



# The Way

May 2016

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

### FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Not long ago, my oldest son, Jesse, asked me what I do. He knows what I do when he sees me working, but he had no idea what I do when he is at school and church services are not in session. This is a common question, actually. Truthfully, I have been asked to do many things over the years.

Thom Rainer, president of Lifeway Christian Resources, recently asked pastors what are the strangest things they have been asked to do. Here were a few of the replies:

"A church member asked, during the Lord's Supper, if we could have a prayer for her dog that had died earlier in the week."

"A church member called, telling me her neighbors' sheep were out in the road. Of course, I was supposed to help since I

was her shepherd."

"I officiated a funeral where the family did the wave and hit beach balls during the service."

"A lady called me to let me know her son-in-law wasn't praying long enough before his bed time. She felt I needed to counsel him."

"A church member was a funeral home director. He called me frequently to help him pick up just-deceased bodies."

"A church member called to request I euthanize an injured rabbit."

"A church member asked me to do a funeral for his horse."

"A church member asked me to put her mother's funeral on my calendar. She wasn't dead."

"A church member asked

me to do an imitation of a character from *The Princess Bride* during the wedding ceremony."

Personally, I think that last one is perfectly reasonable. ("As you wish.") But reading that list got me thinking about some of the many things I been asked to do and, in some cases, have actually done over the years.

Early in my ministry, a chicken farmer had a virus sweep through one of his chicken houses. He said if the dead chickens did not get hauled out by the end of the day, his entire coop would be rejected and he would be financially ruined. Not wanting to see a church member bankrupted, I spent the day removing dead, bloated chickens in scorching summer heat. And I swore off chicken for the next six months.

I have had to break up fights at funerals.

I have been privileged to give numerous graduation addresses, including for a college.

I have been asked to confront cheating spouses.

I have been asked for help with exorcisms. (And yes, I take that seriously.)

I have counseled many couples preparing for marriage and I have counseled many couples in crisis marriage situations.

I was asked to lie down on a bed of nails while a member of the Strength Team bench pressed hundreds of pounds lying on top of me. (Many of you were there for that one!)

I have moderated business meetings in a second language.

I was once asked to accompany a group of doctors to Nicaragua. They said, "Pastor, we'll meet their physical needs. We need you to preach to them while we do it." So I went with them into the jungle and preached the gospel in what may be the remotest place I have ever been, complete with monkeys swinging from the trees. On that same trip, I wound up assisting surgeons who were removing a tumor. (They were pretty desperate.)

I have been asked to present the gospel to lost family members on their deathbeds, some who appeared com-

pletely unconscious, in the hopes that they could still hear and understand and somehow respond.

I was asked by Christian parents to preach the gospel at their son's funeral, who was a leader of the local atheist club. Almost the entire audience consisted of members of that club. The deceased's friends brought a large atheist symbol and placed it on the front row, just in case I forgot who they were.

I have been asked to do many things I could not, in good conscience, do. A man asked me to baptize his fiancé. He said she wasn't a Christian, but she needed to be baptized so they could get married in the special New England church his ancestors founded and this needed to happen before her visa expired and she was deported to China. That didn't happen. I have also been asked to perform weddings... later that same day. That didn't happen either. I have been asked to perform last rites more times than I can remember. Um...no thank you.

As a pastor, I have sanded wooden pews and floors. I have had to sing, cook, paint, wear silly costumes and write newsletter articles. Keep in mind, all of this is over the course of almost twenty years of full time ministry. The typical retired pastor can tell a lot more stories than I can. But all

of this leads to the question...

What exactly is a pastor supposed to do? Fortunately, the Word of God answers this question. There are two passages of Scripture to which I will appeal. The first is Acts six. The early church was growing tremendously. With that growth, came the need for spiritual care. Widows especially needed assistance. For many of them, the only help they could expect was from the church. The pastors (who in this case were the apostles) found themselves spending their time distributing food. Although there were twelve of them (Judas Iscariot had been replaced), they just could not get it all done. The Hellenistic widows began to complain that they were being neglected in this ministry. We read in Acts 6:2-4: "And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, 'It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables.'<sup>3</sup> Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. <sup>4</sup>But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

Notice that the apostles, serving as pastors, said it "is not right" for them to "serve tables." It's not that they were too good to serve tables. It's that God had something else for them to do. They said we will

devote ourselves to “prayer and the ministry of the word.”

Let me talk about those two items. They were to devote themselves to prayer. While “prayer” obviously includes the personal prayer lives of the pastors, it is not limited to what they do in the prayer closet. In this case, I believe “prayer” refers to the prayer ministry of the church. It is the job of the pastor to lead the church to be a house of prayer. Many pastors eliminate this from their ministry altogether and many churches don’t mind. But it is my job to lead the prayer ministry of the church.

The next item is the “ministry of the word.” That word “ministry” is the same word from which we get “deacon.” It means service. It is as if they were saying, “This is how we are to serve: By bringing the Word of God to the people.” The “ministry of the word” includes the time spent studying the word, preparing to teach and preach the word, and actually preaching and teaching the word. It includes anything that involves bringing the word of God into the lives of the people. This includes discipleship, counseling and evangelism.

A third item is found in Ephesians 4:11-12: “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for

the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.” Notice that those who are shepherds and teachers are to “equip the saints.” “Saints” here refers to anyone who has been saved. They are to be equipped for service. Part of my job is to help you find ways to serve and to equip you to do what God has called you to do.

So here are three things: Prayer, the ministry of the word and the equipping of the saints. That is enough to keep any pastor busy. In fact, I find that twenty-four hours in a day are just not enough to do the above. There will always be more praying to do, more study that could happen or someone else who needs to be equipped to serve. It can be frustrating, because this means the pastor’s work is never done.

I am aware that few pastors are truly limited to just these three things. Sometimes, the nature of ministry and the role of shepherd require the shepherd to do things that are “outside of the box.” But I share this with you because there is an important lesson for us all. To the extent that your pastor (or any pastor) can focus on these three things, he will be stronger and so will the church.

By the way, I am not sharing these things with you because I sense there are unrealistic expectations within our church. I share these things so that you

will know what it is your pastors are to do, according to the Word of God. Consider this preventative maintenance. Feel free to keep us accountable to this standard. Pray that we will not be distracted away from these things. And when something does not get done which does *not* fall under the umbrella of Acts 6/Ephesians 4, show mercy.

By the way, as I write this article, tomorrow is the National Day of Prayer. I am grateful to live in a country that sets aside such a day. If ever there was a time when we needed to pray for America, it is now. We will have twenty-four hours of consecutive prayer in our prayer room. Even if you did not sign up for a time slot, feel free to jump in. There will be prayer guides available to assist you if needed.

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

Pastor Howard



## Happy Birthday!

5/01 - Tommy Milner	5/08 - Miranada Santana	5/17 - Justin West	5/25 - Kelly Poteet
5/01 - Jade Perez	5/09 - Breshion Benn	5/18 - Randy Bridgeman	5/26 - Ida Duncan
5/02 - Shirley Caves	5/09 - Norah Medich	5/18 - Isaac Eves	5/26 - Margaret Garner
5/03 - John Ader	5/09 - Colton Search	5/18 - Gabriela Matos	5/26 - Benny Helms
5/03 - Mallory Melton	5/10 - Zac Graves	5/20 - Kristy Alonso	5/26 - Christina Jackson
5/03 - James Yurchak	5/10 - Anthony Soto	5/20 - Britton Hall	5/27 - Tori Rose
5/04 - Kim Rodriguez	5/11 - Chris Johnson	5/21 - David Dulevich	5/28 - Libia Fabian
5/04 - Nicholas Sincore	5/11 - Katherine Padron	5/21 - Kylee Turner	5/28 - Larry Jacobson
5/05 - Melissa Nanan	5/11 - Crystal Rodriguez	5/22 - Damaris Dominquez	5/28 - Bayla Medina
5/05 - Linda Santos	5/12 - Andrew Benjamin	5/22 - Caleb Easom	5/28 - Stephanie Smith
5/07 - Elda Aguayo	5/12 - Jack Gonzalez	5/22 - Sharon Hart	5/29 - Hannah Benn
5/07 - Tiffany Biichle	5/12 - Sam McMillan	5/23 - Juanita Davis	5/29 - Dave Murray
5/07 - Rebekah Hall	5/14 - Vance Hardiman	5/23 - Maya Perry	5/30 - Adriana Anguiano
5/07 - Tania Mora	5/14 - Karlyn Tejada	5/23 - Josselynn Polles	5/30 - Jorge Orosa
5/08 - Peyton Housh	5/15 - Joseph Hall	5/24 - Jessica Boone	5/31 - Angel Alzamora
5/08 - Alyssa Koury	5/16 - Gabriela Murphy	5/25 - Rachel Hensley	5/31 - Monica Franceschi
5/08 - Sebastian Mitchell	5/16 - Vanessa Smith	5/25 - Chrischelle Polles	



## Music Ministry



School will soon be out and events are coming to a close. Our Young Musicians presented a spectacular job of *Kingdom Connection*. They sang from their hearts presenting the Kings of the Bible. **Thank you** Mrs. Lori and her special adult crew. What would she do without you?! They have a heart of service and it shows. We can't wait till next year to see the Bible come to life through song. With summer upon us, I believe they are ready for a break. Although, this does not mean a break from church, just

a rest from children's choir. We will offer mission classes for the summer, so keep your ears tuned.

*Submerged!* Our VBS theme, June 20—24th. We are busy planning and working on exciting Bible stories, games, crafts, and songs. I don't know which one is my favorite! We begin at 8:30 am until 12:30 pm. Come join the excitement!

Here is a date you will not want to miss, August 21st. *Steve Green* will be in concert here at FBC. You may not know him by

name, but you know his music. Many of our members have sung his songs as solos before. Jump on line and check him out. This is a tremendous blessing coming our way. August may sound like a long way away, but you know how time flies. You will be hearing more news as the day draws closer.

Singing for HIM,  
*Pam*



### Stewardship

April 2016

<b>Contributions for April 2016:</b>	<b>\$ 46,587.30</b>
<b>Monthly budget requirements:</b>	<b>\$ 46,595.00</b>
<b>YTD Contributions:</b>	<b>\$ 373,895.13</b>
<b>YTD Budget:</b>	<b>\$ 349,462.50</b>

# UPCOMING ACTIVITIES



## Women on Mission

Invite all ladies to our  
Mother's Day Tea

May 7th 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Bring your favorite tea cup and wear  
your favorite hat!



All men are invited Saturday,  
May 7, 8:00 a.m.



28205 SW 125th Ave, Homestead, FL 33030

Join us Thursday, May 26, 11:30 a.m.,  
as we serve meals and distribute Bibles  
to the homeless.

## 2016 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 29.



## Vacation Bible School

June 20 - 24, 8:30am - 12:30pm



Pre-k4 thru Grade 6. Preschoolers must have been 4 by 9/1/15. Register  
online [www.fbchomestead.org](http://www.fbchomestead.org) or call the church office 305-247-1662.

ONLINE:  
WWW.FBCHOMESTEAD.ORG

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
FIRST BAPTIST  
CHURCH OF  
HOMESTEAD, FL



Primary Business Address  
Your Address Line 2  
Your Address Line 3  
Your Address Line 4

Your business tag line here.



The arrival of May means that the school year is rapidly drawing to a close and summer break will soon be upon us. Before we close the door on this school year, though, here's a look at what's going on in our Student Ministry this month.

First, on Wednesday nights at **ENCOUNTER** we're going to begin a new message series called **#squadgoals**. Friendships are a crucial part of the lives of teenagers. In many ways, a teenager's friends play a powerfully influential role in their life. In this series, we'll be taking a look at the Biblical principles for forming and maintaining healthy friendships. I'd like to take this opportunity to invite all of our students to join us at **ENCOUNTER** as we explore what the Scriptures have to say about our friendships.

Second, our **Mystery Dinner Theater** will be Friday, May 13. Students who signed up to participate will enjoy dinner and an interactive part in a Clue-style game.

Third, on Monday, May 30, we are inviting all of our students and their families to join us at the church for a **Memorial Day Picnic**. We're grilling hamburgers and hot dogs and will have a variety of games for all ages. In order to help us adequately prepare, we're asking families to RSVP by Wednesday, May 25.

Fourth, since graduation is next month, we are in the process of collecting information from all of our graduating seniors. If you are a graduating senior and have not already received your letter and information card in the mail, please contact the church office and let us know so we can get that to you as soon as possible. Please help

us make sure that all of our graduates are recognized for their accomplishment.

Finally, this month I'm highlighting the core value of **Worldwide Evangelism**. This core value highlights the truth that God has commanded us to take the gospel to our community, the ends of the earth, and everywhere in between. We want our students to understand that they are **always** on mission—no matter where they are or what they are doing! We want to do everything we possibly can to equip them to live out that mission of making disciples of **all** peoples!

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

For His Glory,  
Joe

