

THE BRIDGE

MARCH 2021



A monthly newsletter from
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

of Frankfort, Kentucky
*"The Church at the
Singing Bridge"*

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A LENTEN PRAYER

Lord, we would grow with you
New shoots reaching out
Hands stretched upward
Like leaves newly formed
Soaking up your light and warmth
Lord, we would grow with you

Lord, we would grow with you
In sunshine and rain
In darkness and light
In cold days and summer days
From Springtime to Winter
Lord, we would grow with you

Lord, we would grow with you
And bring forth fruit
That is pleasing to you
Fed by your living water
Giving sustenance to others
Lord, we would grow with you

~John C. Birch

May this season of Lent, a season of fasting and self-denial, of Christian growth and repentance, of change and simplicity, be viewed as a spiritual spring cleaning, a time for taking spiritual inventory and cleaning out that which hinders our relationship with Christ and our service to him.

YARD SIGNS SHARE 2021 THEME

By Kara Johnson, Director of Communications

Since 2018, FBC has utilized a yearly theme as a focus for our spiritual formation. Each year, we have employed an item as a reminder to ourselves, and a way to share with others, of that church theme: t-shirts, travel mugs, bracelets, and yard signs.

In selecting this year's item, we thought carefully about how to reach the entire community regarding building a *Beloved Community*. In a year behind masks, behind screens, from 6 feet apart, how do we share that FBC continues to *be* the church, the *real* church, the church *beyond* 4 walls?

It is abundantly clear that being the church begins with each individual, in each individual home. Placing a sign in our front yard is such a simple way to say, "I care about God's church. I care about you. God is love. I strive to be love, too."

We hope you will pick up a sign from the front lobby closet this year. A \$10 donation per sign is suggested to help cover costs but is certainly not required. If you cannot get a sign but would like one, please call the church and we will deliver one for you.



Photo op! Send a photo of your family in your yard with your yard sign to Kara. You might just see yourself in an FBC publication or social media post!

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SMALL GROUPS THRIVING

In addition to our weekly Sunday school classes that meet via Zoom and our Wednesday evening Bible study class led by Dr. Felton on Facebook live, we also have two adult small groups currently meeting on a weekly basis.

The "Tuesday Book Study" group, currently facilitated by Rev. Amanda Standiford, meets each Tuesday at noon for one hour to discuss books that challenge their understanding of the Bible and encourages them to learn from the knowledge and experience of others.

The "Sisters in Grace," FBC's women's Bible study group, meets on Thursdays at 10:00 am and strive to grow in their faith and their daily discipleship to Christ.

New participants are always welcome. Contact Rev. Amanda Standiford for more information.



In Memoriam

Mary Anna Watson
January 21, 2021

TRAVERSING THE DESERTS

BY DR. KEITH FELTON, SENIOR PASTOR

*MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR
YOU, FOR MY POWER IS MADE
PERFECT IN WEAKNESS.*

2 Corinthians 12:9



Ash Wednesday is the start of the season of Lent which marks a forty-day period representing the time Jesus spent in the desert subsequent to his baptism. This almost six-week period is set aside for reflection, prayer, and fasting in preparation for Easter. Many Christians attend an Ash Wednesday service where ashes are applied to their forehead or hand in the shape of a cross. The ashes are a symbol of penance which is an outward expression of an inward commitment to the principles of the Lenten season. We missed having the imposition of ashes this year, but hopefully that will return in 2022 with our student ministry leading this service.

When we traverse through the deserts of our own journey, we realize just how dependent upon God we truly are. Most of our 'desert' times are unexpected and circumstantial, while other times we put ourselves in the desert through sin and bad choices. Either way, we find out who we are and who God can be to us during these times. When Jesus went into the desert after his baptism, it was not because of sin or bad choices; neither was it accidental or because of some tragedy. Jesus went there intentionally knowing the sacrifices and adversity would bring growth, wisdom, and connectivity with God and humanity. I believe this is how Ash Wednesday and the Lenten season can be for us as we follow Jesus into the desert.

Christians observe this season in various ways. Many fast or give up something desirous which they hope will help them focus and rely upon God more. Others use this time for self-examination and penance.

In whatever ways you observe this season, I encourage you to remember this: Jesus ultimately connected to us through sacrifice. What do we sacrifice in order to connect with God and others?

I read on social media something that was humorous yet resonated in a serious manner with me – "I'm tired of living through historical events!" We certainly have had our share of societal shifting events during the past year or so. We have made our way through some difficult times and still have some way to go before we can get back to some sense of normalcy. I have missed in-person church the most. It is still one of the most gut-wrenching decisions I've had to make in closing our facilities. I am blessed with a team of ministerial staff, deacons, and friends who are healthcare experts who have shared the load of this decision-making process. I am so thankful there is light at the end of this tunnel. The vaccine is rolling out – slowly, but surely. We are working on a plan to get vaccinated folks back in the building. I guess I am just confessing to you that my soul has been wrecked over this. BUT... one thing I know about God that's found in Paul's second letter to the Corinthians – " 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me." So, I am resting in this promise, and my prayer is that we as a church may see the fruits of God's grace and power revealed in our times of weakness. I am so thankful for your support and I look forward to a great in-person reunion.



EQMC WELCOMES NEW DIRECTOR, LINDA WITT

Linda Witt is the official director of the Emma Quire Mission Center following 10 months in the interim role.

Linda was born and raised in Booneville. She is a graduate of Eastern Kentucky University with a Rank One in Special Education. Linda retired after 31 years teaching special education to grades 7 through 12.

Linda's children and grandchildren live in Owsley County, and she is a member of First Baptist Church of Booneville, Kentucky.



EQMC on FACEBOOK

Follow the page, Emma Quire Mission Center, for all the latest updates from the Owsley County center.

EQMC can also accept donations through their Facebook page and is available for Facebook Fundraisers!

CONFESSION IS PART OF FAITH

By Rev. Richard Summers, Associate Pastor of Music

We have entered the Lenten season and begun our journey to the cross. A major component of that journey is confession of sins. We generally like to shy away from this part. We don't like to admit we fail. We certainly are aware of it, but we like to ignore it, or sometimes we simply choose to point out someone else's failures we deem worse than our own. But confession is necessary for forgiveness and relieves us of the burden of carrying its load.

In preparing for this year's Ash Wednesday Service, I was reminded just how few hymns we have pertaining to confession. It is sad to me that such an important part of our faith is not adequately expressed in hymns. Perhaps we really don't like to sing songs that are dark. We prefer something we can tap our feet to, something that makes us feel good. Yet I propose that nothing feels better than the

relief one feels when they experience forgiveness. That reconciliation is priceless, and can feel like a literal weight has been lifted.

Our church music should express ALL our faith, not just the praises and songs of joy. We need to incorporate our times of lament, of loss, and even sin.

The music ministry of FBC strives to do just that. There are times we sing hymns that are unfamiliar to us because the scripture text of the day demands it. Our worship needs to express all that's within us, not just those things we don't mind others seeing. I encourage you to engage your mind as well as your voice as we sing hymns together that express our complete faith journey. Confess your sins and know the joy of the assurance of God's forgiveness!

PREPARING FOR THE WORK OF MISSION

By Michelle Carroll, Associate Pastor of Missions

I'm snowed in during a global health pandemic as I write this, so thinking about being the physically present hands and feet of Jesus in our missions work doesn't seem as doable as it usually does. But this Lenten season I hope you will take the time to explore ways we can BE the Church. Whether that means physically going and doing or not. The practice of fasting for Lent in recent years has often turned into giving up a vice or luxury. But when we go back to the roots of Lent, it's about preparation. Reminding ourselves of the suffering Jesus experienced during his ministry and solemnly repenting of our sins through prayer and other practices in preparation for the glory of Easter.

What if this Lenten season we decided to add something to help prepare us for the work of mission when it becomes safer to physically gather? What if we practice repentance of our sins by exploring and learning about some of the big corporate or society-wide sins that plague us today, like racism, sexism, climate injustice, or other issues? I encourage you to pick up a book, watch a documentary, or research something hurting our world you'd like to know more about. When we understand how deep the issue is embedded in our world, then we can truly begin to pull it out by its roots, repenting of our participation we weren't even aware of along the way. Then we might find Beloved Community.

CREATING LAVENDER MOMENTS

By Rev. Amanda Standiford, Associate Pastor of Children

As we begin this new season, I encourage you to stop by the church and pick up a Lent bag for each of your children. The Lent bags are full of materials you can use with your kids to hopefully create some “lavender” moments at home — places where the purple sadness of the Lenten season mix with the promise of the joy of Easter (which is white on our church calendar). Regardless of your schedule and whether you’re able to participate in our regular Zoom sessions, please know that these bags are available as a resource for you as you guide your child’s spiritual formation.

This season is also an excellent time to jump back into Godly Play if your kids haven’t been participating. The Lenten story is

the story of Jesus, and it frames Jesus’ life and work in such a helpful way — I wish I’d had this story as a child! It’s a story that builds every week, so even if your child has to miss a session here or there, they can easily catch up whenever they’re able to join us. The puzzle project included in your child’s Lent bag, pictured at left, can stand alone, but it will be more meaningful if paired with hearing the Godly Play story each week.

If your child would like to be part of Godly Play but the session scheduled for his or her age group doesn’t fit your availability, please let me know! I’m happy to look for creative solutions and help find spots for all of our FBC kids to join us.

OPPORTUNITY THROUGH SACRIFICE

By Rev. Marcus Pernell, Associate Pastor of Students

As we are all aware, the season of Lent is both a time of remembrance and repentance. It is a time to remember Christ’s sacrifice through his kenotic, self-emptying love that he displayed on the Cross. How might we go about this remembering? We could consider sacrificing something that we love or enjoy doing, not like that of a New Year’s resolution, but more so as a means of connecting and growing closer to God.

For me, this season of Lent is a bit more personal. In light of recent circumstances and changes to my health, I am having to sacrifice my love of fitness for the time being. While there’s a bit of grief and emotion present in thinking about this, I can’t help but wonder what opportunities are ahead to connect and grow closer to God. Maybe it will be the chance to actually slow down for once. Maybe it will be remembering that I am just as human as the next person. Maybe it will be something else.

I wonder what your sacrifices for Lent will resemble in pursuing that closeness with God.

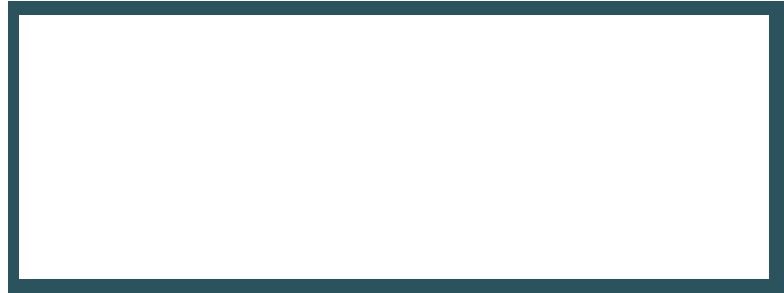


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Published monthly by
First Baptist Church
201 St. Clair St.
Frankfort, KY 40601

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LOOKING FOR THE LAVENDAR PLACES

By Rev. Amanda Standiford, Associate Pastor of Spiritual Formation

As we say in Godly Play, now is the time for the color purple. The season of Lent has begun.

Or, as a friend of mine recently aptly put it, "Who's ready for Lent 2020, Year 2?"

In many ways, it does seem as if we've been experiencing Lent almost continually since COVID began affecting our daily lives just a few weeks into this season last year. We've lived more quietly. We've given up meeting together. We've forgone celebrations and remembrances.

We've felt the sadness and the heaviness of Lent for nearly a whole year now. This has been a long purple season.

So this year, I don't think our Lenten work has to be to give something up or to strip away something that brings us solace. In fact, I wonder if during Lent 2021, we might instead look intentionally for what I'll call the "lavender places" — moments and experiences where the seriousness of this purple season have already begun to mix into the joy of Easter (white on our church calendar), the time for pure celebration. I wonder if this might be a year when we lean into whatever good is before us each day — the Zoom calls with friends, the hints of spring, the promise of coming vaccinations — even as we continue to await the resurrection and the new life ahead.

*"THIS MIGHT BE A YEAR WHEN WE
LEAN INTO WHATEVER GOOD IS
BEFORE US EACH DAY"*