



# The Way

May 2014

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

### FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Perhaps you've heard the phrase, "Never bring a knife to a gun fight." Personally, I try to avoid both kinds of confrontations! And yet, the wisdom of this statement has endured for generations. If you must take up arms, take up the appropriate arms, or you may not live to regret it. There is an element of spiritual truth to this as well.

There's a fight going on. One wouldn't know it from the looks of many churches today, but it's real. It doesn't involve nations on a map, but there is a draft and everyone is on one side or the other. I'm talking, of course, about spiritual warfare. There are two main errors most Christians commit when it comes to spiritual warfare. One is to deny its existence. We do this, not explicitly, but by living our lives as if the warfare isn't real. It has been said that the Christian life is not a cruise ship, but a battle ship. On a cruise ship, you are there to be entertained. You

have the right to expect your every need and want to be met. That cruise ship mentality is then brought into the church. All too often, we approach the Christian life as consumers. We know what we want and it is the church's (or pastor's) job to give it to us. We expect our demands be met. We want messages that always encourage us, music that always inspires us and programs that always fulfill us. A battle ship mentality, on the other hand, views every member as a soldier, not a client. On a battle ship, the objective is not the pleasure of the passengers, but the accomplishment of an objective. In our case, the objective is the Great Commission. We are to take the gospel to the ends of the earth, our own back yard and everywhere in between.

The other error is to acknowledge spiritual warfare, but to fight it using unspiritual weapons. When spiritually attacked, we tend to respond with natural weapons. Some of these weapons may not be inherently bad. Likewise, a knife can be a useful tool, unless you are in the aforementioned

gunfight. Sometimes, we respond to spiritual warfare with legislative measures. This happens when we see our nation turning from God, but instead of seeing the solution as revival, we assume the problem can be fixed by electing the right people or passing enough laws. The truth is, there is no law that can protect us if the hearts of people are far from God, because there will be no one left to respect those laws. Another natural weapon is money. We see churches in decline and assume the problem can be fixed by throwing enough money at them. Thus, many churches will pay obscene amounts of money to hire "rock star worship pastors" who are capable of creating concert-level performances every weekend. They spend millions on buildings, special effects and the like to impress the masses. Another natural weapon is human strategies. Churches are always looking for the latest strategy that will supposedly cause the church to explode in growth. Pastors fly across the country to attend conferences in which they are told, "Imitate what this mega-church is doing and

soon, your church will be mega too." Marketing can be another unspiritual weapon. This is when we research our community to find out what they want, and make sure our church provides it to them. Rarely do we find that what they "want" is to be confronted about sin or challenged to abandon unbiblical thinking.

Paul seemed to have this in mind when he wrote to the Ephesians. Ephesians 6:10-18 says, "Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by His vast strength. Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the tactics of the Devil. For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world powers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens. This is why you must take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand. Stand, therefore, with truth like a belt around your waist, righteousness like armor on your chest, and your feet sandaled with readiness for the gospel of peace. In every situation take the shield of faith, and with it you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is God's word. Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert in this with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints."

This passage has much to say about how we are to see this spiritual warfare and what weapons we are to use to fight it.

We must learn that spiritual warfare is not about planning strategies, passing laws, electing officials, raising money or constructing buildings. It is about relying on God's strength and not our own. It is about living by faith in the face of unsurmountable obstacles. It is about praying always, especially when our situation seems hopeless. It is about living by the truth of God's Word and not pragmatism. It is about proclaiming the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is about waging war against sin, believing that God delights in using a holy people to accomplish what He purposes. These are the weapons of our warfare. Some of you are experiencing it right now. I exhort you to examine yourself closely and make sure you are fighting it correctly.

Speaking of spiritual warfare, let me tell you a little bit about what is going on at FBCH. This spring, we knocked on 1,583 doors in our prayer evangelism project. We asked each one the question, "How can I pray for you?" We left them with door hangers on which they could write their responses. One hundred and seventy-one people did so. Only fifty some have a church home. We are now in the process of making follow-up visits, attempting to share the gospel as we do so. We have only reached a portion of them so far, but we have already seen four professions of faith and I am confident we are going to see more. I can honestly say that we have attempted to share Christ with more people in these last few months than at any time in my tenure as your pastor. I tell you this because when the

church makes advances in evangelism, counter attacks usually follow. In fact, some of you who are in this project have already told me that you have noticed a discernible increase in events you can only call spiritual warfare since we have started. I can honestly say that I have as well. It's never pleasant to be in the heat of the battle, but the only alternative is futility in the Lord's work. I hope you find that as unacceptable as I do!

As summer is around the corner, let me remind you to be faithful during these months. When on vacation, attend church and Sunday School. Remember that your church's budget does not take the summer off. Let's avoid the summer lull common in too many of our churches. Keep running the race with endurance!

Before summer gets here, we have some exciting things taking place. Our Young Musicians will be presenting their spring musical May 18. This is always a blessing. I sense that the kids are extra excited this year whereas this year's theme is related to super-heroes! Also, we will be honoring mothers on May 11. Come sit with mom and don't forget the mother's day tea the day before.

Thank you for the privilege of being your pastor.

*Pastor Howard*



## Happy Birthday!

5/01 - Aida Blaedow	5/08 - Dianne Quiles	5/17 - Betty Morris	5/25 - Chrischelle Polles
5/01 - Tommy Milner	5/08 - Miranda Santana	5/17 - Justin West	5/26 - Tayla Edge
5/02_ Shirley Caves	5/09 - Breshion Benn	5/18 - Randy Bridgeman	5/26 - Margaret Garner
5/02 - Argeo Dominguez	5/09 - Colton Search	5/18 - Isaac Eves	5/26 - Benny Helms
5/02 - Glenda Kimmons	5/10 - Zac Graves	5/18 - Gabriela Matos	5/26 - Christina Jackson
5/02 - Ernest Rodriguez	5/10 - Anthony Soto	5/20 - Kristy Alonso	5/27 - Jamie Hampton
5/02 - Lindsay Trupp	5/11 - Chris Johnson	5/20 - Britton Hall	5/27 - Tori Rose
5/03 - John Ader	5/11 - Katherine Padron	5/21 - David Dulevich	5/28 - Libia Fabian
5/03 - Mallory Melton	5/12 - Andrew Benjamin	5/21 - Nathaniel Kidwell	5/28 - Hailie Medina
5/04 - Kim Rodriguez	5/12 - Jack Gonzalez	5/22 - Kylee Turner	5/28 - Stephanie Smith
5/04 - Nicholas Sincore	5/12 - Sam McMillan	5/22 - Damaris Dominquez	5/29 - Hannah Benn
5/05 - Kevin Harrell	5/13 - Omar LeRoy	5/22 - Caleb Easom	5/29 - Dave Murray
5/05 - Linda Santos	5/14 - Vance Hardiman	5/22 - Damaris Flores	5/20 - Adriana Anguiano
5/06 - Jacquelin Sanchez	5/14 - Raimundo Santos	5/22 - Sharon Gottlieb-Hart	5/20 - Fallon Martin
5/07 - Elda Aguayo	5/14 - Karlyn Tejada	5/23 - Abigail Lopez	5/30 - Jorge Orosa
5/07 - Tiffany Biichle	5/15 - Joseph Hall	5/23 - Maya Perry	5/31 - Monica Franceschi
5/07 - Rebekah Hall	5/16 - Gabriela Murphy	5/23 - Josselynn Polles	
5/08 - Alyssa Koury	5/16 - Vanessa Smith	5/24 - Jessica Boone	
5/08 - Sebastian Mitchell	5/17 - Alejandrian Garcia	5/25 - Rachel Hensley	



## Music Ministry



Thank you so much choir, Morning Glory, sound and media techs, for the music section of our Resurrection Sunday! We had a wonderful worshipful Easter celebration! I look forward to planning more music with the choir and Morning Glory singing together more often. I trust you enjoyed it as much as I did. So many people to thank that had a part from set up to take down sunrise service, kitchen crew, parking attendants, greeters, and pastor, for a God filled sermon.

If you haven't noticed, we have three new members of Morning Glory. Joe, Gigi and Michelle Cordova. They have added so much God given talent to the group with humble spirits. Thank you Jesus for sending them our way. Now, on a sad

note, we have to say good bye to Debbie Pate who is moving to Georgia. She will be missed!

Mark your calendar for the Young Musicians musical that will take place on May 18th . Ms. Lori and her helpers are working diligently to put on their very best for Jesus as they present, "Agape League." This musical is calling on the super powered fruits of the spirit available to every follower of Christ. These heroes must also face an enemy within their own ranks when *Ironblade* forgets his superhero identity. Come hear how self control becomes entangled in the pervasive worldly culture. Don't miss out, 6:30 PM, May 18th!!

Get ready for **Agency D3**, this years Vacation Bible School theme. If there is

a position you would like to work, please see Lynda Melton or myself and we'll put you to work. We have our first meeting May 3rd, 9:30 AM in the fellowship hall with coffee and donuts. A follow up meeting is scheduled for May 31st at 9:30 as well. See you there!

Thank you for helping me serve and worship our Lord and Savior together! I've said it before, and I'll say it again, First Baptist Church knows how to worship!!

Singing for HIM,  
*Pam*



## Stewardship

April 2014

<b>Contributions for April 2014:</b>	<b>\$ 41,472.11</b>
<b>Monthly budget requirements:</b>	<b>\$ 46,227.68</b>
<b>YTD Contributions:</b>	<b>\$ 360,469.71</b>
<b>YTD Budget:</b>	<b>\$ 346,707.60</b>

# UPCOMING ACTIVITIES



*Women on Mission*  
 Invite you to our  
*Mother's Day Tea*  
 May 10th  
 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.  
 Wear your favorite hat!

## 2014 Graduates

If you or a fellow FBCH member are graduating from high school or college this year, please contact the church office 305-247-1662, prior to May 25.



FBCH Children's Choir Presents



Sunday, May 18, 6:30 p.m.

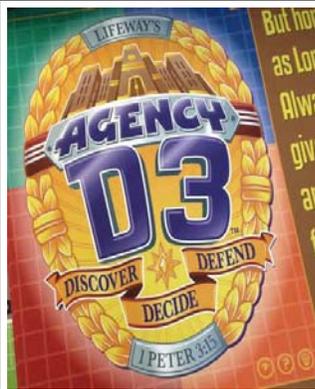


**AWARD Celebration**  
**May 21, at 6:30 p.m.**

## Beach

## Baptism

**Those wishing to take the step of baptism should call the church office at 305-247-1662 to schedule the baptism class.**



## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

June 23 -27, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.  
 Pre-K through 6th grade

If you are interested in volunteering or would like more information about this year's VBS please plan on attending the VBS Meeting Saturday, May 3, 9:30 a.m. in the fellowship hall.

ONLINE:  
WWW.FBCHOMESTEAD.ORG

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
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**Building bridges...empowering  
people...changing lives!**

## Six<sup>+</sup>Thirty<sup>3</sup> Student Ministry

The arrival of May signals a warning that summer is right around the corner! Several of our students and teachers have already initiated the "how many days left until the end of school" countdown. Before we ramp up into summer, let's take a look at what's taking place in our Student Ministry in May.

On Wednesday nights at **ENCOUNTER** we'll be kicking off a new message series called **Wise Up**. We'll be exploring selected passages from the book of Proverbs and seeing what Scripture has to say about living wisely. This would be a great opportunity for all of our students to join us for worship on Wednesdays as we begin this new series.

We are nearing the completion of trainings for our two mission trips we have planned for this summer. Our students and adult volunteers have

been studying and preparing to engage the various mission fields they will serve and have learned how they can be sensitive to the Holy Spirit as He directs them in communicating the gospel through their speech and actions. Please continue to pray for our students and adult volunteers as they prepare for these trips. We also have several students who are in need of financial assistance for these trips. If you have any work that you would like to have a student complete or if you would just like to make a donation to help make it possible for them to go, please don't hesitate to contact me.

This month we also have scheduled a trip to play putt-putt golf at Palmetto Mini Golf on Saturday, May 17. We'll leave the church at 5:30 pm and grab a bite to eat at a fast food restaurant on our way to the golf course. Cost to play is \$7.50 so students should bring enough money to eat supper and play golf. Deadline to sign up is Wednesday, May 14.

This month's core value I'd like to highlight is **Compassionate Ministry**. This core value highlights the truth that believers have been given a spiritual gift that God wants them to use to serve others in love. Regardless of age, gender, social status, income level, physical limitations, etc., **every** believer has been gifted to serve. Our ministry wants to help students discover their gifting and then provide them with an outlet to use it to serve others. Every member is a minister!

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

For His Glory,

*Joe*

