

J a n u a r y 2 0 1 9

# The Connection

## Morton Baptist Church

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Sunday Service: 10:30 AM  
Bible Study: Wednesday at 12:00  
[www.facebook.com/273938523674](http://www.facebook.com/273938523674)

*Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. 1 John 3:2*

### Invested?

My wife and I are investors in stocks, mutual funds and other types of funds. We were fortunate to meet folks along the way that encouraged us to invest a small amount each month; we even did a small amount for our children's college. It was always easy as we did it automatically. Some months the price was low so our fixed amount purchased more, other times not so much when prices were high. We were able to cash in what we needed for our home's down payment, which we did in 2001 before the value dropped in the fall after 9/11, and we borrowed against it for some needed home improvement expenses. Now I'm no financial wiz or anywhere near wealthy (you've seen the car I drive) but I learned the value of investing long term. Over time what we invest, even a small amount, can pay off. There are risks, too, but I believe these are worth taking.

As we, as a church, move to the next phase of our intentional time where we do some congregational and community assessing, that word, invest, comes to mind. Many folks, indeed most folks I see in worship or other activities, are clearly those who have invested their time, talent and resources in Morton Baptist. Our chairman of the Trustees, Gary House, just a few Sundays ago, thanked those who volunteer and serve the church in countless ways. Of course, we're really not simply investing all we do in a local church; we're investing in God's work here and everywhere. Many folks here are also long term investors, keeping their service to God steady even while the church has its up and downs.

Of course, every investor must know that there are risks involved; a sudden shift in the population or an economic downturn could make what we do for God here more challenging. But even from the beginning of our local church, and Christianity itself, believers have always understood and taken the risk; some even risk everything. Christians take risks because they know the value, the ultimate value.

That value is that in our corner of the world we are keeping the hope of Christ alive for ourselves and others. We're those who have invested, not simply in a building or some programs and activities, but in God's work. As one favorite poster that used to hang in my office said, "We are the hands and feet of Jesus." So, as we look to the future and wonder what is to come, knowing our value is most important; knowing that prayers are answered, people care, burdens are shared and lives are changed by God's grace and love.

Lastly, when one invests they look forward. It is always tempting to say, well we could have purchased that stock or invested in this company, but that is time wasted. We invest because we believe that the future will be better for us. That is the only way for us here. There is always the course of "coulda, shoulda", but that too is time wasted. We minister, serve and share the 'good news' because God has a future for his people. What and where our place will be is still to be seen; however, God's plans and future are always bright and glorious. Let's keep investing in that future.

Pastor Walter

## 12-12-18 TRUSTEE MEETING

In attendance: Gary House, Ralph Olney, Tom Ingraham, Sandy Strassenburgh, Frank Hoffman, Rev. Walter Steenson, Marilyn Kandrata

Meeting was opened with prayer at 7:00 pm.

The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed. Sandy made a motion to accept, Frank seconded.

The Treasurers Report was reviewed. All accounts are within budget. The Endowment Fund was up \$2,080. Payments to the Endowment Fund have been increased from \$300 to \$800 per month. Missions were paid. We are waiting for Christian Carpeting to complete the stairs before final payment of \$2,600 is made. Frank made a motion to accept the report, Sandy seconded.

The Budget Proposal was reviewed. Ralph is proposing a 9% reduction from last year. The Pastoral Ministry budget line will be increased to \$20,000 in lieu of the Minister's salary and expenses. Budget lines for Sunday School Supplies, Christian Publications, music, building insurance, water, Telephone/Internet and coffee hour have all been increased. Frank made a motion to approve, Sandy seconded.

We received a check for \$1,000 from the estate of Edith Lear. Frank made a motion to deposit the check into the Memorial Fund for future use, Sandy seconded.

The organ is in need of repair. Rev. Walter suggested purchasing an electric keyboard instead of making repairs on the organ, which is 50+ years old.

Battery operated candles will be available for children to use on Christmas Eve instead of real candles. Fire extinguishers will be on hand.

There are cracks in the ceiling and walls of the pastor's office that need to be repaired.

The next meeting will be held January 16, 2019 at 7:00pm

Meeting was closed with prayer at 8:00pm.

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### **January Birthdays:**

1<sup>st</sup> Tammy Cook  
6<sup>th</sup> Dan Cater  
Kevin Rowley  
7<sup>th</sup> Skip Scroger



8<sup>th</sup> Natalie Cook  
26<sup>th</sup> Abigail Villalobos  
28<sup>th</sup> David Strassenburgh  
31<sup>st</sup> Kaitlyn Curtis

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> following the church service. **All yearly reports are due to Kaitlyn Curtis by Sunday, January 13<sup>th</sup> and will be available January 20<sup>th</sup>.** You can email your reports to the church email address or put the reports directly in my mailbox. Thank you!

### 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Meeting – Assessing Ourselves and Our Community

In a short while we will be asking you to answer some significant questions about their faith and how the church is viewed. These questions are still being formulated and will hopefully be available in the New Year. We will have these in church for you to fill out. These will be anonymous and help give valuable insight at the makeup, faith understanding, hopes for and connections to the church. We will be using this information at our next 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Meeting and luncheon on **January 20<sup>th</sup>** following the worship service.



### Annual Baby Bottle Drive

The Care Net Center in Albion will have their annual baby bottle drive beginning on January 20<sup>th</sup>. Please take a bottle, fill it with loose change (paper money and checks also accepted), and return your bottles (even if they're empty) to church by Sunday, February 17<sup>th</sup>. Bottles can be picked up at the center beginning on January 2<sup>nd</sup>. Pickup times are Tuesdays–Thursdays between 9:30 am and 4:30 pm.

## ATTENTION!



### Kitchen Committee

THANKS SO MUCH to the congregation for donating so many of the items that were requested on the Wish Tree, such as cleaning and kitchen items, paper products, and office supplies! Thanks so much for your generosity!!

### Food Cupboard

Thank you to everyone who donated food or money to help the Kendall Food Pantry this holiday season. Many people were able to have a wonderful Thanksgiving and Christmas. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.



### Volunteer's Needed!

We continue to need people to sign up to make coffee and cookies for **coffee hour** after church. Sign-up sheets are in McQueen Hall. We also need volunteers to be **greeters** (see Carolyn House) and **lay readers** (see Pastor Walter).



### Recorded Messages

The church services are recorded every Sunday and are now can be accessed through the church Facebook page and can be downloaded from Soundcloud <https://soundcloud.com/ortonaptisthurchhermons>).



### *In and Around the Community*

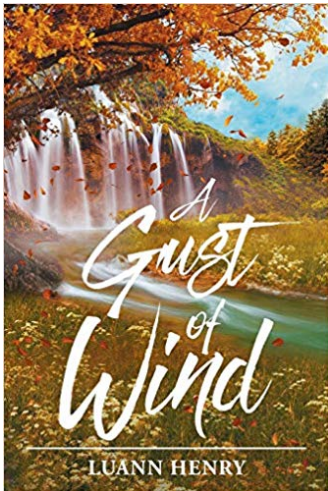
Our annual Christmas Eve service was filled with beautiful music and worship. Thank you to all who were involved.

Please keep the Pearson family in your prayers. Leon Pearson passed away on December 12<sup>th</sup> at the age of 81.

<https://www.newcomerrochester.com/Obituaries/166435/Leon-Pearson/Rochester-New-York>

Kate Ingraham's gall bladder surgery went well on December 4<sup>th</sup>. We're thrilled to hear it!

Bev Olney suffered a pinched nerve in her neck. Please pray for a speedy recovery.



Congratulations to LuAnn Henry for publishing her book, "A Gust of Wind"! The book has received outstanding reviews and has been recommended by all who have read it. It's currently on sale at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

Ralph Olney has been diagnosed with a rare muscle disorder. His immune system has been turned off for a few months, and he's on strong medications to help combat the disorder.

We're happy to hear that Pam Dutton is doing well after finishing her second cycle of chemotherapy!

Remember Ann Bartel's nephew, Robert Drake, in your prayers. He was hospitalized with heart problems in early December. He's home recovering now.

Please keep Ann White and her family in your prayers. Her husband, Michael "Mick" White, passed away suddenly on December 13<sup>th</sup> at the age of 74.

<https://obits.democratandchronicle.com/obituaries/democratandchronicle/obituary.aspx?n=michael-d-white-mick&pid=191003404>

It was wonderful to see the Kundrata girls and their husbands visiting for Christmas. Jessica and Geoff came from Maine, while Katie and Ben flew in from Malaysia.

Pastor Walter and Lori's son, Chris, and daughter-in-law, Alexa, visited from Arizona for the holidays.

The Cook family has been asking for prayers for their friend Sandy Perkins who has been dealing with various illnesses. We're ecstatic to hear that Sandy received news from Roswell that she's completely cancer-free! It's wonderful news!

Congratulations to Matthew Cook and his new fiancé, Emma, on their engagement!



*We continue to remember in prayer: Fred Conradt, Pam Dutton, Chap & Jan Fabry, Kevin & Joyce Foley, Helen Mattern, RoseMary Mintz, Ralph & Bev Olney, Joan Purvee, Eleanor Reynolds, Pastor Jim & Alice, and the youth group.*

*Cards, notes, and visits are always welcome.*

**"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."**

**- Jeremiah 29:11**



# **Don't Cling to the Firewood**

by Dr. Ralph F. Wilson

They're just a young couple, I can tell. These mouseholders who have taken up residence in the woodpile are just starting out in life. They've built a nest under the pile of oak firewood I am loading into the back of our station wagon.

We had our first frost a few days ago, and had spent several days winterizing our house. So had this mouse couple. At the bottom of the woodpile their nest would be dry and warm in all but the wettest of storms, ready for the young ones that would surely be coming soon.

I think of my wife and me in our first apartment many years ago. So excited, so optimistic.

These are tiny mice, equipped with miniature jumping legs, their little bodies only 2-1/2 inches long – if you don't count the tail. I must seem like a huge giant as I deconstruct their carefully built lives, one log at a time.

I feel sorry for them. Such cute little creatures, so hopeful for the future, yet so filled with terror at what is happening to them.

"What's going on, dear?" the mouse bride cries.

"I don't know," her husband answers. "Nothing like this has ever happened before."

He's wrong, of course. Change happens – constantly. But, thankfully, it's not too often that our entire lives are altered forever by external events.

A few weeks after my bride and I had moved into our first apartment, I received a draft notice: "Greetings from the President of the United States." Yes, greetings to you, too, Mr. President. Our carefully constructed lives suddenly took a sharp turn.

You've had some of those turns, too.

The death of someone very close to you.

Divorce.

Loss of a job.

Failure of a business.

An illness or injury.

Suddenly, life is not the same and never will be again. Everything's different. And we try to cope – sometimes in healthy ways, sometimes in self-destructive ways.

I keep loading the firewood into the back of the wagon. I'm about to stack it higher yet when I see one of the tiny mice clinging to a piece of firewood in the back of the car. Another few seconds and he would have been crushed. I pick him up by his long tail, set him on the ground, and go back to get more logs. When I return he is still at the same place on the ground where I put him – stunned by these events, barely able to get out of harm's way.

We're so mouse-like sometimes.

Life goes on. The props change, sometimes all too often. We're so tempted to cling to the props as they are being dragged off the set. And sometimes we're hurt because of our inability to let go, so attached to the accouterments of the past that it's impossible for us to welcome the future.

Change requires courage, great helpings of it. My mind goes to Joshua in the Bible. For nearly forty years he has been an understudy to the great leader Moses. Now Moses is dead and leadership is thrust fully upon Joshua. Ahead is the Jordan River running at flood stage, and beyond that the fortified cities of Canaan – the "Promised Land" that seems so elusive. Talk about change? Joshua has change swirling all around him.

And God speaks to him a word: "Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified, do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9).

Our mouse couple looks up as their world is trembling. One by one the logs that comprise their shelter are disappearing, and soon only open sky is above. What do you do?

Do you cling to the firewood and risked being crushed by it? Or do you cling to God's promise to you?

God has promised to be with you wherever you go. He has promised never to leave you or forsake you. What he asks of you is faith to overcome your terror. Courage to meet your discouragement. And confidence to draw on his strength.

Change is a constant. No part of our lives will endure unchanged for more than a few years, a few decades at most. But the Lord our God is unchangeable. He is forever. You can put down your roots into him, knowing that in this way you will never be utterly uprooted again.

I think of Mr. and Mrs. Mouse. My heart goes out to them. I've been where they are, and so have you. And I hope that, even as I am writing these words, they are dragging their nest into another shelter in the woods to keep them dry and warm this winter. I hope that Mr. Mouse has finally got over his shock and got with the program. Older now, and wiser they are.

And if I could offer just one word of advice for them and for you – and for me – it would be this: Don't cling to the firewood.



# January

2019

"So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" - 2 Corinthians 5:17

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 <b>New Year's Day</b>	2 Choir Rehearsal @ 6:00	3	4	5
6 Communion Sunday	7	8	9 Bible Study @ 12:00  Choir Rehearsal @ 6:00	10	11	12
13 Annual Reports are due	14	15	16 Bible Study @ 12:00  Choir Rehearsal @ 6:00	17	18	19
20 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday Meeting/luncheon after church  Annual Reports are available	21 <b>Martin Luther King Jr. Day</b>	22	23 Bible Study @ 12:00  Choir Rehearsal @ 6:00	24	25	26
27	28	29	30 Bible Study @ 12:00  Choir Rehearsal @ 6:00	31		

Morton Baptist Church  
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January 2019

