

The Tall Spire

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2019

Standing Tall and Inspiring



A new year is upon us! In this edition of the Tall Spire, I want to reimagine with you what it means to be a tall and inspiring church in the twenty-first century. In the not too distant past, a steeple that stretched into the sky was a sure and steady symbol of God's majestic Kingdom on Earth and was a source of attraction to the community. Today, our spire certainly stands tall and harkens back to another time when that was in fashion, but what are the possibilities for what it can symbolize today? For many, such a tall spire is a reminder of a church as a comfortably insulated institution that is more interested in self-preservation of facilities than its mission to care for the marginalized. The once, "Build it and they will come" mantra is no more. Our community longs for us to "Show me, don't tell me."

So instead of just displaying our Tall Spire, let 2019 be a year where First Baptist sees this as a symbol to actively stand tall and inspire! First, we stand tall by standing up for those Jesus tells us to stand up for: the marginalized, the forgotten, those who do not have a voice. In Jesus's day, these people were the widows, children, the disabled, the imprisoned, the thirsty, the hungry, the naked, the sick, and the stranger. Today, these are the same people and it is to our shame that much has not changed in over two-thousand years. "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of My family, you did to Me." (Matthew 25:40) So no, we do not have a need

to "stand up for Jesus" per say, because Jesus can stand up just fine on His own two feet. We are called to be the ones who stand up and love those Jesus stood up for and loved. That is how we change hearts and minds for Christ. It cannot simply be a private faith, but lived in this world to accomplish Christ's prayer for the Kingdom of Heaven to exist on Earth too!

Living this way is authentic to our calling and that is what truly inspires. That is can be attractive about the twenty-first century church. Amazingly, that is precisely the situation in the first three centuries of dynamic church growth. The community was embedded in the lives of the marginalized. Caring for those the Roman authorities had ignored, the church swelled until Rome could no longer overlook them and incorporated the church as the official religion in the fourth century. A community of faith that nurtures the love of God in each of us and loving God in return is a solid foundation which then empowers us to be expressive in that love toward neighbor and self. We learn that we are loved and in turn are equipped to share that love with others. When we stand tall in our faith, it means that we can inspire others to join us in the risky adventure of faith at the frontier of God's redemptive possibilities.

*Endeavoring to Stand Tall and Inspire,
Pastor Tim*

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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

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

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

Courage from God

"Do you have any New Year resolutions?" is a question that we all hear around this time of the year. Have you ever noticed that that query is often accompanied by much sarcasm and rolling-of-eyes? Rightly so, I suppose. Many of us don't keep up our resolve for very long, causing us to scoff at whatever goal-setting ideas we come up with.

However, this year, I really started to think about courage. It is so easy for many of us to default towards defeatism. Often when I have a burst of inspiration for a new habit I'd like to form, I hear a small voice in my head informing me of all the reasons I'll likely fail. Whether it's setting a healthier sleep schedule, getting more fit, spending more time in meditation, having a wiser budget, connecting with friends, volunteering... etc. We've all had these ideas - ways we would LIKE our lives to be better, but I think sometimes the reason we abandon these pursuits is our own predisposition of failure! We don't need to feel this way. It's not a cliché to want to improve your life,

especially when you have a relationship with One who calls you to live your life to the fullest through Him.

As I thought about what I wanted to share in this newsletter, I want to encourage you towards actual courage. YES we have all failed to accomplish many things, probably many times over. However, Psalm 37 says "The Lord guides a man in the way he should go and protects those who please him. If they fall, they will not stay down, because the Lord will help them up." Go after whatever it is that you feel you want to change in this season. Yes, to some this resolve may feel like an overdone adage, but not if we are earnestly relying on God's help, trusting Him to lead us into whatever new life He has waiting for us next. "But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls." (Hebrews 10:39) Happy New Year to all!

Kate Wiswell, Lead Vocalist

Psalm 100:2

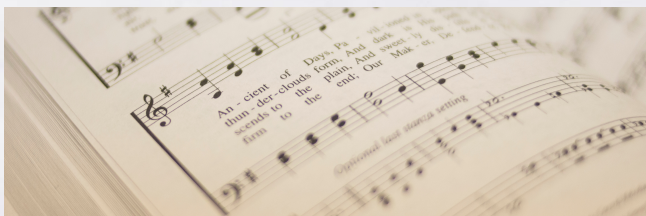
*"Serve the Lord
with gladness;
Come before His
presence with singing."*



Minimizing Without Losing Impact

With all of our major Christmas services now behind us, I can finally begin planning for the spring! I look forward to preparing for Easter and bringing glory to God through carefully rehearsed performances. There will, however, be a few minor changes to the music program here at First Baptist Church starting in the month of February. After having some discussions with Pastor Tim, we've decided to scale-down the number of musicians we regularly bring in to join us for our Sunday morning services. Angel, our ever-faithful percussionist, will perform only a month when we have choral performances, and the size of our hired church choir will be reduced to four members for communion services. Even so, I know that the Lord will use these musicians to bless the congregants just as much as they have in the past. Moreover, you can rest assured that our Easter Sunday service will include a much larger group of musicians! This special occasion will include beautiful sacred choral music as performed by a large choir, string quintet, and talented trumpeter. My hope is that the songs and hymns of praise we lift up to God draw us nearer to Him, and inspire us to develop a deeper and more meaningful relationship with His Son, Jesus Christ.

Matt Perez, Minister of Music



Children's Church

Happy New Year to everyone in the FBC community! In our Sunday School classes, we've recently covered how faithful God was to Abraham throughout his journey. The Lord continuously promised to him a son who would inherit his mission despite Sarah's old age, and we learned that God is still as personally faithful to us as He was to Abraham. When we discussed the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, I tried to make it clear that their downfall was not only caused by their sins, but also their separation from God. In light of this idea, we have been talking about how to have a connection, or a personal friendship with Jesus. I explained that prayer is an important way to develop this relationship, and then the children and I wrote down things we can include in our daily prayers. I also made a prayer calendar for each child, and by getting stickers for every time they pray at home I hope to grow their personal relationship with Jesus throughout this year. It is my vision and prayer request for them to grow closer to God not only in Sunday School but over the course of their lives as well.

Katelyn Perez, Youth and Children Intern

