

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**  
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Here



**The Visitor**  
APRIL 2013

## More Discerning to Come

*Wade Allen*

A few months ago, I had a conversation with Adam Fink. I was talking with Adam about the work of church moderator. I explained to him that we had experienced much change over the last few years. My hope was that we could settle down a bit and keep things a bit more static. In the past couple of years, we have changed our worship schedule and added staff. These are not insignificant adaptations for any congregation. Little did I know that God would be calling us to more adjustments.

As some of you already know, we are experiencing budgetary constraints. Giving to the church remains static if not slightly decreased. At the same time, in 2012 we experienced a decrease in giving. We ended the year with a \$40,000 deficit. Such decline is characteristic in churches throughout the country. We are not the only ones having to adjust to a new world and culture.

In 2007 three professors at Indiana University-Purdue University in Indianapolis studied church giving. They found that baby boomers were donating about 10 percent less to religious bodies than their parents' generation did at a comparable age — and almost 25 percent less than those parents were donating. A 2010 study by Empty Tomb Inc. reveals that giving to churches declined to 2.4 percent of a donor's income, lower than during the first years of the Great Depression. We are not in this alone. Mix these stats with the fact that fewer people are attending church and it is no surprise that income is lower.

We have had a church-family conversation on stewardship in the months of January and February. We talked about biblical stewardship and our calling to be faithful. As of the end of February, our financial situation

has not changed. We are going to need to adjust. As the new CCT begins its work in April, a leading priority will be to develop a balanced budget; this is no easy task.

As has been our practice over the past few years, we will be using a discernment process in this endeavor. Budgetary cuts can be difficult; we can not lean into our personal preferences. We must devote ourselves to seeking the Spirit's direction as we move forward. Only He has the necessary wisdom to lead us in the right directions. Perhaps God is calling us to reconsider our use of resources. We may find that cuts do not mean less ministry; they may be a vehicle to empower all of us to be involved in ministry. We no longer have the luxury of plentiful staffing; we will have to find creative and less resource-intense ways of functioning. My prayer is that this challenge will increase our dependence on the Holy Spirit's leading. My hope is that we will adjust in ways that will build up our congregation. I pray that we will be empowered to walk with God in all that He is doing in our community.

## Trusting the Spirit: A Music Discernment Process Update

*Matt Headley*

As Wade has pointed out, a lot of change is happening in our congregation lately. While change often makes us uncomfortable, it is the only true constant in life. This fact is evident in our church's music ministry. In the time I have served here, I have witnessed a lot of changes to the musical ensembles in our church. Changes of leadership, rehearsal schedules, and participants have occurred multiple times. I have learned that much wisdom is needed when responding to these changes.

[Last month's newsletter] ([http://fbcmuncie.org/visitor/visitor\\_2013-03.pdf](http://fbcmuncie.org/visitor/visitor_2013-03.pdf)) described details about the inception of a music discernment team (see "Group Discerns Strategy for Use of Music in Worship Gatherings.") The team's purpose is to develop an overall strategy for the use of music in our worship gatherings that will enable 1) Participation in music ministries of excellence, 2) Creation of a manageable rehearsal schedule that considers time, space, participants, and resources, 3) An understanding of our limited resources (i.e., stewardship), and 4) Unity across styles and preferences.

The team is currently in a listening phase in which we are seeking to hear God's voice. Following Easter, we will begin a series in Ephesians to help us listen to Scripture as Paul describes God's design for worship within the larger context of church life. On **April 10 an open forum** will be held to facilitate listening to those in our congregation who are passionate about church music. Other listening strategies are being planned and carried out.

A concern has been raised that the music discernment team doesn't constitute a balanced representation of the different groups in our congregation. Right or wrong, debating this critique misses the point of the discernment process.

One primary criterion used for choosing team members was a demonstrated openness to change. Openness to change is the capacity to perceive God's will when it is especially contrasting with worldly wisdom. Wade addressed this aspect of discernment in his March 17 sermon on Mary's worshipful act of anointing Jesus' feet with expensive perfume (John 12:1-8). Rather than selling the perfume and giving money to the poor, the "reasonable" choice, Jesus commended Mary's extravagant act because it was in line with God's will.

Discernment isn't about finding the most "reasonable" decision that will please all people involved, but about discovering God's will for his people through the guidance of the Spirit. The team *will* listen and seek to understand all groups in the congregation. Discernment doesn't require a balanced group of representatives, but a group of people who will listen to the Spirit.

This point illustrates the distinction between a committee representing divided constituencies and a team of people discerning God's will. If a committee had been put in charge of deciding what to do with the expensive perfume, the outcome would likely have been much different. We must have faith that the Spirit is able to lead us in making faithful decisions. Please join this team in prayer that the Holy Spirit will show us what God's will is for music ministry in our church.

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. (James 1:5–6 NIV11)

## Robert's Ramblings

*Robert Burton*

We just returned from a trip to Savannah, Georgia. It was with a traveling group from High Street Methodist Church. Such trips are but one aspect of their ministry to Senior Adults. One observation I made from all this was how trips like this help to bind a group together and strengthen the fellowship of the church. It is not only trips like this, but a variety of events and ministries that can be vital in ministering to Senior Adults.

There are several events important to our senior members in the next several weeks. These include the following:

**Sunday, April 7** – Organizational meeting for a combined senior adult ministry for both First Baptist and Riverside, 4pm at Riverside

**Thursday, April 11** – Senior Adult Day for ABC of Indiana/Kentucky at First Baptist, Martinsville.

**Sunday, April 21** – First Baptist/Riverside Senior Adult program at Riverside, 4pm.

**May 16-21** – Trip to Washington, DC

Every age group is important to the ministry of the church. This includes the older generation as well. In fact, as the baby boomer generation ages, senior adults are become the most rapidly growing demographic in our society. Sooner or later, if they are so blessed, everyone will one day become a senior adult! I solicit your support for this vital ministry, in your prayers, interest, and participation.

PS: Speaking of senior adults, two of our recently retired men gave their time to repair and plaster the walls on the second floor Choir Room and Conference room at First Baptist. (Someone said they both got “plastered” late one night at church!) They not only did a good job, they saved the church a lot of money by doing it themselves. This is only one of many examples of the contribution senior adults make!

## Odd Jobs Needed

We have a family in our church with financial needs. If you have any “odd jobs” that the husband or wife could do for you, please call the church office. They could do most anything – cleaning, washing windows, yard work, painting, etc., etc. He has done quite a lot of work with landscaping and some computer repair work. Please pass this information to other folks you might know.

## Music Discernment Forum

A forum discussion about the music discernment process will be held on April 10 at 6:30pm. Music rehearsals for that evening will be cancelled to allow all musicians to participate. All who are interested in learning about the discernment process and expressing concerns are encouraged to attend.

## Church Softball Team

We are exploring the possibility of having a church softball team this spring. We need to have at least 15 men who are willing to be a part of the team. The entry fee is \$25/person. Please contact David Rodriguez at [drod7425@gmail.com](mailto:drod7425@gmail.com) or 862-219-9573 if you would like to be a part of the team. You can make checks payable to First Baptist Church.

## Salvation Army Donations

Salvation Army needs our help. The best way to help is to write a check to our church and designate the money to Salvation Army. Joe Songer will see that the money gets to second harvest who in turn provides for 4-5 times the amount to Salvation Army in the way of canned goods or meat. Please be generous and thank you. - *Jane Patton*

## New Carpet in Hallway and Workroom

New carpet was recently installed in the hallway and work room. This carpet was purchased by McGuff's Roofing. The flooring was damaged during the recent roof insulation.

## Acquire the Fire

Youth interested in attending this year's *Acquire The Fire* conference in Muncie, please contact Roger or Julie Morency. The event will be held on **April 5-6, 2013** at Worthen Arena.

Read more at <http://www.acquirethefire.com/christian-youth-conference-events/muncie/>

## Personal Care Drive

As part of Delaware County's Poverty Awareness Year and, in keeping with the church's focus on poverty, FBC will be among 8 churches participating in the April Personal Care Items Drive. "People qualifying for Food Stamps can't spend those dollars on personal hygiene, household cleaning supplies or diapers," said Debbie Gregg, outreach coordinator for the Church Coordination Team. "This is a way to help out as our whole community gets involved in this collection. It's easy to buy an extra bottle of shampoo, a pack of toilet paper or box of laundry detergent every time you go to the store," she said. All Delaware County Old National Bank sites will be collection points and people may also bring items to the church. After Easter, the collection boxes will go into the hallway near the sanctuary, but are located initially in the office/visitor center area. A list of needed items is in the back of the sanctuary and in the office.

## Missional Community Service Project

In April, the missional community will be working with the Personal Care Drive. On **Wednesday, April 17** from **4 to 7 PM**, the group will gather at Christian Ministries to sort out donated items. Please contact David Rodriguez at [drod7425@gmail.com](mailto:drod7425@gmail.com) or 862-219-9573 if you would be interested in helping.

## Sermon Series in Ephesians

With the arrival of April, Easter is past and spring is here. As has been our custom, we are moving into a sermon series on a book of the Bible. We often follow the lectionary through the season of Advent, Epiphany, Lent and Easter (sometimes Pentecost). But we generally move into a book series through the rest of the year. Last year, we studied the book of Genesis; the year before, we explored Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. This year, we will delve into Paul's letter to the Ephesian church. Through the month of April, we will be in the following Scriptures.

- April 7 - Our Redemption (Ephesians 1:3-13)
- April 14 - To Know Christ (Ephesians 1:15-23)
- April 21 - God's Workmanship (Ephesians 2:1-10)
- April 28 - Divided We Fall (Ephesians 2:11-22)

## Pastor Celebration in May

On **Sunday, May 19**, we will celebrate, as a congregation, our pastor. In June 2012, Wade graduated from Northern Seminary with the Doctor of Ministry degree. In September 2013, Wade will celebrate his 20th anniversary of ordination. On this special Sunday, we will have a combined worship service at 10:45 AM followed by a celebration lunch. Alistair Brown, President of Northern Seminary, will be preaching in worship. Plan to join us on this special occasion.

## Calendar

**Sundays** – 9:15 AM Early Gathering/Early Sunday School, 10:15 AM Fellowship Time, 10:45 AM Late Gathering/Late Sunday School

**Wednesdays** – Wednesday evenings are a time for various programs, rehearsals and a shared meal. Prayer Shawl (4:30), Meal (5:30), Children Program (6:00), Handbells, Bible Study, other special meetings (6:30) and Choir Rehearsal (7:40).

On the first Wednesday of each month (March 6), Missional Community Large Group Gathering will take place at 6:00 PM. Life Group Leaders Meetings are on the first and third Wednesday at 7:00 PM (March 6 and March 20).

**April 7** – Senior Adult Meeting (Riverside)

**April 10** – Church Music Discernment Forum

**April 11** – Senior Adult Day (Martinsville)

**April 15** – CCT Meeting

**April 17** – Missional Community Service Project at Christian Ministries

**April 21** – Missional Community Poverty Simulation

## April Birthdays

We would like to say Happy Birthday to the following people in the month of April. Please let them know that you are thinking of them on their special day.

3 Hunter Petroviak  
4 John Mulcahy III  
6 Colleen Massoth  
Megan Morency  
Cami Shutters  
7 David Earls  
Lindsey Markwart  
9 Anna Allen  
10 Sam Hershman  
15 Susan Londt

16 Robert Burton  
17 Victoria Bouton  
Marianne Tooley  
21 Kendra Ervin  
25 Maddy Crawford  
Billie Frogge  
Jane Patton  
30 Ray Conley  
Freida Roberts