



January 15 - February 15, 2023

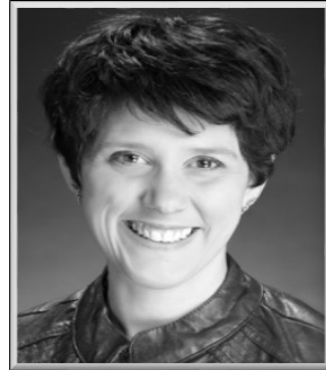
First Things

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.



FEBRUARY 19, 2023

Details to come...



*Draw closer to Me
in 2023*

LETTER FROM PASTOR

Lead Pastor Newsletter Article January 2023

As the year begins, the internet and television are flooded with commercials for diet programs and gym memberships which “guarantee” to help people achieve one of the most common New Year’s resolutions: losing weight. As a “gym rat” and a former employee of a diet center, I always laugh at this empty promise because I know the truth: there is no GUARANTEE these things will work. The truth is gym memberships and diets only help you achieve your goal if YOU invest the time and energy into making them work! Losing weight not only requires investment, but it also demands that we take a risk.

For years I refused to go the gym until I was a “normal weight.” I didn’t want to risk being embarrassed about my body. The decision to live a healthier lifestyle required risking not being able to try new foods (as I gave up sugar and now gluten). I feared not being able to “enjoy” celebrations in the coming year.

Just like the decision to change our body requires investment and risk, the same is true of the decision to make changes or **to adapt** as a church, as Tod Bolsinger says in his book “Canoeing in the Mountains.” As a congregation we must be willing to invest in new people and programs. We must be willing to risk failure and even being rejected by those we reach out to! Which, let’s be honest, is SCARY!

But we must, as a people of God, not be afraid of where God is leading. We must be willing to ask hard questions; and see what it is we do well, and what needs work. God is a God of growth and development. He invests in each of us as individuals and as a congregation! I believe the process, actually the work, is what we are called to do and be if we are to follow God’s purpose for FBC.

As we enter this new year with the goal of following God’s leading to adapt to the changing needs around us, we will seek wisdom from God’s own Word through the sermon series named in honor of the moment in Lewis and Clark’s journey that changed everything: The Lemhi Pass Experience. From January 8th-29 we will look at several passages from the gospels where Jesus showed us an example of being invested in God’s mission or spoke to the risk of being one of His disciples. Hopefully this will provide encouragement for ALL of us (me included) as we begin this journey of discovery.

Let’s move forward and take on the challenge. Let’s together, as a congregation, risk the investment of moving forward. I hope that you will join us either in person or online as we explore God’s word throughout this series. I am excited about what God is doing right now. I don’t know what lies on the other side of this “pass,” but I know that if God is in the lead wherever we end up will be amazing! ~Rev. Lara Escoffre



Scrapbooker's

9AM – 5PM

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

February 16 & 17 (Thursday/Friday)

YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

Youth Fellowship – Our Great Escape Winter Retreat (January 13-15) was a success, with nine junior and senior high students participating. This year's trip had us rafting down the river with Jordan Valley Outfitters, splashing in the water at Avalanche Bay, and tubing down the hill at Snow Snake.

Some really special things happen in our 'little family' when we can get away together:

- Staying away from home overnight encourages independence
- Completing daily household chores at the cabin teaches new skills and develops responsibility
- Immersion in the group fosters compassion and cooperation
- Structured activities provide physical and mental challenges
- Unstructured time promotes socialization and self-regulation
- Chaperones guide us to notice & experience God in nature and in relationships

In anticipation of presenting Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday services for FBC during Lent, our devotions focused on the concepts of confession and forgiveness. This particular group of youth has a keen interest in justice, and a good understanding of God's desire to redeem what has been soiled by sin.

Over the next few gatherings, we will explore these ideas and create two special worship experiences to share with the congregation.

Check out our schedule of upcoming meetings and events:

FBC Midland Youth Fellowship Schedule 2023 <small>last update 1/17/23 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	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>				
Grace and Peace, Pastor Aleka				

STEWARDSHIP & FINANCE - Budget Year to Date December 2022

2022 Budget:	\$ 254,941	
General Fund Receipts	\$ 230,111	90.3 %
General Fund Expenses	\$ 260,954	102.4 %
Receipts over Expenses	\$ -30,843	

The church expenditures for the year are over budget by \$6013.10. Income is under budget by \$24,830.01. The year-end budget deficit is \$30,843.11. However, approximately \$14,000 donated for 2022 came in after the last deposit and will be included in the 2023 income. Therefore, the actual deficit is approximately \$17,000.

All of the ministries were at or under budget except for Property Management (which was only over due to expenditure for new carpet that was not budgeted at the start of 2022). Missions are fully paid. ~Roger Bergman, on behalf of the S&F Team

NOTE: Two big expenditures this year: New Carpeting and Security System were not in the original budget for 2022.

MUSIC MINISTRY

Handbell Ensemble and Vocal Choir continue to meet weekly to prepare music for upcoming worship services. We enjoy sweet fellowship as we work together to refine our gifts and share them with the congregation. What a beautiful Advent/ Christmas season we had, full of a variety of musical offerings. It was a special treat to have the Hitt's & Neil's join in singing and playing handbells on Christmas Eve. We're looking forward to presenting some special music during Lent/ Easter as well.

February presents unique challenges to our music schedule, as many of us will be traveling. Therefore, Handbell Ensemble will take a brief hiatus: there will be no rehearsals between January 29 – March 4. We will meet again on March 7, at 6:00pm in the choir room to begin working on our spring repertoire. Likewise, Vocal Choir will be adjusting our calendar to accommodate absences. Rehearsals will continue to be held Wednesdays at 6:30pm. However, the dates for which we will offer music during worship have changed. Please see our schedule of dates below, w/ extra attention to Sunday start times:

Handbell Ensemble	Vocal Choir	Praise Band
1/17 Rehearsal 6pm	1/18 Rehearsal 6:30pm	
	* 1/22 WORSHIP meet 9am *	
1/24 Rehearsal 6pm	1/25 Rehearsal 6:30pm	
1/29 WORSHIP meet 8:45am	2/1 Rehearsal 6:30pm	2/5 WORSHIP meet 9am
<i>No Rehearsal in February</i>	2/8 Rehearsal 6:30pm	2/12 WORSHIP meet 9am
	2/15 Rehearsal 6:30pm	
	(2/22 No Rehearsal - Ash Wed)	
	* 2/26 WORSHIP meet 9am *	
	3/1 Rehearsal 6:30pm	3/5 WORSHIP meet 9am
3/7 Rehearsal 6pm	3/8 Rehearsal 6:30pm	3/12 WORSHIP meet 9am
3/14 Rehearsal 6pm	3/15 Rehearsal 6:30pm	
	* 3/19 WORSHIP meet 9am *	
3/21 Rehearsal 6pm	3/22 Rehearsal 6:30pm	
	* 3/26 WORSHIP meet 9am *	
3/28 Rehearsal 6pm	3/29 Rehearsal 6:30pm	
4/2 PALM SUN meet 9am	* 4/2 PALM SUN meet 9am *	4/2 PALM SUN meet 8:30am
4/4 Rehearsal 6pm	4/5 Rehearsal 6:30pm	
4/9 EASTER SUN meet 9am	* 4/9 EASTER SUN meet 9am *	4/9 EASTER SUN meet 8:30am
	(4/12 No Rehearsal - Easter)	
	4/19 Rehearsal 6:30pm	
	* 4/23 WORSHIP meet 9am *	
	4/26 Rehearsal 6:30pm	4/30 WORSHIP meet 8:30am
	5/3 Rehearsal 6:30pm	5/7 WORSHIP meet 9am
	* 5/14 WORSHIP meet 9am *	

Grace and Peace, Pastor Aleka

In Loving Memory



Property Management (PM) would like to express our sorrow over the passing of our chairman and friend, Lois Crosby. It is also a time to give thanks and gratitude for her many accomplishments as part of the property management team.

Lois served on property management as an active team member for many years where her wit and maintenance knowledge mentored many new team members. She was chairman of the team for the last three years where she made meetings fun, was a stickler for details and documentation, all while having a dislike to the phrase, "can't do that".

As someone who was excited about the growth for the church, Lois made sure the church was positioned to welcome newcomers and enhance the comfort level of current attendees. While her accomplishments are too many to list, the following are a few under her leadership that created a lasting legacy for First Baptist Church:

- New tile in Sanctuary
- New carpeting in Sanctuary, Harmony and Narthex areas
- A new security system using card readers for after-hours entry
- Enhancements to pew configuration in Sanctuary making it accessible for handicap users

Lois, your legacy lives on. Rest in peace.

Your PM team members,
Keith Freeburg, Dave Jezowski, Dave Hitchcock, Bruce Woodcraft, Bob Winchester, Jake Wang, Shelley Page, Rhonda Vance



We'd like to send Warm Birthday & Anniversary Wishes

January BIRTHDAYS

5 Keith Freeburg
Janice Martz
6 Marcia Williams
8 Dave Jezowski
10 David Hitchcock
Dale Moore
12 Renna Yuill
14 Jo Clarke
18 Brendon Smith
19 Claire Caldwell
Lilly Caldwell
Pat Clark
25 Kathy Burch
26 Victor Atiemo-Obeng
28 Rhonda Vance
29 John Williams

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



January ANNIVERSARIES

None

February ANNIVERSARIES

7 Dave & Bunny Mitchell

PRAYER PARTNERS

For the needs of friends & family - December & January 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 surgery recovery); Rachel (car accident/concussion/ broken elbow); Don Raetz (recovery); John Walter (praise: tumor has shrunk/pray: for strength for surgery; Lacey Wright (knee replacement surgery 2/21/23)

For those that grieve: the families of Chi-Long Lee and Lois Crosby



CALENDAR - 2023

Regular Schedule

ABIDING SCRIPTURES **JANUARY - MATTHEW 25:14-30**

FEBRUARY - 1 KINGS 19:1-21

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 - 2nd Monday - All Welcome
Tuesdays	7:30 AM	Men's Prayer Breakfast - M's Café
	5:30 PM	Stewardship & Finance Meeting - 3rd Tuesday
	6:30 PM	FBC Handbell Practice
	6:30 PM	Property Management Meeting - Media Rm - 2nd 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 - 2nd Saturday

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Special Event</u>
Feb 4 (Sat)	9:00AM-5:00PM	Cub Scout Derby in the Hearthside Room
Feb 12 (Sun)	10:00-11:15AM	Worship Service
	11:30AM-12:15PM	Sunday School for All
	12:15-2:15PM	All Youth Lunch & Fellowship
Feb 16 (Thu)	9:00AM-5:00AM	Scrapbookers in the Hearthside Room
Feb 17 (Fri)	9:00AM-5:00AM	Scrapbookers in the Hearthside Room
Feb 19 (Sun)	10:00-10:45AM	Worship Service
	11:00 - 11:30AM	Annual Business Meeting
	11:30AM-12:15PM	Sunday School for All
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

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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