

Church News

January 2025

First Baptist Church

Pastor - Steve Larson

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Pastor's Ponderings –

Can we spend some time focusing on Leviticus? All too often we look at this Old Testament book as mundane. We tend to think of it as just a lot of offerings and sacrifices, laws and rules, do's and don'ts, and a whole lot of blood. But it's really so much more than that. It is a book about *"The Holiness of God"* and what is required for fellowship with Him. It is a book that points out the sinfulness of man and what is required for atonement with God; how He provides the way for us to have access into fellowship with Him. It is therefore a book on worship...worshipping a Holy God, and living a Holy life. We are created in the image of God, and we are created to have a close relationship with God, walking in close fellowship with Him. Many people are unwilling to have that close relationship with God, but that doesn't mean that we weren't created for that purpose. The essence of the book of Leviticus, and the call upon our lives is this... *"Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy."* Leviticus 19:2.

From the time the Tabernacle was erected in *Exodus 40:17* and the time the Children of Israel set out for the Promised Land in *Numbers 10:11*, there is a span of approximately 50 days. During that span of days, the book of Leviticus takes place, at the foot of Mount Sinai. This short 50 days is a time of uninterrupted teaching for the Children of Israel. They no longer have to worry about living in Egypt...Pharaoh's armies have all been drowned in the Red Sea, so there is no more slavery. They have not yet confronted the Hittites, the Amalekites, the Jebusites, the Amorites, or the Canaanites that dwell by the sea and along the Jordan in the Promised Land. *Numbers 13:29*. In this short time, God is laying the groundwork for how the Children of Israel were to be Holy people, God's chosen people, set apart for His purpose, in order that they might demonstrate what it meant to worship a Holy God, and to live a Holy life. God saw it as a must that His children would regard Him as Holy and that they too would be Holy.

So often we talk about how important it is to NOT run ahead of the Lord. But it is just as important that we would not run ahead of the groundwork that the Lord is laying in our lives. Holy on to the things the Lord has already taught you (with conviction) and then learn some more. Paul reminds Timothy in *2 Timothy 3:14-15*, *"But as for you, continue in what you have learned and become convinced of, because you know those from*

whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” This is the groundwork that God is laying in our lives...sometimes we need to slow down and listen and learn.

We may not be going through a trial or a time of testing right now, but we will eventually. And depending on how well we allow God to lay that groundwork in our lives now, through the reading and the application of the Word of God, will have everything to do with how well we will walk through that storm when it does come. Let's not run ahead of the Lord when He wants to teach us something. As He lays the groundwork now, it will be to our benefit and our protection later. **God knows what's ahead, and He knows what we need.**

Blessings to you as you walk with the Lord,

Pastor Steve

Kristi and I would like to wish each one in our congregation a very happy and joy filled New Year, because our Joy is in Christ.

*Thank you for your kindness towards us,
your cards and gifts, and certainly all your prayers.*

*We thank you for your part in the ministry on behalf of our congregation.
We wait with Joy as we look forward to what God will do in our midst in 2025.*

*We love you all, and are so thankful for you.
We press on in the Lord as we continually look to Him.*

*God's blessings,
Pastor Steve and Kristi*

“The JOY of the LORD is your strength.” Nehemiah 8:10c



OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRAYER AND BIBLE STUDY



Ladies Prayer Group
Wednesdays at 10:00am



Men's Group
Tuesday evenings at 7:00 pm
We are studying the series "Unoffendable"
by Brant Hansen
All men are invited to join us!
Questions?? - contact Stan Motter at 815-545-7441



Ladies Afternoon Bible Study
Wednesdays at 1:00 pm
We are studying through the **Book of 1 Corinthians**.
As we have studied all Paul's writing, we look forward to him outlining a foundation to encourage believers to pursue godly behavior in the world we live in.

Would love to have you join us as we apply the Bible to our lives!
Kim Enlow at 815-931-2533



Ladies Evening Bible Study
Wednesdays at 6:30 pm
We are studying a series called "When You Pray",
which is a look at Six Prayers in the Bible.
We hope you will join us!
Colette Kirby at 815-942-9527



Single Moms Support Group
Meet the 1st and 3rd Thursday Evenings at 6:00 pm
If you are a single mom or know of one who would
enjoy meeting with others, please invite them to come with you!
Please contact Kristi Larson at 815-942-0812

*"Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message
is heard through the word of Christ."
Romans 10:17*



NEW Boards to Meet on Tuesday, Jan. 28

5:30pm - NEW Board of Christian Ed.

5:30pm - NEW Board of Deacons

5:30pm - NEW Board of Trustees

"But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 3:13-14

UNIFIED GIVING

<u>Month</u>	<u>Monthly Amt. Needed</u>	<u>Monthly Amt Received</u>
Received thru December 15	\$25,720.00	\$20,930.40



Thank you for your generous and faithful giving!!!

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Please be sure to get your reports into the office before January 10, 2025



ANNUAL CHURCH BUSINESS MEETING

Tuesday, January 21, 2025

7:00pm



Please save the date for the Church's Annual Business Meeting

*Posted on the bulletin board near the Library -
Report of the Nominating Committee
Proposed 2025 Budget*

If you have any questions, feel free to call the church office at 815-942-0812



Awana Club

"Because Kids Matter to God"

First Baptist Church

Ages 4 yrs.thru 7th grade

Awana Club is held the 1st and 3rd Sunday
of each month at **4:00 - 5:15pm**
You may register by calling the
church office @ 815-942-0812

January 5 - Awana meets at church
(wear your favorite pajamas)

January 19 - Awana meets at church



Questions -
call Cheryl Johnson or Kristi Larson
We are looking forward to seeing you!

ARE YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IN NEED OF PRAYER?

First Baptist Church has a wonderful team of prayer warriors
who are willing to lift your requests to our heavenly Father.

Colette Kirby leads this ministry,
and you can email your prayer needs to her at -

colette.kirby@comcast.net
or text 815-954-9527



"For when I am weak, then I am strong."
2 Corinthians 12:10

“Give careful thought to your ways.” Haggai 1:5

January Birthdays

1 Harrison Wilkinson
4 Garret Johnson, Leslie Meloun
5 Keith Hiney, Wendell Baggett
8 John Sanders
10 Drew Hamilton
11 Gary Bounds, Rayna Dew
12 Richard Allen, Sophia Day, Stephen Motter
13 Brandon Maylum
14 Juanita Malone
15 Teresa Chapman
16 Bob Cottingim
23 Kim Bricker, Sandi Hawk
24 Mark Vaksdal, Leroy Durbin, Paula Misek, Anna Ward
26 David Ritke, Helen Ritke
27 Todd Hoaglund, Kensley Gray
30 Ella Walker, Kay Durbin, Aycen Taylor



January Anniversaries

8 Jim and Amanda Hitchcock
28 Bob and Virginia Edmundson





What are your thoughts as you look back over the last year?
Was it a year of heartache and loss, tragedy and sorrow?
Or happiness and joy, success and achievement?
Do you close the book on this year with regret, or with relief?

No matter what your answer is, I hope you will pause and prayerfully ask yourself two important questions. First, how do you think God looks on this past year in your life? Did it bring you any closer to Him? Second, what lessons will you take from this year into the next? What did God teach you?
Don't be bound by the past and its failures.
But don't forget its lessons either.

*"But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward
What is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which
God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."
Philippians 3:13-14*

Hope

As we start a new year,
the Bible tells us there can be hope for the future.

First....

There is hope of a changed person.
We are incapable of ridding ourselves of the
selfishness and greed that cause conflict
and strife and war.
Our only hope is a changed heart –
And JESUS is in the business of changing hearts.

Second....

There is hope of a changed world.
When we know Christ,
He gives us by His Spirit a new love and concern for others.
Changed by Christ,
we can begin to change our world.

Third....

There is hope of an unchanging eternity in Heaven.
This world is not all there is!

*"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation;
old things have passed away;
behold, all things have become new."*

II Corinthians 5:17 NKJV



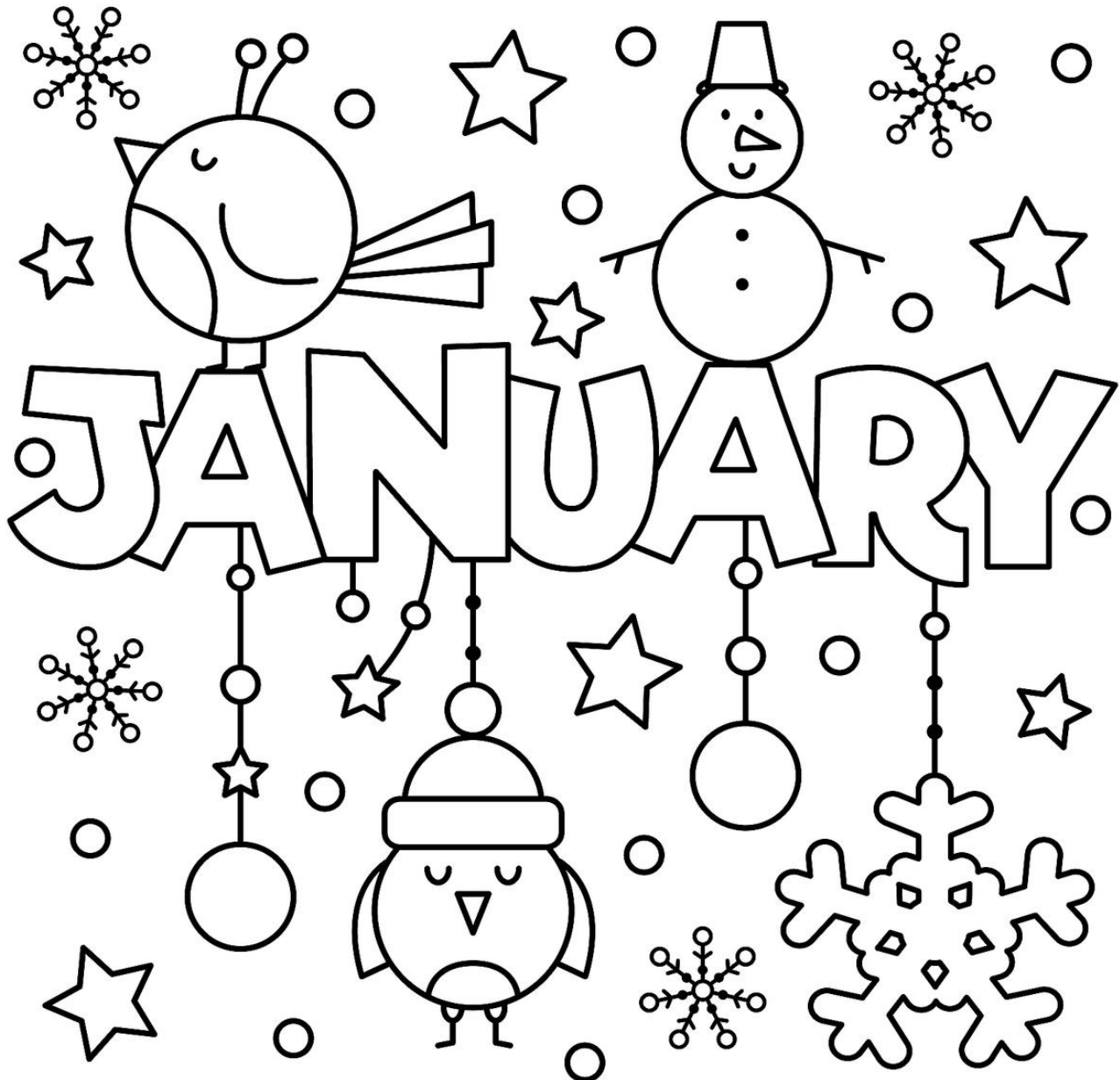


A Note from Me to You.....

Thank you so much for the cards and gifts for Christmas! All of you make me feel so appreciated, blessed and loved. I'm so very thankful for every one of you. May you all have a very blessed and happy year in 2025!

In Christ's Love,
Chrissie

*"Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord,
always giving thanks to God the Father for everything,
in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ"*
Ephesians 5:19-20











PLEASE JOIN US.....

Sunday Morning Worship Service - 8:00am

We offer a staffed Nursery

Sunday Morning Worship Service - 10:30 am

Sunday Morning Kid's Church (Pre-K and up)

during this Worship Service

We offer a staffed Nursery



Kid's Church

Every Sunday morning during the 10:30 am Worship Service

Meets in our Library ... Sue Cheng (ages 4 yrs to 1st grade), Kristi Larson (ages 2nd to 5th grade) and Lisa Vaksdal (sub). This class offers a Bible lesson, craft and snack for the kids during the worship service. It gives the parents a chance to listen to the message and also the kids to receive a message as well. If your kids are too young for this class, we have a staffed Nursery that you may take them to at the same time. Kids are brought back to their parents before the main worship service is concluded. Come check us out!

Adult Bible Study

Sunday 9:15 am

Meets in the Sanctuary.....Jeff & Claudette Swiggett

Looking forward to seeing you!



"Look to the LORD and His strength, seek His face always." 1 Chronicles 16:11

YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL

9:15 - 10:15 am

Pre-K thru 1st Grade ... Lisa Vaksdal

2nd thru 5th Grade ... Jen Goebel

Jr. High ... Mary Motter

High School ... Cathy Planeta



"Pray continually" 1 Thessalonians 5:17



GOOD NEWS CLUB

Ages 5 – 12 years old

Every Thursday at Saratoga School
January 23, 2025 – April 17, 2025

2:45 – 4:00 pm

The Good News Club team is looking for helpers. We will be meeting at Saratoga School every Thursday from 2:45 – 4:00 pm, January 23, 2025 – April 17, 2025.

We have a....

- Bible Story
- Verse memory game
- Singing
- Missionary story

at each meeting and pray many children come to know Jesus.

If you have any questions, you may contact Kristi Larson at 815-370-2395.

Jesus welcomed the children who flocked around Him:

“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matthew 19:14).

Their openness, their enthusiasm, their trust – all these delighted Jesus. A young child may not understand everything about God – but he or she can understand something. A young child understands love, and also understands what it means to obey someone. Don’t ignore the children God brings across your path, but by your words and by your example tell them about Jesus.

“He called a little child and had him stand among them... and He said...” whoever humbles himself like this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 18:2-4





WINTER

WORD SEARCH

M I X P B E D Z Q T D D W M R Z R L T F
 S N V O L U X K N E V N E Q T N S P E N
 N K O C M E L T K Z B O N C F Y Q B K S
 P T I J V L G A U P M K U N E C V G N W
 S C D I N B L I Z Z A R D E B M P H A I
 I X Q P N F P G U S Q A Q A R B B O L N
 T U V L W G L R I J L M X U U S O E B T
 E Q F O L Z L E D W A E V F A S M W R E
 G C N M X A U H F D U F D T R X R I S R
 M S A A S H B O B Z M H F H Y W H T E S
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 S I S L P E F W O D M T S H O V E L A E
 R N W E V E Y R L N C L I I Z P X V K A
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 A E O U M O L O F Y S T X I D N G U C R
 E T N C N A A G G A V A F Z N D W E I P
 H A L O P F N C F E W O O J W N J A G U
 J L E P M O Q G V Z F C E E T S S X X S
 Y R E P P I L S T S O R F M K C B P S M

BLANKET
 BLIZZARD
 BOOTS
 CHILLY
 COAT
 COLD
 DECEMBER
 FEBRUARY
 FIREPLACE
 FROST
 FROZEN
 GLOVES
 HEATER
 HOT COCOA
 ICE
 ICE SKATES
 ICICLE
 JANUARY
 MELT
 SCARF
 SHOVEL
 SKIING
 SLED
 SLIPPERY
 SNOWING
 SNOW BALL
 SNOWFLAKE
 SNOWMAN
 SWEATER
 WINTER

