

The Friendly Communicator

January 2023

HAPPY ★ NEW YEAR

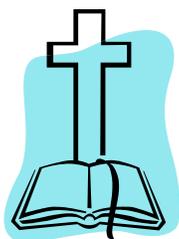
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First Baptist Church of West Allis
1576 So. 78th Street
West Allis, WI 53214

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From the Pastor's Desk...

The important thing is this: to be able at any moment to sacrifice what we are for what we may become.

--Charles Du Bos, *Approximations*

Scary, isn't it? Could it be that the old really is old--dusty, overused, stiff, painful, sagging, immobilized? Thank God for the message of the old becoming "new".

2 Corinthians 5:17

What that means for us is this, that we can start all over again in 2023. Just imagine a "new you"--healed, whole and loved, with eyes opened to see, and ears opened to hear God's words anew. All of this is possible, and can happen because of your new relationship with Jesus Christ. It is a matter of exchanging the old for something new. This is not an easy exchange. After all the Israelites wanted to turn back to Egypt during their journey to the Red Sea because they had comfort in familiarity with no challenges--status quo was acceptable.

This new year 2023 offers infinite possibilities for all of us. For example, a fresh understanding with new applications and practices for our 21st century daily lives.

Let's look forward this new year, vowing to work at letting the old pass away so we can become BETTER and STRONGER people of God. The new year 2023 awaits us and needs us!

Pastor Gwen

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January 2023



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

2	Pastor Gwen
2	Raymond Paprocki
3	Sue Brown
4	Sarah Byleen
8	William Thayer, Jr.
8	Jessica Sauer
10	Joy Gage
13	Norma Kennedy
13	Jake Brophrey
14	Karl Byleen
15	Heather Leitner
17	Sharon Arnold
19	Kris Woods
23	Duane Kirk
23	Ted Hertel, Jr.
24	Karen Sundland
25	Douglas Brown
27	Sarah Smith

ANNIVERSARIES

29	Robert & Tricia Sauer (27 years)
29	Jeff & Linda Bilton (21 years)

If we have inadvertently missed your special day, please accept our apologies, and let the office know so we can change our records.

2023 Annual Meeting

The 2023 Annual Business Meeting and Potluck will be held on Sunday, January 22 in Fellowship Hall. [Note: This is a change from the usual third Sunday date.]

Plan to attend the meeting to share your ideas and make your voice heard!

2023 Board Meetings

To encourage more members to accept a position on one of the three Boards (Christian Education, Trustees, and Diaconate) the Church Council has voted to change the 2023 meeting times for the Boards and Council. Instead of meeting at 7 p.m. on the second Monday of the month, the Boards will meet from 11:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on the Sunday preceding the second Monday. The Church Council (or the Pastoral Relations Committee) will meet at 12:30 p.m., following the Board meetings. Please see the specific dates below.

Board Meetings: Jan 8, Feb 12, Mar 12, Apr 9, May 7, Jun 11, Jul 9, Aug 13, Sep 10, Oct 8, Nov 12, Dec 10

Church Council Meetings: Feb 12, Mar 12, May 7, Jun 11, Jul 9, Aug 13, Sep 10, Nov 12, Dec 10

Pastoral Relations Committee:
Jan 8, Apr 9, Oct 8

The **Communion Offering** for the month of January is designated for the Fellowship Fund.



Musical Notes
FROM THE
DIREKTR



Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
Isaiah 43:18-19

There was an advertisement some years ago that said "New year, new you!" I think we all start the new year with that in our mind. How long it lasts is another story!

Change is hard and doing something new and different is a scary thing. Often, having to do something new involves our health or our job or our home. These things have special meaning to us and we want them to stay the same!

Sometimes, though, we need a change – a change that will makes us better, move us forward, change our attitude, use our gifts. The new year is a great time to start.

As January begins, pray about how you can make a change in your life as it relates to your faith journey. Can you be more involved in worship? Can you sing in the choir? Can you help with Sunday school? Can you plan to attend Bible study? What can you do to move yourself off the sidelines and into game?

Mary Schecher

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January 2023

Historical Reflections: HISTORY ROOM SECRETS REVEALED!

This past summer one of our longtime church members called the office and asked Gayle if she could tell him the date they were baptized. The church does maintain a book with dates of baptisms but it only begins in 1965 and the member believed the baptism was earlier, based on their birth date. In any event Gayle checked the book and agreed that the baptism predated the current listing.

So, Gayle contacted me as church historian to see if I could find the information in the History Room. A simple enough project. All I had to do was find the previous "Baptism Records" book among the hundreds of books in the room. Thank goodness we have an index of what's what and where! Unfortunately, the two indices we have are from 2007 and 2009 and not everything is where it should be. My Dad's motto, "A Place for Everything and Everything in its Place," apparently did not apply here! This will be important later.

Even so, there was nothing labelled "Baptism Records Book" on the lists. So, my next idea was to check the Annual Reports binder, hoping it would contain the names of the baptized. This was another dead end. While the Reports contained the number of people baptized in a given year, names were not mentioned.

I moved on from there to review four years of *The Baptist Dispatch* (published through December 1976), the forerunner of *The Friendly Communicator*. Ten issues were published each year, so I browsed through forty of them. Each had a variety of columns (Men, Women, B.Y.F, Church Chat, announcements, etc.), one of which was "Baptisms." This appeared one or two times each year, listing the names of all who had been baptized the previous month.

The member recalled attending Pastor Sinclair's baptismal class, so I knew I was on the right track, yet could not find the name in the newsletters. Could the member have been mistaken about the timeframe? Or not been baptized at all? Or had I just not looked hard enough?

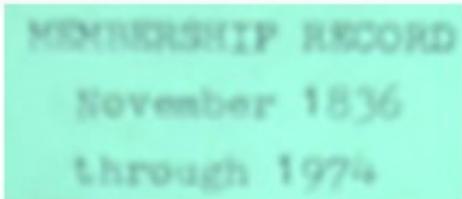
So, I went back to those two indices, looking for anything that might help. But as I noted earlier, things had moved around a good bit. There were books on births, marriages, deaths, and dedications. There were bulletins which might mention baptisms, but nothing I could locate from the years being searched. Finally, I found a listing for "Membership Records 1836-1974" and the shelf in one of the cabinets it was on. I thought just maybe (all other hope being lost) that might hold the answer.

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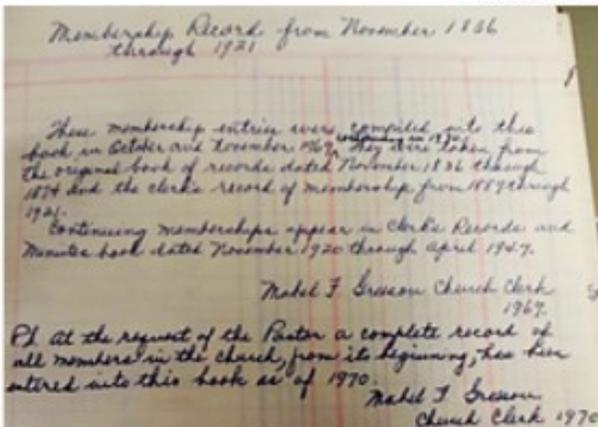
January 2023

I went to the appropriate shelf in the cabinet and found (TA-DA!) . . . nothing. The book listed in the index was simply not there. There were other record books on the shelf including "Dedications, Births, Weddings, Deaths" from the mid-1960s through the mid-1980s, but there was nothing in there regarding baptisms. Anyway, the mid-1960s had already been eliminated as being too late in time. There also was a "Clerk's Records Membership" book that was from 1889-1921, but it *did* have baptism records in it! However, of course, the church member seeking the answer hadn't yet been born.

What there was, though, was a notation on the cover of that book that read: "See Record 1836-1974"! Yes: at last a clue . . . but as I mentioned, *that book was not there!* So I looked on other shelves in that cabinet and finally, stuck in amongst *church cook*



books (!) was the misplaced "Membership Record November 1836 through 1974" volume. (New History Room motto: "A Place for Everything but not all that much in its Place"!)



Membership Record Book by Mabel Greeson, Church Clerk

It's not even a quarter of an inch thick with no identification on its side binding. That little book was created by Mabel Greeson, Church Clerk, in 1969 and 1970 by meticulously copying earlier records. An amazing feat, I have to say.

Anyway, in that book was exactly the information the parishioner had requested. Pastor Gwen wrote the

member a letter and I am sure that they were delighted to finally get the information. By the way, that book is now exactly where the index says it should be. Mission accomplished!

Members' Names	Admitted	Baptism	Admitted
1. John Brown	June 2, 1841		
2. John Brown	June 2, 1841		
3. John Brown	June 2, 1841		
4. John Brown	June 2, 1841		
5. John Brown	June 2, 1841		
6. John Brown	June 2, 1841		
7. John Brown	June 2, 1841		
8. John Brown	June 2, 1841		
9. John Brown	June 2, 1841		
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43. John Brown	June 2, 1841		
44. John Brown	June 2, 1841		
45. John Brown	June 2, 1841		
46. John Brown	June 2, 1841		
47. John Brown	June 2, 1841		
48. John Brown	June 2, 1841		
49. John Brown	June 2, 1841		
50. John Brown	June 2, 1841		

First page of the Membership Record Book showing, June 1841 – December 1845. Note Baptism column to the immediate right of the members' names.

This is the 80th of periodic reflections.