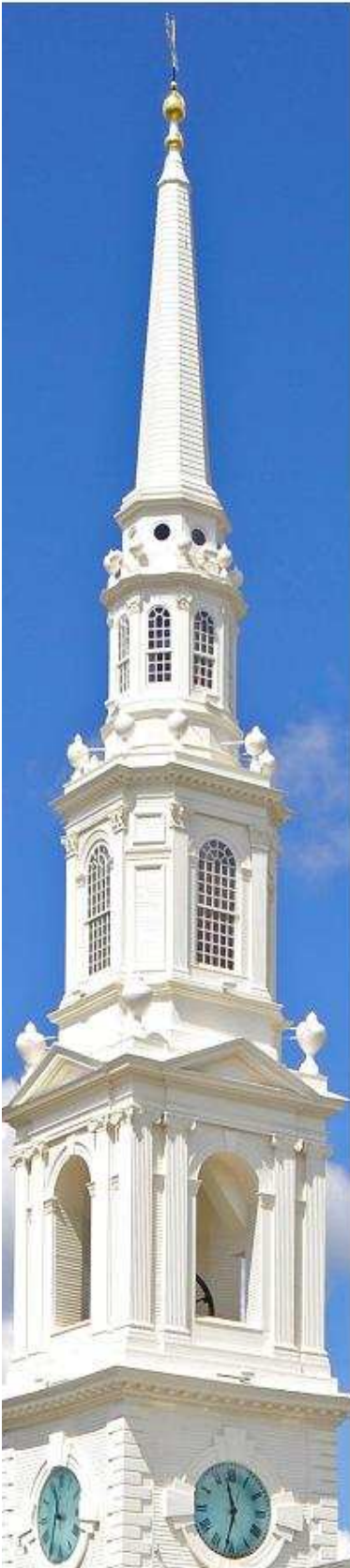


The Spire

Newsletter of the First Baptist Church in America

March 1, 2015, Volume 18, Issue 05



From The Pastor...

I think I will give up snow for Lent this year. How about you? Most of us are more than ready to trade in snow fever for a good case of spring fever! Surprisingly, we have only had ONE Sunday worship service cancelled because of the snow (knock on wood!). Perhaps we should give a prize to the person who correctly predicts when we will see grass again.

Easter (yes, believe it!) is only one month away—April 5! We are on the march toward Palm Sunday and Holy Week. Superb Sunday services are planned for this important season, and I hope you can manage to make it to church even as you maneuver through snow banks and skid along ice. It will be worth the exciting ride!



Blessings on you all!

Thomas R. McKibbens

Linda's Lines

Our church sign this week says simply "Uncle!" Says it all doesn't it. I think we all have had enough of the winter weather. I'm not only tired of the weather, I'm tired of talking (complaining?) about it. Yet, despite a lifetime of observing that spring always follows winter, it is hard to imagine the end of this snow. I am going to act out the faith that I am not feeling by planting some seeds indoors. I don't ever have much luck with seeds I start indoors but I don't really care. I just enjoy playing in the dirt. Somehow the process is more important than the end result. Although some nice spring flowers would be nice, at this point I'd be grateful for a little green shoot. The days are getting noticeably longer and the choir is starting to rehearse Easter music – signs of hope that Spring really will come. It is some comfort that we are all trudging through the snow together looking forward to Easter and spring weather.

Moderator's Minute

Stewardship

Last fall when FBCIA held its stewardship campaign on behalf of the 2015 budget, it got me to thinking about the root word "steward" and how it is used. Aside from hearing the word in annual church campaigns, years ago, it always seemed to be tied to someone performing a service, e.g. a stewardess on an airplane (p.c.=flight attendant today) or a steward on a ship. A standard on-line dictionary defines the noun "steward" as the following: (1) a person who looks after the passengers on a ship, aircraft, or train and brings them meals; (2) a person responsible for supplies of food to a college, club, or other institution; or (3) an official appointed to supervise arrangements or keep order at a large public event, for example a sporting event. How does this meaning translate to a church fund-raising campaign? A little more sleuthing led me to the *New Bible Dictionary*, where "steward" was defined in terms of scripture: "In the Old Testament a steward is a man who is 'over a house' (Gn. 43:19; 44:4; Is. 22:15, *etc.*). In the New Testament there are two words translated "steward:" **epitropos** (Mt. 20:8; Gal. 4:2), *i.e.* one to whose care or honor one has been entrusted, a curator, a guardian; and **oikonomos** (Lk. 16:2-3; 1 Cor. 4:1-2; Tit. 1:7; 1 Pet. 4:10), *i.e.* a manager, a superintendent-from **oikos** ('house') and **nemo** ('to dispense' or 'to manage'). The word is used to describe the function of delegated responsibility, as in the parables of the laborers and the unjust steward."

But that article continues: "More profoundly, it [steward] is used in reference to the Christian's responsibility, delegated to him under 'Christ's kingly government of his own house.' All things are Christ's, and Christians are his executors or stewards. Christians are admitted to the responsibilities of Christ's overruling of his world; so that stewardship (**oikonomia**) can be referred to similarly as a dispensation (1 Cor. 9:17; Eph. 3:2; Col. 1:25)."

To return to "steward(ship)" and fund-raising, the connection becomes obvious as the money raised for the church budget allows the congregation in various ways to perform Christ-like activities, whether that be helping refugee families, writing letters for Amnesty International's identified prisoners of conscience, helping construct a hospital/clinic complex in the D.R. or lending one's voice to the choir to enrich the music that fills the Meeting House each week during worship. Since we have had a successful stewardship campaign on behalf of the 2015 budget, I would challenge everyone to think about the extended version of stewardship in the form of service that reflects the place of Christ in our lives. Where can we be of service to others near and far?

Joanne

Christian Education

Children's Lessons:

March 1st - *Jesus is with us in tough times.*

“Storm Warning”

Matthew 8:23-27; 28:20

March 8th - *Jesus wants us to tell others about him*

“Sowing and Growing”

Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23

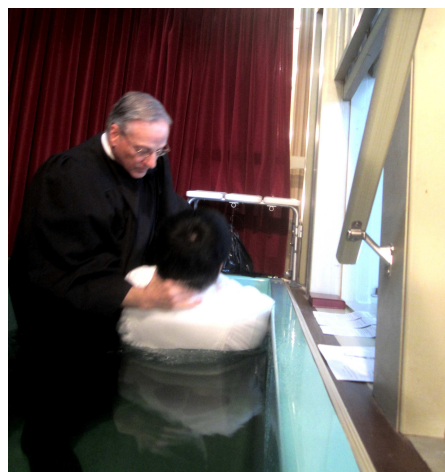
March 15th - *God will always take care of us*

“The Trust Test”

Matthew 14:22-33; John 14:1

Church News

On a snowy Sunday morning, Pastor McKibbens baptized David Sinya Lee. A graduate student at Brown from China, Sinya chose the name "David" to mark his baptism as a Christian.



PICA

SAVE THE DATE!

for

PICA'S

40th Anniversary Gala

on

Thursday, May 7th 6:00 PM

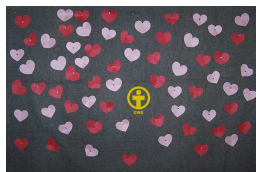
at the

Shriner's Imperial Room

Tickets are \$75.00 per person
And include dinner, dancing and
a silent auction.

Watch your future Spires
for more information.

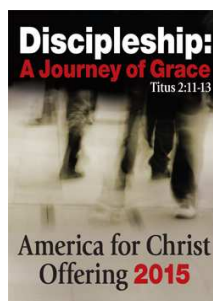
From the Board of Missions and Outreach



Thanks to everyone who donated so generously to the Church World Service **Blanket the World with Love** campaign. We reached our goal of \$500 to buy 50 warm blankets for families left homeless by a tornado or other disaster.



This month's **Amnesty International** case involves two church leaders, Reverend Yat Michael and Reverend Peter Yen of the South Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church. Rev. Yat was arrested by government security officers after preaching on Sunday morning, December 21st. Rev. Peter Yen was arrested in a response to a letter he wrote inquiring about Rev. Yat's arrest. Both men have been held incommunicado, in an unknown location, without access to their families or lawyers. If you were unable to sign letters in church, please visit the web site www.amnestyusa.org, type "Church leaders detained in Sudan" in the Search Amnesty box and you will be directed to the information sheet. Then you can sign the on-line petition.



During March, our focus will be the **America for Christ Offering**. It is the American Baptist offering which is used for projects here in the US.

Among other programs, it sponsors: 1. The Children in Poverty Initiative; 2. Student campus ministries; 3. Refugee resettlement initiatives; 4. Chaplaincy programs; 5. After-school educational programs and 6. Immigration concerns and advocacies.

You can give by writing a check to FBCIA with America for Christ on the memo line and by putting your loose change in one of the America for Christ change boxes that you can pick up at church. Thank you for your generous giving.

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Linda Bausserman, Associate Pastor
Stephen T. Martorella, Minister of Music
Holly B. Edwards, Administrative Assistant
Anne Gagan, Bookkeeper
David Michel, Sexton
Ivy Bermudez, Child Care Worker

Sunday Calendar

Sun. Mar. 1	10:00 AM	College Bible Study/Sunday Morning Forum/Sunday School
	11:00 AM	Sunday Worship: Pastor Tom McKibbens Sermon: "Angry at Religion" Scripture: John 2:13-22 Greeters: Holly and Michael Edwards Ushers: Mark Hall and Barry Bainton
	12:15 AM	Tour Guide: Stan Lemons
Sun. Mar. 8	10:00 AM	College Bible Study/Sunday Morning Forum/Sunday School
	11:00 AM	Sunday Worship: Associate Pastor Linda Bausserman Sermon: "Guilt Trips to Nowhere" Scripture: Luke 5:1-11 Greeters: Donna Puckett and Elsa Grieder Ushers: Barry Bainton and Gary Penfield
	12:15 AM	Tour Guide: Richard Aubin

PARKING BAN IN PROVIDENCE

If there is a parking ban in the city of Providence due to inclement weather, the worship service and all activities at First Baptist Church in America will be cancelled. Please be sure to listen and watch your local radio station and television stations for announcements. Thank you!

Mission Calendar

- ▶ Monthly Prayer Meeting in Fellowship Hall 2nd Saturday of the Month 9:30 AM.
- ▶ PICA Sunday is the 4th Sunday of the Month, Please bring non-perishable food for the food pantry.