

The Spire

October 2026

Volume 77, No. 9

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

200 Lynn Avenue
Ames, Iowa 50014-7188
Worship Sundays 9:45 am

PHONE: 515-292-9612
E-MAIL: office@fbcames.org
WEB: fbcames.org

First Baptist Church is an open and caring family of faith where worship is central and faith engages both heart and mind. We are warmly ecumenical, delight in our diversity, and cherish our Baptist heritage of freedom. We are called by Christ to share God's love with the campus, community, and the world.

As we seek to follow the way of Jesus, we welcome all people to fully participate in our fellowship: all ages, colors, backgrounds, political affiliations, and physical and mental abilities; male and female, gay and straight, rich and poor, single and married. We are all God's children, and all are welcome here.

First Baptist Welcomes

Rev. Dr. John S. Williams as Interim Pastor

Your FBC executive committee searched over the past several months and are delighted to have found a wonderful person to lead us during the next chapter in our church. The job of getting acquainted, hosting visits, and arranging accommodations ended in a formal agreement with Rev. Dr. John S. Williams on September 10, 2026. On October 4, the congregation will welcome Pastor John who will lead us during the transition period before a permanent pastor is called.

His expertise is perfect to guide us as we reflect on big issues. Those issues include remembering the church legacy we cherish, contemplating what may need to be changed for this time, defining who we are in this Ames community, and discerning what God is calling us to be in coming years. Following that work, a search committee will be formed to conduct a search for a new permanent pastor.

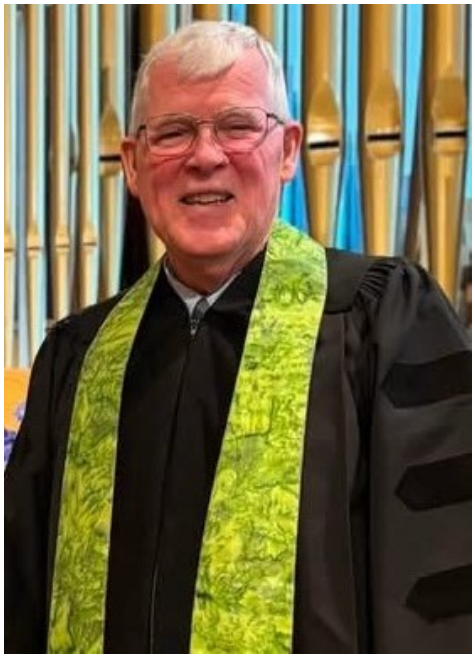
Pastor John will be in Ames three days per week as he commutes from his home in Topeka, KS and plans to work remotely for us another day each week. His wife, Connie, will join him occasionally in Ames as she remains active in their church in Kansas.

Please keep Pastor John in your prayers as you find the many ways you will be needed to support our church in the coming months. On Page 2 is a brief biography provided by Rev. Williams.

With joy and faith,

Your FBC Executive Council,

Julie Johnston-Co Moderator Joyce Davidson- Co Moderator
John Anderson- Chair, Trustees
Dawn Doerr Johnson, Chair Christian Education
Jerilyn Logue, Financial Secretary
Bob Parrish, Treasurer
Kay O'Brien, Clerk



Biography - Rev. Dr. John S. Williams

Retiring after 45 years of active ministry, John has served for 25 as local church pastor to three Central Region congregations in Leavenworth, Wichita and Garden City. He served as an ABCCR Area Minister working with 35 Anglo and Native American churches in Western Kansas and SW Oklahoma, providing resources, encouragement and services to churches and pastoral leaders. As ABCCR Executive Minister he worked with the Region Board and national partners to deploy staff and resources to strengthen and enhance the ministries of our American Baptist Churches in Kanas, Oklahoma and Arkansas, providing resources for pastoral search and call, leadership training, congregational development and relationship restoration. In retirement, John has remained active in ministry, serving as Interim Pastor to provide stable leadership for churches granting pastoral sabbaticals or in transition during a pastoral search. He has also given time as a field advisor for doctoral students and served as an adjunct professor for the contextual learning program at Central Baptist Theological Seminary.

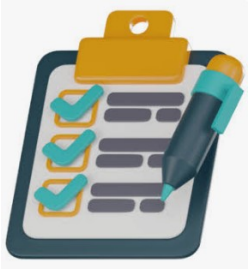
Born and reared in a small town in California's central San Joaquin Valley, John moved to Leavenworth in 1974 to his first pastorate and to attend seminary. John is a 1974 graduate of Fresno Pacific College, earned his M.Div. from Central Baptist Theological Seminary in 1978 and his Doctor of Ministry degree from Drew University in 2012. The focus of John's doctoral studies was on interim ministry and the writing of the training manual used for interim ministry in the American Baptist Churches of the Central Region.

Married to Connie, the Williams have four adult children and five grandchildren, all in Kansas, living in Hays, Overland Park, Lawrence and Topeka. In retirement they took up scuba diving for a time, travel and various projects around the house. Connie is a wood worker, specializing in making rolling pins and walking sticks. She also knits stocking hats for the homeless, making over 1700 knitted hats for those in need. A graduate of Central Baptist Seminary, Connie is also ordained and served alongside John as youth minister and Christian Education director for many years. She is retired from public education, serving many years within the juvenile education system. Married for 50 years, they enjoy new experiences together as partners in travel, adventure and life.

Read Pastor John's letter to First Baptist Church on Page 3 of this month's *Spire.*

Rhythm of the First Baptist Church Year October - December 2026

October 4 - Interim Past John Williams's first Sunday; World Communion Sunday
October 11 - CROP Walk
October 25 - Great Day of Service
November 1 - Budget Forum
November 22 - Pledge Sunday
November 29 - First Sunday of Advent, Hanging of the Greens
December 6 - Budget/Election Business Meeting
December 12 - Christmas Dinner
December 20 - Christmas baskets
December 24 - Christmas Eve service



To The Beloved Community of FBC, Ames -

As I write this note, I am reflecting on conversations and visits over the past several weeks that have brought us together in this new relationship. Early this summer I was asked by Dr. Gregg Hemmen, Executive Minister of ABC/Central Region, if I would be open to consideration as the Interim Minister for First Baptist Church of Ames, Iowa. To be honest, I was a bit surprised, but also a bit intrigued. I decided I would be open to a conversation…and there have been many since that day. In the weeks that followed, after a subsequent conversation with Rev. Jackie Saxon, Executive Minister of the Mid-American Baptist Churches, I began to learn more and more of this incredible church and the paths you have traveled as you have faithfully followed Christ throughout your history. I have also learned that you are not finished with your journey, and in this time of transition, are yearning to discover what God has in mind as you seek to move forward into God's intended future. Moreover, I find I am yearning as well, to have a part in your journey. I count it an incredible privilege and honor to step into your life and history as your Interim Pastor. I am excited about the things we shall learn together as we seek to follow Christ.

I also count it an incredible blessing to be able to step in behind Rev. Dave, after such a long and meaningful time of service as your pastor. The love you have shared together is a beautiful testimony of the health and vitality of this congregation and the faithful ministry you and Pastor Dave have shared together. You have labored alongside one another for 27 years. You have worked together for a significant portion of your church's history. And in many ways, Dave has been YOUR pastor and this has been Pastor Dave's church. But now you are in a time of incredible transition. Last week you bid farewell to Pastor Dave and his family and this week you will say hello to a stranger. I am well aware of the uncertainty, discomfort and grief that is bubbling inside of you. I am also aware that God is not finished with you, that God has a future for you, and that God is sending your way all you will need to move forward. One of my favorite Bible verses holds this incredible reminder from God, *"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."* (Jeremiah 29:11)

In the months ahead, we have some exciting work to do. Along with all the other things we must do as the church that reflects Christ's presence in Ames, we will spend time focusing on five specific areas to help us be equipped for the chapters that are before us as First Baptist Church. We will spend time *Coming to Terms with History*, learning from the past to enrich the future. We will work on *Discovering a New Identity*, gaining an understanding of who we are and who God is leading us to become. We will need to spend time *Allowing Needed Leadership Change*, recognizing that both lay and pastoral leadership will look different going forward, and we need people trained for those differences. We will work to *Re-Affirm Denominational Linkage*, recognizing that who we are as American Baptists is important and will make a difference in the kind of pastor we call next. And finally, we will make *Commitments to New Direction*, developing a shared vision, partnership and commitment for ministry in the future.

We have some incredible and important work to be doing as we move forward. It cannot be ignored and it cannot be left to just a few. This is the work for all of us to be doing together. I want to invite you to step into this time of transition with a new excitement for what God is doing in our midst. The adventure before us is amazing and I hope you will take hold with excitement, energy and open eyes to see where God leads next. I am excited to be sharing this adventure with you. I know your future is bright with the promises of God.

Blessings to you all and I look forward to meeting, knowing and working with you in the weeks and months ahead.

Pastor John

Changes for the First Baptist Church Office Schedule



With our Interim Minister working Saturday - Tuesdays, I will be changing the office hours to be able to work more closely with Pastor Williams on the days he is in Ames. The posted office hours represent only 6 hours in total, but I will be working 10 - 15 hours each week to complete the usual tasks I've been doing as well as picking up some tasks that will be associated with this interim period.

I appreciate the flexibility in the role as First Baptist Office Administrator. I want people to know, for certain, the regular times I will be here. I can also be very flexible in meeting anyone at FBC at a time that works best for both our schedules. If you can not be here during the time listed below, call the office and leave a message, email me, or send me a text on the new FBC cell phone to schedule an appointment. I'll be checking emails from home M-F, one time a day, on days that I am not at FBC, and I'll check text messages when I am at the FBC office during the posted new hours. I am looking forward to this exciting interim time of change moving forward with FBC. You can *always* find me in the office on:

Monday	**11:30am to 1:30pm**	Email: office@fbcames.org
Tuesday	**11:30am to 1:30pm**	FBC Office Phone: 515-292-9612
Thursday	**9:30am to 11:30pm**	FBC Mobile Phone: 515-916-8728

Lori Allen, Office Administrator

First Baptist Membership Directories are available in the church office. Call or email if you'd like one put aside for you on a Sunday or if you'd like one mailed to your home.





Communication! (office@fbcames.org)

From the Sunday Bulletin, to *The Spire*, to the website, to our weekly emails, to the church calendar, and so much more . . . Pastor Dave was *the* communicator of Frist Baptist Church! It will take many people in many roles – office administrator, interim minister, board of trustees, deacons, committee chairs, and YOU! - to fill this role in the days ahead. Here's how and when to communicate with FBC members and friends:

The Spire: Submit information that needs to be shared with the office on the Monday of the last full week of the month for the next month's publication. November submission deadline is Monday, October 26.

The Sunday Bulletin and Projected Messages: Submit information about events and meetings to be mentioned in the weekly calendar or announcement. Submission deadline is **Wednesday at noon**.

All congregation email: Contact the office if you have an announcement or message that needs it's own email. It can take 2-3 weekdays to work this into the scheduled, emergency situations, excepted.

Priority is given to events, meetings, and announcements of FBC. Affiliate organizations like AMOS, other faith communities and local non-profits will be given space when possible. If you're not sure how to get your message out, contact Lori in the office and we'll work to communicate quickly, clearly, and effectively as possible. Stop in during office hours, or send an email. We'll work together to get the word out!

OCTOBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1 5:30p Deacons	2	3
4 9:45a Worship/ Communion 10:45a Fellowship Rev. John Williams Interim Minister Begins	5	6 8:00a Men's Breakfast	7 10:00a Virtual Coffee Shop 6:00p Choir	8	9	10 
11 9:45a Worship 10:45a Church School 1:00p CROP WALK CROP HUNGER WALK ENDING HUNGER ONE STEP AT A TIME BY CWS	12	13 Pastoral Relations Committee	14 10:00a Virtual Coffee Shop 6:00p Choir	15 	16	17
18 9:45a Worship 10:45a Church School 11:00 College/ Young Adult Lunch	19	20 8:00a Men's Breakfast	21 10:00a Virtual Coffee Shop 6:00p Choir	22	23 	24
25 9:45a Worship 10:45a Church School DAY OF SERVICE 	26	27	28 10:00a Virtual Coffee Shop 6:00p Choir	29	30	31

It's almost time for the annual CROP Walk!

Church World Services started CROP walks (**C**ommunities **R**esponding to **O**vercome **P**overty) in the 1940s to fulfill the human right to have access to food. The Ames CROP Walk started in 1972. Local recipients include: Bethesda Lutheran Food Pantry, Food at First, MICA, Loaves and Fishes (Story City), Good Neighbor Emergency Assistance, and SHOP (ISU food pantry). First Baptist Church of Ames has had a team participate for many years, and has been a strong supporter of this cause.

Please join Julie Johnston (Team Captain) for the walk on Sunday, October 11, 1:00 p.m. at Ada Hayden Heritage Park. Your sponsorship would be greatly appreciated! To make an online donation to the First Baptist CROP Walk Team, go to: crophungerwalk.org

Toward the bottom of this page is a grey box where the team name (First Baptist Church of Ames, Iowa) should be inserted. From here, friends can join the team, make a donation, or both!

Julie Johnston, FBC Team Captain johnston2022@hotmail.com



First Baptist Church Day of Service

Dear Folks,
Some of you have been involved with the gathering of materials in the past and I hope we might get some newer input too! The Day of Service is planned for **October 25** and since time is flying by, I just wanted to give you a heads up.

In years past we have put together Hygiene Kits, made Baby blankets, written/made cards for folks, sung songs to people at retirement homes, helped clean up Campustown and I am not sure what else, Hygiene kits and blankets are still in demand as well as getting visits from kids or cards perhaps. the Campustown association is not in business but who wouldn't like some help raking leaves or picking up trash in the neighborhood or any wonderful ideas you might help dream up!

Please let us know if you would still like to help organize an activity for the day. We will put a list up on the bulletin board for folks to sign up for hygiene kit supplies and also ask for an order to be put in if needed.

With thanks and gratitude for your service,

Beth Douglass and Lucille Taylor (Missions)



2026 Theologian-in-Residence
You can register by going to the Ames UCC website (www.amesucc.org) and click on the "Register Now" link at the top of the page, or scan the QR code in the image to the right.

Community Events





Mid-American Baptist Churches Biennial Gathering

October 2-3 – Pilgrim Baptist Church, St. Paul, Minnesota

Our region is made up of 115 churches in Iowa and Minnesota. The regional gathering is a family reunion that happens every two years. Join us in St. Paul for fellowship, inspiration, just a bit of business, and a chance to connect with other American Baptists!

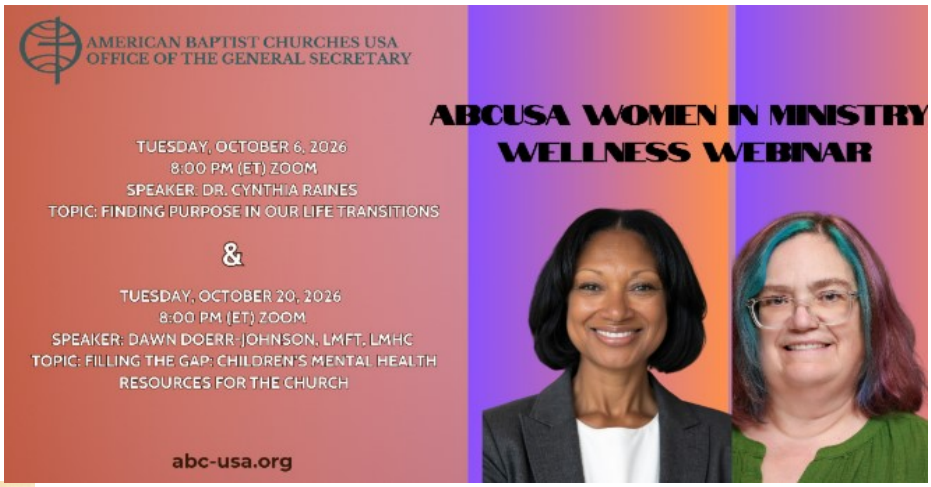
Our church is allotted up to 7 delegates, and everyone is welcome to attend (whether a delegate or not).

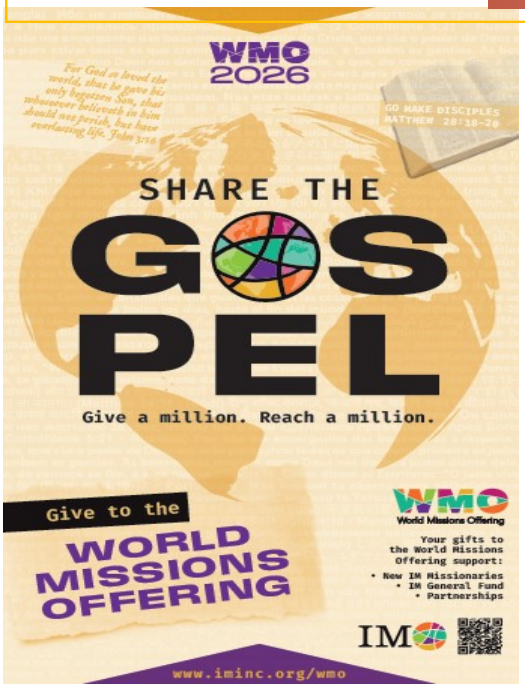
The gathering will be at Pilgrim Baptist Church, 732 Central Ave. West in St. Paul. The Ministers Council Dinner will be at First Baptist Church in St. Paul.

Register here

First Baptist's **Dawn Doerr-Johnson** will be presenting at the ABCUSA Women in Ministry Wellness Webinar. For more information , or to register, go to:

abc-usa.org





In October, First Baptist will be collecting offerings for **International Ministries World Missions.** Look for more information in our weekly October bulletins or go to:

InternationalMinistries.org

for more information or to make a donation.

First Baptist Church
AMES

Our Church Staff

Rev. John Williams	Interim Pastor
Mindy Phomvisay	Director of Music
Emma Phomvisay	Music Intern
Elizabeth Stegemöller	Choir Accompanist
Lori Allen	Office Manager
Erin Topp	Custodian

Church Office Hours

Monday	11:30am to 1:30pm
Tuesday	11:30am to 1:30pm
Thursday	9:30am to 11:30pm

Other hours available by appointment

October



Kenneth Johnson	4
Marian Thompson	9
Fred Borgen	10
Joe Parrish	12
Moffo Ivane	16
Martha Gleason	26
Greg Goodman	28
Lucas Anderson	29
Kyleigh Murphy	29
John Whitaker	29
Dale Grauman	30



We offer a monthly lunch for college students and young adults. Our next lunch will be following worship and fellowship on **Sunday, October 18,** at 11:00 a.m.

Serving in October

Oct 04:

Worship Leader: John Anderson

Ushers: Dawn Doerr-Johnson, Julie Johnston

Oct 11:

Worship Leader: Rev. Dr. Randall O'Brien

Ushers: Jere Maddux, Bob Parrish

Oct 18:

Worship Leader: Erin Johnson

Ushers: Jerilyn Logue, Tom Logue

Oct 25:

Worship Leader: Great Day of Service

Ushers: Daniel Echedon, Erin Johnson



Every Wednesday at 10 am, FBC has our Virtual Coffee Shop. It is an opportunity to visit with friends over Zoom. Participants include regular attenders who generally cannot be here in person. We always welcome new folks to join us! Use the regular Sunday morning Zoom link and join us!

October



Lyndsay and Gabe Whitker	**8**
Ann and Jim Hinds	**8**
Kaylinn and TJ Nugent	**10**
Michelle and Ralph George	**11**



Worship Sunday Mornings 9:45
in person or on ZOOM
Details for connecting via ZOOM at fbcames.org



Dear Friends,

What a day! It is hard to express how much the retirement celebration meant to us. The outpouring of love that we felt filled our hearts. Thank you so much for all of it, and for all of the hard work that went into the day. The worship service was special, with a lot of tears as well as a lot of laughter. The parade of honor was amazing and unexpected! The program with "This Is Your Life" guests, including a surprise appearance by my mom and sister, was very meaningful. All of the food as well as the decorations and all of the attention to detail was wonderful. And we loved the slide show! It meant a lot to us that so many of you were here, some even traveling from other states to be here for the day!

We were touched by the beautiful watercolor of the church and the very generous love gift. Thank you so much to each of you for a wonderful day and for 27 wonderful years. We will be praying for you all and cheering on FBC in the days to come!

With love and joy,

Dave, Susan, and Zoe

