

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

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And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:18

The month of May is the time when we celebrate graduations. Congratulations to all those who are celebrating the achievement of a diploma of one kind or another. As the announcements arrive we will see that we are invited to something called “commencement.” It is a strange word when you think about it. To “commence” means basically to get going. I would guess that there are many who think of graduation as an ending. All those years, all that work, all those papers, all that “reading, writing, and arithmetic” are over. Yet, we call the ceremony, celebrating the end, commencement.

I looked up the word “graduate” just out of curiosity to see if it had anything else to add besides what I already knew. Of course! To “graduate” also means “to change gradually or by degrees.”

This definition is a good description of what happens in the spring time. Little by little – gradually or by degrees – everything starts to change. Bare trees start to get that hint of green and then, almost overnight, leaves start to appear. The plum trees produce huge buds, and then burst into bloom. It’s true about the grass, and spring flowers. Spring is the time nature graduates and commences.

In the passage above, Paul tells us that we are all in the process of graduating and commencing. He tells us that we are transforming from one degree of glory to another. It doesn’t happen all of a sudden but “gradually and by degrees.” The deeper our faith walk grows, the closer our relationship with Jesus becomes, we change into his likeness. But, that is not the end all. No! It propels us into the world, it motivates us to commence, to get going.

As you receive those announcements, as you behold the changing season of Spring, remember that you are also in the never ending process of graduating and commencing as the Spirit transforms you into the image of Christ, and from one degree of glory to another.

Happy Spring!

Pastor Kip



Church Family News

On April 21, 2009, Pamela Thompson received an award for her three years of volunteer service with the Visiting Nurse Association. The awards dinner was at the Field Club. She also volunteers at Bergen-Mercy and Immanuel Hospitals and several other places. Congratulations, Pam!

Our Graduating Seniors

- ◆ **Adam Cleveland**, son of John and Jennifer Cleveland graduates from North High School on May 16 and on June 16 will go to boot camp/training for Army National Guard.
- ◆ **Melanie Musick**, daughter of Jim and Karla Musick graduates from Blair High School on May 10. Future plans are to attend Metro Community College
- ◆ **Ethan Lantz**, son of Sue Endicott, will graduate May 17 from South High School and will attend Metro-Tech to major in computer technology.



Our thoughts and prayers are extended to Elmer Sinner on the recent death of his daughter, Sandy Sinner. There was a memorial service for Sandy in Lincoln,

NE on April 25.

Upcoming Events

- **May 8 and 9th:** Men's Group Outing
- **May 9th:** Neighbors United Community Concert at 1st Lutheran Church: 5:00pm.
- **May 10:** Kid's participate in worship service
- **May 13:** Last Electric Wednesdays events until fall.
- **May 17:** The Rebecca-Ruth Circle Bake Sale.
- **May 23:** Neighbors United Picnic for the feeding program.

A Shower of Blessings

"American Baptists' White Cross has helped thousands since World War II" For many years, American Baptist's "Helping Hands" has been reaching out to people in need. During WWI, many church women assisted the American Red Cross by providing surgical dressings, bandages, and other medical supplies for U.S. service personnel. In 1919, following the end of the war, two American Baptist women from Cleveland, Ohio organized the "White Cross Service League," channeling the war effort into support for Baptist mission.

White Cross has been embraced by local churches throughout the United States. Congregations are eager to fill specific requests from mission workers. Through White Cross gifts, church members provide urgently-needed supplies that cannot be purchased with limited mission budgets.

Through the years, American Baptist women have given leadership in this ministry, which now provides some \$800,000 annually in mission support. And entire congregations often work together to fill White Cross requests.

The importance of White Cross is undiminished today, and the need for both funds and practical items is greater than ever. American Baptists are generous and caring people with a true heart for mission. White Cross needs your helping hands!

Jan Walden, president of the Rebecca-Ruth Circle of FBC indicates this circle is a representative of American Baptist Women's Ministries and is associated with the Omahaland Association of American Baptist Women. Once a year Omahaland churches are assigned a White Cross quota to support American Baptist Missions Nationally and Internationally. First Baptist's quota for 2008-2009 was as follows: National Support: Murrow Indian Children's Home in Muskogee, OK. The following items were supplied and transported by a caravan to Muskogee: 1 book for a teenager; 5 spiral notebooks; 1 pair jeans (size 8-10); 1 shirt (size 12-14) 3 pkgs. Bath soap; 1 book of postage stamps; 2 pairs mittens; and 2 scarves. This was in October. The International quota for First Baptist was as follows: 15 roller bandages for Congo hospitals; 1 baby blanket and 1 infant gown for the Philippines; and \$220.00 for our mission in El Salvador (the circle will raise this money from the bake sale on May 17). In addition to the White Cross quota, the circle chose a missionary from those assigned to Nebraska to support with prayer and financial support. This year the circle chose Susan Linderman, missionary in Bulgaria.

The circle also supports First Baptist's contribution for Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child.

And lastly, the circle saves Box Tops for Education and Campbell's soup labels for Hopi Mission School in Kykotsmovi, AZ. The Mission school redeems the box tops and soup labels for financial support for their school. The circle encourages all FBC members and friends to support the Mission School by saving box tops and soup labels. The box tops and soup labels are sent to the Mission once a year in June.

Pam Kulisek, Ministry Team Leader

Local and World Missions

Youth News

The youth have had a good month. They prepared and served a continental breakfast on Easter, and have volunteered at the Qwest Center. Many have decided to attend camp this summer at the Moses Merrill Camp and Conference Center.

One volunteer project they want to get involved in is helping with various projects around homes where extra help is needed. If you have some yard work or other minor work done around your home, please contact either Joe Christensen or Natalie Sariscsany.



Several of our men will be going out to Moses Merrill Camp and Conference Center to do some cleaning and repair

work on the First Baptist's cabin.

Monetary donations are needed to help fund the purchase of supplies to make these repairs and for cleaning. If you would care to donate to this project, make your check out to First Baptist Church and mark it camp cleaning. Place your check in the offering plate

Around God's House

One joy found in maintaining an old building is that there is no end of things to do. Since the last Columns article, the property team has: removed the old dish washer system and defunct boiler from the building, placed rods and shelves in the donation room, patched, primed and painted the north kitchen wall, painted and carpeted the entry room to the baptistery, primed and painted water damage in the organ loft, moved 50+ cans of paint from the tunnel to the basement, and replaced water damaged ceiling in the women's bathroom by the kitchen.

MANY thanks to Ben Martinez, Gary & Erica Gladwell, Glen Grape and Phyllis Porter.

Larry Graves, Team Leader

Ministry Property and Physical Resources



HEY GUYS!!

We are going fishing!

Friday, May 8th and

Saturday, May 9th

at Summit Lake near Tecumseh, NE.

If you like to tent camp, meet at the church on Friday at 6:00pm

You will need to bring your own tent and your own food.

All others will leave at 6:30am on Saturday. Bring your son, grandson, nephew, etc. for a great time of bonding.

Rebecca-Ruth Bake Sale

Sunday, May 17

COOKS: Dust off your recipes and get out the baking pans. It's time to bake-up a storm to help the Rebecca-Ruth Circle meet its White Cross quota for mission work in El Salvador.

Bring your baked items to the church parlor on May 17 so that the items can be priced. Small items sell the best ie. cupcakes, brownies, Rice Krispy treats, cookies, etc.



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FORWARD IN FAITH...
EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT



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Remembering Our Shut-Ins

In Prayer

- ◆ Lorraine Olson, homebound.
- ◆ Ella Faulkner, homebound.
- ◆ Pat Buie at Millard Manor.
- ◆ Beverly Tompkins at St. Joseph Tower.
- ◆ Violet Schoening at Fox Run Assisted Living.
- ◆ Vincent and Linda Buxton at Millard Manor.
- ◆ Nancy Clatterbuck at Sunridge Village.
- ◆ Jim and Vida Crosby at home.

HAVE YOU VOTED YET?

DO NOT miss your chance to vote on the new colors for the dining room. The ballot must have your name, one number, and one letter on it. VOTING ENDS MAY 17TH !!

The ballot box is on a table in the parlor.

Any questions? See Larry Graves



Rob and Mary Stenzel are the proud parents of a new daughter, Molly Ann Laota who arrived on Monday, April 27. Molly weighed 4lbs, 7oz. She joins older brothers, Noah and John.

CONGRATULATIONS !