



The Messenger

A Monthly Newsletter of First Baptist Church of Rochester

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Welcome

Home!

PASTOR'S COMMENTARY

It was my first week as a pastor and I already had books and resources piled high on my desk. It was the first week that the worship planning buck stopped at my door. I'd helped in planning in the past and I'd put together a few services in seminary, but they were "paper only" services. Nobody would ever actually experience them. That coming Sunday, my planning would become a real worship experience. It was a daunting, but exciting task.

I had a good idea of where I wanted to go with the sermon, I found a prayer to say and wrote another. I knew how I wanted the service to end and communicated with all of the participants. I was only stuck on one thing – the beginning. That's an odd part of a worship service if you think about it. I don't think I ever had until that week for a variety of reasons. It's not a particularly momentous part of a service. One seldom hears, "Oh my, the way she opened the service this morning was just so moving," on the way to lunch after. But though it isn't a particularly "important" part of the service, most churches I've been a part of want their pastor to be the person greeting the congregation and since I hadn't yet been a pastor, I'd never been in charge of the opening so I'd never thought it through. It's really just a transition that stands between moments of fellowship and formal worship. Even so, it seemed to me the words used to make that transition should be in keeping with the tone and feel of the coming service. I just didn't think, "Hey everybody, let's do this thing!" seemed like an appropriate way to begin, but I didn't know what was appropriate.

I had scoured resource books. They all had collects and calls to worship, which come early in a service, but nothing for the very first words uttered. I looked at a few YouTube videos to see what other pastors did and quickly decided that would be last time I looked at YouTube to see what other pastors did. I scribbled a few ideas and deleted a few ideas and just when I was ready to quit for the day I remembered something Anna told me a few years before.

She had read about a church where the first thing they did was set the table for one another. They took the communion table imagery seriously. The pastor or whoever would be preaching that day carried in the Bible, their shared story from which they would read that day. Someone else carried in the chalice and paten (cup and plate of communion) and placed them on the table of God's love. They were from a tradition of higher worship than most Baptists so they had a few other elements to set in place and once everything was together and set, the pastor would come to front, raise her arms, and say...

Yep, she said, "Welcome Home."

How beautiful is that!? With God's people gathered she would welcome everyone home. Everyone. Not just the members in attendance, not just the people who deserved it, but everyone who could hear her voice! It's a statement of radical inclusion and profound intimacy. We, the church, claim to be a people bound together by more than our institutional structure, but indeed by covenant, by God. We're family! "Welcome Home," seemed to express that kind of intimacy in God and I instantly decided that's not only how I would begin my first service, but to the best of my ability, every service I ever presided over henceforth.

That Sunday in Austin after a member of the congregation and I set the table, I turned and said, "Welcome Home." It resonated as much with the congregation as it did with me. I knew because of their smiles. In fact, at some point during my time there we put those words over the entry to the sanctuary in wrought iron, but we also made clear that the welcome wasn't limited to that place. Anytime we worshiped for one reason or another in a different location, we still began services with "Welcome Home." And when I was out of town, I never mandated that whoever filled in for me open services the same way, but I suggested it. They always followed suit. It isn't my welcome, it's God's and it isn't welcome to the building, it's welcome to the family.

That became a deeply meaningful practice in those years, but here's the funny thing. It wasn't a call and response back then. It was just something I said to welcome attendees to the service. It became a call and response 52 Sundays, 1 year ago. It's a funny story actually.

Sensing a call to something new had brought new friends, JoAnn, Dick, Rose, Amy, Ken, and Sarah into our lives. They were, you'll recall, the pastoral search committee here at FBC. Our conversations with them developed into something quite serious, quite wonderful – so wonderful that we moved to a new home, in a new state, where I would have a new job and Anna would go about her work in a new way. We even had to put new tags on our car – our new car (oops). Everything was new and the gravity of that situation sank in during our first couple of weeks here. We realized that when *everything* is new, even if it is wonderful, it is still heavy. In the midst of the chaos of unpacking, getting our bearings around town, and figuring out how Wegman's is organized, we longed for home. I don't mean that we longed for Texas, though we will always love Texas. I don't even necessarily mean that we longed for our families, though we love them deeply too and miss them every day. I mean simply that we longed for a place where we could know and be known, where we could love and be loved, where we could plant ourselves and grow along with others, where relationships are deeper and more resilient than anywhere else. We longed for the people with whom we could laugh and cry, be our best and be our worst, disagree and agree. We longed for people we could share meals with. We longed for home.

In the midst of that longing I began to plan for my first Sunday as pastor at FBC. Worship here was already rich, warm, thoughtful, beautiful, a big part of what attracted us. I didn't have much work to do to that end, but I wanted to be able to include something of my personality and tradition in the service. I wanted to begin the service here just as I had since my first Sunday as a pastor. I wanted to begin by setting the table and saying to my new church, "Welcome Home."

When that day came a year ago, we set the table and I said those words of such meaning, but I realized in the moment that it might seem odd. Here I am, the new guy in town, telling folks who've been a part of this family for decades, "Welcome Home?" I decided off the cuff to make a little explanation. That's when the Welcome Home became a call and response. I explained that we're all in the family of God and that we were gathered at God's table, therefore we were home and I reiterated, "So, Welcome Home." The emotion of that moment caught up with me and I choked up a bit leaving a pregnant moment.

In that moment one year ago you, FBC, began a new tradition. You said to me, **"Welcome Home."**

And I give thanks to God for that.

Pastor Brent

OUR COMMUNITY

REACHING OUT TO OTHERS



Brighton Food Depot:

Cereal and Pasta Sauce

We are pleased to announce that through the last two months we were able to meet our goal. In June and July we collected 113 Peanut Butter and 130 Spaghetti Sauce. Great job! For August we need Cereal and Pasta Sauce (again). The challenge is to reach the goal of 100 of each! Can we do it?

Thank You for your generosity.



Dear Friends,

Thank you for your generous gift to Quad A for Kids, a project of the Rochester Area Community Foundation. Your gift of \$500 will support Quad A's after-school program at Schools No. 4, 16, and 34. Quad A activities form a curriculum that supports children and families around essential components: high quality academic achievement, parent and family involvement, nutrition, health, and personal development. This creates a culture in which students *value education and see a path forward to a successful future*. Quad A kids are bright, thankful, and work hard.

Sincerely,

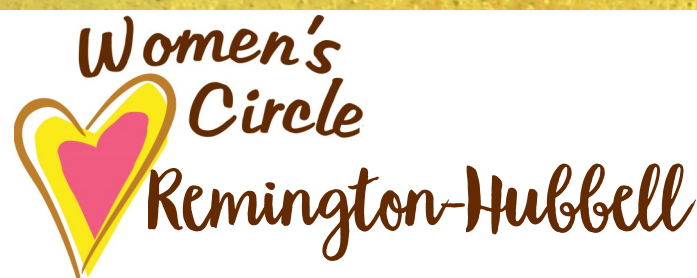
Adam McFadden, Executive Director

Please note: Along with our monetary gift we also host the Quad A board meetings monthly in our Chapel.



FAIRPORT BAPTIST HOMES' STEP UP FOR SENIORS

The FBH "Step Up for Seniors" annual walk will be held on Saturday, September 30. Check-in at 9:00, walk at 10:00. One and 2+ mile routes that include rest/water stops are available to walk. Brochures and a sign-up sheet can be found on the Vitality Table soon. Consider marking your calendar and put your **Faith in Action** with this event.



Again we are collecting socks for the children at Cameron Community Ministries. We would like to have enough new socks to give all to the children when they return to school in September.

A basket for your donation is in the Garden Room under the Vitality Table.

Many thanks for your continued support.

Remington-Hubbell Women's Circle
(Meets 1st Tuesday of select months)



A note of thanks...

Thank you very much for the wonderful support I received over the last year from my church family. The cards, phone calls, food, visits, flowers, and especially the prayers were appreciated so much. I feel

so blessed to have such an amazing family. My recovery is going well.

Thank you! Thank you!

God bless you all.

Marian Morrison

GOINGS ON

OCCURRENCES OF INTEREST

Sunday, August 6, 2017

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

Monday, August 7, 2017

Library Meeting, 9:30 AM

Wednesday, August 9, 2017

Trustees Meeting, 5:30 PM

Sunday, August 13, 2017

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

Monday, August 14, 2017

Welcome & Affirm Mtg., 7:00 PM

Sunday, August 20, 2017

Worship, 10:00 AM
Fellowship, 11:00 AM
Calendar Planning & Meal 11:30 AM

Monday, August 21, 2017

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

Tuesday, August 22, 2017

FBC Book Club, 11:30 AM

Wednesday, August 23, 2017

Jubilee Team Mtg., 6:00 PM

Sunday, August 27, 2017

Sunday Worship, 10:00 AM
Fellowship, 11:00 AM

Calendar Planning Meeting & Meal



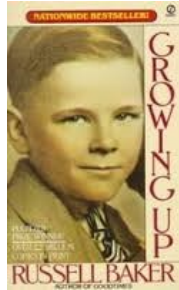
Based on availability of the greatest number of individuals (with one by phone) for the dates offered, we have determined that we will hold our **Planning Meeting and Meal** on **Sunday, August 20th** following fellowship at 11:30 AM in Hubbell Hall. At this meeting we will place various dates (confirmed or planned) onto our calendar for our Jubilee Year.

Lunch will be pulled pork, buns, a variety of salads, dessert, and beverage. So... for those who need to help with the year's plans or for those who just want to be in the know, we need you to **SIGN UP TO KNOW HOW MUCH FOOD TO PREPARE!**

A goodwill offering will be taken to offset meal cost.

FBCR BOOK CLUB

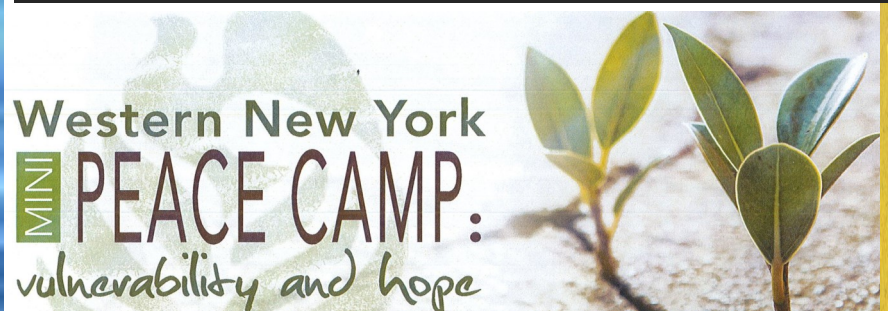
GROWING UP BY RUSSELL BAKER



The FBC Book Club will meet on Tuesday, August 22 at 11:30 AM in the church library. The group will discuss the Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *Growing Up* by Russell Baker. It is a humorous memoir of the author's youthful experiences in an extended family during the years of the Depression and World War II. Everyone is welcome.

WESTERN NEW YORK PEACE MINI-CAMP

VULNERABILITY AND HOPE



Deadline to sign up is Thursday, August 31st

Event held on September 8 & 9, 2017

Greece Baptist Church

1230 Long Pond Road, Rochester, NY

Speakers:

Dr. Marvin McMickle, President of Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School

LeDayne McLeese Polaski, Executive Director of Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America

Program:

- Inspiring worship, speakers, and music
- Workshop dealing with vulnerability and hope in four different context: race, aging, special needs, and being peacemakers in a divisive political climate.
- Age-appropriate activities for children
- Time to relax and share

Cost:

\$32 for adults, \$12 for children through high school. Cost covers registration, fees, Friday dinner, and Saturday lunch. Scholarships available. Deadline August 31, 2017.

Contact:

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