



Pastor's Perspective

“Walk by the spirit...” Galatians 5:16

Another new year is here. It's hard to believe we are now a quarter of a century into the new millennium. Every time a new year rolls around we are challenged to consider making changes or renewing commitments. It's a good time for a restart. We think about starting some good habits and kicking some bad ones. Habits are powerful things. Anything you do on a daily basis is going to have an impact on your life. Studies have shown that walking 30 minutes a day five days a week will significantly improve a person's health. The Bible clearly teaches that we ought to walk by the Spirit. If our lives can be improved by increasing our physical fitness, just imagine how our lives can improve by growing closer to God. No matter what you do your body will inevitably wear out, but your soul never will. There is a limit to how strong or healthy your body can be, but there is no limit to how much you can grow spiritually. Not only that, but as you grow more spiritually active, you gain more and more control over the weaknesses of the flesh (in this case we mean sinful tendencies, not physical abilities...). Paul wrote to Timothy that physical training was useful for some things, but godliness was useful for everything. In the new year we are going to begin by focusing what it means to walk in the Spirit, and how to do so. As we approach a new year and think about new habits to start, let me encourage you to make a few commitments:

- 1) Read the Bible at least 10 minutes 5 days a week.
- 2) Spend 20 minutes in prayer at least 5 days a week.
- 3) Commit to going to church each week unless sick or traveling.
- 4) Begin attending a Bible study (Sunday School Classes are an easy option).
- 5) Invite one person to join you for church (and don't give up until someone actually shows up).

Here is what can happen:

- 10 minutes of Bible reading a day will result in reading the whole Bible in under two years.
 - Daily prayer has proven to reduce stress, decrease chronic illness, and improve mental health, not to mention staying close to God, gaining wisdom and discernment, and unleashing the power of heaven in your life.
 - Regular church attendance has proven to improve our quality of life, give purpose to life, connect people socially, and reduce stress and depression. Not to mention it glorifies God and builds His kingdom.
 - Regular Bible study will expand and activate the Bible reading you are doing.
 - If everyone invited one person to church each year, the church would double in size every year (if everyone invited stayed...). Reaching our community is more about you inviting your friends, family and neighbors than it is about our programs...
- Walking in the Spirit is not a new thing, and it's not novel. But we can grow in it and I'm looking forward to our journey as we start this marathon together.
- In Christ, Pastor Luke



Recap of 2024 Giving Thru 12/22/24

Giving Needed to Meet 2024 Budget - **\$682,735.71**

Current Expense Giving - **\$632,039.99**

Building Fund Designations - **\$102,255.34**

Deacon Fund Designations - **\$12,244.30**

Kids Club Winter/Spring '25 Session

Kids ages 3 through the 5th grade are invited to join us on Wednesdays from 6:30-8:00pm starting Feb. 5th through April 9th. If kiddos joined us for the Fall '24 session, they DO NOT need to register again for the Winter/Spring '25 session. New friends are welcome to join us any time & are encouraged to register ahead of time at www.firstbaptistaledo.com. Check-in is from 6:15-6:30pm through the FRONT lobby doors. Pick-up is 8-8:10 in the sanctuary.



Kids are learning about "The New Church" from Gospel Project. We have so much fun playing games, engaging in Bible activities, eating yummy snacks, and making new friends.

Food Pantry War: Boys vs. Girls: Kids are collecting non-perishable food and hygiene items for the Mercer County Food Pantry. A donation box for each team will be in the lobby. Each item (or dollar) donated will count for 1 point. Who's going to win? Who knows but the winners will get their very own victory party to celebrate when the session is concluded (Date/Time TBA).

Bible Memory Challenges: Kids will have Bible Memory Verses that go along with this session's lessons. They will practice at church but are encouraged to practice at home. For each verse they recite, they will get a prize. Kids can recite during their Bible Memory stations anytime during the session to get their prize on the spot.

Fun Nights this Session:

Feb. 12th - Red Carpet Glam Party: Kids & crew are invited to dress up fancy, cool, or glamorous for this fun "Valentine's" party and to walk the red carpet. This is up for interpretation so just have fun with it! Invite your friends!

March 5th- "Wish It Were Summer" Night: Kids & crew are invited to dress up like it's summer and enjoy some "summer fun" during game time. Invite your friends!

March 26th "Mr. & Mrs. Potato Head" Night: Kids are invited to this special theme night where kids will create their own silly potato heads. Invite your friends!

April 9th Last Night "Super Hero" party: Kids & Crew are invited to dress up like a super hero and join us for this super fun party to end the session. New friends are welcome to join us.

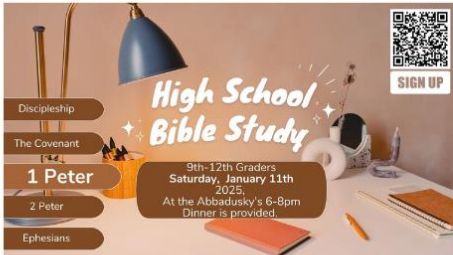
Nursery: Adults taking classes or volunteering can check-in their little ones (2 and younger) along with their Kids Clubbers at the nursery door so they can get their pager. If you have nursery kiddos, skip the line and check-in your whole family at the nursery door.

Have a Question or Need help Registering?

Contact: Mollie Dunn (Children's Pastor) 309-371-6962/mollieadunn@yahoo.com.



REFUGE STUDENT MINISTRY



Refuge at the Y!- All 6th-12th grade students join us at the YMCA in Aledo for Refuge youth group! Games, small groups, snacks and more will be provided from 6:00pm (check-in) to 8:00pm (pick up). Refuge will be taking a break for the holidays and will be back at the YMCA Wednesday, January 8th 2025.

God's Gals-Girls in 6th-12th grades are invited to join us Mondays from 6-7pm in the Enon Room. We just began "The Gospel on the Ground Study- The Grit & Glory of the Early Church in Acts." This study is open to all girls Middle School through High School. Sign up at firstbaptistaledo.com.

Boomsisters Overnight-Girls in grades 6th-12th are invited to join us at FBC for a Boomsister Overnight! We will start at 6pm on Friday, January 17th and end at 10am on Saturday, January 18th. Dinner and breakfast will be served. Bring snacks to share. Please sign-up before January 10th.

High School Bible Study- Attention high schoolers, join us January 11th, 2025 at 6pm as we study 1st Peter. Please be sure to bring your Bible. Dinner is provided and free to attend. This study meets at Nick & Justina Abbadusky's home-408 NE 12th St. Aledo.

FCA-Calling all students to join us for Fellowship of Christian Athletes huddles at Merco High School and Jr. High! High school will meet every Wednesday morning at 7:15am in room 210, Jr. High will meet every Friday at 7:30am in room 23. All students are free to join; breakfast provided!

FCA Meal Train-FCA is looking for families to help out with breakfast at the Jr. High and High School. If you can cook and want to serve these students, please sign up online using the QR code on the slide or go to the Refuge Facebook page. Questions, contact Andrew Hofer at 309-574-0172 or Pastor Austin Shields at 309-582-7812.



Women's FBC FLOURISH Small Groups



We are so excited for the new Small Group year to begin! If you signed up, your group leader will be in contact with you this month with information on meeting times and getting your "Beholding and Becoming" book. Let's grow together in setting our hearts and minds on Christ this year!



Ladies Save The Date!

The True Woman Conference hosted by Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth will be held October 2-4, 2025 in Indianapolis, IN. If interested in attending, please purchase the ticket yourself at <http://www.reviveourhearts.com> and the church will help pay \$100 towards your transportation/hotel costs. We do have some rooms reserved already. Tickets are currently \$189 each, and will increase to \$209 in February. More info coming soon!



The FBC Men's Ministry has begun planning for the 2025 event calendar. There are three events that we have scheduled for the first quarter of the calendar year that you may want to add to your calendar. On **January 15th**, there will be a Bags Tournament at the church, it begins at 6pm and should conclude around 8pm. Pizza, soda and water will be provided. On **February 28th**, we will hold a euchre tournament at the church beginning at 6pm. It's a great opportunity to learn the game or just fellowship with new people. Then in April the Spring Momentum event will take place at Life Action Camp in Buchanan, MI, dates are **April 4th-6th**. The sponsored cost for the event is \$150 (\$225 is the full expense).



Finally, please remember that we host a **Men's Breakfast** every Sunday morning beginning at 7am. We have breakfast then follow up with discussion on the previous week's sermon. We do dismiss in time for 8am services. It's a great time for fellowship and accountability. Men 13 years and older are welcome.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH ALEDO

WEDNESDAY NIGHT LIVE

WINTER/SPRING '25 SESSION
WEDNESDAYS FROM FEB. 5TH-APRIL 9TH
6:30-8PM

Classes & Programs for the
whole family!

SIGN UP COMING SOON!
Open to the Public!



Join us Feb. 5th-April 9th, 2025 on Wednesdays from 6:30-8pm for WNL!

There are classes for the whole family designed to help grow your faith and deepen your fellowship with others!
These classes are open to the public! Sign up coming soon at firstbaptistaledo.com.

A Marriage Study-Art of Marriage - Led by Pastor Seth and Denise Bowker - Every marriage has its strengths and its stresses. There's not one that can't be improved, fine-tuned, made stronger—or even overhauled—if needed. In this study you will discover a transformative marriage resource designed to help you explore new levels of intimacy, communication, and connection with your spouse. Whether you're a newlywed or have been married for decades, this series can be your path to a stronger, more beautiful masterpiece of God's handiwork.

A Study of Parables By John MacArthur-*The Mysteries of God's Kingdom Revealed Through The Stories Jesus Told*. Led by Steve Struble and open to all adults. Jesus was a master storyteller, and the parables He told were ingeniously simple word pictures with profound spiritual lessons. Understanding the parables is a crucial matter for followers of Jesus. Jesus told parables so His people might comprehend His message about the kingdom of God clearly.

A Women's Study-Led by Kady Hofer - Details are still unfolding. Stay tuned for class topic & sign up.

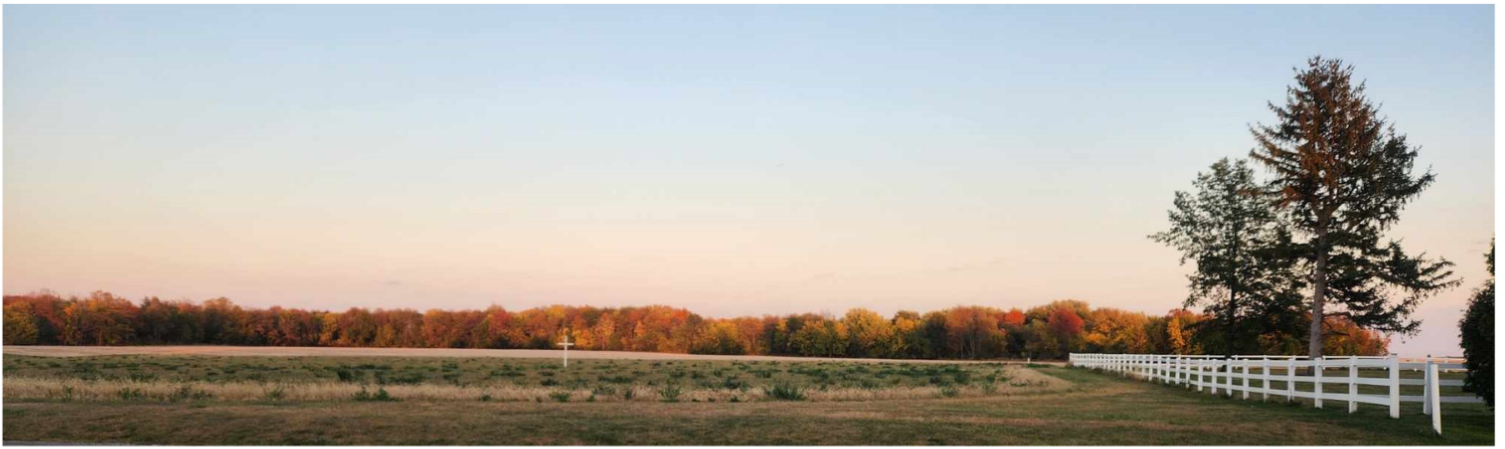
Men's Bible Study-The Book 1st Corinthians-Led by Pastor Luke Dunn. Come join us as we read and discuss the book of 1st Corinthians each week. This study is open to all men.

Men's Strength & Faith Class-Join leader Aaron Struble at the Mercer County YMCA for a devotion and guided weight lifting. We'll gather in the lobby of the Y for a devotion and then proceed to the weight room to do a guided weight lifting. The cost for Non Y members is \$5 per person per night, if you are a member of the Y there is no cost for this class.

***Nursery** for babies 0-2 years old is provided for adults who are attending a study or who are serving. Register your nursery kiddos at firstbaptistaledo.com

Refuge Student Ministry-Students grades 6th-12th grade are invited to join us at the Mercer County YMCA for Refuge Youth Group on Wednesdays. Doors open at 6pm and pick up is 8-8:15pm during WNL. No registration required. Check-in & pick-up through the exterior community room door at the y (to the left of the main entrance).

Kids Club-Kids ages 3 years old through the 5th grade are invited to join us at First Baptist Church on Wednesdays from 6:30-8pm. Check-in starts at 6:15pm in the lobby and pick-up is in the lobby from 8-8:10pm. If you're new to Kids Club, register on the Kids Club registration at firstbaptistaledo.com.



A Letter from the FBC Capital Campaign Committee

Dear Church Family,

We are so thankful to be used by our mighty God to see so many lives changed in Mercer County. Our vision is to reach every heart for Christ in Mercer County and beyond, and that vision includes making room for many more people. The first big step was securing the land across the street that would enable us to expand. The next big step was to reimagine what the future for FBC might look like on a 13-acre campus. The third step has been to develop a building strategy that could meet our most immediate needs for growth. We continue to work together to discern God's will and plan for our church. The building committee hosted a town hall meeting in November to further the discussion on the vision and how to proceed.

From that meeting the building committee received direction on what the church body would like to see with regards to some changes to the proposed building plan. It was agreed that the proposed building plan was a little too ambitious, and a new building plan would be scaled back and resemble the 2020 proposal to some degree.

The 2020 proposal included a gym which would also function as a fellowship hall, and a kitchen, as well as a kid's ministry area that was secure. The building committee has been working on some ideas to meet these needs and will be discussing them at another town hall meeting on January 12th.

Earlier this year we began the process of raising funds for the project by launching a capital campaign.

We are very grateful to all those that made generous commitments to help bring this vision into reality. We also know that many people have not yet made a decision concerning the capital campaign, and we would like to encourage you to pray about investing in the vision of FBC. Some people have already begun to fulfill their commitments, while others are waiting for clear direction before they begin to give to the capital campaign. We would like to suggest that gifts to the building fund can be given, if you are comfortable, at any time. If you prefer to wait, we suggest that you begin fulfilling your commitment once the church has voted on a building plan. In the meantime, year-end gifts of any size are appreciated. Please mark "Building Fund" in the memo of the check or envelope.

We are excited to see how God is going to move in the upcoming months as we continue to reach every heart for Christ in Mercer County and beyond. Thank you for being such an important part of the ministry of FBC. Together, with God's help, we are making a difference.

Sincerely, The FBC Capital Campaign Committee

Ron Moffitt, Chase Burns, Blake Bieri, Rhonda McKinley, Mike Sponsler & Luke Dunn



Other Items & Events *Of Note*

COMING IN JANUARY

In addition to being available for prayer at the altar at the close of each service, the FBC prayer team will now be on hand to pray for your concerns AFTER the services beginning the first Sunday in January. Look for the prayer banner at the front of the sanctuary on the west side and prayer team members wearing an ID badge.



**Annual FBC
Business Meeting**
Jan. 19th
at 11:40am.

**Church Council
Meets Jan. 14th**
at 7pm

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Thank you so much to everyone who donated to the Nursing Home Christmas Gift project this year! We know that your generous donations of gifts are definitely appreciated. This is a community wide event, so we would also like to thank the following churches: Sunbeam United Presbyterian Church, Hamlet-Perryton Presbyterian Church, United Methodist Church, Messiah Lutheran Church, St. Catherine's Church and Grace Evangelical Free Church. We would also like to thank our wonderful volunteers: JC Carlson, Vivian Kopp, Joanne Anderson, Carol Hill, Jeanne Barber, Pastor Seth Bowker, and Jadon Bowker for their help in sorting, boxing, loading and delivering the gifts! A big shout out to Pam Ricke for all her help with all sorts of odds and ends! This important ministry goes so smoothly and quickly when people are willing to serve and volunteer to help us out!
Thanks again! Linus and Cathy Griswold

Town Hall Meeting

Join us on Sunday, Jan. 12th at 6pm as we gather as a church family to hear an update from the FBC Building Committee.



Dear Church Family,
Boomsisters would like to thank you so much for again filling the Bushels of Love to support the Aledo Food Pantry. We also want to give a thank you to the ladies of Joy Circle for all the paper products and to John and Sherry Huffstutler for delivering all collected. We pray for each person receiving these blessings and we praise God for your generosity.

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Stay Connected!

·We offer worship at 8am & 10:15am. Sunday School for all ages is at 9am along with a nursery for 0-2 years old. We have Kids Worship at the 10:15am service as well as a nursery for babies 0-2 years.

·For all the details about our upcoming events and live streaming Visit FirstBaptistAledo.com.

·Listen to WRMJ 102.3 at 10:30am each Sunday.

·Download the "Church Center App" from the App Store or Google Play and choose "First Baptist Church, Aledo, IL" to easily sign up for church events, check our church calendar, give online, watch sermons and receive important church notifications.

·Find Us On Facebook.

·Call the Church Office at 309.582.7812.



Love Christ. Love Others.
Think Biblically.

