

The Tall Spire

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2017



Missing Trees—Enabling Light



PHOTO © TIM DALTON

The magnificent copper beech to the east of the sanctuary was one of 7 trees that needed to be cut down on the church campus.

This summer we had to cut seven trees: prominent, distinctive, shade makers. This was received with sadness by some in the church, but we knew that it was what had to be done because they had become a danger. Several were dead and the others diseased. One of the trees produced only dry dust as the workers ground it up, yes, it was dead.

Although this has certainly transformed the landscape of our campus, it reminds me of where many churches find themselves facing in the 21st century. The “beautiful trees” of Christendom are diseased and dying. In order to have relevant, authentic relationships where even enemies are loved, the structures of “church as it has been” that do not enhance these values of Christ must be cut down. After all, they’re dangerous!

The first Sunday after the huge copper beech just to the east of the sanctuary came down, the amount of light that came into the sanctuary was amazing! The challenge and opportunity for the churches today is create spaces that “let the light in.” People are looking for a safe space where they can discover who God has made them to be. For far too long, the institutional church has been throwing shade on people’s lives instead of letting the light in. This is a reminder that it’s okay to miss the trees, but God’s call to us is to be enablers of light.

Pastor Tim

“Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

—Matthew 5:16

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2017-2018 DAVID MANIERRE SCHOLARSHIP FUND AWARDEES!

Chosen by the Scholarship Fund Committee on August 30, they are Grace and Jeffrey Hamby from First Baptist Church; and Jason Buret, Christina and Christian Chumpitazi, Erika Franco, Evans Meireles, and Yohabet Tejeida from Misión Bautista.

Praise, Worship and Progress

AS THE FALL SEASON APPROACHES, I am excited to think about where we are headed as a Christ-centered community. There have been a lot of new developments since last September, and the progress we've made in regard to updating the "feel" of our worship services has been monumental!

By adding guitar and percussion to our time of praise, our Sunday morning gatherings now provide our congregants and guests with a contemporary worship experience. Furthermore, the blend of traditional and modern songs we've been using encourages people of all ages and from all walks of life to feel at home in the midst of our church family. Praise God for guiding us during this journey!

We've also been blessed to be able to install a brand new projector and screen in the church sanctuary, launching our gathering space into the 21st century. We can now project song and hymn lyrics, sermon notes, images, videos, and more!

As usual, the choir will be returning to sing with us on a monthly basis starting in September, and I am excited to hear the beautiful sound of choral worship in our sanctuary once again. Additionally, I will be introducing a number of new songs to the congregation over the next few months as well as tackling a whole host of hymns requested by our very own church members.

As we worship together and move forward in the name of Jesus, let us continue to pray that God uses our church family to reach out to the lost, and to make a lasting impact on the surrounding community.■

Matthew Perez, Worship Minister



PHOTO © TIM DALTON

A new projector and screen were installed in the sanctuary in May—in time for the Pentecost service on June 4. We can now project song and hymn lyrics, sermon notes, images and videos.

Margaret's Garden

THIS SPRING WE UNDERTOOK A 2-fold expansion of our garden space by fencing in a 40'x80' area between Margaret's Garden and the Family Services of Westchester playground. This area, which for many years had been a brush pile, was recently cleared and is rich in composted leaves and organic matter well-suited for gardening.

We have had to battle to keep the groundhogs and other critters out and I thank Jeffrey Hamby for his help in varmint-proofing the new garden fence line. We have put the new plot to use by planting tomatoes, cucumbers, egg plants, and acorn squash which are

flourishing. In addition to plantings of corn, beans, zucchini, and other vegetables that we sell to help support the Center of Hope (Haiti), we now have space to grow fruits and vegetables for our Putting Families First food cooperative, which will be launched this Fall.

As always, volunteers to work in the garden are welcome. Come join us on Saturday afternoons or whenever you have spare time. There are always plenty of weeds to pull and vegetables to pick.■

*Carl Hamby
Master Gardener*



Sweet and juicy cherry tomatoes were among the many vegetables that flourished this year in Margaret's garden.

New Church Signage

AFTER A LONG PROCESS involving several iterations we have arrived at a final design for a new, larger sign to replace the old, outdated sign at the corner of Bryant Avenue and North Street.

It will incorporate our new church logo and display the new contemporary logo of American Baptist Churches next to the name of our partner in service to the Spanish speaking community, Misión Bautista Hispana de Westchester. The sign will be located closer to the corner property lines for better visibility and lit at night from ground-mounted spotlights. There will be space below the sign to display banners for special events. The two side signs on North Street and Bryant Avenue will be replaced with 3'x4' signs of similar design that display the names and service times for each congregation. We wish to signal with the installation of these signs a new, invigorated religious presence in the White Plains community.■

Carl Hamby

Christian Education Committee



SIGN DESIGN © CARL HAMBY

This photo collage is an approximation of how our new signage will look. In actuality the new sign will be located closer to the corner property lines for better visibility.

Facebook Check-in Challenge

FROM THIS SEPTEMBER until the end of August, next year, we are challenging all of our members and friends to check-in on Facebook when you are here for church or any other ministry activity.

We have WIFI in both the sanctuary and Wilson House which will make this easy to do on any mobile device.

We are hoping to get over 1,000 check-ins for the coming year! This will help us reach out to your community of family and friends and let them know what we're doing.

In order to encourage you, for each check-in, First Baptist will make a donation of \$0.25 to the new building fund for the Center of Hope (Haiti), Inc.

So check-in, let people know where you're at and why, all the while helping some great kids in Haiti!■

Thank you!

Pastor Tim



PHOTO © ALICE LONGWORTH

Revelers at the annual church picnic in June hold their mobile phones aloft. They're ready to check in during our Facebook challenge. Join them to support one of our church missions, Center of Hope (Haiti).

Greetings from the Church Office!

I WANT YOU ALL TO KNOW HOW MUCH I ENJOY MY WORK HERE—the many varied projects that come my way. I've reorganized the office to make everything accessible to everyone. All the shelves and files are tidy, and we have an area for the food co-op collection. So keep the donations coming. The program, Putting Families First, launches this Fall.

In addition to creating the church bulletins each week, I schedule rentals of Wilson House and the sanctuary, and keep the church calendar up to date. Pastor Tim and Pat Ehresmann keep me busy with an array of errands, office work, and general communications.



PHOTO © LUCIA GOLD

Jay Gold has been scraping and sanding two pews which will be decorated with painted artwork and placed outdoors to publicize the Mustard SEEDS Collective of church missions.

The beautiful geraniums in pots outside the sanctuary and Wilson House are from Gedney Farms Nursery. I enjoyed planting them and do my best to keep them weeded and watered, especially during the heat.

Another project I am overseeing is redecorating the pews that were removed from the church. The smaller pew will be painted by youngsters in the Children's Yoga Camp directed by Christina Ortiz. The larger pew will be painted by me with artwork that supports our Mustard SEEDS Collective. My husband, Jay Gold, has scraped, sanded and cleaned the pews, which will be painted with outdoor paint, so hopefully they'll survive the elements.

I am looking forward to more projects in the new church year and hope you all have enjoyed your summer and are anticipating a beautiful Fall. Stop by and say "hello" when you are at Wilson House.

Lucia Gold, Office Manager

Trunk or Treat! Saturday, October 28 at 1pm



PHOTO © ALICE LONGWORTH

DRESS UP YOUR KIDS in their Halloween costumes for our third annual Trunk or Treat! Halloween party, a free community event, on Saturday, October 28 at 1pm.

Featured activities include decorated cars with candy for trick-or-treaters, moon bounces to play in and face painting. For more information call the church office or check the events page on our website <http://www.firstbaptistwhiteplains.org/events.html>.

Children at Trunk or Treat! last year collected treats and enjoyed posing for pictures in their costumes.



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Founded in 1871 and rooted in such historic Baptist principles as the freedom of conscience, separation of church and state, and religious tolerance, First Baptist Church seeks to serve faithfully, and think critically, following the courageous and compassionate example of Jesus Christ.



Sunday Worship at 10:30am

Misión Bautista Hispana
de Westchester
Worship at 12:30pm

Adult Forum at 9:30am

Church Office Hours
Monday through Thursday
9am to 2:30pm
Friday 9am-1pm



Rev. Tim Dalton
Senior Minister

Matthew Perez
Worship Minister

Alice Longworth
Communications Coordinator

Lucia Gold
Office Manager

Katherine Wiswell
Lead Singer

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