



April 15 - May 15, 2023

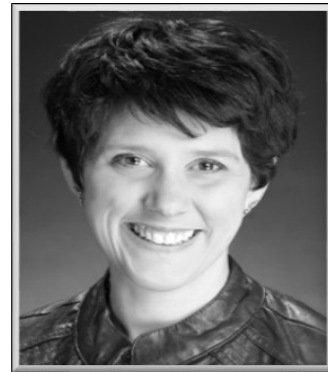
First Things

A Monthly Newsletter for Members and Friends

Who We Are: FBC: Where every person matters and relationships with God and neighbors grow.

What We Do: We are learning to live the life that Jesus would live if Jesus were living our life through:

- *meaningful worship and study*
- *valuing and loving others through service*
- *embracing God's created diversity*
- *intentional connections to our community*
- *caring for one another through all of life*



Rev. Lara Escoffre

joined our pastoral staff, in December 2012, as the Pastor of Preaching and Teaching; in June 2015, Lara transitioned into the role of **Lead Pastor**. Lara has a passion for preaching and teaching God's word and for walking with people as they discover who God has created them to be. Lara is active in the Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force, Mid-Michigan Health Advisory Council, and Faithwalking. She has two children: Lola and Devin.

**Scrapbooker's**

9AM — 5PM

Ladies: Bring your craft project, knitting, etc., and join us!

Thursday, April 27 - 9am-5pm
Friday, April 28, - 9am-3pm

(Note that Friday's time has changed)

LETTER FROM PASTOR

Lead Pastor Newsletter Article April 2023

Since September our leadership (and hopefully our congregation as a whole) has been reflecting on our own church's journey into the "unknown" (meaning the new/post-Christian world we live in) through the lenses of Lewis and Clark's Western Exploration of the United States. We started with a look at the mission that the Corp of Discovery began with, what they hoped they would accomplish, using their experience to help us evaluate our own mission and vision. Then we considered how that plan HAD to change when the explorers reached the Lemhi Pass, where they discovered they could not "Canoe in the Mountains. This invited us to look at how we, as a Church, may need to make some changes to move forward in this new world. Now, this spring, we are going to look at the help Lewis and Clark needed to find so that the next leg of their journey would be possible.

A few months before reaching the Lemhi Pass, Lewis and Clark had hired a French-Canadian trapper to interpret for them with the local Native-American tribe: Toussaint Charbonneau; who had a Native-American wife named Sacagawea. To everyone's surprise, it would be Sacagawea who would open doors for the Corp to accomplish the next phase of their journey. Then, once in the mountains, it would be a tribe of Nez Perce (Native-Americans) who would nurse the explorers back to health after they journey nearly claimed their lives.

Lewis and Clark's story reminds us that sometimes to accomplish the task ahead (even our God given tasks) we need help. As Pastor Aleka and I reflected on this fact, and the story which will be told through the Take Note Musical this spring, we were struck by how the focus of that musical (Moses) had a very similar tale to Lewis and Clark. Moses was sent out with a mission into the unknown, just like the Corp of Discovery! So, can learn from Moses' life about working alongside God and others as we seek to fulfill our God given task which will equip us for this next phase of OUR journey? That is what we hope to find out!

Starting on Sunday, April 16th we will begin our Spring sermon series: "Making Mission: Possible." This series will not only help us prepare to experience the story of Moses told by the Take Note youth on May 21 but will also challenge us to look around at how God and our neighbors can/are helping us on our own journey of discovery. How will this great leader's own call, work with others, and experience with being used to fulfill God's plan impact our assessment of where we are and where God is leading us? I hope you will join us for Sunday morning worship this spring to find out!

~Rev. Lara Escoffre

MUSIC & YOUTH



Take-Note Preview

Join Us on Sunday, April 30, 2023
to preview the Spring Musical

Help is needed with props, costumes, and a reception on the date of the performance! Minimal commitment required. Please contact Pastor Aleka if you are willing to share your gifts in any of the areas. Important Dates:

4/30	10am	Preview of Musical during Worship
5/19	3-5:30pm	Dress Rehearsal #1
5/20	9-11:30am	Dress Rehearsal #2
5/21	10am	Presentation of Spring Musical
5/22	3-5:30pm	Last Day of Programming until Fall 2023

Worship & Music

Thank you to all our musicians who made Holy Week extra special this year. Our Palm Sunday and Easter services included contributions from the Vocal Choir, Handbell Ensemble and Praise Band. What a blessing you are to our church!

Handbell Ensemble is finished for the season and will resume in September.

Vocal Choir sings next on May 5. We will discuss future plans at rehearsals this month (April 19, 26, & May 3).

Praise Band is slated to play in worship April 23, May 14, and May 21 (we will rehearse at 8:30 on those Sunday mornings).

Youth Fellowship

Our Junior and Senior High students were busy in March and April, with planning and presenting special worship services, going on outings to support one another's extracurricular activities, and helping to host the Easter Breakfast.

The school year is quickly winding down, and summer is right around the corner. You still have time to register for Higher Ground at Camp Lake Louise, located in Boyne Falls, MI. You can learn all about the programs being offered this summer, and even complete your registration on their website <https://highergroundatlakelouise.com/>.

Scholarships are available through the camp itself. Additional scholarships and transportation can be arranged if needed through FBC Midland by contacting Pastor Aleka. Find your week and register TODAY!

CHECK OUT the Youth Fellowship bulletin board in the narthex for info about upcoming events and for pics of our latest adventures.

Creation is Calling out to The Creator

FBC affirms that "Worship is the celebration of God's gift of life." Worship is one of the ways Creation calls to The Creator. Worship is a hallmark of the Christian faith. Although worshipping God can be a spontaneous response in our daily lives, regular corporate worship doesn't just happen; it is a conscientious act of the "priesthood of believers". Particularly, as members of the American Baptist Churches, we are all part of this priesthood, responsible for the style, quality, and depth of our worship. There are SO MANY ways we can serve this Worship Ministry! Here's a partial list of jobs that people do to make our worship services possible:

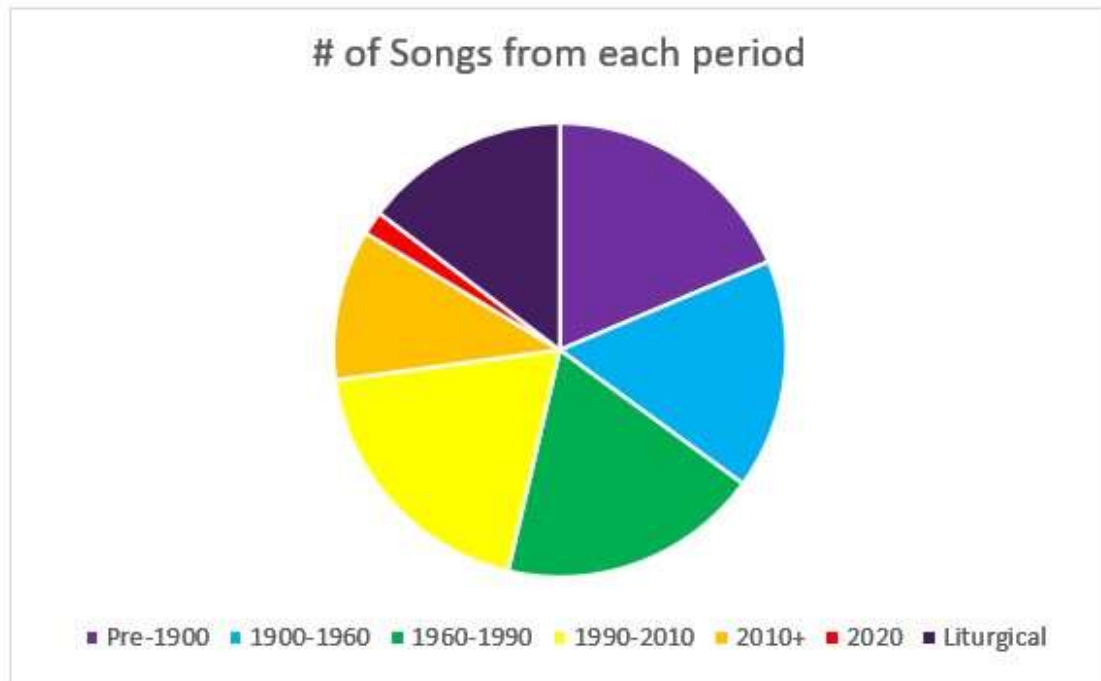
- Coordinating Scripture, messages, and music
- Playing an instrument or singing in ensemble/ solo setting
- Creating & running slide projection
- Preparing & serving Communion
- Receiving offering
- Preparing & presenting children's message
- Providing coverage for the cry room during worship
- Filming & broadcasting worship services
- Running the sound board for on-site amplification and online production
- Turning on lights and opening doors before service
- 'Dressing' the worship space with candles, flowers, banners, etc.
- Keeping attendance
- Receiving & sharing announcements
- Facilitating corporate prayer
- Participating with congregational readings, prayers, and songs
- And more!

If you already serve in one or more capacity, THANK YOU for sharing your time & talent with our church family. If you are curious about how our services come together, or if you are interested in supporting the worship ministry at FBC with your special talents and gifts, this is a great time to let us know. Plans for the upcoming church year will be underway soon, and we'd love to help you find a meaningful way to serve.

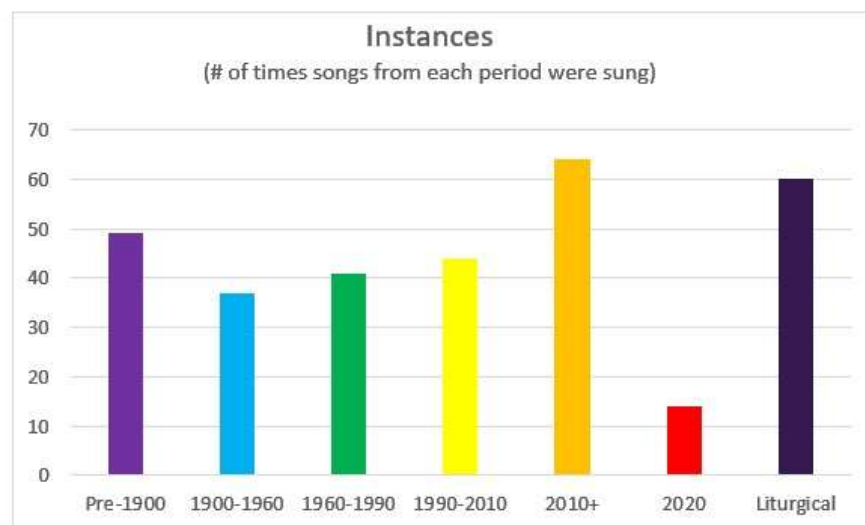
"Blended" Worship

This congregation values a "blended" style of worship, which simply means that we appreciate a healthy mix of traditional and contemporary styles for expressing our faith during worship services. One of the easiest ways to observe this is in the variety of music we use. Did you know that in the past 2 years since returning to in-person services, 177 different songs were used in worship at FBC?! Obviously, some songs were repeated to equal the approximately 309 songs scheduled into our worship plans.

26 (15%) of all the songs used could be considered 'liturgical' or seasonal, like: "Blest Be the Tie that Binds," or "Silent Night," or "Christ the Lord is Risen Today." Of the remaining 151 songs used, 52 (29% of total) were published in hymnals prior to 1960, 33 (19%) were published between 1960-1990, 53 (30%) were published between 1990-2010, and 3 (2%) were published since 2020. These percentages are represented in a pie chart here:



The chart below shows the number of instances songs from each era were actually sung by the congregation, including repetitions:



Sometimes, it may feel as though our services are 'heavy' on one style of music or another. This could be due to the way ensembles were scheduled to accommodate members' availability in 2023. Although the big picture above demonstrates a balance of musical styles over the past 2 years, it does not represent the concentration of each style on a weekly basis. For instance, newer music has often been presented in repetition, several weeks in a row. Armed with this information, moving forward, a different formula will be used when planning worship toward the end goal of presenting a more seamlessly 'blended' service every week, rather than assigning certain dates to be "Praise Band" or "Hymn" Sundays.

Grace and Peace, Pastor Aleka

STEWARDSHIP & FINANCE - Budget Year to Date March 2023

2023 Budget:	\$ 276,035	
General Fund Receipts	\$ 36,269	11.1 %
General Fund Expenses	\$ 68,991	24.9 %
Receipts over Expenses	\$ -32,722	

As of the end of March we are nearly \$33,000 behind in giving, but our bank account remains strong. Mission giving began in March, and Property Management had increased fees for Utilities and Snow Plowing. These "losses" should be made up over the next few months.

Bobbie Baker, on behalf of the S&F Team



We'd like to send Warm Birthday & Anniversary Wishes

April BIRTHDAYS

01 Gregg Clark
 03 Lanny Robbins
 Trevor Snoddy
 06 Devin Heise
 11 Isabelle Mellon
 16 Ada Wong
 19 Adrienne Wiley
 22 Marcellous Rogers
 25 Gary Gibson
 28 Pam Jezowski

May BIRTHDAYS

02 Sue Funk
 14 Beckett Kobel
 18 Tansley Rogers
 25 Sharon Winchester
 27 Kera Metz
 Rupert Dowker
 28 Bunny Mitchell
 31 Dena Moore
 Allen Ross



April ANNIVERSARIES

No Anniversaries on Record

May ANNIVERSARIES

27 Ed & Mary Beth Coons

PRAYER PARTNERS

For the needs of friends & family - March & April 2023: Thayer Bradish (recovery/strength); Cara Hitchcock Reel (tonsil infections); McCourt Family & Extended Family (Baby Jake-recovery/Gabrielle-cancer/Prayer for family); Dan (Moore friend/cancer); Joyce Phillips (pray she can remain home and get the care she needs there); Anne Poindexter (unconscious/hospital); Betty Spiker (broken tailbone/pelvis/recovery); John Walter (wisdom for future treatment); Bob Winchester (fell/bruised/mobility issues)

For those that Grieve: The Skidmore family (Rhonda Vance's sister Betty)

If you know of other folks in our church who need special prayer: Please contact the church office by phone: 989-835-6731 or via email:

office@midlandfbc.com



CALENDAR - 2023

Regular Schedule

ABIDING SCRIPTURES

APRIL - JOHN 19:30

MAY - ACTS 2

Sundays	10:00 AM 11:30 AM	Worship Service - Communion Service is the 1 st Sunday of each month Sunday School Classes for All (Season Ends on May 7)
Mondays	3:00-5:30PM 6:30 PM	Take Note! (Grades K-12) Team Network Mtg - Chapel - 2 nd Monday - All Welcome
Tuesdays	7:30 AM 5:30 PM 6:00 PM	Men's Prayer Breakfast - M's Café Stewardship & Finance Meeting - 3 rd Tuesday FBC Handbell Practice - Resumes in Fall
Wednesdays	1:30 PM 6:30 PM 6:30 PM	Christian Education Team Meets - 2 nd Wednesday Harmony Lounge FBC Vocal Choir Practice Property Management Meeting - Media Rm - 2 nd Wednesday
Thursdays	10:00 AM 6:30 PM	Facebook Prayer Time Adult Bible Study - Media Room & Zoom - All Adults Welcome
Saturdays	9AM-2PM	FBC Serves at Open Door - 2 nd Saturday

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Special Event</u>
Apr 27 (Thu)	9:00AM-5:00PM	Scrapbookers in the Hearthside Room
Apr 28 (Fri)	9:00AM-3:00PM	Scrapbookers in the Hearthside Room (Note time change)
Apr 30 (Sun)	10:00-11:15AM 11:30AM-12:15PM -	Worship Service - Take Note! Preview Sunday School for All Scholarship Application Deadline
May 7 (Sun)	10:00-11:15AM 11:30AM-12:15PM 12:15-3:00PM	Worship Service Sunday School for All All Youth Fellowship/Prayer Walk
May 14 (Sun)	10:00-11:15AM -	Mother's Day Worship Service No Sunday School
May 19 (Fri)	3:00-5:30PM	Take Note! Rehearsal
May 20 (Sat)	9:00-11:30AM	Take Note! Dress Rehearsal
May 21 (Sun)	10:00-11:15AM -	Take Note! Musical Reception following Spring Musical
May 22 (Mon)	3:00-5:30PM	Take Note Cast Party - Last Day until Fall
May 29 (Mon)	-	Office Closed - Memorial Day

Scholarship Applications

Application deadline is April 30, 2023.

FBC Scholarship Applications can be found here: [CLICK HERE](#)



*Draw closer to Me
in 2023*

ONLINE DONATIONS

First Baptist Church is now able to accept online donations!



Online donations are now available on our Website!
(See top right corner: www.midlandfbc.com)

OUR STAFF

Rev. Lara Escoffre.....cell 815-690-8476 - **pastor@midlandfbc.com**
Rev. Aleka Schmidt.....**musicandyouth@midlandfbc.com**
Scott Lippoldt.....Pianist: **salippol@svsu.edu**
Shelley Page.....Office Mgr: **office@midlandfbc.com**
Bruce Woodcraft.....Maintenance Mgr: **maintenance@midlandfbc.com**
Mike Walker.....Assistant Custodian
Dave JezowskiGroundskeeper
Shannon Reilly.....Housekeeper

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<http://www.midlandfbc.com>



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