

Tower Tidings

First Baptist Church of Greater Cleveland
A congregation of the American Baptist Churches U.S.A.

January 2014



M. L. King Day On! Offers Work for People of All Ages and Abilities

by Martin Rolfs Massaglia

Martin Luther King Day, Monday, January 20, First Baptist and Fidelity Baptist Church will again join forces to spend the holiday as a day ON rather than a day OFF. This year First Baptist will travel to Fidelity, 8402 Wade Park Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44103.

There will be projects for people of all ages and abilities:

1. Make pillows for VA Hospital –
2. Sanctuary Windows – Will be sealed, glazed and/or washed as needed.
3. Sanctuary Benches – Support benches as needed.
4. Bench Removal – Remove one bench by the music equipment in order to give our music department more room.
5. General Sanctuary cleaning

Participants will meet for coffee at 8:30 am and begin work at 9:00. After working for three hours, the participants will enjoy lunch together followed by a brief service to honor **Dr. King's legacy.**

This will mark the seventh year that the sister churches have been celebrating Martin Luther King Day together. In keeping with Dr. King's dream, the two churches work together bridging lines of race, age, gender, socio-economic status, urban/suburban on projects that benefit the churches' outreach and mission. "We work on worthwhile projects," commented Martin Rolfs Massaglia, "but the most important part of the day is the building of relationships. This is the most potent way to build on the legacy of Dr. King toward racial reconciliation and peace."



Annual Meeting To Be Held Following Joint Worship Service

by Martin Rolfs Massaglia

In hopes of capturing a larger group for The Annual Meeting, Church Leaders have planned a joint worship service for one time only on Sunday, January 26 at 10:00 am. Discipleship Classes will take a break that Sunday.

The Annual Meeting will begin at 11:30 am in Fellowship Hall with a dinner prepared by Chef Faith. Child care will be provided for your convenience.

Our theme for the year, as well as for the afternoon, is *God's Unexpected Blessings*, picking up on the theme of our Fall Stewardship Campaign.

As we pause to think about the Ministry at FBC, one of the things that most characterizes ministry in the last few years is how many times we've encountered unexpected blessings from God.

We find ourselves drawn to ministry in ways we had not been considering. People have been brought into our community that have filled a desperate need; deep, loving, caring faith-filled community is taking hold in incredible ways. Time and again as we came up to a need for financial resources, someone stepped forward to meet that need.

You will hear highlights of how we have experienced **these unexpected blessings.** We'll also spend a little time in informal discussion around the dinner table about that topic and others.

Matters to be brought to the congregation include presentation of the proposed budget for 2014 and reports from the Cluster Leaders on the highlights of the past year. Candidates will be elected to office and past service will be applauded.

It'll be an enjoyable afternoon. Newcomers and active participants are encouraged to join in.

Stephanie Allen Accepts Call to New Post

by Martin Rolfs Massaglia

We were sad for ourselves, but excited for Stephanie when she announced that she has accepted the call to a new post where she will serve as senior pastor. Stephanie joined the First Baptist Church Staff in 1998 as a Children's Ministry intern. She oversaw the nursery and children's church (what we now call Elevate). Stephanie went into seminary in 1999 and became the young adult fellowship coordinator and wedding coordinator. In 2001 she became youth director, 2003 minister of visitation, 2004 associate minister and 2005 took responsibility for adult education. Stephanie was the stable force on the church staff through some tumultuous and chaotic years. She will be deeply missed. She wrote the following letter concerning her decision:

Dear Congregation:

In September of this year I preached a sermon series with Martin on the "The 12 Simple Words". When I preached two of those words: "behold" and "yes" I told you that when you hear God whisper "behold" it means that He is beginning something to which you should respond, in faith, with "yes". It takes a tremendous amount of courage to take God by the hand and step out into the unknown but when God asks you to do something, we are called to respond in such a way. It is often easier as a minister to preach that, than to do it ourselves. When I preached those two back-to-back sermons I had begun a conversation with another church who had contacted me at the end of the summer for a position as their senior minister. I had not been looking for a job; therefore it was unfamiliar and quite terrifying territory but one that I quickly realized God was whispering to me the word "behold". My time at FBC was coming to an end and I could feel that the things God had brought me here to do were done.

In December of this year, with time away from the church to pray and think and with Martin's blessing, I responded to my call as senior pastor at a church out of state with the word "yes". Martin was aware of the church pursuing me from the beginning and was beyond supportive in his role not only as my boss but as my pastor. He thought not of his own needs but only of allowing me to follow the call which the Holy Spirit had placed in my life. One of the greatest gifts Martin offers you as a pastor is that he will shield his own desires so that you can pursue your path in Christ's Name. When I walked into my new church it felt like I was home. God has given both Mitch and me signs that this is the right move for us at this time in our lives and we have done this with a tremendous amount of prayer. We are not doing this because we are unhappy or for any other reason than when you hear "behold" you need to respond with "yes". We will be leaving FBC at the end of February 2014. The timing of this letter is to allow for the budget process for 2014 to be done with my absence in mind.

We are so appreciative of the sixteen years we have had at FBC. When I started at the age of 22 I was completely unaware of the journey we would have together. It was at FBC Mitch and I were married in 1999, I was licensed in the church in 2001 and ordained in 2004. All five of our children have been dedicat-

ed in the church and Marin was baptized at FBC. To say that we will always have a connection is an understatement. It will be an adjustment but one that will be a growing experience for the church as well as for our family. Mitch and I welcome any questions you may have, but we ask that our children are not asked, in order to make it an easier transition for them. We would appreciate any comments or questions directed at us as their parents.

We will be praying for the direction and path FBC is on through adaptive change. You have good leadership and will continue to be a beacon in the community.

In Christ's Name,

Rev. Dr. Stephanie Allen

Grace Helmuth To Retire As Office Manager

by Martin Rolfs Massaglia

Though she had grown up in the church and studied clerical skills at a Mennonite Junior College in Kansas and then onto Goshen College another Mennonite institution, Grace Helmuth had only used those skills in a church office for a brief assignment that left her NOT wanting to try it again. But her job headhunter encouraged her to interview for a position at First Baptist Church; God whispered "behold" to her and in September 2001 she accepted a call to ministry with us. From the beginning Grace had an awareness that God was calling her to this work; that this was her ministry. This feeling only grew stronger the longer she worked for us.

Grace had used her gifts in the corporate world working for such companies as Voice Com, Original Copy and Cellular One. She started at FBC in a temporary position during a time when the church had an interim senior pastor; it was Rev. Chris Bennett who made her office manager. The only member of the current staff working here at the time was Stephanie Allen. Karen Gill was Church Moderator at the time.

Grace loves to bring order to chaos and she is brilliant at doing it. She loves waking up each day and beginning that process of putting the myriad tasks being undertaken, into order. Of course one of the major skills needed, working in a church office, is flexibility and the ability to multi-task. Interruptions are never-ending. There is never a time when it's possible to start a project and see it through to completion without 10 interruptions. There are periods of the year when the office has more work than they can realistically manage; and then a member dies and now there is a whole new layer of activity on top of what was already too much. Grace lived up to her name in dealing with that very challenging work environment. In the nearly eight years I worked with Grace, I don't remember her ever saying she couldn't complete an assignment I gave her.

Taking on the newsletter was one of the most rewarding challenges Grace had over the years. She'd never done any-



His Day Is Done

A Tribute to Nelson Mandela by Dr. Maya Angelou



The moment I heard of his death I knew that Martin's Musings would be a tribute to Nelson Mandela. He was an inspiration like few others for those of us who seek to bring about peace and justice against seemingly insurmountable odds. A black man, incarcerated for 27 years in the prime of his life, in a country that had institutionalized racial segregation, ruled by a government that had all the power, and all the wealth, played the pre-eminent role in dismantling Apartheid, and creating a new government in which power was shared. He knew that forgiveness and reconciliation were essential ingredients to successfully empower the new government, and somehow, with the help of many friends, he brought the majority of people to his point of view.

South Africa has enormous challenges to work through in order to see the vision of a just society fulfilled. But it was this man, who so embodied the teachings of Jesus, that helped the nation resist the urge to seek revenge and set them on the path toward democracy and peace.

Maya Angelou so magnificently captured all this and more in her tribute to Nelson Mandela. I am very happy to offer it as **this month's Martin's Musings**.

His day is done.

Is done.

The news came on the wings of a wind, reluctant to carry its burden.

Nelson Mandela's day is done.

The news, expected and still unwelcome, reached us in the United States, and suddenly our world became somber. Our skies were leadened.

His day is done.

We see you, South African people standing speechless at the slamming of that final door through which no traveler returns.

Our spirits reach out to you Bantu, Zulu, Xhosa, Boer.
We think of you and your son of Africa, your father, your one more wonder of the world.

We send our souls to you as you reflect upon your David armed with a mere stone, facing down the mighty Goliath.

Your man of strength, Gideon, emerging triumphant.

Although born into the brutal embrace of Apartheid, scarred by the savage atmosphere of racism, unjustly imprisoned in the bloody maws of South African dungeons.

Would the man survive? Could the man survive?

His answer strengthened men and women around the world.

In the Alamo, in San Antonio, Texas, on the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, in Chicago's Loop, in New Orleans Mardi Gras, in New York City's Times Square, we watched as the hope of Africa sprang through the prison's doors.

His stupendous heart intact, his gargantuan will hale and hearty.

He had not been crippled by brutes, nor was his passion for the rights of human beings diminished by twenty-seven years of imprisonment.

Even here in America, we felt the cool, refreshing breeze of freedom.

When Nelson Mandela took the seat of Presidency in his country where formerly he was not even allowed to vote, we were enlarged by tears of pride, as we saw Nelson **Mandela's former prison guards invited, courteously, by him to watch from the front rows, his inauguration.**

We saw him accept the world's award in Norway with the grace and gratitude of the Solon in Ancient Roman Courts, and the confidence of African Chiefs from ancient royal stools.

No sun outlasts its sunset, but it will rise again and bring the dawn.

Yes, Mandela's day is done, yet we, his inheritors, will open the gates wider for reconciliation, and we will re-

Continued on page 4

spond generously to the cries of Blacks and Whites, Asians, Hispanics, the poor who live piteously on the floor of our planet.

He has offered us understanding. We will not withhold forgiveness even from those who do not ask. Nelson **Mandela's day is done, we confess it** in tearful voices, yet we lift our own to say thank you.

Thank you our Gideon, thank you our David, our great courageous man.

We will not forget you, we will not dishonor you, we will remember and be glad that you lived among us, that you taught us, and that you loved us all.



Martin



A Time to Retire

by Grace Helmuth

Many of us have heard those words and many of us have acted upon them. Now it is time for Grace Helmuth to act on them. It has been 13 years of growth and challenges to work in the office of FBC and there is a part of me that would like to continue. However, I look forward to other challenges that may come my way beginning Feb. 1.

I want to thank, Nancy Hamilton, Judy Donley and Jane Smith who proof Tower Tidings with me every month.

Then there are many people who help assemble Tower Tidings for mailing: Arnold Simmons, Nancy Hamilton, Jane Smith, Lois Krajcovic, Beverly Farmer, Barbara Hise, Barbara Baus, Audrey Schregardus, Gil and Elle Fry and Marilyn Cumming. They have been willing workers and such a pleasure working with them.

Thank you one and all for allowing me to be a part of the office and learn to know all of you.

Discipleship Hour will resume Jan. 5 PrimeTime Classes will resume January 8

Discipleship Hour offers:

- ◆ "Let's Talk About Faith", — led by Martin Rolfs Massaglia
- ◆ I Samuel — led by Stephanie Allen
- ◆ Covenant Groups — by Lynne Liu
- ◆ New Testament Bible Study — led by Eddie Wills and Damian Junk

PrimeTime Classes offer:

- ◆ "Mere Christianity" — led by Richard Freshwater
- ◆ "Muslims, Christians and Jesus" continuation of a class — led by Martin Rolfs Massaglia
- ◆ Small Group Experience, (crafts and fellowship)— led by Stephanie Allen
- ◆ Stephan Ministry Training, led by Stephen Leaders
- ◆ Spiritual Gifts Inventory coming in March

Next Art Show – FBC Art

by Sharon Anderson

Since we started featuring art in our Fairmount Gallery more than two years ago we have seen the wonderful creations of members at First Baptist as well as their artist friends in the greater community. We have also inspired other church communities to feature art as part of their worship and outreach. We are now receiving requests from artists for shows that could take this project well into the future.

Many of the members of our congregation collect and create art. It is with that spirit and knowledge that we will present a show celebrating the favorite art of our members that will be on display from January 15 – April 15, 2014. If you have paintings to share, either done by a favorite artist or a member of your family please let Sharon Anderson know that you are willing to lend them for this one-of-a-kind show. We would like to hang the show January 14 – 15 so **that we can all enjoy each other's collections. Pieces should include an index card with the following information:**

Name of the art piece
Name of the artist
In the collection of...

If you are willing or wanting to sell the piece, please include a price and a contact phone number.

I am hoping that this will be a varied and wonderful collection of the love of art shared by many of our FBC friends. It will be very special joining in celebrating art that has moved us as individuals with the hope it will also touch our friends at FBC.

Please contact me if you have works to share: Sharon Anderson, sanderson@firstbaptistcleveland.org or 932-7480, x 22. I look forward to hearing from you.

Retirement — continued from page 2

thing like it before and it was stressful at first, but eventually she found it to be one of the most rewarding of her tasks.

When asked what she would miss most, she said it **would be the friendships that she's made. In retirement** Grace plans to spend time with family and travel. In the fall, via Amtrak, she plans to take a trip to Spokane, Washington **with family. She knows she won't be happy without some** work to do, so volunteering wherever her skills can be used, looks good.

There are no words that will adequately express the thanks due to Grace as she leaves us. She made the work of each of us better; she kept us on point, was generous, flexible, and grace-filled. We will all miss her joyful presence and the deep commitment she had to our mutual ministry. May God continue richly blessing you dear Grace. Best wishes as you move into this new adventure in your life.

The Children's Center Connection

by Jane Pernicone



Many of us are motivated at the beginning of each year to make changes in our lifestyle to improve our health and fitness. This month we are sharing an article from NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children). There are loads of tips and great information in the "For Families" tab at www.naeyc.org.

Healthy, Fit Families

Children need to move their bodies and eat healthy foods. Families can promote healthy habits by encouraging children to eat nutritious foods and get some exercise every day. Here are some suggestions:

- Follow the nutrition guidelines for children under 6. Information on nutritious foods, portion sizes, and sample menus for planning snacks and meals are available free through the USDA.
- Eat meals together. You'll know what your child is eating, you can model appropriate choices and portion sizes, and you'll have fun talking and spending time as a family.
- Steer your child toward healthier choices at fast food restaurants. Look for salads, sliced apples, baby carrots, and low-fat milk in colorful containers.
- Offer fun, healthy snacks. Ants on a log (celery sticks with peanut butter or cream cheese topped with raisins),

sliced fresh fruit on a skewer, or raw vegetables and low-fat yogurt dip are favorites of many young children.

- Teach your child to listen to his or her stomach. **When children do this, they'll learn to know when they have had enough to eat. It takes 15 to 20 minutes after eating to know if you're really hungry for seconds.**
- Plan a taste-testing event. Family members can taste and vote on new, healthy foods—veggie burgers, baby spinach, turkey hot dogs, whole wheat pasta, kiwis, and the like. Then make the favorites part of your regular menu.
- Give hugs and kisses—not food—for comfort and encouragement. This simple action helps children associate eating healthy foods with taking care of themselves. They are likely to grow up to be adults who avoid using food as a reward or a way to cope with stress.
- **Limit your children's screen time.** Instead of watching television or playing on the computer, spend time together—go for a run, kick a ball around, ride bikes (or trikes), or take a nature hike.
- Walk instead of driving to nearby places. Leave the stroller at home. Park a few blocks from the store and walk the rest of the way. Get off the bus a stop or two

Third Annual Jazz and Poetry Night Will Aid Hunger Center

by Sharon Anderson

We are very pleased to announce our third annual Jazz and Poetry night on February 21 at FBC. Once again the admission to the event will be donations of non-perishable food for the hunger center at Bethany Baptist Church. As most of you know, this is the time of the year when the shelves in the food banks run low and it is a great time for us to open our hearts to feed those who are hungry in our greater Cleveland community.

We have some new readers this year and some returning readers as well. If you wish to share a poem you love or one you have written, please contact Sharon Anderson. We are hoping that some of our youth will participate this year, sharing original poems they have created.

We schedule this event at this time of the year for three reasons. First, it is a great time to supplement the food in the dwindling food pantries in northeast Ohio; second, February is Black History month and we try to honor the music and poetry of African Americans; and third, because we are in a season just before Lent, when many enjoy Mardi Gras. It is a good time to get together and celebrate our joy.

More information about the event will be posted in the February newsletter. Please plan to join us this year at 7:30 pm in Spahr Center.

Update On Building Renovations

by Jeff Gordon

Renovations to the Shelburne (south) hallway have been completed! Walls were repaired, textured and repainted, extra radiators were removed, the remaining radiators were sandblasted and repainted, brighter lights were installed and new carpeting was laid – most of the work done by our maintenance team. These changes have updated the hallway and have taken a space in dire need of some help and have given it a classic and tasteful look — take a look when you have a moment.

Check out the Fireside Room as well, and enjoy the **new furniture that now "finishes" the room, and provides** cozy and flexible spaces for conversations and small group meetings. Many thanks go to Pam Schneider and Jo Neff for their work choosing the furnishings.

A final upgrade you probably haven't even noticed is the replacement of the sanctuary lights that point downward, lighting the pews. The old incandescent bulbs were 500-watt energy hogs that were difficult to replace. The new bulbs are energy efficient LEDs, using one tenth the power of the old bulbs, while providing better, more even lighting – and have a life measured in decades rather than in years. The new bulbs (costing just over \$200 each) will more than pay for themselves in energy savings within a few years. Many thanks to our maintenance team members Steve Rosen and Ed Szalay for their good work!

Auditions Are Here! “Les Miserables”

by Mike Skerritt

Save the Dates! Spread the Word!

Auditions for the spring 2014 Happy Ending Lyric Players' production of *Les Miserables* will be as follows:

- 2 to 5 pm Saturday, January 11
 - 2 to 5 pm Sunday, January 12
 - 7 to 10 pm Monday, January 13
- Call-Backs 7-10 pm Wednesday, January 15
The show itself will run from Friday, March 28 thru Sunday, April 6.
- All roles are open. An appointment is not necessary.
 - *Les Miserables* is all music, so come prepared to sing a song that showcases your voice. No a cappella auditions.
 - An accompanist will be provided, or bring your own.
 - In addition to the leads, there are several minor roles available.
 - A strong active and sitting chorus is also needed.
 - While not required, lead role auditioners should try to sing something from *Les Miserables*. Music will be made available for Call-Backs.
 - There are roles for both a young boy and a young girl.

All roles are open. In addition to the leads, there are numerous solo lines for a large number of minor characters, plus a strong chorus. An appointment is not required.

We are also looking for a Stage Manager, and behind the scenes Techies are also needed.

Auditions and Performances will be in the church Sanctuary. Come on out for a truly memorable experience!



Long Range Planning Workshop Engages Congregation In Conversation about Change

by Martin Rolfs Massaglia

On December 8, the Long Range Planning Team presented the results of the congregational survey, completed by small groups of the congregation in 2011. As part of their work they analyzed the comments and discerned that there were seven foundational building blocks on which we can build.

The second step in this process is a congregational workshop to which the FBC community is invited on Saturday, February 15, 8:30 am — 12:30 pm in which people will work in groups they choose in one of the seven foundational building blocks below:

FBC Aspirational Statements

1. *Opportunities to Enhance the Worship Experience.* To enhance people's ability to worship God and through the worship to connect with God.
2. *Create Christian Education and Leadership Opportunities.* To expand the number and kinds of opportunities for children and adults to learn about Jesus and His Gospel message.
3. *Opportunities to Engage and Connect Members.* To develop strategies that insure each person who comes into our congregation is welcomed, mentored and integrated into programs and ministries that fit their calling and gift mix.
4. *Opportunities to Support Youth and Families.* To strategize about how we can tangibly support each other in the congregation from cradle to grave.
5. *Opportunities to Embrace Diversity* – To create opportunities to learn about, experience and dialogue about the rich diversity within our community of faith so that we can more fully live as a diverse congregation.
6. *Opportunities to Expand the Kingdom* – To expand opportunities for people to respond to God's call on their life; to help each other claim and understand our gifts for ministry; to support each other in pursuing the Kingdom work to which we feel called.
7. *Create a Statement of Shared Vision* – First Baptist Church needs to communicate a strategic vision or mission that is shared and understood by all the members and informs all the activities that are created and executed within the church.

The Long Range Planning Team will consider the day a success if:

- ◆ people have an explanation of and understanding of the differences between short term vs. long term planning, and technical vs. adaptive change.
- ◆ we have honest conversations about our aspirations
- ◆ we take the opportunity to put ourselves in each others shoes in the course of our conversations.

Please save Saturday, February 15 from 8:30 am – 12:30 pm to do this important work as we continue to discern God's will for our congregation.

Ladies Mark Your New Calendar Today!

Ladies, today, put a big circle around May 16 & 17, 2014. That is the date of our next FBC Women's Retreat to again be held at the Koinonia Camp and Conference Center. We will begin with dinner on Friday the 16th and close by 4:00 pm on Saturday afternoon the 17th. Everyone that attended last year said that they plan to be back this spring. If you have not yet participated in this event, just ask Jen Bopple or Laura Preston to tell you why they never miss.

Worship/Discipleship Experiment to Begin February 2

by Martin Rolfs Massaglia

With some trepidation and LOTS of excitement, the worship planning team feels led to implement an experiment beginning the first Sunday in February and continuing into June. Refer to **last month's Martin's Musings (available on the website)** or the letter sent to the congregation recently for a detailed description of the rationale.

We know people will have lots of feelings about the changes, but we ask that you hold your feedback until the end of the experiment so that you will be responding to the reality of the experiment and not simply your visceral reaction to the idea of it. At the end of the experiment we will formally solicit your feedback.

Beginning on Sunday February 2, 2014:

- The contemporary service will move to the 11:15 am start time and the traditional service will begin at 9:00 am.
- Elevate will be expanded to a full hour, from 10:00–11:00 am and will be offered just once each Sunday. The children will be kept in worship for a longer time, and those who wish to leave will be led in a meaningful activity for the remaining 30 minutes.
- This will allow Jeff Gordon not only to participate in worship each week, but it opens the door for Jeff to alternate with

Jae Williams in serving as worship leader for the contemporary service. Bob Schneider remains the musical director for the contemporary service; he is ultimately in charge of music selection, rehearsing and directing the praise team. Jeff and Jae will, as I said earlier, be bringing cohesion to the flow of worship.

- Adult discipleship classes will have nearly an hour each week as well, since it is the contemporary service that most often runs over an hour.

When I think about these changes, along with the exciting work being done by the Long Range Planning Committee, and then consider the changes that will result when Stephanie Allen leaves to assume her new position and Grace Helmuth our Office Manager retires at end of the year. I feel that First Baptist is pregnant with possibility. We may have difficulty believing that these changes will bring the desired results; we may feel a little frightened. But we cannot know what can happen if we do not try them.

If we are to experience the fullness of the possibilities in the changes to which we have been led, we need to do everything in our power to make them work. I trust you will make whatever adjustments are necessary and fully embrace the experiment, that you will step up to help fill some new gaps in leadership being created by the changes, so we can see how God will use this time of change as a positive force, as a learning tool, as a catalyst for growth. This is above all else a MOST exciting time in the life of our church.

FBC Christmas Giving - Made a Difference

by Fran Leanza

Newscaster Paul Harvey once told about a woman who called the Butterball Turkey Company and said that she had a turkey that had been in her freezer for 23 years. She asked if it was still any good. She was told that if her freezer was at least zero degrees Fahrenheit, then the turkey was probably safe enough to eat. But **they wouldn't recommend that she eat it. The flavor would have deteriorated considerably. She said, "That's what we thought. I guess we'll just give it to the church."**

I suppose there are many reasons we choose to give. But people who enjoy sharing with others the most do not share simply because they have a need to get rid of some-

thing. Those who find the greatest joy from giving have learned to give from a deeper place; they give from their hearts.

And give from the heart many did! When the Mission Giving tree went up I told Barbara Coiner and Tina Marr who **graciously helped me decorate it, "Just wait, it will soon be loaded with gifts!"** And one by one the gifts came in, lovely new items; for children at Fairhill Partners, Family Promise, Camp Koinonia, men at the shelter at 2100 Lakeside, for our guests that we serve each month at Calvary Presbyterian Church, food for the Hunger Center at Bethany Baptist Church and monetary gifts for our American Baptist Retired Ministers and Missionaries.

Many of you remember Middy & Don Crellin from the time that Don served on our staff. In his Christmas message to me he mentioned just receiving the Christmas gift from the Retired Ministers & Missionary offering. He said that this bonus will allow them to do a little something extra and is always appreciated.

When Tracy Peebles arrived at Family Promise at 9 am on December 16 she was met by a young woman and her small son. They were very helpful in bringing in all of your donations from her packed car. When Tracy got inside it looked like Santa's workshop! Volunteers and the staff were all a frenzy sorting the many donations that were quickly filling the designated space. The staff thanked Tracy for delivering your most welcomed donations. Tracy said it was 17 degrees outside that morning but she was warm inside as she was filled with the Christmas spirit glowing throughout Family Promise.

Thanks also to others for making deliveries: Mary Ann Short, Lindsay Evans, Jeff Gordon, Barbara & Bill Baus, Kay Rolfs Massaglia and MEG.

I hope that your Christmas was a bit brighter as you shared with others!

2014 New Year's Resolutions

by Mike Skerritt

As Director of Planned Giving at First Baptist I have learned that the **emphasis in this field of work is really more about "planning" than "giving."** When you analyze all the variables in your life so that you can plan for a realistic and comfortable future with an ability to accomplish personal and family goals, you will soon realize that there are a lot of non-financial steps you should take to protect yourself and your loved ones.

So here is a list of New Year's Resolutions for 2014 for you to make, and accomplish!

1. I will prepare a will, or, I will review and update my existing will. (The courts will disperse your assets as they see fit **if you don't have a will.** And, as your personal and financial situation changes, so should your will.)
2. I will designate a Guardian for my kids. (If you don't specify a Guardian, in writing, the State of Ohio will determine who gets your kids if both parents are deceased. You may not like who they choose.)
3. I will make a Living Will. (It documents your wish that life-sustaining treatments be withheld or withdrawn if you are a) unable to make informed medical decisions on your own and b) in a terminal condition or in a permanently unconscious state. It enables you to die peacefully, and with dignity, and prevents the unnecessary depletion of your financial resources.)
4. I will prepare a State of Ohio Health Care Power of Attorney. (This document gives your agent, someone you choose and trust, to make medical care decisions on your behalf, based on instructions you include in this document, in the event you cannot make them yourself.)
5. I will prepare a Durable Power of Attorney. (With such a document, you appoint someone, usually a spouse or offspring, to manage any or all of your financial and legal affairs, or do any and every other act which may legally be done by you, if you are unavailable to do them yourself. For example, if you were incapacitated or perhaps on vacation you might want someone to open your mail and pay your bills.)

Do yourself (you will sleep better) and your family (they will sleep better) a favor and pledge to prepare these five documents during 2014. Most, if not all, of these documents have standard forms available on-line. Just type in the name of the document above into your computer search engine, down load the blank document and fill it out. I strongly suggest you then have an attorney look them over. To be legally valid you must sign each document a) before two witnesses or b) a Notary Public.

Do it today! It's important!

Camp Koinonia

"Many Miracles 2014"



Excerpts from a message from Randy Brookes, Camp Director:

"The entire ministry of Camp Koinonia is based on two simple words – "Changed Lives", and nothing changes a life more than when a person first believes in the saving work of Jesus Christ. Such events are the Many Miracles of Camp Koinonia.

Nothing brings me to tears quicker than thinking about personal stories of camper's experiences at Koinonia. One young camper said "It was the best week of my life...I know now how much God loves me." Sam said "I learned how I can obey Him and still have fun." Matt said "God loves me no matter what, and violence is not the answer."

There are so Many Miracles at Camp Koinonia. We need your prayers asking God to continue to use this place in miraculous ways. We need your time, talent and resources. Please prayerfully consider supporting the Many Miracles ministry at Camp Koinonia."

First Baptist, you can send a check directly to Randy Brookes at the Camp at 6810 Cork Cold Springs Road, Geneva, OH 44041, or you can **donate through First Baptist with "Koinonia"** on the memo line of your check and we will make sure it gets to Randy. Thank you! Mike Skerritt

Burning River Brass

by Mike Skerritt

I hope you were able to attend the December 10 *Burning River Brass* concert in our beautifully decorated Sanctuary. It was a wonderful way to get into the Christmas spirit!

To support the FBC Music and Fine Arts Program which paid a fee for their performance, *Burning River Brass* gave FBC 30 of their CD recordings to make available to our members and friends. There are five different recordings, but most of them are of Christmas music. The selection also includes a CD that was recorded a few years ago in our Sanctuary!

If you would like one of the *Burning River Brass*'CD's and support the FBC Music and Fine Arts Program at the same time you may obtain one or more of your choosing from the church office for \$20 each.

Thanks for your support!



First Baptist Youth reached **\$37,000** during the Annual Christmas Tree Fundraiser

A special thank you to everyone that supported this successful fundraiser (i.e. through purchase, donations, sharing our info throughout the community.)

We provided jobs to twelve youth in the surrounding community @\$8.00 per hour and we also provided Fundraising opportunities to Youth Groups (\$5.00 per tree). Church of The Saviour sent 60 of their members to purchase 60 trees, and Church of the Covenant sent 15 of their members. We provided \$400 to Old Land Mark Christian Church Men's Shelter for sending men to help with unloading and moving inventory. We are providing \$1,000 to Boy Scout Troop 179 as they worked with us every Saturday, starting November 23 and they will assist with the clean up, which will start the week of January 6. (FBC Youth gives back to the community).

I believe the biggest impact (impression) is that First Baptist Church of Greater Cleveland continues to prove we are indeed outwardly focused.

We are awaiting final budget numbers from Dr. Ralph Hise (FBC Treasurer) on this project. We hope to have \$6,000 - \$8,000 profit. We are also honored that FBC Property and Finance Committee, under the leadership of Chair Robert Gill, supported this project.

FBC Youth, Parent and Advisors Annual Meeting
February 16, 2014
12:15 Lunch (hot food) will be served in the Fellowship Hall

We will come together to discuss our plans for 2014 (i.e. Mission Projects, Teaching Materials, Exploration Trips, Scholarships, Praise Dancers, Youth Choir, Participation in Sunday Worship, Basketball, CONVERGE, Summer Jobs and Youth Advisory Committee.



| February Birthdays | |
|--------------------|---|
| February 5 | Marlene Cooper Damian Junk |
| February 6 | Tobili Sam-Yellowe Pam Schneider Kathy Skerritt |
| February 7 | David Meil |
| February 9 | Stephanie Allen Dana Capers |
| February 13 | Marty Capers Phyllis Peterson |
| February 14 | Anne Eickmann Christine Marr |
| February 16 | Marvin Hambdan |
| February 18 | Charles Cicco Shavon Gocan |
| February 19 | Jae Williams |
| February 20 | Star Knuckles |
| February 24 | Tina DeBlaey-Cicco Christopher W. Smith |



Tower Tidings

The First Baptist Church of Greater Cleveland
3630 Fairmount Blvd.
Shaker Heights, OH 44118

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U.S. Postage
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Permit 4026

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Web Site: www.firstbaptistcleveland.org

FBCGC Lay Leadership

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Moderator | Paul Eickmann |
| Vice Moderator | Suzanne Blum |
| Treasurer | Ralph Hise |
| Clerk | Lindsay Evans |
| Children's Center | Sheri Stevens |
| Communication & Outreach | Yan Ling |
| | Marketing, Greeters/Welcome Center, Communications, Barnabas Ministry |
| Discipleship | Carolyn Neal |
| | Discipleship Classes, PrimeTime, Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry, Covenant Groups |
| Fellowship and Nurture | Jim Ankenbrandt |
| | Stephen Ministry, Deacons, New Member Orientation |
| Missions & Social Concerns | Tim Farrell |
| Stewardship | Stephanie FallCreek |
| | Property and Finance, Stewardship Campaign, Endowment and Audit |
| Worship and Fine Arts | Richard Freshwater |

FBC Church and Office Staff

Rev. Dr. Martin Rolfs Massaglia, Senior Pastor
Rev. Dr. Stephanie Allen, Associate Pastor
Rev. Jeff Gordon, Associate Pastor / Administrator
Dr. Robert Schneider, Director of Music and Organist
Mr. Jae Williams, Director of Youth Ministries
Mrs. Jane Pernicone, Director of Children's Center
Mr. G. Michael Skerritt, Director of Planned Giving
Mrs. Sharon Anderson, Director of Arts Outreach
Ms. Betty Meyers, Associate Director of Music
Mrs. Margo Jerome, Accountant
Ms. Grace Helmuth, Office Administrator
Ms. Star Knuckles, Administrative Assistant

Tower Tidings Staff

Editors: Martin Rolfs Massaglia, Grace Helmuth and Star Knuckles. Proof Readers: Nancy Hamilton, Jane Smith, and Judy Donley.

Thanks to the many volunteers who help assemble the Tower Tidings mailing each month!

The Next Tower Tidings Deadline: Monday, January 20. The next issue will be mailed: Wednesday, February 5, 2014
Please submit articles or news via e-mail to jgordon@firstbaptistcleveland.org