

First Baptist Church
100 E. Webster St.
Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Rev. Regan Stoops, Pastor

www.firstbaptistmp.com

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Pastor's Hours
8:30-4 M, T & Th
1-4 W



Great News
First Baptist Church Mt. Pleasant

December 2011

'Twas the Morning of Christmas...

It's finally December and every child is eagerly awaiting that wonderful morning when Santa has come and gone, leaving gifts to unwrap and new toys to play with. Parents are scrambling to buy presents for their children, while making plans to visit Grandmas and Grandpas and not leave anyone out. Houses are decorated with lights, and Christmas trees, and festive music is playing on every radio station. This is the wonderful Christmas season.

But this year, something is different. This year, December 25th falls on a Sunday. And what an opportunity that is! I love Christmas. I love giving gifts to our boys, love getting together with family, love the excitement and awe in my sons' eyes when they talk about Santa coming down the chimney. Those are all fun parts of Christmas. And we will celebrate those things on Christmas morning.

But this year we have an important opportunity to teach our kids about Christmas. This year we can wake up early in the morning to look for evidence of Santa's arrival. We can go through our stockings for little toys and candy. We can open our presents, tearing through the wrapping paper with a vengeance. Then, we can come to church and worship Jesus, who truly is the reason we celebrate. You see, I have no problem with celebrating Christmas with presents and Santas, but we must remember why.

2000 years ago, God sent His Son to earth as a weak, poor little infant. He sent Jesus to a young unmarried virtuous woman and caring gentleman. God sent this baby with the ex-

-press intent on sacrificing Him for all of us. So what better way for us to say thank you to Him than to worship Him on the day we celebrate His birth.

I know, you have your traditions. I know, you simply MUST have Christmas with your kids, then head over to Grandma's to open more presents and have lunch, then go to the other Grandma's for more presents and dinner. I know; we have our traditions too. But this year we can teach our kids that we're not just running our mouths when we say that "Jesus is the reason for the season." We can teach our families that as disciples of Jesus, our first priority is to Him over and above our own traditions.

Full disclosure: I have to be there - I'm the pastor. But that's not why we're coming to church on Christmas. As a parent of young kids, I am so excited to actually make Jesus the center of our Christmas celebration, instead of an afterthought that we mention so we don't feel guilty. I'm excited to talk with our children about why we give gifts and who St. Nicholas was exactly. Because all those traditions point back to a perfect baby in a humble manger.

So join us in celebrating Jesus on His birthday. Let's start a new tradition of putting Christ not only back in Christmas, but as the focal point of this and every season.

See you at the birthday party.



During the month of December we will be taking the Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering. This is an annual ABCUSA offering that provides “Thank You” checks to more than 3,000 retired American Baptist ministers and missionaries or their widowed spouses, based on 15 or more years of ABC service and emergency and other financial assistance based on need. Please help us remember them with love and give with gratitude.



We invite you to fill our sanctuary with poinsettias this Christmas as we worship and celebrate the birth of Christ. Please let the office know in whose memory or honor the poinsettia is given.

ANNUAL REPORTS DUE

Annual reports from all chairpersons of committees and ministry teams are due on Thursday, December 29.

WATCH the Christmas sales and pick up some good bargains for next year’s Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes.



A Christmas program will be held Sunday, December 18, during the worship service. Practice will be held Saturday, Dec. 17 at 10:00 am.

A Christmas Eve Service will be held Saturday, December 24, at 6:00 pm. Come and celebrate Christ’s birth with your church family.

PLEASE NOTE~~~~

Sunday School will not be held Sunday, December 25 or Sunday, January 1. Worship service will be held at 10:30 am both Sundays.

During the October Quarterly Business meeting Dean & Mary King, Allivia Shepherd and Allie Looker were all heartily welcomed into our church membership. Congratulations to all of you!

It’s a boy!!!

Ezekial was born to Supra & Heather Gajapur on November 16. He weighed 8 lbs., 9 oz. and was 21 3/4 in. long. Sheryl Cook is the maternal grandmother.

Dear Loved Ones,

Greeting. Yesterday Thursday November 10, the Emmaus Elementary School in our Haut-Limbe village gave RELIV, a powdered dietary supplement, to his school kids. Beside 15 or so who did not come to school that day, the rest of them, close to 135 drank the prepared powder solution. Now most of them are sick with cholera. Our Ebenezer clinic is full with sick children. In some of the small beds, 3 sick children share the same bed. Interesting enough even the wife of the founder of the school is sick even though she did not drink the powered milk solution.

What is amazing is that the school is only two houses down from the Ebenezer clinic where we gave a water purifier for the community. And that school is only 3 minutes walk from the university where we have another water purifier.

The Bible will always be right when it declares that my people are dying because of lack of knowledge.

Please join us as we pray specially for those sick children and the founder who is morally crushed down by bad and nasty comments of the people.

Also pray for Kihomi with her cholera education program as it is becoming more and more challenging.

Yours in Haiti,
Nzunga & Kihomi

Once again we see how vulnerable people in Haiti are to disease especially the children. I and ten others will leave Sunday to travel to Haiti and we will have two more water purifiers with us. How wonderful it would be if Christians would give enough money so we could have enough purifiers that all Haitians could be drinking pure water. This nightmare Nzunga as described happens over and over again in the developing world. It is the leading cause of death for children. Experts have calculated if all Christians tithed this and most of the other deadly problems could be overcome. Of course I am preaching to the choir because you do care and support this ministry. Thanks again.
Dennis Shewell

DECEMBER NURSERY WORKERS

	<u>Babies</u>	<u>Toddlers</u>	<u>Preschool</u>
4th	Deb Brandi	Mersihda	Amber Maxie
11th	Tena	Beth	Melissa Allivia
18th	Mersihda	Judy Kayleigh	Carolyn
25th	- Nursery Closed		

If the weather should become inclement on a Sunday, a decision to cancel Sunday School and Worship will be made by 8:45 that morning. It will be announced on KILJ 105.5 FM and 1130 AM. It will also be put on the church’s answering machine and on the church’s website.



Dear Mount Pleasant First Baptist Church Fellowship,

On behalf of the Forest Lake Ministry Team, thank you for all your assistance and the baked beans donated for the Forest Lake Camp Celebration luncheon on October 22nd. Your beans were delicious. We hope you enjoyed the day and the camp. I believe over 120 people attended our gathering and it certainly must be ranked among the best attended recent Mid-American events in our region.

To date, Forest Lake indebtedness is now down to \$13,000. We are hoping that in the next two months churches and individuals will find it within their hearts to remember Forest Lake financially so that the current level of indebtedness will be paid in full.

We believe that God is in our work together to make Forest Lake a tremendous regional resource for camping and local missions. By becoming debt-free, all of our financial resources can then focus on developing meaningful programs and improving our camp's facilities. It is an exciting time. We are already developing plans for next year (2012) and are doing a better job of promoting the camp's proposed camping activities. We still do not have a camping director to help with this work, but are ready to hire someone when the right match comes along. In the meantime, the team is prepared to accept the challenge of moving our camping ministry forward.

You have been so supportive of Forest Lake in so many meaningful ways. Without your support, the task of helping Forest Lake to become better would certainly be much more difficult. Pastor Regan is a gem. His enthusiasm for Forest Lake and young people in general is a wonderful example of ministry and we are blessed to have him as one of our team members. We certainly appreciate his skills, his knowledge and his reliability. He is a very good positive problem-solver.

Thanks again, for all you do in ministry with others. May God continue to richly bless you!

Joyfully,

/s/ Donald R. Bramschreiber
Chairperson
Forest Lake Ministry Team



Freeze Out Friday was a great success!! With 25 youth participating, we had a great cold time. With the help of our congregation, we had more than enough boxes to make our shelters, and great bonfire for warmth. And the kids have raised \$760 dollars for Community Action's help for the homeless. And one donor has offered to match up to \$500, so we will be able to impact the homeless in this community even better than we'd hoped. Great job, BYG!





December 2011

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

December Birthdays

Jeanne Olson	3
Neil Hunsaker	7
Michelle Norton	10
Jeff Scarbrough	10
Emma Crull	12
Mike Langan	13
Kristin Woodsmall	23
Tanner Woodsmall	23
Linda Moyle	27
Larry McKeehan	29

December Anniversaries

Kenneth & Connie Hummell	28
Mike & Janet Langan	29

Please inform the church office of any birthday or anniversary additions or corrections.

December Communion

Preparer: Mersihda Dyer
Servers: Bob Messer, Don Upton,
Diana Upton & Ted Ogier

				1 10:00 am Prayer Meeting 4:00 pm Praise Team Practice 4:30 pm Small Group Singing Practice 6:30 pm Seekers Circle	2	3
4 9:15 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship & Communion	5 7:00 pm Discipleship Team Meeting 7:00 pm Reach Team	6 10:00 am Coffee Hour @ Tazza Bella's 11:30 am Ladies Lunch @ Jerry's Restaurant 7:00 pm Deacons Meeting	7 6:45 pm BYG	8 10:00 am Prayer Meeting 4:00 pm Praise Team Practice 4:30 pm Small Group Singing Practice 5:30 pm Circles of Support	9 11:30 am Nature Club in Fellowship Hall	10 8:00 am Men's Ministry Breakfast
11 9:15 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship	12 7:00 pm Missions Team Meeting 7:00 pm Reach Team	13 10:00 am Coffee Hour @ Tazza Bella's 7:00 pm Worship Team Meeting	14 6:45 pm BYG	15 10:00 am Prayer Meeting 4:00 pm Praise Team Practice 4:30 pm Small Group Singing Practice 7:00 pm Link Circle	16	17 10:00 am Christmas Program Practice
18 9:15 am Sunday School 10:30 am Christmas Program	19 Newsletter Deadline 7:00 pm Reach Team	20 10:00 am Coffee Hour @ Tazza Bella's 6:00 pm Trustees Meeting 7:00 pm Leadership Team Meeting	21 6:45 pm BYG	22 Office Closed 10:00 am Prayer Meeting 4:00 pm Praise Team Practice 4:30 pm Small Group Singing Practice	23	24 CHRISTMAS EVE 6:00 pm Christmas Eve Service
25 CHRISTMAS 10:30 am Worship	26 Office Closed 7:00 pm Reach Team	27 10:00 am Coffee Hour @ Tazza Bella's 7:00 pm Outreach Team Meeting	28	29 10:00 am Prayer Meeting 4:00 pm Praise Team Practice 4:30 pm Small Group Singing Practice ANNUAL REPORTS DUE	30	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE