communion 10:45a Church School 6:00 p.m. Cook-off	6	7 8a Men's Breakfast <i>2p PD Boxing</i> 5p Pastoral Relations Comm	8 <i>2p PD Singing</i> 6p Lenten Study	9 10a Virtual Coffee Shop <i>2p PD Dance/ Exercise</i>	10	11	
12 9:45a Worship 10:45a Fellowship Time 11a Church School 	13	14 <i>5-8p Women United</i> 7p Trustees 	Spring Break Week			17 	18
19 9:45a Worship 10:45a Church School	20 	21 8a Men's Breakfast <i>2p PD Boxing</i> <i>5-8p Women United</i>	22 <i>2p PD Singing</i> 6p Lenten Study	23 10a Virtual Coffee Shop <i>2p PD Dance/ Exercise</i> <i>5-8p Women United</i> 7p Deacons	24	25 9a Work Day	
26 9:45a Worship 10:45a Church School	27 5:15p Christian Education Comm.	28 <i>2p PD Boxing</i> <i>5-8p Women United</i>	29 <i>2p PD Singing</i> 6p Lenten Study	30 10a Virtual Coffee Shop <i>2p PD Dance/ Exercise</i>	31 6:30p Virtual Trivia Night		



March 5:

Worship Leader Dawn Doerr-Johnson
Ushers: Julie Johnston,
Aaron Stegemöller

March 12:

Worship Leader Kay O'Brien
Ushers: Jere Maddux, Bob Parrish

March 19:

Worship Leader Joyce Davidson
Ushers: Jerilyn Logue, Tom Logue

March 26:

Worship Leader Jan Thompson
Ushers: Stephanie Goodman,
Jon Pritchard



Phyllis Schrag	5
Michelle (Leininger) George	8
Caimbrie Parrish	8
Joseph Core	9
Pat Johnson	17
Gretchen Anderson	18
Wes Johnson	18
Stephanie Goodman	25



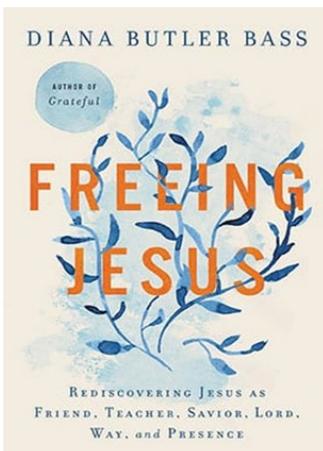
**INDOOR WORK DAY
SATURDAY, MARCH 25**

There will be a church work day on March 25 focusing on indoor projects, cleaning, and repair. We will be running cable for video screens, assessing repair/remodeling needs for the second floor bathroom, scraping and painting radiator covers, organizing/tidying up the kitchen and kitchenette, and other projects – there is something for everyone! We will start at 9 am.



**Instrumental
Ensemble**

Our Yuletide Orchestra is not just for Advent! Our instrumental group will play in worship on March 26. They will be accompanying hymns and playing special music. Music will be distributed in advance and the group will practice that morning. If you would like to play please see Mindy or Pastor Dave. All ages welcome!



Lenten Study

We invite you to join us on Wednesday nights! We will meet at 6 pm, have a simple supper, and then discuss Diana Butler Bass' book, [*Freeing Jesus: Rediscovering Jesus as Friend, Teacher, Savior, Lord, Way, and Presence*](#). You are welcome to join us whether or not you have the book. We will meet on Wednesdays March 1, 8, 22, and 29 (no meeting during Spring Break.)

Reading Schedule

- March 1 – intro, chapter 1
- March 8 – Chapters 2-3
- March 22 – Chapters 4-5
- March 29 – Chapter 6 and conclusion



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
Elizabeth Stegemöller	Choir Accompanist
Charyl Winterink	Office Manager



The **America for Christ Offering** supports our ABC mission work throughout the US and Puerto Rico. The offering supports neighborhood centers in their ministry with children in poverty, seminarians preparing for ministry, churches seeking resources for ministry, ongoing rebuilding efforts in Puerto Rico, continuing education and endorsement of ABC chaplains, grants for new ministry efforts, and much more. We are receiving the AFC offering through the month of March; please use the envelopes provided or use memo “AFC” on your check or online gift.



Worship Sunday mornings 9:45 in person or on ZOOM

Details for connecting via ZOOM at fbcomes.org