

First Baptist Church of Peoria

FIRST BAPTIST NEWS

NOVEMBER 28 2017



ADVENT THEME: THE SEASON OF AWAKENING

By Dr. Rodney Kennedy

Advent opens the Christian year. December 3, the first day of Advent, is New Year's Day for Christmas. Our big story about Jesus begins here. Advent is a season of four weeks including four Sundays. The word comes from the Latin *adventus*, which means "coming."

Here at First Baptist Peoria our Advent theme is THE SEASON OF AWAKENING. There are indications that the church in America is asleep at the wheel. We seem to be driving the bus from side to side, barely avoiding collisions and on the precipice of the ditch on each side of the road. The church needs to wake up! Jesus often demands that his disciples be awake, alert, and on guard. St. Paul tells us in Romans 13: "Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers." In Revelation 3 the church at Sardis thinks she is alive but Jesus says she is dead. Then Jesus says, "If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come to you."

Perhaps we have been lulled to sleep by the Gnosticism that afflicts the church. Our form of Gnosticism thinks that the spiritual contrasts with all the things that make life good. Therefore, to be spiritual, the church has told us, is to be anti-body, anti-sex, anti-pleasure. To be spiritual in this sense means to be moralistic but dull and asleep. This kind of thinking, of course, goes against the entire witness of the Bible that God's people have an embodied existence. The church is the "body" of Christ. We are a biological people, and we need to wake up and resist the spiritualization Gnosticism that afflicts the churches.

More likely, we have been thrown out of kilter by the emergence of postmodern philosophy. While almost no one can actually define what postmodernism means, there is some agreement that postmodern philosophy means that there is no truth. We now live in a post-rationalist world which "sometimes retains the form of reasoned argument but actually works on spin and smear" (N. T. Wright). There are only opinions and points of view, and all opinions and points of view now get equal time. In addition, all big stories, known as metanarratives, are power grabs that are riddled with abuse, oppression, and the desire to control people. Postmodernity has destroyed the larger metanarratives (like the Christian faith) that might explain how and why we are in the mess we are in, and the evangelical Christians are leading the parade. There is no salvation left in the Americanism that now passes for Christian faith among so many. There is no redemption, only play; and the play turns out to be a witches' dance on the edge of a volcano as we fail to address the global problems that keep erupting while we play at power politics and winning and losing as if it all were just a game.

This Advent we need an awakening.

Wake up! We are the body of Christ.

Wake up! We are an alternative politics to the secular politics of the left and the right.

Wake up! Jesus is coming!

Contact us:

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2017 ADVENT WORSHIP SERVICES

10:00 A.M. WORSHIP & CHILDREN'S SS
11:00 A.M. FELLOWSHIP TIME
11:15 A.M. ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

DECEMBER 3, 2017, FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

"WAKE UP!"

Mark 13:24-37, 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

What an odd text for people getting ready for Christmas. What's with all this scary language? We can't schedule the loss of the sun and the shaking of the powers of the heavens. Don't you know this is Christmas season? We go from Thanksgiving, a national holiday, to Christmas as if Advent doesn't matter. Maybe the wakeup call from Jesus isn't so crazy after all. After all, if Jesus says, "Wake up," a sleepy church should take notice.

Music: "The Yearning" — Youth Band

Welcome Center: Jean Currie

DECEMBER 10, 2017, SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

"LIVING AS PEOPLE WHO ARE AWAKE"

Mark 1:1-8, 2 Peter 3:8-15, Isaiah 40:1-11

In a culture lulled to sleep, ignorance, and darkness, there is room for a people who are awake in all their senses — a people of God determined to show and tell what it means to be awake, alive, and in the light of truth and justice.

Music: "Let There Be Peace" — Chancel Bells & Chancel Choir
"Glory" — Youth Band

Welcome Center: Dave Stroemer

DECEMBER 17, 2017, THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

"CHRISTMAS GIFTS GALORE!"

Isaiah 61:1-4

This sermon is not for you unless you are having trouble seeing the world clearly and you feel lost and confused. This sermon is not for you unless parts of your life have incapacitated you and kept you from living freely. This sermon is not for you unless you have deep loneliness in your soul and you feel you are cut off from others, and you feel less than fully accepted. This sermon is not for you unless you are tired and numb and indifferent and cynical and resigned and negative, living in a zone of hopelessness. This sermon is not for you unless you are poor, poor in money, poor in spirit, poor in faith, poor in love, poor in joy. This sermon is for you if you would like to wake up and receive the gifts!

Music: "Carol of the Bells" — Chancel Choir
Skit: "Angels Among Us"

Welcome Center: Paul Grove



Retired
Ministers &
Missionaries
Offering
2017

**GENEROUS
CONGREGATIONS**

Many American Baptist ministers and missionaries make financial sacrifices to answer the call to ministry. Many times this leaves them ill-prepared for retirement. In 1977 the American Baptist Convention initiated the RMMO to help these ministers. Around 57% of the offering is used to give every retired minister and missionary, their widowed spouses and their families a "thank-you" check. The remainder of the offering is used for emergency support and financial assistance in crisis situations.

One grateful widow says, "The thank-you check is more than a check; it sends love...thank you for remembering me."

A pastor talking about a recipient said, "It meant a great deal to him...he didn't even talk about the financial amount. He was talking about the idea that he was remembered."

Our church goal for 2017 is \$2,500. Let's be a generous congregation. Let's remember those who have served.

Bernie Drake
Mission Board, RMMO Coordinator

CONVERSATIONS WITH THE BIBLE

You are invited to a conversation about the Bible readings for next Sunday. At 11:15 a.m. on December 3rd, in the Chapel, we will meet for 30 minutes to talk together about the readings of Scripture for Sunday December 10th. The scripture readings for December 10th and 17th are printed here in the newsletter.

Your task is to read the texts and show up for the conversation. I will be your facilitator, and we will share our ideas about the passages that we have read.

Perhaps you would like to ask, "Dr. Kennedy, why are you asking us to do this?"

To which I respond: "Believing as I do in the power and importance of Scripture, I think we need more ways to have conversations about the Scripture. This is one way to make that happen. Also, I believe that the sermon is an act of the church. St. Paul says we preach. As I listen to you talk about passages of Scripture, you will be providing me with material for the sermon I will preach the next Sunday. The sermon will become a congregational experience."

Mark your calendars to join us in conversation at 11:15 a.m. in the chapel on: December 3, 10 and 17, January 21 and 28, and February 4, 11, 18 and 25.

Dr. Rodney Kennedy, Interim Sr. Pastor



CELEBRATING A MILESTONE

By Beryl Fredell



In April of 2006, three or four women got together to start making hats for the names on the “helping tree.” We thought it would be nice to give each child a hat along with whatever else they wanted. The hats are made of either yarn or fleece, and every hat is given to anyone who needs one.

Today we number between 10 and 15 ladies. Some of the ladies heard about us and have joined our group even though they are not members of our church. The more ladies in our group, the more hats we can make.

This year our group (pictured above) celebrated a milestone — we have made 10,029 hats, 277 mittens, 260 scarves, 156 afghans, 99 booties, 40 4-piece “preemie” sets, and 306 baby blankets!

If anyone would like to join our group, we would love to have you. We meet the second Monday of each month here at the church at 11:00 a.m. in the Connections Room. New members are always welcome. We can teach you how to make hats if needed. Yarn and monetary donations are always welcome as well.

FBC CONSTITUTION UPDATE MEETING – JANUARY 7, 2018

FBC members are invited to attend a presentation of proposed changes to our church’s constitution. We will meet on Sunday, January 7, 2018, at 11:15 a.m. in the Chapel. Our Ad Hoc Constitution Committee members will discuss the proposed changes, which include reductions in the minimum sizes of boards and committees and term-length of officers and their duties, which reflect current practices and language. Many of the changes result from a reduction in the size of our congregation over the past several decades. Past moderators have already reviewed and proposed changes, along with the Executive Committee. Digital copies of the original version and the proposed 2018 revisions will be available and can be requested by contacting the church office secretary, Sandy Johansen (ph: 309-682-5491, e-mail: office@fbcpeoria.com). Printed copies of the original constitution and the proposed 2018 constitution will be available in the church office for your review. It is the intent of the Executive Committee to present the revised Constitution for approval at our Annual Meeting on January 28, 2018.

Tom Lacy, Chairman
Ad Hoc Constitution Committee



CLOSING SHOP FOR THE WINTER

By Jan Olson

We seem to squeeze in our fall clean-up just before winter hits — that is, if you count a damp 33 degrees and freezing fingers as pre-winter.

This year, our worker-bees appeared, and our summer foliage slowly disappeared under rakes and shovels as we yanked and stuffed stuff into brown bags that were hoisted into pickups and disappeared. Six-hundred tulip bulbs were dropped into their beds, point side up please, and carefully covered so they can sleep through the winter. The fountain donned its green cover, done for the winter, as are we.

We want to thank our Bradley intern, John Posth for bringing his band of, need I say young, frat brothers (pictured above) to our party. What a cheerful package of energy boosters they were! We hope it becomes a habit!!!

Now we wait for spring, my favorite time of the year, when our grounds will once more change from brown to green, the tulips will bloom, and Easter will remind us that life is eternal.

THE MISSION OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IS TO MINISTER TO OUR CONGREGATION, THE COMMUNITY AND THE WORLD, SO THAT ALL MAY EXPERIENCE THE LOVE AND GRACE OF GOD.

PRAYER CONCERNS

Barb Petroski	Patricia Lang	Rose Kimpling
Ruth Turner	Pam Orrill	Carol Conover
Marvin Olson	Rosemary Walk	Alyssa Russell
Wally Webber	Paul Phillips	Dorothy Cumming
Jay McGee	Daniel Pasquini	Jacquelyn Kellogg
Mary Hinch	Augusta Smith	

Dick Sternberg (Jo Sternberg's husband)
Ted Osborn (Dr. Rodney Osborn's brother)
Stephanie George (Brenda Shay's daughter)

CONDOLENCES

We extend our condolences to Jim and Mary Lou Russell on the death last week of their nephew, David Moody.

CHURCH WOMEN UNITED

Church Women United will have their general meeting on Friday, December 1st, at First Christian Church, 6400 N. University St., Peoria.

FYI...

December 12, 2017 will be the final 2017 issue of The First Baptist News. All articles and calendar items are due to the office by Thursday, December 7th.

The church office will be closed Friday, December 22, 2017 through Monday, January 1, 2018. The office will reopen on Tuesday, January 2, 2018 at 9:00 a.m.

Adult Current Issues Class

Retired 10th Circuit Judge Rick Grawey will return on Sunday, January 14, 2018, to lead us in a discussion of the tough issues immigration raises and possible solutions that we didn't get to during his last visit to FBC. The class will meet in the Chapel at 11:15 a.m.

2018 BUDGET GOAL:

\$362,500

PLEGGED AS OF NOV. 27TH:

\$225,594