



# The Messenger

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## PASTOR'S COMMENTARY

In Galatians 5:13, Paul writes: 'You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free.' Some translations say that we were called to *liberty*. As followers of Christ, we are not servants driven by hard compulsion; we are children of God, and we are obedient to Christ because we love him. As American citizens, we are obedient to the standards necessary for maintaining a well-ordered, lawful, and free state, because we understand that America possesses a unique mission as a land dedicated to liberty. Lincoln certainly understood the significance of our history and the possibilities for our future when he said, 'We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best hope of earth.'

Years ago Lowell Atkinson took the phrase 'the last best hope' and turned it into a sermon. He broke the rules of sermon-writing by addressing four points instead of three. His first point was that faith is costly in a free country. Freedom is maintained only by the renewal of intelligence and character and reverence. It requires our personal alertness, vigilance, courage, sacrifice, and worship. Every day we must dedicate ourselves to freedom – in our schools, offices, shops, and churches.

In his second point, Atkinson shared a belief that three great perils will always threaten our heritage of freedom.

(1) The peril of anarchy. The great word *liberty* can be used to disguise license, the breakdown of discipline, inner softness, unethical social and economic activities. In his words, 'In homes where sentimentality has



supplanted discipline, in schools where students obey impulse rather than intelligence, in areas of life where undisciplined will defies all restraint, we see the invading menace of anarchy masquerading as liberty.' Whenever we assert freedom by disregarding standards, we see the abuse, not the expression of freedom.

(2) The peril of tyranny. The great word *security* is often used to disguise slavery. We are forever tempted to barter freedom for security. We must never be so frightened by the risks involved in living free that we trade our true birthright of liberty for a tempting bowl of pottage. A person may be adequately clothed, housed, and fed, and be the inmate of a penitentiary.

(3) The peril of inner futility amid outer successes. Let's face it: We Americans have often used our freedom to master the world of things. In darker moods, we may go as far as to say we are enormously successful in mastering everything unimportant, while inwardly suffering from a sense of worthlessness and waste. The externals of life can never make us as happy as the sense of purpose that fills the inner life, when the inner life is turned to noble pursuits. Freedom is opportunity. It is an open door. With a sense of purpose and mission, we can seize opportunity and use it well. In Atkinson's words, 'Only people who are true to worthy standards can be trusted to make their freedom fruitful. The great need of people today is (a) a stalwart faith in the dignity of humanity, (b) a belief in life as a holy calling, and (c) a responsible sense of mission.'

In his third point, Atkinson argued that the Christian religion speaks directly to our freedom. This is the gospel note – that people count for something. God knows us, cares for us, sustains our lives, has visited us in Christ for our salvation, responds to our prayers, and abides with us as our constant companion. God's great thought of us is our charter of liberty. If Christ thinks us worthy of freedom, we need never lose heart or hope; just be careful to use liberty in godly ways.

In Atkinson's fourth and final point he stated that democracy is an ideal by which we are guided; it is an achievement about which we dare not be complacent. Our country has not always been true to its heritage of freedom, but it does have a heritage that judges its abuses of freedom. Our very lapses are a challenge. No country is perfect; may we do our part to make America better! This is a holy calling. In Atkinson's words: 'America has held a faith in freedom which is the golden mean between anarchy and tyranny and which is given purpose by its religious quality.' Our freedom has represented opportunity for every person under the God in whose eyes every person counts. I like that thought, and I feel blessed to be able to celebrate American Independence Day 2015.

Blessings,

Cliff Houston  
Interim Pastor, FBCR

# OUR GRADUATES

## Congratulations 2015 Graduates

The daughter of Barbara Wolin, Wendi M. Frederick, received her Master's of Business Administration Degree in Management from Lake Forest Graduate School of Management, Lake Forest, Illinois on June 28, 2015.

Max Szuba, son of Beth and Richard Szuba, graduated from West Irondequoit High school with high honors and is a member of the National Honor Society. Max was the captain of the volleyball team and set a school record for aces. He was selected for several all-tournament teams and was on a national tournament team in Houston last summer. He will be attending SUNY IT in Utica in the fall, for computer and electrical engineering and will be playing volleyball for the school team.

Leo Ratcliffe, grandson of Frances and John Ratcliffe, graduated from Penfield High School and will be attending Ohio Technical College in Cleveland, Ohio. Leo received a scholarship for winning the state competition for Auto Technicians.

The granddaughter of Marilyn and Bion McClellan, Catherin Marie McClellan, graduated from Muhlenberg College Cum Laude with Honors in Media and Communications, and Honors in Political Science. She will be entering Lehigh University this fall in the Community Fellows Program, working toward her Master's Degree in Political Science.

Cooper W. D. Labinger, grandson of Ken and Sally Dodgson graduated from Oberlin College and Conservatory in Computer Science. Cooper was elected to Phi Beta Kappa and is currently employed at the College.

Kenneth Dean, Jr. has graduated from the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine at the Carolinas' campus.

# OUR COMMUNITY

## Reaching out to others



### Brighton Food Depot

#### Summer Challenge:

Bring one or more items each Sunday and we will blow the roof off of our 100 item goal!

We challenge you!

Many think that there is no need to bring food items over the summer since there is no school in session. But we need to stock up to meet the needs of intercity children. We supply 1,000 items each month from September to May. That is a lot of food and your help makes all the difference. So please be generous. July's items are:

#### Spaghetti Sauce and Canned Entrees

(like canned ravioli, stew, chili, etc.)

## Remington-Hubbell Circle News

We are continuing our mission to Cameron Community Ministries by collecting the following items:

- ⇒ Construction Paper
- ⇒ Colored Markers
- ⇒ Colored Pencils



We are also collecting Children's Socks to be delivered when school starts up in September.

Thanks for your continued support to our Outreach Mission Projects.

### Summer Study and Sermon Series

## EPHESIANS

Discovering Who We Are In Christ

### Summertime Of Grace

## Summertime of Grace

July 12 though August 23

This summer, we are called to praise God for the blessings we have in Christ, blessings we often forget or take for granted. From July 12th through August 23, we will spend time together reading, studying, listening, and reflecting on God's word through the letter from Paul to the people of Ephesus.

The book of *Ephesians* revolves around our life and the life of the church. Since summer is often a time

for relaxation, renewal, and reflection, it can also be a great time to be with others of like mind and draw strength from our God and from each other. It is tough out there for Christians today, and we must get together in the church to pray to God to strengthen us.

This *Summertime of Grace* event will not only be a special sermon series focusing on passages from *Ephesians* for seven weeks, but we will hold a Scripture-based study from 9:00 to 9:45 AM each Sunday morning. All who wish, may gather to ponder a few reflective questions and share your thoughts with others wishing to study God's word.

Midway through the series, everyone is invited to gather after worship for a celebration as we fellowship over a meal and spend a little time sharing ideas on our common values which bring us together as a family of worshippers. We hope you will join us as we delve into the Epistle: read, reflect, and be blessed by this series. It will be a summertime of grace and discovering the new life we have in Christ.

# GOINGS ON

## OCCURRENCES OF INTEREST

### Wednesday, July 1

[Mission](#) Meeting 5:00 PM

### Friday, July 3, Office Closed (July 4th)

### Sunday, July 5

Worship 10:00 AM  
Fellowship 11:00 AM

### Monday, July 6

Welcome & Affirm Team Meeting Time TBD

### Wednesday, July 8

Pastoral Search Team Meeting 6:00 PM

### Sunday, July 12- ~~Summertime of Grace~~

#### Summertime Praise

Study 9:00 AM  
Worship 10:00 AM  
Fellowship 11:00 AM

### Monday, July 13

Trustees Meeting 6:30 PM

### Sunday, July 19- ~~Summertime of Grace~~

#### God's House

Study 9:00 AM  
Worship 10:00 AM  
Fellowship 11:00 AM

### Monday, July 20

[Library](#) Team 9:30 AM  
Council Meeting 6:00 PM

### Sunday, July 26- ~~Summertime of Grace~~

#### True Worship

Study 9:00 AM  
Worship 10:00 AM  
Fellowship 11:00 AM

### Tuesday, July 28

FBC Book Club 11:30 AM  
*Caleb's Crossing* by Geraldine Brooks



First Baptist Church recently received a beautifully bound book "Baptist Beginnings in Rochester: First Baptist Church 1818-1850." It was a gift from author, Dr. Kenneth Dean, written while he was our minister in the 1980's. I had written him requesting a copy as church copies could not be located. Dr. Dean kindly had the book copied, bound, and sent to us. It was felt the copy and information about our history would be valuable in the planning of our upcoming 200th Anniversary Celebration. We owe a debt of thanks to Dr. Dean for this wonderful donation. The hope is to have it catalogued soon into our church library so that we all can have access to it.

JoAnn Trolley

# PASTORAL SEARCH

## Early Work

The Pastoral Search Committee would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the congregation for your overwhelming support. We would like to update you on our progress. We have met a total of four times, once with Rev. Alan Newton, the Executive Minister of our region, to begin the process. We have been provided with many research articles and information on the Pastoral Search Process. So far, we have completed the Ministry Opportunity Listing which Rev. Newton will distribute and post online to inform possible candidates to "keep an eye out" for our official job posting in the future. Currently, we are collecting data on the history of our church and demographics of our congregation that will be included in a packet of information that will be distributed to candidates. We welcome, and are eager to hear, input from the congregation. If you have a comment or question that you would like us to consider, please write us a note that includes your name. Feel free to hand deliver or email your comment to any member of the committee. All comments will be acknowledged by letter and will be accurately represented to the committee at our next meeting. We will prayerfully consider your input during the process. We look forward to the work ahead and we will update you soon.

Thank You,

Amy Dickason, Ken Hines, Sarah Oaks, JoAnn Trolley, Rose Welch, and Richard Wien (FBCRsearch@googlegroups.com)

# LIVING IN THE WORD

## A Reflection

### Where is God?

*But Zion said,*

*"The Lord has forsaken me, my Lord has forgotten me."  
Can a woman forget her nursing child,  
or show no compassion for the child of her womb?  
Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you.  
See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands;  
your walls are continually before me. Isaiah 49:15-16*

In this day of so much violence and hatred we long to hear the familiar words, "You are in good hands." Even my insurance company so assures me with its logo. In these verses from Isaiah, the prophet has announced that the end of exile is near. Though the people should be joyful, Zion (Jerusalem) is personified as a lamenting widow who feels forsaken. There is reassurance in the beautiful words, "I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands, your walls are continually before me." Jerusalem will be rebuilt. The plans of the city are engraved (tattooed) right there on God's hands.



Whatever your image of God, we look at our own hands. The miracle of our creation is right before us. The human hand has great strength for strong work and fine finger movements allow tiny adjustments. Yet the real strength is in the fact that hands connect. They connect us mortals in friendship and love. When they connect with God, they do the work of God. We are claimed by God to do God's work. God has written our names on the palms of God's hands.

Sally Dodgson