

# First Baptist Church of Peoria

## FIRST BAPTIST NEWS

JANUARY 31, 2017



### CREATIONISM: FALSE, UNBIBLICAL, AND DANGEROUS

By: The Reverend Dr. Rodney Kennedy

Find a small coffee shop. Put a group of people around an assortment of tables – a banker, a truck salesman, a baseball player, a preacher, a teacher, an insurance salesman. The animated conversation over black coffees and vanilla lattes is about creationism. This opening gambit has the purpose of providing the background for the way my arguments are going to unfold. Coffee-shop conversations create what passes for argument and truth in America, and I suspect that pulpits and classrooms are slow to accept this notion of populism. In any event, here are some coffee shop arguments. They go better with dark roast Community Coffee sans sugar and cream.

A triad of charges against evolution has been repeated by creationists for so long as to become a mantra – a tired mantra, frayed around the edge with the feel of two o'clock on a hot summer day in Greenwood, Mississippi. The sheer monotony of the charges reminds us of the trump card of the religious demagogue: Repeat charges against the trumped-up enemy often enough and people will believe them. So for the sake of argument let us grant this chimera a moment's life. Let us reach into the murky parallel universe of American fundamentalism with its attendant Creation Museum, Rapture Index, and American flags flying in churches and repeat the mantra: Evolution is false. Evolution is unbiblical. Evolution is responsible for most of what is wrong in the world.

The rhetorical excess of these charges makes it hard not to suspect a triumphalist self-righteousness and doctrinaire callousness on the part of the creationists. After all, the doctrines of creationism are stridently proclaimed with absolute certainty. In reading Ken Ham, I discovered that Ham believes evolution is the cause of abortion, pornography, homosexuals, lawlessness, racism, the loss of prayer in public schools, drugs, sex; and for some reason, sex education is lumped in with all these other demonic forces.

Proving evolution false and unbiblical has not gone very well for creationists. After all, we are a science and technology people at heart. Even the most ardent creationists and intelligent-design scientists admit that they have no theory. This leaves creationists with only one argument: evolution is the cause of all evil. So they put all their rhetorical eggs in the basket of blaming evolution for America's social decay. It's like being given a paper filled with dots with instructions to connect the dots to form an image. No matter how you connect the dots, there's no pattern, no discernible image, no picture.

For my part, I am borrowing the arguments of creationism and turning them on their head. Creationism is false. Creationism is unbiblical. Creationism is dangerous. Rather than simply repeating these charges as if they can stand without data, warrant, backing, or premises, I will provide material in support of my claims.

Creationism is false. From the plethora of available arguments, I offer only two practical observations. Job, one of the most ancient books of the Hebrew Bible, depicts God chastising Job for not being present at creation. This is a startling complication for literalist creationists because they are so field-dependent on what they label as "scientific facts." No human was present at the dawn of creation. There are no facts to back the claim of a six-day creation. Second, there are multiple accounts of creation in the Bible, and not one of them has an inkling of how long creation took. Creationism turns out to be a man-made concoction, a rhetorical flourish designed, when pushed to the limit, to insist that God is so powerful he could have made the world in six days if he so desired. This seems to be the fall-back argument of creationists, and they seem oblivious to the fact that to even make this argument is to admit defeat. Bottom line: There are no reasons to mistrust the science. There are many reasons to mistrust and question the theology of scientists who can't seem to stop showing up in the theological play yard and making religious claims as ridiculous as the scientific claims of creationists. Creationism is false.

*(continued, next page, column 2)*

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## WORSHIP SERVICES

10 A.M. WORSHIP & CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL ■ 11 A.M. FELLOWSHIP TIME

February 5, 2017, fifth Sunday after Epiphany

### “CLASHING BEATITUDES”

Micah 6:1-8 and Matthew 5:1-12

“What is a human being for?” asks Wendell Berry. There are a variety of answers. During Super Bowl Media Day, a boy had fought through the media throng, was face to face with Pete Carroll, and asked if the coach had any advice. “Wherever you want to go, you just keep battling and fighting and hanging onto what you want. If you keep competing, you know you’re going to get what you want.” In his beatitudes Jesus tells us how to live the blessed life. Coach Carroll and thousands of motivational speakers at leadership conferences tell us how to live the successful life. Two ways – two conflicting ways. As a people attempting to follow Jesus, we are a mixture of both these ways. Call it the clashing of beatitudes. Let’s consider the difference between faithfulness and success.

*Additional Lectionary readings: Psalm 15, 1 Corinthians 1:18-31*

**Music:** “We Gather At Your Table, Lord” —Chancel Choir  
“O Bread of Life from Heaven”

Zene Baker, soprano; Mark Grizzard, violin

**Welcome Center:** Bob Brown

February 12, 2017, sixth Sunday after Epiphany

### “YOU ARE SOMETHING!”

1 Corinthians 2:1-12, Matthew 5:13-20

In the movie, *Analyze This*, there’s a line repeated again and again by the two main characters: “You are something!” “You are something!” I want to fill in the blanks of what that something is because you are something. Don’t take this the wrong way because this is not a group therapy session. Pop psychology makes for some really bad preaching, and there’s already too much of that in American pulpits. But as Dr. Ben Sobel says in one particularly colorful bit of dialogue, “This is the time to be happy! Life is too short!” I don’t want you to be messing up your life with hang-ups caused by self-appointed people on power trips in the churches and claiming to speak for God.

*Additional Lectionary readings: Isaiah 58:1-9a, (9b-12); Psalm 112:1-9, (10)*

**Music:** “Eagle’s Wings” —Chancel Choir

**Welcome Center:** Richard Petroski

## BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

Dan and Carolyn Pasquini joyfully announce the birth of their sixth grandchild, Veronica, on Sunday, January 29<sup>th</sup>, in Chicago. Veronica is the daughter of their son, Dr. Reuben Pasquini, and his wife, Dr. Joanne Tong. Dan and Carolyn thank God for Veronica and for such abundant blessings and also thank the ABWM Circle of Friends for their prayers!

## CREATIONISM: (continue from cover)

Creationism is unbiblical. Reading accounts of creation in the Bible convinced me that creation is more doxology than theology. There is an overwhelming sense of praise lifted to the mighty power of God in creating the universe. There is no carefully outlined and systematic theology of creation. It is hard to be patient with disquisitions of religious certainty delivered by persons who have made no discernible effort to study biology, zoology, geology, and astronomy. And yet passionate creationists imagine that science is simply not true. These same theorists would, of course, rush to the cardiologist, at the first signs of heart trouble. When it comes to life or death, they trust the science; when it comes to rhetorical skullduggery, they stick with the claims of creationism and deny the science. Creationism is unbiblical.

Creationism is dangerous. Please permit one lapse into the world of books. Kenneth R. Miller, in his charitable investigation of intelligent design, *Only A Theory: Evolution and the Battle for America’s Soul*, argues that “America’s scientific soul, its deep and long-standing embrace of discovery, exploration, and innovation,” are truly at risk. The persistent attacks on science by creationists are the cutting edge of dangerous arguments that, if accepted by the majority of our citizens, will undercut our status as the leading scientific nation in the world and reduce our advances in science and technology to that of a third-world nation.

Conservative columnist and thinker, Charles Krauthammer, claims that the impulse to embrace intelligent design is foolish. He says, “How ridiculous to make evolution the enemy of God. What could be more elegant, more simple, more brilliant, more economical, more creative, indeed more divine than a planet with millions of life forms, distinct and yet interactive, all ultimately derived from accumulated variations in a single double-stranded molecule, pliable and fecund enough to give us mollusks and mice, Newton and Einstein?”

Evolution is true, and it is a far grander story than anything that multi-media technology and Disney World animatronics can produce at the Creation Museum. What is going on in science labs across America and in our great universities and research laboratories is far more significant than what is going on at the Creation Museum. The scientists are leaning into the future to discover new truth; the creationists are falling back into a mythological past attempting to prop up what is not true, biblical, and downright dangerous.

I can only conclude that the health and future of our world depend upon not dealing in the patently false, unbiblical, and dangerous precepts of creationism.

## ADDRESS CHANGE

Marvin Olson has moved to Grandview Memory Care. His new address is: Grand View Alzheimer’s Special Care Center, 6210 N. University St., Peoria, IL 61614. His wife, Jan Olson, remains at their home on Picture Ridge Road in Peoria.

# February 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><b>2017 1<sup>ST</sup> QUARTER ADULT LEARNING DELAYED, NEW DATES PENDING</b></p> <p>Our first quarter adult Sunday school class will be viewing a new video being produced nationally, called "The No Joke Project." The class has been postponed due to delays in completion of the video. We hope to have the video by March and will provide new dates as soon as possible.</p>			<p><b>1</b></p> <p>5:00PM Higher Grnd Reh 5:30PM Bell Rehearsal 6:15PM Choir Rehearsal 7:00PM Spanish GED</p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p>8:30AM FBC Exercise Class (Chapel) 10:30AM Faith &amp; Doubt (Chapel) 7:30PM Dartball (Fell. Hall)</p>	<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p>8AM Men's Breakfast (Fell. Hall)</p>
<p><b>5</b> <b>FOOD DONATIONS COMMUNION SUN</b></p> <p>9:00AM Music Reh. 10:00AM Worship 11:00AM Fellowship</p> <p><b>PICK UP YOUR SUPER BOWL SUBS</b></p>	<p><b>6</b></p> <p>10AM MUGS2 @ Panera's</p>	<p><b>7</b> 8:30AM FBC Exercise Class (Chapel) 10AM MUGS (Parlor) 7:30PM FBC Dartball (fell.hall)</p>	<p><b>8</b></p> <p>5:00PM Higher Grnd Reh 5:30PM Bell Rehearsal 6:15PM Choir Rehearsal 7:00PM Spanish GED</p>	<p><b>9</b></p> <p>8:30AM FBC Exercise Class (Chapel) 10:30AM Faith &amp; Doubt (Chapel)</p>	<p><b>10</b></p> <p>6:30PM Gourmet Group</p>	<p><b>11</b></p> <p>10:00AM ABW Brunch (Fell. Hall)</p>
<p><b>12</b></p> <p>9:00AM Music Reh. 10:00AM Worship 11:00AM Fellowship</p>	<p><b>13</b></p> <p>10AM MUGS2 @ Panera's 11AM Heart-warming Hats (Conn. Room)</p>	<p><b>14</b></p> <p>8:30AM FBC Exercise Class (Chapel) 10AM MUGS (Parlor) 6:30PM Board Meetings</p>	<p><b>15</b></p> <p>5:00PM Higher Grnd Reh 5:30PM Bell Rehearsal 6:15PM Choir Rehearsal 7:00PM Spanish GED</p>	<p><b>16</b></p> <p>8:30AM FBC Exercise Class (Chapel) 7:30PM Dartball (Fell. Hall)</p>	<p><b>17</b></p>	<p><b>18</b></p> <p>8:00AM Sr. Net Open House &amp; Reg. (Fell. Hall)</p>
<p><b>19</b></p> <p>9:00AM Music Reh. 10:00AM Worship 11:00AM Fellowship 11:15AM Exec. Mtg.</p>	<p><b>20</b></p> <p>10AM MUGS2 @ Panera's</p>	<p><b>21</b></p> <p>8:30AM FBC Exercise Class (Chapel) 10AM MUGS (Library) 12:30PM Circle of Friends (Parlor)</p>	<p><b>22</b></p> <p>5:00PM Higher Grnd Reh 5:30PM Bell Rehearsal 6:15PM Choir Rehearsal 7:00PM Spanish GED</p>	<p><b>23</b></p>	<p><b>24</b></p> <p>6:30PM Dining Out Group at Weaver Ridge in Peoria.</p>	<p><b>25</b></p>
<p><b>26</b></p> <p>9:00AM Music Reh. 10:00AM Worship 11:00AM Fellowship</p>	<p><b>27</b></p> <p>10AM MUGS2 @ Panera's</p>	<p><b>28</b></p> <p>8:30AM FBC Ex. Class (chapel) 10AM MUGS (Parlor) <b>5-7PM Fat Tues. Pancake Dinner</b></p>	<p><b>SAVE THE DATES:</b> Wednesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, Ash Wednesday Service Saturday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, Trollinger's Creation Museum (Fell. Hall) Wednesdays, March 8, 15, 22 &amp; 29, Lenten Dinner Program (Fell. Hall)</p>			



Gathered in God's Word, Scattered to God's World

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**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

Ruth Turner      Happy Dean      Pam Orrill  
Barb Twist      Rose Kimpling      Carol Conover  
Marvin Olson      Jay McGee      Alyssa Russell  
Wally Weber      Rosemary Walk      Dorothy Cumming  
    Dick Sternberg (Jo Sternberg's husband)  
    Elaine Bolen (Paul Grove's sister)  
    Jake Teel (Cornelia & Mark Teel's nephew)

### THANK YOU!!

I want to thank the members and friends of First Baptist Church for their support, words of encouragement, and prayers during the time I served as moderator. I ask for your continued prayers for Wayne Nowlan, moderator, the Search Committee, and the Executive Committee as they serve our church in the new year ahead. May we continue to ask God's guidance as we seek a new Pastor and new ways to work and serve God at First Baptist Church.

God Bless,  
Marti Atwater

### CONDOLENCES

We extend our sympathy to:

Mike & Cheryl Huddle and family on the death of Cheryl's sister, Eileen Green on January 19<sup>th</sup> in Burnsville, Minnesota.

Tim and Sheri Heth and family on the death of Tim's mother, Rita, on Saturday, January 28<sup>th</sup>. No memorial plans are in place yet. Tim and Sheri's new address is 223 E. Audubon Hills Drive, Metamora 61548.

Rachael Schwarzendruber and family on the death of Rachael's husband, John Schwarzendruber, on January 23<sup>rd</sup> in Austin, Texas.

Bob & Joan Trotter and family on the death of Joan's brother on January 24<sup>th</sup> in Fishers, Indiana.