



THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI
Dr. Stephen D. Jones - Dezo Desauguste, Rev. Stephanie Spears - Rev. Victor Velez - PASTORS

AROUND & ABOUT

2018

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Poor and Miserable

I nearly drove off the road. I was listening to the radio and I heard a popular television “prosperity gospel” preacher say to Oprah Winfrey, “Surely you don’t believe that God wants anyone to be poor and miserable.” He was arguing that God intends all of us to be financially prosperous. The Prosperity Gospel has ballooned in popularity not only across the United States, but around the world.

How can one look at the life of Jesus and make such a statement that “surely God doesn’t want us to be poor and miserable?” God’s son, Jesus, didn’t have two shekels to rub together. He was dirt poor. He literally owned nothing. Jesus said, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” (Lk 9:58) Jesus taught, “Sell your possessions, and give alms.” (Lk 12:33) He said, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...” (Mt 6:19-20) He said, “You cannot serve God and wealth.” (Mt 12:24) And again he said, “Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven... For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.” (Mt 19:23-24)

Jesus was not only poor, but he chose to be miserable for our sake. He chose to suffer and die upon a cross, a painful humiliating death. Where does this Prosperity and Happy Gospel originate? From my reading, it doesn’t originate in Holy Scripture but rather from our culture which teaches that wealthy people “have it all”, including God’s blessing.

The most perverse aspect of this theology is that poor people do not enjoy the blessing of God, only those with material riches are blessed by God. The reason this is perverse is because often poor people are happier than rich people, not always, but often. When we were in the tiny mountain village of San Onofre, Nicaragua, I think it struck all ten of us on the mission trip that these people seemed genuinely happy. They were poor and they were not miserable. They lived in a safe village with no police because no police were needed. They looked out for each other and enjoyed the joyous communal life offered in the village. Were there depressed people in the village? Yes, of course. But one would not spend a week among these people and say that they were “poor and miserable.”

There are people who have earned what they own by honest, hard work. We know there are some rich people who have earned their wealth by taking advantage of others. And of course there are generous, honest rich people. But we must be careful not to call material possessions or physical wealth “blessings.” I think when I look at the cars I own, the house I own, the possessions I have as God’s blessings, it presumes that God blesses all our possessions, all our “stuff.”

God’s blessings to us are more often in the form of relationships, of our call to ministry, of the beauty of the natural world around us. Looking at and smelling a rose – that is one of God’s blessings. But the size of my investment funds may not necessarily be a blessing. It can be – but not necessarily.

What we can say is that God doesn’t offer wealth and prosperity to those who follow Jesus. What he offers is the abundant life, life with meaning, life with purpose, a fruitful life. And these words truly have

little to do with physical wealth. An abundant life to Jesus isn't in the size of your warehouses for excess crops. An abundant life is for all who follow the way of Jesus, it is for those involved in serving, it is for those who model sincerity, integrity, honesty, gentleness, wellness, and profound faith.

Practically everyone wants "just a little more money." We often think: "If only I had..." But when this desire for money and wealth becomes our primary motivation – it is not God's blessing – it is the opposite – a curse. We find ourselves driven, chasing after the wrong dreams.

God desires for all of us to have a fulfilled life, an abundant life. And that life is available to poor persons as well as those of wealth. But Jesus was right: wealth often clouds our view and convinces us that we have no need of God. That is why Jesus said, "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than a rich person to enter heaven." The Prosperity Gospel has no relation to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

– Stephen Jones



Winter Jazz Vespers
February 11, 6 pm
Featuring
Kathleen Holeman
& Band



KATHLEEN HOLEMAN



MORE2 PUBLIC MEETING – at All Souls Unitarian Church, Thursday, Feb. 8, 7:00 pm. We are carpooling and hope more people will sign up and join us!



ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CHURCH: Sunday, Jan. 28

A significant crowd and members and guests gathered in Fellowship Hall, enjoying a delicious meal by our church chef, Matt Huckabey. Jessie Carpenter, moderator, called the meeting to order. The 2018 Nominating Committee report was accepted and by consensus the officers and board members were elected for the coming year. The Year-End treasurers report was reviewed. There were many positive developments including income by surpassed the budget by \$6,000. 2018 pledges and projected givers of record is significantly higher than 2017, including 22 new pledges! We rejoice in this development. Punkin Patch ended the year in the black.

There was concern expressed throughout the congregation about the bookkeeping contractor we have used, the lateness of their report, and its many inaccuracies and the difficulty the staff had in convincing the contractor to correct the numbers. Many people expressed their concern, asking the new finance team to review whether we could bring the bookkeeping back in our office, or change contractors. We pay \$16,104/yr currently.

The 2018 Towel and Basin Award was given to Debbie Ebright for her leadership in our church's hospitality ministry and in communion preparation. Announcements were shared and Dezo offered the closing benediction.

ALL ABOUT FIRST BAPTIST PEOPLE

We pray for...

- † Mariko was in an accident in a parking lot on Sunday struck by a truck mirror knocking her unconscious; she is recovering well from a concussion at home.
- † Patty Vann who continues to appreciate our prayers. She is in physical therapy at home.
- † The family of Ken Aber who passed on to eternal life on January 7. He was 98 years old. His funeral was at our church on Jan. 13. Ken was our longest serving deacon, over 50 years.
- † Lloyd Brown at home undergoing cancer treatments.
- † Becky Boden recuperating at home
- † Dixie Kelly who is recovering from a concussion and broken toe.
- † John Hopkins and family upon the recent death of his uncle, Roosevelt Duncan.
- † Dawn Kirton, & Avery, grandson hospitalized with flu-symptoms at home now.
- † Gerry Raines, member of our church living in southern Missouri, recently hospitalized in Rogers, Ark with an obstructed digestive system
- † Jerry and Sherry Mustapha now both at home, over coming mobility issues
- † Gayle Bradshaw Thompson who was hospitalized with back surgery; now home



We give thanks for....

- † Debbie Ebright who was given the 2018 Towel and Basin Award at the annual meeting for her years of service as our church's hospitality leader. In this capacity, Debbie coordinates nearly all receptions, dinners, and other fellowship events. Also, Debbie and Marvin Combs have prepared the elements for communion for years. For all these extraordinary efforts, we honor Debbie!

We rejoice with...

- † The family of Irene Howard as we dedicated the new Hospitality Center in her memory on Jan. 21
- † Chloe Dean, daughter of Remy Dean, celebrating her first birthday!
- † Dezo Desauguste who soon will be applying with the INS for R1 (religious worker) immigration status. She has a work authorization permit.
- † Jan and Steve Jones are proud of their son, Brian, who launched the "Two Dog Hot Sauce" brand last year and his garlic pepper hot sauce recently won 3rd Place in the 2017 World Hot Sauce competition with hundreds of entries!

We share our Long-term prayer for...

JoAnn Gardner - Jan Carrigan - Chet Young - Harriet Buttry - Robert Woods

We share our prayer for Those Far away...

Thelma Sickles - Kathleen Brown - Marie Denton & Family - Maybelle Logan - Geraldine Raines
Harriett Bonner - Bobbie Matson



Compassion in Action
... heart prints of love meeting the needs of the people!

– Join others in making a friendly call on one of our 13 confined members or upon members in the hospital. We will gather for prayer and organizing our visits on these Wednesday mornings at 9:30am: **Feb 14 and Feb 28**. All are welcome. We go out in teams of two and make one or two calls before noon. It would help if you would contact Karen Foster or the church office if you plan to participate.



Upcoming Worship Sundays at 10:50 am

Sunday Feb 4, Stephen Jones, preaching; "Holding In"

Text: Matthew 6:1-6; Jesus urged his followers to "hold within them" a vital, living faith, filled with integrity, not given to "showy" gestures to impress others but to have a living, intimate relationship with God based on gratitude and sincerity. Communion Sunday

Sunday, Feb 11 – Black History Month preacher, Rev. Sandra Campbell
associate pastor, Unity Temple on the Plaza, speaking around Black History Month.

2018 LENTEN WORSHIP PLAN

"Women on the Journey to the Cross"

...The Hidden Role of Women in the Passion Story...

Women have been sidelined during the Lenten Season because few played a key role. However, women were present throughout the story, mostly by their own choices, compelled to stand with Jesus in the closing events of his life.



Ash Wednesday Service, February 14, 2018, 6:00 pm, Fireside Room

Soup and Bread Simple Dinner. We need volunteers to bring a loaf of bread and a crock of homemade soup. We gather around tables in the Fireside Room. The service ends with holy communion and the imposition of ashes. The service and meal concludes by 7:00 pm.

"Prostitutes Entering the Kingdom of God",
Stephen Jones, speaking

After Jesus entered Jerusalem, he lifted up prostitutes as entering the kingdom of God ahead of the chief priests and elders of the people. Why? Because their hearts were open to change. Matthew 21:31b-32

The First Sunday of Lent, Feb. 18, Dezo Desauguste, preaching

"Mary of Bethany: Preparing Jesus for Death"

John 12:1-8; Mary, by anointing Jesus with burial ointment while still alive, provides one of the earliest actions pointing toward Jesus' inevitable death.

She may even have been ahead of Jesus, in knowing and accepting his destiny. Others were aghast by her morbid action. Jesus immediately recognized her wisdom.

The Second Sunday of Lent, Feb. 25, Stephen Jones, preaching

"Pilate's Wife: A Voice of Conscience"

Matthew 27:15-23 Pilate's wife declares Jesus innocent, urging his release. She has a dream in which she feels compelled to speak.

We welcome Andrea Davidson's Hickmon Mills Freshman Choir as our guests



Retired
Ministers &
Missionaries
Offering

2018

RETIRED MINISTERS AND MISSIONARIES ANNUAL LOVE OFFERING

We raised \$936 our goal was \$800. Thank you!



Join us in Mission in Nicaragua in January 2019!

Here's your chance to escape the cold of winter and have a wonderful time of fellowship and mission with fellow FBC members and the AMOS Hope and Health mission team. We sent a delegation of ten in January 2017 and have been invited back for 2019. See the scrapbook in the commons to see the photos of the previous trip. Each member of the FBC delegation felt the trip was very meaningful, appreciated getting to know many of the people of Nicaragua, and learning how effective AMOS is while participating in the work of the mission. In 2017 we assisted in installing water filters to provide safe drinking water to people's homes, assisted with a health clinic to track the growth and gain of infants and children and educate their parents on proper care and nutrition, and a wild and wonderful Bible School.

Tentative dates are Friday, January 4, 2019-Sunday, January 13, 2019. If college students can join us, this should get them back prior to the start of Spring Semester.

Please join us for a **no obligation informational session on the upcoming trip on Sunday March 4th** immediately after church. We'd love to have you join us!

For more information on AMOS see:

<http://www.amoshealth.org> or <http://www.amoshealth.org/walkwithme/> .



American Baptist Work Opportunities at Green Lake Conference Center and in Puerto Rico

Two work opportunities are available for us to assist the American Baptist family at the Green Lake Conference Center in Wisconsin and in Puerto Rico.

Hurricane Maria devastated the island of Puerto Rico last fall. Two work times have been established for us to help in the recovery and rebuilding effort with more to follow later in 2018. The first time is from February 5 through 23. (You do not need to work all three weeks.) The second dates March 26 through 30 with March 25 and 31 being travel days. The work being performed is unknown but is believed to be constructing or repairing distribution centers for future relief and rebuilding supplies. While all are welcome to assist, there is a special need for those with construction trade skills, at least in February. American Baptist Men-USA will cover the cost of food and lodging for its volunteers while in Puerto Rico. Each volunteer is responsible for their transportation to and from San Juan, Puerto Rico. Living conditions may be somewhat primitive – do not expect air-conditioning or evening electricity, at least initially.

The Green Lake Conference Center work week is the first week of April 2018. Volunteers will arrive at Green Lake on the afternoon/evening of Monday, April 2. The work week will end at the end of the day on Saturday, April 7 with Sunday, April 8 being the travel day home. The projects include tree work, wood splitting, clearing debris, road repair, painting, office help, kitchen help, work in the greenhouse, and the grounds. There may also be some minor carpentry, electrical, plumbing, masonry and mechanical projects. Lodging and meals will be provided at no cost. Lodging is in the Robbins Youth Center North Hall so it will be somewhat more primitive than in previous years. The rooms are all single and bunk beds with a bath shared by two rooms. Meals are in the Kraft Dining Hall.

If you would like to assist with either of these projects, please contact me at bhumenczuk@kc.rr.com. I will be in Colorado until February 12 but I plan to check my e-mail a couple times each day.

Bill Humenczuk

FYI

ABWM

Due to things beyond our control we canceled the January meeting. We will meet Saturday Feb. 10 at 10:00 a.m. in the Fireside Room. Our program will be given by Carole Raines, "Walking in Their Shoes: Immigrants & Refugees" We have fellowship and fun and always done by noon. We invite you to join us. If you have any questions please call - *Sue Hansen President, 816-942-1334*

Food Pantry Needs for February is Souper Bowl of Caring: We ask that you bring nonperishables, paper goods, etc. Help us as we again host all the Red Bridge Area churches and groups hosting a Saturday event to bring thousands of canned goods and nonperishable food items for the Red Bridge Food Pantry. There will be soup, salad and desert served in our Fellowship Hall for the entire community.

In Dec. we had 35 orders of which 5 were new. In Jan we only had 15 orders with 1 new. Overall we served 34 adults and 36 children. I want to share with you that I call to remind those who sign up about the Sat. a.m. pick up. As I called a new Client with 7 in the family, he was so glad I called, he wanted to tell me he started a job and would not need the food pantry help. He was pretty sure there were many others in need and wanted to decline the offer of assistance at this time. We really appreciate people like him. They are hard to find.

If you have any questions or would like to volunteer, please call Sue

Red Bridge Food Pantry

Feb 16 Friday, 1:30 – 3:30 pm Sacking Day for the Red Bridge Food Pantry in our Fellowship Hall. We will fill the sacks for families in need in our wider community. Please speak with Dixie Kelly or Sue Hansen if you can help.

Feb 17 Saturday, 9:00 – 11:00 am Pick Up day. If you know of a family in need of food assistance, contact our food pantry leaders. Dixie or Sue. Or have them call 913-313-0250



Black History Month

Rev. Sandra Campbell, associate minister of Unity Temple on the Plaza, has written a number of narratives and stories about famous black women, including "Follow Your Dreams...the Bessie Coleman Story" about her pioneering role in the American aerospace program. She will highlight our black history month with her sermon on **Sunday, Feb. 11.**

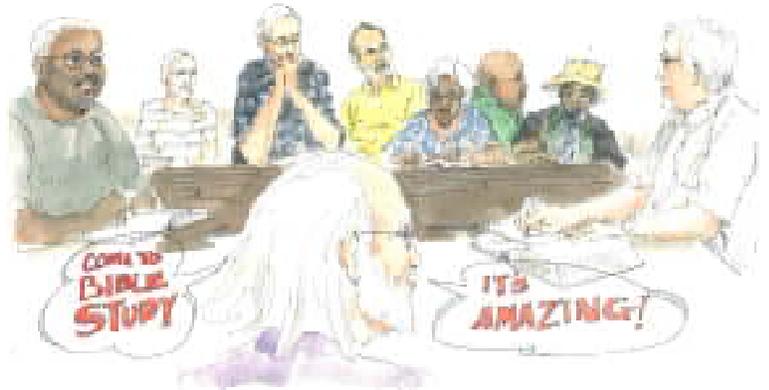
Sunday, Feb. 18, 9:30 - 10:30 am, LEARNING COMMUNITY HOUR, in the Fireside room, Brother John Anderson is a master storyteller. He developed a program "Underground Railroad: The Who, What and Where did it Go." Brother John also presents a program, "Tales from the Black West." Truly, Brother John brings black history to life!

Sunday, Feb. 18, noon: soul food dinner and concert! Two of our members are preparing Soul Food Dinner in Fellowship Hall as our monthly February Congregational Dinner; followed by a concert by Leonard Barbee's singing family, called The Hancock Singers. Once an active singing group, this is a rare reunion for these talented singers and we will have a wonderful gospel music concert at the close of the dinner in Fellowship Hall.

FYI



Board of Deacons would like to remind you the **first Sunday** of the month is Communion Sunday. Please consider the Deacon fund, when giving. This fund is used to help people in need.



BIBLE STUDY – TUESDAY MORNINGS, 10 – 11 AM

Dr. Jones is leading the group in studying the book of I John

All are welcome to attend!



Thank you seems inadequate to express our deep gratitude to members of FBC, for your visits, prayers, cards and phone calls during Jerry's illness. Specifically Dr. Bill Gillen for his phone calls & visits; Karen Foster, Audrey Dibble and Pat Hester for bringing cookies. We thank our Pastor Steve for calls and visits especially, Dezo for her daily visits and all her help. We are blessed to be a part of such a caring congregation. God Bless each of you.

Jerry & Sherry Mustapha



Thank You

To My Dear FBC Family,
Once again I thank you for one of your many kindness to me. Thank you so much for my Christmas gift. I took my husband to dinner and we had a good time. *Love & Blessings Shirley*

Dear Church family,
Thank you so much for all the beautiful Christmas and birthday cards, and all the goodies. They mean so much to me. I am extremely thankful for all of you. May God give you more and more mercy, peace, and love! *Blessings, Dezo*

LENTEN OPPORTUNITIES FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH:

1. *A Lenten Prayer and Sharing Group will meet in the home of Jan and Steve Jones, 100 W. 108th Court (just 3 blocks from church) on 5 Friday evenings beginning Feb. 16 - March 16 at 7:00 pm Dezo and Steve will co-lead this group. Please RSVP on the Green Sheet.*
2. *An Evening of Spiritual Preparation on Palm Sunday Evening, March 25, the first day of Holy Week at 6:00 pm which includes a brief Worship Service around Singing and Praying for Holy Week, a Labyrinth Walk, and a Service of Healing.*
3. *A special Ecumenical Good Friday Service at 1:00 pm on March 30 with our neighboring 3 churches -- a Good Friday "Way of the Cross" as we walk and carry the large cross from church to church with a short 15-minute service in each location as we recall the Good Friday experience of Jesus carrying the cross to Calvary.*



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TIME SENSITIVE INFORMATION

Happy Valentine's Day

Birthdays of the Month

- 2 - Dennis Fugitt
- 5 - Marilyn Greene
- 13 - Shelbi Neel
- 14 - Pat Hester
- 19 - Tom Counts
- 19 - Dawn Kirton
- 20 - Angelica Velez
- 27 - John Barton
- 27 - Glenda Huckabey
- 27 - James Prigel
- 27 - Patricia Vann
- 28 - Brenda Brown

Towel & Basin award to Debbie Ebright
Jessie Carpenter, Debbie Ebright, Dr. Jones



January Youth Bowling

