

2018



Newsletter of FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
134 North Main Street
Geneva, New York 14456
(315) 789-3220

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

An American Baptist Church
134 North Main Street, Geneva, NY 14456
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Web Site: geneva1rstbaptistchurch.org

OUR STAFF

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

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
Sheila Griffin - 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
Bible Study - Sunday, 11:30 am – 12:30 pm
Prayer Time – Wednesday, 5:00 pm

March 2018

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

Pastor Page:

If you are a believer and follower of Jesus, you are called a Christian. Christians are ambassadors for Christ. All that you are and all that you do should reflect Jesus. Lent is a time for us to acknowledge any areas of our life that do not reflect Jesus. Anything that does not reflect Jesus is sin. We hesitate using the word “sin,” or sometimes even try to rationalize our behavior, but the truth is any part of our life that does not reflect Jesus is sin. We are all sinners on a journey to become more like Jesus day by day.

If you have not done so, spend some time in prayer with Jesus, and ask Him to reveal to you anything in your life that He would like to change or improve upon. In the 15th chapter of John, we are told that Jesus is the vine and we are the branches, and apart from Him we can do nothing. So once Jesus reveals something that we need to turn from or improve upon, we need to pray to Jesus to help us be successful in overcoming that sin. Sometimes we struggle to do this in the flesh instead of asking Jesus for His help. If Jesus has revealed something to us, He doesn't expect us to walk alone in that journey. He is eager to help you. So spend some time in prayer. We have seen the power of prayer many times in our personal life and in the church.

Speaking of the church, I would like you to pray about our church. Do we reflect the love of Jesus in all that we do? For instance, in our bulletin in the Lord's Prayer section, I always put (“debt, debtors”) so someone coming to our service knows what version we use in our worship. We say “debt and debtors,” but someone else might use the words “trespasses” or “sin.” It's just a small thing, but it allows them to feel like part of the family instead of an outsider. Is there anything else we should be doing to make them feel welcome in God's house?

We started a Children's Message in our worship service so the little ones at an early age can feel the love of Jesus and the love of the church family. Is there someone who wants to lead this instead of the pastors? Should we have greeters at the doors? Is there a ministry we should be doing to minister to a part of God's family that is being overlooked? Should we start the Movie Night again so we can invite someone who does not go to our church to join us in a simple meal, fellowship, popcorn, and a movie? Is there a certain Bible Study you want us to teach? Should we start a mid-week service or Bible study? Should we start a men's group for the men in our church, perhaps with a simple breakfast, a devotion and then a sharing of prayer requests? Again, it would be an opportunity to invite someone who does not go to church. It would be a non-threatening event that would get them in the door of God's house. Who knows where that might lead?

Also, is there anything we do as a church that is not reflecting the love of Jesus? The church is the bride of Christ, so we need to be sure we are reflecting the love of Jesus in all that we do. Please pray to Jesus for Him to reveal these things to you. Then share them with me so we can address them. We are all equal in Christ's family so every idea is worthy to be considered. So if Christ is speaking to you, please share with us. I am excited to hear what God has to say to us.

Rev. Phyllis Granger

Preaching schedule:

March 4 Pastor Phyllis

March 11 Pastor Bill

March 18 Pastor Bill

March 25 Pastor Phyllis – Psalm Sunday

Report from the Financial Secretary

For Lenten study the Christian Ed class has been reading the book Loving God by Charles Colson. For me this has turned out to be one of the more meaningful Christian Ed classes I can recall. Responsibility for running the sessions is passed around, and so far Phyllis, Bill, Dale and Dusty have each taken a lead in presenting a section. Each time the group has found itself in a fairly deep discussion sharing our different understandings of important core points of faith. The openness and kindness with which we listen and share with each other has drawn me closer to these sisters and brothers in faith. So I want to thank the group and especially Pastors Phyllis and Bill for arranging this study. For anyone interested, Lent is not over and all are welcome to join.

Let me close with a quote from Colson's book that struck me. It is about reading the Bible from a faith perspective. After telling the story of St. Augustine and his conversion, Colson writes:

"Prior to his conversion Augustine thought the Scriptures a collection of texts that must be interpreted and revised in comparison to the "advanced wisdom" of the philosophers. But in the garden he saw that the Scriptures were not just words to be interpreted; they were words that interpreted the reader. Through Scripture, God spoke personally and inerrantly to him. And as God's voice, Scripture knew infinitely more about Augustine than Augustine knew about Scripture." (pg. 52)

Attendance Midwinter worship in our sunny fellowship room with comfy chairs and warm friends.

February 4	February 11	February 18	February 25
38	26	36	33

Pledging

2018 is off to an excellent start! Total pledges for 2018 are \$60,327 which is \$2594 more than last year. Eight weeks into the year we have already received \$17,145 of those pledge contributions. This is \$8,547 ahead of the anticipated rate of giving. Plate collections are also running slightly ahead of last year at \$987 for the first two months.

There is indeed a great reservoir of goodwill and support for this church and its work! We see it each Sunday as workers prepare for worship and fellowship arranging flowers, lighting candles, setting up coffee hour. We feel it as families bundle their children into the worship hall. And behind the scenes the goodwill thrives in the ready volunteers for our lunch program and food ministry, and in the hundreds of little tasks of care throughout the week that people constantly contribute around the church. So where does all this goodwill come from? As God touches our hearts we cannot help but melt like winter snow in the sun. In the warmth of God's love we cannot help but yearn to give of ourselves.

Dave Belding
Financial Secretary

ABC/NYS Regional Offering 2018

Thank you to Pastor Bill for promoting New York State Regional Ministries of American Baptist Churches in our area. As a congregation we have benefited 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 FBC of Geneva. Our contributions to the ABC/NYS Regional Offering this year total \$345 so far. Thanks to all for your caring and helpful donations.

Susan Belding
Mission Coordinator

THE STUDENT LOAN FUND

Our Student Loan Fund has limited funds available for loans for the 2018-2019 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 (or in honor of) individuals are always welcome!

Sheila Griffin has a new phone number. It is 585-260-5569. Please correct your records.

Christian Bible Reference Site

Crossword Puzzle: Places

Desktop, laptop: Type with your regular keyboard. Click on a square to type across. Click twice to type down. Or click on a clue then type. Or print this page and solve on paper. **Tablet, mobile, smartphone, touchscreen:** Type with the on-screen keyboard below the puzzle. Tap a square to type across. Tap twice to type down. The **Solve** button at the top of the puzzle shows the solution.

Solve

Q W E R T Y U I O P

A S D F G H J K L

Z X C V B N M ⓧ ⓧ

ACROSS

- 3 Sea of _____
- 7 Residents of this city tried to build a tower to heaven
- 10 Jesus was arrested in this garden
- 13 Ancient Jewish kingdom
- 15 Jesus was baptized in this river
- 16 God gave Moses the Ten Commandments on this mountain

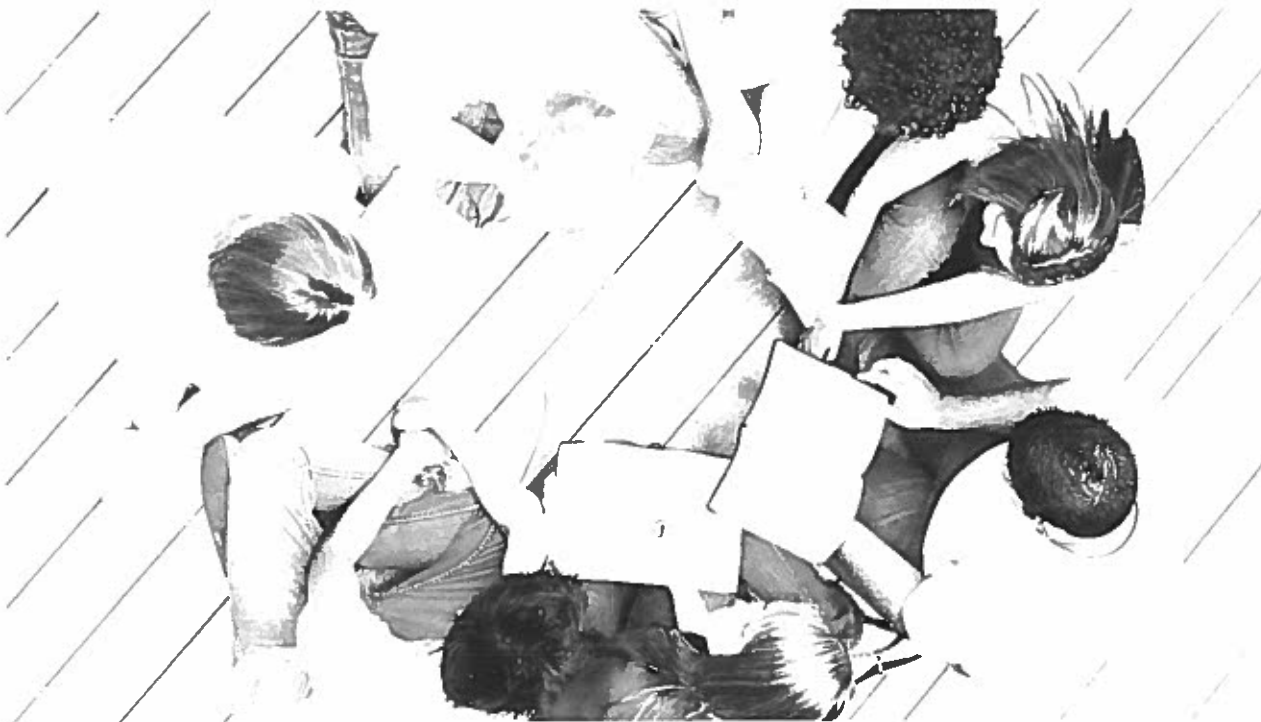
DOWN

- 1 Jesus was crucified on this hill
- 2 Jesus was born here
- 4 The Corinthians lived here
- 5 The Jewish temple was here
- 6 Jesus grew up here
- 8 Moses led the people out of slavery in this land
- 9 Joshua fought the battle of _____
- 11 Noah's ark landed in the mountains of this region
- 12 God destroyed this city by fire
- 14 Jesus turned water in wine at a wedding here

God

NOVEMBER 14, 2015

Six Questions to Ask When Studying the Bible in a Group



Article by **Marshall Segal**
Staff writer, [desiringGod.org](https://www.desiringgod.org)

The word of God is a small group's primary source of spiritual power, encouragement, and wisdom.

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man (or woman) of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16–17)

If we are trying to teach, correct, train, or encourage one another toward maturity in Christ, the Bible is our book. To be sure, Bible study is not the only thing (or even the main thing) we do in a small group, but without it, a small group will lack the life it's meant to develop and preserve.

Studying the Bible in a group can be the best and worst way to study the Bible. It can be the best because you get to benefit from the Spirit-filled insight and experience of other believers. It can be the worst for a variety of reasons.

It might be the guy who dominates the conversation, barely allowing anyone else to share something or ask a question. Or the girl whose emotional articulation of what it means to her has little or nothing to do with the actual passage at hand. Or it could be the person who always asks the peripheral and irrelevant question that sidetracks the whole discussion for way too long. Or it might be the three or four quiet ones who never say more than two or three words, even when you call on them.

One Way to Read the Bible Together

Reading the Bible in community can be challenging, but it can also be deeply rewarding. The Bible gives us resources for the relationships in our groups that we would never have otherwise. It speaks into Christian community with unparalleled authority and relevance.

If you want to read the Bible with your small group, or have tried in the past and it's fallen flat, you might try the Swedish method. There's nothing especially Swedish about reading the Bible this way. It was named the Swedish Method because Ada Lum first encountered the approach in a Swedish student group. Whether you're reading alone, or with another person one-on-one, or in a small group, this method gives you five things to look for in every passage.

One advantage of this way of reading the Bible is that it requires less preparation of leaders than the alternatives. It's based on mutual discovery and dialogue. It is helpful to have one person facilitate and even lead the conversation, but the model thrives with engagement from the whole group, each person seeing and contributing something from the five categories below.

The five things, each represented by a symbol, are light bulbs, question marks, crosses, arrows, and talking bubbles. I'll explain them each, using 2 Timothy 3:16–17 as an example passage.



A light bulb should be something that “shines” from the passage — something new or fresh. *What stuck out to you this time through?* Every time we read the Bible, God will be reminding us of things we've forgotten, and showing us things we haven't seen before.

And when we read the Bible in a group, he'll be revealing different things to different people, multiplying the

insight and learning. God does not intend for us to see different *meanings*, but to learn the one true multi-dimensional meaning, and then to see some of the limitless implications and applications from that truth.

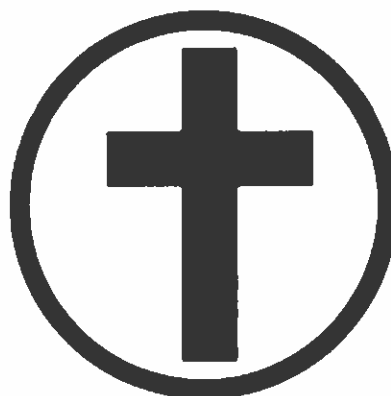
Light Bulb (Example): *All of Scripture is profitable, not just the verses that seem immediately profitable to me. Part of the challenge of reading the Bible is asking God to show us the spiritual benefit of every word he's given us.*



Did these verses raise any questions as you read? You might stumble over a word or verse, or a connection to another part of the Bible, or a particular theological point.

With every question you ask, try and answer your own question before going to others for help. Some of the deepest, most lasting learning we do comes when we press ourselves to search the Bible for an answer to our own question. The answer might be in the verse we're studying, or in the surrounding chapter or book, or God may bring to mind a verse or verses elsewhere in the Bible. Stop, pray, ask, and do your best. *Then*, turn to others (whether commentaries or other members of your group) for another perspective.

Question Mark (Example): *Why does Paul list the benefits or uses of Scripture like he does? Is there a reason they are ordered the way they are?*



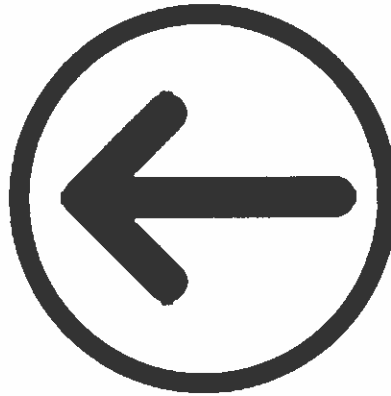
The cross is not original to the Swedish Method, but was added to bring a Christ-centered lens to our Bible reading. Where do we see Jesus Christ in these verses? Jesus did say the whole Bible is about him,

"These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." (Luke 24:44)

What in this passage helped you see more of Jesus and his cross, or what moved you to love him more?

Cross (Example): *Jesus died and God wrote a book (the Scriptures) at least in part so that we would not just be saved, but be made increasingly "complete." Having saved us through the cross, God intends to make us*

more and more mature; that is, more and more like Jesus.



An arrow indicates a personal application for our lives. Identify and commit to something you sense the Spirit is leading you to do in obedience to this text. Make it specific enough that you can do it this week, and make it personal enough that you yourself can do it (and not someone else).

A lot of Bible study, both privately and in a group, falls short of applying the text to our personal lives. One of the great things about studying the Bible in a group is that there's built-in accountability. If you talk out loud with others through steps to take toward greater obedience, you have other people around you to follow up and ask you how those particular things are going.

Arrow (Example): When I do my personal Bible reading, I am going to regularly ask if God might be 1) teaching me something, 2) telling me to stop doing something I am doing, 3) correcting some wrong thinking or behavior, or 4) preparing me to live more effectively for him.



The talking bubble is something to share. Write down the name of someone who might benefit from hearing what you've seen in the Bible. It could be something that you share with another believer, or it might be a way of sharing the gospel with a not-yet believer in your life. How can you share the joy, peace, and conviction you've been given by God with others?

Identify a specific person you might connect with in the next week, and think about a time you could bring this particular truth up with them.

Talking Bubble (Example): The Bible is not just an old book filled with truth and wisdom. It is actually extremely relevant (profitable) for my everyday life (and yours). God wants us to learn how to truly live a full and meaningful life through this book.

Why?

One last question I love to ask when I read the Bible with a group: Why are these verses in the Bible? We're trying to summarize God's purpose in putting these particular words in his book. There are a number of ways to ask this question. Why is this passage in this particular book of the Bible? What might the Bible lose if this passage was left out? What's the author's main point? Try to sum up your answer in one sentence.

Why? (Example): 2 Timothy 3:16–17, maybe more than any other verses in the Bible, state God's relationship to his word (God-breathed), and declare its relevance for all of life (profitable). Paul (and God) wants us to see the absolute authority of the Bible, through which God speaks into every aspect of our spiritual growth.

We multiply the riches when we read and share the Bible together.