



March 15, 2024 - April 15, 2024

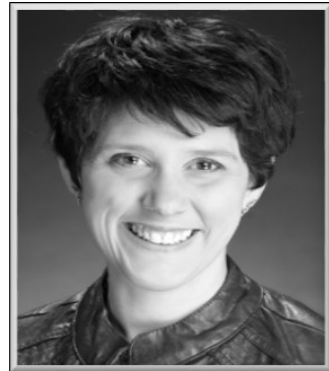
First Things

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 Freeburg 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 2024: Ashleigh and Owen (pre-natal difficulties/Lois Crosby's granddaughter); Louise Bergman (heart surgery recovery); Angela Bushell's Dad (cancer-stage 4); Beckett Kobel (health); Shawna Kobel (cancer); Joyce Phillips; Chris Seamster & Family (Chris in training); Karen Walker-Freeburg (ulcers/anemia); Bob Winchester (hospice)

For those that Grieve: No New Requests

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

LETTER FROM PASTOR



First Baptist Church

Rev. Lara Freeburg, Lead Pastor
Rev. Aleka Schmidt, Music and Youth Minister

Whatever You Do, Do All to the Glory of God

Letter from Pastor – March 2024

The bedroom of my eight-year-old son, Devin, is a DISASTER area. I cannot walk into it without stepping on clothes and toys so I refuse to enter it at all. This, in addition to living into my promise to him about six months ago that I would not help him clean his room again, led to a massive breakdown by my son last weekend stemming from his sense that the mess was too big for him to tackle.

As I stood in the doorway listening to this, I asked him if I could offer some advice as to how he could proceed. Having faced similar messes in my life, I explained, I have started at one side of the room and simply worked my way in a circle. The mess didn't seem so massive when I just looked at what was in front of me.

Since August, our sermon series have focused on what could easily be perceived as the monumental task of "embodying the Kingdom of God." Taking on this mission may, for some, make us feel overwhelmed. We too may ask: "Where do we even start?"

It is my conviction that when God calls a people to join Him in His work, He begins to lay the foundation for that work to be fulfilled. Consider for a moment what God says to Abraham when He calls him. In Genesis 12:1-3 God says:

Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

God was going to use Abraham and his family to bless ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH. Talk about a HUGE task. To accomplish that goal, God would make the patriarch's descendants into a nation. Notice that God already limited how the goal would be accomplished. The first step in achieving that goal: Go to the land God was already preparing for them.

God didn't send Abraham into the whole world (that would come later with Christ.) Instead, He sent him to a very specific land. Throughout the Bible, our Lord guided Abraham and his descendants each step of the way so that they could claim that land and the promises associated with it.

Like Abraham, God has a plan for FBC. God has given our church a "land" to claim as His kingdom. Our job is to discern what that "land" looks like. Is it our HeadStart families? How about our neighbors at Plymouth or Northeast? Is it the community surrounding our church building? Answering this question can help us with a renewed sense of purpose and vision.

To help guide some discussions around this idea, April 7 we will be starting a new sermon series entitled "Bringing the Kingdom Home." Throughout this series, which will end with the Take Note Musical on May 12 (Mother's Day), we will look at the issues God's people had in discerning God's will for "conquering" the land He had given them. Hopefully these stories will challenge us as we learn from the experience of those who have walked this way before us.

~Rev. Lara Freeburg

Holy Week

Maundy Thursday

For hundreds of years since the first Passion play, drama and music have gone hand in hand during Holy Week. Through the dramatic/musical approach, worshipers get a little closer to understanding the suffering of Christ or appreciating his glory. Our **Maundy Thursday Communion service** will be based on 3 monologs from a collection by Christian homeschooler, author, and blogger Susan A.J. Lyttek entitled, "I Will Sing of My Redeemer." Worshipers will be invited to consider three perspectives, each based on a familiar hymn, toward the significance of the Last Supper. Please join us in this special remembrance of Christ's final meal with His disciples before His crucifixion, **Thursday, March 28 at 6:30pm in the chapel.**

Good Friday

The Midland Faith and Worshipping bodies are excited to bring together a 'mass choir' to offer the beautiful piece, "God So Loved the World" during this year's Good Friday service, and **ALL SINGERS are invited to join us.** See Pastor Aleka for a copy of the music.

Piece: "God So Loved the World" by John Stainer

Rehearsals: Sundays, March 17th and 24th at 1pm in Main Sanctuary at FUMC (We do understand that some may not be able to attend all rehearsals, that's okay.)

Final Rehearsal: 11am prior to service in Main Sanctuary

Dress Expectations: In the traditional observance of the day and performance, please wear black or dark colors. The liturgical color of the day is black.

Director for Combined Choir: Tyler Morse, Choral Program Director at FUMC

Accompanist: Gabrielle Cook-McIlvenna, Director of Music Ministries

Listening Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=24pe76Edh_s We acknowledge that some musicians are audio learners, so we are providing a YouTube link to a performance of this piece. This will allow everyone to have a chance to hear the piece in its entirety and find parts and pitches throughout.

Not up for singing right now? We'd love for you to join us in worship & fellowship on this special day. The series of **three 30-minute services beginning at noon on Friday 3/29 at Midland First United Methodist Church (315 West Larkin Street)** are open to the public.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES!!!

As a new season in the church calendar begins, we find ourselves in need of a few good men & women to **serve as worship assistants** or to **share a children's message**. Worship Assistants open the service with the welcome & announcements (announcements are provided for you), then lead the call to worship, and offer prayers on behalf of the congregation (prayer requests are provided for you). If you'd like to present a Children's Message, the week's Scripture and worship focus will be provided for you to prepare a 5-minute talk/activity designed for children 2-12 years old. **Would you consider stepping in** to fill one or more of the blanks in the schedule below? Please let Pastor Aleka know you're interested!

Date	Worship Assistant	Children's Message
3/17	EI B	Dave P
3/24 Palm Sunday	Rhonda	Chuck M
3/31 Easter Sunday	Amy M	Karen W-F
4/7 Communion		Barb N
4/14	EI B	Deb H
4/21	Dave P	Louise B?
4/28	Chuck M	
5/5 Communion	Bunny M	
5/12 Mother's Day & Take Note	Victor A-O	n/a
5/19		Dave P
5/26 Memorial Day Weekend		Chuck M
6/2 Communion		Barb N
6/9 (MISSION TRIP)		
6/16 Father's Day (MISSION TRIP)	Dave P	Louise B?
6/23	Chuck M	
6/30		Lara F



Have you heard of the musical *Come From Away*? The story of actual events that took place in Gander, Newfoundland following the attacks in America on September 11, 2001. The musical is coming to the Midland Center for the Arts and we have tickets!

The story begins as 38 airplanes, carrying approximately 7000 people, were unexpectedly forced to land at Gander International Airport. The characters in the musical are based on actual Gander residents and stranded passengers. The musical is a reminder of the capacity for human kindness in even the darkest of times and the triumph of humanity over hate.

First Baptist Church has secured 20 tickets to the Tuesday, April 2nd show which begins at 7:30pm. The cost of the tickets is \$78 each. If you are interested in purchasing one of these tickets, please contact Debbie Hitt as soon as possible.

One of Midland's own, Tom Ammerman, was a passenger who was grounded in Gander on 9/11. Tom has graciously agreed to join us during the Sunday School hour on April 21st to share his story of compassion and community. We hope you will join us in what is sure to be a moving experience.



**God's Work
Our Hands**



Mission Trip

We have received \$2,495.70 (donations, deposits, fundraisers) and spent (deposits & supplies for fundraisers) \$2,012.36 so far. With 8 (possibly 9) volunteers going, our remaining balance with ASP is around \$1,200.00. Additional expenses will include fuel for 2 (possibly 3) vehicles and meals & overnight accommodations on our travel days to and from West Virginia. We will also be responsible for our own transportation between work sites during our week of service.

Please contact Pastor Aleka for information.

MUSIC

Take Note

It's the annual "Cram 'n Jam" at Promise University - time to study for the big P2F2P2K exam, or "Precious Promises to Famous Followers of the Past 2000 Years!" Dee jay "Stan the Man" (*Elliot L.*) provides music for jammin' while student body president, Valerie Dictorian (*Omora V.*) leads the crammin' as the P.U. students review God's promises to Paul, Martin Luther, Pocahontas, the Wesleys, Harriet Tubman and missionary Gladys Aylward. History and Literature professor Juan Zaponatime (*Devin H.*), sophomore wrestling champ, Marvelous Marty (*Maverick F.*) and Music teacher, Senora Doremi Fasolati (*Danika C.*) are just some of the zany characters on the Promise U. campus who help to share God's promises through a variety of presentations and musical styles. Before the Cram 'n Jam closes, the kids realize that the greatest promise is "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" and that God's promises are for all believers, whether they lived 2000 years ago or today!

Join us for a preview during worship on **April 14 at 10am**. And you won't want to miss the full presentation on Mothers Day, **May 12 at 10am**.

Special thanks to Bunny Mitchell, Vicki Walter, Ruth Pangborn, Lara Freeburg & Lola Heise, Barb Neil, Rachel & Travers LeClair, Ares Varela, Deb Hitt, Ceonni Williams, Bobbie Baker, and Claire Caldwell for your help with snacks & supervision.

Please note, there will be **no program on March 25 and April 1**. Happy Easter!

Music Calendar

3/17	BAND, Bells
3/24	Palm Sunday - BAND
3/31	Easter - Choir
4/7	Piano
4/14	BAND, Take Note Preview
4/21	BAND, Choir
4/28	Bells
5/5	Choir
5/12	BAND, Take Note Musical

* *Bells – No rehearsal 3/17-3/31* *

YOUTH

Youth Retreat

8 students had a blast "up north" during this year's Great Escape Youth Retreat Winter Edition in February. We played games, went snow tubing, enjoyed the indoor water park, visited the shores of Lake Michigan, and participated in a viewing/ discussion of the 2011 film Courageous.



ONLINE GARAGE SALE



The 2024 Mission Trip Team is doing a virtual “garage sale” on Facebook Marketplace during the month of March. Donations of items valued of at least \$50 are now being collected. This might include furniture, jewelry, golf clubs, home décor, small appliances, etc. They can be delivered to the Hearthside Room or arrangements can be made to have them picked up. Please consider supporting this fundraiser by either donating an item or purchasing an item. For any questions or to arrange a pick-up, please contact Pastor Aleka or Debbie Hitt.



Scrapbooker's

Friday & Saturday

April 11 & 12

9AM – 3PM

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



We'd like to send Warm Birthday & Anniversary Wishes

March BIRTHDAYS

- 4 Shawna Kobel
Tyler Steib
- 24 Bobbie Baker
- 26 Barb Neil
Preston Streeter
- 27 Mark Neil
- 29 Dustin Seamster
Sheridan Seamster
- 31 David Pellegrum
Emersyn Seamster

April BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Lanny Robbins
Trevor Snoddy
- 6 Devin Heise
- 11 Isabelle Mellon
- 22 Marcellous Rogers
- 25 Gary Gibson
- 28 Pam Jezowski

March ANNIVERSARIES

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



April ANNIVERSARIES

No April Anniversaries Recorded



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MARCH 2024

APRIL

Regular Schedule

Sundays at 10:00 AM
11:15 AM
11:30 AM

6:00 PM
Mondays 4:00-5:30 PM
6:30 PM

Tuesdays 7:30 AM

Wednesdays 1:30 PM
5:30 PM
6:30 PM
6:30 PM

Thursdays 10:00 AM

Saturdays 9AM-2PM

ABIDING SCRIPTURES

MARCH - PHILIPPIANS 3:12-21

APRIL - DEUTERONOMY 1:19-33

Worship Service - Communion Service is the 1st Sunday of each month

Fellowship

Sunday School

1st Sunday - Sermon Reflection & Baptist Beliefs

2nd Sunday - Sermon Reflection & Missions Training

3rd Sunday - Community Partner & Baptist Beliefs

4th Sunday - Sermon Reflection & Missions Training

Handbell Ensemble Practice

Take Note! (Grades K-12)

Church Council Meeting - Harmony Lounge - 2nd Monday - All Welcome

Men's Prayer Breakfast @ Big Boy

Christian Education Team Meets - 2nd Wednesday Harmony Lounge

Stewardship & Finance Meeting - Harmony Lounge - Dates TBD

FBC Vocal Choir Practice

Property Management Meeting - Room 16 - 2nd Wednesday

Facebook Prayer Time

FBC Serves at Open Door - 2nd Saturday

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Special Event</u>
Mar 24 (Sun)	10:00AM	Palm Sunday
Mar 25 (Mon)	-	No Take-Note! (No MPS - Spring Break)
Mar 28 (Thu)	6:30-7:30PM	Maundy Thursday Service in the Chapel
Mar 29 (Fri)	12NOON	Good Friday Service at 1st United Methodist Church
Mar 31 (Sun)	8:30AM 10:00AM	Easter Breakfast provided by the Seamster Family Easter
Apr 01 (Mon)	-	No Take-Note! (No MPS - Spring Break)
Apr 02 (Tue)	7:30-9:00PM	"Come From Away" - see Aleka or Debbie Hitt for details
Apr 11 (Thu)	9:00AM-3:00PM	Scrapbookers in the Hearthside Room
Apr 12 (Fri)	9:00AM-3:00PM	Scrapbookers in the Hearthside Room
Apr 14 (Sun)	10:00AM	Take-Note! Preview during Worship Service
Apr 21 (Sun)	11:30AM	Community Partner: Tom Ammerman "Come From Away" Experience



Dear Church Family:

I wanted to reach out to say
“THANK YOU.” I’ve had a rough

four years: taking care of my father and mother-in-law, my mother-in-law’s death, followed by my mom’s death, followed by my hospitalization and long recovery time, followed by more surgeries, increased struggles with caring for my father-in-law, and recently his death.

Thank you for being a source of comfort and support during the above-mentioned hard times, for your kindness in providing funeral meals, and for your great gift of love by helping with my son’s wedding rehearsal dinner and dinner, again, on his wedding day. You lifted me up when I was weak, as Aaron and Hur did Moses during the battle with the Amalekites. I am proud to stand beside you as we serve the Lord in this place, at this time. Thanks, again, for lifting me up.

~Shelley Page

OUR STAFF

Rev. Lara Escoffre.....	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 Jezowski	Groundskeeper
Jeff Carroll.....	Housekeeper

ONLINE DONATIONS

First Baptist Church is now able to accept online donations!

