

“Growing Spiritually as Individuals and as a Church”

It's a reasonably cool Monday morning as I write this Midweek Message while sitting in a lawn chair on my driveway. Although it will be hot later on, there's a nice breeze causing the corn in the field across the fence to gently sway. The sprinkler moves rhythmically on the lawn. The air is fresh and fragrant with the green smell of summer. Summertime on the farm isn't perfect, but it sure comes close. Then a really weird looking bug lands on the page next to my pen, breaking the spell. That minor annoyance is a reminder that life is never perfect for long. We want the good times to last forever, but clouds obscuring the sunshine are inevitable. In the worst times life can feel unendurable, like winter on the farm when sitting outside is impossible for any length of time. Remembering what summertime looked and felt like is harder than recalling a half-remembered dream. It's during those seasons of darkness and pain when we struggle in our faith-walk.

In ***Genesis 28:10-19*** Jacob struggles to survive in the wilderness where God has called him. Exhausted, Jacob lays his head on a rock and falls into fitful sleep. I don't know about you, but I don't think I'd sleep well using a rock for a pillow. I'd have to be mighty tired to lay my head on a rock! In this uncomfortable and vulnerable state God comes to Jacob in a dream, bringing a message of hope and promises of generational greatness and blessing. Empowered by this vision, Jacob gets up the next morning and gets himself moving. Paul reinforces the idea of being powered by the Spirit when all else seems grim. Paul ought to be an expert on this topic given his many misadventures as an evangelist. God's promises are good, and He never abandons us according to Paul in ***Romans 8:12-25***. All creation is groaning as it is being reborn in the image of the Son. We need to keep hope in the things we cannot see even in the face of the difficulties we can see. Yes, the world is imperfect, but we can find quiet moments of communion with the Father IF we set aside time for Him. We can even find God in a weird looking bug that lands in our life IF we seek Him in everything and everyone, including the hard parts of life. How Great Thou Art and all that. Personally, I'd rather He keep His weird bugs to Himself and His Creation and away from me, but what do I know?

Come to church this Sunday to learn more about finding God in the shadows and dark days of life. See you at 9:30 in person or on Facebook.

Blessings, Pastor Walt

Circle of Caring

Kim West, Richard Poff, Terrance Nolan, Stacey Meisegeir, Brian McDougal, Linda Jackson,
Michael Harris, & Vicki Dietsch

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

Thank You for Sharing the LOVE: you have contributed \$1,150 to One Great Hour of Sharing for "Our Love Offering to the World" Please continue to share the love & remember the prayer requests. Your support is greatly appreciated! ~ Mission Board

Family Movie Night: Saturday, July 18th at 6:00 pm. The movie is “GOAT”.

Women’s Prayer Meeting: hosted by the Symphony of Prayer and Praise Women's Ministry on July 18th from 12- 4:00 pm at Home 2 Suites.

Blood Drive: July 21st from 2:00 – 6:00 pm. The flyer is posted in the Narthex.

ABW: will hold their Program Bulletin meeting, for the Executive Committee (officers and chairs), will be on July 22nd at 10:30am in the Gathering Room.

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.

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.

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

Saturday	July 18	6:00 pm	Movie Night
Sunday	July 19	9:30 am	Eighth Sunday after Pentecost ~ Proper 11
		10:45 am	Coffee Hour
Tuesday	July 21	2:00 – 6:00 pm	Blood Drive