

THE VISITOR



From the "Shepherd's Shop"

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

My father, Ronald M. Hinson, and my mother, Irene Grace Siewert Hinson, had a second son on June 16, 1957, named David Kelly Hinson. Little did they know that one day I would be serving as the Interim Pastor of the First Baptist Church in Muncie, Indiana.

Beginning on Sunday, March 14, I am confident I will go down in the storied church history as the Interim Pastor who had the "most recognizable southern accent." I have long believed that if you don't write your own history, someone else will do it for you! I also hope to be known as the Interim Pastor who helped the Church have a "smooth transition to a post-Covid environment" –yet to be determined.

As the husband of Patricia ("Pat" -a nurse consultant inspector) and the father of four children (Bess- an attorney, Leah- a physical therapist, Hannah-a digital strategist, and Ben-an accountant), two sons-in-law (Phil and Daniel- both engineers), and two grandsons (Luke and Max- with undecided occupations), one of the most anticipated challenges of my future will probably be to remember all their birthdays and ages correctly.

On top of that, YOU, my new friends and members/attendees of FBC Muncie are unveiling your masks and expecting me to know your names as well. Just like being a parent or "Papaw," I promise I will do my best, and that is all I can do.

So far, some of you have asked me: What do you like about FBC Muncie? My sincere answer is: What is there not to like? You have welcomed me with kind words and much love. THANK YOU!

CONTINUED ON P. 2

IN THIS ISSUE

From the "Shepherd's Shop"

Catching Up with the Allens

How Can We Serve?

New Quarterly: "The Visitor"
Gets a Facelift

"The Visitor" Begins Monthly
Impact

Take a Journey:
Small Groups are the Great
Adventure!

From the "Shepherd's Shop"

CONTINUED FROM P. 1

You are who you are, and I am who I am, so how do we work TOGETHER to mold and shape the Church to become its best reflection of Jesus Christ? That really is our task TOGETHER, just like it is my task to LOVE my family and to LOVE the Lord my God with all my heart, mind, soul, and strength.

Recently, Church historian Bill Leonard said that one of the biggest needs for churches today is to tell "the Jesus story." He advised: Churches must learn how to revisit the Jesus story and tell that story in a way that creates a need and a response. Every congregation needs to be intentional about identification. Thriving churches engage the community, and go where there is need, and then make their case in terms of how the Church cares for persons and presents a witness.

Thriving churches develop "signature ministries" that respond to specific local needs. These become programs and ministries "by which they are known in a particular community." That makes sense to me!

Some of today's challenging statistics are: 1) About seven of ten Christians in the denomination are ages 65 or older; 2) Attendance at religious services has dropped from 50 percent to 35 percent of the population; 3) Four thousand or more churches close in America every year. So, is that discouraging?



Answer: Not for me! It just means there are more persons who need the Gospel than ever before, so let's get busy telling the story of Jesus. Let's get busy figuring out FBC Muncie's "signature ministries." Let's get busy calling and asking persons to come join us in worship at FBC so they may come and hear the stories of Jesus. People everywhere need us to share the Gospel! Let's get started...there is no time to sit and wait for a new pastor to do it all.

Besides, the "Interim Pastor" needs your help now...he talks "sooooo sloooowwww...". We have to get movin'-- NOW!



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Catching Up with the Allens

More than 85 people attended the “Catching Up with the Allens” picnic on Sunday, May 30. **The Allens**, who pastored at First Baptist Church from 2008-2021, were in Indiana for Dawson’s graduation from Rose Hulman and came to Muncie to visit with and hear appreciation from FBC family members. The Allens now pastor The United Church in Canandaigua, New York.

The event was at the Ross Community Center, an independent facility serving all ages, particularly from the southwest side of Muncie. The center near the Chevrolet property on 10th Street has been providing a weekly food giveaway to 400-700 households during the Covid- 19 crisis.

During the day with the Allens, people ate and fellowshiped, children played on playground equipment and adults and kids played ball on one of the ball fields.

Those who led the event were **Barb Campbell, Cheryl and Dick Flaherty, Sharon Jackson, Mary and Larry VanDeventer, Nina Oisten, Ann Heilman, Brian Green, Mark and Molly Flodder, James Heimlich, Larry Fouch, Lester Bryars, and Clif Davis.**



*Thanks
to the
picnic team!*



"God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them."

HEBREWS 6:10, NIV

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITY

The pillowcase project continued during Covid.

While detained at home, Dana Davis sewed more than 50 that were distributed a few weeks ago!

Thanks so much, Dana!

The effort reconvenes with women from the YWCA.

Date and time: Tuesday, June 22, 2021, 2-4 p.m.

Location: Second Floor of the Church

The long pause of the pandemic is appearing to be slowly ending, and we are continuing and increasing our involvement in serving as Christians in any community are called to be servants. The Bible tells us to care for the poor, help the widowed and orphaned, and serve our brothers and sisters in the faith.

For the past several years, we have worked toward "Joining God in the Neighborhood" and, in 2019, did a "Digging Deeper focus" with 14 organizations and churches in the FBC downtown area. In this model, we don't have to do everything alone but work from the premise that God is already out ahead of us, active in our neighborhoods, and we can find a way to help.

Part of our service to the community was to provide our church building to Forward STEPS for their Thursday night meals as a part of Second Harvest Food Bank's services to help people build resources to get out of poverty. A Better Way, the domestic violence shelter, also used our church for support groups on Monday evenings. (Second Harvest has no plan to come back to FBC at this time, and ABW will not be using our facility in the near future.)

However, there are many ways we are serving our neighborhood and can continue to do so. Now is the time to review services we provide and clear a small amount of time to share, donate, serve, and support people who need our help. The pandemic pause is ending, and the needs for our involvement continue to be strong.

What Do We Do?

Although some efforts were on hold, we have continued this past year to participate in several ministries. Below are the ones that are currently operating and the coordinator of each. A more detailed description will appear from week to week in the Wednesday Weekly.

COLLECTIONS—*Coordinator Needed*
(**Brian Green** and **Colleen Massoth** are handling some of this work.)

- YWCA: Canned goods, paper products, cleaning supplies, ladies' toiletries
- Grace Episcopal Church: Institutional-size cans
- Christian Ministries: Collecting socks for homeless men
- Hearts 'n Hands: Back-to-school supplies

HOLIDAY COLLECTIONS—*Coordinator Needed*

Operation Christmas Child: Collecting shoeboxes full of gifts for needy children all over the world

MISSIONS—*Coordinator Needed*
America for Christ and World Missions

PILLOWCASE PROJECT—**MaryAnne Bayer**, Coordinator

- YWCA and A Better Way: residents make pillowcases for themselves and to provide to several organizations, along with a new pillow
- Meals: **Mary VanDeventer**, Coordinator
- Muncie Soup Kitchen: Serving meals
- Christian Ministries: Providing a meal a month for the Men's Sleeping Room

OFFERING COLLECTIONS

Salvation Army bell-ringing time between Sunday School and church

POP TABS—**Michelle Heimlich**, Coordinator

Ronald McDonald House: Collecting soda can pull tabs (a project of our children)

What About Me, Lord?

What can I do? Am I willing to share about the organization or project and to recruit volunteers? Can I see that items get delivered to the organizations for which we are collecting? Can I volunteer 30 minutes to 2 hours a week? Am I the one to lead a committee to do the autumn collecting for Operation Christmas Child and involve the youth in helping us?

Would it mean I might cut out a TV show or two a week to create more time? Lord, I'm listening. Are you calling me, me and my spouse, me and a friend, or me and my family to make a difference? Can I be your hands and feet?

Contact **Gayle Songer** (765-744-0991) or **Mary VanDeventer** (765-215-3375) with questions or to present yourself to serve.

And if you offer yourself to the hungry and satisfy the need of the afflicted, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your gloom will become like midday.

ISAIAH
58:10
NASB



New Quarterly: "The Visitor" Gets a Facelift

Over the years, many features of this publication have not changed. A monthly format in black-and-white has been the timing and look of it. Various members or even church secretaries have edited it. One member in particular (whom many members knew) was the late Phoebe Reid who led a group working on the newsletter during the late 1960s and 70s. In recent years former pastor Wade Allen served as editor and augmented the distribution to include emailed copies.

This issue will begin a quarterly publication with a feature format so that readers can delve into more details about people, projects, and plans as well as articles about living a Christian life in today's world and scripture-related topics. The publication will also feature color photographs.

Many thanks to **Katie Braswell**, FBC digital communications specialist, for her design of "The Visitor".

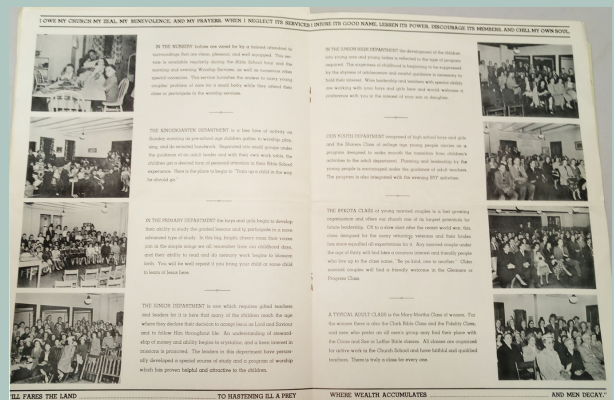
We pray that the focus of this publication will help you become more familiar with the people of our church family and the characteristics and direction of FBC Muncie.

The Wednesday Weekly, emailed to you (unless your spam filter is blocking it) will continue to cover last-minute information, births, deaths, events, announcements, etc.

For story ideas for "The Visitor", contact **Molly Flodder** mollyflodder@gmail.com or anyone on the Editorial Board.



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"The Visitor" Begins Monthly Impact

BY BILL EIDSON, CHURCH HISTORIAN

It was on January 27, 1947 that the first issue of "The Visitor" appeared. That means that "The Visitor" has been describing church and identifying members for nearly 75 years. New pastor Lewis Maples in a November meeting of the deacons spoke about the value of the church having a newsletter, the deacons agreed and charged the Publicity Committee with the task of bringing such a paper to life. After two months of consulting with other churches about the newsletter, the first issue was printed. Louis Crooks, a design engineer with Delco was named editor with his wife and Kenneth Dudley serving as associate editors.

The first issue states that the purpose of the newsletter is to keep the membership informed about and interested in the work of First Baptist. The four-page, slick-paper issue was to be printed monthly and mailed to members and interested friends. Each issue was to contain a column written by the pastor; a list of "vital statistics" such as births, deaths, shut-ins, and weddings; and a calendar of church and activities for the next month. Then, of course, there also was a section named "News of Our Members" where one could read about the trip a family took, the wedding anniversary of another couple, and who had recently moved. The early issues of "The Visitor" showed a definite optimism about the church and its future. Gone were the financial difficulties of the 1930s. Indeed, the church had absolutely no debt.

The first issue of the newsletter told of the deacons voting unanimously to send the new pastor to Copenhagen, Denmark in July as a delegate to the Baptist World Alliance Conference. The vote was passed with little concern about the cost.

The editors wrote with pride about recent purchases the church had made. Tile flooring had been installed throughout the first-floor corridor and new carpet installed on the pulpit platform. Readers today would probably be amused to read about other purchases the church made. There was the purchase of a new Remington typewriter, a mimeograph machine, and a complete Ediphone system which allowed the pastor to dictate letters and news releases.

Reflecting that same optimistic outlook, the second issue of the newsletter listed various features of the church's new Ten-Year Plan. The proposal called for 1,000 baptisms, 600 additions by letter (48 had joined in 1946-47), 1,000 in Sunday School (1946 average was 385), a choir with 50 voices, and several other objectives. Most goals were not reached in the next ten years, but the effort was commendable, and growth did occur.

The newsletter was an immediate success. Members praised it and after only three months the deacons formally acknowledged in their meeting the fine work done by the editor and his associates. Maples' vision and the Crooks' pioneer editing provided the foundation for a newsletter that has informed and interested members of First Baptist for more than seven decades.



"The Visitor" has informed and interested members of First Baptist for more than seven decades.



The mind of the discerning acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.

PROVERBS 18:15, NASB

Take a Journey: Small Groups are the Great Adventure!

BY MOLLY FLODDER

When **David Rodriguez** identified himself and his role in the church during introductions at the pastoral transition workshop on April 10 he said his name and “I’ve been part of small groups here in our church.”

In 2008-09, having recently come to FBC, **Tim Stigers** and his wife, **Patty**, certainly did not start small groups, but they gave them a shot in the arm. They discovered a number of young people--mostly newly married couples--who wanted to come together to develop meaningful relationships and find a deeper walk with the Lord. But the 21st Century brand of discussion and study groups was introduced in the work of the Stigers and group members such as David and **Kelly Rodriguez**. Eventually, after several years, group members were having families, and babysitting was even a part of the weekly discussion and study sessions at the Stigers’ home, with 20 in attendance! (The Stigers are now retired to St. Louis.)

According to the Stigers, facilitating this large study group was an outstanding opportunity to grow in faith, create networks of support, and grow closer to one another as trusted friends and followers of Jesus.

Long-term FBC members **Jim and Irene Hiatt** have participated in at least four small groups in the past 25 years. As a member of the praise band Jim rarely gets to have lengthy or meaningful conversations before or after church, nor does Irene who tries to move around and greet as many people as possible. Their participation in a Life Group (small group) allows them to become more engaged with other Christians and to build relationships in which confidential struggles can be shared, and discussions about the Bible and the Christian walk can keep faith alive. They feel that it is difficult to be vulnerable in a Sunday morning setting, but struggles can be shared with a close-knit group of trusted fellow Christians who are praying for each other.

“Our group is intergenerational, ranging in age from the late-30s to the mid-80s,” said Jim. “We meet for about 2 hours twice a month—8 months out of the year— although it has been virtual most of the last year. We start with eating the foods we have brought—good Baptist food—and talking about all kinds of things, about each others’ families, work, and experiences. Then we have our lesson studying and discussing a book of the Bible or a Christian book.” **Julie Davis** is the facilitator of the group and most of the meetings are in the home of **Brian and Deena Green**.

“Being able to study the word with people of different ages is really valuable,” said Irene. “It gives us different perspectives that help us think.

“Being in a small group can be a great adventure,” continued Irene. “It’s a way to grow along with other Christians. It’s something you should try and be prepared to take a journey that can become a wonderful part of your life.”



Another Life Group (small group) meets in the summer and early fall because some of the members are snowbirds. They are in their 60s-80s and often bring in guests and discuss Christian service going on in our community. This summer they will study *When God Doesn't Fix It*, a book by critically acclaimed songwriter and singer Laura Story.

A third group will organize and begin in late summer. **James and Michelle Heimlich** were in a small group a couple of years ago that disbanded when several members moved away. Currently, seven people are considering joining this group. The Heimlichs will pull interested individuals together for an introductory discussion in late June or early July. Anyone who is considering being in a Life Group and would like to be part of this planning meeting should contact James or Michelle at

magandaphotos@gmail.com

Coming Soon to "The Visitor"

Pandemic Outlook—How the pandemic has changed or affected people in our church family

Family/Individual Features—A look at their lives, life philosophies, interests, and activities

Hymn History—Occasional backgrounds on hymns to learn about composers and the motivation to write some of our most-loved music

Pastoral Search—The search team and their progress toward finding a new pastor.

Church History—Occasional writings on the history of First Baptist Church Muncie

Your Stories—Stories and articles written by members of our church

Your Suggestions—Stories and articles that you, our readers, suggest and request

First Baptist Church Leaders

Interim Senior Pastor—Dr. David Hinson

Worship Arts Pastor—Dr. Clifton Davis

Church Coordination Team

Moderator—James Heimlich

Members

Treasurer—Dan Lemen

Clerk—Colleen Massoth

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, Mary VanDeventer

At Large—Steve Reed, Larry VanDeventer

**Replacement representatives to be voted on by membership at next business meeting*

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309 E. Adams, Muncie, IN 47305

PHONE: 765-284-7749

E-MAIL: info@fbcmuncie.org

WEBSITE: www.fbcmuncie.org

Produced by:

Molly Flodder, Editor

Katie Braswell, Graphic Designer

Editorial Board:

Julie Davis, Michelle Heimlich, Colleen Massoth, and Kelli Petroviak