

The Tall Spire



SUMMER EDITION

Starting at the End

Life can be overwhelming, painful, and confrontational, offering impossible to avoid situations. When something unpleasant or inescapable happens along the journey, do this: start with the end. Imagine what it will be like for you after the present looming difficulty is over, after you are healed, after the trouble has passed (and it will). That vision at the end redefines any current trouble, struggles or fears. Of course, not all things turn out as we imagine and sometimes we are changed forever, but it is in this act of envisioning a better future coming toward us that makes it possible to slog through the present – bearing pain, taking on demons, discovering strength we never thought we had.

This mental strategy encouraged by psychologists today has ancient roots in the theological writings of Daniel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the Book of Revelations (to name a few). These writers envisioned a God who was constantly at work doing new things in the midst of terrible circumstances. The Israelite exile into Babylon in 587 BCE shattered a people of faith. What happens when you lose your king, your land, and your Temple – the symbol of God's covenantal presence with the people? God's love endures through all that mayhem and these prophetic

voices creatively expressed the hopes of God both to make new lives of meaning in distant lands as well as visioning the ultimate restoration of a New Jerusalem.

In the New Testament, the book of Revelation continues this hopeful theological imagination. This book becomes a word of needed hope to seven churches struggling with persecution from Imperial Rome. Despite all these hardships, John of Patmos urges these small churches to press on in their faith and acts of love despite the trouble they are experiencing. He shares an apocalyptic vision of God remaining present with them through the hell and death they knew all too well. Ultimately, this present, abiding God will bring them (and us) to a New Jerusalem, a new city of God where people and God dwell together in an intimate relationship. In fact, this new city has no temple, because there is no need – since God will reside directly with the people, not away in the temple. God starts us in a perfect garden and moves us to a holy city!

We, as the church, are to be the first fruits of this new city. Our interactions and love for one another and the stranger demonstrates this end reality, here and now. We as followers of Christ are a people who take comfort now,

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of White Plains*

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Sunday Worship @ 10:30am
Misión Bautista Worship @ 12:30pm
Adult Forum @ 9:30am
Church Office Hours
Monday – Thursday 9am to 2:30pm
Friday 9am to 1pm

Rev. Tim Dalton, Senior Pastor
Matthew Perez, Minister of Music
Lucia Gold, Office Manager
*George McCullough, Maintenance
Supervisor*

Affiliated with American Baptist
Churches of Metropolitan NY
The American Baptist Churches USA
www.abc-usa.org

LOOK FOR THE TALL SPIRE
at Bryant Avenue and North Street
adjacent to White Plains High School

along the journey of life, in the ultimate destination we share in God. We know that no matter what we endure in this life, we have a God, like the Good Shepherd in the 23rd Psalm who walks diligently with us “through the valley of the shadow of death.” Our hope is oriented toward a future where God prevails and walks alongside us now. Looking back upon your life, can you see the hand of God in the events that led you to this moment? Looking back upon your life from that glorious future in God’s new city, what do you want to see? Begin with the best aspirations of your heart, for God put them there for a reason! May those aspirations find birth in your life today! Starting with the end,

we can find renewed energy and strength for the beginning of the rest of your life! Renowned Christian spiritual writer, Henri Nouwen, said it well:

“A Christian community is there a healing community not because wounds are cured and pains are alleviated, but because wounds and pains become openings or occasions for a new vision. Mutual confession then becomes a mutual deepening of hope, and sharing weakness becomes a reminder of one and all of the coming strength.”

Pastor Tim

Lifted Up Together

As lead vocalist at First Baptist of White Plains, I look forward to our time spent in communal worship together. This may seem obvious, but in my field of work as a professional singer, my focus can often become misguided. I find myself worrying on how I will succeed or fail when I’m presenting a piece of music. No wiggle room allowed – I am either a success or a failure – all based on one performance. This mindset is, of course, incorrect and unhelpful. However, this focus of independent performance is pervasive in our culture (even if you are not pursuing a career in the professional music industry). Many of us wake up, work, eat, run through our days and occupy our time with a mindset of competitive anonymity from our fellow man. We judge ourselves and our peers by a pass/fail standard that can be very stressful. The ultimate questions of how will we succeed or fail as employees, friends, partners, parents, etc., can overwhelm. This isn’t a healthy mindset. Christ said, “I came that they may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). I don’t know about you, but an abundant life, to me, is not one filled with a personal checklist of how I’m winning or losing in tasks that I must complete on my own each day.

This is why our time spent in music together as congregants is so powerful to me. We can consciously lay aside the negative ultimatums that we build into our minds and focus on One greater than we are, One whose love does not increase or wane depending on our performance. When we use our voices in praise and contemplation of the Divine, I find a measure of rest and fulfillment that only God and my community can give. Not only do multiple scientific studies show that group singing can have a positive effect on a person’s mental health – lowering anxiety and promoting a better quality of life in the participants – we see repeated references in the Bible encouraging us to spend time together in this manner. Together we are bonded, encouraged, and uplifted: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God” (Colossians 3:16). As we go forward into the summer months at First Baptist, I hope that the community you find here will offer you the chance to rest and renew your minds each week. This is our call to one another. Let’s lay aside our stresses and focus upward together.

Kate Wiswell, Lead Vocalist

Psalm 96:1

*“Oh, sing to the Lord a new song!
Sing to the Lord, all the earth.”*



Easter Sunday at First Baptist

Children's Corner

Leading the children’s program at First Baptist is such a blessing! It is my privilege to talk about Jesus and His love as we explore God’s character throughout the Bible. We have begun building a model of Noah’s Ark, and have learned that it was bigger than an airplane. The children then crafted pairs of various animals using clay, and made rooms for the them as well as Noah’s family inside the ark.

This 3D project enriched our conversations about God’s righteous, loving character. Indeed, obedience to Jesus is how we can love Him back, just as Noah responded to His faithfulness. We have also learned about the Tower of Babel as well as Abraham through storytelling, watching short video clips, quizzes, and word puzzles. Please continue to pray that the Holy Spirit inspires our hearts and leads this program as the children grow up to be servants of God.

Katelyn Perez, Youth and Children Intern



Future Hope

In looking back, I can say with confidence that the Lord's hand was on our Easter Sunday service! Many visitors from the community came out to worship with us, and the musicians who joined us that morning sang and played quite beautifully. God truly blessed us this year, and it was a pleasure for me to be able to create such glorious music for the congregation. Having that said, my goal is for us to continue singing beautiful praises to our Lord as the church focuses in on the character of Christ, worshiping Him who loves us with a perpetual love!

As we enter into the summer season, we'll be scaling down the frequency of visits from our guest choir. But fret not! The worship band and I will continue to introduce new songs, lead the church in the singing of classic hymns, and use this time to discuss how we can improve the worship experience here at First Baptist. Our ears are always open, so feel free to let us know what we can do to help you grow closer to Jesus through our congregational praise.

Additionally, it is my personal hope that God begins to use our ministry to draw new believers to this church. I'm praying for big things this year, and am looking forward to seeing the Holy Spirit work through us in a powerful way! Therefore, let us continue to fellowship and unite with one another through prayer, that the Lord would bring about a revival in our church which spreads throughout the entire city of White Plains.

Matt Perez, Minister of Music 🎵

Egg Hunt

Even the cool and cloudy weather on Easter Sunday could not deter a crowd of over 200 people from gathering to take part in our 6th Annual Easter Egg Hunt. More than 1,200 plastic Easter Eggs filled with candies or toys were scattered on the grounds in front of the sanctuary and behind Wilson House for children to search out and scoop up on Easter morning. Thanks go to the egg-stuffing teams from FBC and Misión Bautista who prepared the eggs and to Lucia Gold who prepared the leaflets and flyers advertising our next community-wide event that were distributed to families at the egg hunt.



Over 40 Years Helping Children and Adults with Disabilities

As you know, we have leased space in the “Undercroft” (under the Sanctuary) to United Cerebral Palsy of Westchester to house a preschool for children for many years. These wonderful children are both typically developing and those on the autism spectrum. What you may not know, is that for all those years here at First Baptist, UCP has had one social worker who has dedicated herself to these kids. In fact, Barbara Marks, has been with UCP for just over forty years!

We got to know her (and her husband Eric) when we just moved to White Plains and needed a preschool for Isaac. Barbara has a generous spirit, infectious laugh, and an unwavering dedication to generations of kids and adults with special needs. She says that when she looks back over those decades of her profession, she marvels at all the changes. Yet, the changes came a little at a time and she adjusted to meet the new demands as they came. She reminds me of a modern Beatitude I found in seminary: “Blessed are the flexible, for they are not easily broken.” Thank you, Barbara, for all your diligent work, and the flexibility and kindness with which you do it!

Pastor Tim

June 25-29
8am to 3pm
Open to ages 4-12



FREE
SUMMER CAMP
SIGN UP TODAY!

(914) 949-5207
fbcwp@optimum.net

Location: 456 North Street
White Plains, NY 10605

The excitement is building! For the first time in a number of years, First Baptist Church, along with our partners Iglesia: Misión Bautista Hispánica de Westchester and our neighbors from across the street, Trinity Lutheran Church, will be hosting a week long VBS! Our theme for this summer will be “Shipwrecked: Rescued by Jesus.”

What can you do to help?

1. Pray

Pray that the kids who are coming will have an amazing time learning about Jesus and want to know more and see church as a fun, welcoming environment. Also pray for all the teachers and volunteers, that they will be energized and inspirational to the kids. How do you let families know you care about them? You love their kids. Pray that we wash these kids with the extravagant love of Christ!

2. Help out

In the weeks to come, we will be having special projects to get ready for the week. If you see something that you might want to help with, such as letting us borrow your kiddie pool or helping us gather supplies, let us know and do it!

3. Volunteer

You might not be able to help out every day, but maybe you can bring lunch or snacks one day or assist a teacher one or two days. That would be great! We welcome you to bring your gifts to this week.

4. Support

Would you consider supporting this ministry to our community financially? Whatever amount is welcome as we are providing this program free to the community and the registrations are starting to pour in! This is very exciting, but also a challenge as we want the kids to have a wonderful time to learn about Jesus and discover a church family that loves them.

Bee Buzz from the Blessed Bees Keeper!

The bee buzz for this Tall Spire is that our church bees will arrive at the end of May! Cornell's in Eastchester said it is because the bees need time in the spring to develop, the bee farm in Albany has recommended waiting a little longer to move them to their new homes. Unlike some bees that arrive in a package, our bees are going to be in two Nucs, and will arrive inside cardboard boxes with frames that already have stored honey and pollen, eggs and developing bees (brood), obtained from a strong hive. The queen will be clearly marked for us to track. The owner of Cornell's is a bee keeper and keeps hives on top of the store roof. Hopefully they will be Docile Bees and not Mean Bees, as you can get batches of either! Please pray for docile bees!

Nucs, or nucleus colonies, are small honey bee colonies created from larger colonies. The term refers to a smaller sized box and the colony of honeybees within it. The name is derived from the fact that a Nuc hive is centered on its queen, the nucleus of the honey bee colony. Ideally, they should contain 1/3 of a hive or 10,000-20,000 bees! We now have 2 assembled Bee Hives as well as the equipment needed and two bee suits. Carl Hamby and I joined the Hudson Valley Natural Beekeepers Club and attended our 1st meeting which was interesting and talked about animals that can invade your hives. Squirrels, Raccoons, Groundhogs and Wasps, Hornets and Ants all love honey. In the next few weeks we will be painting the hives and preparing the area for the Church Bees new home!

I also signed up for a Bee Keeping Course at Hilltop Hanover Farm and April 7th, I attended my first class. The first class was an overview of becoming a 'natural' beekeeper, which is highly recommended and the approach is different than commercial beekeeping. We have been assigned a Bee Keeping mentor for the Church Bees. Her name is Patricia Adams and she lives close by in Rye. She has 4 hives and has been Bee Keeping for many years and raises her own Queens. She has seen our property and the hives and made so many great recommendations as to the hive assembly and positioning on the property. Did you know the front door to the hive needs to face East? This way the bees wake up to the morning sun and get an early start to their day!

Carl and I plan to plant Bee friendly flowers this Spring in an area of the garden. The Bees love Sunflowers, Lavender, Clover, Dandelions, Hollyhocks, Calendula, Borage, Asters, Sweet Alyssum and Zinnias, just to name a few! All the plants in our community garden and orchard will benefit from our bee pollinators. We encourage donations of bee friendly packaged flower seeds! Please leave them under the office door.

Lucia Gold, Office Manager



I am pleased to report that, after many design revisions and upon obtaining approval from the White Plains Design Review Board, our new church signs have been installed on Bryant Avenue and on North Street. The new larger sign at the corner of Bryant Avenue and North Street incorporates our new church logo and brings increased visibility to First Baptist Church and our sister church Misión Bautista Hispana de Westchester. It has space underneath to display banners highlighting special events such as our annual Egg Hunt.

The smaller North Street sign is also designed to allow replaceable special event signs to be displayed. Both signs will be lit at night with ground mounted spot lights equipped with dawn-to-dusk light sensors. With these new signs we hope to better communicate the presence of our dynamic congregations which seek engagement with the White Plains community.

New Orchard

Anyone who has spent time in Margaret's Garden will probably recall the dense brush pile that occupied the space between the garden and the slope up to the high school parking lot. After seeing this overgrown brush and weed patch for many years it occurred to me that it would be an ideal location for a fruit orchard to supplement the vegetables and other produce that we grow in Margaret's Garden. With many thanks to the Church Board and Property Team who gave the green-light to have the brush pile cleared and with the advice of Doug Candia, a local "urban food forest" expert, I have begun selecting plants and mapping out a design for the new orchard.

We've started with plantings of disease-resistant varieties of plum and apple trees that are well adapted to the Northeast and trees which produce nutritious but highly perishable fruits such as paw paws and persimmons that are generally not available (at least not fully ripe) in grocery stores. Semi-dwarf apple trees were chosen whose fruit can be picked while standing on the ground. The first three varieties planted include the Liberty, a good all-purpose eating and baking apple; the Jonagold, a delicious cross of Jonathan and Golden Delicious apples; and the Chestnut Crabapple, an excellent pollinator for other apple varieties that is also edible. In addition two cross-pollinating plum tree varieties good for fresh eating and making jelly were planted as were two elderberry varieties whose dark purple berries can be juiced to make a sauce with reputed medicinal properties.

The plants are young so it will take between 2 to 4 years for them to come into production but being planted this young they should develop into hardy, long-lived trees that will produce fruit for many years to come. There is room in the orchard plot for more trees so I am seeking input from all who have an interest about trees and plants that you'd like to see included. Many thanks to Ken Shortlidge, Joe Mariotta, and David Pereira, a High School volunteer from Iona Prep, who helped do the initial planting.

Carl Hamby, Gardener-in-chief

Upcoming Events

Pentecost Sunday – Sunday, May 20th @ 11:00am

Join us for a combined service with Misión Bautista. Ice cream will be served afterward!

Scholarship Dinner – Saturday, June 2nd @ 6:00pm

Join us as we, for the second year in a row, raise funds for the David Manierre Scholarship Fund. Last year we awarded 8 scholarships from the fund and raised nearly \$6,000! We are hoping to do even better this year. How can you help? You can attend the dinner. Tickets are only \$25 per person. You can donate an item for our raffle, you can buy an ad in our journal for \$125, you or your business or organization you work for can be a sponsor at three levels:

Diamond Sponsorship at \$1,000.00

Platinum Sponsorship at \$500.00

Gold Sponsorship at \$250.00

If you cannot make it, please consider a donation in any amount to help dreams of college education become a reality!

Church Cookout – Sunday, June 10th @ 11:30am

Vacation Bible School – June 25 - 29th @ 8:00am - 3:00pm

White Plains Fireworks and Church Cookout

Tuesday, July 3rd @ 5:00pm

