



# The Way

March 2015

## NEWSLETTER OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF HOMESTEAD, FL

### FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

I remember the time a friend and I were driving across the country on Interstate Forty. To our left was an eighteen wheeler, driving about the same speed as we were. To our right was an entrance ramp. Coming our way on that ramp was another eighteen wheeler. It made no attempt to slow down and enter the interstate behind us. It made no attempt to speed up and enter the interstate in front of us. It simply proceeded to enter our lane as if we did not exist! My friend was able to slam on his breaks and we barely avoided becoming a sandwich between the two trucks.

Have you ever had someone veer into your lane like that? You probably have. Well I've noticed that is exactly what the world does when it comes to the church. Sometimes, we feel like we are coasting along, minding our own business. The world enters our lane, so to speak, and tries to take over. This is especially true of our holidays and celebrations. We celebrate Christmas and Santa veers into our lane. We celebrate the resurrection and the Easter Bunny veers into

our lane. We celebrate Reformation Day only to have witches; monsters and skeletons veer into our lane. This also happens every March 17. The world calls it Saint Patrick's Day. To the world, it's an excuse to wear green and get drunk. To the Irish, it's a celebration of Irish culture. To Catholics, it marks the day a "Patron Saint" died. I say they are veering into our lane.

Patrick of Ireland was a fifth century missionary to Ireland. When he was a teenager, he lived in Great Britain, only to be kidnapped and sent to Ireland as a hostage. He would live there as a slave for six years. He arrived in Ireland having knowledge of the gospel but never having been converted himself. His slavery became instrumental in causing him to repent and be saved. Eventually, he escaped and returned home, much to his family's delight.

This, however, was not the end of Patrick's story. God placed it upon His heart to return to Ireland so they might hear the gospel. Having been a slave in Ireland, he'd learned the celtic language and become familiar with the culture. He was uniquely qualified for this task. Over the objections of some, he returned to the

land of his former imprisonment. He did so knowing the risks, including the risk of being found and punished by his former master.

Patrick knew the land he set out to evangelize knew nothing of the God of the Bible or the gospel of Jesus Christ. It was a land filled with superstitions and sorcery. Patrick may have wondered how he would persuade the people to turn from the pagan worship practiced by their ancestors for generations. Patrick knew, however, that he had two things going for Him. He knew God is real. He knew that God answers prayers. So Patrick decided to use those two truths as the basis for gaining an audience for preaching the gospel.

Patrick developed the habit of going into towns, discovering their needs, and leading prayer meetings in which he prayed regarding those needs. If a village was suffering because they were not catching as many fish from the river as they used to, he would call them to the river and pray for more fish. He did this so that when they started catching more fish, they would want to know more about the God to Whom Patrick prayed. It was a bold method in that it would only work if God answered prayer. And

yet, over and over again, God answered his prayers. The people were intrigued. The gospel was preached. People got saved. Churches were started. By the time Patrick was finished, he'd planted 365 churches and seen 120,000 converts. This is how he did it. Bold praying. Faithful preaching. Church planting.

By the way, if you were to read Patrick's *Confession*, you might be surprised to find what is missing. Patrick makes no mention of "sacraments." The concept of transubstantiation (the belief that the bread and wine of communion literally become the body and blood of Christ, conferring grace) does not appear. He does not refer to the Bishop of Rome. While he speaks much of Jesus and the gospel, there is no mention of prayers to or veneration of Mary. He describes how he prayed for every occasion of life, even writing out hundreds of prayers. None of those prayers, however, were to a saint. At this point, you might be wondering why Catholics even celebrate him. I'm wondering too. And that's why I say, "They are veering into our lane." Patrick is our hero, not theirs.

I don't say this because I am interested in some petty dispute about who can and cannot "claim" Patrick. Ultimately, Patrick belongs to Christ. I say this because Patrick set out to evangelize a culture that ours increasingly resembles. Patrick's Ireland knew very little of the Gospel. More and more, our culture knows very little of the Gospel. Patrick's Ireland was pagan. Our culture is becoming pagan. Patrick's Ireland was spiritually curious. So is our culture. Patrick was willing to risk his life for the sake of bringing the gospel to the very people who once enslaved him. What are we willing to sacrifice? Patrick under-

stood that Ireland would only be won by faithful, fervent, bold, continuous, let's-charge-hell-with-a-water-pistol praying. If we want to see this culture won for Christ, we'd better get to the same. The battle will be won in prayer or not at all.

Patrick is not a figure we should avoid due to his name being associated with the world, its revelry and the Catholic church. Patrick is a pioneer missionary who has much to teach us and should inspire us. We do not revere him, but we should admire him, much in the same way we admire other missionaries like Jim Elliott or evangelists like Billy Graham. I pray God would raise up more Patricks in our day and time. I wish we would be as devoted to the Great Commission as he.

Most of all, I wish we would pursue holiness as did Patrick. I hope we will learn the preeminence of Christ in all of life like Patrick did. I think of some of Patrick's most famous words, which describe his one true ambition in life. "Christ be with me. Christ before me. Christ behind me. Christ in me. Christ beneath me. Christ above me. Christ on my right. Christ on my left. Christ where I lie. Christ where I sit. Christ where I arise. Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me. Christ in the mouth of every man who speaks of me. Christ in every eye that sees me. Christ in every ear that hears me."

Changing the subject, I want to exhort you to continue to pray for and give to our Advancing the Kingdom Campaign. For those of you who are new, this is a three year capital campaign begun in 2014, to raise funds for the new multi-purpose educational building. I can tell you that only four-

teen months into the campaign, we have already received over three quarters of the pledged amount. So we are grateful for your giving to this project. That being said, the pledged amount does not come close to what will be needed to finish and pay off this building. We are glad that giving is well over what was pledged, but we also *need* giving to be over what was pledged!

I would also like to challenge you to attend a special time of prayer for this campaign and for the new building. Wednesdays at 6:15 pm, we will physically meet at the new building site. We need to pray for the builders, for God's provision and for the resolution of any and every obstacle that might appear along the way. I realize this is not feasible for everyone. I know some of you may be finishing dinner or rushing to church from work. But no time is going to be perfect for everyone. We will not be long. We will pray and dismiss for the Wednesday evening activities. Those who can come, come. But I want to challenge you to do your part and make effort to pray. Let's not just talk about praying. Let's do it.

As always, thank you for the privilege of being your pastor.

Pastor Howard



# Happy Birthday!

- |                        |                          |                           |                         |
|------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 3/01 - Wayne Boynton   | 3/09 - Lee Sweeney       | 3/20 - Melissa Hobden     | 3/27 - Kayla Badillo    |
| 3/01 - Eleanor Grant   | 3/09 - Camille Wright    | 3/21 - Valerie Goodwin    | 3/27 - Robert Diaz      |
| 3/01 - Russell Philpot | 3/10 - Anita Powell      | 3/21 - Meg Morris         | 3/27 - Riiah Durante    |
| 3/01 - Victor Santana  | 3/11 - Jared Allen       | 3/22 - Steven Lapworth    | 3/27 - Joel Estrada     |
| 3/02 - Kristin Benn    | 3/12 - Sebastean Medich  | 3/22 - Lani Shellhouse    | 3/27 - Nicholas Sourber |
| 3/02 - Mary Jones      | 3/12 - Kelly Friman      | 3/22 - Kim Sizemore       | 3/28 - Marion Grant     |
| 3/02 - Craig Nowicki   | 3/13 - Jordan Bejarano   | 3/22 - Weslee Strickland  | 3/28 - Ralph Holland    |
| 3/04 - Luis Cartaya    | 3/14 - Ada Lucio         | 3/23 - Kathryn Krepcho    | 3/28 - Kaelynn Sears    |
| 3/04 - Mylinda Drury   | 3/15 - Carole Boyett     | 3/23 - Ronald Monday      | 3/29 - Jason Garner     |
| 3/04 - Kathy Main      | 3/16 - Elizabeth Barrera | 3/24 - Robin Decker       | 3/29 - Gregg Powell     |
| 3/04 - Lenna Taylor    | 3/17 - Grayson Endress   | 3/24 - Ramaya Khan        | 3/29 - Clarissa Robles  |
| 3/05 - Emily Grimes    | 3/17 - Lacie Faktor      | 3/24 - Martin Rodriguez   | 3/30 - Dylan Goodwin    |
| 3/05 - Kevin Sweeney   | 3/17 - Timothy Martin    | 3/25 - Esmeralda Albarado | 3/30 - Brenda Harden    |
| 3/07 - Cooper McMillan | 3/17 - Otto Toirac       | 3/25 - Erin Burrichter    | 3/31 - Luis Mejia       |
| 3/07 - Sarah Roldan    | 3/18 - Ruby Vasel        | 3/26 - Jasmine Oquendo    |                         |
| 3/08 - Lola Irizarry   | 3/20 - Helen Day         | 3/26 - Charlene Richard   |                         |



## Music Ministry



Members, family, and friends; You are more than welcome to join us Good Friday at 7:00 pm for our part of our Easter musical. You won't want to come alone, so bring someone with you to share the good news. Our youth choir will be joining us for this special event as well. The title is

"Kingdom, Power, Glory praising the Risen Christ" by Vader and Rouse. Our bell choir has taken off again practicing. Thank you to those individuals for participating. Many whose plates are full to begin with, make time for practice. We have a fun time on Tuesday

evening at 7:00 PM.

Thank you Morning Glory for your dedication and service. It takes someone special, called by God to help lead in our early service.

Blessings,  
Pam



## Stewardship

February 2015

<b>Contributions for February 2015:</b>	<b>\$ 48,746.25</b>
<b>Monthly budget requirements:</b>	<b>\$ 46,491.16</b>
<b>YTD Contributions:</b>	<b>\$ 255,903.82</b>
<b>YTD Budget:</b>	<b>\$ 244,078.59</b>

# UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Week of Prayer for **SEND» NORTH AMERICA** MARCH 1-8, 2015

Goal **\$8,000**

**ANNIE ARMSTRONG**  
EASTER OFFERING



**March 14**  
**9:00 a.m.**

spring *forward*  
SUNDAY, MARCH 8



March 22, 5:30 p.m.  
in the fellowship hall

**FIRST THINGS FIRST**  
**MEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST**  
*Saturday, March 7, 8:00 a.m.*



28205 SW 125th Ave, Homestead, FL 33030

Join us March 10, 11:30 a.m., as we serve meals and distribute Bibles to the homeless.

## Membership Information Class

Our next membership information class is March 8, at 3:00 p.m. While not required for membership, this class is an excellent way to learn about First Baptist Church. A special meal will be prepared for those in attendance.

ONLINE:  
WWW.FBCHOMESTEAD.ORG

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
FIRST BAPTIST  
CHURCH OF  
HOMESTEAD, FL

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



While fall is my favorite season of the year, spring is a close second! I love the new growth that is evident all around! There's nothing quite like watching plants sprout new blossoms that you know will one day become full flowers! When I look around at the new growth in nature I'm reminded of the desire each of us should have to see new growth in our spiritual lives. No matter what stage you are in with your walk with the Lord, there is always room for growth! My prayer for each of you is that you would be intentional about cultivating habits and practices that would lead to growth in your walk with the Lord!

Here's a look at what's taking place in our Student Ministry during the month of March:

First, on Wednesday nights at **ENCOUNTER** we're going to begin a new message series called **A Season in the Minors**. We're going to be taking a look at various sections of Scripture from the Old Testament minor prophets and what they teach us for living today. I have been tremendously blessed this past year

as I spent some time intentionally studying this particular section of Scripture and I am anxiously looking forward to sharing what God has taught me with our students! If your teenager hasn't been to **ENCOUNTER** lately, I hope you'll consider this a prime opportunity for them to reengage with us.

Second, on Friday, March 13, our Student Ministry will be going to Betania for a Night of Worship. We'll be joining 3 other student ministries from our area as we come together to share the gifts God has given and worship together with one another! Students need to be at the church at 6:15 pm that Friday and we will take the church bus to Betania. Last day to sign up to go will be Wednesday, March 11.

Third, we are currently planning a slate of mission projects for the week of Spring Break. Students will have an opportunity to do some painting, yard work, playing games with senior adults, and much more the week of March 23-27. An informational brochure is being finalized and will be available in the youth room. If you have any questions about any of the projects, please don't hesitate to contact me.

something that is taking place next month. Renew Weekend will be taking place on April 10-12. Year after year, this has been one of those events that is just a highlight for the year for many students! I love to see how God moves and works in the hearts and lives of both students and adults. Informational brochures for Renew Weekend are available in the youth room or on our student ministry website. Deadline to sign up is Sunday, March 29!

Finally, this month I'm highlighting the core value of **Lifestyle Worship**. This core value highlights the truth that all of our life is an act of worship! In fact, the only thing we can't do as an act of worship is sin! Our ministry strives to teach students **how** to live a life of worship in addition to giving them opportunities to worship with other believers on a regular basis.

As always, thank you for the opportunity to serve you and to serve with you for the glory of God!

For His Glory,  
**Joe**



Finally, I want to remind you about