

June 3, 2021



We're Open

Actually, FBC has been open for worship since last summer, but with the pandemic still raging and various restrictions on capacity, congregational singing, and interpersonal contact, as well as mask and distancing requirements, most people have chosen to “attend” worship and Bible study remotely.

As more and more people have received the COVID-19 vaccine we have been seeing people slowly returning to worship. It's been fun to see people in person that for the last year we have only seen on a computer screen or not at all!

Now that Gov. Hogan has lifted the indoor capacity restrictions, we can begin to envision returning to some semblance of regular church life. Many of our adult Bible Study classes are planning to resume meeting at the church in the next few weeks, and as they return then our children's classes will as well.

Attendance at our 10:00 a.m. worship service has crept up into the fifties, and as more people return we will keep a close watch on attendance and return to our two-service schedule when numbers warrant. Though our numbers have been few and fellowship has been limited, it has been good for people from both services to worship together the last year.

If you are fully vaccinated we encourage you to come back to worship as soon as you are comfortable. We caution those who haven't been vaccinated to consider, for your own protection, waiting until Maryland has reached “herd immunity” before returning.

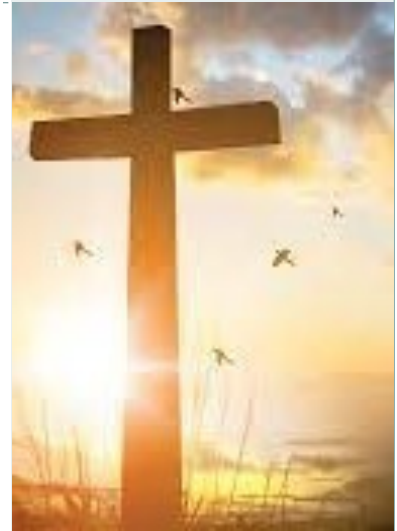
I am beyond happy to report that financially we have actually flourished, due in part to reduced expenses but also to the continued faithfulness of the FBC family. Many people have been taking advantage of our online giving platform or that of their bank, and others have faithfully mailed their contributions to the office.

In addition, we have had up to four congregations in addition to ours using our facility for worship, and along with other rentals from basketball teams our Worship Center is used all day every day. Finally, we were able to receive grants through the Payroll Protection Program which boosted our income and that of Little Lights Child Development Center.

Thus, we were able to finish 2020 over \$123,000 in the black! So far in 2021 we are \$8,290.40 under expenses, with over \$182,000 in our General Fund.

Thank you for your faithfulness! We look forward to seeing more and more of you in the weeks to come!

Pastor Larry



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OUR VISION: TO BE LIGHT UNLEASHED

Jesus' original vision for His church was light unleashed; a church whose life and good works were so compelling to the world around it that the community would be drawn to God because of its irresistible influence.

OUR MISSION

To become a body of Christians committed to reaching the unchurched in Frederick County. We will do this by being an exciting, growing and innovative church that, by following God's leadership and timing, will start new churches that will start new churches.

“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:16

THE LINARES FAMILY



The Linares family upon arrival to Frederick

When the family learned that FBC had partnered with the Asian American Center of Frederick to help low-income families in Frederick with food needs during the pandemic, the family made a generous contribution in honor of FBC and their parents.



Jose Linares

A few months ago, Pastor Larry received an email from a man named Jose Linares, who told of his connection with First Baptist when he and his family came to America as refugees from Cuba after Castro took over.

His family's story is below. Easter morning the Linares family placed a beautiful floral arrangement in the worship center in appreciation of FBC and in memory of their parents, Onelia and Manuel Linares.

"It has been almost 60 years since the First Baptist Church extended a much needed helping hand to our family..."

In 1963 The First Baptist Church of Frederick sponsored a Cuban Family. My name is Jose Linares, and I am the youngest member of that family. This short narrative is that story.

"They've just arrived!" said Rev. Woodward, in his soft gentle voice, as he introduced us to a few neighbors at 211 Dill avenue on that warm summer day in June 1963. That house was to be our new temporary home while we found work, registered for school, and settled in Frederick, our new hometown.

My older brother and I had arrived at Miami airport in October of 1961. He was 16, I was 11, and we had no family in Florida waiting for us. Our parents and our sister would arrive in June of 1962. That story of emotional separation is for another time. What mattered most to us then is that we were reunited. Our parents, Manuel and Onelia, had sacrificed everything for us!

By the spring of 1963 South Florida had been overwhelmed with asylum seeking refugees fleeing Castro's Cuba. As such, steady employment was nonexistent and all rental properties were filled beyond capacity. All of us worked at whatever was available. My sister cleaned houses from time to time and I sold newspapers on the street corners. My mom stretched every meal as much as possible and at times earned a few dollars sewing for others. My father and brother worked as field hands picking pole beans in Homestead, Florida. With summer arriving the harvesting season was ending and with it two sources of our income.



The Linares family today

To relieve economic pressures in South Florida the US Department of Health Education and Welfare asked other communities around the country to sponsor Cuban families. Many communities responded including The First Baptist Church of Frederick. On June 5th, 1963 we boarded the airplane that took us to Frederick. Externally the house at 211 was like most houses are today on Dill Avenue. I know this because I have since been back

a few times and have also visited virtually using “Google Street View,” a marvelous innovation! The church used the living room for Sunday overflow services, but other than that the house was totally at our disposal until we got on our feet. All rooms had been fully furnished while the refrigerator was filled with fresh provisions, and the pantry was fully stocked! I fell in love with Cocoa Krispies!

“I cannot help but get emotional at the compassion, generosity, and genuine kindness extended to us by your congregation.”

LINARES FAMILY TODAY

Opportunities have since taken us to other states and I am now retired and living in Massachusetts. My sister and brother are also retired and living in Florida, and Georgia, respectively. From time to time, we gather and remember our wonderful experiences in our adopted hometown, Frederick, and still consider ourselves a part of The First Baptist Church’s congregation. Our parents passed on in 2001. Their grandchildren number seven and have started their own families. Three of those grandchildren were born in Frederick! They are all productive and contributing citizens of this great nation and work in accounting, computer technologies, education, and banking. Their grandparents’ sacrifice lives on!

A few days after our arrival we were invited to dinner at the church. We were introduced to many members of the congregation and many questions about our family and our trip were asked. My brother and sister answered as best they could. English was a work in progress for us. After dinner Rev. Woodward said they had a surprise! As if a furnished home, even if temporary, and a pantry and refrigerator full of food was not enough! We were led to an adjacent room where the church community had donated every conceivable form of attire you could imagine, from dresses to shirts, suits, shoes and purses, winter boots and coats, and ‘galoshes’...whatever those were! Those last few items, as you might guess, were a curiosity to us. We had never been exposed to ‘real’ winters or seen snow. “Take what you like, it’s for you!”, said Rev. Woodward. To this day, whenever I recount this story, and that includes while I am typing this note, I cannot help but get emotional at the compassion, generosity, and genuine kindness extended to us by your congregation.

It has been almost 60 years since the First Baptist Church extended a much needed helping hand to our family and in so doing opened the doors of opportunity. It is because of your congregation’s compassion, generosity, and care for those in need that the Linares are established American families today.

With heartfelt gratitude and profound appreciation, we thank you for everything your congregation did for us during our time of need.

Marta Smith, Raul Linares, and Jose Linares

BOX PROJECTS

First Baptist plans to conduct several “box projects” per year to help Meals on Wheels respond to the needs of seniors. In August we will create “Pet Pouches” for senior’s pets which will include dry and canned food, treats and small toys. Although seniors receive great love and companionship from their pets, it is often a struggle to feed them on a limited budget. More details will be sent out in a couple of months, but you can start to look for sales and coupons now! We will be collecting Shoeboxes for Seniors again in November.



The church also collected shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child for Christmas last year. The mission of Operation Christmas Child is to provide God’s love in a tangible way to children in need around the world and to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Several boxes were packed with toys, crafts, personal care items, and clothing.

MISSION PROJECT: SHOEBOXES FOR SENIORS

Imagine it’s a snowy day, and the radio says that the roads are icy across the county. If you are a senior who is house bound, and who counts on regular deliveries from the Frederick County Meals on Wheels, you begin to wonder if the delivery will be made today. Your biggest concern is that there isn’t much in the refrigerator to eat, and if the volunteer can’t get up to your house to deliver a meal, what will you eat for the next day or so?

This is a serious problem for many seniors in Frederick County who depend upon Meals on Wheels to deliver nutritious and tasty food. However our church members are working hard to make sure that there is a solution.

In February members filled over 100 “Shoeboxes for Seniors” to be distributed through the Frederick Meals on Wheels. Each box contained “shelf-ready” food which could be used whenever a regular meal can’t be delivered. Containing food such as crackers, peanut butter, dried fruits, soup, and small treats such as

cocoa mix, cookies or granola bars, these boxes can be a real lifeline for many. In addition to helping during weather emergencies, these boxes will also be given to seniors who may be in immediate need of food due to homelessness or lack funds to purchase food until benefits are activated.

In addition to filling a box full of food, members also included a small note for encouragement to brighten the day for isolated seniors. Some boxes were even decorated with paint, ribbon, glitter or stickers to add a ray of sunshine to the box. One creative member even painted inspiring quotes on the boxes, encouraging seniors to look for hope during difficult times.

When the boxes were delivered to the Meals on Wheels office for distribution, the staff were surprised and thrilled to receive so many boxes. “These will be wonderful for our clients and will brighten their days to know that they are remembered,” said Kitty Devilbliss, Director of Community Services at the Frederick County Senior Services Division.



Left: Shoeboxes for Seniors.

Right: Youth group shows off baby blankets.

MISSION PROJECT: LOW INCOME FOOD NEEDS

For the first five months of this year, First Baptist collected funds in partnership with the Asian-American Center of Frederick (AACF), a community non-profit which provides critically-needed food every month.

AACF provides vital services to assist lower income, minority, or immigrant groups reach their full potential through access to health insurance enrollment, interpreter/translation services, ESL and Citizenship classes, mentoring, housing, education, employment and business development services.

Through your generosity, FBC was able to send over \$3000 to AACF to meet the needs of low-income families.



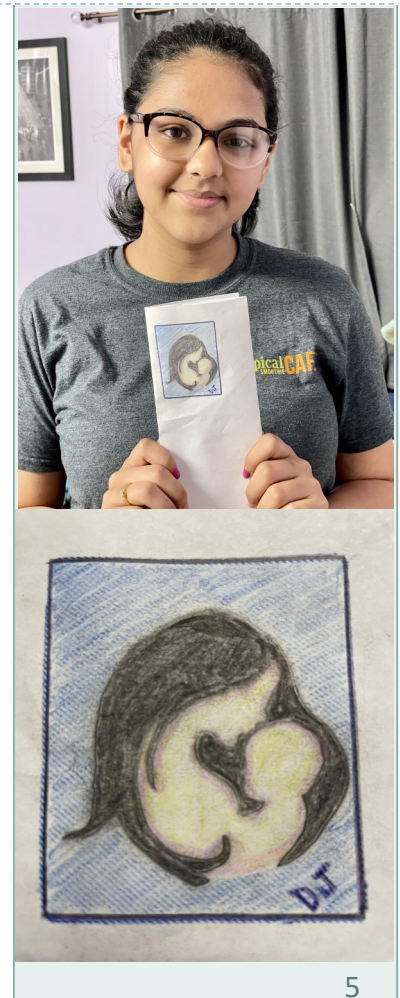
Thank you FBC for your continued commitment to be light unleashed to those in need in our community.

MISSION PROJECT: BUNDLES OF JOY

During the month of May, First Baptist partnered with the Asian American Center of Frederick (AACF) for a new mission project, **BUNDLES OF JOY**. These boxes include critical baby essentials like sleepers, baby shampoo, washcloths, bibs, and socks to share with a new mother of limited means. We hope those that assembled a box remembered the joy and love they received from their own mothers while sharing that love with other new mothers. Each box will be distributed by the AACF to families who are seeking financial and educational assistance as they settle into a new life here in Frederick County. The boxes will remind the families that Jesus loved and valued little children, and that this community will welcome them.

The Church also accepted donations of disposable diapers for delivery to the AACF. The youth group also made 8 baby blankets for new mothers.

Prior to delivering the Bundle of Joy boxes to the AACF, they were sealed with stickers showcasing the beautiful mother baby artwork drawn by Diya Jha. Diya is a sophomore at Governor Thomas Johnson High School and a very active member of the youth group. She earned her Girl Scouts Gold award with the help of youth group volunteers for painting a room for the developmentally disabled young adults who attend the Pathways program in Frederick, Maryland. Diya loves every opportunity to volunteer and interact with the youth group. She is a taekwondo black belt instructor and teaches kids ages 4-14. Diya aspires to study computer science and business and also continue working with children and volunteering.



From Janet Willsie-Noffsinger:

Our **Amazing Grace** class weathered the pandemic together. Some of us met weekly at Janet Willsie-Noffsinger's home, others connected via texting.

We shared Bible lessons together as well as our personal lives. We grew so much closer and praise God for keeping us safe. We prayed for others who contracted covid. We shared tears for our dear friends who went to Heaven to be with our Savior. Our faith was strengthened by our deep personal connections. We are so grateful for the love and friendship that developed during this challenging time.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not onto your own understandings. Acknowledge Him in all his ways and paths.” Proverbs 3: 5-6.

PRAYER WARRIORS

Prayer Warriors is a group created at the beginning of the pandemic as way for the women's and men's groups to stay connected to each other.

The groups were left without a place to meet and tried to keep in touch by email. Through email, they were able to stay in touch with each other and have a Prayer List to share concerns and joys with each other. The email list has grown to nearly 70 members. As this larger group met regularly, the prayer ministry continued to grow.

Most of the prayer requests are church members and their families, but some have been for neighbors and co-workers as well. You can contact Lucky Brittain [photo-graphs@of@aol.com](mailto:photosof@aol.com) to be put on the email Prayer List.

Pray about everything, tell God what you need and thank Him for all He has done.
(Philippians 4:6)



UPDATE ON ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

Some adult Sunday School classes returned in May.

Heaven's Harvest, led by George Littrell, meets from 8:45-9:45 in Room 204. Homemaker's, led by Jim Devilbiss, meets 8:45-9:45 in Room 211.

Bible Bus, led by Doug Dawson, continues to meet via Zoom at 11:15 am Sunday mornings.

Upcoming classes beginning in June include:

Emmanuel Class, led Rae Ann Rippeon, will begin meeting June 6th at 8:45 am in Room 202.

Seekers, led by Mike Harrington, will begin meeting June 13th at 8:45 am in Room 200.

Amazing Grace, led by Janet Noffsinger, will begin meeting June 20th at 11:15 am in Room 201.



Lifeway and Smyth and Helwys Bible study books continue to be available at the Welcome Desk and in the Adult Sunday School hallway.

“As believers, we are meant to be in community.”

Hebrews 10:24-25

BOOK STUDY: A BIGGER TABLE

Several members met via Zoom over the past two months to read and share their thoughts about a new book by Pastor John Pavlovitz entitled “A Bigger Table.” This book invites readers to “envision a church that is big enough for everyone by holding up a mirror to the modern church and speaking clearly on issues at the heart of the Christian community: LGBT inclusion, gender equality, racial tensions, global concerns and theological shifts.” The author encourages readers to build a “bigger table just as Jesus did, by practicing radical hospitality, total authenticity, messy diversity and an agenda-free community.”

Although these Church members did not always agree with the author, his ideas generated a lot of spirited discussion about how First Baptist could invite others to this “bigger table.” Many shared stories of their own church experiences in the past and visualized how our members can encourage others to join in love to welcome everyone to our fellowship. The book study encouraged the members to break down barriers within our faith community so that we are welcoming and affirming to all to come.

Deacon Marcy Gouge is considering organizing a second book study to discuss this book. If you are interested in joining, let the office know, or send an email to Marcy Gouge at marcy.gouge@gmail.com.

FROM THE DEACONS

It’s been a long pandemic but our church has remained active and financially healthy due to the faithfulness of our members and associates. Our church only remained completely shut down for three months in 2020. We are gradually emerging with attendance increasing. Throughout the pandemic, your deacons have remained engaged and have met online every month. Even though the pandemic somewhat curtailed our ability to “Grow, Share, Serve,” the Lord empowered us to do all three.

Notably the shoebox ministries and partnering with AACF, both described in greater detail in the newsletter.

Land Development: The deacons continue to explore ideas with the pastor to develop our land with the potential to lease some of it.

Sunday School: The deacons recommended opening Sunday school during their meeting of April 11. More information in this newsletter and on the website.

Gratitude: We remain grateful for the Lord’s guidance with leadership decisions that resulted in no COVID-19 cases being traced to our church. We pray that as the threat of the virus is diminished, that you will consider returning physically.

Deacons: Doug Dawson (Chair), Amanda Aliperti, Lloyd Berry, Liz Brady, Marcy Gouge, Carl Haas, Robert Huenger, Taruan Matthews (Secretary), Elisa McCoy, Chris Morales, Guildine Tunis, and Rissah Watkins

YOUTH MINISTRY IN A PANDEMIC

The past year has been a challenging one for everyone, but in spite of the obstacles presented by the pandemic, our church youth group has managed to stay active. We've continued Sunday morning Bible studies and Wednesday night meetings both virtually and in person. We have ministered to others by building desks, making wreaths, delivering floral arrangements, sending out cards of encouragement, and assembling emergency food kits for Meals on Wheels. We continued to have times of fellowship with one another through outdoor movie nights and cookouts. Finally, we got ambitious and repainted the Youth Department. In spite of all of this I cannot say our youth group has felt 'normal'.

Now as vaccines are being administered, we are hoping and praying that our youth can begin returning to normal with a Summer Mission trip. We are watching the pandemic numbers closely and putting some strict rules and procedures in place. God willing, we are looking at a trip to Southern Appalachia on the week of June 27- July 3. We have chosen this particular trip because the ministry *Appalachian Outreach* has been very willing to address our concerns and work with us to keep our students safe. After our trip we hope to resume normal summer youth activities such as our water slide night, a downtown scavenger hunt, and a night of "Random Acts of Kindness". We have also planned to do a "30 Hour Famine" to raise money for World Vision in February of 2022.

Our student ministry has continued during the pandemic and we are anxious to move forward. I would like to ask our church family to pray that we move forward safely and in tune with God's will.

Pastor Richard



Top: Making desks for children

Middle: Repainting the youth hallway.

Bottom: Fellowship



Left: Youth assembling Shoeboxes for Seniors



Right: Youth making wreaths for Senior church members.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Children's Ministry has been offering activities for children since the beginning of the pandemic. They began with Facebook Live videos and transitioned into a hybrid option with Zoom and in person activities once churches were allowed to reopen in a limited capacity. The staff even assembled Birthday Party for Jesus and Easter activity boxes for children who joined virtually.

Children's Ministry is currently offering in person activities and a Zoom option for families not yet comfortable returning to church. Activities are 10 am during the Worship Service.

Children's Ministry staff will continue to take temperatures of children participating in activities. Following the guidance of the Maryland Department of Health and Maryland State Department of Education, staff will continue to wear masks during Children's Ministry. Children over the age of 2 that can successfully wear a mask are strongly recommended to do so for activities in the building. As weather allows for activities to be outdoors and children can be distanced 6 feet, masks breaks will be allowed.

If your child would like to participate using Zoom, please email rachelann.rp@gmail.com to receive an invitation for each Sunday's activities.

You can also visit <http://Lifeway.com> for a Bible story and activity page.

“All your children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children.”
Isaiah 54:13

LITTLE LIGHTS CDC

Little Lights Child Development Center (LLCDC) has been able to stay open throughout the pandemic. Last March, they were classified as an Essential Personnel Childcare facility.

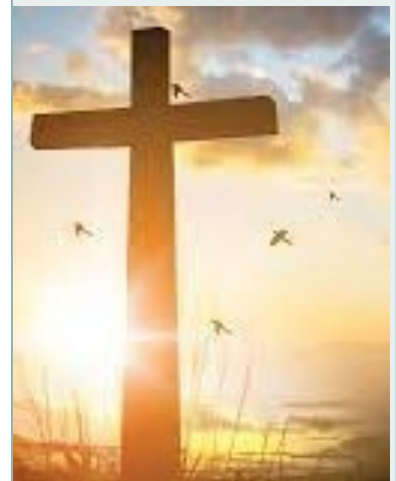
Rachel Pyles, the director of LLCDC, has been able to secure several grants for the facility. A security grant allowed LLCDC to update their cameras and security at points of entry into the facility. She also secured grants from the State of Maryland and Maryland State Department of Education specifically for childcare centers.

GREETERS NEEDED

As the church is regaining some semblance of normal, we once again need greeters. All the doors have been reopened on Sunday. For the time being, we will continue doing a combined service at 10:00 AM. Thus, greeters are needed from 9:30 -10:00 AM.

As a greeter, there is no expectation that you shake hands or give hugs. Everyone is very respectful of personal space. We need at least one greeter every Sunday.

If you are interested in greeting, please sign up using the following link: <https://volunteersignup.org/B4T9W> or you may contact Doug Dawson by email at dougdawsonj@hotmail.com



2020 CENSUS

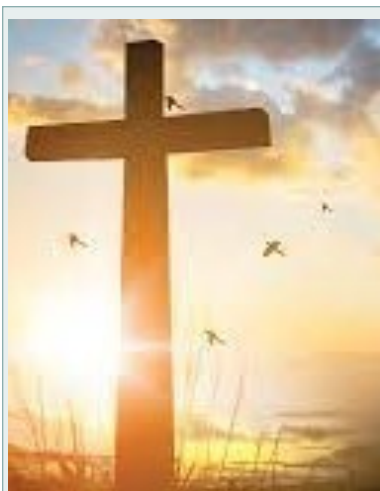
First Baptist Church stepped forward to help our community be counted in the Census 2020 by serving as a training site in August 2020 for over a week, hosting 400 Census field workers. During this period when all government buildings were closed during the pandemic the Census was desperate to find a local site large enough to train these workers. By providing our building for training these critical service workers, our members made certain that Frederick County would be accurately counted, thus bringing in millions of federal funds to support community services such as schools, roads, and senior services.

CHURCH BUILDING UPDATE

Even though the church was shut down for several months in 2020 and open at a limited capacity for nearly a year, maintenance had to continue on the church building and grounds. We were able to refinish the wood stairs and stage, replace soffets and gutters and added Gutter Guard, repair the roof behind the steeple, replace the old projectors with a new center projector in the worship center, and keep up with regular grounds keeping during the warmer months.

Current needs for the church grounds include a new shed as we have outgrown the current maintenance building. It currently is being used for the maintenance equipment plus a variety of miscellaneous storage. A second shed would hold the non-maintenance items like all Christmas Trail decorations and items that need "clean" storage such as extra upholstered chairs, etc. The cost will be approximately \$7,000 which includes both the building and the ground/foundation preparation. Currently we have received \$3100 in designated donations toward a new shed. THANK YOU ! Please note that any donation amounts received in excess of that needed to complete this project will be placed in the Repair Reserve Account.

We are so grateful for the Trustees and custodial staff for taking such great care of our church building.



*"The Lord is near to the
brokenhearted, and saves
the crushed in spirit."
Psalms 34:18*

IN MEMORIAM

In honor and memory of those in our Church family and friends who passed and will hold a special place in our hearts.

June Drehmer
Lee Jacobs
Sue Littrell
Helen Proudfoot
Glenn Rippeon
Lee Sharpe
Doug Sine
Charles Travis
Miriam Walters
Betty Winchester
Bob Winchester