



First Baptist Church
Grove City

3301 Orders Road
Grove City, OH 43123
614.991.9205 www.firstgc.org

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DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

Pastor's Message



Dr. Jerry Neal
Senior Pastor

Dr. Dave Earley
Lead Pastor

Bryan Corbett
Associate Pastor

David Berna
Visitation Pastor

Jeff Bane
Outreach Pastor

Mike D'Attoma
Assistant Pastor

Mike Latella
Children's Pastor

Robert Stroup
Business Administrator

Andy Kovalchik
Home Life Group Pastor

Doug Worley
Life Group Pastor

Brian Kinnett
Member Services Pastor

Cindy Tryon
Preschool Coordinator

Visit us on the Web
www.firstgc.org

Bill came from a church that closed its doors. He and several of his friends have started to attend FBC. It has been a difficult adjustment. The attendance at his home church was very small which makes FBC seem huge. The struggle has gotten better over the last few months. Bill and his family attended Discover First Baptist dinner. He attends Bible study on Wednesday night, and Bill started playing golf with the Oakhurst men, including myself.

Bill has discovered what many people this year have come to realize: as a church becomes larger, it must get smaller. That happens all the time as new people find Life Groups or serve teams. In those, they develop friendships, prayer partners, and fellowship activities. This month Doug Worley reported that four new Life Groups have started. Brian Kinnett has a list of over 50 serve teams that are active through FBC ministries. Mike and April Dearing led us in a fundraiser for *Feed My Sheep* with over 200 people involved. Our church is growing! All of us need to invite new folks into one of our groups for the church to become smaller.

On the Sundays I don't preach, I have more time to meet and greet people. My delight is to observe new folks who change dramatically from week-to-week. Many start out as reluctant attenders and move on to be eager listeners. Following a recent worship service, one of those people was elated after hearing Pastor Earley's message. He opened up like a flower as he poured out the compliments for our lead pastor and this congregation.

We seem to be on track for a record number of new members and baptisms this year. We are growing, but my friend Bill is not intimidated by our size. He has found a Life Group and men's fellowship. My greatest joy as a pastor is being a part of a healthy growing church.

Pastor Jerry



MEMBERS' MINISTRY

December, the month when an Indian Summer can abruptly develop into a brisk winter chill. The month which contains the shortest day of the year. The month when pine tree forests mysteriously appear in vacant parking lots. The month we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Christ. For a short time, our thoughts are filled with images of mangers, shepherds, angels, and wise men.

I have a family member who visits our home every Christmas season and, without fail, uses this opportunity to chastise me for having the audacity to position the Magi in close proximity to the manger. "They were never there!" he scolds. "Just read Matthew 2:11. It says they came to the house. A HOUSE! Not a stable!" Then, without fail, he picks them up, camels and all, and ceremoniously transports them from under the Christmas tree to the family room. "He probably wasn't even born in December, so they shouldn't be wearing heavy coats either!" he says with an air of superiority signifying an end to his hypothesis.

He may be right, you know. The Bible doesn't specifically say that Jesus was born on December 25th. Strong evidence suggests that it could just as easily been June or July. And that's probably the way God intended it to be.

I think that God loves to dabble, from time to time, in the indistinct... the unexpected. No one expected the Messiah to be born in a manger. No one anticipated the virgin birth. No one foresaw the humble upbringing or modest lifestyle. No one predicted the cruel death. No one envisioned the astonishing resurrection.

Unexpected. Unanticipated. Unassuming. Unprecedented. Our God cannot be wrapped in a nice, little package. He is much too immense for that. So, this Christmas, expect the unexpected, anticipate the unanticipated, assume the unassumable, and believe the unbelievable. That the God of creation, the one and only great "I Am", came, lived, died, and rose... as a gift for you and me—A gift that should not be left unopened. Merry Christmas (whenever you celebrate it).

P.S. This month's article for me is rather bitter sweet. Effective December 1, 2017, I will officially retire as Children's Pastor. I have served in this capacity for nearly 10 years and have loved every moment. I am taking with me many wonderful memories that I will always cherish. Linda and I will continue as active members, but I believe it's time to leave the heavy lifting to those younger and stronger. I thank God for the opportunity to serve and look forward to His new leading in my life.

Mike Latella,
Children's Pastor

It is hard to believe that another year has gone by so quickly as we so rapidly close out 2017 and enter 2018. Time is defiantly fleeting, and the times we live in can be discouraging. At times it is hard when we are trying to serve the Lord and living in such a wicked society, all around us we see tragedy, people falling further away from God and His Word, the wicked seeming to prosper as we seem to struggle. The hard part of this for us is when we have taken our eyes and hearts off Christ, our focus is wrong. It is not that the world strives and we struggle; it is that the world is trying to steal our hearts and that is the struggle.

This is the natural battle that we are in. But we have a responsibility to keep our hearts and eyes on Christ, instead of envying the world and it's pleasures or treasure. We need to pray that Christ will be revealed and the world would turn from the false hope it holds onto, to the hope that we have in Christ for eternity.

As we enter the New Year, let us renew our commitment to Jesus Christ, and let him renew our hearts and minds. Let's focus on serving His kingdom, studying His Word, and growing in His grace and knowledge. Let us join in fellowship with other believers by joining in a Life Group and actually doing life together as we are stronger in Christ.

You and I must make a commitment to Christ. We are called to do more than exist; we are called to live an abundant life in Him.

Is Christ the desire of your hearts?

If so keep your hearts and eyes on Him for He is the author and finisher of our faith.

"Don't let your heart envy sinners; instead, always fear the Lord. For then you will have a future, and your hope will not be dashed. Listen, my son, and be wise; keep your mind on the right course."

Proverbs 23:17-19

In Christ,

Pastor Brian Kinnett,
Members' Minister

Notes of Appreciation

Our family wishes to thank all of you who have supported us the past months during Cheri's fight with cancer. We thank all for the prayers, cards, flowers, visits, and food. As some of you may know when she got a card with scripture quoted, she would go to her Bible and make a note by the verses with your names. A special thank you to FBCGC REFIT.

She cried tears of joy whenever she got a gift or flowers. She said many times, "I don't understand why so many people love me."

Thanks to all of you at FBCGC who helped with her celebration service. The choir did a fantastic job. The meal after the service was scrumptious.

Yours in Christ,

Ken Williams, Lori Tatman, Melissa Lamoreaux,
Michael Williams, and families

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

EDWARDS, Brad	12/01	FULTON, Nicholas	12/22
BERGER, Tiffany	12/01	MURDOCH, Winnie	12/22
HANKINS, Ted	12/02	MAYNARD, Derrick	12/22
PENNY, Joe	12/02	HAMMOND, Zach	12/22
BETTES, Abby	12/02	CLEMENTS, Kim	12/23
WALTERS, Lance	12/02	TRAVIS, Tim	12/23
SMITH, Lola	12/03	ARLEDGE, David	12/24
BOWER, Chuck	12/03	BARBER, Ashley	12/24
WILLIAMS, Dan	12/03	BOSWELL, Lance	12/24
TYLER, Anna	12/04	BURCHWELL, Margaret	12/24
WILDS, Becky	12/04	LAMB, Josh	12/24
WEBB, Steve	12/04	LESHER, Naomi	12/24
BRADFORD, William	12/05	WITBECK, Makayla	12/25
PLUMLY, Madison	12/05	BARR, Matthew	12/27
COX, Caleb	12/05	LOVE, Wes	12/27
RAQUET, Sarah	12/05	SOSA, Elizabeth	12/27
MALE, Cody	12/05	MORGAN, Patricia	12/27
SEBERT, Faye	12/05	CAMPBELL, Diana	12/27
SWICEGOOD, Dave	12/06	FISHER, Abigail	12/27
MARTIN, Patrick	12/06	EARLEY, Karla	12/27
WILLIAMS, Kevin	12/06	LEONARD, Joanna	12/28
BRADFORD, Sharon	12/07	WEST, Donna	12/28
CAVE, Jeff	12/07	THOMPSON, Jennifer	12/30
FULTON, Nathan	12/07	HIGGINS, Ilene	12/30
FISHER, Sandy	12/07	HISEY, Amber	12/30
BOWLING, Sharon	12/08	FURR, Georgianna	12/31
MCGILL, Jack	12/08	MCDONALD, Joni	12/31
LEETH, Pamela	12/08	FLUHARTY, Carol	12/31
THOMA, Kara	12/08	WOLFE, Jill	12/31
ROUSH, Kris	12/09	TERRY, Buzz	12/31
DUNCAN, Tim	12/09		
HICKMAN, Donald	12/10		
HOLLIDAY, Jane	12/10		
STOLL, Nicole	12/10		
STEVENS, Scott	12/10		
SHOEMAKER, Kapri	12/10		
PALMER, Beth	12/10		
LAMB, Jill	12/11		
ANTLE, Kaitlyn	12/11		
CALDWELL, Madeline	12/11		
STONICH, Matthew	12/12		
WATTS, Samantha	12/12		
HUSTEN, Shawna	12/13		
GOLDSMITH, Nicole	12/14		
FAUGHT, Benny	12/14		
SHOEMAKER, Jason	12/15		
CARMICHAEL, Mya	12/15		
SINSEL, Judy	12/16		
SCOTT, Sharon	12/16		
BRINLEY, Mattie	12/17		
WILSON, Liane	12/17		
JONES, Belinda	12/17		
GABRIEL, Winnie	12/17		
CAVE, Jeremy	12/18		
YOWELL, Carlos	12/18		
BOWMAN, Treva	12/18		
BEBEL, Richard	12/19		
TYLER, David	12/20		
WARNER, Matthew	12/20		
HEIBY, Staley	12/21		
ARMENTROUT, Aaron	12/21		



When is the last time you went Christmas caroling?

I remember my last time. It was way back in the mid 1990's, before I met my wife

Karen and discovered First Baptist Church of Grove City. I worshipped then at a little church in Gahanna, where everybody knew everybody. I can't remember who came up with the idea, but somebody did, and about 15 of us set a date, printed off some popular carols, bundled up (it was COLD), and headed out.

We covered several blocks right near the church. At almost every house where we caroled, people were *completely* surprised! It had been *years* since anyone had come by their house Christmas caroling, if ever. I'm a little ashamed to admit that I haven't done it again in almost 20 years.

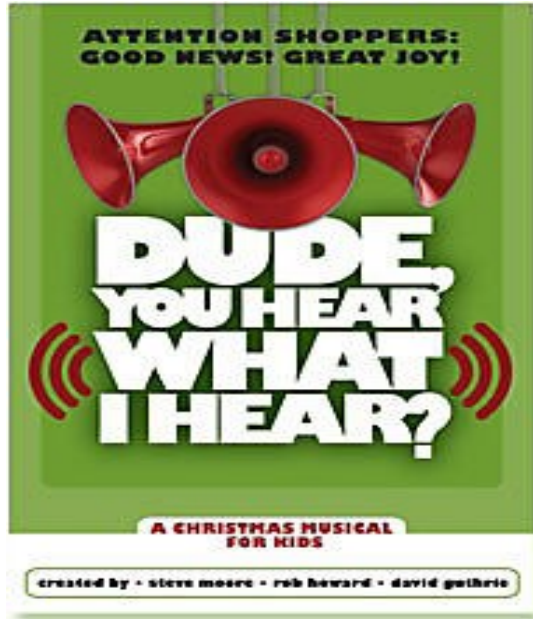
I have an idea. Life Group leaders, why don't you give some Christmas caroling a try this Christmas season? I guarantee that you will have fun and that most of your neighbors will be completely surprised. It would be a great opportunity to invite them for one of our Christmas Eve services.

And, if you choose your carols prayerfully, your neighbors won't be able to miss the true meaning of the season.

**Pastor Andy Kovalchik,
Connections Minister**

From Our Worship Minister

On Sunday, December 10th, at 6PM, our children will be performing, *Dude, You Hear What I Hear?* It's a wonderful, family friendly presentation of the Christmas story! Please join us!



Join us, and our adult worship ministry, on Sunday night, December 17th, at 6PM, for an incredible night of Christmas worship as we celebrate the birth of Christ! Please join us!



Christmas Eve Services

We are adjusting our service times a little bit this year to accommodate more people on Christmas Eve! We will have Christmas Eve Worship Gatherings at these times:

4:00 PM Neal Auditorium
4:00 PM GENESIS Auditorium
6:00 PM Neal Auditorium

Trustee Ministry Report

The Trustees spent much of their time in October focused on bringing year-end jobs round the campus to a close.

The trees and shrubs that needed attention have been trimmed, bagworm control has been completed, the equipment blades on the mowers have been sharpened, and mower decks have been lubricated as needed.

The Upward Program welcomed a smoother playing environment for all of our soccer and football enthusiasts last month. A heavy-duty asphalt roller was used to even out rough areas on the playing field. The Trustees oversaw and provided labor to assemble nine bleachers which were donated as a memorial gift to the First Baptist Church and which will be used by the Upward Program.

Both 15-passenger vans and the 48-passenger bus were given a thorough cleaning inside and out. The kitchen sink disposal had a coin lodged in it which had to be removed. It is now back to normal and functioning properly. Just a reminder, we do not have a coin operated disposal any longer. Please remember to use the electrical switch when turning it on.

The Father and Son Hog Roast was a tremendous success. Our thanks go out to the hardworking volunteers who so willingly gave of their time and energy to make the day a truly memorable one. Last but not least, our sincere thanks to those Trustees who stayed behind and helped clean up.

You may not want to be reminded of this, but we wanted you to know our snow crew is getting ready.

November, yet another wonderful month to give praise and thanks to our Lord!

Phyllis McCloy,
Trustee Ministry Secretary

Other FBC News and Notes

Help us decorate the **Stowe Christmas Tree** in the main foyer with your donations of hats, gloves, mittens, scarves, and socks. If you have any questions please contact Debbie Blakesley at (614) 206-2438.

The **Secret Sisters** have had a good year encouraging and praying for one another! All those who would like to participate in 2018, look for information sheets on the Secret Sisters table to the left of the Preschool wing doors. Our annual party is scheduled for Friday, January 12th, for both 2017 and 2018 participants. If you have further questions, please contact Karen Campbell at (614) 208-6355 or by email kjb1978@live.com

2018 Ohio Disaster Relief Training Sessions

Two-day training sessions for **SBC Ohio Disaster Relief** will be held in Bluffton, Ohio, on the weekend of May 18th and 19th. Training will include the areas of food service, child care, chain saw, shower trailer, and mud-out. For more information please contact **Pastor Jeff Bane**.

Women of FBC

Book Club: Will be meeting on Thursday, December 7th from 7:00-8:30 PM. Join us at the Olive Garden as we discuss *The Beloved Christmas Quilt* by Wanda Brunstetter. Please contact Kari Jones at 614-589-7557 with any questions.

Surviving Grief with Hope: This is a group to support those who are dealing with the grief of the loss of a loved one, health, a marriage, a job, and more. Please contact Barb Lovingshimer at 614-875-4613 about up-coming meetings.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors: Is a volunteer-based initiative to help people in our area who are seniors and/or struggling with disabilities. We provide volunteers with a wide range of home maintenance abilities to work on projects that you may need help with. For more information, please contact Becky Grundei at 614-947-9296 or Sherri Love at 614-871-3053.

Next Fellowship Breakfast: Saturday, December 9th starting at 9 AM. We will be enjoying breakfast together and preparing baskets for our shut-ins.

Amazing Love Dinner: Will be February 23rd. Please watch the bulletin for further details.

Bible Studies: There will be several new Bible studies starting in January. Watch the bulletin for more details.

- Monday afternoons at 1:30 PM in Room C-154 we have a bi-weekly study. Please contact Mindi Stith at 614-871-4812 for more information.
- Monday mornings weekly, at 11:30 AM in Room C-157. Please contact Carol Middendorf at 614-370-3480 with questions.
- Tuesday at 7:00 PM in Room C-156. Starting January 9th, we will be studying *First Peter* by Jen Wilkin. Questions? Call Debbie Watts at 614-875-4201.
- Wednesday at 7:00 PM in Room K-117. We are studying the book of Ecclesiastes.
- Thursday at 9:30 AM in Room K-117. We are studying *David* by Nathan Buttery. For more information please contact Kay Hardman at 614-323-6891 or kayhardman@gmail.com
- Sunday at 4:30 PM. We are exploring a Kay Arthur Precepts study on the book of Ezekiel. Please contact Kari Jones at 614-589-7557 with any questions.

**Kari Jones,
Women's Ministry Director**

FBC Family,

I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving and remembered all the things in our lives that we have to be thankful for! God has been so good to us. November was an exciting month for us as a family and for our student ministry. As far as our family is concerned, November 2017 will forever be special to us because it is the month in which we got to move into our house! Many of you know that we bought a home close to the church on Haughn Road and renovated much of the home. We are so grateful to Randy Antrobus and his crew for taking on this project, as well as Paul and Gerda Barr for housing our family for several months. Y'all are such a blessing! We are in our home, and we love it. We are forever grateful to God for this blessing! Many of you have asked about us over the length of the project, and we're thankful for your support and prayers. We also would love for you to be able to see it, and so we have scheduled an OPEN HOUSE on DECEMBER 9th, from 3-5 PM! Please plan to come by for a few minutes, and say hello! We are so thankful for you, Church.

As far as our ministry is concerned — we had our DNOW in November, and it was amazing. We had an incredible weekend with our speaker John Nix, as well as the Justin Putnam Band from South Carolina! It was so cool to see all God did in our midst!! Thank you to everyone who supported this weekend financially and in prayer!!

I hope you're looking forward to Christmas! I know I am!!

**Soli Deo Gloria,
Pastor Mike D'Attoma**

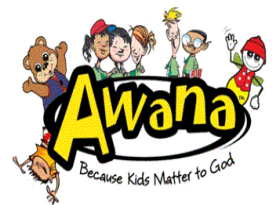
AWANA Calendar of Events

Dec. 6 — Hat Night!

Dec. 13 — Happy Birthday, Jesus!

Dec. 20 — No AWANA! Have a blessed Christmas!

Dec. 27 — No AWANA! Have a Happy New Year!



Notes of Appreciation

Dear First Baptist Church,

During this time we realize how blessed we are to have a wonderful church family. Thank you for the beautiful flowers, all the prayers, hugs, and support.

**Gene Workman,
Brenda, Mike and family**

Men's Corner

The next Men's Fellowship Breakfast at FBC will be on Saturday, December 2nd at 7:30 AM. Richard Bebel will be sharing his testimony. Below is the testimony of Tim Suhayda from the November breakfast.

On a Sunday morning when I was around 5 years old, I, along with my brothers, was made by our mother to go to Sunday school at the Hilltop Lutheran Church. I remember this distinctly because I did not want to go to church. I wanted to stay home with my agnostic father and do whatever it was that he was doing. At the church, I was thrust into a room with a bunch of other 5 year old captives, and we were instructed by a young woman with brunette hair about someone named "God" and about someone named "Jesus" who for some reason I needed to accept into my heart so that I would not go to some place called "Hell." We were told to bow our heads and pray to accept Jesus into our hearts. However, as a child I took this to be literally a physical event, and so a skeptic was born.

I was still made to go to church every Sunday whether I believed anything or not. About the time I turned 8 years old my mother stopped taking us to church for some reason. I was indifferent to spiritual things.

I suspect that after that initial attempt to get me saved was unsuccessful, God decided a little more convincing would be needed to overcome my skepticism. When I was about 13 years old I was in the Boy Scouts. Our troop went on a camping trip to Old Man's Cave in the Hocking Hills of Ohio. A number of us began scaling cliffs. On the cliff there was a ledge that we all needed to traverse. It was quite narrow at a point and 30 feet off of the ground. I lost my grip on the wall and began to fall backward. At that moment I felt a powerful hand on my back push me up against the wall with power and held me there till I recovered my grip. I turned my head to the left to thank the scout behind me, but he was two arms lengths away from me—impossible to reach me. I think the shock of the realization that someone or something unseen had saved my life scared me worse than falling off the cliff. I pondered this event for a while....What unseen hand had saved me and why? Eventually, I came to grips with the reality that there was a spiritual being there that day. And if there was a spiritual being there, there had to be a real Creator of the spiritual being.....God? And if there was a real creator God, then there must be a real Jesus, a real heaven, and a real hell. I became interested in spiritual matters, and a fear of my eternal destiny came on me. The skeptic was dead, but I was dead spiritually in sin.

Years later, I met a "born again" Christian while attending the Ohio Institute of Technology. Randal was optimistic and happy. A picture of Jesus. One couldn't help but like him. He exuded Jesus all the time. But the truth of what he was saying made no sense to me. I thought I was a good Christian because I went to my own church.

Following graduation from OIT, I began my electronics career working for 3M as a copy machine repairman. After a service call at a Baptist church on Karl Road, the pastor there asked if I was a "born again" Christian. He asked if I was saved. So I answered that I went to church. I can't remember what else he said but I do remember being offended and feeling that he

was right, and I was sure I was going to hell.

Not long after the pastor's witness at the Baptist church, I was laid off from my job with 3M. I looked for a job for 9 months. During this time, I began to listen to Christian radio stations. I liked listening to all the great preachers of the day like J. Vernon McGee, Charles Swindoll, John MacArthur, and, my favorite, Dr. Charles Stanley.

Listening to these great men of faith and their constant explanations of the Gospel and real Christian life, the Holy Spirit's conviction of my lost condition began to get through. I was depending upon good works rather than faith alone in the finished work of Jesus Christ at the cross. One evening in December 1983, after listening to Dr. Charles Stanley give a message about "Why Christ Came," he gave an invitation to accept Jesus Christ as my Savior. I submitted to the Holy Spirit's conviction and prayed asking God to forgive my sin of unbelief, and I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior. At that moment, I was transferred from the domain of darkness to the Kingdom of Light at 23 years of age.

**God Bless,
Pastor Dave Berna**

My View From The Back Of The Pew

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

We encounter lost souls every day. It's harder with children, though, isn't it? It is difficult to watch them navigate their world without knowing how very much Jesus loves them.

A few Sundays ago, I spent an entire church service rocking a baby to sleep. He wasn't fussy or hungry and, best of all, there were no bad smells from his diaper. He just wanted to be cuddled and rocked. He held my finger, rubbed my arm and snuggled in under a cozy blanket. The second he heard his mom's voice, though, he sat straight up and smiled the biggest toothless grin. He knew her voice and that he was her boy.

I know there are some children who shrink in fear when their parent arrives home. Others wish for a parent to just come home once in awhile. We minister to kids like this at this church here. We see others who are looking for acceptance from their friends for the hope of love. We have cried with a few over their lost innocence and for the promise of love. The world offers plenty of instant happiness instead of real joy and a whole lot of fake love. We see little ones get dropped off for the "free babysitting" during VBS or AWANA. We know they only hear of Jesus in this place and maybe only feel real affection here.

Christmas is a busy time, but as we were recently reminded: no matter the season, let's do what our church does best—truly loving on the lost. There are plenty of opportunities to help with children of all ages here. Some may be waiting for us to show them the true meaning of Christmas.

**Cindy Tryon,
Preschool Coordinator**

