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DECEMBER 2023



Wrapping Up the Christmas Season

The Christmas season has already been wonderful! "Christmas at First Baptist," our annual Christmas concert, was a special and beautiful event. Our fearless leader in all things music, Dr. Mark Grizzard, crafted a night of entertaining and inspiring musical numbers. If you weren't able to make it to the show, be sure to check online for the broadcasted service.

Our advent worship series has been challenging for me, and I hope for all of you as well. Striving to be "light for all people" is no small task, but it is the calling that God has placed before us. So let's each of us keep going, keep serving, keep loving others, and keep looking after our neighbors!

While you are wrapping gifts this year and planning out your holiday travels, please be praying for our church. We have much to be thankful for. There are loads of new faces coming to see what is happening at First Baptist Church of Peoria. Many of them show up to see what a progressive, welcoming, Baptist Church even looks like. There are children running through the halls and groups meeting for food and games and fellowship and discipleship. What a blessing it is to be part of this community. So as you are making your holiday plans, pray that our church will keep serving others and blessing the community around us with light and hope.

This is the season where kids are making lists for Santa. Now our church doesn't have an official letter out to Santa (that I know of), but if you're looking for ways to bless the church in this season, there are lots of places that you can do it.

You can volunteer time to serve on a committee or board, or with a particular ministry. You can take a step out of your comfort zone and visit or join a group that you have never been a part of before. Maybe come to choir, or show up for the men's breakfast or the American Baptist women's gathering.

You can pray for our church and our church leaders and staff and volunteers every day.

You can also support the church financially. You could help the church meet its end of year budgeting for 2023 with a one time gift. This allows us to use less of our invested reserves and save them for future ministry. Or, you can start looking into 2024 for events, ministries, and missions that you want to help sponsor and support.

Whatever it is, and wherever you feel called, I encourage you to listen for the voice of God and follow in the path of Jesus Christ, our Lord. I look forward to celebrating Christmas with all of you.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,

Dr. Rob Collins
Senior Pastor

Contact Us:

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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.

Parish Nurse Moment - Do depression rates rise during the holidays?

Yes, patterns of increased rates of depression during the holidays have been documented by doctors and mental health professionals for years. The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) found that 64% of people living with a mental illness reported that their conditions worsened around the holidays.

Why does this happen? When the holidays come around, they bring a variety of events, social interactions and challenges. Sometimes the resulting stress has to do with the pressure of how many responsibilities someone has. In other cases, it can be tied to complicated memories of the past or anxiety about family gatherings.

But aside from the holidays, many people experience something called Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) with a seasonal pattern (also known as seasonal affective disorder). Seasonal affective disorder is clinical depression that tends to appear in the late fall and can last until early spring. It's known to be linked with changes in light during the wintertime, so it's more common in northern climates. The limited exposure to natural light can impact our body's rhythms and neurochemical balance. It can change your perspective when the days seem shorter, darkness lasts longer, and cold weather keeps us cooped up indoors.

PRAYER CONCERNS:

- Judy Ryan
- Garland Criswell
- Jerry Edwards
- Alyssa Russell
- Butch and Karen Vickerman
- John Crawford
- Betty Hart
- Char Austin
- Robert Jackson
- Bob Atwater
- Sharon Polakow
- Thelma Hopwood
- Bob Hinch
- June Fredell

Research shows that clinical depression with a seasonal pattern impacts as much as 6% of the population. And it's also common for people who don't normally struggle with depression to experience it temporarily during the winter months.

Listen with sympathy.

You don't have to understand how someone is feeling to have respect for it. Being there to let someone express their feelings in a safe environment can be very impactful for someone going through depression. Try to engage by responding with supportive statements or asking follow-up questions. Avoid telling them to cheer up or saying "Well, things could be worse." These kinds of remarks can invalidate and minimize the other person's feelings, which might make them regret opening up. To learn more about what to say and what not to say to someone who is struggling, [Make It OK.org](http://MakeItOK.org) has some great resources. (Information by **HealthPartners**, Bloomington, MN)

Christmas Eve Service

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
OF PEORIA

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24 AT 5PM

MARK YOUR CALENDAR ●●●●

JANUARY
28

FBC PEO

ANNUAL MEETING

Join us for our annual meeting on January 28th, following the Sunday worship service. We will meet in the fellowship hall, talk about our goals for the new year, and vote on the 2024 budget.

JANUARY 28 www.fbcpeoria.org 309-682-5491

DIRECTOR OF KIDS CHURCH AND KIDS CHOIR

We are excited to announce that Leigh Grizzard's role at FBC Peoria is expanding!

This past summer Leigh Grizzard, our dedicated Handbell Director extraordinaire, led a Kids Choir to beautiful success. This was, in many ways, a pilot program to measure interest from our families. Afterward I spoke with her about continuing this ministry and incorporating our vision of Sunday morning Kids Worship into a larger role for her at FBC Peoria. She expressed a calling to that ministry, and our Resident Ministry Team has taken it from there.

Leigh brings with her tons of experience leading children's music ministry at other churches, along with degrees in music and *a heart called to serve*. Leigh will be our new Director of Kids Worship and Choir at FBC Peoria. In this role she will lead a Kids Choir four times per year and will help us in establishing and running a kids worship service on Sunday mornings. So be on the lookout for exciting plans to come in 2024!

We are still working on establishing a part-time minister to serve our youth and young adults. That goal is still in front of us, and our leadership will keep listening for God's guidance in this area. Thank you Church for being supporters of this endeavor, and may God continue to bless our ministry, our kids, and congregation at First Baptist Church of Peoria. Pastor Rob Collins

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Greetings from the Treasurer - I trust you found that your recent giving statements were in alignment with your records. Please reach out to me through the church office if you have questions. Thank you for your faithful giving.

Here's a quick update on our overall financial position through October. Receipts, both pledge and plate, have been pretty solid for the year - that's good news. "Jumping In" response has been moderate but certainly appreciated - around \$13,000 in total (*there's still time to "jump in"*). You will recall at the annual meeting, we approved the budget with an \$87,600 gap on the receipt side. I'm expecting the gap to be less than that but still fairly significant - conservatively I'm thinking \$65,000 - \$70,000. The Boards have been doing their best to manage expenses. Regardless on where it ends up, I've been working with the FRUT committee to identify which funds we will target to balance the budget. While not the picture we want to see and one we cannot continue to run at in future years, it should not be unexpected. I'm encouraged by many things happening in the church that are putting us on a better course going forward. I'm excited about that!

Pledge Campaign Update - We have received 68 pledge cards to date totaling \$265,300 with 40 increased or new pledges in that count. Last year we received 74 pledges totaling \$260,000 and had projected another 12 givers that typically had pledged regularly that put us at \$298,000 going into 2023. Plate giving is then factored in separately. I'm encouraged by the increases some have been able to make; we still have the month of December for additional pledges to come in. The boards are starting respective 2024 budgeting efforts; the pledge process is a key input to what will be available to support the budget. Thank you again for your collective involvement in church life, your financial support, and your prayers..

In Christ,
Doug Miller, Treasurer

Pickleball - what is it? Are you interested?

Pickleball is a racket or paddle sport in which two (singles) or four (doubles) players hit a perforated, hollow plastic ball with paddles over a net until one side is unable to return the ball or commits an infraction. It resembles tennis and table tennis, but has its own set of rules and some unique terms like "kitchen and pickled", ATP, DUPR and more.

You may have noticed the blue, temporary striping in fellowship hall; that is the outline of the court and where we would play. Contact the church office if you have an interest in learning more; let us know, along with your level of experience (zero, little, a lot, ?). At this time, we have not determined what days/times this might be available. In the beginning, we are envisioning Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:45ish to 11:30 and possibly one evening (day and time to be determined, but not Wednesdays). Level of interest will drive initial organization and available times. Doug Miller