

THE VISITOR



Fireflies . . . a 15-Year-Old . . . and a Song

BY JIM HIATT

On warm summer evenings, **Irene and I** like to hop on the bike and head to a favorite spot we found in the country where, on clear nights, you can see a million twinkling stars. I exaggerate, but away from the foreboding noise and lights of the city it would appear as if you could actually reach into the darkness and touch them . . . so close as if suspended within reach. And, if the humidity is just right, thousands (not an exaggeration) of fireflies in the neighboring field start to find their wings and launch themselves into the clear night sky. Serenaded by a choir of a thousand crickets, these little creatures of nature rise slowly and purposely toward the heavens, and as they breach the horizon line, their flashing beacons become intertwined with that of the stars, creating a scene of “resounding joy as heaven and nature sing together.”

Sound familiar? “Joy to the World,” perhaps? I bet the youth of FBC might find the following interesting: that song was penned by a 15-year-old! In the early 1700s, Isaac Watts (15) disliked (hated) how the English translations of Old Testament songs sounded, and he objected (complained) to church elders. A deacon (i.e., worship minister) challenged him to come up with something better. The young man went home and penned his first hymn—the first of many. He transformed an old Jewish psalm of praise into a song of rejoicing for the salvation that began when Jesus came to “make his blessing flow as far as the curse is found.”

The music itself is from George Handel, and some scholars say it resembles his greatest work: *The Messiah*.

Enjoy the holidays . . . and . . .
MERRY CHRISTMAS.



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Looking Ahead and Looking Back at Christmastime


BY REV. DR. DAVID K. HINSON, INTERIM SENIOR PASTOR

VISION 2022 is the descriptive phrase for our church's next emphasis, which will be our theme for the coming church year. It is centered around God's vision for the future of First Baptist Church of Muncie and its life-changing ministries, and it will be the focus of our prayer, our mission, our gifts, and our efforts to declare the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every person in Muncie, Delaware County, and around the world. This effort is God-sized, and we cannot do it in our own power. My prayer is that you will give generously above your regular tithes and offerings until we reach our **GLORY (\$22,000)**, **HALLELUJAH (\$44,000)**, and **AMEN (\$66,000)** goals. FBC Muncie's future is BRIGHT! Let us allow God to use us to reach the world with His VISION present in our lives as we soon celebrate His Son's birth.

THANK YOU to all who have contributed in so many ways through kind words and deeds associated with encouraging this Interim Pastor. It is my joy to serve each week, preaching from God's Word, and seeking to deliver His Word to our lives—all of us. As I celebrate this beautiful holiday season, I am truly THANKFUL for each of you and your devotion to Christ. As the Advent Season progresses, I look forward to continuing to worship with you all as we anticipate the celebration of Christ's birth. Our Christmas Eve service will be a wonderful time for you to encourage your family, friends, and neighbors to join us in worship at 7:00 p.m. on December 24.

In closing my thoughts, I'd like to share with you a special part of Christian history that took place over a hundred years ago.

DURING CHRISTMAS 1914, along France's western front, from the English Channel to the Swiss Alps, a famous and uplifting incident took place amid the horrors of World War I. The war was only five months old, yet 800,000 persons had been wounded or killed. But on Christmas Eve, the true story is told that British soldiers raised "Merry Christmas" signs above their trenches. The Germans responded in kind. Soon carols were heard from the German and British trenches alike. Christmas Day found unarmed soldiers from both sides meeting the enemy in the middle of no-man's land for fellowship. Exchanging small gifts, they passed Christmas Day peacefully. The unusual outbreak of peace occurred for miles along the battlefield. At one spot, the British played soccer with the Germans, who won 3-2. In some places, the spontaneous truce continued the next day as neither side was willing to fire the first shot. Finally, fighting resumed when fresh troops arrived, and the high command of both armies ordered that further "informal understandings" with the enemy would be punishable as treason. (Adapted from C. Douglas Weaver, ed., Our Christian Heritage [Smyth & Helwys, 1997], 370.)

Blessings to you all as we seek to practice and share Christ's PEACE ON EARTH . . . to ALL. 

Working Remotely for FBC

Katie Braswell: First Baptist Church Muncie Employee Lives in North Carolina



Active members involved at First Baptist Church from 2011–2015, **Katie Braswell** and her husband, **Casey**, were sad when his work took them to North Carolina. "We always loved FBC and still do," said Katie. "We loved the close-knit, caring people who loved each other and lived life together."

When Katie was talking with a member in January who explained that **Pastor Wade Allen** was leaving, she was told that FBC would need to fill a gap his departure left in some of the digital communications tasks. "I was immediately interested, both because I love FBC and because that is my area of expertise," she said.

In March, Katie was hired as a "digital communications specialist" and has been involved in communications ever since. She has another part-time job working for The Joel Fund, a local nonprofit located near her home in Wake Forest, which is north of Raleigh. Katie has experience in website development, social media, and marketing, which serves her well at both jobs.

For First Baptist Church, Katie creates the graphics for the weekly sermon blogs, edits, and produces the "Wednesday Weekly", the online newsletter people receive electronically every week from FBC. Her work helps the church keep a strong social media presence, and she is linked to keeping and sharing data via Planning Center, the church's administrative software. "I work approximately 10 hours per week," she said, "but sometimes it is considerably less and others quite a bit more."



THE BRASWELLS:
KATIE, SIMON, MICAH, CASEY

Recently Katie was involved in creating the "brand" for the Women's Conference, as was evident by the design of the materials created to market the event and printed programs and other tools needed to host the event.

The work for FBC is a good fit for Katie and her busy family. Her boys are **Micah**, 9 ½, and **Simon**, 7. Both boys were born while Katie and Casey were in Muncie and both were dedicated at FBC. Katie homeschools them and supports Casey in his busy life as a finance executive for an area automotive corporation. This fall, Casey's only brother was killed in an outdoor accident, and Katie and Casey both appreciate all the prayers that went up from friends at First Baptist in Muncie.

"We love our local church, Covenant Hope Church, and finally joined last year after spending several years looking for someplace we would love as much as FBC," Katie said. "Being able to work for the church in Muncie and communicate often with old friends and new friends is both exciting and rewarding."



Working Remotely for FBC

Spencer Goodman Provides Remote Link via Youth Sunday School Class

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Sunday afternoons at 4:30 p.m., FBC middle school and high school youth meet via Zoom to participate in Sunday school. Their teacher is **Spencer Goodman**, a dental school student at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. Often, **Levi Allen**, the son of former pastor **Wade Allen**, is part of those sessions.

"We study a book of the Bible, often hopping around from one book to another. Currently, we are studying the book of Mark. Our pattern is to read Scripture verse by verse and then discuss the Scripture as well as life issues," said Spencer.

Spencer was active at FBC shortly after he was a student at Ball State University. In the academic year 2018–19, he offered his help in working with youth and began teaching FBC youth on Sunday mornings at the church. When he headed to dental school, he was not working with the FBC teens. But when the pandemic stopped in-person worship services in March 2020, the youth began meeting online via Zoom for their Sunday school class.



Spencer agreed to fill in as a teacher one Sunday, and it occurred to him that he could continue to do this and it would bring him a special blessing as well as help the youth enhance their knowledge of the Scripture and current issues.

Spencer grew up in Marion, Indiana, and hopes that when he goes into dental practice—sometime after mid-2023—that he can stay in the Midwest area. Being in dental school has opened his eyes and helped him change priorities. He says that he has learned to face life more seriously.

Spencer and his girlfriend are involved in a non-denominational church in Cleveland and are especially enjoying being in Bible study there.

"This work with the Muncie kids has been good for me, and I believe it has been good for them, too," he said.



*"For unto us a
Child is born,
Unto us a Son
is given;
And the
government will
be upon His
shoulder.
And His name
will be called
Wonderful,
Counselor,
Mighty God,
Everlasting
Father, Prince of
Peace."*

ISAIAH 9:6, NKJV



Women's Conference Receives High Marks

A total of 65 women attended the "I Am Enough," Women's Conference held at FBC on November 6.

The attendee evaluations showed that most of the women loved the conference, appreciated the keynote speaker, and liked the opportunity to fellowship and share with other Christian women. The work team met to debrief on the session and to focus on what went well and what could be improved.

In line with what people liked and wanted to continue, the group will sponsor a breakfast from 9:00–11:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 2. Stay tuned for more information.



Youth Fellowship Outing Draws a Good Crowd

Seventeen middle school and high school students and 9 adults met at the **Flodders** on Oct. 23 for a cookout, bonfire, and scavenger hunt along the river. Clues like "the largest stone on the property" or "a place where a pig can be warm" sent three teams scattering to find the items while **Dr. David Hinson**, interim senior pastor, collected proof of their discoveries and announced the winners.

Deena Green, youth ministries coordinator on the Church Coordination Team, was in charge of the event. It was well received by the youth, who are ready to do another social event in the near future.





Get to Know ... Terry Hazlewood



Terry started attending FBC in April of this year. Having been saved and then baptized at Temple Baptist, he was looking around for a different church more centrally located and was pleased to find FBC to be friendly. He also enjoys the worship and preaching.

Terry grew up in Muncie and attended Southside High School. He is the youngest of four children whose father experienced incredible difficulties in World War II.

Terry worked most of his career in transmission shops and even owned a shop from 2009–2012 next door to Richard’s Restaurant on Broadway. When the recession hit, he was forced to close the shop.

For the last 10 years, Terry has been on disability. He suffered from congestive heart failure and ultimately experienced a major heart attack. He has been trying to get back to working but has learned from doctors that he shouldn’t be doing a full-time job.

One thing that has allowed him to be healthy enough to consider working is having lost 127 pounds. He started with walking and eating fewer carbs due to diabetes, then moved on to becoming a vegetarian and doing strenuous exercises such as using a rowing machine.

In terms of life views, Terry considers himself a moderate. Not speaking merely of a political view but a life’s philosophy, Terry says, “Whether it is politics, religion, or whatever, I want to see things from all sides. In terms of politics alone I am not red and I am not blue. I guess you’d say I’m purple!”

Terry has been married but is single now. He never had children but has had the delight of helping two of his friend’s children grow up. “I guess you’d say I’m one of their strong male role models.”

Although he hasn’t passed his one-year mark at First Baptist, Terry knows he wants to become more and more involved with FBC and is considering joining the church.

(An aside: When Terry participated in this interview, he didn’t realize that the “**Mark**” he had been talking with at church was a favorite teacher from his Southside days, nor did **Mark Flodder** realize that the *Terry Hazelwood* in his classes in the late 70s was Terry, the new guy at FBC!)



First Baptist Church worked hard to prepare and send **87 Operation Christmas Child boxes** to be given to children all over the world.



A Special Thank You

The pastors thank FBC Muncie for the generous cash gifts as part of Pastor Appreciation Month. We are honored to serve along side you at this time!

-Dr. David Hinson & Dr. Clifton Davis



Pastoral Search Update

BY BRIAN GREEN, PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIR

Thank you for your participation in the congregational survey, which was our first step when we began this search for a new pastor. The one thing that has impressed me the most from the surveys is the level of love and respect that our congregation has for the Lord, each other, and the longevity of FBC. Not one person expressed negativity, and all want nothing but the best for our church.

In analyzing the responses, our team was able to decipher some of the top needs and desires of the congregation. High on the list was the need for a more definitive, structured children's ministry. Several surveys suggested the need for a full-time youth pastor.

Another area that was heavy with response was for a new pastor that could help grow our numbers, not only by young families but also by individuals from all generations.

Preaching Style

A topic where it is more difficult to find total agreement—both among the people on the search team and individuals across the congregation—is people's thinking on preaching style. A common thread, however, is that all of us want to see Bible-based preaching, and many mentioned biblical teaching that we can apply to our everyday lives.

We appreciate the prayers of our church family as we work harder and harder in the time-consuming process of reviewing résumés and begin to review preaching and other video content from those ministers. As we continue making headway, we ask for prayers for comfort, peace, and, most of all, wisdom.

The Indiana-Kentucky office of American Baptist Churches has led us through this effort and is providing us with their assistance. We are grateful for their expertise.

American Baptist ministers not only turn in their résumés when they would like to be considered for another church position but also keep their information on file, even when they are not looking. The latter was the case with our former pastor, **Wade Allen**.

Our interim pastor, **Dr. David Hinson**, has reminded us that God already knows who our next pastor is. We believe God is guiding us in our endeavors, and with your prayerful support we will find the man or woman God is leading to First Baptist Church Muncie.



BRIAN GREEN,
PASTORAL SEARCH
COMMITTEE CHAIR



Get to Know ...

Chloe Durke

Chloe, who has sometimes helped lead service as a soprano with the Praise Band, is a 15-year-old freshman at Wapahani High School. She is the daughter of **Jennifer** and **Mike Durke** and quips that her parents' jobs are working on kidneys (her mom is an RN specializing in nephrology) or working on buses and semis (her dad uses his special mechanical skills at work). She also has an older half-brother.

In school, Chloe likes biology and playing clarinet in the band. But when it comes to thinking about a future career, she quickly offers, "I have no clue!"

At First Baptist Church, Chloe has enjoyed not only participating in music, but also collecting items for and assembling Christmas boxes for "Operation Christmas Child." Her very best memories of youth activities revolve around ski trips to Wisconsin. She loves to ski any time she can.

She believes that our church youth program needs to center around Bible study with plenty of games and "running around" thrown in. In addition, as she has done with the ski trips, she thinks trips to different places would be wonderful.

Being a Christian is important to Chloe. "It can help you create a mindset to move you toward your best future," she said.

Her wish is to extend her travel from many trips in the eastern part of our country to trips out West. She would love to see the mountains and desert, which would be a new experience. She wouldn't ever tackle mountain climbing, however, as she is terrified of heights!

Chloe can't talk about herself without mentioning her three cats: an older cat Fiona, aged 14, and kittens Onyx and Valkyrie.



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