



The **Messenger**  
 A Monthly Newsletter of First Baptist Church of Rochester

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With a heavy cross, who wants to carry it?

Let's do it together.

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She looked like she'd seen a ghost. We were at church, so I thought maybe she'd seen the Holy Ghost! The service had only just concluded and a woman I didn't know was asking for a few moments of my time. She had something very pressing she needed to tell me.

After saying my farewells to a few more people we walked to my office. As we went, she looked like she might pass out. Whatever was on her mind was clearly deeply troubling. Sweat rolled down her brow, clearly anxious about what she had to say. We sat. "Pastor, I had no idea what I was walking into today," she began, "that sermon of yours was really something."

I replied, "Oh, I'm glad that you..."

"No, I mean really," she cut me off, "I've never heard anything like it. I've been to this church before when there was another pastor and he was good. He told a lot of stories and stuff and I like that, but your sermon, your sermon was..."

I have to be careful here. There's a fine line between appreciating



a compliment and overfeeding an ego. Nobody needs a pastor with a big head; you can find enough of them on television.

"...your sermon was so..."

I tried not to let it go to my head.

"...was so BORING!!!"

Sermon feedback isn't always edifying, but it is always appreciated. Well, almost always.

I've received a fair amount of feedback since arriving here at First Baptist. All of it has been kind and warm and heartening. Thank you. I love preaching and it's always nice to know someone's listening.

There has been one common theme in much of the feedback I've received. More than a few of you have reflected, "It's clear you're going to challenge us." I've heard that consistently enough that I worried someone would think I was quoting them in particular when I wrote it. I didn't. It's just a theme I'm hearing. My response?

"Um, I guess so."

You see, I grew up with hard-charging, pulpit-pounding preachers and I didn't like it. My therapist doesn't like it either. I don't see what I do on Sunday mornings as an opportunity to read anyone the riot act. In fact, if you can't tell already, I'd much rather stand there and make jokes for a few minutes and then we all go home. I don't want to talk about white privilege, poverty, or the prevalence of injustice in the world! The problem is that I try as best I can to be a biblical preacher. My sermons are crafted, to the best of my ability, at the crossroads of ancient tradition (the Bible) and present reality (our world, culture, and lives). Beginning as I do, with the Bible, means that the themes of the Bible will crop up time and time again. The themes of the Bible you may know are justice, peace, equity, hope and they are often presented in the negative. That means there's a lot of injustice, violence, marginalization, and hopelessness in the Bible – just as there is our world.

The good news is this – there is good news. The Bible often carries us to places we'd rather not go. Who wants to pick up their cross and carry it!?!? But scripture is equally full of good news - not easy answers - but good news. As it turns out, God wants good things for all of God's creation and God has given you and me a role to play in bringing them about! Sometimes we'll have to venture through the dark places to see that clearly, but we'll make it through together. So yes, I may push and prod from time to time – but I'll be pushing and prodding myself too. If we'll hang on together, the good news will make itself known before long.

*Pastor Brent*



**ABC Special  
Offering for  
September**

World Mission Offering supports ABC International Ministries with the needed assistance to help maintain over 240 global Christian partnerships worldwide. Our support helps nurture the relational networks which global workers are invited to serve within. Our support also allows IM to identify, evaluate, and develop new ministry areas around the globe. FBC supports all IM endeavors with a specific focus on two international missionaries.



## **YOUTH GROUP GATHERING**

Join on us September 18 as we kick off a new season of youth group. There will be reconnections made, food for all, games galore, and planning of the year. It will be an extended group time from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM. RSVP so we have enough food! See you in a few weeks!

# OUR COMMUNITY

## REACHING OUT TO OTHERS



### The Brighton Food Depot

Thank you for your continued support of the Brighton Food Depot. We begin to provide 100 bags of ten kid-friendly items each month in September and need everyone to consider giving generously.

For September 2016 we are collecting:

**Peanut Butter or Entrées**  
(stew, ravioli, spaghetti, and more.)

# ABC - USA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & DR. NG

First Baptist Church of Rochester will host the Executive Committee of ABC-USA on September 8, 9, & 10 at the church. Our 12 guests will be meeting each day in the library from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM and until noon on Saturday.

On the Sunday following the meeting, Rev. Dr. Donald Ng, Past President of ABC-USA, will be our guest preacher during worship at 10:00 AM on September 11. Immediately following fellowship time at 11:30 AM, he will continue his time with us at Forum in the Chapel.

We hope you will join us and warmly welcome Rev. Dr. Ng to our church.

## FBC BOOK CLUB

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

The FBC Book Club will meet on the fourth Tuesday, September 27, at 11:30 AM in the church library. The book for discussion will be *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr. In this World War II novel, the author traces the lives of two children, one French and the other German, whose experiences converge at the end of the war. You are welcome to bring a sandwich and join the discussion.



### American Baptist Churches, Rochester-Genesee Region Annual Gathering

Please join us for this two-day Gathering of clergy, lay delegates, and church leaders, highlighting our theme, "Responding to the Call"

#### Friday, September 23, 2016 - Ministers' & Church Leader's Retreat

Consider the Call...to Developing Missional Communities

Glynis LaBarre, ABHMS, Time: 9 AM - 2 PM

Cost: \$35 (Price Includes all Materials, Continental Breakfast & Lunch)

Greece Baptist Church, 1230 Long Pond Road, Rochester, NY 14626

#### Saturday, September 24, 2016 - Annual Gathering

Responding to the Call - Speaker: Charles Jones, Int'l Ministries

Time: 9 AM - 3 PM

Cost: Individual (with Lunch) \$32, Individual Half Day (no Lunch) \$20,

Seminarian (with Lunch) \$12, and Family (includes Lunch) \$55

The Baptist Temple, 1101 Clover Street, Rochester, NY 14610

Register online at [www.abcrgr.org](http://www.abcrgr.org) Annual Gathering.



### September 15<sup>th</sup> Eldergarten

Summer is coming to a conclusion. It is time to **remember** the fun times of getting together on the third Thursday of each month. Here is a specific date for you to **remember!!** September 15, 2016. Our guest speaker will be Suzanne Feather, Community Health Educator, and, you guessed it, her topic will be: MEMORY. Meet in the church parlor at 12:00 noon with your brown bag in hand and a donation of \$1.00. Salad and dessert will be furnished. Come prepared to enjoy the fellowship and to learn how to remember all our names. If you have never attended an Eldergarten session, this first post-summer meeting is a good time to come and give us a try. All are welcome. If you are age-sensitive, "elder" means approximately 55 years and counting. Everyone is asked to sign up at the Vitality Table. If you have questions phone JoAnn Trolley at (585) 586-8545.

# GOINGS ON

## OCCURRENCES OF INTEREST

### Sunday, September 4

Worship 10:00 AM  
Fellowship 11:00 AM  
Counters: Diane and Chris

### Monday, September 5

Labor Day, Office Closed

### Wednesday, September 7

Adult Choir Begins, 7:15 PM  
Adult Choir Social following

### Thursday, September 8, 8:00 AM - Saturday, September 10, 12:00 PM

ABCUSA Executive Board Mtg. @FBCR

### Sunday, September 11

Worship, 10:00 AM  
Rev. Dr. Ng, ABC-USA, preaching  
Fellowship Time 11:00 AM  
Forum—Rev. Dr. Ng, 11:30 AM  
Counters: Diane and Daryl

### Monday, September 12

Library Team Meeting 9:30 AM  
Welcoming & Affirming Mtg. 7:00 PM

### Tuesday, September 13

Trustees Meeting 6:45 PM

### Wednesday, September 14

Mission Meeting 5:00 PM  
Brown Bag Fellowship 5:30 PM  
Study, 6:00 PM  
*Children, Poverty & the Bible*  
Adult Choir 7:15 PM

### Thursday, September 15

Eldergarten 12:00 PM—*Memory*

### Sunday, September 18

Worship 10:00 AM  
Fellowship 11:00 AM  
Forum: New Library Updates  
Counters: Diane and Pat

### Monday, September 19

Council Meeting 6:00 PM

### Wednesday, September 21

Brown Bag Fellowship 5:30 PM  
Study 6:00 PM  
*Children, Poverty & the Bible*  
Adult Choir 7:15 PM

### Friday, September 23

ABCRRG Min. & Ldrs. Mtg. 9:00 AM  
Greece Baptist Church

### Saturday, September 24

Annual Gathering 9:00 AM  
The Baptist Temple

### Sunday, September 25

Worship 10:00 AM  
Fellowship 11:00 AM  
Forum: Chris and Sarah Oak on BPFNA conference.  
Counters: Diane and Dale

### Tuesday, September 27

Book Club 11:30 AM September's Book is  
*All the Light We Cannot See*  
by Anthony Doerr.

### Wednesday, September 28

Brown Bag Fellowship 5:30 PM  
Study 6:00 PM  
*Children, Poverty & the Bible*  
Adult Choir 7:15 PM

# STEPHEN MINISTRIES

## LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS CARE MINISTRIES



Stephen Ministries Programs is a one-to-one lay caring ministry that equips and empowers lay caregivers to provide high-quality, confidential, Christ-centered care to people who are hurting. They are active in many Rochester Churches—and churches throughout New York State, the country and the

world. We at FBCR have an opportunity to learn more about this program by attending a workshop from 9:00 AM-1:00 PM in DeWitt (Syracuse area) on Saturday, October 15. There will be no charge to individuals attending and transportation will be arranged through car-pools. Please indicate your interest in attending by signing on the Vitality Table sign-up sheet.

## MUSIC PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES

### MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE!

There are lots of opportunities to sing and make music together at First Baptist, and we hope you will consider joining us this season!



- **Adult Choir:** Wednesdays 7:15-8:30 PM - Begins September 7.
- **Children's Choir and Music Program:** Sunday morning singing and instrument playing immediately following worship - Begins September 18.
- **Handbell Choir:** Sundays 11:30 AM-12 PM for several weeks prior to Christmas and Easter.
- **Open Anthem Sunday** will be back with some new updates and will continue to provide a short-term singing option for anyone who can't commit to the weekly Adult Choir program.

More information about all of our music program activities will be shared in the bulletin and at announcement times in the service. Check out the new "Music Program Happenings" bulletin board which is located across from the Library door and will be active on September 7!

*David Labman*, Director of Music

*Doleen Hood*, Music Committee Chair

## WEDNESDAY STUDY SERIES

### CHILDREN, POVERTY, AND THE BIBLE

Developed by American Baptist Churches, **Children, Poverty, and the Bible** is a study born out of the *Children in Poverty Initiative*, a denomination-wide issue of concern. It seeks to encourage and equip American Baptists to respond to the needs of children in poverty through caring ministries and prophetic justice. This study begins the process of further discussion and the action needed for us to heed God's call to care for children in need. Please join our 5-part study on Wednesday, September 14 at 6:00 PM.