



November 15 - December 15, 2023

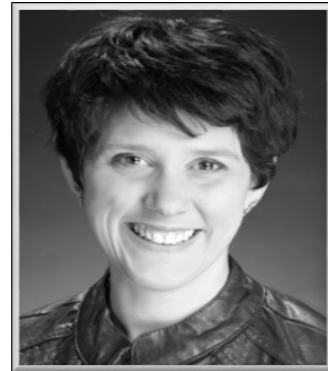
First Things

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 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 - October-November 2023: Beth (cancer-Gary Poindexter's daughter); Jo Clarke (back surgery & recovery); Terry Finklea & Chuck McCourt (kidney transplant/recovery); Joyce Phillips; Maureen Rose (defibrillator /pacemaker surgery 11/22 & arterial surgery 12/5); Les Shell (cancer); Shawn Williams (migraines/vision problems); Steve W. (cancer/son of friend of Marcia Williams); Bob Winchester (healing/recovery)

For those that Grieve: The Scott Crook family

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

November 2023 – Letter from Pastor

For the last month I have had the opportunity to meet with several members of our church on a weekly basis to discuss grief. Many shared specifically about how they have grieved the loss of their spouse. We discussed topics such as loss, family dynamics, and the stages of grief, shared our own experiences and stories, laughed and (yes) even cried. Several in the group have mentioned how helpful the experience has been.

This next week we will discuss the topic of the holidays. As I thought about my own experiences of grief, which arise around the holidays, I was reminded how broad an experience this is. Whether your grief is around a recent or distant death, divorce, a child leaving home, marriage, or a medical condition which is impacting your life, many of us are likely going to struggle with some additional emotions in the coming months. This led me to want to share with you, the FBC congregation at large, several ways we can manage this holiday season.

According to “Dealing with Grief During the Holidays: 28 Ways to Cope” by Hart Harahutchu, MA, LMHCA (found on: choosingtherapy.com) “While coping with grief and loss can be particularly difficult during the holidays there are things you can do to support yourself...” Here are several ideas to help with some self-care:

1. **Feel Your Feelings:** “Best you can, allow yourself to feel your feelings as they come up...feelings that go unacknowledged and unexpressed often build up...give yourself the space and time...”
2. **Show self-compassion:** “Acknowledge that it’s going to be hard...and that is ok.”
3. **Take care of your body:** “Grief is often a very physical experience. It can affect everything from your sleep to how, what, and when you eat. As much as you can, practice self-care.”

4. Tell others what you need as specifically as possible: 'The holidays may be a time to slow down, to connect, and perform traditions. But what happens when someone you love may not be there? When experiencing loss, on special days, you have full permission to note what was, what is, and what you want the future to be in honor of the people who cannot make it.' (Lashara Shaw, LPC)
5. Set healthy expectations and boundaries: "Set yourself up for success by setting realistic expectations for yourself and others. If it seems impossible to think about getting through the holidays without shedding a tear, don't expect that from yourself. Practicing kindness and fairness to all parties will make the holidays more successful."

This is just a portion of the great concepts that Harahutchu shares in this article. If you find yourself experiencing grief this holiday season, know that you aren't alone and that there are things you can do to experience both the joy and the sense of loss this season brings. And for those who are not having that experience this season, please remember those who are! That is one of the ways we show one another we matter (as we say in our "Who We Are" statement).

Rev. Lara Freeburg

YOUTH MINISTRIES

Youth Fellowship

Sundays after Sunday School Hour until 1:30pm our Middle and High School students are learning about the "Three Big Questions that Change Every Teenager" by Brad M. Griffin and Kara Powell (a resource that was recommended to me at clergy retreat last Spring). The concepts we are studying revolve around Identity (Who Am I?), Belonging (Where Do I Fit?) and Purpose (What Difference Do I Make?). Each session invites us to consider the world's answers to these questions, and then learn about and incorporate the Bible's answers into our lives.

We'll be serving the church and community via Salvation Army's Red Kettle (11/18) and Sharing Tree (11/26) Campaigns this season, as well as making a presentation during Hanging of the Greens (12/3). We're also looking forward to our second annual Youth Fellowship Christmas Bash at Pastor Aleka's house in December. Plans are underway for Winter Retreat and 2nd semester programming.

Take Note



Parts have been assigned, costumes have been selected, choreography has been taught, songs and lines are being memorized, all in preparation for this semester's musical. I am so proud of the progress made by our students thus far, and so grateful for the support of our program volunteers who have made it all possible. This month we'll be working on sets & props, lighting & sound, and blocking.

Sun.	Dec. 3	6pm	Take Note! Participates in Hanging of the Greens (Rehearse at 4pm)
Fri.	Dec. 15	4-6pm	Dress Rehearsal – Snacks: Steib, Avery, Freeburg, Varela
Sat.	Dec. 16	9-11am	Dress Rehearsal – Snacks: Steib, Avery, LeClair, Varela
Sun.	Dec. 17	10am	Take Note! Presents "Angels Aware" during Worship
Mon.	Dec. 18	4-5:30pm	Cast Party, Last Day of Program until January 8, 2024

Invite your friends and family to join us **Sunday, December 17 at 10am** as we share the story about the first Christmas. But before you start thinking shepherds and wise men, we need to tell you that *this* Christmas story is one you've never heard before (except at FBC Midland in 1995, 2006 and 2012). That's because we're going to step back in time... all the way back to when the angels found out about the birth of Jesus. After all, that's when Christmas *really* began! A reception will be held in the Hearthside Room after worship.

~Rev. Aleka Schmidt



Option 1: Meet FBC's Youth Fellowship THIS SATURDAY, 11/18, outside Alex's Railside at Midland Mall 2-4pm.

Option 2: Go to www.registertoring.com to choose your own day/ time. Be sure to use the following identifiers throughout the registration process. Group Code: FBC23, Group Name: Midland FBC.

Option 3: Contact Felicity Dowker 989-572-6249.

Now is the time to sign up to **receive gifts** through the 2023 Salvation Army Angel Tree Program. Call **(989) 496-2787**.

For those wishing to **give gifts** through this worthy program, FBC's tree is up: Ready for you to select tags and start shopping! Please return gifts by 11/26.

Not up to shopping this year? Select a tag, attach to it your cash gift or check (FBC Midland, message line: sharing tree) to have Youth Fellowship shop for & wrap gifts on your behalf!

For more information, see Bunny Mitchell.



sharingtreemidland.org



MUSIC MINISTRY

Music Ministry

Rehearsals are underway for several special music opportunities at FBC this year, and there's still time for YOU to join us!

Vocal Choir has begun preparing several pieces from "Tapestry of Light: A Celtic Christmas Celebration" by Joseph Martin. Rehearsals are on Wednesdays from 6:30-8pm. **Handbell Ensemble** will play a number of Christmas arrangements from "Ready to Ring II" that can be rung comfortably by 6 members. This week I will begin researching seasonal music for **Praise Band**. And the worship planning team is hoping to pack our **Advent and Christmas services** with carols and hymns.

11/19	Praise Band Vocal Choir	Song of Praise: "Light the Fire Again" Introit: "Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil" Offertory: "Let the Praise Go 'Round"
11/26	Praise Band Handbells	Congregational Song: "Build Your Kingdom Here" Introit: "Come Ye, Thankful People, Come" Offertory: "To God Be the Glory"
12/3	Praise Band Vocal Choir	Song of Praise: "God's Love Made Visible" Offertory: "An Advent Garden" from <i>Tapestry of Light</i>



Sunday, December 3, decorating 4pm, dinner 5pm, music 6pm

It's time to: unpack your favorite Christmas sweater, dust off your musical instrument, warm up your best Christmas caroling voice, dig out your dancing shoes, find a poem or short holiday tale to tell, and join us for Hanging of the Greens! Please contact Pastor Aleka if you have a talent you'd like to share. Program must be finalized for printing by Monday, November 27.

12/3 HANGING OF THE GREENS!!! With your participation, on **12/3, Hanging of the Greens** will be bigger and better than ever this year. We'll decorate at 4pm, with soup supper at 5pm, and performance at 6pm. **Handbells** will play one (long) piece, and **Vocal Choir** will sing 3 songs from *Tapestry of Light*. **TakeNote!** will share 2 songs from *Angels Aware!*, and **Youth Fellowship** is developing a skit. We're hoping to book at least one **musical ensemble from Midland High** to perform at the event too. What will **you** bring? Your special (sacred or secular) musical, theatrical or dance offering will be a blessing to all in attendance. Please contact Pastor Aleka ASAP to express your interest. You still have a few weeks before commitment to a piece/title is necessary to finalize the program.

12/10	Handbells	Introit: "The First Noel" Offertory: "We Three Kings" Benediction: "Go Tell It on the Mountain"
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12/17 Take Note! Musical Angels Aware! ... Calling all **Families & Alumni**: I'm sure many of you have fond memories of performing with TakeNote! Perhaps you were even in *Angels Aware!* back in the day? It would be so much fun to have you join us on 1 or 2 numbers as our "special" angels! Drop in for **dress rehearsal Friday 12/15, 4-6pm or Saturday 12/16 9-11am**, and take the 'stage' with us **Sunday 12/17, arrive 9am, service 10am**.

12/24 4th Week in Advent...

12/24 CHRISTMAS EVE!!! All musical groups will participate in our traditional **Candlelight Christmas Eve Worship** service with music beginning at **6:30pm, 12/24**. Alumni are *always* welcome to join our groups on Christmas Eve. We'll warm up and do final run-throughs for **Bells at 5, Praise Band at 5:30, and Choir at 6**.

CHRISTMAS EVE!!! PLUS - We'll need *all kinds* of folks to help create a **live manger scene** as we progress through the service. Bring your self, kids & grandkids, nieces & nephews, friends & neighbors to celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. Just show up a little early for worship - we'll provide the costumes and guidance.

Rehearsals:

Handbells Sundays, 6-7pm, playing in worship on the 4th Sunday of each month.

Vocal Choir Wednesdays, 6:30-7:30pm, singing in worship on the 1st & 3rd Sundays of each month.

Praise Band Sundays, 8:30-9am, playing in worship *almost* every Sunday.

MISSION TRIP 2024

Mission Trip Summer 2024



warmer. safer. drier.®

FBC will be sending a contingent to work with Appalachia Service Project in Kentucky in June 2024. We will be working in an impoverished area in Southeast United States to repair and improve housing so that families can be "Warmer. Safer. Drier." Two major components of the program are (1) relationship-building in the community where we will serve and (2) spiritual development in those who serve. The **cost per participant is \$375.00**. Group housing, meals, and all building materials/ tools during the mission will be supplied by ASP. Travel by car and scholarships/ supplements will be provided through FBC Midland.

Early interest has been promising, and our first fundraiser was a success. Beginning in January, there will be regular opportunities for church members and friends to engage in learning about service, culture, and faith alongside our future missionaries as we prepare for this life- and faith-changing adventure! A schedule of meetings will be shared soon. Email: musicandyouth@midlandfbc.com for more info.



First Baptist Church

915 E. Sugnet Rd.

Midland, MI 48642

Phone: (989) 835-6731

Email: office@midlandfbc.com

Website: www.midlandfbc.com



First Baptist Church, Midland, MI
Fall Business Meeting Minutes
Sunday , December 10, 2023

1. Call To Order (Barb)
2. Agenda Review and Call of Additional Topics (Barb)
3. Acceptance of Minutes of Spring Business Meeting 6/11/23 (Barb)
4. Presentation of Slate of New Officers (Dave)
 - a. Slate of Officers
 - i. Property Management: Keith Freeburg
 - ii. Worship Ministry: Bobbie Baker
 - b. Discussion & Voting of Officers (Dave)
5. 2023 Finance Report (Harry)
6. Presentation of 2024 budget (Harry)
 - a. Discussion on 2024 budget
 - b. Voting to Accept 2024 budget
7. Moderator Vision (Barb)
8. Pastoral Vision
 - a. Pastor Lara Freeburg
 - b. Pastor Aleka Schmidt
9. Adjournment



Sharing your “Wealth!”

Would you like to share some of your “wealth” with others in our congregation? No, I’m not talking about money! I’m talking about your time, your gifts, and your love for others!

Congregational Care is looking for individuals who would be willing to share their wealth with other members of our congregation. Would you like to occasionally:

- Share your time by visiting with a shut-in, or someone in the hospital, who would love to see your friendly smile and have a chat?
- Share your gift of connecting with others by making a call to someone who may feel isolated and alone?
- Share your gift of cooking to make a meal for someone who really needs your help?
- Share your gift of love by writing notes to others who need words of encouragement?

If you would be interested in occasionally sharing your wealth with others, in any of these ways, please contact Bunny Mitchell (989-948-8977), by text or phone.

Sunday Events

NOVEMBER

Nov 5 - Sermon Talk Back
Nov 12 - Community Partner - Open Door
Nov 19 - Song Fest
Nov 26 - Sermon Talk Back

Join each event immediately after
Sunday worship, 11:15 am-Noon

Halloween Hallway Thank you to all the amazing helpers who made the 2023 Halloween Hallway Community Outreach Event a success! Although not as many people came this year, those who did stayed longer to enjoy our hospitality and fellowship. About 30 people helped with set-up, running the event and clean up, and about 90 individuals attended the event.





We'd like to send Warm Birthday & Anniversary Wishes

November BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Rylin Barden
- 4 Lacey Wright
- 7 Janice Wallace
- 8 Ryder Seamster
- 10 Hope Seamster
- 14 Alixandra Mellon
- 15 Amy Meilink
Joyce Phillips
- 16 Linda Atiemo-Obeng
- 18 Joelle Meilink
- 24 Roger Bergman
- 25 David Bussell
- 26 Mary Beth Coons

December BIRTHDAYS

- 5 Annalise Meilink
- 7 James Beavers
Harry Steib
- 13 Alexa Richards
- 14 Kathy Pellegrom
- 16 Troy Bergman
- 19 Cathy Steib
- 25 Ashley Seamster
Brett Seamster
Jillian Seamster



November ANNIVERSARIES

- 10 David & Kathy Pellegrom
- 23 John & Diana Holmes

December ANNIVERSARIES

- 10 Keith & Karen Freeburg
- 27 Paul & Renna Yuill
- 28 Gregg & Laura Clark



CALENDAR - 2023

Regular Schedule

Sundays	10:00 AM
	11:00 AM
	12:15-1:30 PM
	6:00 PM
Mondays	3:00-5:30 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

NOVEMBER - ROMANS 10:5-13

DECEMBER - ISAIAH 40:3/JOHN 3:16

Worship Service - Communion Service is the 1 st Sunday of each month
Sunday School Activities
Youth Fellowship
FBC Handbell Practice
Take Note! (Grades K-12)
Church Council Meeting - Room 16 - 2 nd Monday - All Welcome
Men's Prayer Breakfast - M's Café
Christian Education Team Meets - 2 nd Wednesday Harmony Lounge
Stewardship & Finance Meeting - Harmony Lounge - Dates TBD
FBC Vocal Choir Practice
Property Management Meeting - Room 16 - 2 nd Wednesday
Facebook Prayer Time
FBC Serves at Open Door - 2 nd Saturday

Date

Time

Special Event

Nov 18 (Sat)	2-4:00PM	Salvation Army Bell Ringing (at Mall by Alex's Restaurant)
Nov 22 (Wed)	12:00 PM	Office Closes at Noon for Thanksgiving Holiday
Nov 23 (Thu)	-	Office Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday
Dec 3 (Sun)	10:00AM	Worship Service



HANGING OF THE GREENS

4:00PM	Decorating
5:00PM	Soup Supper (Bring bread or dessert to pass & your own place settings)
6:00PM	Hanging of the Greens Program

Dec 10 (Sun)	11:00AM	Fall Business Meeting following Worship Service
Dec 15 (Fri)	4-6:00PM	Take Note! Special Rehearsal
Dec 16 (Sat)	9-11:00AM	Take Note! Dress Rehearsal
Dec 17 (Sun)	10:00AM	Take Note! Musical
Dec 24 (Sun)	6:30PM	Christmas Eve Candlelight Prelude & Service

SS Events: November 19 - Songfest / November 26 - Sermon Talk-Back

HAVING TROUBLE MAKING ENDS MEET?



Visit the
MIDLAND COUNTY EMERGENCY FOOD PANTRY NETWORK MOBILE PANTRY
and receive free food to help supplement your family's pantry.

Date: **Wednesday – December 6, 2023**

Registration Time: 9:00 a.m. or text EFPN to 866-474-3663

Distribution Time: 10:00 a.m.

Location: **Midland Missionary Church**
479 South 11 Mile Road – Midland

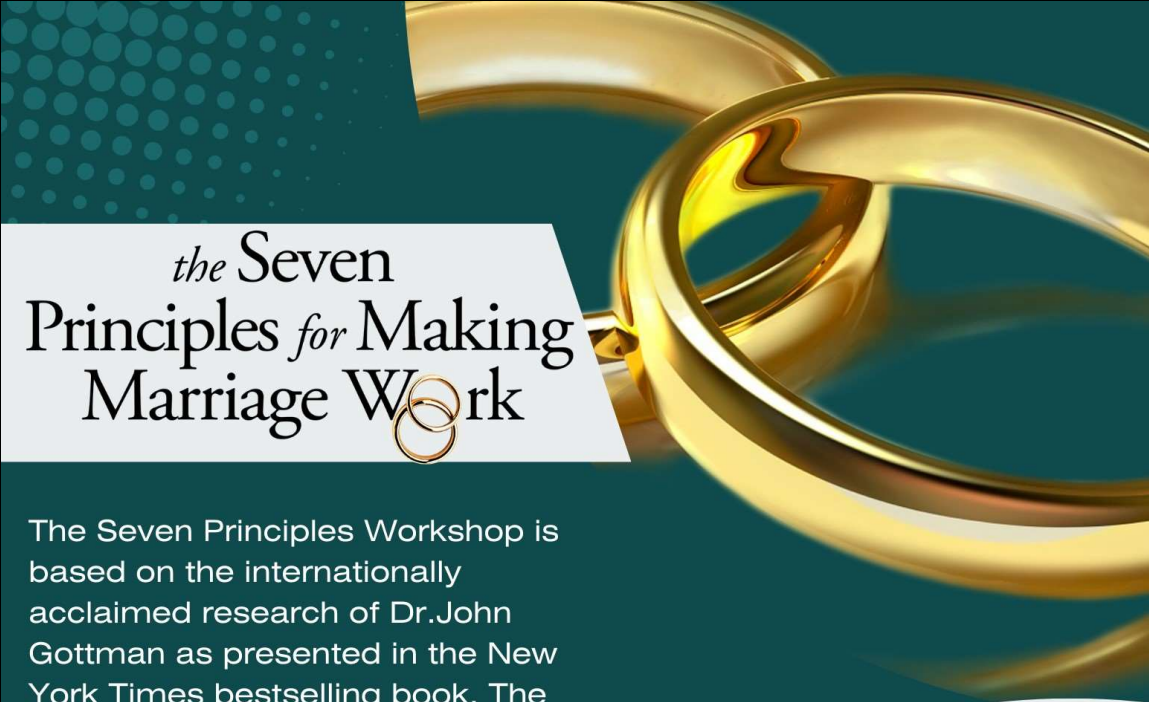
Please stay in your cars. Registration will be done in your car. Volunteers will put the food into your car. Please be patient as we try to keep everyone safe.

No identification or proof of income necessary

Sponsored by:
Robert McKellar
Food Bank of Eastern Michigan
Midland County Emergency Food Pantry Network.

QUESTIONS? Contact 989-486-9393

Note: This is an emergency feeding program intended to provide a supplemental food source to families and/or individuals who are in need. This is a first-come first-served program. There will be enough food for 250 households. Client registration begins prior to distribution time. Midland County residents who have an ongoing or emergency need for food can connect with our regular pantry program by calling 989-486-9393. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



the Seven Principles *for* Making Marriage Work

The Seven Principles Workshop is based on the internationally acclaimed research of Dr. John Gottman as presented in the New York Times bestselling book, *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*.

READY FOR A DEEPER CONNECTION?

- Improve communication
- Increase intimacy
- Manage conflict better
- Create shared purpose
- Maintain these strengths long-term
- Workshop materials & Meals provided



SCAN ME

Presented by:
Megan Welke, LMSW



**December 8th 4pm-8pm &
December 9th 9am-5pm**

Great Hall Banquet & Convention Center
5121 Bay City Rd, Midland

Space is limited, register today by scanning the code above or by emailing
forwardtherapymidland@gmail.com

Early registration \$450 per couple if registered by 11/20/2023,
\$500 per couple until registration closes on 12/01/2023



*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
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Mike Walker.....Assistant Custodian
Dave JezowskiGroundskeeper
Shannon Reilly.....Housekeeper

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