



March 8, 2018

First Baptist Church Family and Friends,

In June of 1818, five men and seven women gathered to form the First Baptist Church and Society. Their first gathering place was a local schoolhouse but they also met at times in the courthouse. Their congregation grew steadily with significant increase happening during the period called the “Second Great Awakening” (1790 - 1840) which followed the revivals of Rev. Charles Finney in Western New York.

Just prior to this in 1817, Nathaniel Rochester petitioned the legislature for a new village and county. The Village of Rochesterville was approved but Monroe County took several more years forming in 1821. The Erie Canal was constructed between 1817 and 1825 which opened up the state and our community to a viable waterway for travel and transport. President James Monroe was our country’s fifth president and we were 21 states strong with the addition of the state of Illinois. On Christmas Eve of 1818, *Silent Night (Stille Nacht)* was performed for the first time in a small church in Oberndorf, Austria.

During the next 200 years we saw a great deal unfold in our area, our country and our world. Each generation has had its share of innovation, exploration, hardship, tragedy, and revival. We have shared times of war and times of peace. Through it all, God has been by our side and has blessed us as a faith community. We have had opportunities to face new challenges – some ending in triumph with others in heartache. Through it all, we have had support from this strong community where we have shared our joys and concerns.

In 2018, we will celebrate **200 years**. Using the text from Leviticus 25 as our scriptural guide, we will focus on Liberty and Justice, Mercy, Forgiveness, Stewardship, Redemption, and Celebration. We will learn, grow, experience, envision, hope, act, and celebrate together.

As we continue to make our plans, we ask ALL of our family and friends to consider their support of a **Jubilee 200th Anniversary Fund**. This fund will offset the costs of many of the various events throughout the year, focusing on the Celebration Banquet during Welcome Home Weekend. We would love everyone to be able to attend without any concern for the cost of the event. Please consider giving **200 for our 200th**, in whatever way you can give. All we ask is that you consider giving 200 of something – one item for each year that First Baptist Church of Rochester has served this community.

On the next page we have provided you with some of the plans which are underway for the year.

Our Bicentennial Year Plans Include:

- *Home with You*, a wonderful anthem created just for First Baptist Rochester by our Director of Music, David Labman and funded by a special memorial fund in memory of Susan Boulay,” was performed on Jubilee Sunday. It will be performed a few times throughout the year and can be heard on our website on the *Jubilee* page.
- Three community concerts sponsored by the Music Committee:
 - The Sibley Chamber Players concert was held in the fall of 2017.
 - Rochester Gay Men’s Chorus concert was held on March 2, 2018, at 7:30 PM.
 - The Eastman School of Music Organ Department will be featured on May 4.
- Several learning opportunities and guest speakers:
 - Amanda Tyler from the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty will preach on Sunday, April 15, 2018 and speak at Forum that day. She will also speak to the community on the evening of April 16.
 - Plans are underway for a social justice conversation later this year.
 - An abridged Stanford University remote course on Poverty that was on campus at FBC in the fall of 2017.
 - Our “What if” series in the month of April, a special project funded through the Lewis Grant Fund, will immerse us in learning, inspiring, and planning conversations leading toward the ultimate goal of action.
- Ways we will celebrate.
 - *Jubilee Sunday* in September 2017 kicked-off our year, *Home with You* was performed, and our initial plan for the year was shared.
 - A Community Block Party, on Saturday, June 9, 2018 at our church campus, will feature music, food, fellowship, and fun for our family, friends, and neighbors.
 - Welcome Home Weekend of October 5 – 7, 2018 will begin with a casual Friday evening event including music and appetizers in Hubbell Hall. On Saturday morning we will feature *FBCR history: its people and campus* at an Open House at the church. We will celebrate at our 200th banquet held on Saturday evening at the Burgundy Basin Inn at 6:30 PM. We will conclude the weekend sharing in a special worship service with communion on Sunday morning.
- Additional plans include sharing historical information throughout the year, our anniversary quilt already hanging in the sanctuary, a memory book with an updated photo directory, and other potential Jubilee projects.

Thank you for your generous support of our Jubilee! You may give your support at any time using “200” in the memo line of your check. If you are not able to give your gift at this time, we encourage you to make a pledge commitment. A pledge card is enclosed with this letter to complete and submit to the office or you can complete an online pledge which is located on our website on our *Jubilee* page. By making your pledge, we are able to effectively plan our year of Jubilee to be a true celebration of our past, present, and future!

Thank you for this support.

The Board of Trustees for the “*Jubilee-200th Anniversary Fund*”