

“Growing Spiritually as Individuals and as a Church”

I met a retired minister and took an immediate like to him. We exchanged the usual information and I invited him to consider being a pulpit fill-in for me when I went on vacation. He demurred, saying he was a Pentecostal minister, and his theological views would likely not be well received by our church. This quick refusal both surprised and disappointed me. It also got me to wondering if this reflexive retreat by Christians of all kinds behind safe, theological walls might be a part of the problem of modern churches. Last week I noted during the sermon that I don't like pet snakes or white chocolate. On the other hand, I don't think either should be illegal!

This week's readings for Pentecost Sunday offer strong challenges to our cherished American Baptist theology. We are not usually pentacostals in the ABC but I'll allow the idea that there are some pentacostal ABC churches out there. We American Baptists are a widely varying group, held together by few pillars of belief and we like out independence. As for me, I'll dig in on my stodgy, overly academic, some would say spiritually starved stance. I was raised by academics and have a hard time seeing things any other way. Besides, if I get to heaven and God wants to know what I meant by any comments made in sermons, I'll whip out a commentary so I can show my homework. I figure that way the author of the commentary will be in trouble instead of me. And yes, I am planning on being buried with all my commentaries because I'm not going without my resource library, 2 sharpened #2 pencils and an approved calculator. I've ordered a double-wide casket and a fork-lift in. As a former Boy Scout, I'll take my Scout knife, flint and steel too. "Be Prepared."

More seriously, is our fixation on our theology faithful adherence to the truth as we've received it, or is it just our petty prejudices against things we find uncomfortable. I'm not changing teams at this point because I don't have the energy of Pentecostal ministers. At the same time, I am wondering if I can find room to accept and maybe even embrace a part of their theology, even if I see it as only good for them instead of a heretical mistake. Our readings, what do they see in *Numbers 11:24-30 and Acts 2:1-12* that is foundational for the Pentecostal movement? Please come to church this Sunday with an open mind and heart as we look into these 2 readings, both deeply troubling for our theological outlook.

Maybe that's a key to dying to ourselves and living not for ourselves, but for Christ alone. I don't expect you to change your theology or identity but I'm hoping we might someday be open enough to hear sincere and faithful believers who have different beliefs. Perhaps as important, I hope someday we'll be known as broadminded enough to respectfully welcome those with differing views, even as we stick stubbornly to our beloved ABC theology. After all, we are Baptists and while we may not be known for elaborate theological views, we are well known for being stubborn. Where'd I put that Scout knife?

Blessings, Pastor Walt

Circle of Caring

Andy Yeadon, Bobby Wilson, Kim West, Amy Trieu, Richard Poff,
Brian McDougall, Harvey Kopp, Robin Huffman, Pam Gribou, Eric Gill, & Cindy Breithaupt

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

Special Summer Music Calendar: is posted on the narthex bulletin board. If you would like to participate, please sign up. We would enjoy your musical talents.

Camp Tamarack: complete schedule and registration information can be found on the bulletin board in the Narthex and at <https://camptamarack.org/2025-abcwi-camps/> Everyone wanting to attending camp will have the fee covered by the church. Please reach out to Pastor Walt with any questions.

ABW: meets on May 20th in the Gathering Room at noon. Salad luncheon will be provided, the program is “*April Showers Bring May Photo Cards*” by Donna Hutchinson. All women welcome! This is our last meeting until September.

Scholarship Applications: for 2026/2027 are available on the table in Narthex. Please return the completed applications no later than May 31st.

Choir Practice: is taking its summer break and will return in the fall.

Beloit Farmer’s Market: is June 13th from 8am -1pm. We are looking for volunteers. Sign-up sheets in the Gather Room

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: Canned Tuna & Salmon, Canned Stew & Chili, Canned Pork N Beans, Canned Vegetables, Peanut Butter, Rice, Pasta. Their next General Board Meeting is May 21st at 4 p.m. at Our Savior's Lutheran Church 749 Bluff St.

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

Thursday	May 21	6:00 pm	Bible Study No Choir Practice
Saturday	May 23	6:00 pm	Fred Woodard Funeral
Sunday	May 24	9:30 am	Day of Pentecost Whitsunday & Memorial Day Sunday
		10:45 am	Coffee Hour
Monday	May 25	9:00 am	Memorial Day Parade