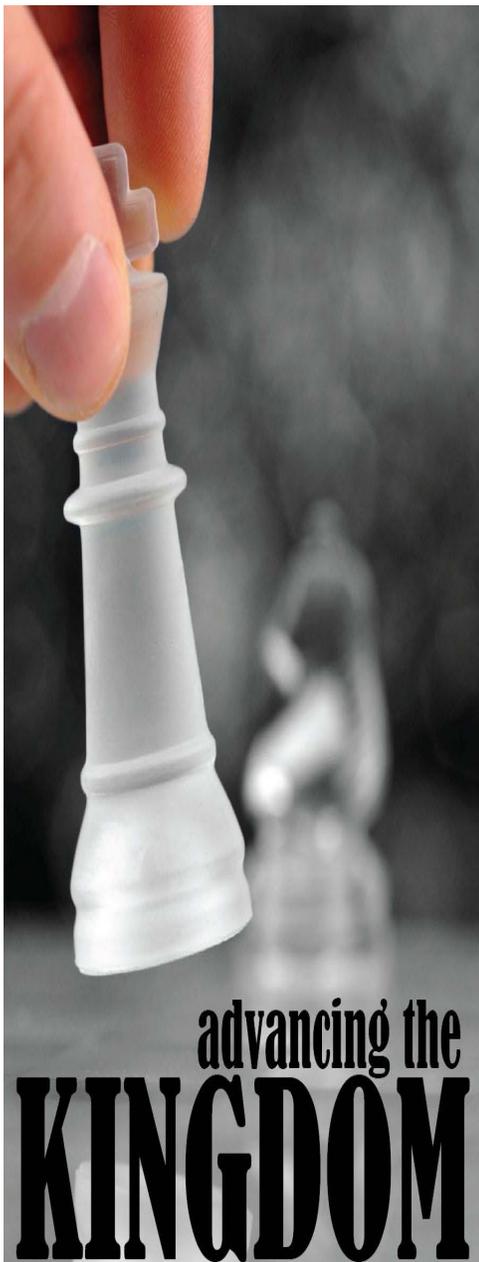


NEWSLETTER OF THE
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF
HOMESTEAD, FL



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

As I write this article, 2014 seems like a distant dream. Tomorrow I will leave for a two week Christmas vacation that will take us to Tennessee. We hope our children will see snow for the very first time. (Ok, I should clarify. I would like to see snow! My wife does not concur.) But I know that the New Year will be here before I know it.

The arrival of a new year is always significant, but this one is especially significant for our church. Three years ago, in 2011, we began a three year campaign called "Building for the Future." The purpose of this campaign was to raise funds for a new multi-purpose facility. We believe that this building, once completed, will enable our church to carry out new ministries and enhance the ones we are already about. In short, it will double our Sunday School capacity, provide space for youth ministry, language ministries,

mission trips, a food pantry, fellowship and recreation. In other words, it will do a LOT! When the clock struck midnight on January 1, 2014, the Building for the Future commitments "officially" ended.

The commitments ended, but alas, the construction of the building has just begun. If you have been paying attention, you've noticed progress on the West lot. The footers are installed and the steel is up. Soon, walls will be erected and a shell will be standing. Then the money raised will have run out! On the one hand, we don't want to be the builders Jesus talked about who built a tower they could not complete. On the other hand, we want you to know we are serious about doing what we have said we will do with the monies that have been given. For this reason, we broke ground in June.

Some will ask, "Why don't we just borrow the balance?" We could do that very easily. Borrowing is not the problem.

The problem is repaying. The Bible says that the wicked borrow and do not repay. Repaying a loan the size of the balance to complete this building would mean almost eliminating ministry altogether. We would have a building, but we wouldn't be able to do anything with it. Yes, we are building to grow, but we dare not assume that such growth will happen immediately. Loan payments, however, do follow immediately.

If you, the members of First Baptist Church, continue to sacrificially give to the building as you have these past three years, we would be in a position to borrow the balance in about two to three years, by my estimation. (And when I say "borrow," I do not mean borrowing from a secular institution.) We, as a church, will need to seek God about this and decide when is the right time and how much is the right amount. But we have time to pray about this decision.

Given that the Building for the Future commitments have been completed, we are calling the next phrase, "Advancing the Kingdom." Why this title? It's simple. According to the Webster dictionary, "Advance" means, "to go forward; to make progress; to continue a process of development." We are advancing because we are continuing something that has already been started. This is true both spiritually and physically. Spiritually speaking, Jesus established the church and He

promised to build it. He chooses to use people to "advance" the building of it. By ourselves, we can do nothing. In Christ, we can do whatever God wills. Physically speaking, we are "advancing" in our plan to build a facility begun in recent days. We are focusing on advancing the "Kingdom," because ultimately, everything we do is to be about the Kingdom of God. First Baptist Church will not last forever. The buildings we build will eventually crumble and fall. The Kingdom of God, however, shall have no end.

During the month of January, I will take a break from our new series in Revelation and be preaching on the "Advancing the Kingdom" theme. Sunday School lessons, sermons and testimonies will focus on stewardship as it relates to the Kingdom. An "Advancing the Kingdom" prayer guide will be given out on Sunday, January 5. Sunday School classes will be meeting for special times of prayer. On Sunday evening, January 26, we will have a special "Vision Service" in which we will talk about where we are and where we are going as a church. I want to urge you to be present for this service.

On February 2, we will ask you to once again pledge what you believe God would have you to give over a three year span to "Advancing the Kingdom." Just to be clear, these pledges are between you and God. No one will be comparing your pledge to actual giving a year down the

road. Your pledges, however, are important because they enable us to gauge where we are going and plan accordingly. The Building for the Future giving was very close to the pledged amount, and for this we are grateful. Please spend time in prayer about what you will pledge and use the "Advancing the Kingdom" commitment cards on this day.

I would like to commend you for your Lottie Moon Christmas Offering giving. As I write, there are two Sundays left in December and we are already within \$6,500 of our \$30,000 goal. I would be shocked if we did not reach it. I'm glad to be a part of a church that does not forget missions, even in the midst of a building campaign.

Please be sure to pray for your pastor. Only those who have walked this path know the challenges we face, the burdens we bear and the crises we navigate on a regular basis. There is never a time I do not find myself dependent upon God's grace for the spiritual direction of my family and this church.

I look forward to the new year and all that it will bring. May it be your greatest year of growth in the Lord. Thank you for the privilege of being your pastor.

Pastor Howard



Happy Birthday!

1/01 - Laycon Castro	1/12 - Sandra Jones	1/21 - Connie Everett	1/28 - Phyllis Bridges
1/01 - Camilla Poteet	1/13 - Katy Baynard	1/21 - Omar Lugo, Jr.	1/28 - Annah Monismith
1/02 - Jesus Fabian, Sr.	1/13 - Capri MacQueen	1/23 - Melody Willoughby	1/28 - Brett Sharpe
1/02 - Victor Martinez	1/14 - TJ Meury	1/24 - Luke Varnadore	1/28 - Desiree Veras
1/02 - Irma Perales	1/14 - Valera Rickard	1/25 - Jerry Dickson	1/29 - Destiny Gray
1/03 - Paul Dimare	1/15 - Guy Blaedow	1/25 - Margaret Edwards	1/30 - Karen Dees
1/03 - Leslie Olvera	1/15 - Randy Olvera	1/25 - Omar Lugo, Sr.	1/30 - Susie Ebersole
1/04 - Cesar Berrones	1/15 - Ryan Orosa	1/25 - Tom Patterson	1/30 - Zaida Gonzalez
1/04 - J.D. Van Ryn	1/15 - Thor Peterson	1/25 - Judith Santos	1/31 - Rebecca Rose Gonzalez
1/06 - Geri Davis	1/15 - Madison Wells	1/26 - Steve Breivogel	
1/06 - Morgan McDonnough	1/15 - Peggy Wells	1/26 - Amanda Clayton	
1/07 - Kelly Davis	1/16 - Melissa Nowicki	1/26 - Cathy Lamb	
1/07 - Doug Smith	1/17 - Rose Marie Nazon	1/26 - Shannon Rogers	
1/08 - Naomi Martinez	1/18 - Nancy Rodriguez	1/26 - Elizabeth Toirac	
1/09 - Nick Gonzalez	1/19 - Noah Orellana	1/27 - Betsy Byars	
1/09 - Michael Mann	1/20 - Eddy Dickson	1/27 - Ruth Garner	
1/11 - Jane McMillan	1/20 - Jack Luff	1/27 - Jeri Martinez	
1/11 - Seth Porch	1/20 - Sandra McBeth	1/27 - Terry Tompkins	
1/12 - Elvira Avalos	1/20 - Ruben Toirac	1/27 - Eric Zdancewicz	



Music Ministry



Another year has come and gone. Welcome 2014!! It has been said over and over, "Where has the year gone?" I believe the older we get, the faster time flies. Although when you hear teenagers repeat the same question, it makes one think, yet we know God is in control and life is but a vapor. As I look back, I know what I am grateful for; marriage, family living, family growing, health, jobs, friends, but most of all and foremost, *my Lord and Savior* who died for me so that I might live! "My lips will shout for joy, when I sing praises to you; my soul also, which you have redeemed." *Psalm 71:23!*

What a fantastic year of music!! God's music!! Thank you adult choir, children's choirs, and the leaders who helped finish the year off strong!! I

cannot thank you enough, as well as members who shared their feelings with me and others who loved the music. Music is such an important role of worship. "Saying, *I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.*" *Hebrews 2:12*

There is no way I can do my job by myself. It is **YOU** that makes First Baptist who and what we are suppose to be. Our adult choir shared "Hope Has Come" in four different events this year. Two evening services here at home, The Railroad Museum, and the Homestead Hospital. Each event was well attended with members who love God and wanted to share through song. "Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides through the deserts; his name is the Lord, exult

before him!" Psalm 68:4

Please know that you are more than welcome to join a choir. From ages 4 to 104 - we have a place for you! Let 2014 be the year where you become more involved! It is my pleasure being your worship leader, especially as we worship together! "Addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart," *Ephesians 5:19*

Singing for HIM,
Pam



Stewardship December 2013

Contributions for December 2013:	\$ 82,607.14
Monthly budget requirements:	\$ 57,784.60
YTD Contributions:	\$ 163,225.22
YTD Budget:	\$ 150,239.96

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES



Club will resume

Wednesday, January 8, 2014

6:30 - 8:00 p.m.



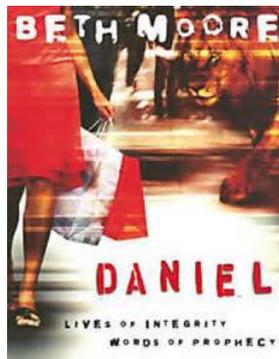
Saturday, January 4, at 8:00 a.m.



Resumes Jan. 8, 5pm



Our schedule has changed, to the 2nd Tuesday of the month. Join us January 7, 11:30 - 1:00 p.m. as we serve meals and distribute Bibles to the homeless. 28205 SW 125th Ave, Homestead, FL 33030



Lady's Bible Study

Join us!

Wednesday's 6:30 p.m.

In the sanctuary.

Led by Joy Harden



Women on Mission would like to thank our church Family for providing gifts for 86 needed children.



ONLINE:
WWW.FBCHOMESTEAD.ORG

NEWSLETTER OF THE
FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH OF
HOMESTEAD, FL

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



It's interesting how certain occasions lead a person to both look back and look ahead. As January 1, 2014 approaches, I find myself doing just that—looking back on 2013 and looking ahead to 2014! As I look back at 2013 I am filled with conflicting emotions. As with most years, there were moments of joy and moments of sorrow. Through it all, however, I can see that God has been faithful and has been working all things in accordance with His perfect plan. As I look ahead and think about 2014, I am filled both with excitement and apprehension. None of us know what awaits us in this new year but one thing we do know—God will be just as present and faithful as He has always been. I am excited to see what He has in store for each of us in 2014!

Here's a look at what's taking place in our Student Ministry during January:

First, on Wednesday nights at **ENCOUNTER** we're going to begin a new message series called **I Am SixThirty3**. We'll be taking a look at our Student Ministry purpose statement and talking about who we are and why we do what we do. I'd love to encourage all of our

students to join us for worship on Wednesdays.

Second, we will have a Mission Trip Informational Meeting for parents and students after the 11 am service on January 12. After a quick meal, we'll present the two mission trips we have planned for the summer of 2014 and what is involved and required for each of them. I hope all of our students and parents will come and see what opportunities there are for them to be involved in missions this summer. In order for us to have an accurate count of how many to provide lunch for, please RSVP to the church office by Thursday, January 9.

Third, also on January 12th, we'll be kicking off The CORE. As I shared in last month's newsletter, The CORE is a student discipleship opportunity where teenagers will be taught the core doctrines of the faith (WHAT we believe); how we arrived at those doctrines (WHY we believe it); and how to answers some of the questions about and objections to those doctrines (HOW to defend it). The CORE will take place on Sunday nights at 6:30 pm in the youth room. I hope our students will take advantage of this opportunity to grow in their faith.

Finally, I began last month taking the opportunity to use the newsletter to remind you of one of the core values of our Student Ministry. This month, I'm highlighting the core value of **Cultural Relevance**. This core value emphasizes the importance of contextualizing the gospel for our teenagers. The world in which they live is constantly changing and I mean changing at a very rapid pace. While our ministry leaders and volunteers are firmly convicted of the unchanging truths of the gospel, we also realize that we need to communicate those truths in ways that our students can understand and relate to. For this reason, we are constantly asking questions about whether what we are doing and how we are doing it is relatable to the students to who we are seeking to minister.

As always, thank you for the opportunity to serve you and to serve with you for the glory of God! I pray that 2014 would be our greatest year of ministry yet!

For His Glory,

Joe

