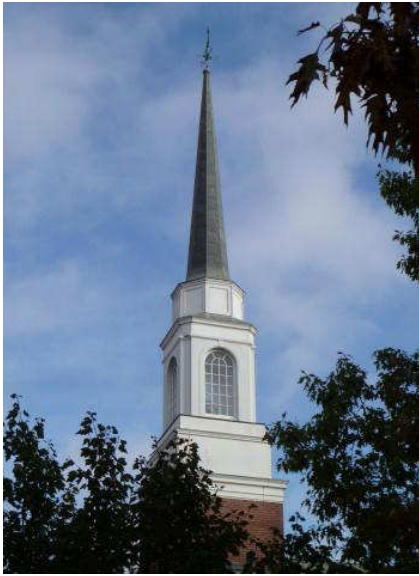


The Spire

First Baptist Church, Ames, Iowa



December 2011

Volume 57, No. 12

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Pastor's Word

December! A wonderful, joy-filled month. Christmas parties. Time off from school. Vacation days. Food, food, and more food. Visits with family. Basketball games (yes, basketball games!) Christmas lights and displays. All kinds of seasonal programs and shows and concerts and plays and festivities. I'll get to play my John Denver and the Muppets Christmas album. And, sooner or later, snow!

December is a wonderful month in the church, with carols and Advent candles and banners. The Yuletide Orchestra will be playing. The church is all decked out with greenery and poinsettias and candles and looks beautiful. There is something in the air. The Christmas Dinner and Program is always a great time together. We'll have Vespers at Northcrest. And then, a highlight of the church year, Christmas Eve. This is one of the best-attended services of the year, sometimes eclipsing even Easter in attendance, and is the favorite service for many. It is a special moment as we light our individual candles and end the service singing "Silent Night." This year, Christmas falls on Sunday, and we are looking forward to a casual, family Christmas service that morning.

To top it all off, Susan and I will celebrate twenty-five wonderful years of marriage. December is a fabulous month.

Of course, that is not the whole story of December. It is competitive shopping season, and for some, mega-consumerism is what December is all about. For those who are struggling just to get by – and there are many in that category - the cultural focus on buying stuff makes tough times that much worse.

December can be an exciting month, but "hectic" is another word that comes to mind. As we try to fit too much activity into a limited number of days and hours, clean the house for guests, buy perfect gifts, bake cookies and goodies, and do whatever else the season requires, stress levels go up considerably.

All the while, cold is setting in and days are growing shorter and shorter. For a lot of people, this is a lonely time, even with all of the parties and get-togethers. It is a time when we especially think of loved ones who are not with us to share the joy of the season.

Whether we are delighted or depressed by it all, we need to remember what we are celebrating – the "reason for the season." God broke into human history and came to us as a child, born to bring us hope and peace and love and joy. The Sundays of Advent help us to focus on what really matters, and prepare our hearts so that the true joy of Christmas is that much fuller. I look forward to worshiping with you this month.

Peace and Joy,
Dave

The Spire

Published monthly

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**Worship Leaders
For December**

December 4

Worship Leader:
Joe Parrish

Ushers:
Bob Parrish*
Wallace Sanders
Marian/Jan Thompson
Ngair West-Johnson

December 11

Worship Leader:
Michael Thompson

Ushers:
Howard Johnson*
Pat Johnson
Becca Whitaker
Andrew Perrine

December 18

Worship Leader:
Zoe Russell

Ushers:
Bob McCarley*
Dianne Borgen
Tom Logue
Jeryllyn Logue

December 25

Worship Leader:
Susan Russell

Ushers:
Martha Gleason*
Beth Douglass/
Rosemarie Starrett
Scott Anderson
Jere Maddux

Flowers for December:

Donna Cleasby &
Barbara Woods



Irene Shireman	2
Walter Fehr	4
Todd Smith	7
Jim Demarest	8
Meyer Smith	9
Tonia McCarley	12
Chrissy Amaya	24
Jill Leininger	28
Ike Robinson	29
Dave and Susan Russell	20
Lee and Joyce Davidson	27

Birth Announcement

Sara Ann Marsh born to Inger and Tony Marsh of Georgetown, Texas on Nov. 14, 5 lbs., 4 ozs, 19 ins. long. Proud grandparents are Gayle and Arvid Osterberg.

Student Christmas Party

Dave and Susan Russell will host a college student Christmas party at their home on Sunday, December 4 at 6 pm. Students are asked to bring a wrapped gift for the gift exchange. Bring something you already have or if you have to buy something, spend \$3 or less. (Goofy gifts are encouraged.) If you need a ride, please see Dave or Susan. The Russells live at 2316 Hayes Avenue.

Vespers

Our annual Vespers at Northcrest service will be Sunday, December 18 at 5 pm in the Green Room in the main building at Northcrest. There will be music by our choir and instrumentalists and a brief message. Northcrest residents and all others who would like to attend are invited to join us.

Student Suppers

Thank you to Beth Douglass and Jere Maddux for providing a meal on November 13. Thanks again to everyone who prepared a meal this semester-the students really enjoyed all the great food shared!

On December 4, the Student Christmas Party will be hosted by the Russells at 6pm. December 11, students are invited to the Annual Christmas Dinner and Program in the Fellowship Hall at 6pm.

Regular Student Suppers and Bible study will resume January 15, 2012.





Christmas Dinner

The Christmas dinner is a long-held tradition at First Baptist with good food and warm fellowship with church family and guests, and the Christmas program after the meal. This year's dinner will be Sunday, December 11 at 6pm. We will have a Christmas buffet again this year. The meat, dressing, rolls, beverages and table service will be furnished by the church. Please bring a dish to share. If your name starts with A-E, bring a salad. F-L please bring a potato dish. M-P is asked to bring a dessert, and Q-Z should bring a vegetable. Dividing dishes alphabetically is an easy way to make sure that we have a balanced selection. However, if you have something special that you would like to prepare, you are welcome to do that! Please let us know if you can or cannot come by replying to this email, calling the church office at 292-9612, or using the friendship pads next Sunday at church. Please also let us know if you can help in the kitchen or with table set-up. Students, you do not need to bring a dish, please come as our invited guests!



December

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

				1	2	3 7pm-Phi Kappa Psi Initiation
<p>4 8:45-Orchestra 9:45am-Worship/ Communion RMMO Offering 11am-Church School 6pm-Student Christmas Party- Russells</p>	5	6 8am-Men's Breakfast- Perkins	7 6:30-Choir	8 AARLA- 10am	9	10
<p>11 8:45-Orchestra 9:45am-Worship Christmas Offering 11:15am-Church School 12pm-Budget & Elections Meeting 6pm-Christmas Dinner & Program</p>	12	13	14	15	16	17
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> Finals Week </div>						
<p>18 9:45 Worship 11am-Church School 12pm-3rd Sunday Lunch-Arby's 2-4pm-Prayer Shawl Circle 5pm-Northcrest Vespers</p>	19	20 8am-Men's Breakfast- Perkins	21	22	23	 Christmas Eve 5pm-Social Hour 6pm- Candlelight Worship
<p>25 9:45 Worship No Church School</p>  Christmas Day	26	27	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> Church Office Closed </div>						

Looking ahead to January...

Church School resumes	8
Student Suppers resume	15
Prayer Shawl Circle	15



Each year, we receive a Christmas Offering and designate 50% for the Emergency Residence Project. The other 50% goes for emergency assistance distributed directly through our church. The need for this kind of assistance has never been greater, and we invite you to give generously. You may mark your check with the memo, "Christmas Offering" or use the special envelopes available in the Narthex.

Stewardship Update

Thank you to all who have responded so generously to our stewardship campaign by pledging financial support for our church in 2012. As of November 27, we have received 34 pledges for a total of \$155,940.00. If you have not yet pledged, we invite you to do so. Additional pledge cards are available in the narthex or from the church office.

Nicaragua Mission Trip

Our spring break trip is set for March 9-18. We need a few more team members to join us! If you are interested or would like more information, please see Pastor Dave or Barbara Woods as soon as possible. Be looking in the mail for our "Virtual Mission Trip" fundraiser this month!

Business Meeting

Our annual Budget/Election Meeting will be held Sunday, December 11 at 12 noon, following Church School. We will approve the budget for 2012 and elect officers, board and committee members, and organizational representatives for the coming year.

The Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering
RMMO *connects generations*



Michelle Leininger to Graduate from UNI

Michelle Leininger is our December student of the month, and just in time! She will be a student for just two more weeks before graduating from the University of Northern Iowa on December 17. Michelle will receive a Bachelor of Arts in English with a minor in creative writing.

Michelle is a member of First Baptist; she started attending here with her family in 2003. She is a graduate of Ames High School and DMACC. While at home over the summer, Michelle has frequently worked in our church nursery. At UNI, she has worked at the Rod Library. A highlight of her time at UNI was spending several weeks this summer taking a course in Ireland.

Michelle is a big movie fan and an avid reader. Her favorite movie is "The Neverending Story" and her favorite book is *On Fortune's Wheel* by Cynthia Voight. She also enjoys crocheting and writing. She is an animal lover. Michelle has two cats, Carmel and Cocoa, and she is often asked to pet-sit for friends who go on vacation.

After graduation, Michelle will be looking for a job. We will be recognizing her in worship on January 8.



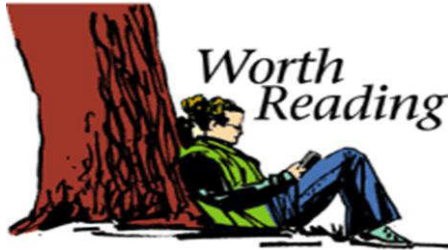
Michelle Leininger

Since 1935, American Baptists have contributed to special offerings received in their churches for retired ABC ministers and missionaries or their widowed spouses. The Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO) was established in 1977.

Through this annual offering, American Baptist congregations say thank you in a tangible way to the denomination's retired ministers and missionaries or their widowed spouses. The offering provides them with emergency and other financial assistance, based on financial need; and "Thank You" checks, based on 15 or more years of ABC service.

Weather Cancellations

With snow and cold weather upon us, we want you to be aware of how we will get the word out in case of cancellation. If worship or other major events are cancelled or postponed due to weather, we will post the cancellation on the church website, on the church facebook page, and send an email to our Spire mailing list. We will also notify KKCI-TV channel 8, WHO-TV channel 13 and KASI radio in Ames. For smaller group events (choir, committee meetings, etc.) group members will be notified by phone or email.



Needing something to get you the mood for Christmas? There are many Christmas books on display in the hallway near the lounge. There are kid's books, romance stories and an answer book for such questions – Which were they? Wisemen or Kings! Among the books are these titles:

A Wish For Christmas by Thomas Kinkade & Katherine Spencer, **Advent of a Mystery** by Marilyn Leach, and **Christmas At Harrington's** by Melody Carlson

New in the Library are books 2 and 3 in The Green Series (**Gone To Green**) by Judy Christie: **Goodness Gracious Green** and **The Glory of Green**. If you like these books, let me know, there are more in the series.

Cape Light by Thomas Kinkade & Katherine Spencer
“This heartwarming novel introduces us to the quaint town of Cape Light, and the unique residents who call it home. Nestled in New England is the picturesque seaside hamlet of Cape Light, where everyone knows everyone, and folks still care about one another. But Cape Lighters have their share of hidden dreams, desires, and doubts, too. They are friends and neighbors, doers and dreamers. They laugh and love and build their lives together in the town of Cape Light - and they will work their way into your heart.”

I haven't read it yet, (I wanted to get it out for others to read instead of it sitting on my book shelf waiting for me!) but reviewers have written that if you like Jan Karon's Father Tim books, you'll like these. We also have book 2 in the series and I'll add more if I get requests.

Nearing Home: Life, Faith and Finishing Well by Billy Graham

In this moving narrative, Billy Graham once again takes up the pen not only to share his personal experience of growing older but also teach us some important lessons on how to view our time here on Earth. He says that the Bible makes it clear that God has a specific reason for keeping us here. So what is His purpose for these years, and how can we align our lives with it? How can we not only learn to cope with the fears and struggles and growing limitations we face but actually grow stronger inwardly in the midst of these difficulties?

Also new in the Library are books 2 & 3 in The Debutantes Series (**Heather**) by Debra White Smith”

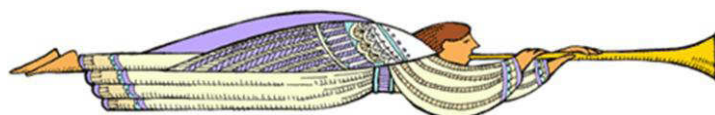
Lorna

“Attending a welcome-the-new-mayor party, Lorna Leigh counters boredom by escaping to the garden...only to realize she's not alone. The dashing 30-something mayor is getting fresh air too. Sparks fly when she realizes Michael's idealistic views match hers and he discovers she's a tennis fiend.

When a pastor is arrested for pornography, debutantes Lorna, Heather, and Brittan take the case. Convinced the pastor was set up, the gutsy amateur detectives investigate.”

Britten

“When Brittan Shay meets Jose Herrera, she's found love for the first time. Even when she and her friends, Lorna and Heather, investigate a money laundering scheme and discover Jose's mother might be involved, Brittan's sure her new boyfriend isn't part of the plot. But when Chief Rob Lightly gets involved Brittan hesitates. As suspicions and accusations fly, who should Brittan believe? And what will the culprit do when awareness of the Debutantes' investigation comes to light?”
-Catherine Parrish



The Spire

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First Baptist Church is an open and caring family of faith where worship is central and faith engages both heart and mind. We are warmly ecumenical, delight in our diversity, and cherish our Baptist heritage of freedom. We are called by Christ to share God's love with the campus, community, and the world.

First Baptist Church
200 Lynn Avenue
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May God's Blessing Be With You in This Holy Season

The First Baptist Staff

Pastor Dave

Pastor Susan

Mindy

Cindy

Jen

Terri

Kelsey

Kristin

