



The Messenger

A Monthly Newsletter of First Baptist Church of Rochester

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First Baptist Church
ROCHESTER
A Journey in Faith, Fellowship, and Service



PASTOR'S COMMENTARY

The Jubilee has begun!

In the summer and into the fall of 1818 a small, but determined group of Baptists were busy lending their hands and their feet, their minds and their hearts, to a work they felt God was calling them to do. That work came to be known as First Baptist Church of Rochester and it is now the work God has called us to do. As we approach the 200th anniversary of the founding of this beloved congregation it is fitting that we celebrate and so we have declared a year of Jubilee!

On Sunday, September 24 our Jubilee got its start and will run throughout the year taking the form of special events, missional emphases and projects, opportunities to learn and grow, and not a few moments of celebration culminating with "Welcome Home Weekend", October 5-7, 2018.

I would like to invite you to join in the festivities of this year, but this invitation is to more than just a great party. Jubilee means to celebrate, yes, but the source of the celebration is renewal – renewal of self, renewal of others, and indeed renewal of all the world around us. So my invitation is certainly to join us for a myriad of events and moments of celebration, yes, but first my invitation is to begin to encounter our theme with your mind and heart. Jubilee is a biblical concept found in the dusty pages of Leviticus, yes, Leviticus. I admit it isn't the most exciting thing to read, but the ideas within just might change the world. So let me help you get a start on Jubilee:

On September 24, the topic of my message was Jubilee, the ideas within, and why we've made it our theme for our bicentennial. If you weren't able to make it that Sunday consider giving it a listen at www.fbcrochester.net/sermons/092417.htm or you can request a hard copy from the church office.

For a more in-depth look at the specifics of Jubilee, I've put together a self-guided study that can be undertaken in a day, a month, or through the course of the year. It is included here below.

The excitement at First Baptist is real and not merely because we have survived 2 centuries. We are planning to use a year of looking back as a way of also looking ahead. Won't you join us in our year of Jubilee!?

Pastor Brent



Jubilee Guided Study

The Jubilee, found in Leviticus 25, appears at first as just a set of laws and regulations. In fact, it was the third tier of regulations regarding Sabbath – renewal. A Sabbath day had been declared by God for the renewal of people and a Sabbath year had even been commanded for the renewal of the soil/earth. In Leviticus 25 we find the third tier, regulations seeing to the renewal of the social systems of the world.

The Jubilee is not law, but rather a practice of making all things new that was written into the law. The law and Jubilee are not one and the same. The law is the vehicle by which the social reality was carried, but while the law is particular to a specific time and place, Jubilee is timeless. In order to invoke Jubilee as a framework for our bicentennial celebration in 2017 and 2018, it is necessary for us to separate what is law bound in time and what is Jubilee for all times. One way to do that is to use the old, proverbial idea of the letter of the law and the spirit of the law as a guideline.

Here are some exercises to help us do just that:

Example:

Read Leviticus 25:13-17

What is the letter of the law in this short passage?

Land cannot really be sold. What is described is more of a rental agreement. It may be “purchased” for only the period of time before the next Jubilee (every 50 years). The price of land is proportional to the number of harvests remaining before.

But what is the spirit of the law?

Land may never permanently be taken from the hands of those to whom God had originally given it. This would prevent anyone from ever losing their family land permanently, provide a moment of “reset” or even “redemption” every 50 years for the family. It would also prevent anyone from doubling up their land and thereby their yield and using the extra profit to purchase more land, and more land, and more land. It allows economic incentive to those who do well without allowing anyone to go entirely without and without allowing anyone to get obscenely ahead of others. The spirit of the law is justice, equality, access to resources, perhaps even forgiveness if the loss of land was the result of poor decisions or behavior.

Even if the letter of the law is impractical, impossible, or even inconceivable in today's world how might the spirit of the law still be practiced? And how might the church/our church participate in that?

We could by ensuring that penalties for bad behavior or the consequences of bad actions do not last forever. We would have to envision ways to work redemptively instead of punitively. We could by creating systems that allow people to learn lessons and try again.

The church can participate by advocating for these systems in the broader culture and by modeling them in church life through actions such as making sure leadership positions are regularly rotated (nobody holds authority for too long) and by contributing to organizations working toward these ends, etc.

What populations, issues, or aspects of modern life might be changed if Jubilee concepts were practiced now? *How* might they be changed?

There are lots of populations, but the prison population comes to mind for me. I think of sentencing practices in the effort to "crack down on crime", but actually end up simply warehousing humans in unredemptive places. This is penalty without the opportunity (or at least a very difficult opportunity) to redeem oneself and return to society and productivity.

Day/Week 1:

Read Leviticus 25:18-24

This section is a reiteration of the Sabbath Year regulations listed just before the Year of Jubilee (25:1-8). It might be helpful to know something about the agrarian practice of letting fields lie fallow. Take a few minutes to research that topic if you need to.

What is the letter of the law in this short passage?

But what is the spirit of the law?

Even if the letter of the law is impractical, impossible, or even inconceivable in today's world how might the spirit of the law still be practiced? And how might the church/our church participate in that?

What populations, issues, or aspects of modern life might be changed if Jubilee concepts were practiced now? *How* might they be changed.

Day/Week 2:

Read Leviticus 25:25-28

What is the letter of the law in this short passage?

But what is the spirit of the law?

Even if the letter of the law is impractical, impossible, or even inconceivable in today's world how might the spirit of the law still be practiced? And how might the church/our church participate in that?

What populations, issues, or aspects of modern life might be changed if Jubilee concepts were practiced now? *How* might they be changed?

Day/Week 3:

Read Leviticus 25:35-38

What is the letter of the law in this short passage?

But what is the spirit of the law?

Even if the letter of the law is impractical, impossible, or even inconceivable in today's world how might the spirit of the law still be practiced? And how might the church/our church participate in that?

What populations, issues, or aspects of modern life might be changed if Jubilee concepts were practiced now? *How* might they be changed?

Day/Week 4:

Read Leviticus 25:39-46

This is where dividing timeless Jubilee from culture-centered law become most important. This passage, and others following it, at least implicitly condone slavery. While it is true that servitude in these early cultures was not quite the same as the more recent American slavery, it is still to be understood as a vile practice. Nonetheless, it was a part of the culture of that day. Can we find anything salvific (leading to salvation) in a text that does not go as far in the direction of justice as we might wish in the modern world? Let's find out.

What is the letter of the law in this short passage?

But what is the spirit of the law?

Even if the letter of the law is impractical, impossible, or even inconceivable in today's world how might the spirit of the law still be practiced? And how might the church/our church participate in that?

What populations, issues, or aspects of modern life might be changed if Jubilee concepts were practiced now? *How* might they be changed?

Day/Week 5:

Read Leviticus 25:47-55

What is the letter of the law in this short passage?

But what is the spirit of the law?

Even if the letter of the law is impractical, impossible, or even inconceivable in today's world how might the spirit of the law still be practiced? And how might the church/our church participate in that?

What populations, issues, or aspects of modern life might be changed if Jubilee concepts were practiced now? *How* might they be changed?

Summary:

Can you identify the pursuit of God's justice in the spirit of these regulations? How about liberty? Or Mercy? Redemption? Forgiveness? Stewardship?

Did you notice that the year these regulations are to begin is marked by the playing of a horn? Did you find any other hints of celebration within?

How do you think the celebration of our 200th year could inform and energize our pursuit of Jubilee in 21st century Rochester, New York and beyond?



Hurricane Disaster Relief

Through **One Great Hour of Sharing** special offering 100% of your gifts will go directly to those with the greatest need following the numerous hurricanes that have hit Texas and Gulf coast, Florida, and Puerto Rico.

Please place OGHS in the memo line of your check or use an envelope found in the pews on Sunday.

Thank you for caring, praying, and giving.

SHOWING GRATITUDE

HATHWAY SCHOLARSHIP

The Hathaway Scholarship was created in 2013 by the family of and in memory of Rev. Robert and Dorothy Hathaway, long time members of First Baptist. It is their wish to support High School and Undergraduate students who wish to pursue further education. The Hathaway Scholarship Guidelines are:

- 1) The scholarship will be available to one high school graduate and one college graduate per year. The total scholarship amount provided to each student is \$250.
- 2) The high school student must be an active member of the church environment who attends church service regularly. If there is a health reason a student cannot regularly attend Church or Youth Group functions, that factor will be taken into consideration.
- 3) An application must be made to the Memorial Funds Committee by May 15th to be shared with the family sponsoring the Memorial Gift. This application should be a minimum of a one-page, typed sheet in letter format explaining the applicant's plans for the future and how the church has contributed to those plans. The preferred submission method is by email. Please send your application to Peter Boulay at fbcmemorialgifts@gmail.com.



In the Baptist tradition we do not venerate individuals as saints, but that doesn't mean we don't have people who have had extraordinary impact on our faith. On Sunday, **November 5**, we will remember those who have died whose lives have been a guiding light to our own. You are invited to participate by bringing a small photo or a memento to worship and placing it on the remembrance table during the service.

MISSION MINUTE

Dear Mission/Outreach Team,

Thanks so very much! We are overjoyed to have the opportunity to continue providing specialized educational opportunities to the Beechwood neighborhood through the use of the PLAY SAFE! BE SAFE materials for the 36 childcare providers and your funding of the 2.5 hours of training for dealing with children who have experienced trauma. Both will be invaluable.

Please extend our most sincere thanks to everyone at First Baptist. You are truly champions for young children!

I will keep you informed as we develop the program plans for both initiatives.

Sincerely,

Barbara-Ann Mattle, CEO
CHILD CARE COUNCIL, INC.



October 1, 2017
has been designated as
AWAB SUNDAY

On Sunday October 1, 2017, First Baptist Church of Rochester will celebrate our choice to become a Welcoming and Affirming Baptist Congregation. We will rejoice in the diversity of God's creation and seek wisdom and guidance as we proclaim our love to all God's children. During our time of giving in response, gifts will be accepted in support of the work of the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists.

During Second Hour, we will welcome two guests from the Gay Alliance who will speak to the congregation about their work and their lives as well as the organization they represent. Please plan to welcome these special guests.

ORDAINED: REV. CHERYL MILLER FRANK

Last August Pastor Brent invited Marcia McCarthy and me to serve as "coordinators" of the more social parts of Cheryl's ordination service and reception. We were honored to be given this responsibility. Pastor Brent guided Cheryl in planning the ordination service with its beautiful music and many regional pastors with Joanne Gilbert-Cannon as the guest preacher. We then began asking members of our church and of Greece Baptist Church to assume various responsibilities. Judy Oaks was first on our list to begin reception planning. So many were involved in making this service meaningful and in making the reception that followed a joyous celebration. Marcia and I thank all who participated, and all who attended that Saturday afternoon to witness and celebrate Cheryl's ordination. Please read on as Cheryl says it best in her note of appreciation that follows. Thank you all.

Lynn McClellan

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Thank you so much to everyone at First Baptist Rochester for hosting my ordination service on Saturday, September 16.

Thank you to the choir for singing, to Gavin Williams for running the soundboard, to Judy Oaks for planning a beautiful reception, to Betsy Vipperman for serving punch, to David Labman for playing Mozart and rehearsing the choir, to Barb and Gene Tiesler for greeting, to Jack Holt for ushering, to Bonnie Schwartzbauer for producing the program, to all the clergy for walking with me, to Janet Richardson, Pastor Brent, Marilyn McClellan, and Marcia McCarthy for taking care of many details behind the scenes. Thank you to everyone who attended or sent prayers from afar. I was amazed at the power of the Spirit that I felt in the praying and laying on of hands, which will stay with me for a long time.

Thank you also for the beautiful stole, which I am told is made from upcycled burlap fair-trade coffee bags, and reads, "Do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God." You could not have chosen a more perfect gift. I will think of all of you whenever I wear it.

I wish God's many blessings on all of our ministries.

Love,

Cheryl



Happy 20th Birthday Eldergarten

Eldergarten began 20 years ago with a small group of active and precocious seniors, age 55 and older for lunch and a program on the 3rd Thursday of each month, September thru May. We are celebrating our 20th birthday on Thursday, October 19th at 12 noon and will recognize some of our original members.

We are looking forward to an exceptional program presented by a renowned expert on the history of the Erie Canal. Mr. Bruce Schwendy will enlighten us with his program on the "Three Erie Canals" and the 200 year history of the era.

Plan now to join us in our 20th year celebration. Bring a sandwich; soup, birthday cake, and a beverage will be provided. Sign up on the Vitality Table if you can come and put a star ★ by your name if you were with us 20 years ago.

OUR COMMUNITY

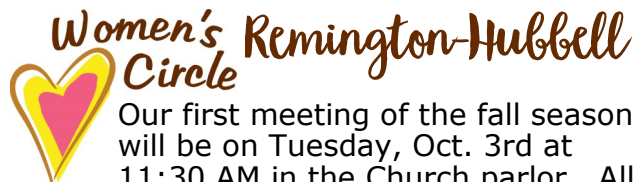
REACHING OUT TO OTHERS



Brighton Food Depot:

Peanut Butter

Peanut butter has protein as well as potassium — which lowers the risk of high blood pressure, stroke, and heart disease. It also contains fiber for your digestive health, **healthy** fats, magnesium to fortify your bones and muscles, Vitamin E, and antioxidants. Give a gift of health and sustenance by giving peanut butter to the Depot this month! Thank you.



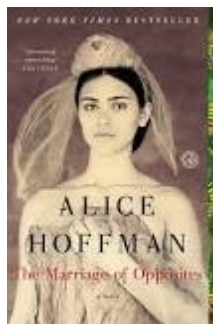
Our first meeting of the fall season will be on Tuesday, Oct. 3rd at 11:30 AM in the Church parlor. All women in the church are invited. Please bring a sandwich. Dessert and beverage will be provided.

By popular demand, we will be selling Georgia Pecans again this year. Place your order on the form located on the Vitality Table. This is our only fundraiser of the year and all proceeds will go toward missions. Pecans will be available after November 1st.



FBCR BOOK CLUB

THE MARRIAGE OF OPPOSITES BY ALICE HOFFMAN



The FBC Book Club will meet on the fourth Tuesday, October 24, at 11:30 AM in the church library. The book for discussion will be *The Marriage of Opposites* by Alice Hoffman. This novel, set on the island of St.

Thomas, is the story of the mother of painter Camille Pissaro, an Impressionist whose works hang in the Louvre in Paris. Everyone is invited to join us.



**Salvation Army:
2017 Project Bundle Up
at J.C. Penney (Eastview)
Saturday, October 28
7:30 AM - 10:00 AM**

Project Bundle Up gives Rochester's children the opportunity to shop and choose a new winter coat. Last year, they helped 322 children. If you enjoy shopping with children and are available from 7:30 AM to 10:00 AM on Saturday, October 28, please sign up to on the Vitality Table to volunteer at J.C. Penney (Eastview). If you have questions, please contact Lynn Mulvey, Director of Development for The Salvation Army of Greater Rochester at lynn.mulvey@use.salvationarmy.org.



A Book Review

by **Marcia McCarthy**

It was the cover of the book that caught my attention. In muted tones the upper part of the cover had a person wearing boots sitting on an old-fashioned suitcase; and the lower portion showed a back view of four women walking together. The title, **Sensible Shoes**, was a bit out of the ordinary. Then I noticed the subtitle, **A story about the spiritual journey**, and the author's name, Sharon Garlough Brown. I decided to check it out of the church library.

My husband could attest that for the next several days I was "lost" in the story of the lives of the four main characters and their interwoven spiritual journeys. I really enjoy books that draw me in that way. Brown, not only develops the characters well, she also provides examples of tools that the reader can use in his/her own spiritual journey. It was a great read and led me to two other books by the same author.

You might enjoy it, too. Or perhaps, if that type of book isn't what you're looking for, you might enjoy: the biography section; the section on Biblical interpretation; or books for children. There is a WIDE variety of reading choices waiting for your attention. Come check out the library, and maybe check out a book.

OCCURRENCES OF INTEREST

Sunday, October 1, 2017 - AWAB SUNDAY

Worship, 10:00 AM, AWAB Sunday
Fellowship, 11:00 AM
Forum, 11:30 AM – *Gay Alliance*

Tuesday, October 3, 2017

Remington Hubbell Circle, 11 AM

Wednesday, October 4, 2017

GRCC Retreat, 9 AM
Brown Bag, 5:30 AM
Study, 6:00 PM - *Building Blocks - Sources and Norms*
Adult Choir, 7:15 PM

Friday, October 6 - 7, 2017

Youth Event, 6:00 PM

Sunday, October 8, 2017 - Stewardship

Worship, 10:00 AM
Fellowship, 11:00 AM
Forum, 11:30 AM – *Poverty*

Monday, October 9

Columbus Day – Office Closed
Trustee Meeting, 5:30 PM
Welcome & Affirm Meeting, 7:00 PM

Wednesday, October 11, 2017

Mission Meeting, 4:30 PM
Jubilee Planning Team Meeting 4:30 PM
Brown Bag, 5:30 AM
Study, 6:00 PM - *Poverty*
Adult Choir, 7:15 PM

Thursday, October 12, 2017

Worship Meeting, 10:30 AM

Sunday, October 15, 2017 - Stewardship

Worship, 10:00 AM
Fellowship, 11:00 AM
Forum, 11:30 AM – *Biennial Report*

Monday, October 16, 2017

Library Meeting 9:30 AM
Council Meeting, 6:00 PM

Wednesday, October 18, 2017

Brown Bag, 5:30 PM
Study, 6:00 PM - *Poverty*
CE Meeting, 7:15 PM
Adult Choir, 7:15 PM

Thursday, October 19, 2017

Eldergarten, 12:00 PM - *20th Anniversary/Canal History*

Saturday, October 21, 2017

Otto Green Day 9:00 AM - Church clean-up day

Sunday, October 22, 2017 - Jazz 'n Jeans

Stewardship

Worship, 10:00 AM
Fellowship, 11:00 AM
Forum, 11:30 AM - *Bob Sneider Jazz in Rochester*

Tuesday, October 24, 2017

Book Club, 11:30 AM

Wednesday, October 25, 2017

Brown Bag, 5:30 AM
Study, 6:00 PM - *Poverty*
Adult Choir, 7:15 PM

Saturday, October 28, 2017 - if needed

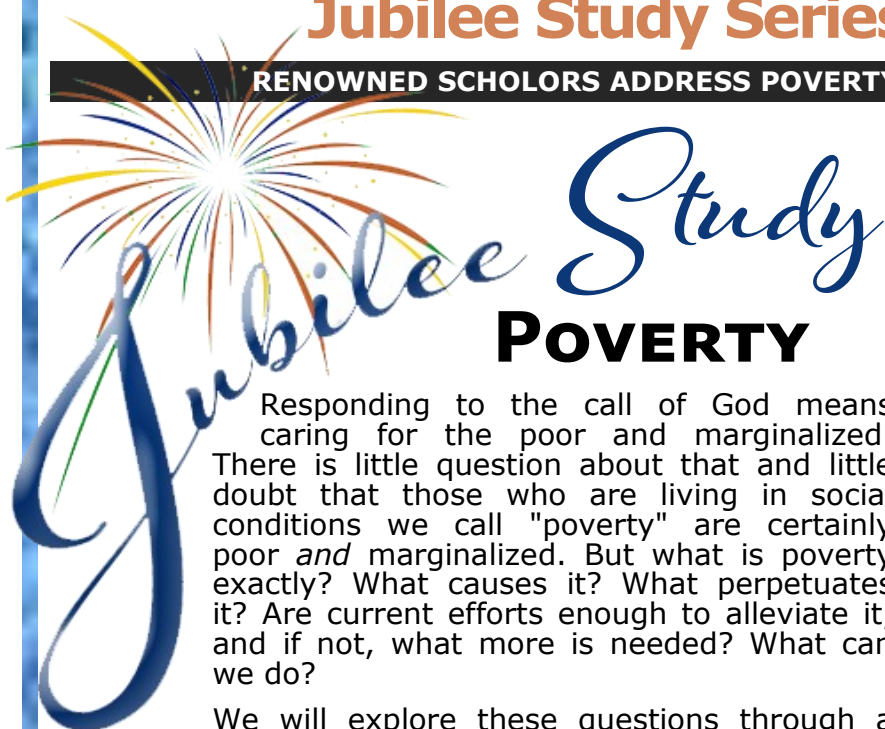
Otto Green Day Rain Date from 10/21

Sunday, October 29, 2017

Worship, 10:00 AM
Fellowship, 11:00 AM
Forum, 11:30 AM

Jubilee Study Series

RENOWNED SCHOLARS ADDRESS POVERTY



Responding to the call of God means caring for the poor and marginalized. There is little question about that and little doubt that those who are living in social conditions we call "poverty" are certainly poor *and* marginalized. But what is poverty exactly? What causes it? What perpetuates it? Are current efforts enough to alleviate it, and if not, what more is needed? What can we do?

We will explore these questions through a Stanford University course using videos and discussion questions on poverty and its effects and origins, abridged and presented by Richard Wien with numerous opportunities for participant discussion.

We will kick off an overview of the topic and study in Forum on October 8th from 11:40 AM-12:20 PM in the chapel following a time of fellowship. Then on the next four Wednesday evenings at 6:00 PM, October 11, 18, 25, and November 1, we will gather together to view more videos from renowned scholars from across the country and discuss ideas presented.

This study is our fall offering of our year of Jubilee focus and encompasses many if not all of our focus areas of Mercy, Justice and Liberty, Celebration, Forgiveness, Stewardship, and Redemption.

Won't you spend one month learning more?

See you at one, more, or all!