



Saint Patrick's Day

March 17

J	Q	Y	E	S	H	A	M	R	O	C	K	G	B	I
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Y	E	A	I	E	O	C	C	Y	K	L	S	S	L	B
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H	A	I	A	R	X	V	M	Y	L	K	E	C	D	B
F	U	B	B	A	X	E	Z	F	A	E	B	H	J	H
V	N	E	K	P	R	M	L	B	R	P	R	A	C	E
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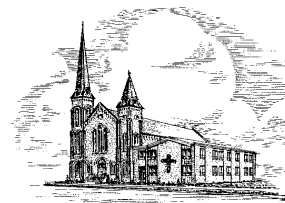
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Greetings,

As we continue in the season of Lent, I was drawn to the Old Testament Book of Amos. It is a book of the Bible that I always find interesting, but at the same time, I find it frightening. Today, I was reading the 5th and 6th chapters from The Message Translation and was struck with how similar the condemnation of Israel was with what is happening in the United States today.

Amos 5:7 says, *“Woe to you who turn justice to vinegar and stomp righteousness into the mud.”* We are daily confronted with things that are distortions of the truth as well as outright lies. Social media has enabled anyone to say what they want to millions of people, and the truth is of little value. Justice isn’t present if truth is determined by who shouts the loudest.

In Amos 5:10-12 says: *“People hate this kind of talk. Raw truth is never popular. But here it is, bluntly spoken: Because you run roughshod over the poor and take the bread right out of their mouths, you’re never going to move into the luxury homes you have built. You’re never going to drink wine from the expensive vineyards you’ve planted. I know precisely the extent of your violations, the enormity of your sins. Appalling! You bully right-living people, taking bribes right and left and kicking the poor when they’re down.”*

If one looks at how the poor are treated and how it is being proposed we treat them in our nation, it becomes clear that we are running over the poor and those who don’t have financial resources to defend themselves.

There are those in power (of one sort or another) who clothe their actions in religiosity. Amos directed his comments directly at that kind of behavior in the 5th chapter, verses 21-24. *“I can’t stand your religious meetings. I’m fed up with your conferences and conventions. I want nothing to do with your religion projects, your pretentious slogans and goals. I’m sick of your fund-raising schemes, your public relations and image making. I’ve had all I can take of your noisy ego-music. When was the last time you sang to me? Do you know what I want? I want justice—oceans of it. I want fairness—rivers of it. That’s what I want. That’s all I want.”* These words speak for themselves.

The 6th chapter of Amos didn’t make things any better. There was nothing but doom predicted for Israel because of how the poor were treated and because truth and justice were perverted.

America was at one time a great nation. However, we are sinking into an abyss of injustice, unrighteousness, selfishness, and despising the poor and anyone who isn’t like us. I believe, I fear, that our time is at an end. There will be no hope unless we as a nation repent.

Peace,
Pastor Ross



If you would like to donate a lily for use at the Easter service on Sunday, April 1, please fill in the information below and turn it in to the church office no later than **10:00 a.m. on Monday, March 19.**

All plants are to be paid for at the time they are ordered.
Plants not picked up will be taken to a member of our

church family who is unable to attend.

_____ Number of plants ordered (\$9.50 each)

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

Given by _____

Please return with check payable to: **First Baptist Church**

201 S. Jackson St., Jackson MI 49201

As you can see, this is a potentially large ministry, and obviously, our church cannot do this alone. So, where do we start, and where is the ministry at right now? The ministry will be broken up into four phases. Phase one is transportation and children’s needs. Phase two is life skills. Phase three is education and jobs. And phase four is household. As the ministry grows, the other phases will be implemented.

At this point, the ministry has started phase one. Church Mutual, who is our insurance carrier, was contacted because of concerns with the church’s liability. After conversations with their agents, underwriters, risk management, and lawyers, they gave us their blessing and informed us there would be no additional cost in premiums (alleluia!). The ministry has created brochures, put together intake folders with several forms to be filled out, and folders for the people who want to participate in this ministry with forms and information they will need. The ministry has its own phone number and email address (517- 748-7642, prisonfamilyministry@gmail.com). The ministry is using Trusted Employees (a company referred to us by Church Mutual) to do background checks on potential volunteer drivers. Finally, local churches are being contacted to set up times to present the ministry to them to see if they want to partner up with us. So, please pray that the churches in our community will be receptive to this ministry and want to be a part of it and that the ministry can find individuals that will be willing to be volunteer drivers.

Submitted by,

One of God’s many servants

Brian Manchester

Ministry Facilitator



NEW MINISTRY

Did you know that that a new ministry has started at First Baptist Church? It is the Prison Family Ministry. Last summer, after one of Pastor Lucas's transitional meetings, I was approached to make a list of possible outreach missions our church might want to start. I decided to take this one step further and talk to God. I asked Him if First Baptist was to be part of this community, what outreach should we do? I didn't think we were supposed to be a food bank, a clothing bank, or a soup kitchen, but I felt there should be an outreach mission that was not being done in Jackson for us to start. I didn't have to wait long for a response. The Lord revealed a ministry to me that has six different parts that make up the ministry. He was giving me so much information, I was literally in information overload. I had to ask Him to stop and let the information soak in and to give it to me in smaller chunks I could handle - which He did. So, I will explain to you about the ministry and where it is right now.

The ministry is designed to reach the families who reside in Jackson County who have loved ones incarcerated in the Michigan State Prison system. The ministry has six different areas to the ministry: (1) Transportation, (2) Children's Needs, (3) Life Skills, (4) Education, (5) Jobs, and (6) Household.

Transportation: The ministry will provide transportation to the prison where their loved one is providing they give 25 hours of their time volunteering in the community.

Children's Needs: Send out birthday cards and Christmas cards to the children, provide school supplies in the fall (possibly book bags), summer camps, or any other children's events the church may put together.

Life Skills: Teach basic life skills to the significant others, such as cooking, sewing, how to manage a budget, minor household repairs, etc.

Education: Help them to get a GED, Pell grants for college, etc.

Jobs: Help them to fill out job applications; teach them what to wear and how to conduct themselves at a job interview; teach them how to follow up after an interview.

Household: Help them to purchase used furniture or new appliances, again, using the community volunteer program.

EXECUTIVE BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

February 18, 2018

- February 25 – Youth will offer worship service.
- March 9-11, 12 youth will attend Winter Weekend at Spring Hill Camp
- March 26, Maunday Thursday light supper and service at 6:30 pm.
- April 1, Easter Sunrise Service at Sharp Park Rotunda at 7:00 a.m.
- Information is being verified by Sherry Dodge for updated church directory.
- Pastoral Search Committee will begin search for a full-time pastor.
- Pastor Lucas gave a one-year report as Transitional Pastor; a copy is posted on the back bulletin board.

"I have come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. I possess tremendous power to make life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated, and a person is humanized or de-humanized. If we treat people as they are, we make them worse. If we treat them as they ought to be, we help them become what they are capable of becoming."

-Johann Wolfgang von Goethe,
Submitted by Edna Harris

Through my recent health issues, I have felt bolstered by the expressions of care and concern offered by my church family. Your tender words, cards, calls and beautiful planter have reminded me over and over again that my diagnosis of breast cancer is just a "bump in the road" of life. It all just goes to show that God will provide exactly what is needed. Thank you for your kindnesses now and as I proceed through treatment.

-Mary White

