

FIRST REMINDER

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Faith is the ability to not
panic.

As a child of God, prayer
is like calling home every
day.

THE PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

Recently I had the privilege of attending the Prairie Pastor's Conference in Omaha. It was a refreshing time to connect or reconnect with other ABC pastors from Nebraska, North and South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, and Kansas. The fellowship was uplifting, the food was nourishing, the worship fed our souls, and in spite of a 14 hour round trip from Scottsbluff to Omaha and back, it was well worth the drive.

Tossed in to the mix was a side trip to the Henry Dourly Zoo with a couple of my pastor buddies. So cool!

The highlight of the entire event, however, was the presentation of our special speaker, Dr. Jolene Erlacher. She is currently a consultant and trainer with Sync Leadership Development, and works extensively with churches, mission organizations, and other non-profits.

Her real expertise is with those referred to as the millennials. And unlike many who decry the exodus of the millennials from churches,

she brings a very different, and positive, perspective on what is taking place in our nation and our churches.

Without going into detail, suffice it to say that our nation is experiencing a massive cultural change. History has taught us that every civilized society has a cultural change and upheaval roughly every 200 or so years. Because our nation has only been established for about 250 years, a cultural change is due.

Fueled by the rise of technology, and the ease of access to information of every kind, as well as other important factors, human behavior is being transformed - not always for the better. Social media is causing a blurring of the lines between reality and fantasy. It is seen in how people relate to one another. Especially those in the millennial category.

Dr. Erlacher noted that one prime difference between millennials and those of the older generations is the change in understanding truth. Those who are older



rely on fact and reason; those who are younger seek truth from an experiential framework, relying more on emotions.

In a nutshell - if the people to whom we are called to share the Good News of Jesus speak in a different "language" than we are familiar with, we must learn to speak that "language," even if it means we move out of our comfort zones. We must differentiate between the truth of God's love we are called to share, and the package we wrap it in. The gift never changes - the container does.

If there is one prime thing that must be a part of our message, Dr. Erlacher suggests, is that the witness of our lives must mirror the words of our mouths. If we do not demonstrate godly love in how we live and relate, our words will fall on deaf ears.

MAY BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| 9 Theodora Copenhaver | 28 Ezra Mata |
| 11 Olivia Garcia | 30 Nancy Johnson |
| 13 Brandon Hessler | |
| 14 Carissa Smith | |
| 16 David Mata | |
| 16 Encyia Ramirez | |
| 18 Cooper Morrison | |
| 19 Hunter Hill | |
| 24 Gordon McLain | |
| 25 Tobin Gross | |

★ HAPPY ★
BIRTHDAY!

NEWS AND NOTES...

Blessed are the flexible,
for they shall not be bent
out of shape.

Silence is often
misinterpreted but never
misquoted.

Laugh every day; it's like
inner jogging.

National Day of Prayer:

While we will not be holding a service at the church this year, we do encourage you to take a few moments from your day's agenda to lift up our nation to God in prayer. We are called by God to pray for those who are in leadership over us - local, statewide, and national. We are obedient to God's commands.

Primary Elections:

First Baptist has a long history of being a voting location in Scottsbluff. The primary elections are taking place on Tuesday, May 15th, and the Fellowship Hall will be used by the local election officials. Because of that, there will be

no other functions in the church on that day.

Choirs and Ensembles:

As is our custom, the choir and ensemble members will be on a summer break during the months of June, July, and August. The rehearsals will begin again during the month of September.

Soup Supper:

The weekly Wednesday evening supper at the church will begin its summer break in June. The final supper for this season will be held on May 30.

AFC Offering Results:

We are so pleased to announce the total amount received for the America For

Christ Offering was \$900+, well over our established goal. This offering helps support a wide variety of mission and service work located within the borders of our nation.

A thank you goes to all who gave to this very important American Baptist mission effort!

Church Library:

As has been evidenced by the overflowing book displays in the foyer, many new books have been added to our lending library over the past few months. We encourage you to check out a book or two - read them - and bring them back for others to read.

SANCTUARY REMODELING DECISION

A part of the new vision for First Baptist is a renovation of the most important room in our facilities - the sanctuary. Because of the changes needed to connect with new generations of people, a refurbishing of the gathering space for worship



has been under discussion for quite some time. In fact, part of that transformation is already underway with the purchase of 184 new padded chairs currently being stored in the Annex.

On Tuesday, May 8, at 7:45pm, a very special meeting will take place in the Fel-

lowship Hall to determine the direction we will be taking in this project.

Following an overview of both the project ideas as well as estimates of costs, all who are in attendance will have opportunity to share ideas and concerns about this rather involved project.

We encourage all members of the church to attend this meeting.

CAMP ROCK CAMPING:

Here are the dates of the camps at Camp Rock for this summer:

- Discover Camp 1 (K-2nd Grade) - June 6-8
- Intermediate Camp 1 (Grades 5-6) - June 11-15
- Senior Camp (Grades 9-12) June 18-22
- Core Camp (Grades 7-8) - June 25-29
- Junior Camp 1 (Grades 3-4) - July 9-13

Intermediate Camp 2 (Grades 5-6) - July 16-20

Junior Camp 2 (Grades 3-4) July 23-27

Discovery Camp 2 (K-2nd grade) - July 20-August 1

As we have stated before, we support both Camp Moses Merrill (our ABC Nebraska Camp and Conference Center), and Camp Rock. Both offer superb Christian camping experiences for all ages of



kids.

But - for all practical purposes, sending our kids 400 miles away, or sending them 35 miles away ... you can do the math. We have a very close relationship with the director of Camp Rock. We know our kids will be taken care of very well.

SAFETY AND SECURITY TEAMS:

In an ideal world, children could play unmolested, people could walk without being robbed and beaten, there would be no drive-by shootings, and schools and churches could meet without the possibility of deranged shooters taking out their anger on innocent bystanders.

In an ideal world.

But that world does not yet exist. It will when Christ returns, but we have to be alert and ready until then.

Through the work of responsible leaders in the church, a decision has been made to form carefully trained teams to deal with any kind of emergency that might take place.

A **security team** is presently in place to protect against the very unlikely, but always possible attack by that deranged individual who for some presumed reason decides to vent his or her anger against a group of gathered believers.

(Note: it is illegal for anyone to carry a concealed weapon into a church building unless that person has been given specific authorization by the church to do so.)

A **medical team** is undergoing specific training to deal with any kind of medical emergency that can unexpectedly happen, regardless of the cause or circumstances.

A **safety team** is presently



being assembled, and will be trained how to react and help in the case of a church fire, a severe weather incident, or any other kind of emergency that requires action for the protection of attendees of a service or activity of the church.

We pray these teams will never have to be used. But in case of an unforeseen incident - well, we have you covered. You are safe here.

God wants spiritual fruit,
no religious nuts.

Growing old is inevitable;
growing up is optional.

CONNECTION RESOURCE BEING FORMED

Because of typical vagaries of Nebraska weather, the sunrise service planned for Easter Sunday at the top of Scottsbluff Monument had to be moved to the church.



Being Easter weekend, most of the usual channels of getting work out to the members

of the church, and the general public, were unavailable. We discovered rather quickly that we needed a much better way to get information to our members than that which we had been using.

Lacey Fleeman has volunteered to be the liason person in case of a need to get parti-

cular information to the members. A preference list is in the works for how each member wishes to be contacted to receive the information - emails, phone texts, or phone calls. When info needs to get out, one of these methods will be used.

If you have a preference, please get that information to the church office ASAP.

PENTECOST SUNDAY

One of the most important days of the church calendar is also one of the most overlooked - at least in our traditional Baptist agenda - Pentecost. Perhaps because it is so closely associated with the charismatic approach to worship, many evangelical churches simply give a tacit nod to it, then quickly move on to something else.

But Pentecost is so much more than the mascot of what has become the fastest grow-

ing movement in the Christian church. The truth of Pentecost is the basis of most of the commands of Jesus to His followers—and to us today.

Sometimes known as the birthday of the church, Pentecost relates the time when God sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in the lives of His followers on a permanent basis. Before that time the Holy



Spirit would come upon people chosen by God for a specific task, but would then

withdraw back to heaven. Permanent residence is what now empowered the disciples and followers to do what they needed to be faithful to God's life changing call.

Celebrate the birthday—after all, YOU are the church! May 20th - be here for the party!

There is no key to happiness. The door is always open.

MINISTRY UPDATES

A grudge is a heavy thing to carry.

The various missional ministries of First Baptist continue to make a real impact on the community and the lives of those who benefit from what they do.

The **Fire Fighter Ministry** has established itself into the very framework of the community. More and more folk now look to the ministry as a pathway for their involvement in caring for others when a house fire occurs, or some other tragedy strikes a family. A simple request for donations brings a flood of responses, and people seek out ways to help.



The success, and the stabil-

ity of the **Diaper Depot** has meant that more often instead of searching for ways to increase the ministry, organizations and people are now coming to us to get involved.

The recent bicycle giveaway is just one instance when a local organization saw this ministry as a viable way to get their "product" into the hands of needful persons.

The **Career Closet** is gaining ground every week as more and more individuals are setting up appointments to receive good clothing which helps enable them to

get back into the job market. New partnerships are being discussed to expand the ministry in different ways.

The **Food Ministry** will be a vessel for the distribution of fresh vegetables through a partnership with the University of Nebraska. A local shared gardenspot, sponsored by UN, will bring a fairly large quantity of veggies from the garden to First Baptist that we might get them to those who need them the most.

Most importantly, we are unimpeded in sharing the Good News of Jesus to all whom we serve. Now **that** is a God thing!

The most important things in your home are the people.

GRADUATION RECEPTIONS

We are so very proud of the young people who are graduating or have graduated this year:

From Scottsbluff High School:

Kaitlyn Shallenberger (her reception - Saturday, May 12, at 6PM in the Fellowship Hall.)

Uriah Mata (reception - Saturday, May 26, at 3PM, at the National Guard Armory.)

Sarah Wagoner (reception - Sunday, May 13, at 4PM, at 515 4th Street in Gering.)

From Morrill High School:

Johnny Hessler (reception - Saturday, May 12, following the graduation ceremonies, and will be held at the American Legion in Morrill.)

From Gering High School:

Nicole Patton (granddaughter of Randy Johnson)

Sydney Ridgeway (granddaughter of Betty Kanzler)

From U-Nebraska/Kearney:

Darin Gonzales

From Bellevue University:

Heather Silva

We are proud of all our graduates! God bless you!



It is all right to sit on your potty every now and again. Just be sure to flush when you are done.

VISITATION TEAM TRAINING

Another goal that has been set from the Vision Ministry of First Baptist is the formation of a visitation team. Members of this important team are selected from a list of candidates who will undergo specific training in the proper way to make a church visit.



It is important to note that this team does not take the place of the pastor of the

church, but add a very significant layer to the making of connection with potential new members of the church, or strengthening our connections with members who have a special need.

It is a proven fact that when the pastor, who will always be temporary, is the only one making these connections,

the retention of prospects is relatively low. When the members of the church also make these connections, the retention of prospects is quite high. Members - in the form of a visitation team - do make a vital impact on how the congregation grows.

The training of the visitation team members will begin during the first full week of May. If you wish to be a candidate for this ministry, let Pastor Gary know right away.

YOU MIGHT BE A PREACHER IF ...

You've ever dreamed you were preaching and you wake up and discover you were.

You've ever wondered why people couldn't die at more appropriate times.

You've ever spoken for free and were worth every penny.

You look forward to Mondays.

You wonder why the tax seminar leader didn't open with prayer.

Instead of getting "ticked off" you get "grieved in your spirit."

You've ever been tempted to take an offering at a family reunion.

You'd rather talk to people with "every head bowed and every eye closed."

You've ever wanted to "lay hands" on a deacon's neck.

You've ever been the only one in the room wearing a tie.

You hate the idea of "long" weekends.

When visiting another church you automatically read the leader's part.

You can't eat toast without

breaking it first.

You've counted the number of people at a football game.

You're leading the church into a new millennium, but you don't know what you are preaching on Sunday.

You've hit your thumb with a hammer and had nothing to say.

Yes, my friends ... preachers are human, too.



When we get all tangled up in our problems, be still. God wants us to be still so He can untangle the knots.

Do the math. Count your blessings.

YOUTH NEWS

The children and youth of the church are sharing an expanded participation in the activities of the church.

A children's choir practices every Sunday morning as a part of their Sunday School. Heather Silva leads the choir, and the choir performs at least once a month in the worship service.

The morning offering is now being taken by a group

of children and youth. Under the careful eye of Brian Ring, the kids are realizing they can be a part of what takes place during a worship service.



A girls-only study, led by Heather Silva, is enjoyed by later elementary and middle school girls learning how to use Christian principles deal

with the pressures of growing up in the world today.

Later middle school and high school youth gather every Sunday after the

worship service for a lunch and a study led by Patrick Fleeman and Joe Gaul. The studies are hard-hitting and very encouraging.

KEEPING IT COOL!

In the advent of the every Sunday morning breakfast, a logistics problem arose. Because much of what is used by the chefs in the kitchen needed refrigeration, the use of the refrigerators by our food distribution ministry operators had been somewhat curtailed.



Now the problem has been

solved. Donations by several people allowed a search for an additional refrigerator for the kitchen, which is now installed and filled with the makings of great breakfasts.

But that's not the end of the story. In the search for a used, but in good shape, refrigerator, not one but two were found. And even better yet, the second turned out to be itself a donation to the

church. The only cost was to drive to Angora to pick it up. That appliance replaced the one in the Annex kitchen, which was beyond its last legs.

Total cost for two very good refrigerators? - \$50. PTL!

And, we are also the recipient of a professional popcorn machine. It, too, is in the Annex, and once it is cleaned up, it will be put to use for various programs here at the church.

Wow! God provides!

Be more concerned with your character than your reputation. Your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are.

First Baptist Church

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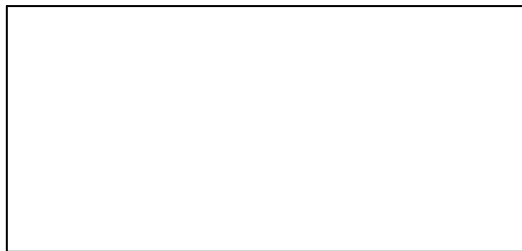
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Pastor Gary Cole



We're on Facebook!
First Baptist Church
of Scottsbluff

*Our Mission -
Evidence of Faith:
Excellence in Walk*



SERMON SURVIVAL TIP: If during the sermon, you drift off to a peaceful slumber.. and your wife gently nudges you, pretend you were praying, and just quietly say.. "AMEN".