




**Office Hours:** Monday 9:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m. (Closed for lunch) Friday: 9 am – 1  
 402-721-1265

*Lord,  
 Whether I leave behind a year of joy or of trials and difficulties,  
 I pause to give thanks,  
 Thank you for being with me every day of every year.  
 Thank you for making all things new and for giving me the grace of  
 fresh starts and new beginnings.  
 Remind me of your presence in the days to come, even when I feel pushed  
 and rushed by busyness.  
 Be glorified in my life this year.  
 -Amen-*



Lead Pastor Richard Crooks | Youth Ministry Intern Luke Chavanne | Fremont, NE

**JANUARY 2022**

**TWO PART SERIES ---THE CHALLENGES AHEAD**

*“Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.” –Hebrews 2:1 ESV*

I ran across an Associated Press article, dated 12/14/21, with contributing writer Mariam Fam, that really places before us some of the challenges that lay ahead for the Christian community in the coming years. I have pulled excerpts from that article and included them in italics below, because the article speaks so much more clearly than I would. My comments along the way will be in boldface to help distinguish them from the article. We are living in a time when many of those raised in the Christian faith have abandoned the church and even the faith over recent decades. As people allow themselves to drift away, as Hebrews says, those of us dedicated to our churches are left with the question of how to reach them and bring them back, as well as whether there are ways, we can re-think our sense of church to avoid the drifting away in the first place. The article is based around the stories of individual people, as well as recent surveys concerning the religious life of individuals here in the United States. Let’s hear the challenge:

*Nathalie Charles, even in her mid-teens, felt unwelcome in her Baptist congregation...So she left. “I just don’t feel like that gelled with my view of what God is and what God can be...,” said Charles, “It wasn’t a very loving or nurturing environment for someone’s faith.”*

*After leaving...she identified as atheist, then agnostic, before embracing a spiritual but not religious life...she blends rituals at an altar, chanting Buddhist, Taoist and Hindu mantras and paying homage to her ancestors as she meditates and prays.*

As church members, these words can be hard to hear, but it is important that we learn to do so. Notice that the first seed of discontent came in the form of feeling unwelcome...she had different views about society and questions about herself and her faith, and rather than being a place where Nathalie felt she could explore who God is for herself and nurtured to discover how Christ’s teachings are relevant for her own life and world, she experienced church as a place where only one way of thinking was allowed, and those who questioned were somehow ostracized. But notice what happened afterwards: her understanding of God, spirituality and her own faith life was important for her to continue developing and discovering. Because she had discarded everything when she walked away from her church, like so many in society today, she began to fabricate her own religious mix, not based on an absolute truth, but on a blend of things that fit into her “view of what God is and what God can be.” People remain hungry for spiritual meaning in life, for connection with a God who is bigger than themselves, but so many have not found that connection in the traditional church, even though you and I may have. And so, in their search for God, they begin to seek and create a “god in THEIR image,” based on their own perspective and understandings, rather than seek for a God revealed. The studies indicate some troubling facts:

*...the religiously unaffiliated –(is) the fastest-growing group in surveys asking Americans about their religious identity. According to a survey released Tuesday by the Pew Research Center, this group — commonly known as the*



“nones” — now constitutes 29% of American adults.

The nones. None of the above religious affiliations. None of the above churches. None of the above faiths. Another poll goes further:

...a recent poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. For example, 30% say they feel some connection to God or a higher power, and 19% say religion has some importance to them even though they have no religious affiliation. About 12% describe themselves as religious and spiritual and 28% as spiritual but not religious. More than half describe themselves as neither.

Isn't it interesting that they folks continue to talk about being spiritual, religious, or having a connection with God or a higher power, but do not find those connections in a church setting nor in the Christian faith? Why not? How would you answer that question? Is our church a place in which someone seeking these things would find a meaningful connection to God? Would your description of your relationship with God assure them that the Christian faith you practice has religious/spiritual significance they could find helpful in their search? Let me add a couple more perspectives from the article:

Another advocate for the nones is Kevin Bolling...now executive director of the Secular Student Alliance, which has more than 200 branches in colleges and schools nationwide. The chapters, he said, serve as havens for secular students or those questioning their faith. "I think this generation can be the first generation to be majority non-religious versus majority religious," he said...

Wow! Looking forward to the possibility that this could be the first generation where the majority is "non-religious"? Ashley Taylor, 30, originally raised Catholic, describes her "none" status:

"It just means finding meaning and maybe even spirituality without practicing a religion .... pulling from whatever makes sense to me or whatever fits with my values," she said.

What would you say to people like this? How are we to reach them? And how can their rejection of traditional church understandings challenge us as we seek to live and teach a faith that is biblical, relevant, and genuinely meaningful? How would you answer these questions? What would you say to draw individuals like these into a personal relationship with Christ?

To be continued....



### January Bible Puzzle:

Since we just celebrated Christmas by giving gifts, how about a "gift" puzzle? The New Testament has four places describing God's "ministry gifts" to his church. Where are those descriptions?

### January Peoples Puzzle:

This church member went to school to become a beautician... but never got to practice, since school administration absconded with all the funds and records, leaving our friend without proof of training!

(Answers provided next month)

### December Answers

#### Bible Puzzle

Paul's secretary whose name is given is Tertius, who sends his own greetings in Romans 16:22.

The answer to the extra credit question is the scholarly term for these kinds of secretaries is "amanuensis".

#### Peoples Puzzle

The church member with 9 siblings who went to Hawaii during COVID was Patty Raver.

## A Collaborations of poets making changes...

Along with his friend Nicholas Brady, Nahum Tate was a pioneer in church music. At the end of the seventeenth century, the church of England still did most of its singing from the Psalter compiled by Sternhold and Hopkins in 1562. Tate and Brady recast the psalms in more "modern" language, publishing the *New Version* of Psalter in 1696. Even though the old Psalter was often unpoetic and hard to sing, many resisted attempts to change it and resented Tate and Brady for trying to improve it.

Eventually, though, King William III of England endorsed Tate and Brady's *New Version*, and it became the standard psalter in both England and America. Ironically, many people later protested when translators tried to improve on Tate and Brady!

In 1700 Tate and Brady published a supplement of sixteen new hymns to go along with their psalms. This Christmas carol, a retelling of the shepherds' story, was in that collection.

-The One Year Book of Hymns, December 17  
Robert K. Brown and Mark R. Norton

*And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*  
-Luke 2:12-14 (KJV)

*Glory to God in the Highest*



If you know of someone in our church family whose name should be on this birthday and/or anniversary list and it is not, please call the office at 402-721-1265 to let us know.

Birthday	Phone	Date	Anniversary	Phone
Walt Hickman	402-330-7554	3		
Mary Ann Ritthaler	402-721-1623	4		
Marilyn Hillrichs	402-721-0949	14		
Wes Howe (100th)	402-721-4163	20		
Deb Peterson	402-727-4034	21	Jim and Dottie Strenger	402-721-9648
Joyce Jokumsen	402-719-4857	27		
John Dennert	660-240-8699	29		



*Bible Book of the Month:  
Hosea*



**January 6, 2022**  
**ABWM @ 1:30**  
**FBC Parlor**  
**Hostess: Esther**

*Thank You*

**Thank you so much for the food you brought, your cards, memorials, thoughts, and prayers following the loss of our son, Mark. We appreciate it all and what a blessing you are.**  
**Red and Esther Bechtel**

**Senior Residential/ Homebound**

<b>NYE SQUARE APTS</b>			
650 W 21st St. Fremont 402-721-9224			
Dalton Benson	402-721-7717	# 126	
Wes Howe	402-721-4163	# 133	
Charlie Wild	402-721-2158	#130	
Joan Sorensen	402-830-6519	#178	
<b>SHALIMAR GARDENS</b>			
749 E. 29th St, Fremont, 402-721-1616			
Harlan Waugh	(402-753-8046)	#207	
<b>Edgewood Vista</b>			
2910 N Clarkson St. Fremont 402- 753-8800			
Mary Ann Paulger		#7	

WASH ME,  
AND I SHALL BE  
- WHITER -  
THAN SNOW.  
PSALM 51:7



**Geneva Peterson**  
**c/o June Cardwell**  
**12187 County Rd P1**  
**Fontanelle NE, 68044**

**THANK YOU**

Many, Many thanks to all my friends at First Baptist church! I appreciate all the prayers, cards and food given to me during my recent fall and hospitalization. Your thoughtfulness and concerns are so special. Thank you again. Dee Rasmussen



**American Baptist**  
**Women's**  
**MINISTRIES**



**Meetings**  
**Esther Circle - January 10 @ 11:30 -Village Inn**  
**Hannah Circle - January 11 @ 1:30 - BK**  
**Naomi Circle - NO Meeting**

*Have you entered  
into the treasures of  
the snow?*  
**Job 38:22**



## VISION TEAM

MONTHLY MEETING | DECEMBER 11, 2021

Members present: Pastor Richard, Joel Foreman, Marcia Hill, Shelly Bowen, Mary Weldon, Mary Lamberty, Eileen Cash, Randy Cash, Don Charleston, and Dorothy Charleston.

The meeting was called to order by Pastor referring to Jacob's dream of God's words "I will not leave you".

A discussion of the calendar was held. The Bunco party will be the 17th of December.

Mary W. suggested a trip to Omaha to eat out and see the lights could be planned for the 18th.

Chess Club tournament is being held this morning in the complex.

A 100th birthday party for Wes Howe is planned for January 22. Mary, Marcia, and Dixie will plan this event.

Mary Lamberty said coats and sweatshirts are needed for a mission meeting in Amsterdam. She asked for donations of clean small, medium, and large sizes be brought the Sunday after Christmas.

The Christmas Eve offering will be divided between RMMO and Kodiak.

Pastor Richard will be gone from Christmas to January 2nd. Fred Dougherty will be here for his replacement.

Don reported the mulch for the playground will be delivered Monday. Plans are being made to spread it on Wednesday, possibly getting some youth to help.

A discussion of the roof leaks on the parsonage was held. A bid of \$14,000 to replace it was discussed. The signage project is being worked on.

A gift of \$5,000 from the American Baptist Foundation to use for general expenses this year was revealed. An additional amount of around \$50,000 for next year will also be available. A motion to accept this gift and deposit it into the General Fund was made by Eileen, seconded by Marcia and vote was unanimously in favor.

Joel made a motion to withdraw \$2200 from the Youth Endowment for expenses, seconded by Eileen, and motion carried.

The Staff part of the budget will be available on Sunday.



KNOW | LOVE | GROW | SERVE

# New Beginnings

## January



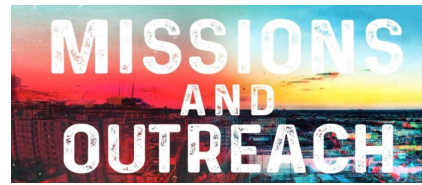
- Day 1: Genesis 1:1-2
- Day 2: Jeremiah 29:11
- Day 3: Job 8:7
- Day 4: Lamentations 3:22-23
- Day 5: Psalm 30:5
- Day 6: Psalm 40:3
- Day 7: Isaiah 43:18-19
- Day 8: Isaiah 40:31
- Day 9: Isaiah 58:12
- Day 10: Ecclesiastes 3:1
- Day 11: Ecclesiastes 3:11
- Day 12: Isaiah 65:17
- Day 13: Ezekiel 11:19
- Day 14: Jeremiah 31:31
- Day 15: Matthew 26:27-28
- Day 16: Hebrews 12:1-2
- Day 17: 1 Peter 1:3
- Day 18: 2 Corinthians 5:17
- Day 19: Galatians 6:14-15
- Day 20: Colossians 3:8-9
- Day 21: Colossians 3:10-11
- Day 22: Romans 6:4
- Day 23: 2 Peter 3:10-11
- Day 24: 2 Peter 3:12-13
- Day 25: Philippians 3:13-14
- Day 26: Ephesians 4:21-22
- Day 27: Ephesians 4:23-24
- Day 28: Romans 12:2
- Day 29: Revelations 21:1-2
- Day 30: Revelations 21:3-4
- Day 31: Revelations 21:5







# FBY



With the month of December comes plenty of opportunities to give, support, and remember the love of Christ which held Him to the cross as well as being born in a lowly manger. We as a youth group were able to reflect on the gift of Christ and His salvation as well as the expectations that come along with it such as a Godly unwavering love as well as an appreciation for all the little things in life we may take for granted. We were able to send a donation for Eric and Yuree Lembke, the missionaries preparing to return to Thailand, that we gathered together throughout this year for our drinks and snacks. I am also pleased to report a growing interest in salvation & baptism for our youth group as well as the ability to help those who are in need. It has been an incredible journey so far with these young adults and I'm excited to continue to see God reveal Himself as well as seeing these kids desire for Godly advice and chase after Spiritual understanding through all different circumstances and events.

Thank you for all your love and faithful support in this!  
 Luke



## Christmas Family Festival 2021



A new position of Music/Worship Leader is under consideration.

Christmas Eve Service is at 6:00.

Respectfully submitted, Dorothy Charleston, clerk



The Kids Club park received and upgrade!!!  
 A big FBC thank you to Lee Holzerland for unloading the rubber mulch and to the many volunteers that spread the new material. We are blessed to have so many servants of God among us.



The women of FBC planned a night of Food, White Elephant gifts, and **BUNCO!!**



# BUNCO





*It's always a good idea to verify times and places,  
Thanks!*

# January 2022

## Van Driver

**Alan Holzerland**  
**402-721-7605**

## Cookies & Coffee

**2 - ABM**  
**9 - HANNAH**  
**16 - ESTHER**  
**23 - NAOMI**  
**30 - SIGN UP**

## Prayer Emphasis

**Health Care  
Workers**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 7am ABM Bible Study 8am ABM Breakfast
2 <i>Communion</i> 10am Combined Service	3  7pm woodcarvers	4 7pm AA Meeting	5 6:15 Kids Club 7:00 Bible Study	6	7	8 9:30 Property Team
9 9:30 Traditional 11:00 Casual Service 5:00 Brown Bag & Movie Night	10	11 7pm AA Meeting	12 6:15 Kids Club 7:00 Bible Study	13	14 10am Nye Square Bible Study	15 8:50 Personnel Team Meeting 9:30 Vision Team Meeting
16 9:30 Traditional 11:00 Casual Service	17  7pm woodcarvers	18 7pm AA Meeting	19 6:15 Kids Club 7:00 Bible Study	20	21	22
23 9:30 Traditional 11:00 Casual Service 5:00 Brown Bag & Movie Night	24	25 7pm AA Meeting	26 6:15 Kids Club 7:00 Bible Study	27	28 10am Nye Square Bible Study	29
30 9:30 Traditional 11:00 Casual Service	31					