



# The Way

December 2010

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

### FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

There is a phrase that you are going to be hearing a lot in upcoming months. The phrase is "Building for the Future." That is the theme for our building campaign that will begin next month. Technically, the campaign has already begun, with numerous teams at work making the many preparations involved. Starting in January, there will be Sunday School lessons, testimonies, a banquet and a message series designed to bring us together to pray and seek God about what He would have each of us to do.

Speaking of "Building for the Future," we are where we are today because yesterday, someone else built for the future that is today. We continue to be indebted to those who sacrificed so that FBCH could have an attractive facility at a good location with the necessary room for future growth. I wasn't here in 1992 when Hurricane Andrew brought its devastation, but anyone can look and see that we are still trying to catch up in terms of space to accommodate our ministry. Some of you were here in those days and when the call was sounded to provide a new multi-purpose worship facility, you personally gave to make it happen. It's eighteen years later and it's time for that same call to sound.

Personally, I am not a fan of buildings

for the sake of buildings. I care more about building the Kingdom than I do building facilities. The structures we erect will stand for awhile, maybe even centuries, but eventually they will fall. The Kingdom of God, however, is forever. In fact, the only time a church should build facilities is when doing so will enable them to build the Kingdom. From the bottom of my heart, I believe that this is one of those times.

The number one question you ought to be asking as we talk about "Building for the Future" is "Why do we believe that this is what God would have us to do?" Perhaps we can best answer that question by asking another. "What could we do in terms of ministry that we cannot do with the facility we currently have?"

**Imagine being able to aggressively plant new small group Sunday School classes without having to stop and ask "Oh, but where would we put them?"** There is a phrase pastors occasionally use that says "In order to grow larger, you must first grow smaller." In other words, we must be able to provide new Sunday School classes to accommodate new people. It is in Sunday School, not the Sunday morning worship service, that someone truly connects with the church body. I often tell our guests, "You really haven't been to First Baptist Church of Homestead until you have visited a Sunday School class." And you're probably aware of the 83/16 rule. When a new member unites with our

church, there is an 83% chance they'll stick around for five years if they get involved in Sunday School. On the other hand, there is only a 16% chance they'll remain for that time if they do not get plugged into Sunday School. I can almost statistically predict whether or not someone will endure based on whether or not they are involved in Sunday School. And the best way to grow the Sunday School is to provide new classes to accommodate new people so that everyone can relationally connect to someone in the body of Christ.

**Imagine a youth worship/educational center that could accommodate more than forty students.** During Thanksgiving week, the youth met on Wednesday night while our weekly prayer meeting took place the Tuesday before. This enabled me to visit a youth "Encounter" service for the first time. Seeing that it was a holiday week, many were out of town, which we expected. Yet even at half strength, the room had a full "feel" to it. It's not hard to see that space is a limiting factor for our student ministry. Furthermore, additional Sunday School rooms will allow us to divide teenagers into more appropriate grades during the Sunday School hour.

**Imagine being able to hold regular church-wide fellowships with the body of Christ under one roof... without separating and meeting in**

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**Sunday School classes.** I have felt that the fellowship side of church life suffers here because we currently do not have a fellowship hall that would accommodate even half of our members for a single event. Currently, our fellowship hall accommodates about one hundred people seated. The new facility will come with a pavilion that will enable us to fellowship together. Fortunately, the climate in South Florida is such that after church fellowships will work any time of the year.

*“The only time a church should build facilities is when doing so will enable them to build the Kingdom. From the bottom of my heart, I believe that this is one of those times.”*

**Imagine additional space for our AWANA ministry that would allow us to reach even more children with the gospel.** If you haven't seen what takes place week after week at AWANA, you need to show up on a Wednesday and look around. To say that it is crowded would be an understatement. When it rains and recreation must come inside, much of what we do comes to a standstill. AWANA would certainly benefit from both the pavilion and additional classroom space.

**Imagine having a facility that equipped us to host evangelistic mission teams throughout the summer.** This past summer we hosted a small team from north Georgia who targeted a neighborhood and did prayer evangelism. We continue to see visitors come as a result of that event and I'm about to baptize the first resulting convert. The proposed facility includes showers so that mission teams from around the country can stay there and be self contained. The truth is, South Florida is an attractive mission trip destination for numerous reasons. It's very different, culturally speaking, from the typical Bible belt community. Exactly 50.9% of the people in our county were born outside of the United States. God has chosen to bring

the world to our doorstep and mission teams could use a variety of ministries to reach them. Imagine that a time of the year in which much of ministry slows down becoming a time when thousands are reached with the gospel. This facility will make that possible.

**Imagine having space for a food bank so that we can do a better job of feeding the hungry.** This would not require much space at all, but it would require space that we do not have. Currently, we partner with Minor's Market, a local grocer which accepts food vouchers to provide for families in need. This is a blessing to the many families we minister to but it limits the number of families we can minister to.

**Imagine having space for recreational activities.** As you have probably noticed, the pavilion section of the new facility can be used for recreation, be it for youth, AWANA or a Sunday School class event.

**Imagine the impact such a facility would have on Vacation Bible School.** You have to have been to VBS here to know what I mean. It takes every square inch at our current facility to be able to reach the number of children we do (one third of which are always unchurched). A new facility would mean more space for bible study and missions classes, not to mention crafts.

If you try, you can probably do some imagining of your own. There is any number of ministries that God may have us to do in the future that would not be possible within our current space. While we should always do our part to plan for the future, God doesn't always give us a ten year plan in which He reveals everything that He wants us to do in the next decade. There are **many more** possibilities that will exist for us with this new facility. So let's not limit ourselves to the benefits I have briefly named here.

I cannot tell you how important it is that you pray for our church during this time. And make sure that you have re-

served January 30, 2011, for our "Building for the Future" banquet to be held at Redland Country Club at 6:30 pm. There will be a children's event taking place at the same time so as to accommodate our families with little ones. Much of what I have discussed in this article will be presented in greater detail. There is no charge to you for the banquet, but you must RSVP.

I realize that December is the month when I would normally write about Lottie Moon. We are, of course, into our LMCO campaign because we must not forsake missions giving in order to focus on a building. And I do fear the possibility that some might feel giving fatigue with our Lottie Moon and Building for the Future in consecutive months. But I also believe that our God is a big God who not only owns the cattle of a thousand hills, but He owns the hills as well. And I would never ask anyone to do anything more or less than what God leads them to do. So seek the Lord in both of these matters. And don't forget whose birth we are celebrating at Christmas. You wouldn't like it if your friends threw you a birthday party, but at the party everyone got a gift but you! Likewise, our gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas offering should always surpass whatever we spend on presents for friends and family.

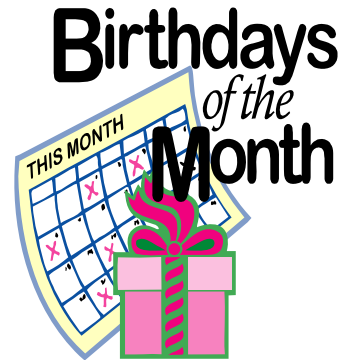
One more thing: The Christmas season always represents an opportunity to reach some who are otherwise resistant to the gospel. Some of your lost friends who might never come to church may accept your invitation to come to church these next few Sundays. Our Christmas Eve service is always a blessing and I look forward to seeing a great crowd. Stay close and stay clean in your walk with Christ. It's an honor to serve as your pastor. Merry Christmas.

Pastor Howard



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

- |                          |                          |                             |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 12/01 - Katie Johnson    | 12/11 - Kim Eldridge     | 12/17 - Bryant Quick        | 12/28 - Charles Crumpler |
| 12/01 - Judy Williams    | 12/11 - Roger Goodwin    | 12/17 - Catherine Stockment | 12/28 - Danny Shellhouse |
| 12/03 - Abigail Johnson  | 12/11 - Chris Lee        | 12/18 - Ayleen Bouquett     | 12/29 - Adriana Blais    |
| 12/04 - Larry Irby       | 12/11 - Daniel Tonge     | 12/19 - Austin Patterson    | 12/30 - Joe Rodriguez    |
| 12/04 - Iliana Rodriguez | 12/13 - McKenzie Breen   | 12/20 - Jessica Guthas      | 12/31 - Rod Davis        |
| 12/04 - Brittany Smith   | 12/13 - Jessica Horne    | 12/20 - Carmen Huici-Lopez  |                          |
| 12/05 - Joy Harden       | 12/13 - Gary Melton      | 12/20 - Tyler Kuehl         |                          |
| 12/05 - Gene Mendheim    | 12/13 - David Rodriguez  | 12/22 - Kaitlyn Terry       |                          |
| 12/07 - Pat Place        | 12/14 - Nicole Hunnewell | 12/23 - Lisa Boone          |                          |
| 12/07 - Lori Tompkins    | 12/15 - Maria Lopez      | 12/23 - Holly Ingram        |                          |
| 12/08 - Scott Tabuso     | 12/16 - Ladona Crumpler  | 12/24 - Jeffrey Mitchell    |                          |
| 12/09 - Donna Portal     | 12/16 - Felicia Rogers   | 12/23 - Stephen Shaffner    |                          |
| 12/09 - Jason Portal     | 12/16 - Mary Wager       | 12/24 - Marge Bidwell       |                          |
| 12/09 - Taylor Wilson    | 12/17 - Tonya Ebersole   | 12/25 - James Peebles       |                          |
| 12/10 - Madelyn DeVary   | 12/17 - Gloria Lawler    | 12/25 - Jorge Rodriguez     |                          |
| 12/10 - Evelyn Guilfoyle | 12/17 - Bill Olson       | 12/26 - Jesse Harden        |                          |



**Music Ministry**



Your sanctuary choir is presenting “One Small Child” Friday, December 3rd, at 7:00 PM and Sunday, December 5th at 6:30 PM. Please invite your friends and family to share the wonderful Christmas story with us. Following our adult choir is our children’s choir December 12th in our evening service. Mrs. Lori and the Young Musicians have been diligently working on “How the Grouch Found Christmas.” This is an event you won’t want to

miss. The Young Musicians choir has grown to a nice number, but Mrs. Lori is always looking for more. Come join the fun!!

Our youth choir will have “The Living Nativity” on each night of the musicals. They will be placed outside next to Krome Avenue portraying the nativity scene. People may think that this could be a little early for the nativity scene, but we need to celebrate the Christmas story year round. Patti and Dean

Sourber are helping with the set and lights. If anyone would like to offer additional help please see the Sourbers.

Tis’ the season to be busy! Let us not forget the real celebration to celebrate.

Singing for HIM,  
*Pam*



**Stewardship  
November 2010**

Contributions for November 2010:	\$	43,107.04
Monthly budget requirements:	\$	45,693.24
Contributions Year to date:	\$	90,856.93
Year to date budget requirement: ( Through 9 Sundays)	\$	100,809.79

# UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

## The Giving Tree

W.O.M. will be Collecting Christmas Gifts for children. Choose the age and gender of the child. Suggested price limit \$15.00 (Wrap gifts).  
**Deadline December 15th**  
 If you know a church family in need, please contact the church office.



**Christmas Eve  
Candlelight  
Communion  
Service**

**December 24  
7:00 PM**

**ARE WE  
THERE  
YET?**

**2010 Lottie Moon  
Christmas Offering®**  
 National Goal: \$175 Million

Week of Prayer for International Missions  
 and International Mission Study  
 November 28 – December 5

Our Church Goal:  
**\$20,000**

imb.org/offering

**BUILDING FOR THE  
FUTURE**

*Banquet*

January 30th at 6:30 p.m.  
 Redland Country Club. Please RSVP to the Church office.

**How the  
Grouch  
Found  
Christmas**

**December 12th  
Children's choir**

Dessert social  
following

**Dennis & Nan Allen**

*Lottie Moon Post Office*

Send Christmas cards to fellow church members through the post office in the back foyer.

*Suggested donation of 25¢ per card.*

*Cards may be picked up before and after church, during the month of December.*

*Mission Trip to Cuba*

**January 14th -21st**

Those interested contact the church office.  
 The cost of the trip would be \$800.00

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I love this time of year! Celebrating the birth of the Savior is a special thing for those of us who have received Him as our Lord. I pray that you would **MAKE** time to reflect and meditate on the birth of the Savior (because it won't happen if you aren't intentional about it). Don't let the number of parties to attend; presents to buy; or cards to send distract you from the real reason to celebrate!

Here are a few things I want to bring to your attention for this month. First, we are going to see the new *Chronicles of Narnia* movie on Friday, December 10. Any student (or adult for that matter) interested in going with us need to let me know no later than **Wednesday, December 8!** Second, our ladies are having their

monthly craft meeting on Thursday, December 9. Any youth girl interested in participating needs to let Mrs. Susie Ebersole know. Third, our Student Ministry Christmas party will be held at the church on Thursday, December 16 at 6:30 pm. We're doing a "Christmas Around the World" theme this year. Students need to sign up for a food item to bring and need to purchase a \$5-\$20 gift for a gift exchange. Please see either me or Jeri Martinez to sign up for a food item.

Finally, on January 8, we have scheduled "The Amazing Race." If you have seen the TV show, you have a little idea of how the event will work. Students and adults will be in teams of 4. They will race to complete tasks

throughout South Miami-Dade county. We are in need of adult volunteers to serve as checkpoint officials and drivers. If you are available, please let me know as soon as possible.

As I look back on another year of ministry here at First Baptist Church of Homestead, I am profoundly grateful for all that God has done and I am extremely excited about all that God is going to do here. I say it every month, but please know how much I mean it when I say this: it is a pleasure and a joy to serve and serve with you! From the Friman family to your family—Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Joe

