



FBC First Baptist Church

Family By Choice all are welcome...really!

VISIONS

January

2020

A Welcoming & Affirming
Congregation

Embracing Change



Welcome to a new year and a new decade! By now you have made (and perhaps broken/discarded) your New Year's resolution, you (may) have taken down the tree and decorations, and you are back to your new/old life, before the birth, before the calendar change, before thinking about how any of this past season makes a difference in your everyday life. Unfortunately, for many of us, the celebration of Jesus' birth doesn't change anything beyond the extra pounds gained from too much feasting and a sense of let down when the decorations and meritment are gone. The birth of Jesus only means something lasting if we internalize what Christ among us means, not only in what we say and do but who we are.

Change is in our midst and we will be talking and thinking about it in the days and months to come. As we continue to discern God's call to our congregation and neighborhood, we need to think about what needs to change in order for us to be faithful. Peter Senge, in *The Dance of Change*, writes "Profound change is organizational change that combines inner shifts in people's values, aspirations, and behaviors with 'outer' shifts in

processes, strategies, practices, and systems." Eric Law picks up the idea and continues: "The word 'profound'...means, literally, 'moving toward the fundamental'. In profound change there is learning. The organization doesn't just do something new; it builds its capacity for doing things in a new way--indeed, it builds capacity for ongoing change."¹

What profound changes does FBC need to make in order to remain faithful to God's call to us in this new year, in this new decade? What inner shifts might enable us to learn new ways of being Jesus in the world we live in? What are the "fundamental" truths we need to move more intentionally toward? How can we, together, face and celebrate ongoing change?

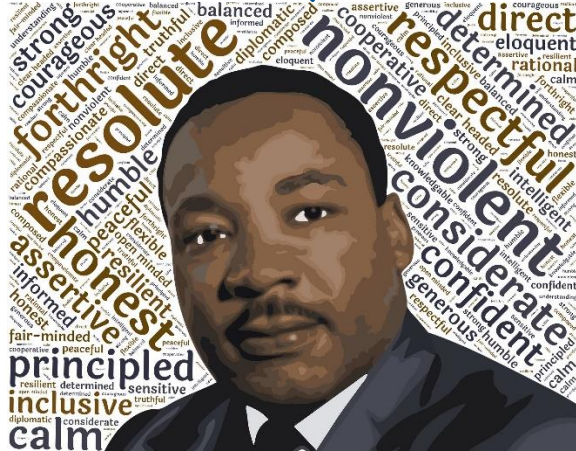
You are invited to explore the answers to these questions, and more, as we prepare for our upcoming Congregational Retreat (see article for dates and details) and for God's future in this community. Eric Law points out that it's really the internal assumptions we hold that determine whether or not we can confront and embrace change. We may think that change has to do with the number of people in the congregation or dollars in the offering plate, our cultural context or our ability to be relevant. All those things are important but not as significant as who we are, what patterns we have accepted as "normal", what capacity we have for exploration and discovery, how vulnerable and brave we are willing to be.

Change is coming! That's the Good News! It's the fundamental claim of the Gospel, that in Christ, we can all be made new! Join us as we discern the change God calls each of us to in the days of this new year.

Blessings,
Marcia

¹ Law, Eric. *Sacred Acts, Holy Change: Faithful Diversity and Practical Transformation*. 34-35.

Remembering
the Life and Work of
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
January 19th



Our Pottstown Religious Communities are sponsoring a celebration of the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Everyone is encouraged to attend this celebration on January 19th at 3:30pm in the Alumni Chapel at the Hill School (860 Beech St, Pottstown). Rev. Brandon C. Harris, who is the Protestant Chaplain at Georgetown University, will be the guest preacher. Refreshments will immediately follow the celebration.

Congregational Meeting
January 26th

There will be an important congregational meeting Sunday, January 26th immediately after worship for the purpose of voting on the 2020 budget and Marcia Bailey's contract, reception of annual reports, discussion concerning whether to submit an application to join the Philadelphia Baptist Association, update concerning the building and its usage and any other business. Please plan to stay and engage these matters of importance to our congregation.



All Church Retreat!
February 7th & 8th



Join us for an important all church retreat February 7th, from 6-9 pm (dinner included) and February 8th from 9am- 3 pm (light breakfast and lunch included). We will be led by the Rev. Dr. Marcia Patton, President of the Board of Directors of The Kaleidoscope Institute (<https://www.kscopeinstitute.org/about-1>), and former Executive Minister of the Evergreen Association of American Baptist Churches, USA. Kaleidoscope is the organization that extends the work of Eric Law, who's work on inclusion and change was the subject of our fall Learning Community. Dr. Patton is a trained facilitator in creating change in local congregations and we are excited to have her expertise at our disposal.

Please plan to come to as much of the event as possible. There will be a sign-up sheet in Echo Hall or you can indicate your intent to attend by calling the church office. You can expect a phone call to encourage your participation if we do not hear from you. The more input we have, the more effective our planning and ministry together!



Finding a Balance:
The New Pastoral
Covenant

At the congregational meeting on January 26th, you will be asked to vote on the new Pastoral covenant, negotiated with and recommended by the Ministry Coordination Team.

You will notice that it remains a half time position, approximately 20 hours a week, which is what is most feasible, in terms of the church's financial resources and Marcia's time, at this point. You will

remember that Marcia has a full-time job, teaching at Temple University.

One of the new features of this covenant is that it requires Marcia to be in the pulpit three Sundays out of four, rather than every single week. We came to this determination after a couple of things: one, an informal survey of other half time clergy and secondly, experience. After checking in with a number of half-time pastoral leaders in several different denominations, it became clear that the common practice is that half time clergy did not serve their congregations every Sunday. Some of this has to do with finances but mostly it has to do with the idea that “part time” doesn’t mean “full time on Sundays.” In fact, one denomination does not allow their part time clergy to serve every Sunday. The second factor was experience: after 18 months of working full time for Temple and half time for FBC, it became clear to Marcia that she would not be able to be present to both communities unless there was some respite, especially during the semester. So this new contract allows her one Sunday away from the church each month; on that Sunday we will either fill the pulpit or create a new way to worship and serve, perhaps using Worship in Action in a fresh way.

Your affirmation of this arrangement will support Marcia’s on-going leadership at FBC and open opportunities for creativity. Please share any concerns you have about this arrangement with the Moderator’s or the Pastor. Marcia’s first Sunday off will be January 5th.

Worship In Action Takes a New Twist!



As we enter this new year we will be putting a new twist on our Worship in Action Sundays. Instead of *talking* about what we will do, we will, on some months, actually *enact our worship* by *doing* things in and for our community! What will that look like? Come on January 12th to be a part of creating this new way to love and honor God and to serve our community!

Worship in Action might mean walking the streets of our community, getting to know our neighbors. It might mean serving breakfast for people without homes at Ministries on Main. It might mean knitting scarves, hats or mittens for the kids at CCLU or the YWCA, or for shelters or others who might appreciate them. It might mean a work project in the neighborhood or a bible study at our church. The point is to put our words into action! Worship IS action!

Whatever we decide, we will plan with the abilities of participants in mind; those able to *go and do*, can. Those who prefer to *stay and do*, can. There will always be a place for you. **January 12th will be an interactive bible study! Come and find out just what that means!**

Learning Community for January/February

During the months of January and February, our Adult Learning Community will practice listening to the Scriptures as we discern God’s invitation to change for us, as individuals and as a community of faith. Each week we will read, hear and listen to a passage and then respond to using a type of *lectio divina* (“divine reading”) that will help us explore and deepen our understanding of the text together. Join us each Sunday at 11:15 am.



Celebrating our “New” Pastor



Mark **Sunday, March 1st** on your calendar; that’s the Sunday we will be celebrating the installation of our “new” pastor, Marcia Bailey! We will mark that moment in our lives together with a special worship service at **3 pm**. The Rev. Dr. Stephanie Sauve, Vice President for Academic Life, Dean of Faculty, Director of Supervised Ministry and Associate Professor of Practical Theology will be our guest preacher. We will be inviting others from our community and those who have been significant in Marcia’s journey to be a part of this joyous occasion. Please plan now to join us and invite others!

January Birthdays

- 2 Yolanda Grohoski
- 5 Gladys Miller
- 7 Christina Rojas
- 9 Holly Hayer
Carol Weiss
- 10 Jacob Trexler
- 12 Diane Gumbarge
Sydney Yeager
- 22 Michael Heinz
Susan Kelly
- 26 Tim Raub
- 29 Marcia Bailey
- 30 Joe Alden-Sawtelle
- 31 Corinne Griffiths
Terry Gauger
Keith Grohoski

Are we missing your name? Send us your birthday so we can invite others to celebrate with you!



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