



# TOWER TIDINGS

August 2022

## MISSION STATEMENT:

With Jesus Christ as our guide, our mission is to glorify God and expand the kingdom by following in Christ's footsteps and inviting others to join us on the journey.

## SUNDAYS

10:00 A.M. Worship Service

## THURSDAYS

6:00 P.M. Prayer Meeting

Sunday School and Thursday Night Discussion Group will resume in September



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## Your August Issue

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## HAILEY'S COMMENT



Rev. Dr. David John Hailey  
PASTOR

### Help Us Catch Up on Our Giving

*"Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and thus put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing."*

*Malachi 3:10*

In October 2021, our church adopted an annual budget of \$498,436. We're approaching the end of our fiscal year (September 30), and we have some "catching-up" to do. Through June, you have faithfully given \$179,616.27 (roughly 80% of our Year-To-Date goal of \$226,748.25). Thank you for your generosity thus far!

Unfortunately, our expenses are \$56,116.28 more than our receipts so far in 2021-2022. We've exceeded our facilities budget by roughly \$37,000 this year. These expenses were not budgeted (a major water leak, a new hot water heater, basement repairs for a new covenant partner, and an inspection of our roof), but they were necessary expenditures to ensure safety and stability for our facility. Additionally, we anticipate spending another \$45-50,000 on air conditioning repairs in the gymnasium, plasterwork in the Sanctuary, and roofing repairs in the coming months.

~ continued on page 2

~ Hailey's Comment continued from page 1

In addition to the facility upgrades we will incur over the coming months, our church will also embark on an outreach campaign to bring in new members. We plan to hold an event in September or October for families in our community and for the families of our preschool children. We hope this event will bring new faces to our congregation!

Thankfully, in 2020 and 2021, we were fortunate to receive financial assistance from the Payroll Protection Program through the federal government. These funds have kept us afloat during the pandemic and continue to offset any budgetary challenges. However, these funds will not be available much longer, so we need your help to help us "catch-up" on our giving.

Would you be willing to give an additional \$250 or more per month to help us catch up for our giving goal in 2021-2022? If 50 giving units would commit to giving \$250 over and above their tithe for the next two months, we can raise \$25,000 for our annual budget goal.

Again, thank you for your generosity thus far. We'd be unable to do the work of God's kingdom without your donations. Let's work together to reach our goal!

## Sarah Circle Update

One of the original small group ministries at First Baptist Church of Oak Park is Sarah Circle. Sarah Circle is the last remaining cluster (called Circles) in the First Baptist Church of Oak Park chapter of the American Baptist Women's Ministries (ABWM) of the American Baptist Churches, USA. ABWM was organized in 1951 but the emergence of women in ministry had been an important part of the work and life of the denomination for a long time before that. In FBCOP, the women's ministry has been part of the congregational life since its inception after the first World War.

Today, Sarah Circle has emerged as an active participant in the life and work of Area 1, Great Rivers Region, American Baptist Women's Ministries. In the last five years, we have joined the other women in our Area and the rest of the region in the activities of ABWM, including participation in the bi-annual gatherings for fellowship and spiritual growth, the annual meeting of ABWM Great Rivers, and especially during the pandemic, in virtual meetings with the Area's leadership as well as, visits with missionaries, from both national and international assignments. In addition, we have joined Zoom presentations by not-for-profit organizations engaged in topics vital to women and their families, and webinars offered by the National ABWM. We contribute a Love Gift to support ministries in the Area and Region and have just donated towards the Special Project to construct a handicap accessible cabin, available year-round, at Lake Springfield Baptist Camp.

Here at FBCOP, we gather on a monthly basis from September to June and use the summer months for special projects (like making flannel blankets to be donated to needy families), attending conferences or informal gatherings. Although our meetings have ranged from 12-15 regular attendees, there has been interest among women at the church to join. While initially the concept is to have meetings in member's home, to facilitate relationship building and fellowship, hence a limitation on the size of the group, we will be opening up the possibility of hosting another Circle, to encourage other women to join and be blessed.

You will hear more about Sarah Circle, ABWM, in the coming months. We ask for your prayers as we seek discernment of God's leading in this ministry. Please contact Elaine Feuerabend, Kathy Ogundipe, Flora Cudiamat or Perla Londres with your questions or more information.

~ Perla Londres Waters



# STEPHEN MINISTRY

**Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2, NRSV).**

Stephen Ministry offers a proven and effective way to organize, equip, and supervise a team of congregation members—called Stephen Ministers—to provide high-quality, one-to-one, Christ-centered care to people in the congregation and the community experiencing life difficulties.

## Who's Involved in Stephen Ministry?

Stephen Leaders are church staff, lay leaders, and pastors trained to provide ongoing leadership for their congregation's Stephen Ministry. They are equipped for this key role through the Bridge Leader's Training Course offered by Stephen Ministries St. Louis.

Stephen Ministers are congregation members trained by their Stephen Leaders to offer care to people who are hurting. A Stephen Minister typically has one care receiver at a time and meets with that person once a week for about an hour. Care receivers are individuals in the congregation or community who are going through a crisis or life difficulty. Potential Care Receivers first meet with a Pastor or a Stephen Leader, who assesses their needs for care and matches them with a Stephen Minister. The caring relationship lasts for as long as the need persists.

## Stephen Ministry at First Baptist Church of Oak Park

In 1992, the first group of congregational members attended training to be Stephen Ministers in St. Louis, MO, home of Stephen Ministries. Upon completion of their training and their commissioning, they undertook the caring program for the first group of Care Receivers, meeting with them and offering compassionate care while they underwent life challenges. Since that beginning, nine Stephen Leaders have been trained, who in turn have trained an estimated 27 Stephen Ministers. We have established partnerships with two other churches in our area—First Presbyterian and Grace Lutheran, both in River Forest, where we do joint training and continuing education classes as well as seminars and other interactions to bolster our preparedness for the calling to care for others.

## The Blessings of Stephen Ministry

Stephen Ministry multiplies blessings throughout the church and community.

- Congregations carry out Christ's commandment to "Love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12 RSV) in a powerful and practical way.
- Pastors have a team of gifted, trained, and committed lay caregivers ready to minister to hurting people.
- Laypeople nurture and use their gifts in meaningful ministry, growing spiritually as they serve others.
- People who are hurting have a caring Christian presence to provide emotional and spiritual support.

In short, Stephen Ministry helps carry out the mission of the church.

## Stephen Ministry Is Built to Last

You will find Stephen Ministry in congregations from more than 180 Christian denominations, across the U.S. and Canada and in thirty other countries. Stephen Ministry is built to last—going strong for decades in hundreds of congregations. Since Stephen Ministries St. Louis was founded in 1975:

- More than 13,000 congregations have enrolled in Stephen Ministry.
- More than 75,000 pastors and lay leaders from those congregations have been equipped as Stephen Leaders.
- More than 600,000 laypeople have received Stephen Minister training.
- More than one-and-a-half-million people have had a Stephen Minister to walk with them, providing one-to-one Christian care during tough times.
- Stephen Ministers are lay congregation members trained to provide one-to-one care to those experiencing a difficult time in life, such as grief, divorce, job loss, chronic or terminal illness, or relocation.
- Stephen Ministers come from all walks of life, but they all share a passion for bringing Christ's love and care to people during a time of need.

**We invite you to learn more about Stephen Ministry by contacting any one of our Stephen Leaders—Elaine Feuerabend, Marvin Pope, Linzy Waters and Perla Londres Waters. It is a blessing to spend time with you.**

# Our Finances at a Glance

## Offerings & Donations

June 2022

79.98%

Actual: \$20,150.96  
Budgeted: \$25,194.25

## Total Income

June 2022

115.48%

Actual: \$47,965.34  
Budgeted: \$41,536.33

## Total Expenses

June 2022

128.74%

Actual: \$53,474.25  
Budgeted: \$41,536.33

Year-to-date

79.21%

Actual: \$179,616.27  
Budgeted: \$226,748.25

Year-to-date

89.41%

Actual: \$334,223.44  
Budgeted: \$373,827.00

Year-to-date

104.42%

Actual: \$390,339.72  
Budgeted: \$373,827.00

## June 2022 Missions Distributions

ABC United Missions	352.00
Northern Baptist Seminary	172.00
Judson University	37.00
Jon & Amanda Good	133.00
Larry & Becky Stanton	133.00
Phillip & Corrine Smith	133.00
Great Rivers Region Area1 Dues	15.00
Lawndale Health Christian Center	207.00
Beyond Hunger	136.00
Circle Urban Ministries - Austin Neighborhood	100.00
Communion Fund	367.00
One Great Hour of Sharing	100.00
Ukraine Relief Fund (May & June collection)	920.00

## Back to School Drive

We will be collecting the following items in August for children in the Austin neighborhood to donate through Circle Urban Ministries.

1. Non perishable snacks
2. Anti-bacterial wipes for cleaning the tables
3. Kleenex
4. Hand Sanitizer
5. Paper Towels
6. Pencils
7. Replacement Back Packs
8. Expo Markers
9. Craft Kits
10. Glue Sticks

September Campaign - Non-food drive for Housing Forward clients.

## Second Saturday Book Club resumes in September

Dear Readers,

Come join the Second Saturday Book Club for a discussion of **"Confronting Justice Without Compromising the Truth"** by Thaddeus J. Williams. We'll meet in person at church on **Saturday, September 10th, 2022 at 10:00 am.**

Any questions? Please feel free to contact: John Howland 312/810-8751 / Priscilla Williams 630/741-5890 / Brent Friesen 708/745-2187 / Judy Friesen 708/745-2184

## An Open Door

### Update by Jon and Amanda Good



It is amazing how God places us in the right place at the right time. Who would have imagined that in Hungary, in 2022, there would be an opportunity to serve people fleeing war? You, our wonderful partners, have given much toward helping Ukrainian refugees. Thank you for your compassion and generosity!

This past spring it became clear that the war will not end soon and we prayed about how to provide long-term support. One of our partner churches put us in touch with a family in need of long-term housing. We just knew that the Lord had put us together. The church is providing spiritual care and helping this precious family enroll in school. We agreed to provide groceries and a two-bedroom apartment that we are able to rent through your generous support.



The International Baptist church family came together to prepare the home, supplying it with everything three little girls, a baby boy, and a mom could want. Beautiful quilts from FBC El Paso, IL decorated each bed. Our Ecuadorian artist-in-residence even created sunflower themed art personalized with their names.

This support is more than just a comfortable place to live. A team from our church assists with groceries and Hungarian Baptist social services has been able to hire the mom so that she can earn income for her family.



It is a beautiful picture of how your support plus three churches here in Debrecen work together to provide care for this family. We are amazed at how the Lord brought all of this together!

Please pray for this family, that they will be well-established and rooted in the love of Christ here in Hungary. Please pray for the people of Ukraine and Russia, for this war to end quickly. Please pray for those who are fleeing war-torn homes. Please pray for those serving the refugees, especially those brothers and sisters inside Ukraine. Above all, pray that all these people will find the hope of Jesus.



**Pictures from top to bottom:** Members of the International Baptist Church prepared the home; Luis and Patty are showing the artwork created for the family; This is an outside view of the apartment. It is the third floor balcony on the right; These are some of the quilts handcrafted with love from First Baptist El Paso.

World Mission Offering gifts are used for all areas of IM mission and operational support. When personalized global servant funding falls short, WMO general gifts also fill the gap and keep global servants in their country of service.

## FBC P&K say 'goodbye' to their beloved teachers - Erica Branch and Rebekah Branch

We recognize two young women who have dedicated their lives to nurturing and educating the children of First Baptist Church Preschool and Kindergarten for the past 20 plus years. The amazing and wonderful thing is there are both my daughters – Ms. Erica Branch and Ms. Rebekah Branch. I began working here as a teacher in February of 1996. The previous director Ms. Cheryl Sanders hired Erica in March. We worked together for two years, and then I became the director in the fall of 1998.



L-R Erica Branch, Barbara Branch, Rebekah Branch

Along the way, Ms. Erica raised two daughters, both college graduates. Erica received an Associates degree in Radiology and graduated with honors with a degree in Health Services Administration. Erica is an irreplaceable Teacher Assistant (TA); she has also been a cook and a van driver during the Covid-19 pandemic. Ms. Erica was instrumental in making sure the students stayed on task and facilitated the students working on Zoom. Erica is returning to California where she was born to pursue her career in health services.

Ms. Rebekah began her career with this preschool in the summer of 1998 after graduating from OPRF. As a TA, she shared her innate ability to connect with and assist her students with learning and playing experiences. Rebekah graduated from Triton college with an Associates degree in Early Childhood Education. As a teacher, she gained experience with all age groups including the after-school students, kindergarten through 5th grade. Along the way she raised her son who is now a senior in college.

A parent of three children in Ms. Rebekah's classroom was very impressed with her nurturing care and teaching ability. She encouraged Rebekah to complete her education and would help her find a job with District 97 if she did. Rebekah returned to university and received her Bachelors degree in Early Childhood Education this year, and earlier this month was hired as a 2nd grade teacher by District 97. She will be working under the supervision of Ms. Sarah Mendez, principal of Hatch Elementary School.

I will be forever grateful to have had the support and love of these two wonderful women. I know their work ethic and love of children have been a great part of the success of our school. We are thankful for the support of the members of First Baptist and the continual support of the members of the Preschool Board with the direction of Ms. Lynne Williams as the Chairperson. Erica and Rebekah will be greatly missed, but I'm so excited for them as they begin the new chapter of their professional careers.

~ Ms. Barbara Branch (Director - FBC P&K)

### Women's Bible Study "From Garden to Glory" by Courtney Doctor

Hey Sisters!

Do you wonder what Exodus has to do with Ephesians? Wonder where to start learning what's in the Bible? Wonder if it's just rules or an historic document or what? If so, this study was written for you! The Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is a beautiful, epic, and cohesive story. It is the story of how our eternal God is on a grand mission to redeem and restore his rebellious and wayward children. BUT . . . it is not a story meant to merely inform us. The story itself is meant to transform us and invite us to participate in this glorious redemption of all things!

10-week study / meet on Zoom / one member book per participant / weekly video content / discussion / prayer / fellowship

Intro: September 6th, 2022 - the movie Tangled

Session 1 - September 13th, 2022 through | Session 10 - November 15th, 2022

Let us know if you'd like to join us on a journey this fall!

~Judy Friesen 708/745-2184 [judybeth81@hotmail.com](mailto:judybeth81@hotmail.com)

# AUGUST 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4 6:00 pm Prayer 7:00 pm Al Anon	5	6
7 9:00 am Matthew Studies 10:00 am Worship	8	9	10	11 6:00 pm Prayer 7:00 pm Al Anon	12	13
14 9:00 am Matthew Studies 10:00 am Worship	15	16	17	18 6:00 pm Prayer 7:00 pm Al Anon	19	20
21 9:00 am Matthew Studies 10:00 am Worship	22	23	24	25 6:00 pm Prayer 7:00 pm Al Anon	26	27
28 9:00 am Matthew Studies 10:00 am Worship	29 7:00 pm MST Meeting	30	31			



Some FB friends enjoy cozy Sunday nights by the fire with conversation and fellowship.

P.C. Judy Friesen #latepost #throwback (March 20, 2022)

## AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

3. Amy Hogan
4. Norma Gavard  
Holly (Heidorn) Shafer
5. Ron Van Doren  
Priscilla Williams
7. Jane Demaree
8. Nancy O'Toole
13. Pat Larson
14. Karen Pride-Robertson
15. Judy Friesen
16. Mark Wallace
17. June Marshall
21. Donna Hencinski
23. Johnathon Cunningham  
Jeannette Scholer
26. Eric Hogan
28. Amy Aubry
31. Lee (Snyder) Cross  
Brian Cudiamat  
John Howland  
Lynn Rutledge Jones  
Jan Slaughter



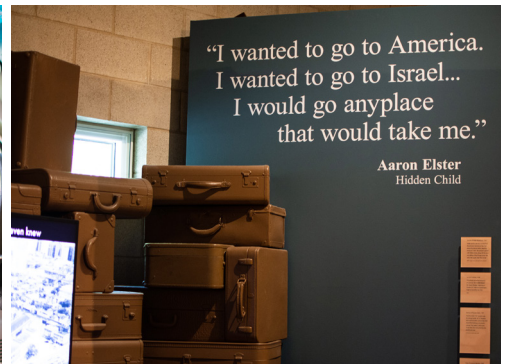
## A Sobering Journey

Thirteen members of the church had the opportunity to go to the Holocaust Museum in Skokie July 30th. The museum was founded by Survivors in response to the attempted NEO-NAZI march in Skokie in 1978.

We all participated in an interactive hologram experience where we had the chance to ask questions to a “real holocaust survivor” (actually a hologram). We then walked thru the museum, which was set up in chronological order starting after WWI and ending in the post-liberation world. Everyone went through the museum at their own pace; stopping, reading, and listening to many different aspects of the Holocaust story. One exhibit (my personal choice for most sobering and interesting) featured the voice of a survivor of one of the death camps. He described his time at the camp. This camp had only two survivors while half a million Jews died there. It was hard to listen to, yet fascinating. The museums founding principle “REMEMBER THE PAST, TRANSFORM THE FUTURE” speaks to us even today; by teaching universal lessons to combat hatred, prejudice, and indifference.

This trip provided great camaraderie and good conversation throughout the bus ride and our time at the museum with lunch afterwards. BIG thank you to Brent Friesen for driving, Mithun Roy and Cheryl Verville for planning.

~ Keith Gavard



## Calling all Bakers! Save the date!

As a church fundraiser we will be participating in the **Oak Park Farmer's Market** bake sale this year. We will need lots of baked goods for our table so get your recipes out and start planning.

Date: **October 22, 2022**

Contact: **Cheryl Verville**

More information to follow.