

FBC Newsletter

A Monthly Source of News & Information for Members & Friends of First Bible Church of Decatur



January 2012

FBC Mission Statement

Our mission is to glorify God by helping people know, love, obey, and exalt Jesus Christ

FBC Vision Statement

Our vision is to present Christ to Decatur and the world in a contemporary and creative way through equipped and mobilized believers who make disciples.

Annual Congregational Meeting

The annual Congregational Meeting was held December 4, 2011.

Rotating off the Elder Board are **Charlie Adams, Donnie Haynie, Stan Moore,** and **Glenn Whiteside.** Rotating off the Deacon Board are: **Scott Anderson, Adrian Baker, Joe Cimino, Gary Kessinger, Joel McWhorter** and **Phil Olinger.**

Gratitude was expressed to these men and their families for their faithful service and ministry.

The following officers were unanimously elected. Elders: **Ray Cain, David Francis, Jeff Hodge** and **Stratton Orr.** Deacons: **Ty Batchelor, Peter Bromirski, Wes Easley, Jay Reichmann** and **Darryle Waldron.**

The proposed 2012 budget was presented and approved. The total 2012 budget is \$2,114,431 representing a 4.7% increase over 2011. Required weekly giving is \$40,662.

During 2011, FBC gave: \$49,000 in donations for disaster relief; \$13,000 for additional foreign mission projects; \$7,500 additional for Decatur Outreach projects

and \$7,500 allocated to supplement benevolence.

Our mission budget for 2012 is \$354,100. We are committed to be obedient to fulfilling the Great Commission in the financial support of thirty missionary families and eleven missionary organizations serving in multiple nations and in the U.S.

Our Decatur Outreach represents our commitment to mercy ministries and evangelistic outreach in the Decatur-Morgan County area.

As a result of the Education for the Great Commission fund, set aside for planting new churches throughout the world, since 2002 we have been able to have four active plants: Antioch Mission Church, **Serbia**; Holy Trinity Church, **Ukraine**; Voice of Truth Church, **Moldova**; and FBC Emanuel, **Azerbaijan.** Two new plants are scheduled for 2012 in Yekaterinburg, **Russia** and God's Place, Chisinau, **Moldova.**

Ronne Harvell reported on negotiations with the City of Decatur and their plans for widening Spring Avenue. The work is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2013.



Faithfully Serving Our Youth



Thank You, Joni!

You have had an eternal impact on our children and all of us.



Joni being Joni



In the spring of 2004, **Joni Clark** joined our team as our first full-time Children's Ministry Director. We have been so blessed to have someone like Joni lead this ministry. She exemplifies our mission statement in her desire to glorify God by helping children know, love, obey, and exalt Jesus Christ.

Joni will continue serving in a volunteer role through this school year by overseeing our Kid's Worship.

Looking Ahead with Steve...

Christopher Hitchens, arguably one of the most famous atheists in the world, converted to theism shortly after his death last week. He now believes God exists. I have quoted, referenced, and written about Christopher Hitchens ever since he wrote his 2007 best-seller, *God is Not Great*. I am not the first to note the irony that his name, Christopher, means “Christ-bearer.” Sadly, instead of bearing Christ, he did all he could to bury Christ. In my book, *Which “Real” Jesus?* I noted that if Thomas Paine had a fan club, Christopher Hitchens would be the president. Paine, whose writing spurred on the American Revolution, was a deist, not an atheist. But Paine and Hitchens had this in common: they rejected the deity, supremacy, authority, sovereignty, and historicity of Jesus Christ. Perhaps a man named Jesus lived in the first century and taught a moral code, said Paine and Hitchens, but he did not rise from the dead and he certainly was not God. Hitchens was a “new” atheist. The old atheists aimed their arguments at the cultural elite, the pinnacles of academia. They were generally discreet. New atheists, like Hitchens, are anything but discreet and brought the debate down to a popular level, aiming it at the masses who do not hold degrees in philosophy. They have been especially successful in convincing a younger generation of Americans fed up with the empty rhetoric of a hypocritical church.

I didn’t like Christopher Hitchens at first, but he grew on me. He never persuaded me with his arguments, but he did make me think. Because of Hitchens, for example, I had to tighten my reasoning about C.S. Lewis’ argument that we commonly call the “trilemma.” He was feisty, irreverent, brilliant, boastful, clever, smart, funny, and... well, wrong. But I always enjoyed reading his books and listening to him in debate, even when he infuriated me. And I ended

up liking him, not because I agreed with him but because he was honest. He didn’t pretend to be someone else and he did not apologize for his views. He was clear, even if he was controversial. He was not double-minded or two-faced. Frankly, I would rather hang out (work out with, hunt with, golf with, fish with, cut firewood with, drink coffee with) an honest atheist than a smug Christian.

The older I get, the less patience I have with religious hypocrisy. I’m repelled by judgmentalism, a critical spirit, an arrogant attitude. I know it when I see it and I probably recognize it in others because there is so much of it still in me. So it is good for me to remember that I am no better than Christopher Hitchens. Mine would have been the same fate if God had not chosen me, pursued me, captured me, made me alive in Christ, opened my blind eyes to see, caused my deaf ears to hear, and made my dead heart to beat. If God had not given me faith, I would have been right there with Hitchens.

And speaking of Christopher Hitchens’ fate, I’m not quite sure how he is doing right now. A lot of evangelicals are convinced he is in hell and they seem to be happy about that. If he is in hell, I am not happy about it. If he is in heaven, he doesn’t deserve it. Russell Moore recently blogged about this and made a good point. If the thief on the cross had believing friends and family members, then most of them went to their grave thinking that thief went to hell. Imagine their delight and surprise to see him when they arrived in heaven! Christopher Hitchens heard the truth about Christ many times. I believe in deathbed conversions.

Enough said.



Steve Bateman
Senior Pastor


Children's Ministries



GIGAS Play!



Thank you,
GIGAS,
for blessing our
Christmas season
with another
fantastic
Christmas Play!



**2012
PASSION**
JAN 2-5 // GEORGIA DOME

A GATHERING OF 18-25 YEAR OLDS
THE JESUS GENERATION UNITED FOR HIS RENOWN

268generation.com

We have about 45 of us going to the Passion Conference this year. Please pray for these students as they encounter the Lord in this time.

If you would like to follow along, you should be able to watch sessions during the conference at: www.268generation.com

Youth Activities



Wayne Campbell
Pastor to Students



Alexander Roberts
Assoc. Director of Student Ministries



DNOW 2012: Breathe

Kick off Rally February 1
DNOW Weekend: Feb 3-5
Cost: \$50
For: 6th-12th grades

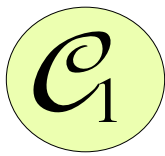
DNOW is a great opportunity for our students to grow in their faith. We partner with other churches throughout Decatur for citywide rallies and will be studying the same curriculum. **DNOW** is always a great time and you won't want to miss it.

To sign up, turn in your \$50 to the church office. Please help us to plan accordingly by signing up as soon as possible.

If you are willing to be a host home, please contact Wayne. wayne@fbc.org

Sympathy

Please express Christian sympathy to:
Julie Burleson (in death of her father, Jim Hedges);
Chris Howard (his grandfather, Noel Williams);
 Darrel Phillips (his mother, Minne Phillips),



Seminar C 1 — Our Creed

January 22, 2012 3:00-6:30pm

This first step of four in our Catalysts of Commitment is for anyone interested in becoming more involved in the FBC church family through church membership.

Attendance at C1 **does not commit you to membership**. Rather it helps you understand our beliefs, values, direction and philosophy.

Attendance at C1 is required for membership.

You can sign up online at www.fbc.org or by calling the church office (256-353-2711).



- Jan 1 **New Year's Day**
- Jan 6-7 GIGAS Sleepover
- Jan 10 Elders Meet 6:30 pm
- Jan 12 Mission Committee Mtg 5:30 pm
- Jan 13 MOPS 9:30 am
- Jan 13 CR Leaders Mtg 6 pm [Location TBA]
- Jan 14 **Half Day of Prayer #1 8:00-11:30 am**
- Jan 17 Decatur Outreach Committee Mtg 5:30 pm
- Jan 22 Carpenters Luncheon @noon in Kitchen hall
- Jan 22 **C1 Seminar 3:00-6:30 pm**
- Jan 27 MOPS 9:30 am
- Jan 27 International Holocaust Remembrance Day

Coming Next Month

- Feb 1 DNOW Kickoff @ Decatur Bapt. 6 pm
- Feb 3-5 DNOW WEEKEND
- Feb 24-25 **MISSION CONFERENCE WEEKEND**

January 2012						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

January 2012 Deacon of the Month

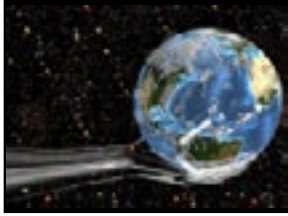


Scottie Hubbard

Men's Prayer
Breakfast
 Tues. 6:30-7:30 am
Prayer Breakfast resumes January 10

Newest Addition

Ellis Noel Howard
 born: December 1, 2011
 weight: 8 lbs 2 ozs
 Parents:
 Chris & Jonica Howard



News From Our Partners Around the World

Reported by Maria Coker

A Letter From Our Sister Church in Moldova

Dear FBC,

We thank you for your loyalty, for coming every year to Moldova to support VOT with what we are doing for God's sake.

Thank you for your labour on God's field in Moldova. Those kids who attended day time camp this year are attending kids club now every Saturday, some of them are attending Sunday school for kids on Sunday. Recently we visited Social Care and were given names and addresses of the poorest families in our subdivision; we were so pleased to hear that social workers know about our projects for these kids and how important they are. They know that we love them and take care of them.

Thank you for the fence we installed this year and for the water facility so that we came to the end of the year with these project closed.

Thank you for supporting our youth ministry, this year we had several camps for teens and youth so a lot of unbelievers heard the Good News about Jesus.

Thank you for supporting our sports ministry, hundreds of youth heard about Jesus at the gym hall you helped to rent. The outdoor events in Chisinau and at the countryside were the only sports activities they could have; all of them heard about Jesus. Our volley team was invited to take part in the National Moldova League; this is the highest level of sports event in our country. We plan to buy them t-shirts and print "THERE IS A GOD." Thousands of people will read that truth.

I count all these blessings, and would like to say these blessings are for both of us!

God blessed us in an abundant way working with women and men separately and also with the families. You already heard about the women's conference, December 3. Our church was stuffed, some women sat two on one chair. We heard great reports from family members and friends of those who attended the conference.

It is a joy for us to see Jewish people attending our church with Kola. Our people are pleased to fellowship with God's chosen people.

This year, the Mahotkins made a decision to go to a mission field on the Arctic Circle; the two Grins families went to a mission field in Russia; Kostea and Lily Pochtarenco with a team of 20 people planted a church.

We «lost» some of our ministers but God has chosen some others; we have a plan to ordain some new ministers.

God is enlarging our ministry, I looked back and saw what God did in 2010; this year He indeed enlarged the ministry and chose you to help. Thank you for supporting the pastors' families and for all the stuff you brought us this year, especially the sneakers!

Thinking about our country, we THANK GOD for your support. You know that thousands of people leave our country to make money; all of us have these temptations to work somewhere and make more money, but your generous support helps us to go further and work in God's field as the doors open for spreading the Truth about Jesus.

Recently our son Nikita asked me to help him prepare a presentation based on Jesus' parables, a girl from our church of 8 years from another school heard about this presentation, and used Nikita's notes and performed it. Our hearts are filled with Glory as we see the next generation coming along!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

We thank God for this year and we pray for the future projects.

As the whole world admired Mother Teresa's fruits we have our own heroes of faith: those who feed street kids in Transnistria, in Telenesty, take care of Jewish people, support Jesus' work on the Harvest field... and all the projects mentioned above. Thank you for your model, dear FBC.

We love you, We pray for you,

Merry Christmas

Vitaly Pochidco for Voice Of Truth Church

Columbia International University

- CIU recently posted the following on its web site: Christian singer/songwriter **Laura Story**, a 2003 graduate of Columbia International University, has been nominated for a Grammy Award. Story's song '**Blessings**,' which she wrote and recorded, is one of five songs nominated in the 'Best Contemporary Christian Music Song' category. '**Blessings**' was written after Story's husband developed a brain tumor in 2006. Story says the song is a reminder that God remains faithful even when He doesn't answer our prayers the way we want Him to. She says that's why there are a lot of "what ifs" in the chorus of the song:

*'Cause what if Your blessings
come through raindrops:
What if Your healing comes
through tears
What if a thousand sleepless
nights are what it takes to
know You're near
What if trials of this life are
Your mercies in disguise?*

Laura Story talks more about the song "Blessings" in a video at her website:

<http://laurastorymusic.com/media/>

Another CIU graduate, Dr. Hans Finzel, president of World-Venture, will be the guest speaker at our FBC missions conference February 24-26.



**Tao & Madalena Cavaco
Portugal**

- Pray for clarity about the ministry God has for us and the financial support needed for this new phase in our lives.
- Pray for physical and spiritual health for us and our children.
- Continue to pray for jobs for our children, Ester and Ruben.



**Bill & Ginann Franklin
Taiwan**

- Praise that the follow-up vision retreat for the Jya Ying church went well. They seem more unified and now have a vision statement. Continue to pray for two of the deacons who still clash because of communication styles. Pray for Bill as he works with them.
- Pray for good health, Ginann has been having some asthma problems.
- Continue to pray for our support needs and that our faith will increase as we wait to see how God will work.



**Brent & Lindsay Gosnell
Texas**

- Our winter conference is early January and we have 5 students signed up. Pray for them and others to catch the vision of the Gospel around the world.
- We have officially been approved at UTA as a student organization. This means we can meet weekly on campus. Pray for our continued Bible studies and for new students to be drawn to Him.
- Pray for the safe delivery of a healthy baby in late January!



**Brian & Abbey Harper
Brazil**

- Praise that many of our non-believing students are still actively studying the Bible.
- Pray for our weeklong conference, January 23-30th, that the Lord would work in the lives of believers and non-believers attending.



**Loreen Ittermann
Moldova**

- Many praises: For God’s provision for finances for the ministry during the past year, -for the many souls brought into His kingdom through our committed national leaders, and -for the encouragement due to the prayer and financial support of FBC.
- Pray for the protection of our national leaders serving in closed countries where their lives are at stake.
- Pray for our national leaders striving to plant churches, train career missionaries and carry on the ministries God has entrusted to them.
- Pray for the financial support needed to take care of our 70 national pastors/missionaries, our 3 orphan houses and 60 Jews with whom we are ministering.



**Arthur & Meg Kraai
Japan**

- Praise for Meg’s completion of the 1st term of language school. Pray for Arthur as he

begins formal language study in January.

- We are moving into a new apartment closer to the language school. Pray for provision of household items needed for small spaces and for good relationships with neighbors, especially those living below us.



**David & Bethanne Moles
US**

- Prayer for Bethanne’s surgery in February and for the nurses who will be taking care of her – that the one would pass the test needed for certification and any others would be believers. Pray Bethanne stays healthy until then.
- Pray that the 1700 collegians that gather for the Mid-Atlantic Radiate student conference at the end of December will catch a vision for serving the Lord.



**Scott & Stephanie Nannen
Texas**

- Pray for Stephanie in her new

role leading CRU’s efforts to reaching ethnic minority students in the Red River Region (TX, AR, OK, LA).

- Pray for two upcoming ethnic student conferences on January 13-16th. One is for Asian American students and one for Latino students. Pray many would come to faith and student leaders would be developed for their campuses.



**Mark & Kathy Schaaf
South Africa**

- Last week was Kathy’s first visit with Siphon, Pretty and Precious in two weeks. As she walked into the shack, Siphon’s first words were “thank you for praying.” Kathy almost didn’t recognize her at first...she was sitting up in a chair and talking with her sisters. Still very weak and underweight, there is hope and stamina in her eyes along with the occasional smile. She sat all the way through the Bible study this week and is soaking in the Word of God. We received many responses from FBC saying they were praying especially for Siphon and hope this encourages you that prayer works!
- Kathy and I took an early Christmas holiday and went

camping. The enjoyment of being outdoors was only disturbed by a pesky baboon who waited until we went walking each day before seeing what mischievous fun our supplies and gear would provide!



Kathleen Wintter
Romania

- Thank the Lord for all He has done with the refugees, especially during the holiday season, in spreading His word. Pray for more workers to be able to enter the refu-

gee camp, especially a young woman who is here for the school year teaching American studies at the university.

- My schedule for 2012 has been rearranged so I can spend more time at the refugee camp. Pray I use my time wisely and take time out for my own spiritual and physical health.



Brom & Betty Cowser
US

- Pray for Betty physically and emotionally not doing well. She uses a walker with much

difficulty to get around. She is uncomplaining, loves the Lord and a source of blessing in my life.

- For the ministry, that the radio broadcast will be effective. I send it to one station and they relay it to several others.
- Apart from doing my radio ministry, I take care of the house and Betty. Thank you for your prayers for us. We find the Lord sufficient and we are grateful we are able to serve Him at nearly 82 years of age.



January 27, 2012 marks the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi death camp. In 2005, the United Nations General Assembly designated this day to be an annual observance known as International Holocaust Remembrance Day (IHRD), to honor the victims of the Nazi era. Every member nation of the U.N. has an obligation to honor the memory of Holocaust victims and develop educational programs to help prevent future acts of genocide.

In addition, each April or May the United States officially commemorates the Holocaust during the national Days of Remembrance.

This year the national Holocaust Remembrance Day (Yom HaShoah) begins at sunset on Wednesday, April 18, 2012, and ends at sunset on Thursday, April 19, 2012.