

Baptist Bugle



December 2018

First Baptist Church of Morris ~ Pastor Steve Larson

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Pastor's Ponderings –

As we enter the holiday season, which always seems to be busier than we want it to be, we tend to forget what our focus for the whole time is really all about. It's about being thankful, having thanksgiving and gratefulness in our hearts for our many blessings, how important it is to be thankful. It is a very important part of our armor as we put on the whole armor of God. Even though it is not specifically mentioned as one of the pieces of armor in Ephesians 6, it is a very real part of our weaponry and our protection. The Word of God directs our attention repeatedly to the importance of being thankful and having a heart of gratitude. For the rest of the time I would just like to use Scripture to point out how very true this is. And really, that's my favorite way to write these newsletter articles each month anyway: just let Scripture teach. I know we call it "Pastor's Ponderings", but in reality, you don't need to hear from me. We all just need to hear from the Lord as we focus on His Word. Truly, one of my greatest blessings as a pastor is to be called of God to point people to Christ, and to His precious Word.

Philippians 4:4-7 says, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:11-12 says, "I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret to being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want."

Ephesians 5:20 says, "Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Colossians 2:6-7 says, "So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in faith as you were taught and overflowing with thankfulness."

Colossians 3:15 says, “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of body you were called to peace. And be Thankful.”

And finally from *I Thessalonians 5:16-18* we read, “Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

Do you see a theme here as we look at these six passages from some of Paul’s Epistles? And yes, you may say, “I see several different themes.” Ok, I agree, but let me do this. Look with me at another couple passages of Scripture and then I’ll ask you several questions. Because there is something at work here in the heart of Paul that directs him to say all the things he does. There is an underlying theme that everything else comes out of. More than anything else, there was something Paul knew to be true that so guided and directed his life. Look with me...

I Timothy 1:14-16, “The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display His immense patience as an example for those who would believe in Him and receive eternal life.”

In *Romans 1:16* Paul writes, “For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.”

Yes, Paul was able to ‘Rejoice in the Lord’ always. He was able to be content whatever the circumstances and in any and every situation. He was able to give thanks to God always, and Let the peace of Christ rule in his heart. But why, and how? Certainly his life was not easy. He was beaten, he was stoned, and he was imprisoned and shipwrecked, and finally killed for the cause of Christ. Everywhere the Holy Spirit lead Paul to go, he went with great thankfulness and gratitude in his heart because he knew this to be true – that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And “To all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.” *John 1:12* Paul carried within his heart the grace of Jesus that reminded him that he had been saved. And he was able to say with conviction and confidence, “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” *Romans 8:38* Paul knew he was saved, and that brought a thankfulness and a gratitude that trumped everything else.

To know that God loves you, to know that Jesus died in your place on the cross and shed His blood as payment for your sins, to believe that He rose from the dead and did not stay in the grave, and to ask Jesus into your heart because you know you need a Savior, and accept Jesus as your Savior because only Jesus can save you from your sins and give you eternal life...truly this is what it means to be thankful, to live with a grateful heart and to be content in any and

all situations. For *“If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord’, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”* Romans 10:13.

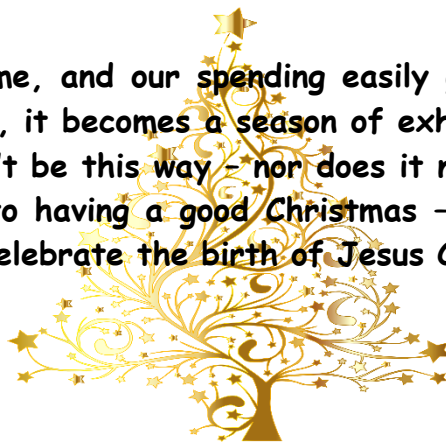
We can be thankful for many things, but when we know that we have been saved, when we know that we’ve been born again, and that nothing will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, we truly know what it means to be thankful. Are you saved? Are you sure? God wants you to know for sure!

On behalf of Kristi and myself, a very blessed Christmas and a joyous holiday season to each and every one of you. Our joy and our fellowship together are because of Jesus. Thank you for your friendship and the fellowship we share with each of you. What a privilege it is to be with you at First Baptist. Truly God is good! All the time!!

Pastor Steve



Christmas is such a busy time, and our spending easily gets out of control. Instead of a season of peace and goodwill, it becomes a season of exhaustion and resentment. Of course Christmas shouldn't be this way - nor does it need to be. There is a deeper solution to having a good Christmas - and that is to rediscover its true meaning. At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, who came down from Heaven to save us from our sins.



May you see His glory this Christmas season!

“When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped”.

Matthew 2:10-11



The Christmas Story

Luke 2:1-20

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them. And they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace to men on whom
His favor rests.”

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRAYER AND BIBLE STUDY



Women of Prayer
Tuesdays at 2:00 pm

Men of Action

Tuesday evenings at 7:00 pm
All men are invited to come



Women's Afternoon Bible Study

Wednesdays at 1:00 pm
Study titled –
“The Joy of Jesus”
from book of Philippians

All women are invited to come
Please contact Helen Brehm
815-942-6625



Women's Evening Bible Study

Wednesdays at 6:30 pm
Study titled –
“Psalm 23: The Shepherd with Me”
by Jennifer Rothschild

All women are invited to come
Please contact Colette Kirby
815-942-9527



Single Moms' Group

Every Other Wednesday Evening at 5:30 pm

If you are a single mom or know of one who would
enjoy meeting with others, please invite them to come with you!



“Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.”
Psalm 37:4

Congregational Prayer

Sunday, December 2nd

5:00 pm



Come gather together for prayer and praise!



Boards to Meet on Tuesday, December 11th

5:30 pm – Board of Christian Education

5:30 pm – Board of Trustees

6:30 pm – Board of Diaconates (if necessary)

SOWL Food

Looking for a volunteer willing to fill the need of organizing people and food for those that require a few meals brought to them while recovering from surgery or illness.

Please call the church office if you are interested, 815-942-0812.



Good News Club

Good News Club began Thursday, October 4th and will finish Thursday, April 25, 2019.

Club will be held every Thursday 2:45-4:00pm,
during the time period that school is in session a full day.

We are excited to see what God has planned for this new school year
and appreciate the prayers of our "Family of Faith" as God brings the kids!

It's our fervent hope and prayer that many will come to know
Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior
and that they will be little missionaries in their homes, neighborhoods and school.

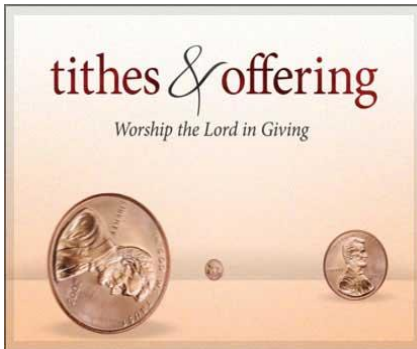
Staff for the 2018-2019 school year –
Carol Adair, Kara Paulson, Kristi Larson, Helen Brehm and Kay Hemmersbach

UNIFIED GIVING

<u>Month</u>	<u>Monthly Amt. Needed</u>	<u>Monthly Amt. Received</u>
November (4 Sundays)	\$25,720.00	\$21,384.27

Church Mortgage Balance as of November 25, 2018 \$206,060.63

Thank you for your generous and faithful giving!!!



This past year \$15,795.00 has been given to be applied to the 'principal only'! Anyone wishing to contribute toward lowering the principal should write 'apply to principal only' on their check. For accounting purposes, it would be appreciated if you would write a separate check if giving for 'principal only', rather than including it in your regular giving check. Thank you!



JEWEL-OSCO FRESH DONATION

Jewel-Osco continues to donate fresh food each Sunday morning.
The donated fresh food is that which is dated and must be used.

We have a great need for volunteers to go to Jewel at 11am on Sunday mornings to pick up the food and bring it back to the church. If you are able to serve in this capacity once a month or so, please sign up on the sheet on the bulletin board near the library.
If you have any questions, please see Deb Ritke, our coordinator!



Women of the Church

Christmas Brunch

Saturday, December 1st at 9:00 am

Julie Applegate's Home

(2024 Teller Rd., Morris)

There will be a \$10-15 Gift Exchange

All women are invited to come!



**All Youth
Progressive Dinner
Sunday, December 16th
5:00 pm**

**All the youth are invited to a "Progressive Dinner Nite"!
We will meet at the church at 5:00 pm
and then travel to 4-5 restaurants in town
All youth will be responsible for paying for their own dinners
Afterwards we will head back to the church to play
Games and have a \$5 gift exchange!
Little ones will be picked up by 6:30 pm**

**Adult drivers are needed to transport the youth
to each restaurant -
Any questions, please call Leslie Meloun**



Join Us For Sunday School

**Sunday mornings
9:30 am – 10:30 am**

**Nursery – 3 years and under
Preschool – 2nd Grade, Teacher Lisa Vaksdal
3rd – 5th Grade, Teacher Kayla Hamilton
6th – 8th Grade, Teacher Diane Gagliardo
9th – 12th Grade, Teacher Mary Motter
Adults – Teachers, Jeff and Claudette Swiggett**

Senior Christmas Luncheon
Thursday, December 13 at 12:00 pm



A time of celebrating the Christmas Season
Beginning with a luncheon and followed with a
Short program and music

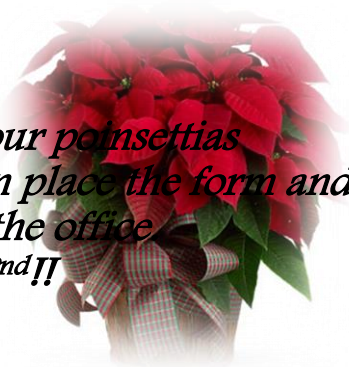
All Seniors are invited to attend this afternoon of fellowship
and Celebration of the Birth of Jesus!

Look forward to seeing you!

Christmas Poinsettia Orders

It's that Wonderful Time of the Year....

*The order form is now in the bulletin for ordering your poinsettias
for this Christmas Season...Please fill yours out and you can place the form and
your payment in the offering plate or drop it in the office
All orders are due by Sunday, December 2nd!!*



Christmas Program
Sunday, December 16, 2018
10:45 am
(during Late Service)



“Train a child in the way he should go,
and when he is old he will not turn from it.”
Proverbs 22:6

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Monday, December 24
7:00 pm

Please join us for a beautiful night of music, scripture, the Christmas story and a message from Pastor Steve.

Invite your family and friends to come with you to experience this special candlelight service.



“Even if you had been the only one, Jesus still would have come for you. Hoping you know how special you are...At Christmas and all year long!”



“WE CARE” BELL RINGING

Friday, December 7

4-9pm, North and South Doors at Walmart

We will once again be ringing bells for ‘We Care’.

**This is such a great ministry,
along with a chance to give shoppers a smile!
We still have a few spots left on the sign-up sheet.
Any questions, please contact the church office.**

**“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him,
so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”
Romans 15:13**





Joy to the World

Isaac Watts, 1719

George Frederick Handel



1. Joy to the world! the Lord is come; Let earth re-ceive her King; — Let ev - 'ry —



heart — pre - pare — Him — room, — And heav'n and na - ture — sing, And —



heav'n and na - ture — sing, And — heav'n, and heav'n — and na - ture sing.

2. Joy to the world! the Savior reigns;
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

3. No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as, the curse is found.

4. He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders, of His love.



The Home for the Holidays Christmas Tea

Thank you to everyone who helped make the Christmas Tea
at the church a success!

What a great team effort by everyone!
And to all who provided music.....Thank You!



December Birthdays

1 Gene Hannu
3 Verneda Hall
8 Mary Beldon
9 Russ Battersby
10 Karen Rabideau
14 Martha Stephenson
18 Abel Valdivia
19 Rick Cunningham
21 Micah Johnson
22 Emma Mote
28 Mike Disseler, Jim Swiggett
29 Bob Krug, Niki Matuszewski
30 Annika Gretencord, Alicia Steffes
31 Jacob Davids



December Anniversaries

11 Dave and Cheryl Johnson
16 Ray and Marlene Burnside
17 Scott and Cindy Henderson
19 Gerry and Beth Carlson
21 Gene and Judy Hannu
23 Russ and Jane Battersby
27 Ken and Colleen Miller



You may live in this world, but as a Christian, you are not of this world.

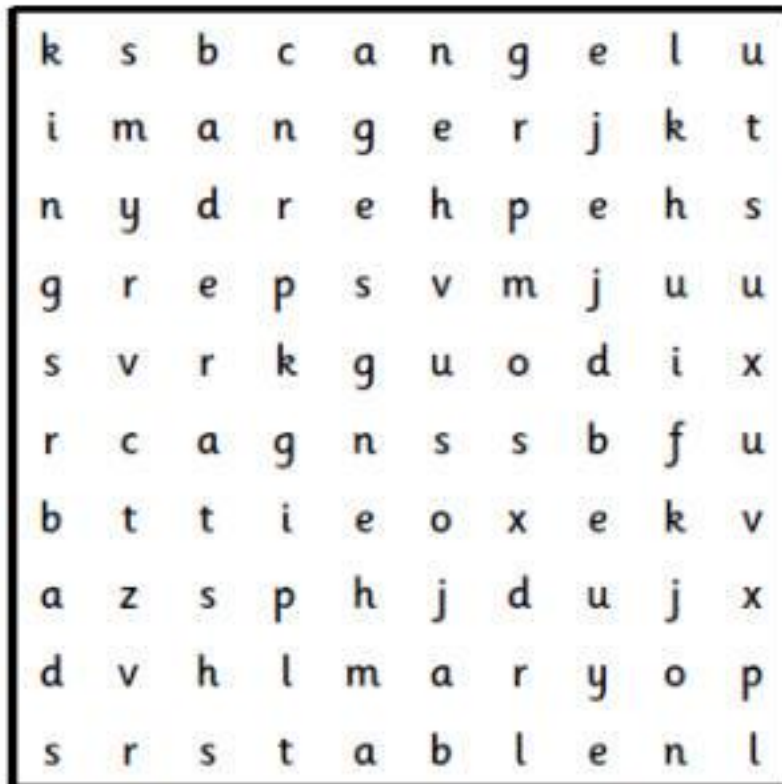
You were sent here on assignment. To be you.
To disciple, to laugh, to breathe, to cry, to mentor,
to struggle, to overcome and to praise God for every
breath He's given you.

Emma Rushlow





Nativity Wordsearch



angel

donkey

Jesus

Joseph

kings

manger

Mary

shepherd

stable

star



Mr. Snowman!



Let's build a snowman! First we need to have a really _____ snowstorm, of course on a _____ day. Watching all that _____ snow fall makes me _____ for a bowl of _____! _____ it's still _____ and there's a lot of it! Let's go!

Next is _____ to go out in the cold. Once that is done, we need to get busy. We make a _____ and _____ it in the _____. It gets so _____ we can't roll it anymore. Then we do _____ more and stack them on top of each other. We _____ for _____ in the driveway for the _____, eyes and _____. Mom gives us a scarf, hat and _____ to complete Mr. _____. _____ he's done! Finally. Now the best part, _____.



Merry
Christmas

