



The Way

December 2014

NEWSLETTER OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF HOMESTEAD, FL

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Anticipation. It is the act of looking forward. Normally, we anticipate something to which we look forward greatly. Like Christmas! More than likely, you can remember what those days before Christmas were like as a child. You anticipated the arrival of Christmas morning. You anticipated finding out what was under the tree. You anticipated days off from school, the yummy food, visits to see family, ugly sweaters, repeated carols, egg nog, cantatas, and more.

Have you ever had something you truly anticipated? Have you ever anticipated something so fervently it overwhelmed your thoughts and emotions? Any mother understands anticipation. After nine months of carrying each of our four children, Joy greatly anticipated the day she would hold that new baby girl or boy. As I write this article, I am anticipating taking vacation next week, during which time I will travel to North Carolina and pick up my doctoral degree. I anticipate being home for Christmas this year. I anticipate the day our new building will be complete and in use. I anticipate new min-

istries soon to begin at FBCH.

Anticipation can be a wonderful and yet taxing thing. There is another thing I believe every believer should anticipate: the completion of the Great Commission. Simply put, Jesus said we are to "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20). You have heard me say that "all nations" in Matthew 28:19 is "panta ta ethne" in the Greek. This literally means "all peoples" or people

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24

CHRISTMAS EVE
CANDLE LIGHT SERVICE
7:00 PM

groups. We are to take the gospel to every single people group. What is a people group? A people group is a group of people usually of the same ethnicity, from the same region, with the same culture, speaking the same language, practicing the same traditions, and sharing the same values. And there can be more than one people group in a single nation.

God has given us the job of making sure the gospel reaches every people group on the planet. This is the most important endeavor in the history of mankind. No greater venture has ever been attempted. And God has given this task to YOU and to ME! It was given two thousand years ago, and yet, there is work to be done. We believe there are 11,234 people groups in the world. Of those, 6,576 are considered “unreached,” meaning less than two percent of the population would claim to be “born again.” There are 3,027 people groups classified as “unengaged.” That means we cannot find and are not aware of a single missionary, missions agency or church of any kind currently engaging them for the purpose of making the gospel known.

There is a reason why there are still so many unreached, unengaged people groups (UUPG’s). It’s hard. Unbelievably hard. Most of these people groups are in hard to reach places. Some of them have their own language and dialect. In many cases, there are governmental laws forbidding evangelization. Often, those who would bring the gospel to them must face the prospect of persecution,

even death. Any missionary who would accept the challenge of bringing the gospel to an UUPG must be willing to forsake everything, prepare theologically, learn a rare language, translate the Scriptures, and accept severe risk just to make contact, knowing even then, death may be their imminent reward for all of the above. No wonder the number of UUPG’s is still so high!

With that in mind, remember what Jesus said in Matthew 24:14. “This good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed in all the world as a testimony to all nations. And then the end will come.” For years, it was believed this meant the gospel would arrive in every nation on the map, setting the stage for Christ’s return. I would point out, however, the phrase “to all nations” is the exact same phrase Jesus used in the Great Commission when He said we were to make disciples of all people groups. Thus, when Jesus spoke of the end times, He did not predict the gospel’s *arrival* in every country, but the gospel’s *presence* among every one of the world’s people groups. And if I understand Scripture correctly, that means we must bring that number of unreached, unengaged people groups from 3,027 to zero.

When I consider the number of Southern Baptists, when I consider the resources with which God has blessed us, when I consider that God is at work in other denominations and missions boards in other nations, I have great anticipation. I have anticipation because I truly believe we can reach this goal in our lifetimes. I see the church today as a

horse making the final turn of the last race of the Triple Crown. After two thousand years, victory could very well be in sight. How could that not excite us?

At this point, let me share some good news. Just two years ago, the number of unengaged people groups was 3,133. That means right now there are just over 100 new people groups we can identify where the gospel is being preached. These are places where—just two years ago—the gospel had not arrived. Furthermore, we should be amazed at the fruit we are seeing overseas. Our SBC missionaries personally presented the gospel last year 1,747,631 times. This led to 190,957 who confessed Jesus as Lord and followed him in believer’s baptism. About forty percent of all SBC baptisms are happening outside of the United States. There were 13,824 new churches formed. (To put that in perspective, there are 45,000 churches in the entire Southern Baptist Convention.) God is truly moving in a mighty way.

On the flip side, if we *only* engage fifty new people groups per year with the gospel, it will take us another *six decades* to reach this milestone. I don’t believe we should be satisfied with that!

Every follower of Christ should be committed to doing their part. What roles shall we play? As I said last Sunday, we are to pray, give, send, and go. All are called to pray. Most are able to give. Most will be called to send. Some will be called to go. I am encouraged to know there is no shortage of missionary candidates will-

ing to be sent, in spite of the many difficulties mentioned above. If anything, potential candidates are being turned away. Our missionary force has been reduced from around 5,400 to the current level of 4,900. Why? Reduced funding. Obviously, it cost a lot of money to send just a single missionary. Missionaries must not only be sent. They need medical care. They have transportation expenses. They need supplies. They go to language school. If they have children, there are educational expenses. That is where we come in.

For FBCH, the primary way we accomplish the “give” part of our mandate is the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. Our goal as a church is \$31,500. I realize this is a challenging goal for a church our size. And yet, it is comparable to recent LMCO offerings we have received.

Every penny of the LMCO goes abroad. On the other hand, when you give a single dollar in tithes to FBCH, eight pennies go to the cooperative program. Then about four pennies make it to the Southern Baptist Convention. They send two pennies to the International Mission Board. So when you give to the general budget, two pennies per dollar get to the ends of the earth. When you give to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, one hundred pennies per dollar get to the ends of the earth. If you want to make the biggest impact for the Great Commission by your giving, the LMCO is the way to do it.

I truly believe the Interna-

tional Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention is the best means of reaching the people groups. Sometimes experts disagree on what, exactly constitutes a people group, which people groups we should recognize and how many people groups there are. That is a worthy discussion, but it is beside the point. Jesus has not returned, thus the task is not yet finished. We must not stop. We must not rest on yesterday’s accomplishments. We must not be content to preach the gospel at home. We must not stop with the low hanging fruit. We must pray, give, send, and go until the name of Jesus is worshiped by believers from every single one of the 11,234 people groups in the world. Why? Because Jesus is worthy.

I know it will happen because Jesus said it will happen. And maybe I’m a bit selfish for wanting this, but I don’t want to go to glory until the task is finished. I want to see it happen in my lifetime, with my own eyes. And I want to be able to say I did my part.

Let me encourage you to once again take the “Lottie Moon Challenge.” Make sure you give more to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering than you do spending on presents. In fact, I challenge you to account for *all* of your Christmas spending, including travel, meals, etc. and determine that your LMCO gift will be larger. The truth is, if we can afford to spend so much money on ourselves in celebrating the Savior’s birth, we can certainly afford to give the one gift that would honor *Jesus* the most: Making it

possible for someone to hear His name for the very first time.

As we celebrate this Christmas season, let me inform you of some things that will be taking place. First, on December 7, I will begin a new sermon series on the Gospel of Luke. I have never preached through this book and I’m excited to do so. By starting Sunday, I’ll be able to cover the first two chapters detailing Christ’s birth during the month of December.

Our Sanctuary Choir will kick things off this Friday, December 5, with their presentation of “Unspeakable Joy.” It will be presented again on December 7, both times at 7:00 pm. Our children take over the following Sunday with “An Unplugged Christmas” on Sunday night, December 14, at 6:30 pm. There will be a Christmas Eve service with candlelight communion on December 24. I’m excited about the fact our hand bell choir will be presenting special music for this service as well. (Didn’t they do great at Thanksgiving?) Don’t miss any of these opportunities and be sure to bring someone with you!

Once again, thank you for the privilege of being your pastor.

Pastor Howard



Happy Birthday!

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|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 12/01 - Oswaldo Barrera | 12/08 - Gabrielle Demosthene | 12/16 - Felicia Rogers | 12/23 - Stephen Shaffner |
| 12/01 - James Glass | 12/09 - Donna Portal | 12/16 - Mary Wager | 12/23 - Susan Young |
| 12/01 - Katie Johnson | 12/09 - Jason Portal | 12/17 - Tonya Ebersole | 12/24 - Marge Bidwell |
| 12/01 - Judy Williams | 12/09 - Madelyn DeVary | 12/17 - Bill Olson | 12/25 - James Peebles |
| 12/02 - Anita Espinoza | 12/10 - Evelyn Guilfoyle | 12/17 - Catherine Stockment | 12/26 - Jesse Harden |
| 12/02 - Onilda Hardiman | 12/10 - Leah Rodriguez | 12/18 - Ayleen Bouquett | 12/26 - Rebecca Kinkade |
| 12/03 - Samantha Manresa | 12/11 - Kim Eldridge | 12/18 - Brenlyn Smith | 12/27 - Bianca Hillary |
| 12/04 - Zachary Causley | 12/11 - Roger Goodwin | 12/20 - Carmen Lopez | 12/28 - Charles Crumpler |
| 12/04 - Katie Phillips | 12/11 - Daniel Tonge | 12/20 - Nikko Saldivar | 12/28 - Danny Shellhouse |
| 12/04 - Iliana Rodriguez | 12/12 - Galliele Demosthene | 12/20 - Kaitlyn Ellen Terry | 12/29 - Aiden Batson |
| 12/04 - Brittany Smith | 12/13 - Emilio Guerra | 12/21 - Gab Demosthene | 12/29 - Jonathan Stockment |
| 12/05 - Matthew Davidson | 12/13 - Amy Ramirez | 12/22 - Lisa Boone | 12/31 - Rod Davis |
| 12/05 - Austin Davis | 12/13 - David Rodriguez | 12/22 - Lorelai Giddins | 12/31 - Nicky Drury |
| 12/05 - Joy Harden | 12/15 - Sean Dorber | 12/22 - Cornelius Kinkade | |
| 12/05 - Gene Mendheim | 12/16 - Robert Abens | 12/23 - Montrey Hill | |
| 12/07 - Destiny Polles | 12/16 - Ladona Crumpler | 12/23 - Jefferey Mitchell | |
| 12/07 - Lori Tompkins | 12/16 - Donna Drenthe | 12/23 - Natalie Murillo | |



Music Ministry



I cannot believe it is December! The hustle and bustle of plays, musicals, dramas, pictures, appointments, parties, shopping, wrapping, cooking. You name it, everyone will be doing several of these things listed. But what is disappointing, is people sometimes forget the real reason of the true meaning of Christmas. Don't let this happen to you! Start this weekend as our Sanctuary Choir presents, "Unspeakable Joy", Friday, Dec. 5th and Sunday, Dec. 7th, both services will begin at 7:00 PM. Claire Cloinger states it best; "Good news of a great joy! This joy, this bounteous, contagious, and overflowing joy is what Lari Goss has truly captured in his musical *Unspeakable Joy*. It is the joy of

Christmas. The joy of knowing the One who was born at Christmas. It is the joy of each believer discovering the love of Jesus Christ for himself, for herself!"

The following week (the 14th) our children's choir will bring to you "An Unplugged Christmas" during the evening service. They are extremely excited to sing for you as they share Christ through the version of a child. Invite all you know to this fantastic occasion.

Special thanks to our handbell ringers! We enjoyed them at Thanksgiving, and will continue through Christmas. What a great group to work and play with.

Benny and I would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and an exciting New Year! Only God knows the true day when He shall return, but we need to live as if each day is our last. Reach people and share the love of Christ. We can offer the free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ, to our friends and loved ones, but it is up to them how they receive it. It hurts my heart when they believe *they are in control* of their lives. There is *power in prayer* to make 2015 the best one yet! Let us continue adding more numbers to the fold!!

Singing for HIM,
Pam



Stewardship

November 2014

Contributions for November 2014:	\$ 58,796.02
Monthly budget requirements:	\$ 58,113.95
YTD Contributions:	\$ 108,311.33
YTD Budget:	\$ 104,605.11

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Lottie Moon Post Office



Send Christmas cards to church members through the Lottie Moon Post Office located in the back foyer. Suggested donation of 25¢ per card.

IMAGINE
joining the Author of all history
in

ONE SACRED EFFORT

FIND YOUR PLACE IN GOD'S STORY
MATTHEW 28:19-20

2014 LOTTIE MOON CHRISTMAS OFFERING
NATIONAL GOAL: \$175 MILLION
WEEK OF PRAYER FOR INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS • NOVEMBER 30-DECEMBER 7
OUR CHURCH GOAL:

imb.org **imb**

Women on Mission



We are collecting gifts for needy children this Christmas. Please select a tag from our Giving Tree! Return the gift wrapped by December 17.

UNSPEAKABLE JOY

A CHRISTMAS MUSICAL
ARRANGED & ORCHESTRATED BY LARI GOSS
NARRATIONS BY CLAIRE CLONINGER

FBC Choir Christmas Cantata
Friday, December 5, 7:00 p.m.
Sunday, December 7, 7:00 p.m.

45757-2393-7 An Unplugged Christmas (Gambill) Unplugged/Optional 2-Part

Simple Plus Series for kids

AN UNPLUGGED Christmas

A Simple Plus Musical About The Biggest, Brightest CHRISTMAS SHOW EVER!

Created by Susie Williams and Luke Gambill

Children's Christmas Cantata
Sunday, December 14, 6:30 p.m.
Dessert social will follow.

First Things First

Men's Prayer Breakfast

Saturday, Dec. 6, 8:00 a.m.

ONLINE:
WWW.FBCHOMESTEAD.ORG

NEWSLETTER OF THE
FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH OF
HOMESTEAD, FL

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**Building bridges...empowering
people...changing lives!**



You don't have to look far, long, or hard to know that we are in the Christmas season. The sights and sounds are everywhere! From stores and shops to homes and cars, it's quite clear that we have reached what the popular Christmas song calls "the most wonderful time of the year." As you go about all of the celebrations that accompany this season, my prayer is that you would not fail to keep Christ at the center of it all. I am convinced that far too often, Jesus is relegated to the sidelines instead of staying in the spotlight during a season that is supposed to be celebrating His birth. Let's do all we can to make sure that He is the center of all our Christmas celebrations this holiday season. Here's a look at what's taking place during December in our Student Ministry.

First, at ENCOUNTER we're kicking off a new sermon series-called *A Season of Hope*. We'll

spend the next three weeks studying how the story of Christmas provides hope to the world. In a society that is increasingly pessimistic, our students need to know about the hope that is available through Christ. I'd love to encourage all of our students to join us as we study through this Christmas series.

Second, our Student Ministry Christmas Party is scheduled for Friday, December 19th. The party will begin at 6:00 pm and will be at the church. Like last year, we will be having a Christmas Costume contest. We're asking our students to dress up as some Christmas-themed item (present, tree, reindeer, etc). Our adult volunteers will judge the costumes and the student who wins will be awarded a trophy and a gift card. This year we will also be having an ornament exchange. We are asking each student to purchase an ornament, gift-wrap it, and bring it to the party. Please limit your ornament purchases to \$5-\$10.

Finally, let me just remind you that one of the core values of our Student Ministry is that we aim to be **Family Focused**. What that means is that we understand that God designed the family to be the primary teachers of spiritual instruction and it is the responsibility of the church to assist families in that endeavor. If there is anything that I, or our ministry, can do to help you as you seek to lead your teenagers spiritually, please do not hesitate to contact me.

As always, thank you for the opportunity to serve you and to serve with you for the glory of God! The Friman family wishes you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

For His Glory,
Joe

