

First News & Notes

April—May 2026



“What If...?” ~ 1 Corinthians 15:12–20

What if everything Christians believed rested on something that never happened? That is exactly the question the Apostle Paul raises in this great passage.

Paul is challenging the Corinthians and us to the very core with a series of What If's! What if there is no resurrection? If true, then all our preaching has no purpose he says.

If Jesus did not rise from the dead, then every sermon, every message, every testimony is empty. It would all be words without truth behind them. The gospel would not be good news; it would be no news at all. Preaching would become nothing more than encouraging stories instead of life-changing truth.

If there is no resurrection our faith is without forgiveness.

If Christ is still in the grave, then sin still has power over us. The cross would not be a victory; it would be a defeat. We would still carry our guilt. Without the resurrection, there is no assurance that our sins are truly forgiven.

If there is no resurrection we have no hope.

If there is no resurrection, then death has the final word. The grave would be the end of every story. Every goodbye to our loved ones would be permanent. Every loss would be without comfort. The future would be uncertain and ultimately empty.

But Paul does not leave us in the “what if” scenario. He declares one of the most powerful truths in all of Scripture: “But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead.”

This changes everything. Easter is God's great “Amen!” to Good Friday

Because Jesus is alive, our preaching has purpose — it proclaims a living Saviour.

Because Jesus is alive, our faith brings forgiveness — our sins are truly paid for.

Because Jesus is alive, we have hope — not just for today, but for eternity.

The resurrection means death is not the end. It means the grave is not the victor. It means that those who belong to Christ will live again.

So today, do not live in the “what if.” Live in the certainty of “He is risen.”

And because He lives, we can face tomorrow with confidence, peace, and unshakable hope

Let doubters doubt if they will. We gladly join with Christians everywhere in declaring that Jesus Christ is alive forevermore. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

Pastor Alex



APRIL

9 - Diane O'Dell
23 - Keith Woods
25 - Sara Rust

MAY

11 - Bob Dillon
18 - Betty McPhee
25 - Janet Whitlock



Sharon & John McGrail—May 30

**COMING
UP**



Seniors' Lunch & Hymn Sing

Thursday, April 16

Thursday, May 21

Noon ~ Fellowship Hall

Wonderful food and warm friendship!

Come celebrate 154 years of faith and fellowship
here at First Baptist!

Sunday, May 3

Pastor Kevin Mahon will be our guest speaker

Special music from the Lambton Youth Choir

Delicious roast beef dinner following the service ~
please bring a dessert to share



CONSTITUTION REVIEW

The “Constitution and Bylaw of First Baptist Church Petrolia” defines our purpose and structure. This serves as a foundational document comparable to the foundation of a house which provides stability. It includes key components that guide our church. Some of these are our statement of faith, membership requirements, leadership roles, decision-making process, staff, and meetings just to name a few.

Bylaws, on the other hand, expand upon the daily function of the church and provide practical guidelines. These are like the walls and beams of a house that can be changed as needs change. Our core beliefs stay the same but the rules governing our church ebb and flow.

As per our present Constitution and Bylaw document, that was adopted in November 2016, we are required to review it every ten (10) years. This review shall be conducted by a committee comprised of two members of the Deacons Board and three members from the Church at large. Our thanks to Deacons John Lorantfy and Harald Rust, Wanda Pratt, Jean Bradshaw and Cheryl Cassin for taking on this audit. They will present an updated version of the Constitution to the congregation to vote on at a later date.



~ Donna McAuslan

“The very first Easter taught us
this: that life never ends and
love never dies.”

- Kate McGahan



“The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is a fact better attested than any event recorded in any history, whether ancient or modern.”

Charles Spurgeon

We're rolling out the welcome mat!

May 10—Polisi Kivava from *Canadian Baptist Ministries (CBM)* will be speaking on God's work in Africa.

Refreshments to follow.

May 17—Cid Latty will bring greetings from the *Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec (CBOQ)* and we will hear a message from Elie Haddad who we have sponsored for many years thru the *CBM*. He is leaving his current position at the Arab Baptist Theological Society in Lebanon to take up a different role.

Refreshments to follow.



A lot can happen in 3 days

He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'

Luke 24:6-7

Our Heavenly Father is constantly raining blessings upon us, but it is our fear, doubt and sin that, like an umbrella, block those blessings from reaching us.



An umbrella cannot stop the rain but it allows us to stand in the storm. Faith in God may not remove our trials but it gives us strength to overcome them.

From the Deacons...

We members of the Deacons' board, Jan, Donna, John, Larry, and I have met along with Pastor Alex regularly each month to discuss, plan, and pray concerning all known aspects of church life. Gaining the Lord's guidance, wisdom and effectiveness are our goals. We met most recently March 19 and plan to meet again next April 14. Thankfully we typically have good and productive times of fellowship, discussion and discernment.

Preparations are underway for another PA day Bible camp on Friday, April 24 with the Wonder Junction theme for Bible instruction.

We look forward to our 154th anniversary on May 3rd with guest preaching and special music followed by dinner in the fellowship hall. After that on May 10, we plan to host visiting missions leaders associated with our denomination from Africa and then also some additional guests the following Sunday, May 17 including our retiring Partner in Missions couple Elie and Mireille Haddad from Lebanon and also Rev. Cid Latty from our M-L-H Association.

May we all continue to look to the Lord for His strength and guidance.

~ Harald



If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Romans 10:9



MLHA Association Meeting

I joined the MLHA Association meeting on ZOOM February 19, 2026 along with 14 others. Here are the highlights:

- Upcoming is the Annual Meeting on April 18, 2026 at Wyoming Baptist Church.
- We will vote on the New Constitution at this meeting. Some changes include changing the names of both the Annual and Association meetings.
- Annual meeting will be called “Celebration Gathering”.
- Association meeting will be called the “Fellowship Gathering”.
- These name changes are to make them more inviting and welcoming to our members.
- There will no longer be an Honorarium for the Secretary and Treasurer of the Association.
- CBOQ Assembly will be held at Brock University on June 4 – 6, 2026.
- CBOQ Sunday is being changed from the Fall to June 7th following Assembly.
- Lobo Baptist Church has left our Association and CBOQ.
- Cid Latty from CBOQ would like to visit member churches to discuss the life cycle of each church.
- Ron Rye from Wyoming would like to receive stories of interest, prayer requests etc. from churches to share at future meetings. He had 3 short quizzes for us at the beginning of this meeting.
- Charlene Root will be looking for reports from member churches for the Annual Meeting.
- We had “Break out Rooms” at the end of this meeting. The choices were “The Constitution” and a session with “Tracey Bagley CBWOQ. I chose the Constitution to learn more about it.

Hopefully many will choose to attend the Annual meeting on April 18th.

~ Respectfully submitted by Beverly Woolaver

Learning About our Neighbours

~ Wanda Pratt

I enjoy learning new things. It's a great way to stretch your mind and understanding of other cultures and customs. Recently, the opportunity arose to attend the Sarnia Mosque for a Muslim bazaar just before Ramadan began.

A friend and I went and were treated to kindness and pleasant faces all around. One vendor even gave us cookies! And we brought home some samosas for our supper.

We very much admired the clothing for display and sale. One lady had on an exquisite black gown with red embroidery around the neck and sleeves as well as down the front. She explained different areas have different embroidery patterns that sort of identify themselves. She had recently been to Lebanon and said she "went crazy" buying dresses.

Another vendor had some very beautiful dresses with lots of beading and embroidery on them for a really good price. I was surprised at the kids and young people also selling some of their wares: knitting, beaded bracelets etc. I managed to find some pretty earrings too. Our hosts tried hijabs on us and even let us keep the scarves.

One young lady was doing henna art and was very good at it. It goes on kind of thick and washes off when it dries, leaving a sort of orange/brown stain. Mine didn't show up very well with all my 'wisdom spots', bruises and veins, but it was a pretty flower when she started.



The mosque is very different from a church setting. There are no pews, pulpit or musical instruments that we saw. The large carpeted area was for men for their prayer times. A wall separated that area from another area for women and children. It seems the teaching happens mostly in the homes. And there are instructions before going in as to how to purify yourself with washing before entering that area. Also a good sized area for storing shoes before you enter. Since there was not place to perform the purifying right there, I assume it is done at home before going to the Mosque.

The guides were very good to answer questions and gave us a Quran and some other literature. While Muslims believe in Jesus, they do not believe he is the Son of God; that he was simply a good teacher.

There is a Mission in Sarnia to reach out to Muslims lead by Cristina Boersma. It is called "Loving Muslims Together". More info is available at lovingmuslimstogether.ca



The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever:

Forsake not the works of thine own hands. — Psalm 138:8

Have you ever felt as though you are not moving forward in your walk with God? You may have even felt like God was finished with you.

There are times when spiritual progress feels slow. We look for change and see repetition. We hope for growth and notice weakness. It can be discouraging to feel as though we are standing still while others appear to be moving ahead.

Yet David writes with confidence: *The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me.* This is not a declaration rooted in personal strength. It is rooted in God's character. The word "perfect" means or bringing something to fulfillment. What God begins, He continues.

God does not abandon His work halfway through.

We may become impatient. We may measure growth by visible milestones or emotional highs. But God works with patience. He shapes quietly. He refines gradually. His mercy endures, not for a moment, but forever.

When David prays, "Forsake not the works of thine own hands," he acknowledges something profound: we belong to God. We are His workmanship. The very fact that we desire growth is evidence that He is still at work within us.

If you feel unfinished, uncertain, or stalled today, remember this: God is not finished with you. His mercy has not run out. His purpose has not expired. What concerns you concerns Him.

~ adapted from *Digging Another Well Ministries* (anotherwell.org)



"Let them eat cake" is famously attributed to Marie Antoinette, though there's no historical proof she ever said it.

The Fellowship Committee *did* say it and we *did* eat it!

All in celebration of Leone's 97th birthday and Joyce's 96th.



A section of the protective plexiglass covering the stained glass window on the north side of the church was shattered in a windstorm on December 30, 2025.

It was replaced by Sure Signs of Sarnia on February 24, 2026.

God
ALWAYS
KEEPS HIS *Promises*

**7 PROMISES
FROM GOD'S WORD**

**I AM
FORGIVEN**

PSALM 103:8-12, ISAIAH 1:18,
ACTS 10:43, ROMANS 8:1,
EPHESIANS 1:7-10,
COLOSSIANS 1:13-14,
1 JOHN 1:9

**I AM
FREE**

PSALM 118:5, JOHN 8:36,
ROMANS 6:6-8,
2 CORINTHIANS 3:17,
GALATIANS 5:1,
GALATIANS 5:13, 1 PETER 2:16

**I HAVE
HOPE**

PSALM 25:3, PSALM 71:5,
PROVERBS 23:18,
LAMENTATIONS 3:25,
ROMANS 5:1-5,
2 CORINTHIANS 3:12,
HEBREWS 10:23, 1 PETER 1:3-4

**I AM
GIFTED**

ROMANS 12:6-8,
1 CORINTHIANS 12,
EPHESIANS 4:11-13,
JAMES 1:17, 1 PETER 4:10

**I HAVE A
PURPOSE**

JEREMIAH 29:11,
PROVERBS 16:9, JOHN 15:16,
ROMANS 8:28,
EPHESIANS 2:10

**I AM
VALUABLE**

GENESIS 1:27, JOB 33:4,
PSALM 17:8, PSALM 139:13-15,
JOHN 3:16,
1 CORINTHIANS 6:19-20,
2 CORINTHIANS 3:5

**I AM
BLESSED**

PSALM 32:1-2, PSALM 144:15,
GALATIANS 3:8,
EPHESIANS 1:3,
ROMANS 10:12-13