



Tower Tidings

First Baptist Church of Greater Cleveland

“For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of God.”

Hebrews 12:2



In This Issue

He Has Risen, Hallelujah!

We're on our way to healing physically. As we come back together globally will we be better and wiser from this experience? We will remain remote until everyone is comfortable with our return. We will keep everyone apprised of our opening plans.

Here are some instructions for connecting with us during this COVID-19 pandemic. All of the purple underlined links are clickable. Bookmark our [Church Updates](#) page. Our worship service is streamed [LIVE Sunday morning on YouTube](#) while previous videos can be viewed anytime on our [YouTube Channel](#). Our [Wednesdays in the Word](#) classes are available through digital conferencing,

sign up to receive instructions via email. [Sunday Discipleship Hour](#) is available through Zoom conferencing. Our youth are active in their online [Zoom conferencing](#) Sunday at noon.

Our children get together online Sundays so please sign up to get on the [children's email list](#). Our [Spiritual Gifts classes](#) are online, you can find them on the web page. If you have anyone who needs our prayers please [submit a request online](#) for our prayer team. Stay healthy! If you have any trouble accessing any of our activities or have challenges using technology call Pastor Kregg 216-882-8555 and he can connect you with someone who can help!

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Spring in a Post-COVID World

Last week, I noticed the first indication of spring's arrival: the emergence of a cluster of purple, white and yellow crocuses. The trees were completely barren as in the midst of winter, the grass brown and lifeless, and the grey cold sky gave no indication that spring's arrival was to be anytime soon, and yet, there bursting forth, the fragile looking flowers blooming in full color.

Our year-long pandemic has been a trying time for everyone. I don't need to explain to anyone of you the weariness of isolation, long list of cancellations, and fear of the great unknown called COVID-19, however, the signs of a future spring within a "post-COVID" world lays before the church. Jim Capaldo, District Executive Minister of Coverge recently gave a foreshadow of what this new landscape might be like. "COVID-19 has required congregations to adapt their ministry methods, extend grace, and to streamline budgets." He then lists a number of practical insights for the church moving forward. The post-COVID Church should focus on:

- **MISSION DRIVEN AGILITY:** Going forward, churches must determine what ministry methods work best in their context. However, those church members and leaders who are aligned with their church's mission more than their church's traditions will experience the necessary grace, freedom, and unity for exploring and embracing new methods that work in their context.
- **LOCAL OUTREACH:** As communities have grown closer, congregations will need to place higher ministry and budgetary priority on relational outreach within their local context. This will likely result in many church leaders and mission teams reviewing and re-prioritizing their supported ministry partnerships.
- **CHURCH COMMUNICATION:** High congregational communication expectations will remain the norm. Therefore, churches will need to emphasize communication quality, consistency, church data management, online presence, and the development of their church "brand" recognition.
- **CHURCH FELLOWSHIP:** COVID-19 has revealed that the one thing that cannot be virtually replaced is physical human interaction. Sermons

can be delivered via video but congregational fellowship cannot. Going forward, churches will need to facilitate, celebrate, and allow for more congregational involvement and interaction during their congregational gatherings.

- **VIRTUAL MEETINGS:** It has become clear that online meeting venues work, can be more time efficient, and are sustainable for certain types of church meetings. Be prepared to continue using online video platforms for various meetings as well as for certain trainings and transfer of ministry content.
- **INCREASED WORSHIP SERVICE OPTIONS:** We are not certain when social distance restrictions will fully disappear. Until then, churches need to prepare their gatherings for social distance realities. Be prepared to maintain six-feet between family units and be sure to evaluate your community expectations as well as your congregational convictions, norms and needs in light of these ongoing restrictions.
- **DELEGATION & DISCIPLESHIP:** Many churches have been confronted with an over-dependence on pastoral and church staff. Delegating, equipping, and releasing people to use their skills and passions will be increasingly necessary, especially in the area of congregational care.

Our congregation has already seen many of these focal point being initiated as we are moving forward. God's grace is truly amazing and our people have held each other up looking toward our next opportunity to safely regather in God's house, our beautiful church sanctuary with the freedom once more to greet one another face to face.

Until that day – love to you in our Christ Jesus, the Resurrected Son of God,

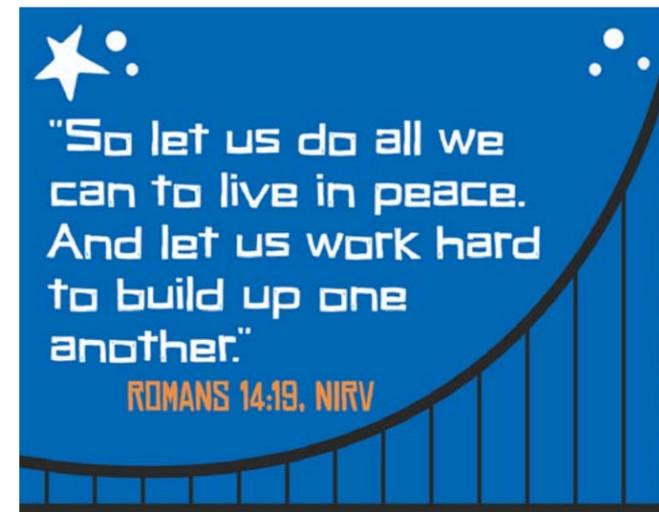
Pastor Kregg

Pastor Kregg Burris
Senior Pastor

HERO HEADQUARTERS

Preschool & Elementary Children's March Schedule

Preschoolers and K-4 are meeting with [Carly Marino](#) online.



APRIL 2021	Elementary WEEKLY CUES	YOU GOT THIS!
Theme	Reconnect: Build the Bridge	Week One
	Peace is proving you care more about each other than winning an argument.	Colossians 1:20 and John 20:1-18 Easter / God's Big Story SAY THIS: God made peace with us.
		Week Two
		Colossians 3:15 Live in Peace with Others SAY THIS: We can make peace with others.
		Week Three
		Genesis 26:1-6, 12-22, 26-31 Isaac's Wells SAY THIS: You can show you care about others by walking away from a fight.
		Week Four
		1 Samuel 25:1-35 Abigail Intervenes SAY THIS: You can show you care about others by being part of the solution.

April Birthdays

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 4th Virginia Alt | 8th James Shelley | 13th Phyllis Ruppert | 22nd Francina Cardwell | 26th Jennifer Bopple | 29th James Knauf |
| 7th Shaina Brewer | 9th Barbara Baus | 15th Leslie Brown | 23rd Melvin Garthrite | 27th Joan Parajon | 30th Vincent Tillman |
| 7th Lois Krajcovic | 11th John Negus | 17th Sarah True | 23rd Lissy Gulick | 27th Laura Parajon | |
| 8th James Brightup | 12th Ashlie Dyer | 20th Julie Stern | 24th Gwen Dyer | | |



FBC Youth: Divine Dialogue *by Kelley Pernicone*

As we reach one full year of shut down and isolation, we are able to reflect on the changes and trends of the past year. It has been a year of creative solutions, uncertainty, and hopefulness. The First Baptist Church of Greater Cleveland's Youth Program has recognized the uncertainty and has found creative solutions to bring the members of our community some hope. With the increase in opioid abuse and increase of mental health issues in our young people, the FBC Youth department has created opportunities to connect parents and students to community resources.

On Saturday April 10th at 7pm, the Youth Department at First Baptist Church of Greater Cleveland will host a special event for parents and students. This interactive webinar will give students and parents the opportunity to ask questions, connect with resources and find out more about recognizing the signs of addiction and mental health issues. Our panel of experts includes the founder and Executive Director of Project LIFT Services, LaToya Logan and Associate Director of Prevention, Wellness & Community Outreach for Recovery Resources, Ayme. We are excited to have their expertise for this event!

This event is open to the public and designed for parents, caregivers, and students. For more information about this event or for registration information, please visit firstbaptistcleveland.org/conversations.



Fill out the form at firstbaptistcleveland.org/children-youth/childrens-ministries if you would like to join us!

Organ Restoration Contract Released!

by Mike Skerritt



YOU: What are you talking about? The organ sounds fine!

MIKE: There are two reasons why the title of this article may confuse you.

1. The organ itself is a magnificent instrument, completely renovated and expanded in the late 90s, with many different organ and orchestral sound possibilities, and with a huge variety of music it can produce. Therefore, even with about 20% of the organ damaged in 2008-2010 and currently inoperable, it still sounds wonderful every Sunday morning. The majesty of this instrument is extraordinary!
2. We are so blessed that our organists Stephanie Price and Betty Meyers are exceptional musicians that can make the organ sound superior even when some of the components are damaged.

But the bottom line is that the components of the organ in one of the four organ chambers, two located on either side of the Chancel, were severely damaged several years ago by rainwater. That's right. The tuck pointing in the spaces between the stones of



Organ Console

the outside walls was badly deteriorated and allowed rainwater to enter, seep through the walls, and trickle down on some of the components in one of the organ chambers that houses the solo division of the organ. The pipes were damaged as were the wind chest, and all the accompanying super structure.

Jeff was able to get the outside walls sealed a few years ago. And he restored the damaged walls and ceiling of the chamber itself. As limited funds were available, we have been able to complete some of the necessary repairs over the past few years. But proceeding with a limited, piece-meal approach meant that it would take many years to fully restore all damaged components. Fortunately, we no longer must wait.

Thanks to the incredible performance lately of the stock market our endowment fund has grown significantly. The Property and Finance Cluster, with approval of the Endowment Committee and Council, has taken some of the growth in our Endowment Fund and designated it for Capital Improvements. You have probably heard that extensive bathroom renovations have already, and finally, been approved. We were also successful in getting funding

to complete the organ restoration approved as well.

Why is this important? Here are excerpts from Christ King Catholic Parish, Wauwatosa, WI web site, paraphrased to reflect the place and importance of the Skerritt-Cumming Organ at First Baptist Church of Greater Cleveland.

"At First Baptist we utilize many tools to help us recognize God in our midst, stained glass windows, liturgical carvings, sacred vessels, vestments, even flowers, etc. Additionally, musical instruments inspire our song and aid us in reflection. We have a beautiful piano, guitars, access to string and brass instruments, all of which bring a variety of music to life. Of all the instruments heard in our worship the organ is the largest and most versatile.

Some liturgical repertoire sounds great on a piano or guitar but not so great on an organ. Some repertoire is more successful when offered by an organ. To offer a worship experience that all members of our congregation find aesthetically and inspirationally pleasing it is necessary to provide a wide range of liturgical music. (FBC Contemporary and Traditional service music.) The issue is being able to offer many types of music in a liturgically, pastorally, and artistically appropriate style.

Among all other instruments which are suitable for divine worship, the organ is "accorded pride of place" because of its capacity to sustain the singing of a large, gathered assembly, due to both its size and its ability to give "resonance to the fullness of human sentiments, from joy to sadness, from praise to lamentation." Perhaps the most important is the organ's ability to lead congregational singing. This is the organ's primary role in a Sunday service. It is the most effective instrument for this purpose.



Chamber waiting for restored organ pipes to be reinstalled

Organ pipes are designed to mimic many sounds. Trumpets, oboes, strings, brass, and flutes are all literally at one person's fingertips, but it is the principle sounds of the organ that are designed to support the human voice. What better way to lead people in song that with pipes designed to support and blend with their voices?

Our Church stresses the importance of congregational participation. When we gather on Sunday we do not only listen to songs as prayer, but we also generate the prayer with the songs we sing. Likewise, the manifold possibilities of the organ in some way remind us of the

immensity and the magnificence of God.

In addition to its ability to lead and sustain congregational singing, the sound of the pipe organ is most suited for solo playing of sacred music during the service at appropriate moments such as preludes, postludes, service of communion, etc. Pipe organs also play an important evangelical role in the church's outreach to the



Racks of organ pipes ready to ship to Peebles-Herzog for restoration

Christian Education Schedule

Come join us in these upcoming Sunday, Wednesday, and Thursday classes to grow in God's Word. All of our Christian education activities have gone virtual. Email Rev. Sandra Alexander-Haynes – saalexander@firstbaptistcleveland.org to receive login instructions.

Wednesdays in the Word

Romans 8-16 For You – Men's Group

by Dr. Timothy Keller

Led by Eddie Wills

Starting at 7:00 PM via Zoom conferencing

Explore and discuss the book of Romans. In his description of the book, Dr. Keller stated, "The book of Romans is one that changes the world by changing the people."

The Screwtape Letters – Group for Everyone

by Clive Staples Lewis

Led by Pastor Jeff and Tammy Gordon

Starting at 7:00 PM via Zoom conferencing #867 3860 6720

This is an engaging discussion about our typical flawed human experiences which are only changed by the grace of God.

The Screwtape Letters is a fictional, satirical, novel written by C.S. Lewis. This novel serves as a platform for a thought-provoking discussion.

Into the Word – Women's Group

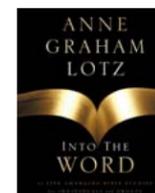
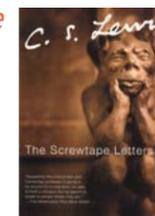
by Anne Graham Lotz

Led by Martha Lant and Sandra Alexander-Haynes

Starting at 6:30 PM via Zoom conf.

Led by Tobili Sam-Yellow

Starting at 7:30 PM via phone conf.



wider community in sacred concerts, music series and other musical and cultural programs."

Michael Laufer of Peebles-Herzog, the Pipe Organ Company of Columbus that tunes and maintains our organ every year, has targeted completion of the restoration for October of this year, if everything goes as planned. I look forward to having the full range of this magnificent musical instrument available to inspire us over the Christmas holidays as we welcome the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.



by Jennifer Whatley-Williams

God calls us as believers to discover and use our spiritual gifts in order to grow the Church in Spirit and in numbers. Class videos and materials are available online firstbaptistcleveland.org/spiritual-gifts-classes.

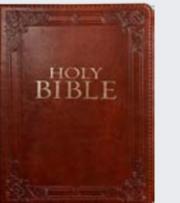


Thursday Mornings

Women's Bible Study Class

Led by Sandra Alexander Haynes

Starting at 10:00 AM & 10:30 AM via phone conf.



Thursday Evening Bible Study

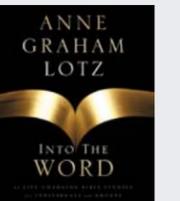
Into the Word – Women's Group

by Anne Graham Lotz

Led by Sandra Alexander-Haynes

Starting at 7:30 PM via telephone conf.

The Women's Bible study group is focused on lessons from a study titled Into the Word. This study includes 52 life-altering Bible lessons. As noted by the author, "These fifty-two weekly studies emphasize personal application and will draw you directly into God's Word...to love Him more."



Sunday Discipleship Hour

The Power of Knowing God – Group for Everyone

by Dr. Tony Evans

Led by Marty Capers

Starting at 12:00 PM via Zoom conf.

The Sunday Discipleship Hour class is embarking on a life-transforming and extraordinary study. Please join us as we examine the Power of Knowing God by Dr. Tony Evans. As stated by Dr. Evans, "You go to church, you read the Bible, you participate in small groups, but many still don't know God intimately." This study will empower us to "experience a soul-deep closeness with God, practice relying on God instead of self-reliance, and find our identity and purpose in belonging to Him." Most significantly, this study will remind us to make developing our relationship with God our greatest purpose in life.



firstbaptistcleveland.org/wednesdays

International Ministries

by Rev. Dr. Adalia Gutiérrez Lee - Area Director for Iberoamerica and the Caribbean

Following God Through The Wilderness

In the Hebrew Bible we are reminded of the Exodus of the Israelites in the wilderness. They did not like the wilderness and were sorry they had left Egypt. God sent them manna, but the people got tired of eating manna. They wanted some meat. Forty years of journeying—the days were intense, hot, dry. The people were weary. They learned through every hard and grueling step how much they had to rely on God.

One year after the global pandemic, humanity has been forced to rethink the way we relate, work, have fun, celebrate, or even process our losses. Christians have been greatly affected because the very act of entering a building to gather, share, pray, sing, and study the Scriptures puts our health and our neighbor's health at great risk.

We have been asked to stay home and seek new ways of being church. While many people have died and others are fighting to survive all over the world, having lost health, homes, jobs, and the ability to put food on the table, some of us are angry and complaining, unable to rely on God. How will we, as Christians, be remembered in history during this pandemic? As the Israelites in the wilderness?

This year of desert wandering has been difficult to endure. The hardest struggles we face have the greatest potential to teach us patience. Are Christians going to look back at this year as the most strengthening, faith-building time of our lives? Is the world going to look at Christians as those who did not miss the miracles of God's provision out of busyness or stress, and who were always willing to be God's instruments of grace and love?

God's promise is still the same to us as it was to the Israelites: "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." We cannot enclose God in a building, in a tabernacle, in an image, not in liturgy, or in a certain creed. No pandemic will be able to destroy our faith, no Herod or Pilate will be able to kill God. No government will be able to abolish our beliefs, no culture will ever camouflage the Spirit.

As long as there are women and men of good will who, in the depths of their hearts, live the Good News of Christ the Risen Lord, God's presence is with us as we reflect God's love and grace to others. Be the presence of God and find rest and hope in God's faithfulness.



THE IMPACT OF YOUR GIVING by Christina & Lance Muteyo
Rain, floods, and COVID-19 in Zimbabwe

It is the rainy season now in Zimbabwe, and God has blessed us with good rains. The harvest is plenty.

Unfortunately in January and February the rains turned into floods across the country. In Harare where we live, thousands of people were left homeless. The damage is extensive; people were swept away, and telephone and electricity lines were ripped up.

Your partnership has allowed us to successfully mobilize basic support like foam rubber mattresses, food packs and tents to accommodate the affected families in our community. We also provided survivors with psycho-social support.

In December 2020, Zimbabwe was hit by a second wave of the vicious COVID-19 virus. Prior to December, the country did not have many cases, but we now have over 1,400 deaths. Consequently, the whole country was placed in indefinite lockdown since January. Movement is restricted to essential service providers. Because the majority of people in the country have informal jobs, the impact of this lockdown is felt far and wide. Often times we are called to offer mediation services for domestic and community violence cases.

We are taking this opportunity to educate our community regarding how to stay safe. We are doing this virtually through various social media platforms. We mobilized community singers to produce COVID-19 songs and videos which we post on our social media platforms.

TOP Africa received some PPEs from friends, which we are donating to the community. Through our tailoring project, we have been making masks which we donate to vulnerable populations (including orphaned children and the STEP Children of Peace Africa beneficiaries).

Zimbabwe is slowly starting the COVID-19 vaccination program. The government recently received a donation of 200,000 Sinopharm doses from China to vaccinate 100,000 frontline workers. More vaccines are expected to come in due course. Nevertheless, some citizens are skeptical of this and other COVID-19 vaccines. This is based on the negative history of colonialism, slavery, and oppression that most Africans have experienced and continue to experience. internationalministries.org

As Christians our joy lies in the fact that: "By his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).

Help Us Find the Bunny!

 by Kelley Pernicone

We received a note from the Easter Bunny! He said he has a big surprise for us, but we have to follow his series of eggs! Join us on the First Baptist Church YouTube channel on Sunday April 4th to help our friend Kelley track down that rascally rabbit! The "egg hunt" is modeled after Blue Clues and is designed to be interactive with your little ones! Oh, did I mention we'll actually get to see the Easter Bunny!

Each clue will lead us to a new room or space on the FBC grounds and will share a fun fact about Easter! Learn why we have an Easter Bunny, not an Easter Chicken, why we hunt down eggs, and why



everyone is so obsessed with marshmallow peeps (although that may just be Kelley). If we're lucky, we may get to do the bunny hop!

So, grab your jellybeans and get ready to find that Easter Bunny on Sunday April 4th. Can't make it? No need to fear! A replay will be available on the FBC YouTube Channel as well as their Facebook Page, just search First Baptist Church of Greater Cleveland. We hope to see you there!

Can I Get a Like, Share, & Subscribe?

By Kelley Pernicone

 Do you have a favorite FBC memory? A great recipe to share? Favorite hymn or praise song? Pictures with your church family serving the community? The Outreach and Communications Cluster needs you!

We are compiling pictures, fun family recipes, music, and memories to share with our church family and our community! Our goal is to build our social media presence and cultivate a community. We have been reaching a lot of phones, tablets, smart TVs, and computers through our virtual worship and want to ensure that our online presence is as warm and welcoming as our church family.

Growing our presence on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube will help us stay connected even while we're apart. Below you will see the themes! We'd love to see your content (I'm most excited for family dinner recipes and great stories)!

- Mondays: Missions and Music – We will feature one mission each week as well as fun facts about our favorite hymns and worship songs!
- Tuesdays: ICYMI (In Case You Missed It) – An invitation to watch the most recent service.
- Wednesdays: Wednesday's In the Word – Christian Education feature as well as Scripture to get you through the rest of the week.
- Thursdays: Throwback/Thankful Thursdays – What are you thankful for? What are some of your favorite church memories?
- Fridays: Fellowship Fridays – Recipes to try at home with the family (don't you miss potlucks?!)

Have a picture, story, recipe, favorite song/scripture? Feel free to send it over to us at outreach@firstbaptistcleveland.org! We want to build a connection, share our personality, and show our community that FBC is more than just a big stone building with a great light display at Christmas time. We are church with a heart for service and fun and worship and support! We should share that!

First Baptist Church
OF GREATER CLEVELAND

3630 Fairmount Blvd.
Shaker Heights, OH 44118

**Free 2021 Mobile Pantry
Produce Pick Up is Available
at First Baptist Church**

Five Saturdays
from 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
May 1st | June 5th | July 10th
August 7th | September 11th

Help us help others... spread the word!
Bring your valid ID.
firstbaptistcleveland.org

 **Greater Cleveland
Food Bank**



Combat Hunger In Our Community

by Karen Gill

SAVE THE DATE: JUNE 5th will be the day YOU can help combat hunger in our community. We have two service opportunities available on that day. You can either volunteer to be a part of our Mobile Pantry here at FBC or participate in the Walk for Hunger at the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused widespread unemployment so this year more than ever, it's important for us to give back to our community.

FBC is proud to be a partner of the Cleveland Food Bank as a Mobile Pantry. The Mobile Pantries ensure that families receive the healthiest and most nutritious food available. A truck will usually contain 90 percent produce (fruits and vegetables) including apples, cabbage, greens, potatoes, onions, carrots, oranges, melons and more. The remaining 10 percent usually consists of bread, yogurt or another donated item. Our food distribution that day will take place from 10:00 am to noon at the Portico entrance to the church. Volunteers are needed to help bag and distribute the produce.



The other opportunity to give back on June 5th will be to join our "First Baptist Church and Children's Center" team to participate in the 33rd Annual Walk for Hunger & 5K Run. Participants will be able to enjoy refreshments, entertainment as well as a day at the Zoo while raising money to ensure that no child goes hungry over the summer months. The 5K begins at 8:30 am and the Walk kicks off at 8:45 am. You can register at <https://give.hungernetwork.org/team/344156>. If you are unable to attend, please consider making a donation to support our team. Every dollar we raise provides four meals! 1 in 5 people in Greater Cleveland struggle with food insecurity which means 4 in 5 people can help!

To volunteer for the June 5th Mobile Pantry or for questions about the Walk for Hunger contact Karen Gill at kgill@firstbaptistcleveland.org. Let's work together to fight to end hunger in our community!!



Tower Tidings

First Baptist Church of Greater Cleveland
3630 Fairmount Blvd.
Shaker Heights, OH 44118

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Dated Material: April 1, 2021
Thanks for prompt delivery!

Church Office - 216.932.7480
The Children's Center - 216.371.9394

FirstBaptistCleveland.org
office@firstbaptistcleveland.org

Facebook/First Baptist Church of Greater Cleveland



Watch Sermons Online

Miss a sermon
or want to hear
one again?

youtube.com/channel/UCGPcB14N9TRe50jES6uHK7Q

2021 FBC Lay Leadership

Moderator: Dan Mizener
Vice Moderator: Kim Kidd-Collins
Treasurer: Ralph Hise
Clerk: Melinda Burns
Personnel: to be filled

Children's Center: Frank Marino

Communication & Outreach: Debra Hegler
*Greeters, Welcome Center, Marketing,
& Communications*

Discipleship: Dana Capers
*Discipleship Classes, Children's Ministry,
Youth Ministry, & Covenant Groups*

Fellowship & Nurture: Kristin Roberts
*Stephen Ministry, Deacons,
& New Member Orientation*

Stewardship: Lynne Liu

Finance & Property: Jennifer Whatley-Williams

Missions & Social Concerns: Carolyn Neal

Worship and Fine Arts: Carole Negus

Serving in Ministry

Ministries

Rev. Dr. Kregg F. Burris - Senior Pastor

Rev. Jeff Gordon - Associate Pastor/
Business Administrator

Rev. Dr. Sandra Alexander-Haynes -
Associate Pastor/Christian Education

Carly Marino - Director of Children's Ministry

Ship Collins - Director of Youth Ministry

Office

Star Knuckles - Executive Assistant/Office Admin.

Music Ministries

Stephanie Price - Director of Music

Betty Meyers - Associate Director of Music

Brian Kozak - Director of Contemporary Music

The Children's Center

Jane Pernicone - Director

Marketing/Photography/Video

Greg Beckner - Web Design/Publicity/Social Media

Send content for the next issue by **Apr. 15th** to Greg
gbeckner@firstbaptistcleveland.org Issue mailed May 1