



The Spire

Pastor's Word

Dear Friends,

These last months have been filled with “lasts.” My last Easter with you, my last Music Camp, my last shared service with our sibling churches, my last Worship Under the Trees. This month I will celebrate my 27th anniversary with you at FBC, and I will give my last sermon as your pastor. This is my final *Spire* column. It has been such an honor to serve alongside you these many years. As I prepare to retire, I am feeling a lot of emotions, but the overwhelming feeling I have is one of gratitude.

September 2026

Volume 76, No. 8

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.



photo from circa 1999

I will spend some time looking back this month and you will hear a lot more words of gratitude, but let me just say thank you for being such a caring, nurturing, and accepting community of faith. You were a wonderful community for Susan and I as we raised our daughter, you have put up with all kinds of new and sometimes questionable ideas over the years, from Karaoke Night to a car show, and you have always supported us both through words of encouragement and in very tangible ways.

From the moment I received a phone call from Jack Cleasby as chair of the search committee (we were on land lines, of course!), I had a good feeling about First Baptist, and that feeling has only strengthened over the years.

I have been blessed by all the wonderful music. I have been blessed by the laughter, and by the way you have cared for one another. I have been blessed as I have witnessed you reach out to neighbors in need. I have been blessed as I have seen your generosity in action. I have been blessed by your willingness to innovate and try some new things – through COVID, certainly, but over the years as well. I have been blessed by your friendship and continuing support.

You have not taken yourselves too seriously, but you have taken God's call to love one another and love our neighbors very seriously. And you have continued a wonderful tradition of being “a different kind of Baptist” in our community.

I look forward to seeing the next chapter unfold for our church, and to celebrating what God will continue to do through First Baptist!

Love, peace, and blessings to each of you,

Dave

The First Pastor's Word from Pastor Dave Russell
October 1999



THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH - 200 Lynn Ave., Ames, Iowa

The Spire

Dear Friends,

October, 1999
Vol. 45. No. 7

David W. Russell, Pastor

Having been in Ames now for all of ten days and having the vast experience of one Sunday with you under my belt, I am already feeling excitement about the possibilities and potential for our ministry together.

Susan, Zoe and I want to thank all of you who have helped to ease our transition. The food, cards, e-mails, words of encouragement, offers to move heavy furniture, and other expression of kindness and concern have meant a great deal to us. And rest assured, I won't forget about those offers to move the heavy items!

My primary goal for these first months is simply to get to know the church and community. I would like to have a chance to visit with each of you personally--in your home, or place of work, or over lunch. (I could possibly be persuaded to visit with you at a ballgame or on the golf course!) We all have a "story" to share, and I am interested in hearing your story and your hopes and dreams for our church.

Sunday was a great day. There was a feeling of expectation and anticipation in worship. The music was wonderful, and God's presence was with us. We felt a genuine welcome, and that it truly was a day of new beginnings.

This church has a strong history of ministry and service, and as we stand at the edge of a new millenium, I believe that we have a bright future, because we serve a great God. Please join me in praying for God's wisdom, guidance and blessing as we journey forward as God's people.

With much anticipation,

Dave

Happy
Retirement

1999 - 2026

27 Years of Service to
First Baptist Church of Ames



Don't Miss It!

Pastor Dave's Retirement Celebration September 27, 2026

- 9:45 a. m. - Worship Service
- 11:30 a.m. - Brunch in Fellowship Hall
- 1:00 p.m. - Program
- Dessert follows the Program in Fellowship Hall

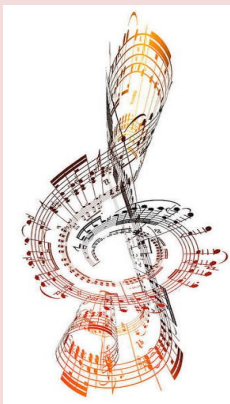
As you probably know, September 27th will be the last Sunday that our beloved Rev. Dr. David Russell will be with us as pastor. The date of the 27th seems appropriate since he has led First Baptist Church for 27 years! What a wonderful journey we have had together with Dave and Susan and Zoe! The morning will begin with worship at our usual time of 9:45AM. This will be a time of reflection, praise, and gratitude as we worship God and give thanks for the bountiful blessings of the past (almost) three decades.

Following the service, we will gather in the fellowship hall for brunch and a time to visit with the Russells and with visitors who may be attending that day. Please RSVP by emailing the church office (office@fbcame.org). Include any guests you plan to bring. We are simply looking for an approximate number for food planning but anyone who couldn't RSVP is most welcome to join us for brunch.

Around 12:30PM, folks may begin to gather again in the sanctuary where Mindy will lead a lively sing-along as the brunch is cleared away and reset for dessert later. Folks who may have attended their own church services but wish to join us for a celebratory program honoring Dave will have time to arrive for the 1 pm event. The program of thanks and memories will be light and joyful in spirit. Finally, we will wrap up with dessert and coffee again provided in fellowship hall.

REARRANGE YOUR SCHEDULE; SET YOUR ALARMS; BUT DON'T MISS IT!

Instrumental Ensemble



Our instrumental ensemble will be playing in worship on September 13. All ages and all instruments are welcome to join us as we accompany the hymns that morning. If you haven't played with

us before and would like to join us, please contact Mindy or Pastor Dave.

August 30 - Worship under the Trees

9:45 a.m.

Join us for worship on the front lawn as we welcome students back to town. A meal will follow with Hickory Park barbeque—bring a dish to share. Bring a lawn chair if you can. (Folding chairs available.)



Hello SEPTEMBER

S M T W T F S

		1 8:00a Men's Breakfast	2 10:00a Virtual Coffee Shop 2:00p PD Student Training 6:00p Choir	3 5:30p Deacons	4 	5
6 9:45a Worship/ Communion 10:45a Fellowship	7  LABOR DAY	8 7:00p Trustees	9 10:00a Virtual Coffee Shop 2:00p PD Singing 6:00p Choir	10	11	12
13 9:45a Worship 10:45a Church School Begins! 	14	15 8:00a Men's Breakfast	16 10:00a Virtual Coffee Shop 2:00p PD Singing 6:00p Choir	17	18	19
20 9:45a Worship 10:45a Church School 11:00 College/ Young Adult Lunch	21 	22	23 10:00a Virtual Coffee Shop 2:00p PD Singing 6:00p Choir	24	25 	26
27 9:45a Worship 11:30a Brunch 1:00p Retirement Program Dessert to Follow	28 	29	30 10:00a Virtual Coffee Shop 2:00p PD Singing 6:00p Choir			

Run For Ukraine 5K - Run & Walk

DATE

TIME

LOCATION

Saturday, September 5th,
2026

8:30am - 10:00:am

Ada Hayden Heritage Park,
5205 Grand Ave, Ames, IA
50010

Along with the families from Ames' Piece & Freedom Bakery - and many other Ukrainians from Ames and the surrounding communities - an Ames High school senior, Uliana, is promoting a walk/jog around Ada Hayden Park scheduled for Saturday, September 5 from 8:30-10am. 100% of the proceeds will go to humanitarian aid for Ukraine through <https://novaukraine.org/>. Here's a link for folks (and Ames area sponsors) to register for Uliana's event/fundraiser. <https://sites.google.com/ames.k12.ia.us/run-for-ukraine/home>

From Our Friends at Ames UCC

The 2026 Theologian-in-Residence registration is open! The 2026 Theologian-in-Residence program will feature Dr. Meghan Sullivan (Wilsey Family Professor of Philosophy at Notre Dame University) and take place from Thursday, October 15th to Sunday, October 18th. The theme of the program will be "Remaining Human in the Age of AI." To view more information, go to www.amesucc.org/theologian-in-residence-20261.html

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.



**Ames United Church of Christ**
2026 Theologian in Residence


**REMAINING HUMAN
IN THE AGE OF AI**
Dr. Meghan Sullivan
Notre Dame University

Thursday, October 15th 7:30pm:
"Is Learning Dead? How AI is Changing Our
Assumptions about Human Achievement"
Public lecture, Iowa State University Memorial Union

Friday, October 16th 12pm-3pm:
For Faith Leaders: Working together on AI Issues
Ames UCC

Saturday, October 17th:
"Remaining Human in the Age of AI"
First Presentation - 9am
Second Presentation - 10:45am
Workshop - 1pm
Ames UCC

Free and open to the public
For more registration, or to register:



Or visit amesucc.org

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.

Confirmed Speakers:



Dr. C. Jeff Woods
Associate General Secretary for Regional Ministries ABC-USE Office of the General Secretary.



Dr. Kathy Maxwell
Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty - Central Baptist Theological Seminary

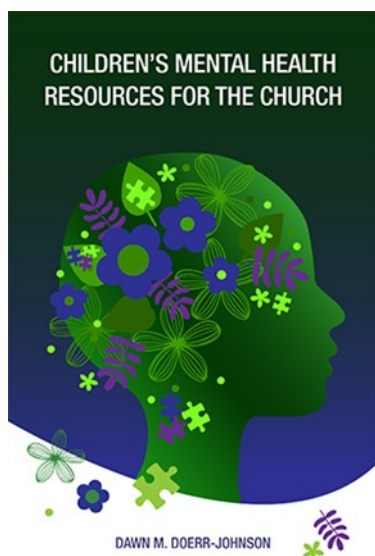


Dr. Mercy González-Barnes regional consultant in theological education and leadership development in Iberoamerica and the Caribbean - ABC-USA International ministries.

[Register here](#)

New Books by FBC Authors!

Two FBC members have new books out this summer! You may find them in the church library.



Dawn Doerr-Johnson has published a book through Judson Press (our American Baptist publishing house) aimed at helping churches care for children and families dealing with mental health issues. A timely volume! Congratulations to Dawn on her first book!

"Children's Mental Health Resources for the Church uses robust case studies to provide practical, detailed, and accessible strategies for attending to children with a host of mental health concerns in the context of the church. This is a valuable resource that will equip people with a passion for mental health, regardless of any training they may have received. It is a timely reference to have as a part of your church library."—Jessica Young Brown, PhD

[Order from Judson](#)

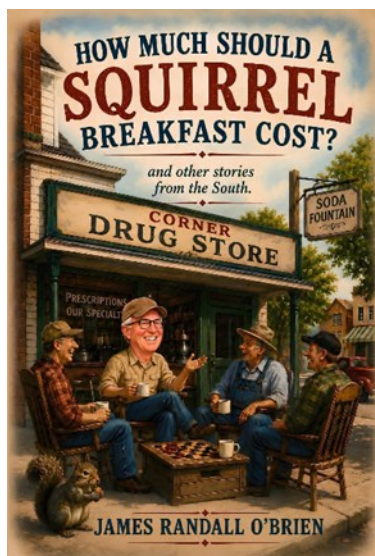
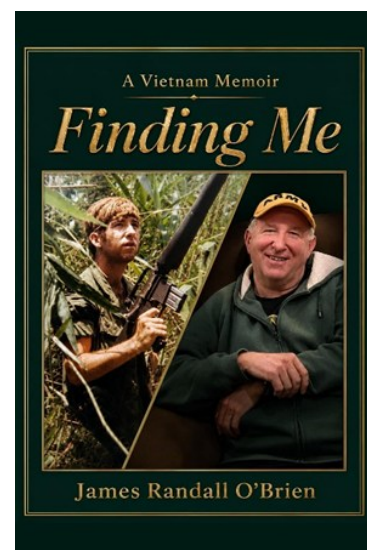
[Order from Amazon](#)

Randall O'Brien has published two books in recent months. In June he published *Finding Me: A Vietnam Memoir*.

"O'Brien tells the story of being drafted, enduring boot camp, serving in Vietnam, and wrestling with the larger questions of identity, purpose, faith, and calling. Along the way, he invites readers into the fear, confusion, humor, hardship, and grace that shaped his life.

More than a war story, this is the story of a man being found by God. Through vivid memories and honest reflection, O'Brien traces the journey that eventually led him to discover peace, purpose, and his calling as a Christian minister."

[Order from Amazon](#)



How Much Should a Squirrel Breakfast Cost? and Other Stories of the South was just released on August 27.

From squirrel hunts gone wrong and Southern family legends to memories of Vietnam, faith, friendship, aging, and loss, Randall O'Brien gathers a lifetime of stories shaped by the places and people he has loved... a warm, candid, and often laugh-out-loud collection for anyone who believes the best stories are the ones we carry with us.

"No one tells a story quite like Randall O'Brien – and it helps that (most of) his stories are true!" - Mark Osler, St. Thomas University School of Law

"Randall O'Brien shares stories that will make you laugh, some may make you cry, but all will reveal life's lessons from a man with a loving heart, sharp wit, and deep and abiding faith" – Maj. Gen. Michael Jones, US Army (retired)

[Order from Amazon](#)

Sojourner Truth Women's Ministry Conference

Join women from across the nation (clergy and laywomen) as we come together to strengthen our faith, enhance our leadership skills, learn strategies for economic empowerment, expand our networks, and nurture our souls! The conference will also include components for teen girls. To learn more and to register, visit <https://givebutter.com/SJT2026> First Baptist's own Dawn Doerr-Johnson will be leading at workshop at this conference.



SJT Workshop Leaders

American Baptist Women's Ministries - Rudd Empowerment Center
"Sojourner Truth Women's Ministry Conference," 9/25-9/26 2026



Ms. Janus Small
Founder and President
Janus Small Associates



Rev. Lisa Goods, Ph.D.
Senior Pastor
Shiloh Baptist Church, Cleveland, OH



Rev. Dr. Alicia Malone
Founder, CEO,
Bondage Breakers, Inc.



Ms. Gina Haas
Director of Investments
American Baptist Home Mission
Societies



Ms. Dawn Doerr-Johnson
Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist,
Mental Health Counselor



Rev. Dr. TaNikka Sheppard
Executive Minister, Cleveland Baptist Association
General Secretary,
North American Baptist Fellowship



Rev. Christine A. Smith, Ph.D.
Executive Director, The Rudd Empowerment Center
at ABWM, Senior Pastor, RMGRCLC
Conference Host



Save the Date!

Good Neighbor Emergency Assistance will be hosting their annual Fall Choral Concert, "You Do Not Walk Alone" on **Sunday, November 8, at 2:00 p.m. at Bethesda Lutheran Church** in Ames. All local choirs are invited to

share a choral piece at the concert. Anyone who wishes to sing in the large group chorus is welcome to participate. More info, including rehearsal times and how to obtain music will be shared in late September. First Baptist is a founding congregation of Good Neighbor, a local homelessness prevention nonprofit. A free will offering will be collected and applied to rent and utility assistance fund for Story County residents facing eviction.

Our Church Staff

Rev. Dr. David Russell	Pastor
Mindy Phomvisay	Director of Music
Emma Phomvisay	Music Intern
Elizabeth Stegemöller	Choir Accompanist
Lori Allen	Office Manager

Church Office Hours

Tuesday	9:30am to 1:30pm
Wednesday	1:30pm to 4:30pm
Thursday	9:30am to 12:30pm
Friday	9:30am to 11:30am

September



Katherine Thompson	2
Stephanie Keat	3
Lucy Stegemöller	10
John R. Anderson	12
Carol Beavers	20
Ethan Phomvisay	22
Dave Russell	22
Rosemarie Starrett	24
Kent Johnson	29
Elizabeth Stegemöller	30



We offer a monthly lunch for college students and young adults. Our next lunch will be following worship and fellowship on **Sunday, September 20th** at 11:00 a.m.

Serving in September

Sept 06:

Worship Leader: Joyce Davidson
Ushers: Dawn Doerr-Johnson, Julie Johnston

Sept 13:

Worship Leader: Kaylinn Nugent
Ushers: Jere Maddux, Bob Parrish

Sept 20:

Worship Leader: Jere Maddux
Ushers: Jerilyn Logue, Tom Logue

Sept 27:

Worship Leader: Susan Russell
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 attendees 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!

September



Jill and Michael Leininger

6



**Church School Begins
September 13!**



Worship Sunday Mornings 9:45
in person or on ZOOM

Details for connecting via ZOOM at fbcames.org