



# The Way

March 2011

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

### FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

If you are a football fan, you know that the most important moments during any game do not take place on the field, but in the locker room. I am referring, of course, to halftime. At halftime, adjustments to the game plan take place. Strategies are tweaked and sometimes, personnel changes are made. Likewise, one might say that we are at halftime in terms of our Building for the Future campaign. We had a wonderful banquet in January, the Chest of Joash was observed in February and we continue to get pledge cards that are turned in. So far, the pledges made for gifts to be made to the building fund over the next three years are around \$462,000.00. This does not include gifts that had already been made or anything that might be allocated to the fund from our general budget in the future. This is a start, but we have a long way to go.

The Bible says that in Hebrews 11:6, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." God delights in placing us in situations in which we are forced to trust in Him. We are in one of those situations at FBCH right now. I cannot

predict the future and I do know how this will work out, but I do know that it will not work unless the people of God have faith.

There is a reason why our church observed a day of prayer and fasting recently. It is vital that we, as a body of believers, be hearing from God about where to go from here. As Baptists, we believe in the doctrine called the Priesthood of the Believer. This simply means that every believer has the same access to God and that God speaks to each believer individually (and not just to the pastor). God will not, however, cause confusion or lead us all in different directions. A statement made of the early church in the book of Acts is that they were "in one accord." (No, this is not a reference to the top selling Honda!) This means that they were moving forward in the same direction. For this reason, if you did not participate in our day of prayer and fasting on February 24th, would you do so now? Fasting manuals and prayer guides are available in the main foyer near the welcome center. And dare I say that we need more than just a single day of prayer and fasting to take place? Would you ask God *how often* He would have you fast and pray for FBCH at the present? I believe that if we will be proactive in prayer, Satan will have a difficult time in creating divisions where there are none.

In previous editions of the Way, I dealt with numerous questions that one might have about our needs as a church and why the educational/youth facility was proposed. I want to take this opportunity to handle some final questions regarding Building for the Future.

#### **"Why make a pledge?"**

With the economic uncertainty that is around us, it is understandable that someone might want to simply give to the campaign but without having pledged to do so. There is one very important reason for submitting a pledge card, however. The purpose of the pledge is to enable the church to know what we can reasonably expect to receive over the next three years so that we can plan accordingly. It is impossible to make such plans if no one pledges to give a certain amount. A conservative pledge is better than no pledge because it allows your contributions to be included in planning.

#### **"Will someone be monitoring whether I am up to date on my pledge? Will I receive late notices like a note on a car or a mortgage?"**

Absolutely not. We will be keeping track of where we *are as a church* in

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relation to the pledges that were made. If, for example, the church giving *as a whole* is five percent behind pace, a church-wide letter could be sent encouraging everyone to keep track of their pledges and remain up to date if possible. But there will be no individual looking at your pledge to remind you if you are behind. We've already begun!

### **“When are gifts to Building for the Future to be made?”**

If you have made a pledge to Building for the Future, you will be receiving Building fund envelopes, similar to your tithing envelopes, in which to submit those. You may also use your normal tithing envelope and write on the envelope the breakdown. In other words, state how much of the enclosed amount is for your tithe and how much is for the building fund. Loose checks (no envelope) may be directly given, but be sure to write “Building Fund” on the memo so that it does not go to the general budget.

I also want to point out that you may spread out your pledge over the next three years however you see fit. For example, you may have a weekly amount in mind to give immediately, but an annual amount that is given separate from the weekly amount. Furthermore, you can pledge to give a certain amount weekly during the first year, but a different amount the second or third year. There are no rules here. It is between you and God.

### **“Can I change my pledge?”**

Yes. In fact, now that we know the sum of the first batch of pledges, I would encourage you to pray about doing so!

### **“When will we break ground?”**

This is the question that we hear the most. Unfortunately, the answer depends on several factors. The actual bids on the building are currently coming in and that information is vital. An-

other factor is the total amount of the pledges that are turned in. Once we believe that we have most of the pledge cards we expect to receive, there are decisions that the church will have to make in regards to how we move forward. I will not go into all of those decisions here because I believe that this would be premature. I do, however, encourage you to take part in our monthly business meetings the Wednesday after the second Sunday of each month. Also, when a proposal is made for how to proceed, we will make sure that there are multiple opportunities for any and all members to participate, listen and ask questions.

By the way, if you have not yet submitted a pledge card, you should be getting a call from someone on our commitment contact team. The purpose of that call is simply to ask if you have any questions about the Building for the Future campaign. There will be NO attempt to pressure anyone to make a pledge. It is very important that every person who has a question have the opportunity to present it in a way that is confidential. If the person contacting you does not have an answer, they will gladly forward your question (without supplying your name) to someone who will be able to answer it.

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“I cannot predict the future and I do know how this will work out, but I do know that it will not work unless the people of God have faith.”

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Now I have a question for you: Is the pledge that you have made sacrificial? Someone recently pointed out the enormous gifts that can be made by what may seem like small sacrifices over the course of three years. For example, packing a lunch instead of eating out results in a huge difference in what one could pledge over three years. I propose that the Kingdom work that will take place in the facility

that will be built is much more valuable than a bacon double cheeseburger! Have you looked closely at your budget (if you do not operate by a budget, now would be the time to devise one!) and asked God to show you what is most important?

On another note, make sure you take advantage of the special concert we'll be hosting on March 16. The 57 piece Liberty University Wind Ensemble will be with us. They're touring in South Florida this year and they'll be presenting a mixture of sacred and patriotic pieces. (I'm particularly looking forward to hearing “Stars and Stripes Forever!”) Many of you have offered to host students in your homes that night after the concert, so let me thank you, in particular, for making this concert possible. Be sure and invite your friends. A concert like this is very rare indeed. The concert is free and a love offering will be taken.

Also, our church is now on iTunes. You can download any of the Sunday messages at FBCH on your computer or phone. You can also send a message to anyone who might be touched by it with a single push of a button. Just search “First Baptist Homestead” to arrive at our iTunes site. And those of you who have teenagers in our student ministry, you can also download the sermons your youth are hearing at the Wednesday evening Encounter service. I believe that you will find that they are being fed the Word of God and challenged to live a consecrated life for our Lord.

*Pastor Howard*



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

- |                        |                          |                          |                        |
|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 03/01- Byanca Arcia    | 03/07- Heather Ingram    | 03/19- Elena Sanchez     | 03/28- Isaac Brown III |
| 03/01- Wade Boynton    | 03/07- Sarah Roldan      | 03/20- Helen Day         | 03/29- Kaelynn Sears   |
| 03/01- Eleanor Grant   | 03/09- Lee Sweeney       | 03/20- Melissa Hobden    | 03/29- Jason Garner    |
| 03/01- Russell Philpot | 03/09- Camille Wright    | 03/21- Bryan Dobbs       | 03/29- Gregg Powell    |
| 03/01- Victor Santana  | 03/10- Anita Powell      | 03/21- Valerie Goodwin   | 03/30- Dylan Goodwin   |
| 03/01- Kathy Vasquez   | 03/11- Jared Allen       | 03/21- Meg Morris        | 03/30- Brenda Harden   |
| 03/02- Kristin Benn    | 03/12- Tatyana Hills     | 03/21- Sandra Williams   | 03/31- Margo Mena      |
| 03/02- Mary Jones      | 03/12- Kristen Ali       | 03/22- Lauren Shellhouse |                        |
| 03/02- Craig Nowicki   | 03/12- Kristen Cili      | 03/24- Robin Decker      |                        |
| 03/03- Linda Kelley    | 03/13- Nicole Curtiss    | 03/24- Ramaya Khan       |                        |
| 03/03- Cortny Maxfield | 03/15- Carole Boyett     | 03/24- Martin Rodriguez  |                        |
| 03/04- Kevin Curtiss   | 03/16- Elizabeth Barrera | 03/25- Erin Burrichter   |                        |
| 03/04- Lenna Taylor    | 03/16- Zack Mena         | 03/25- Janet McDonald    |                        |
| 03/05- Bill Moak       | 03/17- Otto Toirac       | 03/26- Jasmine Oquendo   |                        |
| 03/05- Kevin Sweeney   | 03/19- Kendrick Jones    | 03/27- Alicia De Marco   |                        |
| 03/06- Mason Howes     | 03/19- Janet Ivy         | 03/27- Nicholas Sourber  |                        |



### Stewardship February 2011

Contributions for February 2011:	\$ 59,225.98
Monthly budget requirements:	\$ 45,693.24
Contributions Year to date:	\$ 256,102.85
Year to date budget requirement: ( Through 22 Sundays)	\$ 251,312.82

# UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

## First Things First

**Men's prayer breakfast**



**8:00 a.m. in the fellowship hall.**



March 17 to April 3, 2011  
Volunteers needed to host a booth at the fair, distribute Bibles and pray for visitors. Please contact the church for details.

## PRAYER CANVASSING



**March 19th**

Join us as we connect with our neighbors through prayer.

Training at 9:30 a.m.  
Canvassing 10:00 a.m.

## A Conference For Women

*Spaghetti for the Soul*

*A feast of faith, Hope and Love*

March 19th 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Tickets \$40.00 lunch included.

Guest Speakers Kathy Croccoli and Ellie Lofaro

## Men's Cake Bake-off

March 6th  
after the  
6:30 p.m.  
service  
in the  
fellowship hall.



Now on iTunes  
search,  
First Baptist  
Homestead.

Young Musicians Kite flying  
Saturday, March 26th 11:00 a.m.



## Daylight savings time



Begins Sunday,  
March 13th

ONLINE:  
WWW.FBCHOMESTEAD.ORG

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
FIRST BAPTIST  
CHURCH OF  
HOMESTEAD, FL

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



The longer I serve in Student Ministry, the more I see the need for parents to take the lead in the spiritual formation of their children. There's not a week that goes by that I don't see, in some way, the impact that the presence or absence of spiritual leadership from mom and dad has in the life of a student. One of the core values of our Student Ministry is **Family Focused**. Here's what we mean by that: **God has called parents to be the primary teachers of spiritual instruction (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Ephesians 6:4). Therefore we will do everything we can to love, encourage, support, and equip parents to be the primary teacher of spiritual instruction.**

One of the ways we are trying to come alongside parents and help them fulfill their responsibility is through a new resource called **Continue the Conversation**. For those of you who have students in the ministry, **Continue the Conversation** is a synopsis

of the message given during Wednesday's **Encounter** service along with some additional questions you can use to initiate a spiritual discussion with your teenager. If you haven't already been using this resource with your teenager, I'd like to encourage you to give it a shot. They can be found on our Student Ministry website—[www.633students.org](http://www.633students.org). Simply navigate to the **Parent Page** and you'll see a link to **Continue the Conversation**. If you have been using the resource, GREAT! Now, I'd like some feedback. Send me any questions, comments, suggestions, etc and let me know how the resource could be more beneficial to you as a parent!

I would like to also make you aware of a couple of upcoming events. First, Renew Weekend is right around the corner! The dates are April 1-3. Cost is \$40 per student; however, students can get a discount by having friends register for the event! If one friend registers, cost is \$20; if two friends register, the event

is **FREE!** Be sure to register soon! Registration deadline is Sunday, March 20th! Also, plans are being finalized for this year's Summer Mission Trip. The dates for that trip are July 8-15. We'll be heading to Jacksonville, FL and working with Words to Works Ministries. We'll be conducting Backyard Bible Clubs, block parties, and working with local community organizations to take the gospel into Jacksonville. Informational brochures are available in the youth room.

Please be in prayer for these two upcoming events. Also, if you are interested in participating in **ANY** way, we are always looking for people to help us serve. Simply contact me and let me know you are interested! As always, it is a joy to serve you and to serve with you!

For His Glory,

*Joe*

