

# THE VISITOR



## *"Operation Light in the Darkness" Is New Outreach Ministry*

In the healthcare environment of the past two years, being a frontline caregiver anywhere in the world has been difficult at best. Staff members have faced declining energy and felt heavy spirits while working amidst critical illness and death. The results: a very dark work environment. When the First Baptist Church (FBC) family heard about local churches reaching out to nurses and other workers in the critical care departments at IU Ball Memorial Hospital, people at FBC wanted to do something similar.

The Emergency Department (ED) became the place of focus. The outreach team, bolstered by donations from the entire church, flew into action. On Valentine's Day, more than a hundred snack bars and drinks, including energy drinks, were delivered to the ED nurses' break room.

The reception from the staff was very positive. One nurse said, "Oh my gosh, it was so nice of these people to bring us something. I love these cute drawings from the kids." Another nurse chimed in, "It really helps brighten my day to know that people care and are praying for us."

Members of the team are Gayle Songer, outreach coordinator; Emily Anderson; Mallory Flodder; Molly Flodder; Loraine Garrett; Jim Hiatt; Sharon Jackson; Jessica San Miguel; and Maggie Sims.



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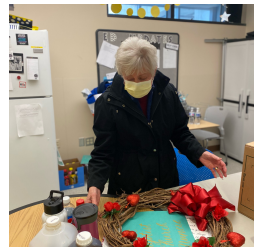
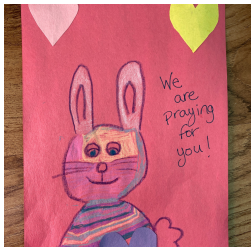
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TOP: Sharon Jackson; Rory, Jessica, and Steven San Miguel

LEFT: Gayle Songer

MIDDLE: Jim Hiatt; Loraine Garrett; Sharon Jackson



## *Wrights Share Talents with FBC and Greater Muncie Community*

**Chris Wright** grew up at First Baptist Church. Older members remember the days when Joe Johnson and Harry Irwin were involved in working with sound in the services. And then there were Ward Head and Chris, two young teenagers—Chris only 12 when he started helping—who piloted what now in comparison is an archaic system.

Fast-forward more than forty years, and Chris is still part of the team immersed in amplification of sound in the ninety-three-year-old building at the corner of Jefferson and Adams in downtown Muncie. What's more, Chris has taken his self-taught knowledge, finely-tuned at FBC, to the community, providing his proficiency as well as his family and their capabilities into a group labor of volunteer love at Muncie Civic Theatre.

The connection between the Wrights and Muncie Civic began when Civic was being renovated and needed to use community venues while construction was underway. They asked to use First Baptist Church for *Aladdin Junior*, and Chris was asked to help with sound. As they say, "The rest is history."

In 2021, the Wright family had a busy holiday season in which Civic presented twenty performances of *Elf*, selling out each show. The family will be involved in the production of *Peter Pan* as well: Chris and son, **Will**, working on the fly rail and his wife, **Janis**, sewing costumes.

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# Wrights Share Talents...

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Janis grew up in Indianapolis and came to Muncie to attend Ball State University. Chris and Janis met while she was living at the Baptist House and quickly realized how very much they had in common. Both sets of parents were also very involved in their churches. Many at FBC remember that Bill Wright was a long-term usher and trustee and Chris' mom, Marge, sang in the choir for many years.

One of the ways both of Janis's parents served in their church was in the search for a pastor. Today, Janis is a member of the pastoral search committee at FBC, which has been very busy learning about and vetting people who are being considered to serve at FBC Muncie. "I wanted to be part of this effort and to learn how it works as everyone prays for God's leading in the process. It is a lot of work, but very much what I expected," said Janis. One comment she made about the search team is that the age diversity of the group--forties to eighties--is very beneficial.

Although the Sanctuary Choir has not been singing since COVID hit and the traditional service was put on hold, Chris and Janis were active members singing bass and alto, respectively.

Janis also plays in the bell choir, and Chris still oversees sound and sometimes substitutes as a vocalist in the Praise Band.

Chris is putting in his thirty-fourth year as a computer software engineer at Finvi (formerly Ontario Systems). Janis worked several years in Muncie Community Schools and is now employed part-time at Panera Bread. They have three children: **Will** (named for his grandfather) is 18, and the girls **Emma** and **Grace** are 16 and 13, respectively. All three kids enjoy video games, although Will works part-time at Sight and Sound and the girls are busy with school.

The girls—whom Dad says get along so much better than they did at a younger age—spend spare time focusing on Manga and Anime: Japanese cartooning, comics, and animation with vibrant characters in action-filled plots. Will makes more time for volunteer work at Civic—also focusing on sound, but all three have involvement in many of the productions, either in the audience, the cast, or the crew.

Willy Wonka was a show in which three of the Wrights were involved, even on stage. In Big River, Chris played five small roles, including Judge Thatcher. Janis has been in several roles as well, including the cast of Clue. Most of their work, however, is backstage. Chris is a rotating audio engineer, works with rigging, is an electrician, and does anything that involves computers or technology. Janis is a gifted seamstress, always calm in a storm and willing to do any small job. Once, during Annie, she had to help "Grace Farrell" into her Christmas party dress in thirty seconds!

Laura Williamson, artistic and executive director of Muncie Civic Theater, said, "The Wrights have mostly been backstage problem solvers and lightened my personal load more times than I can count." Laura directs many of the shows and her husband, Michael, often conducts the orchestra. (Laura is the daughter of the late FBC pastor Rev. Dr. "Woody" Noblitt, who served from 2000–2005.)

"As much as I'm thrilled when we get a new 'talent' at the theatre to be onstage," said Laura, "what I really wish is that we had more people like Chris and Janis, who aren't in it for the ego at all, but willing to serve with unique skill sets. Their son, Will, is also getting more and more involved backstage."

If you see Peter Pan at Civic in April, four of the main characters will fly. Chris and Will will be the head of the fly team needed to lift the actors in the air. Laura concluded her remarks by saying, "The time commitment to a show is unbelievable. I am so grateful that the Wright family found their way over to Civic. They have blessed us with their time and talents, and become valuable members of our theatre community."



PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT  
CHRIS, EMMA, WILL, GRACE, JANIS

# What Should Our Prayers Be for the Pastoral Search?

We have just passed one year since our former pastor, **Dr. Wade Allen**, and his family left our church after his call to pastor The United Church in Canandaigua, New York. Since then, we have elected a pastoral search team composed of **Brian Green**, Chair, **Emily Anderson**, **Ella Mae Lemen**, **Jane Patton**, and **Janis Wright**. They conducted a membership-wide survey in which people indicated for what qualities the team should be looking. They also have worked closely with American Baptists of Indiana and Kentucky to peruse résumés, watch preaching videos, and begin talking to potential candidates. The team reports that there will soon be important news regarding outcomes. Our interim pastor, **Dr. David Hinson**, often reminds us that while they move forward, the rest of us need to be continually praying for them and their efforts.

This question was posed to the congregation recently: **“How am I praying and how could I be praying for our pastoral search and the coming of a new pastor?”**



**Jim Hiatt** gave this much thought and responded as follows:

“Personally, I have been praying for each individual on the search committee, that they would seek out and honor GOD’s will for FBC. I have a ‘wish list’ as do most members. Mine is that the new pastor have power in his/her ministry and be successful in reaching people with the gospel... both good things to pray for, but it is presumptuous of me to assume that my ‘needs and wants’ match what God really wants for our church. What if God wants to send someone to FBC with a résumé with only a few of our wish list ‘boxes’ checked, yet another candidate’s profile is ‘exactly’ what WE want (all the boxes checked)? What’s the ‘right’ choice? Hence, my prayer is that each committee member be filled with the Holy Spirit during vetting; that they each be granted wisdom, understanding, and revelation; and that by their faith, evidence of trusting God, and belief in His promises they be unified in bringing God’s chosen disciple to FBC.”

Other members and church leaders had the following responses:



**Cheryl Flaherty**—“I am praying that our search team allows the Holy Spirit to guide them to be of like mind as they do research and interviews.”



**Larry Fouch**—“I am praying for three things:  
1. That the Holy Spirit will move in the hearts of our search team so that they will know from the interviews the direction that God is leading FBC.  
2. That God will provide FBC the right candidates.  
3. That the Search Committee will keep an open mind to all possibilities available.”

**Clif Davis**—“I am praying that the new pastor is gifted in helping downtown churches thrive.”



**James Heimlich**—“We should pray that the pastor God is calling to our church will have a heart to engage with, love, and serve our congregation and community.”



**Deena Green**—“I am praying for our search team to have patience and for them not to feel rushed as they search for the person God has chosen for us.”

**Michelle Heimlich**—“We should be praying expectantly, because God already knows who our new pastor will be! We should pray thanking God for the pastor whose life and testimony is presently leading them by the Holy Spirit to lead our church and join us in our fellowship and ministry.”



▶▶▶ *"Do not be anxious  
about anything,  
but in every  
situation, by prayer  
and petition, with  
thanksgiving,  
present your  
requests to God."*

PHILIPPIANS 4:6, NIV



## Get to Know...

Carolyn Harke

You may know her face and name and realize that her husband is very visible in helping with the church property. But unless you have been a long-time member of FBC Muncie, you likely don't know how much her family history and her own gifts are wrapped into the history of this church.

Carolyn, a retired teacher, long-time volunteer, and former paid employee of the church, grew up at FBC. Her parents and grandparents were also part of the church. In fact, in the 1929 historical photo of the church on the day the congregation walked down Jefferson from the old church to the new one, her dad is pictured on the front row.

Carolyn joined the church at age 12 and participated in all activities. She also took piano lessons and organ lessons at the church and still plays. "I don't play in public or anything because I know I need to practice and just don't get that done," said Carolyn.

Carolyn met her husband, **Terry**, through mutual friends, and they have been married for fifty-five years. They are the parents of Tom, Susie, and Kim and have eight grandchildren. For sixteen years, six of those children stayed at Grandma and Grandpa's house while their parents worked and are as close as siblings, as a result.

Carolyn lived at the Baptist House during part of her years at Ball State and eventually served many years on the board of the Baptist House. Early in her career she taught second grade in Marion and at Harrison Township and, after her children were in school, went all over the area as a substitute teacher.

At the church, Carolyn taught Sunday school, children's church, and Bible School. She helped **Barb Eidson** with children's choirs, led Bible study, and helped with the youth group.

In the '90s, after Carolyn Butler, the Christian Education leader, left the church, Carolyn Harke was asked if she would consider taking her spot. She worked in that capacity for four years. After David Jones came to serve as youth pastor, she continued working with David in a volunteer capacity.

At that time, all the church's education-related work was unified under one umbrella and adult, youth, and children's ministries worked together. For example, youth and older adults sometimes interacted in projects, and leaders in each area collaborated and made certain their efforts were unified. "I liked that model and it worked well," said Carolyn.

Carolyn, whose life and service are woven into the fabric that is First Baptist Church, holds high hopes for the church's future and the coming of a pastor who God wants to lead our congregation.



## FBC to Host Good Friday Service

Save the date! Christian Ministries will not hold its customary community-wide service, but FBC will host a service on Friday evening, **April 15, at 7 p.m.** Invite others to join us for that service, which will include music, prayer, and reflection.

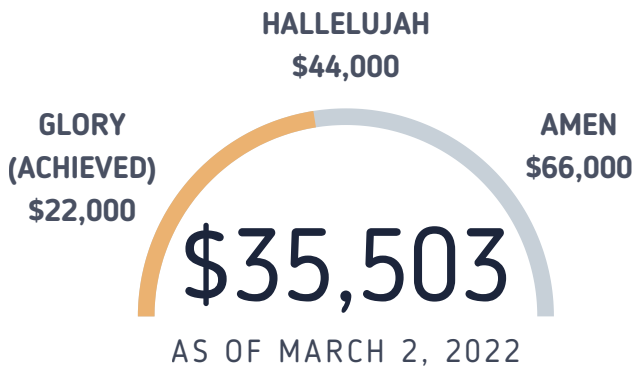
# *From the "Shepherd's Shop"* *Vision 2022 Reaches Halfway Point*

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

Vision 2022 is centered around God's vision for the future of First Baptist Church of Muncie and its life-changing ministries. It is the focus of our prayers, 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.

Thank you for the gifts you have already given. Vision 2022 focuses on these new initiatives: 1) Expanding youth and children's ministries, 2) Solidifying FBC's role as a teaching congregation through internships/mentees, 3) Providing enhanced support for the church's 2022 ministry/mission needs (to be determined).

Our milestones include:



## **IMPORTANT NOTE:**

Please consider giving a gift beyond your regular tithes and offerings. I am told that most of you gave generously to the Legacy Campaign, a drive to maintain and improve the church property. Our current initiative, however, focuses on ministry and mission.

In memory of or in honor of a loved one or friend, consider giving a gift that can be celebrated on Easter Sunday, April 17, 2022. If your gift, the name of the person to whom you are dedicating it, and whether it is "in honor of" or "in memory of" can be turned in by the Sunday before., a published list may be produced and distributed on Easter. The amount of your gift, large or small, will not be revealed.

Thank you for praying and believing God will help us reach these goals! 🏰

*Find out how much God has given you and from it take what you need; the remainder is needed by others.*  
-Saint Augustine

## *The Deacon Fund Provides Much-Needed Assistance*

COVID has impacted many people financially. First Baptist Church has a Deacons' Fund supported by donations from the church family. The kinds of assistance this fund provides include utility bills, mortgage or rent payments, medication payments, car payments, unexpected home or vehicle repairs, and medical bills.

This fund has a long history at FBC and was established to help members of the congregation who are finding themselves in unexpected financial hardships. Contributions should be specifically designated for "The Deacons' Fund" on a donation envelope or on the memo line of a personal check. These gifts can be collected every Sunday in the offering boxes located in the front and back of the sanctuary or through online giving.

"All individuals who receive financial assistance from the Deacons' Fund are kept strictly confidential," said **Brian Green**, chairman of the diaconate.

"Presently the balance in the fund has been affected by COVID-related expenses," he said. "Contributions would be appreciated. Financial strain for most of us makes it difficult to make contributions, but even a small amount from several can make a difference to a household with significant struggles."

If you find yourself in need, please reach out to Brian at 765-215-7485 or Bpgm263@gmail.com. 🏰

# “Fresh-Brewed Life” Breakfast Aims to Meet Need for Women’s Fellowship



Ever feel like your life resembles instant decaf coffee?

Do you want a full-bodied, fresh-roasted, premium experience instead?

Maybe it’s time for a fresh-brewed life.

If you’re a woman at First Baptist Church, that’s what we’d like to offer you.

Women who attended First Baptist Church’s women’s conference last November were polled for feedback on that event. They gave the event high marks in a variety of areas, but their comments revealed one thing above all else: attendees valued the opportunity to gather with other Christian women and wanted more chances to do that in an informal setting.

In response to that need, a team of FBC women has been planning a casual breakfast event to take place **Saturday, April 2, from 9:00–11:00 a.m.** “This will be a wonderful get-together for women from our church, as well as their female friends, coworkers, and family members,” explained **Julie Davis**, chair of the team. “We anticipate seeing ladies of all ages enjoying the morning. The setting will be relaxing and inviting for both introverts and extroverts, and we expect that everyone will leave feeling re-energized and encouraged—truly experiencing a ‘fresh-brewed’ quality of life!”

A catered hot breakfast will be served, and **Deena Green**, a local pharmacist, will speak briefly on women’s health. There will be some directed conversation around the tables, as well as time for women to talk about whatever is on their minds.

Rather than charging a ticket price, the team plans to collect monetary donations on that day to help defray the cost of the food. Free childcare will be available for the children of women who attend if they indicate the need for childcare when they register. Since the children won’t be participating in the meal, attendees should pack a snack for their child if they will need one while in childcare.

**Reservations for this event must be made from March 14–28.** FBC members may sign up on the registration link that they will receive online in mid-March. Or, anyone may call the church office at **(765) 284-7749** and share their name and a way to contact them to complete their reservation. “In order to serve women who are attending in the best way possible, we aren’t going to be able to extend the deadline,” Julie said. “We need to plan several days ahead for everyone to be seated comfortably and have a wonderful meal.”

In addition to Julie, other team members are **Emily Anderson, Cheryl Flaherty, Molly Flodder, Loraine Garrett, Deena Green, Michelle Heimlich, Ella Mae Lemen, Nina Oisten, Maggie Sims, and Gayle Songer**. Table decor will reflect the interests and personalities of the team members—expressing the diversity of the women of FBC rather than following a particular theme. “No two women are alike, so why should all of our tables look the same? Let’s celebrate our uniqueness instead,” Julie added.

Do you have questions? Any member of the team would be happy to talk to you about this event, or you can reach out to Julie at **jdd613@gmail.com**. You won’t want to miss this chance to have breakfast and encouraging conversation with other women!



# FAQs about FBC

## Where can I see the church calendar?

The expanded calendar is available on the church website at <https://fbcmuncie.churchcenter.com/calendar>. You may also pick up extra copies at the Visitors' Center window.

## Where can we see the announcements and information that we saw “before COVID” in the church bulletin?

That current, up-to-the-minute information is contained in the "Wednesday Weekly," which is distributed to your email inbox every Wednesday afternoon. That is also the place to find FBC family birthdays and a prayer list.

## Who leads the Facebook Livestream prayer sessions on Wednesday evenings?

Currently, the leaders are **Emily Anderson, Julie Davis, Molly Flodder, Deena Green, and Michelle Heimlich. Cheryl Flaherty** will take up that role again when she returns to Indiana in the spring.

## How can I get up-to-the-minute info about what is going on in the church?

FBC publishes the "Wednesday Weekly," which goes out electronically to all members as an email. **Katie Braswell** is editing that publication. Information you want to include should go to **[info@fbcmuncie.org](mailto:info@fbcmuncie.org) by noon on Tuesdays.**



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## First Baptist Church Leaders as of March 2022

**Interim Senior Pastor**—Dr. David Hinson

**Worship Arts Pastor**—Dr. Clifton Davis

### **Church Coordination Team**

*Moderator*—James Heimlich

### **Members**

*Treasurer*—Dan Lemen

*Clerk*—Julie Kirklin

*Worship*—Emily Anderson

*Property*—Joe Songer

*Adult Ministries*—Molly Flodder

*Youth Ministries*—Deena Green

*Children's Ministries*—Michelle Heimlich

*Member Care*—Cheryl Flaherty

*Outreach*—Gayle Songer

*At Large*—Larry Fouch

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