

Baptist Beacon

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF DIXON

PASTORS BUNYAN & RACHEL COCAR

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Pastor's Page

Action Oriented

Do I have to attend? Do I have to serve? Do I have to study? Do I have to pray? Do I have to give? Have you ever struggled in your faith over the part that works plays in our salvation? You are not alone. Plenty of people think being a Christian is just a thought. "Do you believe that Jesus died for your sins?" If you say "Yes" that's usually the litmus test for who is and who is not a Christian. But there's more to it. We can never go back to living as if we don't know Jesus; that would make us "practical atheists." That would not be a good response to the love of Christ. We must put our faith into action.

Jesus was action oriented, even though he did say that we must believe. Yet out of the spring of belief must flow forth the fresh water of righteous deeds. Some stories in the Bible are all about belief, while others tell us to act. Some even show a lack of understanding, but are praised for doing the will of God, like the Good Samaritan. But most often, it is those who follow Jesus that are called to follow belief with action. "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done." (Matt. 16) "A time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned." (John 5:28) "There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.' 'I will not,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. 'Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go. 'Which of the two did what his father wanted?' (Matt. 21:28-31)

It is clear that Jesus expected his disciples to DO the will of God, to be about God's business of good works. However, that expectation has seemed to lessen as the centuries passed. Righteous behavior became replaced with right belief, correct theology, and condemning the right heretics.

(Cont. on Page 4)

Weekly Meetings

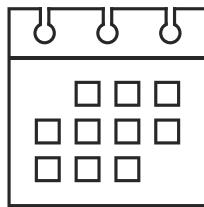
Sunday
Morning
Sunday School
9:15am
Worship
10:30am

Tuesday
Morning Bible
Study
9:00am

Wednesday
Night Meeting
6:00pm

2nd & 4th Tuesday
G.L.A.D. Group
6:00pm
**(PAUSED FOR
WINTER)**

3rd Wednesday
Dorcas Meeting
1:00pm



Coming Events

Feb.

- 9th - Elder Board Meeting 6pm
- 15th - Youth Group
- 18th - Ash Wed. Service 6pm
- 22nd - Community Lenten Service at First Presbyterian (110 E. 3rd St)

March Community Lenten Services

- 1st - Grace UMC (921 E Chamberlin St)
- 8th - First Baptist (111 E Second St)
- 15th - SV Community Church (489 IL-2)
- 22nd - Immanuel Lutheran (1013 Franklin Grove Rd)
- 29th - Community Hymn Sing at Brethren(215 N Court St)

April

- 5th - Easter Service 10:30am
- Breakfast at 9:30am



Meet Your Missionaries

Follow this link for a complete list of our International Ministries global partners:
<https://internationalministries.org/international-ministries-global-servants/>

This Lenten season you have an opportunity to worship with the community of faith in Dixon. We want to invite you to join us every Sunday night throughout Lent at 6pm for an evening of worship. Each night we will be at a different church with refreshments to follow. Let us start this year of Christian action by joining with brothers and sisters on the road to Calvary and Easter resurrection.



- 1st - Jason Gomes
- 2nd - Nancy Smice
- 4th - Tyler Hess
- 6th - Ken & Susan Buccola
- 6th - Brittany Rumph
- 7th - Andrea Miller
- 9th - Brooklyn Johns
- 9th - Ray Marschang
- 12th - James Huffstutler
- 14th - Bob & Carlene Augustine
- 17th - Mardi Huffstutler
- 17th - Niky Parke Druien
- 23rd - Caitlin Gleissner
- 24th - Andy Younger
- 27th - Marion Younger
- 27th - Laney Guerrero

Prayer Requests

New Health Issues

- Darrel in hospital
- Lots of loved ones with Viruses/Flu right now

Other Concerns

- Our nation
- Unspoken requests
- Food Insecurity
- Friends & family members of our church
- Peace around the world and in our country
- Those with depression
- That leaders would rise up in the church
- Those with financial concerns

Praise

- We have TWO #1 in the state saxophonists in our congregation! Congrats to James and Blake! Congrats to John as well for making it to state as a freshman!

Condolences

- The Olsen/Cocar family on the loss of Rachel's Aunt Beverly
- The Buhlig family on the loss of Joe's Grandpa Bob
- The Tucker/Costello family on the loss of Gerry Renken



Continue to Remember

- Bunnie & Darrel Heath
- Bill & Joyce Cruse
- Lance Lopez
- Kaitlyn Marschang
- Pat Soulton
- Jim & Arden Olsen
- Katrina Shirley
- Dale Beeman
- Angie Gomes
- Nina Mardauss
- Pam Vivian
- Devin Beard

Sunday Morning Statistics

December Giving

<u>Current Offering</u>	<u>Missions</u>	<u>Total</u>
1 st \$3,081.00	\$210.00	\$3,416.00
2 nd \$2,575.37	\$240.00	\$3,565.37
3 rd \$2,426.00	\$187.00	\$2,868.00
4 th \$2,520.25	\$578.00	\$3,668.25

December Attendance

<u>Sunday Morning Worship</u>
1 st 27
2 nd 39
3 rd 54
4 th 42

*For reference, we need approximately \$3,000 a week to stay on track with our annual budget

Pastor's Page (continued)

Pretty soon it got to the point where popes and kings sanctioned wars, and said things like, "God wills it." Evil, often violent behavior was condoned and even encouraged if it was in the name of God. Good works became optional and reserved for the truly faithful like priests and nuns.

Christianity accepted and sometimes welcomed those who simply believed, but didn't bear any fruit or show any evidence of repentance or love. We must reverse that trend. Does there still exist, acceptable and unacceptable Christian behavior? You know this is true. I am not speaking of hairstyles or clothing, but matters of the heart, and the behavior that follows. Greed for instance has run unchecked through the church. There are millionaires and billionaires who hoard wealth, and never give to the church nor to charities. Then there are wealthy churches who don't help anyone. Churches do not exist for themselves. We exist to share the love of Christ, in word and deed.

Working towards holiness is not optional. Christian ethics are not optional. Helping people is not optional. We must not lower the standard of behavior for followers of Jesus. What will we say to Jesus when he asks us why we didn't give water to the guy dying of thirst? We were too busy? Too tired to care for another human being? The Christian ethic is not dead, but it has been silenced and usurped by simple belief.

My challenge for us is to reinvigorate Christian ethics and action. To pray, to study, to fast, to lift people out of oppression, to seek justice, to give to the less fortunate, to fund missionaries, to build shelters, to fund doctors and cure diseases. All of these are done from a position of belief. We believe that all people have worth, and matter to God, therefore we must act as Christ would in our place.

God understands our weakness and so I am not asking the impossible, even though Matt 5:48 says "be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect". If we don't at least strive for holiness and goodness then we have not understand God. God is so holy that to accept the grace of God, to get closer to God's goodness is to be changed. I dare say, "We cannot say we believe and not be changed." Sins no longer hold us captive the closer we get to the Lord. As the old hymn, "I Need Thee Every Hour" reminds us, "temptations lose their power when thou are nigh." When God is close to us, our temptations to sin lessen.

Paul writes in Ephesians 2:8-10, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. We are not saved BY works, but FOR works. Let's spur each other on to good works this Lenten season.

Peace,

Pastor Bunyan

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

2 TIM. 3:16

The understanding that the Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God and the written authority on Christian living.

1 PETER 2:9

The responsibility of an individual's private interpretation of the Bible and the right to directly approach to God

ACTS 6:1-16, 1 COR. 6:1-6

The complete independence of the local Church and its interdependence in associated fellowship with other Baptist Churches

JOHN 3:16

The acknowledgement of Christ as our divine Lord and Savior.

MARK 12:17

The absolute separation of Church and State

MICAH 6:8

Church membership which displays humility and grace and seeks justice

JOHN 17:20-21

An ecumenical effort toward a spiritual unity of all believers.

ACTS 15:22

The practice of congregational consensus, ensuring equal right to all and special privileges to none

MATT. 28:19, 1 COR. 11:23-26

The symbolic ordinances of believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper in obedience to Christ.

MATT. 28:18-20

The commitment to being the hands and feet of Christ both locally and abroad in support of missionary efforts

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF DIXON, ILLINOIS

SKWIM TRIP 2026

Last month Pastor Bunyan took some of our youth up to Green Lake, WI for a ski retreat with students from GRR Areas I, II, and III

They said they had a great time and no one came home with broken bones!

