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JUNE 2022



### Roll Down The Window And Let The Wind Blow Back Your Hair

Hello Church,

As you are reading this, the Collins family is on the road. When I accepted the call to come and serve at First Baptist, doing so required that I give up a month of my sabbatical. That lost month was put into my FBC contract to be given after three years. Can you believe it's been over three years already? Back in 2018, I had no idea how much this break would be needed. Really none of us knew the stress and pain that Covid would bring into the world. I am incredibly grateful to have this break and am looking forward to spending time with the family and returning refreshed.

On the morning of our trip, we realized that we were finally *on the road again*, which is good because *I just can't wait to get on the road again*. A couple hours into the trip, Casey asked where we were stopping. I reminded her that *life is a highway*, and, if possible, *I want to ride it all-night long*. She insisted that the kids just can't handle an all night trip. So we headed to Omaha, Nebraska, for one night, and then on to Estes Park and the Rocky Mountains.

After a few weeks there, we're traveling to Badlands National Park for a week and then we'll make the trek back home to Peoria. I am beyond excited for this trip. You might be wondering, how did you decide to go there? Well, I simply said, "*Baby, what do you say we just get lost, leave this one horse town like two rebels without a cause?*" Casey loved this idea and suggested that we flip a coin, saying "*heads - Carolina, tails - California, somewhere greener, somewhere warmer.*"

But I'm not big on warmer, not really a beach person honestly, so I suggested the mountains. Thankfully she agreed! At first we were going to *get our kicks on Route 66*, you know, because *it winds from Chicago to L.A., more than two thousand miles all the way*. But honestly, that is just too far in the wrong direction. Anyways we will be sure to share plenty of pictures. Please say a prayer for us as we travel with the kids and our dog across the country. **Lord have mercy!!**

I have no doubt that First Baptist is going to be in great hands. Rev Daniel Siems will be preaching on the first two Sundays of June, and our own Rev. Cheri Grizzard will preach the following three Sundays. The Deacons will be looking in on you, and we'll be back before you can say "*Cadillac, BlackJack.*"

Be safe my friends and stay rooted in God's love.

Serving Together,

Dr. Rob Collins  
Senior Pastor

P.S. Many thanks to my close, personal, long-time best friends who all provided inspiration for this newsletter article: Willie, Tom, Jo Dee Messina, Brooks and Dunn, Nat King Cole, Rascal Flatts, and the Boss. Thanks, friends, you're the best!

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.

## Nutrition & Healthy Eating

Eating habits, healthy or unhealthy, start to develop at a young age. Unfortunately in the busy world we live in, sometimes convenience takes precedence over nutritional value. Learning to cook in a healthy way is a skill we all benefit from, especially our children. When a child leaves the home, for example, to college or first apartment, making themselves a meal can be a challenge. An unhealthy diet at a young age can lead to a lifetime of bad habits, obesity and a variety of health ailments.

One positive outcome of being in lockdown is people started to cook at home again. This led to teaching their children to cook and learning/experimenting with new recipes. Remember when everyone was making bread and you could not find yeast or flour in the grocery store? Let's continue this family-friendly activity. Cooking at home saves money and provides valuable family time. Online cooking lessons on YouTube have become a popular venue for learning these skills. In-person lessons are starting to happen again with the benefit of asking questions at the time. For more information on nutrition and healthy eating, visit **Healthy People 2030** at <https://health.gov>.

The Illinois Nutrition Education Program is offering a series of kid-friendly cooking classes for children ages 8-13 in June and July.

July 18th-22nd, 2022  
1PM-3PM  
University of Illinois Extension  
Tazewell County Office  
1505 Valle Vista Blvd  
Pekin, IL 61554

Contact Us:

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Dr. Joshua Russell, Organist	(319) 400-8920	joshua@joshuarussellpianist.com
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Peoria  
friendship  
house  
of Christian Service

presents

# Concert for the City

Featuring **Jordan Feliz**  
and  
**Victor Solomon**  
July 2, 2022  
Dozer Park, Peoria, IL

Tickets and additional  
information available at  
mlib.com/peoria/events/concerts

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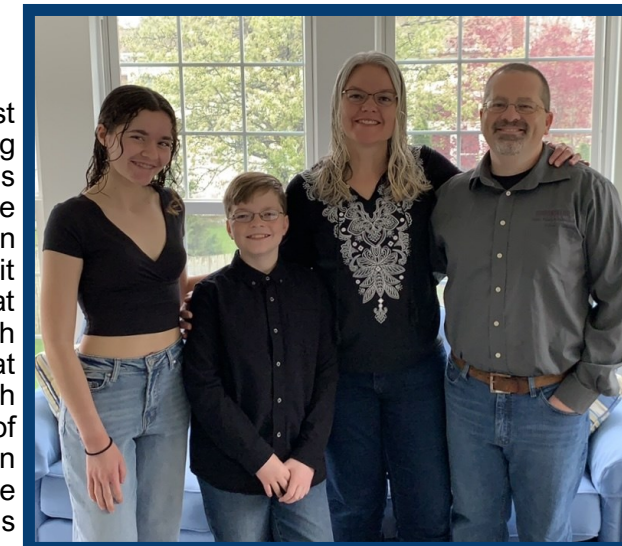


**First Baptist has tickets for this wonderful concert! They are first come, first serve. Contact the church to request your tickets!**

**The Men's group has been asked to provide concession help for the concert. Please contact Dick Gillaspie to sign up!**

## MEET THE POTTS FAMILY!

(Barb Drake)



Greg, Helen, Renee and Bryan Potts visited First Baptist Church because they were looking for “an affirming church” - one that welcomed people of all sexual orientations to church life and ministry. “To exclude people was the opposite of how Jesus lived,” says Helen. They’d given up on the Methodist church they had been attending because it lacked that welcoming spirit and visited several others that didn’t make them happy. Hearing a podcast interview with Pastor Rob Collins made them think First Baptist could be that kind of church. It was – and more. Not only was its approach to gender comforting, but they appreciated “the kindness of everyone in the church,” says Greg. “Everyone has been extremely welcoming,” says Helen. The size is right, the preaching is good and “the kids like it. We knew the kids needed to be back in church.” And so, in April, we happily welcomed the four of them as new members. Yes, quite a story, and there’s more to it.

Greg grew up in the small town of Mexico, Missouri; went to the University of Missouri, graduating with a degree in chemical engineering; and came to Peoria in 1999 to work at Caterpillar as an engineer specializing in rubber parts. Two years later, Cat moved him back to Missouri to work at its plant in Columbia. It was a fortunate move -- because Helen was there. Born in Guam, she’d traveled around the world as a child because her dad was in the Air Force. But she landed in Columbia, where she too attended the University of Missouri, majoring in communication science disorders. Both were in the university’s marching band – she played the saxophone; he played the trumpet – but they never met!! It took a friend to introduce them and decisions to attend the same church to move the relationship forward. They enjoyed its new members class, where they got free pizza, then started going out for burgers and beer. “It was talking theology over beer that made us get to know each other better,” Helen says. They married in 2004 and moved to Peoria in 2005 – another Cat transfer.

Having earned a master’s degree in speech pathology from Indiana University, Helen went on to work as a speech pathologist at Stark School in Pekin. But when the children were born, she stayed home to raise them. Not that she lacks for things to do. She’s taught English as a second language to adults and volunteered with St. Jude. Every spring she runs a big plant sale; last year she sold about 800 plants she started from seeds or diverted from perennials. Unfortunately for our members, most are gone by now – but there’s always next year. She says she doesn’t know what the next big thing will be, “but I will not be bored.” Oh, yes, she also makes quilts.

Nor will Greg be idle. Woodworking is his main hobby; he specializes in making jewelry boxes and picture frames, which he gives as gifts. He also makes furniture. Greg also enjoys tennis, pinball, and being a father when he’s not working in wood or at Cat.

Renee, 15, is a sophomore at Washington High School, where she plays the piano and flute in the band. The flute is “her first love, her passion in music,” says Helen. She also loves to dance and is a member of the school dance team, the Pantherettes. She takes part in a lot of other school activities, loves to read, is learning to drive, and aspires to be a band director.

Bryan, 12, is a seventh grader at Central Intermediate School in Washington. He runs cross-country for the school team, loves playing football with friends and enjoys playing basketball with the Washington Park District. But “video games are his passion,” says Helen. He loves animals, especially his two dogs. And he plays the baritone saxophone. That’s him on the big baritone sax in the church youth band; that’s Renee on the flute.

Happy days now, yes, but in late 2013 there was a real shocker. The family returned home from church on the morning of November 17 to discover that a tornado had hit Washington, and their home was part of its wreckage. They drove to the top of a hill, looked down and saw that their house had been destroyed. “We couldn’t even tell what was there; debris was all over the road,” says Helen. They couldn’t drive further, so they walked through the debris, seven-year-old Renee in her dressy heels and year-old Bryan on his dad’s shoulders. The family had to check out the house because their dog was in a crate upstairs -- but, no, he wasn’t. And then a good thing happened. Some people who lived in the last house on the street – people they’d not met – walked by and asked if they could help. It was Bob and Lynelle Ryan. Helen and Greg said yes, trusted their children with these strangers, and went off searching for their dog. Then the day got luckier; they found the dog, the Ryans took the kids home and fed them; and that neighborly acquaintance continues to this day. The Potts family rebuilt on the same lot. And now the families that met on that terrible morning meet Sundays in the same church!

### ABM/GRR GATHERING

This year’s theme is “Ambassadors for Christ”, 2 Corinthians 5, verse 20. The American Baptist Men of the Great Rivers Region come together each year for a weekend of worship, spiritual growth, fellowship, food, and activities. First Baptist Church of Peoria will be hosting the 2022 gathering beginning on Friday, August 5. Registration will start at 4:00 p.m. followed by dinner around 6:00 p.m. Saturday morning will begin with breakfast at 8:00 a.m. The worship session will finish around noon. Volunteers will be needed to help as plans are finalized.

Please contact Dick Gillaspie with any questions and learn how you can be part of this enlightening experience!



Our Christian brothers and sisters in Ukraine, Hungary, Romania, and Poland are fervently working to help people escape the war in Ukraine. If you would like to support the efforts to help the refugees, please give to your church and place One Great Hour of Sharing – Ukraine in the memo. Your church can send it to the GRR on the monthly mission report. There will be no overhead fees, and all will go directly to help these refugees. Also, please remember to keep the Ukrainian people and our global servants in your prayers.

### PRAYER CONCERNS:

Judy Ryan	Debbie McGlothlen
Garland Criswell	Jerry Edwards
Paula Austin	Jo Sternberg
Alyssa Russell	Kathy Paradise
Sally Heathcoat	Bonna Zimmerman
Sally Maubach’s Mother	Collins Family
Butch and Karen Vickerman	
Susan Buxton (Bobby Courtney’s sister)	
Anna Burgess (Bobby’s sister)	

Blanket Sunday will be held every week during June. A display will be set up in Fellowship Hall. Every blanket is \$10, and you may donate for as many as you like. Church World Service goes all over the world when bad things happen. **Let’s cover the map!!**



Thanks in advance – ABW!