

“Growing Spiritually as Individuals and as a Church”

This Sunday we’ll be continuing our Sermon on the Mount sermon series, focusing on *Matthew 5:7-11*. Jesus tells us His followers will be blessed for being merciful, pure of heart, and as peacemakers. The world could use more of those folks these days! That’s a very old wish because our Old Testament verse this Sunday will be *Psalms 34:11-14*. On top of that tall list in His sermon, Jesus goes on to tell us that God will heap additional blessings on those who are persecuted for His sake. In other words, all the points Jesus covered in His Sermon on the Mount will most likely bring the hostility of the world down on believers’ heads. Oh great!

How can we live through this mess called life? Not by ourselves, and that’s why God saves the best for last. No matter what happens God is with His people when they are doing His work, in His way. Can there be better news? Probably not, but I do have something that comes in as a close second. In addition to His Good News, I can also report that the LORD, in His great benevolence has preserved Wisconsin’s trout through the worst of another Wisconsin winter (or so I hope the worst is over). I spent a day in a few trout streams, out of cell service and mostly alone. I like to think I was celebrating Presidents’ Day by honoring, Calvin Coolidge, Jimmy Carter, George W. Bush and all the other flyfishing presidents. At least that’s my excuse. God is most present to me in His creation and SW Wisconsin is as close to heaven as I can get in this life.

I believe God ordained days of rest as just that, days to rest because He has work for us to do tomorrow and as I just said, some of it will not be easy or popular work. If it were not for days spent fishing and Sundays in church, I’d be a real mess as ministry sometimes includes hard and unpopular speech and actions. You are in the same boat along with me. Remember, I’m no different than you as we are a nation of priests, chosen and ordained by God to do His work. He’s going to call on you too. It could even be that you’ll be called to do something harder than He’s set before everyone else you know. I have seen faith carry average people through anything but average troubles. It’s probably a good thing to get prepared for the hard parts in life before they arrive.

God has a plan for you just as He has a plan for each of His children, a plan not to harm them but to make them prosper. I’m glad he also has a plan for the trout, so He preserved them otherwise I’d be harder pressed to keep smiling through the hard days. Come to church this Sunday and we will look at the final part of the Sermon on the Mount.

Blessings, Pastor Walt

Circle of Caring

Fred Woodard, Curt West, Margaret Robinson, Pam Penewell, Richard Poff, Jeff Martindale,
Brian McDougal, & Kevin Hayden

(Names will remain on the prayer list for four weeks unless the office is notified.)



**Ash Wednesday
Ecumenical Service**

St. Paul’s Episcopal Church
212 W. Grand Avenue
Wednesday, February 18, 2026
7 PM
Reception to follow

ABW: will meet in the gathering room on Wednesday, February 18th at noon. Please bring your lunch. Dessert is provided. The program is “Who Are We?” presented by Jana Maxted. All women welcome.

Movie Night: February 21st at 6:00 pm. Movie will be “*A Sloth Story*”. Free food and fun for everyone!

Family Promise: will host a Coldest Night of the Year fundraising walk on Feb. 28th at 4:00pm. Ed Hansen is walking and has a goal of raising \$500 and is only \$100 away!

Spaghetti Splash: on March 15th from 11:00am – 2:00pm. Adults \$10, Ages 6-12 \$5, under 5 are free. A dessert & beverage are included. All proceeds go to Family Promise.

Save the Date: Game Day April 26th! More details to follow.

Coffee & Donuts: Do you enjoy donuts at Coffee Hour? Please consider sponsoring a Sunday for \$60. Drop it in the basket or leave a check in offering plate and write “Coffee Hour” on the memo line.

Our Daily Bread Devotionals: mission is to make the life-changing wisdom of the Bible understandable and accessible to all. Please remember to leave a \$0.50 minimum donation.

Wear Red: please wear red on the first Sunday of each month to support our military and their families.

New Ways to Give: please read the Baird flyers in the Narthex. Questions, see Ed Hansen.

Facebook: please remember to like and share First Baptist posts to friends and family!

Prayer Requests: please fill out the green card in the narthex and put them in the offering plate or give them directly to Pastor Walt.

Caritas Needs: cereal, pudding cups, bottled juice, canned soup, Hamburger Helper, & canned tuna.

2026 Worship Bulletin Recognition: Please sponsor a Sunday bulletin in memory or honor of a loved one or a special occasion. Fill out the white form in the narthex & drop it to off in the office. Include a check for \$20. You will be notified if the date is not available.

Feeling Ill: you can watch our Sunday service from home at www.facebook.com/firstbaptistbeloit

Calendar

Wednesday	February 18	Noon	ABW Meeting
		7:00 pm	Ash Wednesday Service
Thursday	February 19	6:00 pm	Bible Study
			No Choir Practice
Saturday	February 21	6:00 pm	Movie Night
Sunday	February 22	9:30 am	First Sunday of Lent
		10:45 am	Coffee Hour