



August 2017

First Baptist Church Bozeman

The Grind of Creativity

While my job description as pastor at First Baptist is certainly nuanced and diverse, much of what I am asked to do contains a creative element - reading, studying, writing, teaching, and speaking on a regular basis. There is a weekly expectation, from you and me both, for me to create insightful, interesting, and relevant sermons that inform, encourage, challenge, and stir us all to action. It's a lot of pressure, yet I love.

But over time, the creative process becomes more difficult. When I first began, I had thoughts and ideas stored up over a lifetime of reading, thinking, and following Jesus that were just waiting to get out. But now, two years into regularly preaching, the creativity doesn't flow as easily and uninhibited as it used to. Creativity, over time, becomes more of a grind. It takes work. The creative thoughts may still be present, but are harder to capture and communicate effectively. So, the creative must be willing to work at their craft, hone their skills, and form rhythms and practices that can sustain over a lifetime of being creative. And that is a good thing.

That is the process of becoming a professional... at anything. When the work is not as fresh as it once was, the professional realizes the creative process is a grind. The creativity is still there. The good ideas have not disappeared. But creativity takes work. It

takes dedication. It takes waking up each morning and dedicating to the craft. As novelist (and author of the incredible book *The War of Art*) Steven Pressfield says, "The secret is this: it's not the writing part that's hard. What's hard is sitting down to write." Inventing fun, creative sermon series is not the challenge. It's making time amidst a sea of urgency to sit down and work at what is important - to pray, study, read, and write - that is the real challenge.

And that is what I am wrestling with and learning about as I continually trek down the road of becoming a professional preacher - that it just takes dedication and commitment. It takes sitting down and just doing the work. That there will always be resistance to the creative process - and there will always be urgent things that can distract us from the important things.

So, as we all go about our daily lives, may we be committed to the process of creating whatever it is we create. May God grant us the strength, commitment, and fortitude to push through the resistance we face daily. And may we honor God in all that we do and make.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Jason

Children's Ministry

- Mandy Bowker



The summer is quickly coming to an end and the children's ministry team is busily preparing for our new Godly Play program that will kick off September 10th. Please check the board at the back of the church for items you may have in your home that could be donated for the program. Also, we would love if you would prayerfully consider a donation to this important ministry. You can write checks to the church and note "Godly Play" in the memo line. If you are interested in checking out the materials used for Godly Play, you can visit <https://www.worshipwoodworks.com/>. August 27th will be our dedication Sunday for the materials as well as a chance for us to publicly thank the story sponsors and story makers that have made this ministry possible.

There will be a number of trainings for storytellers/doorkeepers as well as an orientation session for parents and children in August, so stay tuned for dates and time. If you are interested in serving as a volunteer for Godly Play, please let Mandy know so we can keep you in the loop.

Children's Church continues this month for children under the age of 6. Politeness, Joy, Confidence, Love, Patience, and Peace are the topics for the next few weeks. We continue to seek a childcare worker for our nursery, so continue to be in prayer that God would send us the right person.

Children's ministry is also accepting donations for snack time on Sunday mornings. Feel free to bring fruits and veggies, organic fruit snacks, crackers, cheese sticks, popcorn, pretzels, or other snacks. Snack donations can be put in the kitchen, but please let Mandy know it is for children's ministry.

Blessings!

SUMMER SCHEDULE

Summer Picnics:

Summer Picnics are held every other Wednesday night throughout the summer. Half of them are held in parks around the city and are used as an outreach opportunity to our community. The other half are hosted by members of our church and are held at their home and/or in their back yards.

For the picnics in the parks, the church will provide the meat, buns, and paper products and we would ask you to provide a side or dessert to share. For the picnics in people's homes, we ask that you bring whatever meat you want for yourself (to grill at the host's home) and a side/dessert to share.

We still have 2 dates available for hosting a picnic in your home (July 26 & August 23), but please keep in mind that you may be hosting 40-50 people, so only volunteer to host if you can accommodate that many people. Please talk with Pastor Jason if you are interested in hosting one of these picnics.

Outdoor Ministry:

As a church with lots of active members, we try to get out in creation together during the summer. We often arrange activities like hiking, birding, camping, and river floating. Please pick up a summer schedule in the back of the sanctuary for already-scheduled dates and stay tuned for more information.



Templed Hills Senior High Camp



An awesome week of worship and fun

The Baptist Calling: Striving for Human Equality (Part 5 of a Series)

- Bruce T. Gourley [www.brucegourley.com]



As I've outlined in previous months, the Baptist calling in the 21st century reaches into the past to inform the present and future. The Baptist calling involves fighting for freedom for all persons, living in freedom-centric community, and striving for human equality. In addition to these three dimensions of calling, Baptists join other

Christians in the calling of redeeming the world, albeit with a Baptist twist.

The Christian tradition of redemption is rooted in Christ, whom the Gospels portray as primarily concerned with delivering God's creatures and creation from evil, oppression and brokenness. Jesus tirelessly spoke of the "Kingdom of Heaven" (or "Kingdom of God") as the redeeming presence of God on earth, a presence brought about by the coming of the Christ (Matthew 3:2) and lived out in the Christ-like loving and merciful actions of humans.

However, religious and political authorities in the Palestinian region where Jesus lived opposed the "Kingdom of Heaven." Branded as a heretic, Jesus was put to death by those very authorities, rising again to commission his followers to carry on the mission of redeeming the world.

From a tiny and persecuted sect, Christianity grew to become a powerful and privileged institution in the centuries following Christ. Gradually coalescing around a construct of other-worldly human redemption focused on earthly adherence to proper doctrine and ritual, Christianity embraced political and military might, abandoning love and mercy. For many centuries, evil and oppressive measures too often enforced religious dogma, resulting in horrific human brokenness. Even some of the leading Protestant Reformers of the sixteenth century forsook love and mercy and turned to political and military might to mandate and maintain doctrinal purity.

Yet the use of evil and oppressive methods to enforce doctrinal-based redemption had long been abhorrent to many Christians. Baptists, a tiny sect birthed in resistance to misguided, self-serving concepts of Christian redemption, sought to reclaim Christ's vision of redemption, that of living the "Kingdom of Heaven" as expressed in the Gospels.

Numbered among the outcasts, persecuted, and often living under theocratic governments, Baptists sought redemption for the poor and despised. They used means spiritual and secular in efforts to protect persons whose bodies, families, possessions and livelihoods were endangered under Christian tyranny. They spoke Gospel to tyrants and willingly endured harsh persecution.

In the 17th and 18th centuries the redemptive witness of Baptists gradually won over many among the lower classes of the Western world. Yet a period of rapid growth and increasing social and cultural prominence in the late

18th century and following garbled the Baptist witness. Many English Baptists became distracted by doctrinal purity, tarnishing their prophetic message of redemption. Many white Baptists of the American South, once against or ambivalent about African slavery, became advocates of that oppressive, evil institution. Anti-Catholic sentiment among some Baptists became more visible than their commitment to religious liberty for all. So culturally mainstream were Baptists of America by the early 20th century that some sought to impose their religious views and morality upon the entire nation, most notably in the Prohibition movement.

In the nearly century since, Baptists have achieved majoritarian status in America and many have allied with evangelical fundamentalists in putting anti-Gospel Christian nationalism above Jesus of the Gospels. In these dark chapters of the Baptist story, selfishness, anger and hate have cast aside love and mercy, leaving a long trail of human brokenness.

Now, the world is boiling over yet again with anti-Gospel religious agendas too often spear-headed by Baptists who know not their own faith heritage, nor perhaps care. Today's all-too-common narrative of majoritarian religious groups using weapons of power and privilege is as contrary to the nature and person of Christ as were the Crusades of old.

On the other hand, the "Kingdom of Heaven" remains alive and active on society's margins. Among faith groups neither powerful nor privileged, faith in Christ still makes a Gospel difference in the world. Minority Baptists, Quakers and other dissenters in the 17th and 18th centuries redeemed the Western world from the evils of theocracy. Abolitionist Christians, including Baptists, of the early and mid 19th century played significant roles in redeeming the Western world from the evils of African slavery. Women and black Baptists of the 20th century to the present are yet helping redeem their own faith, and the wider world, from gender inequality and racial hatred.

Today, the work of redemption is far from finished. Evil, oppression and brokenness remains, with no end in sight. Wars, terrorism, theocracy, greed, genocide, starvation, human inequality, hatred, racism, discrimination, child abuse, human trafficking, ecological devastation, loneliness, despair and hopelessness are all too real in our world. These and much more have yet to be redeemed by the "Kingdom of Heaven."

The call of Christ remains. Will we answer the call by forsaking the alluring evils of power, privilege, selfishness, forced doctrinal purity and legislated religion, and instead follow Christ by faithfully and redemptively living lives of love and mercy in word and action?

Bruce is executive director of the Baptist History and Heritage Society (baptisthistory.org), a non-profit organization devoted to the communication of Baptist principles and identity.

Leadership Team Meeting Report

- Robin Moore, Secretary



The Leadership Team reviewed the First Baptist Church (FBC) financial report for June at our meeting on July 19. The Non-Designated General Fund balance was \$58,120 as of 6/30/17. The Pledge & Plate giving for June was \$3,853. June expenses (General

Fund + Escrow Fund contribution) were \$6,413 (No Sr. Pastor). This included a \$2,786 payment for the new landscaping which is being donated by several families. We were short \$2,560 in covering our June expenses with the Pledge & Plate giving for the month. June expenses including the Sr. Pastor were \$11,610.

Our third quarter donation to ABCNW Region (\$375) was paid in July, as was the \$150 donation to International Ministries missionaries. This quarter our donation will support Jae Stockton from Billings who has been commissioned to serve in Mexico and is in need of financial support. The America for Christ offering of \$70 was sent to ABCNW Region, and currently we are collecting for the One Great Hour of Sharing offering. Envelopes and informational materials are available on the back table in the sanctuary. We have collected \$430 so far for the Godly Play curriculum materials for the fall children's program.

As Gary Cook mentioned in the July Link, The Rock received a grant from the Gilhousen Family Foundation, as well as the opportunity for more funding through a matching grant. With these funds, as well as other smaller grants and donations received, The Rock should be able to open this fall. The Rock Board will be meeting to craft a new budget, to make fundraising plans, and to discuss restructuring the staff for the coming school year.

Pastor Jason and Gary Cook directed the Templed Hills Senior High Camp the week of July 24-29. Pat Flemming served as Camp Counselor. FBC will be in charge of Templed Hills Family Camp again this year over Labor Day weekend, September 1-4. There will be planning meetings over the next few weeks, and all are encouraged to be a part of preparing for this special camp weekend.

Pastor Jason and family will be out-of-town for four days during the first week of August. Rev. Lynn Baker-Dooley, a former pastor of FBC, will be the guest

speaker on Sunday, August 6.

The Ministry Teams will start to meet regularly in the fall to help plan and organize fall programs and activities. The Children's Ministry Team has been active over the summer with the preparation of the Godly Play curriculum materials for the fall children's program. Carl Fahlstrom has cut out all of the wooden figures for the stories. These need to be sanded and stained, and other materials using fabric and burlap need to be created. More work days are planned for August, so please consider joining the group to help out. The library room in the basement will be devoted to the Godly Play program. Take a peek to see how the classroom is progressing. We will try to advertise this Montessori-based Christian Education program at Montessori schools and in the community before the fall kick-off on Sunday, September 10.

Remember to keep Pastor Jason and his family, the church, and The Rock in your prayers daily as we all work together to discern God's will and direction for FBC and The Rock. Pray that the Lord will help to meet our needs and that we will be a faithful church in all that we do. Also pray for your Leadership Team as they seek God's wisdom and guidance for FBC. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to speak with Pastor Jason or members of the Leadership Team. Leadership Team members are: Gary Cook, Grace Holiday, Austin Beard, Robin Moore, and Carl Fahlstrom.



2017 Summer Camps

August 3-6 - Voices in the Hills

September 1-4 - Family Camp

templedhillscamp.org



First Baptist Church



August 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Denotes Anniversary Denotes Birthday		1 9:30am All Church Bible Study	2	3 5pm - Cancer Group	4 Joe Barnett	5
6 9:00 - Adult & Youth Sunday School 10:30 - Worship Lynn Baker-Dooley preaching	7	8 9:30am All Church Bible Study	9 6pm - Summer Picnic @ Bozeman Beach 	10 5pm - Cancer Group Abrams	11	12
13 9:00 - Adult & Youth Sunday School 10:30 - Worship Green	14 Cassidy Cook	15 9:30am All Church Bible Study	16 Crystal Connie Crystal Walt Gordon	17 5pm - Cancer Group	18	19 Newby (P+P)
20 9:00 - Adult & Youth Sunday School 10:30 - Worship	21	22 9:30am All Church Bible Study	23 6pm - Summer Picnic @ Linnea Skoog's house 	24 7am - Community Ministry Team Meeting 5pm - Cancer Group	25	26
27 9:00 - Adult & Youth Sunday School 10:30 - Worship	28	29 9:30am All Church Bible Study	30	31 5pm - Cancer Group	Sep. 1 MSU Catapalooza	Sep. 2
Templed Hills Family Camp						

Daily Prayer Points

Worship Leaders; Pastor Jason, Mandy, Zoe, & Peyton	Homebound & Nursing Home Members; Hallie, Louis & Chris Kronebusch	The Rock: Gary & Tammy Cook, Alison Curry, John Kawalski	Leadership Team: Gary, Grace, Austin, Robin, & Carl	ABW & Women's Ministries; Family Promise; Cancer Support Group	Community Groups; College & Young Adult Ministries	Our Church: the future mission & vision of FBC
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