



February 15 - March 15, 2023

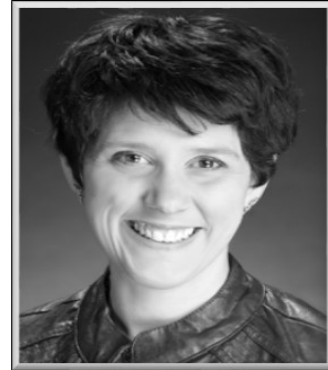
First Things

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.

PRAYER PARTNERS

For the needs of friends & family - January & February 2023:

Betty (Dan & Holly Rashott's grandmother-broke neck); Boucher Family: Diane-cancer surgery recovery, Cathy-sepsis, Chuck-physical/emotional strength, Karen-recovery and strength; Jenn Hitchcock (surgery recovery); Cam Lippoldt (heart); Joyce (Cathy Steib's mom-pneumonia and recovery); Christina Opitz (cancer); Rachel (car accident/concussion/broken elbow); Don Raetz (recovery); Schultz family; Andrea Snoddy (depression); John Walter (strength for surgery on 2/28); Adrienne Wiley; Sharon & Bob Winchester (health); Lacey Wright (knee replacement surgery recovery)

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



FEBRUARY 19, 2023: Agenda

1. Call to order (Dave Pellegrom)	1 min
2. Agenda review and call for additional topics. Revise the final agenda to fit in 32 minutes. a. We primarily want to focus on the year 2023 b. Please read the 2022 Annual Report. It's available for you now.	3 min
	(total = 4 min)
3. Acceptance of minutes of Fall Meeting of (Dave)	4 min
4. Questions on 2022 Annual Report (Refer to Right Team Leader)	12 min
	(total = 16 min)
5. Other Business a. Moderator vision – Dave to speak on 2023 Canoeing challenges b. Pastoral vision – Rev. Lara to speak on vision for 2023	3 min 9 min
6. Adjourn	(Total = 32 min)

[CLICK HERE for 2022 ANNUAL REPORT](#)

[CLICK HERE for Fall Business Meeting Minutes](#)

LETTER FROM PASTOR

Lead Pastor Newsletter Article February 2023

Remember when we would go to a store and actual try on an item before purchasing. Modern marketers are now calling this call this an “inconvenience,” but I never viewed it as such. While trying on shoes or clothes meant leaving the comfort of our homes, doing so gave us the chance to see if we liked the look or feel of a product BEFORE we took it home. What is more, there was no risk in doing so! The worst thing that could happen was that we simply tried something else or left empty-handed.

Several years ago, I attended a conference where the leaders challenged the attendees to “try on” new ideas. They stated that, just as with clothes or shoes, we could always walk away if these concepts didn’t fit. I love that perspective! Doesn’t it seem far less scary to engage in things that are new if we view them as simply “trying something on” to “see if it fits”?

As many of know, Team Network has been studying Tod Bolsinger’s book “Canoeing in the Mountains,” which challenges churches to adapt to the “new world” where we find ourselves. This perspective offers a possible need for change and/in how we do things. Bolsinger encourages churches to experiment and see what works, and to do so without fear of failure. This sounds a lot like the “old fashioned” “try on” doesn’t it?

I was so excited when Team Network decided to give this perspective a shot this Lenten Season by intentionally leading events which are intended to be outside our “norm.” Will they work? We just don’t know, but I think a lot of the successes or failures depends on us. Which brings me to the question “Will we take the time to ‘try on’ the events and give them our “all?” Before you answer let me give you an overview of what is happening: Let me offer you an overview of what this Lenten season will offer:

1. **Wednesday, February 22 at 6:30 p.m.** --- The Youth are planning an **Ash Wednesday Service**. This will give us an amazing start to the season of Lent with our youth leading the way into a season of repentance. How will their “take” on the service challenge us?
2. **Friday, March 3rd from 7-9** --- There will be an opportunity to be a part of an inter-generational learning experience. This will be facilitated by Louise Bergman. We will watch two episodes of the movie/or/show called **“The Chosen.”** This show, which enacts scenes from Jesus’ life, and does a great job of inviting dialogue about the life and teachings of Jesus in a way that can be understood by all ages. What a great chance for us to learn and grow together. Also, this could be a great outreach tool for any friends or family who are interested in Jesus, but not real excited about the church!

3. **Friday, March 10 (time TBD) ---March Madness/Chili-Cook off Fundraiser** (at FBC)---What better than a night of fun and fellowship that serves a cause! The Senior High Sunday School class has joined up with the Stewardship and Finance Team to raise funds for Shelterhouse (more information to follow). Whether you want to show off your best chili or just come try someone else's chili while watching the game, this event is sure to fit the bill. Due to the fundraising aspect of this event, it will be advertised widely in the community!
4. **Saturday, March 18 (time TBD)---**You have heard of Christmas Caroling, well we are going to try **EASTER Caroling**? Come join us for an evening of spreading the message of God's love through song to those who are unable to participate in the life of the church on a regular basis. Want to be included or know someone who should be? Please contact Bunny Mitchell (Congregational Care) or Janice Wallace (Missions).
5. **Friday, March 24 from 3-6pm---** Let's get out in the community with a fellowship gathering at Cultivate, a free coffee and tea shop in the mall, called "Books and Bakes." This outreach event will invite members of our community to come and enjoy a warm beverage and sweet treat while getting crafty making book marks OR exchanging their much-loved books with other readers. What a great chance for us to make new friends! (Hosted by Felicity Dowker and Lara Escoffre)
6. **Monday, March 27 at 5:30 p.m. ---** Join us for a **Family Fellowship Meal** at the church hosted by Barb Neil and Linda Atiemo-Obeng. While this is another great chance for fellowship, let's make it more! Let's make this a true Lenten a challenge for us to invite a friend who doesn't attend church, or is simply a non-believer. This invitation is to build relationships only, so there will be NO ALTER CALLS, only a meal with new friends.
7. Finally, our Lenten "experiments"/ "try ons" will end on **Thursday, April 6 at 6:30 p.m.** with a **Maundy Thursday Service**, where once again is planned and led by the youth. This special day has so much potential to be a powerful experience in the life of a believer! I look forward in anticipation with our youth leading us through a meaningful experience.

As you can see there are many opportunities to "try on" and I'm excited to see what God has in store for us with these events. Who knows what ideas will inspire new avenues for our congregation. I do hope you'll take advantage of some, or all of these gatherings.

~Rev. Lara Escoffre

YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

Check out our schedule of upcoming meetings and events:

FBC Midland Youth Fellowship Schedule 2022-2023 <small>last update 2/14/23 AS</small>				
DATE	TIME	WHO	LOCATION	NOTES
2/12/23	12:15-2:30pm	All Youth	Youth Room	Lunch & Plan/ Practice Ash Wednesday
2/22/23	6-8pm (6:30 service)	All Youth	Worship Service	Youth Present Worship Service
2/26/23	2:30-5:30pm (3pm curtain)	All Youth	FIELD TRIP to see Lola in "Honk!"	Students \$9, Chaperones \$13
3/12/23	TBD	All Youth	FIELD TRIP to Animal Shelter	Lunch & Drivers
4/2/23 PALM SUN	12:15-2:30pm	All Youth	Youth Room	Lunch & Plan/ Practice Maundy Thursday
4/6/23 MAUNDY THR	6-8pm (6:30 service)	All Youth	Worship Service	Youth Present Worship Service
4/8/23 SATURDAY	10am-12noon	All Youth	Kitchen & Hearthside Room	Prep Easter Breakfast
4/9/23 EASTER SUN	8:30am	All Youth	Kitchen & Hearthside Room	Serve Easter Breakfast
5/7/23	12:15-2:30pm	All Youth	Midland Parks & Recreation	Prayer Retreat
6/11/23-ish	TBD	All Youth	Mission Trip	TBD
<i>Start thinking about Summer Camp!!!</i>				

Memories from Great Escape Winter Retreat 2023:



Grace and Peace, Pastor Aleka

TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

We wanted to bring to your attention, in case you are unaware, some of the technology difficulties FBC has been experiencing in various areas that affect Worship Service, Praise Team, and Audio-Visual Team tasks.

In December, Microsoft Windows pushed out an update that caused the laptop used for Worship Service to crash and burn. (Many people experienced this problem.) Even after reloading Windows 10 and other programs, Shelley Page was unable to get the laptop to communicate with other devices and was forced to send the laptop out to be "fixed" by better computer technology experts than herself. In the meantime, FBC experienced difficulties during Worship Service using another laptop that is not considered a media machine and does not have our normal Worship Service program loaded for slides, videos, etc.

In January, our Worship Service laptop was returned in good working order, but just as FBC was returning to normal broadcasting, the projector used in the Sanctuary began experiencing difficulties...first we experienced problems with the lamp, which our Maintenance Manager replaced, then we experienced problems getting the projector to accept the new lamp and to re-set the counter. As such, we keep getting an error telling us the bulb needs replaced, or the machine overheats. Then, the projector refused to display anything. After many, many hours of troubleshooting by our Office Manager, Maintenance Manager and Rev. Aleka Schmidt...and even an attempt to use a temporary portable projector...we were finally able to get the old projector working again. We do not know if errors will continue to pop-up.

Then the software program used during service (ProPresenter) required an update to a new version by January 31. The new version was more than a normal upgrade; it came in a format very different to what we had before and has a HUGE learning curve. This program refused to respond last Sunday to our normal method of controlling the slides during Worship Service.

In addition to these technological problems, we've tried to introduce an update for our Worship Services...a monitor for pastor and Praise Team to use. (The television was a gift from members of the church.) Again, due to technological problems, the television was experiencing loss of connectivity to the laptop via WiFi.

Part of the problems we are experiencing in Worship is due to the age of our equipment and that most of our technological devices are analog equipment that we are attempting to interface with newer digital devices, requiring special converters or adapters in order to work. (Using old technology with new technology has its own set of challenges.) Please have patience with us as we attempt to improve FBC's worship experience both in-house and online.

Shelley Page, Office Manager

P.S. Our office computer has lost the ability to connect to our Electronic Sign for updates, so that is a project for me to troubleshoot with the Watchfire sign people, next week. Stay tuned for the next episode of...Technology Updates.



MOVIE NIGHT

FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 2023, 7:00-9:00 PM

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
915 E SUGNET RD

FEATURING

TWO SELECT EPISODES OF **"THE CHOSEN"**

7:00 PM - DOORS OPEN; ARRIVE AND SETTLE INTO THE SANCTUARY

7:10 PM - FIRST FEATURE: **"JESUS LOVES THE LITTLE CHILDREN"**
(SEASON 1, EPISODE 3, 30 MINUTES)

7:40 PM - INTERMISSION - **SNACKS AND FELLOWSHIP** IN THE
HEARTHSIDE ROOM (FAMILIES WHO NEED TO GET HOME FOR
BEDTIME ROUTINES MAY SLIP OUT AFTER INTERMISSION.)

8:10 PM - SECOND FEATURE: **"THE ROCK ON WHICH IT IS BUILT"**
(SEASON 1, EPISODE 4, 48 MINUTES)



Scrapbooker's

9AM – 5PM

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

**February 16 & 17 (Thursday/Friday)
March 23 & 24 (Thursday/Friday)**

STEWARDSHIP & FINANCE - Budget Year to Date January 2023

2023 Budget:	\$ 276,035	
General Fund Receipts	\$ 20,259	7.3 %
General Fund Expenses	\$ 21,424	7.7 %
Receipts over Expenses	\$ -1,165	

Bobbie Baker, on behalf of the S&F Team



We'd like to send Warm Birthday & Anniversary Wishes

February BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Jeff Richards
- 2 John Holmes
- 12 Thayer Bradish
- 18 Sharon Houghton-Ross
Emily Richards
True Rogers
- 20 Marci Rogers
- 25 Rena Walker
- 26 Kelly Kloha
- 27 Corinne Bishop
- 28 Louise Bergman



February ANNIVERSARIES

- 7 Dave & Bunny Mitchell

March BIRTHDAYS

- 04 Shawna Kobel
- 04 Tyler Steib
- 23 Ruth O'Dell
- 24 Bobbie Baker
- 26 Barb Neil
Preston Streeter
- 27 Mark Neil
- 29 Sheridan Seamster
- 31 David Pellegrom
- 31 Emersyn Seamster

March ANNIVERSARIES

- 23 Jim & Debbie Hitt
- 23 Chris & Michell Moe
- 30 Roland & Janice Wallace



CALENDAR - 2023

Regular Schedule

ABIDING SCRIPTURES **FEBRUARY - 1 KINGS 19:1-21**
MARCH - LUKE 23:33-43

Sundays	10:00 AM	Worship Service - Communion Service is the 1 st Sunday of each month
	11:30 AM	Sunday School Classes for All
Mondays	3:00-5:30PM	Take Note! (Grades 1-12)
	6:30 PM	Team Network Mtg - Chapel - 2 nd Monday - All Welcome
Tuesdays	7:30 AM	Men's Prayer Breakfast - M's Café
	5:30 PM	Stewardship & Finance Meeting - 3 rd Tuesday
	6:30 PM	FBC Handbell Practice (Resumes March 21)
	6:30 PM	Property Management Meeting - Media Rm - 2 nd Tuesday
Wednesdays	6:30PM	FBC Vocal Choir Practice
Thursdays	10:00 AM	Facebook Prayer Time
	6:30 PM	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>
Feb 16 (Thu)	9:00AM-5:00PM	Scrapbookers in the Hearthside Room
Feb 17 (Fri)	9:00AM-5:00PM	Scrapbookers in the Hearthside Room
Feb 19 (Sun)	10:00-10:45AM	Worship Service
	11:00-11:30AM	Annual Business Meeting
Feb 22 (Wed)	6:30PM	Ash Wednesday Service
Feb 26 (Sun)	10:00-11:15AM	Worship Service
	11:30AM-12:15PM	Sunday School for All
	2:30-5:30PM	Youth Event - Midland Center for the Arts
Mar 3 (Fri)	7:00-9:00PM	Movie Night - The Chosen
Mar 10 (Fri)	TBD	March Madness Event
		Chili Cookoff Fundraiser for ShelterHouse
Mar 12 (Sun)	10:00-11:15AM	Worship Service - Daylight Saving Time
	11:30AM-12:15PM	Sunday School for All
	TBD	All Youth—Animal Service Project
Mar 18 (Sat)	5:00PM-?	Easter Caroling: 5pm Pizza, 5:45 Caroling, 7:45pm Cookies & Games
Mar 19 (Sun)	TBD	Books & Bakes at Cultivate in the Midland Mall
Mar 23 & 24	9:00AM-5:00PM	Scrapbookers in the Hearthside Room
Mar 27 (Mon)	6:30-8:00PM	FBC Family Fellowship Dinner - Hearthside Room

Turn CLOCKS
FORWARD
on Sunday,



March 12th

(Or move them
forward at Noon on
Saturday, March 11th,
so you won't miss
an hour of sleep!)

MISSIONS NOTE

Dear Family of First Baptist Midland:

We pray that the new year has started well for you and your ministries. We know you have challenges, as do we. Isn't it encouraging to know that "'though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet My love for you will not be shaken, nor My covenant of peace be removed,' says the Lord, who has compassion on you." Isaiah 54:10

We have experienced God's love this past month, especially with work and health challenges. Yet, God always comes through, always provides. Thank you for being partners with us, in translation ministry, providing for our daily needs through financial support and prayers, so we can focus on our work.

May God continue to bless and guide you as you serve Him together!

In His Grace, Helga & Chaz Mortensen



*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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