

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

An American Baptist Church
134 North Main Street, Geneva, NY 14456
(315) 789-3220

E-mail: genevafbc@rochester.rr.com
Web Site: genevafirstbaptistchurch.org

OUR STAFF

The Rev. Phyllis Granger, Pastor
Bill Robbins, Assistant Pastor
Nancy Robbins, Secretary
Don Will, Organist

OUR CHURCH OFFICERS

Beverly Simons - Moderator
Bill Robbins - Visitation/
Christian Education/Evangelism
Geoff Marshall - Personnel Manager
Gary Hartman - Property Manager
Verne Marshall - Financial Advisor
Judy Hartman - Fellowship Coordinator
Bill and Nancy Robbins - Worship
Susan Belding - Missions
Peter Achilles - Treasurer
David Belding - Financial Secretary
Nancy Robbins - Church Clerk

OUR SCHEDULE

Neighborhood Saturday Lunch Ministry - 11:45am - 12:15pm
Worship - Sunday, 10:00 a.m.
Fellowship - Sunday, 11:00 - 11:30 am
Sunday School - Sunday, 11:30 am - 12:30 pm
Prayer Time - Wednesday, 5:00 pm

Newsletter of FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
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2019

March 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 Lunch Ministry 11:45 am
3 Worship 10am Pastor Bill	4 Michael Peters Birthday Elizabeth Freier Birthday	5	6 Prayer Time 5pm Verne Marshall Birthday	7	8	9 Lunch Ministry 11:45 am
10 Worship 10am Rev. Granger	11 Silas (Belding) Rifenburg Birthday	12 Ellis (Belding) Rifenburg Birthday	13 Prayer Time 5pm	14 Nick Davoli Birthday	15 Paul Granger Birthday	16 Lunch Ministry 11:45 am
17 Worship 10am Rev. Granger Casey Doyle Birthday	18 Ed Cieslak Birthday	19	20 Prayer Time 5pm	21	22	23 Lunch Ministry 11:45 am
24 Worship 10am Pastor Bill	25 Wendy Doyle Birthday	26	27 Prayer Time 5pm Changhee Lee Birthday	28	29 Tom Achilles Birthday	30 Lunch Ministry 11:45 am Cathy Foster Birthday Josh Peterson Birthday
31 Worship 10am Pastor Bill						

Pastor Page

As we enter the season of Lent, I'd like to offer you a little information about Lent and a prayer.

This year March 6, Ash Wednesday, marks the first day of Lent. During the Ash Wednesday service, a minister distributes ashes by lightly rubbing the sign of the cross with ashes onto your forehead. This tradition is meant to identify the faithful with Jesus Christ. In the Bible, ashes are a symbol of repentance and death. Thus, observing Ash Wednesday at the start of the Lenten season represents one's repentance from sin as well as Jesus Christ's sacrificial death to set followers free from sin and death.

Lent is the Christian season of preparation before Easter. Early Christians felt the importance of Easter called for special preparations. It is thought that the tradition may have grown from the early church practice of baptismal candidates undergoing a 40-day period of fasting, studying, and preparing for their baptism at Easter. Eventually, the season evolved into a period of spiritual devotion for the whole church.

The Lenten season is a time when many Christians observe a period of fasting, repentance, moderation, self-denial and spiritual discipline. The purpose is to set aside time for reflection on Jesus Christ—his suffering and his sacrifice, his life, death, burial, and resurrection.

Some churches also celebrate Shrove Tuesday. Traditionally, pancakes are eaten on Shrove Tuesday (the day before Ash Wednesday) to use up rich foods like eggs and dairy in anticipation of the 40-day fasting season of Lent.

During the six weeks of self-examination and reflection, Christians who observe Lent typically make a commitment to fast, or to give up something—a habit, such as smoking, watching TV, swearing, video games, facebook, or a food or drink, such as sweets, chocolate, or coffee. Some Christians also take on a Lenten discipline, such as reading the Bible and spending more time in prayer to draw nearer to God.

Strict observers do not eat meat on Fridays, often opting for fish instead. The goal of these spiritual disciplines is to strengthen the faith of the observer and develop a closer relationship with God.

The significance of the 40-day period of Lent is based on two episodes of spiritual testing in the Bible: the 40 years of wilderness wanderings by the Israelites after the exodus from Egypt (Numbers 33:38 and Deuteronomy 1:3) and the Temptation of Jesus after he spent 40 days fasting in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13).

We all have areas in our life that do not reflect the image of Jesus Christ. Let us not be the one that someone looks at and says, "If that person is a Christian, I don't need to be one." Instead let's be that person that someone says, "There is

something special about that person's life, and I need to know more so my life can be as special as that." During this season of Lent, let us spend time to lift our shortcomings, which are really sins if we are honest with ourselves, to the Lord and ask Him to help us to be a true reflection of Christ in our life. Lift up anything that is a hinderance in your relationship with Jesus. Also, let's spend more time on the discipline portion of our Lenten commitment – reading our Bible, learning more about Jesus' life and His ministry so we can draw nearer to Christ, strengthen our relationship, and become more obedient.

Shall we pray? Lord, we desire to be your ambassadors. We want people to experience Your love, Your grace, and Your forgiveness. Help our life to reflect the love You have to offer them. Lord, not only do we want to draw people closer to You, we need to draw closer to You ourselves. Strengthen our relationship with You so our hearts, our minds and our actions always reflect the love of our Savior. May we spend quality time with You each day so You can lead and guide us. Thank you for Your unconditional love, for always being there to help us celebrate the blessings you send us, to comfort us when we hurt, and to lead us when we need guidance. Most of all, please accept our gratefulness, Lord, for making the ultimate sacrifice so we could be forgiven, be adopted into Your family, and have eternal life with You. Amen."

Pastor Phyllis

Preaching Schedule for March

March 3	Pastor Bill
March 10	Pastor Phyllis
March 17	Pastor Phyllis
March 24	Pastor Bill
March 31	Pastor Bill

Report from the Financial Secretary

Over the last three Sundays our congregation has been treated to an especially wonderful series of sermons. First was Pastor Bill's story of Peter's courage to actually step out of the boat and his ensuing struggle of faith. (To learn what to do after stepping out from the safety of our own boat we were invited to return the next week.) Bill followed with a sermon on Paul urging us *"to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."* *Romans 12:1-2*. Central to the message was an inspired children's talk on how

"in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others". Romans 12:5.

Finally, Pastor Phyllis' stirring and heartfelt sermon on spiritual gifts inspired many of us to reflect on the gifts that God has bestowed on each other and how we might use them. Phyllis shared her personal story of how God had led both her and Bill through prayer and various signs to their particular messages. As Phyllis said, the sermons had not come *from* our pastors, but rather *through* our pastors. *"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work."* *Corinthians 12:4-6*.

As Financial Secretary I found these sermons a nice reminder of how finances are but one of a vast array of gifts. Like members of a body, these gifts work together to support the whole body. An especially important gift that is often overlooked is one's very presence. Any grandparent feels this in their heart when they visit their grandchild. I feel that same joy each Sunday at worship when I look around. All these many gifts, even our very lives, are not our own but come from God to be shared freely.

Attendance

February 3	February 10	February 17	February 24
36	33	34	30

Pledging

Since I last reported we have received three additional pledges! We now have 25 pledges totaling \$55,330. So although our winter weather can sometimes seem cold and brutal, God has blessed the hearts of this congregation with a wonderfully generous and regenerative spirit. (Margene and Clair would be proud of how strongly First Baptist Church marches on!)

Two months in to this new year our collections are doing quite well. Collections are running well ahead of expected pledges. To date the expected pledge receipts were \$8512, but actual pledge contributions were \$15,257. Thus, we are ahead of schedule by \$6745. Plate collections are also off to a healthy start at \$969.

Thank you all for the wonderful gifts of all imaginable types that you so generously share with our church as we at First Baptist strive to become the body of Christ.

Dave Belding, Financial Secretary

ABC/NYS Region Offering 2019

Thank you to Pastor Bill for promoting the New York State Regional Ministries of American Baptist Churches in our area. As a congregation we have benefitted from local help in strengthening our pastoral leadership through training provided for lay leaders and pastors alike. Opportunities for mission are also made available for local churches such as ours. First Baptist Church of Geneva contributions to the ABC/NYS Region Offering this year so far total \$411. Thanks to all for your caring and helpful donations to our family association of local ABC churches.

Susan Belding
Mission Coordinator

THE STUDENT LOAN FUND

Our Student Loan Fund has limited funds available for loans for the 2019-2020 school year. Applications are due May 15. Blank forms and Loan Information sheets are available from Marlyn Stanton, Mary Achilles and Tena Milne. Contributions in memory of (or in honor of) individuals are always welcome!