



Pray. Listen. Baptize. Marry. Direct. Lead. Bury. Comfort. Counsel. Mourn. Welcome. Intercede. Guide. Celebrate. Enlighten. Perhaps you have had some of these encouragements/ ministry efforts from a Pastor(s) of your past. We can all remember a pastor or missionary that made a difference in our lives. During the month of December we take the annual offering (The Retired Ministers and Missionary Offering) to say Thank You! Our goal is \$1,200 and is very doable for us a church. This is our way to give back to those who have served faithfully over their many years of ministry prior to retirement. Thank you for your generous gift in advance.

Pastor Rick



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UP FOR A CHRISTMAS MIRACLE?

I have fond memories of the basement level of what was then First Baptist Church in Glenwood, Iowa. It was the place where church members went to hold wedding receptions, funeral luncheons, church meetings, youth groups, even VBS treat breaks. And it was the place where proud parents and relieved kids gathered for refreshments after Christmas programs, which pretty much marked the official Baptist beginning of the Christmas season.

It was at such a Christmas pageant reception that a few of us middle schoolers were busing tables. As I walked through the swinging doors of the main kitchen alongside my cousin, we came upon two middle-aged ladies broken down and weeping on each other's shoulders. We hurried over to the kitchen sinks to leave off the dirty dishes. My cousin said, "Maybe you should go get your mom." Seemed like a reasonable suggestion, given that neither of us had a clue what was going on or of how to help.

We heard more as we were picking up and loading out. When we were the last ones left, Mom finally let us in on the story. "Really, what happened tonight was nothing short of a Christmas miracle. Beverly and Maxine were the closest of sisters growing up, but they haven't talked to each other for six years. Tonight they decided to become sisters again. It ends up they couldn't remember most of what made them angry to begin with, so they're giving themselves a fresh start."

Sometimes the holidays can be a season of great healing, as friends and family members realize they don't even remember the reason they've been distancing themselves from you for a decade or more. That's happened to me more than once.

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Then there's the vice-versa circumstance, where you know you had a well-thought-out rationale as the basis for avoiding Cousin Syd but just can't figure out exactly what it is. This, too, has happened to me more than once, but less often as I get older. Nonetheless, it is upon me to let go of all that baggage and move ahead to restore the family tie, friendship, or Trivial Pursuit team in jeopardy.

Have a relationship that needs mending? Jesus is the ultimate provider of fresh starts. So how about it?

Up for a Christmas miracle in the next few weeks?

Steve Wamberg

Upcoming Sermon Schedule

December 4	What Are You Waiting For?	<i>Luke 2:21-40</i>
December 11	But What About the Optics?	<i>Matthew 1:18-25</i>
December 18	My Fiefdom or God's Kingdom?	<i>Matthew 2:1-23</i>
December 24	Dad's Coffee (Christmas Eve devotion)	<i>John 1:10-14</i>
December 25	The Package Matters	<i>Philippians 2:1-11</i>

The ABC-USA Biennial Mission Summit will be held June 23-25 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Registration has begun. Event information and schedules will be available at www.americanbaptists2023.com.

Sunset Hills is allotted 5 delegates. Anyone from the congregation who is interested in attending and representing Sunset Hills can contact Moderator, Terry Anderson. "So much has happened in ministry with our brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico since Hurricane Maria," said Dr. C. Jeff Woods, general secretary for American Baptist Churches USA, "and I believe that there is no better time to celebrate our togetherness in ministry and our unity in Christ."

Vision Statement

Communicate the love of God so all may experience the joy of a relationship with Christ.

Mission Statement

Build disciples by empowering each church participant to practice personal and congregational mission to reach people in our everyday lives.

Shepherding Ministry – Pam Hamlin

“let us love one another, for love comes from God” (1 John 4:7)

We are all called to love and care for one another through support and encouragement. The goal of the Shepherding Ministry is simply to provide a coordinated means of doing that, if needed. The Shepherding Ministry has a couple of opportunities to consider for those who may be looking for a place to serve at Sunset Hills.

Nursery: If you are interested in being part of the planning, updating and coordinating of the nursery, or if you are interested in volunteering for the nursery, please contact me for details.

Meal Coordinator: If you are interested in coordinating meals to be made and delivered to individuals in the church family, who may have a need due to illness or other circumstances, please contact me.

Physical Assistance Coordinator: This person would coordinate physical assistance for short term needs such a transportation or a specific chore around the home. If this interests you, let me know.

Thank you and have a beautiful Christmas.



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Bottom line: we need more people to become involved. Some roles are more demanding than others, but all allow our congregation members and attendees to learn how a church functions, how to become better leaders.

We may not be able to fill every chair on every ministry board, but we must get more so that the boards are more effective and the workload can be shared more evenly.

So, what would we “like” to do and what “can” we do? That is determined by how involved the congregation gets. We'd like to get the nursery up and running again and children's church active regularly, but that requires personnel on a regular basis, maybe not every week but enough to share the responsibilities. If we had more cooks, we could have monthly breakfasts. We plan to restart children's stories during our worship services (starting Christmas morning, so plan to bring the kids and grandkids) and it might mean finding a storyteller for every week or having that feature monthly, every other week or whenever someone is available. How about organizing ushers and greeters? Or a short-term role, such as watering outdoor plants during a month in the summer, or sharing talents during Vacation Bible School?

While we'd prefer that ministry boards be filled with members, it's not mandatory. What's your talent or experience? Did you sing in the high school choir? You didn't need to be a soloist to have just the perspective to serve on the Music and Worship Ministry board. Are you a property manager? Maybe you'd be perfect in the Stewardship Ministry. Feel comfortable connecting with our shut-ins? Shepherding might be the place.

What could we do, and what can we do? Much of it depends on you.

Date	Attendance	Giving
October 30	49	\$3,474.51
November 6	68	\$5,212.25
November 13	67	\$4,418.00
November 20	86	\$1,809.00
November 27	58	\$1,646.00

SHBC Financial Scoreboard	
October Pledges	134% Effective
YTD Pledges	126% Effective
YTD Income	\$167,413
YTD Expenses	\$148,907

Our current study is *Life Principles to Live By*. With more interest by newcomers, the Adult Sunday School Class has moved downstairs into the doubles classroom to better accommodate everyone. From the bottom of the stairs, enter the lower level hallway and turn right, then walk to the double doors at the end of the short hallway. Class is now from 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. We welcome new attendees with open arms.

Men's Study Group December Update - Ron Reed

We have just completed the study *James and Galatians* by Scot McKnight and would like study topic recommendations from others interested in joining our group. We normally meet by way of Zoom on Tuesday evenings from 6:30 to 7:30 but have paused meetings until the new study is decided on by way of group email. Please contact Don Zak, Bob Molby, Marvin Vanosdall, Bob Slechta, or Ron Reed for more information.

Stewardship Ministry December Update - Ron Reed

The Stewardship Ministry 2023 Team is coming together. Please contact Ron Reed at walkingwithHim@outlook.com to learn how you may serve God with all who are on the team. We have several tasks yet to fill, including the Stewardship Ministry Leader position. Ron will partner with the new leader until they are ready to assume the responsibilities. As well, we are looking for an Assistant Stewardship Ministry Leader. This will assure the team will not be without leadership and possibly position the assistant to assume the leader role if the opportunity presents itself.

Pastor/Staff Relations December Update - Ron Reed

Our Pastor Search Committee has had their first meeting and has been given information to help them prepare for their first organizational meeting. The Pastor/Staff Relations Committee will be available to help with work as the committee sees the need. Please, continue to pray for the members: Telly Woods as Chair; Rita Vetter, Jim Hedrick, Jason Rich, Diane Workman, Carol McCormick, and Becki Pike as they will represent each of us in the congregation during the search for the pastor God is now preparing to serve at Sunset Hills.

- 1 Terri Rich
- 5 Brittany Howe
- 6 Nalini Anderson
- 7 David Nallathambi
- 12 Ryan Heller
- 18 Cameron Rich
- 19 Kayla Workman
- 21 Amariana White
- 24 Steve Combs
- 24 Rosemary Gordon
- 25 Jean Larsen



Women Mentoring Women
Meeting on Wednesday,
December 14 & 28
6:30 p.m.
Dinner served at
6:00 p.m.

Prayer Chain

We have a lot of new faces at Sunset Hills. If you are not yet on our Prayer Chain email list and would like to be included, please let Dot North know at 402-658-6401 or email her at obertant@outlook.com. You can also call the church office at 402-391-0820 or email the office at sunset@sunsethillschurch.org.



If you would like to purchase a poinsettia this year, cost is \$15 each. Please fill out the back of your Connection Card or call the office and let us know. Deadline to order is Sunday, December 11.

Prayers for Health, Healing, and Strength

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| Alexander Christian , newborn great-nephew of Joan Peterson, low blood sugar | Nancy Berney | Jacque McDuffie | Yvonne Swearingen |
| Glenn Kilpatrick, Jr. | Deanne Caughey | Patty Martin | Barb Ganey |
| Amber Dale | Nancy Quinnette | Betty Prokop | Jack & Carol Welch |
| Mark & Ruth Steele | Dick & Norma Larsen | | |

On-going prayers of well-being for shut-ins and military personnel

PLEASE Text or call and leave a message for Dot North at 402-658-6401. She will confirm that your request was received and it will be sent out to the prayer chain. Your prayers are very important.



Angel Tree

If you would like to participate in this year's Angel Tree to purchase Christmas gifts for the residents at Maple Crest Care Center, please choose a tag from the tree and shop for the resident listed. Items that they would like to receive are listed with their name. Please have wrapped gifts, with the name of the resident visible on the gift, returned to the church by Thursday, December 15. Please see Jean Larsen or Jacque McDuffie with questions. Thank you.

**Sunset Hills Baptist Church
Ministry Council Meeting
November 21, 2022**

Attendees: Rev. Steve Wamberg; Terry Anderson, Moderator; Scott Darden, Vice-Moderator; Doug Larsen, Treasurer; Becki Pike, Clerk; LaShawnda Woods, Discipleship; Donald Zak, Worship; Ron Reed, Pastor/Staff Relations; Dot North, Prayer; Jason Workman, Safety/Security; Pam Hamlin, Shepherding; Visitor, Bob Molby

Devotion and Prayer: Rev. Steve Wamberg

Treasurer's Report: Doug Larsen presented last month's financial statement. A motion was made to accept statement and accepted.

Old/Continuing Business:

Prepare 2023 budget process:

- **Stewardship campaign (compiling packets for mailing in November, letters from treasurer and pastor, pledge cards):** Next year, start process sooner. Add janitorial staff under Stewardship in the letter.

2023 Church Directory: New directory should be out in the next few weeks.

Mission Outreach:

- **November winter gear for Pine Elementary and college care packages:** Collecting winter gear through December 4th and Jason Workman will be delivering items to the school. College care packages have been delivered.
- **December Angel Tree, Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering:** Angel tree presents are due by December 15th. RMMO goal will be the same as last year in the amount of \$1,200.
- **January:** Start thinking of ideas.

Filling leadership openings: Missions/Outreach, Stewardship, Shepherding, finance clerk:

Pam Hamlin is stepping down from Shepherding and Denise is stepping down from finance clerk duties in January.

New Business

Ministry Council: Biennial; filling ministry board openings; is this form of church governing working:

- Biennial is being held in Puerto Rico on June 23-25, 2023.
- If council switched back to boards, there would be fewer ministries. Something to think about.

Pastoral/Staff Relations: Complete evaluations for paid staff: Ron Reed is working with pastor/staff relations to complete evaluations.

Worship/Music: Advent/Christmas preparations: find Advent candle lighters; coordinate poinsettias orders:

- Decorations will be put up this weekend. Poinsettias will be ordered by Denise or Shawnda. Music will be coordinated by Pastor since Dan will be off. Momoro will be playing the piano.

Shepherding/Discipleship: Restoration of nursery, children's church and children's moment during worship:

- Planning on resuming children's moment during worship at the Christmas service.
- Currently looking for volunteers for the nursery. In the nursery, a wall-mount changing table will be added in the restroom.

Stewardship/Security: Pool table: Someone was wanting to donate a pool table to the church but going to pass at this time.

December-January Council Meeting Preparations: Ministries, please look at the back of agenda for suggestions.

Miscellaneous: Computers have arrived for Denise and Don.

Closing Prayer: Jason Workman

Next Meeting: Monday, December 19, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

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The difference between could and can - By Terry Anderson, moderator

We're at the time of year when we've given thanks for all we have, look forward to celebrate and honor the birth of our Savior and prepare for the 66th year in the history of Sunset Hills Baptist Church.

In 2022, our pastor retired, which presented challenges while filling the pulpit, finding an interim pastor and forming a search committee. No church wants to see a sister congregation close, but we experienced that -- twice in two weeks -- and tried to open our doors to welcome members of those churches.

Partly because we haven't paid a full-time pastor's salary since August and partly because of consistent giving throughout the year, our financial base is solid. Our 2023 budget is considerably reduced, anticipating that we won't have a pastor for the near future. That could change, however, so we need to focus on what could happen. The typical search period could last anywhere from less than a year to more than two years.

Rev. Steve Wamberg is experienced in filling interim roles and how to keep a congregation active and moving forward. It's not easy, especially following closely behind the separation that the coronavirus caused.

The Ministry Council members and I are working with Rev. Steve to see that we're focused on what we can do to keep Sunset Hills as a vibrant American Baptist Church and a mover in Omaha and our neighborhood.

There are many things we "could" do, but we'll need to determine what we "can" do. The council and I have ideas, but it takes more than that. We must know the feelings of the congregation. We're not "see all, know all." There are ways to minister of which we may not be aware. Combined, the council and congregation will determine where and how we move ahead.

COVID was especially hard on the leadership structure of churches, and Sunset Hills was not an exception to that. Changing how ministry boards and the council met were so disrupted and many ministry members left their roles and weren't replaced. We are looking to fill vacancies in three of our eight ministry leadership positions. Even more positions are vacant on the ministry boards. That needs to change -- and quickly.

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