

first foundations preschool 9:15 a.m. schedule

Weekly Coach	Victoria Hertenstein	Darleen Block	Kim Bell	Jackie Haight	Darleen Block
9:15 a.m.	Jan. 1	Jan. 8	Jan. 15	Jan. 22	Jan. 29
Desk	Jo Ann Sanders	Tricia Brinson	Elayne Powers	Annette Ivery	Lisa Sanders
Infants (Otters)	Linda Watts Beth Bentley	Tammy Hollonbeck Kent Hollonbeck	Sybil French Larry French	Linda Watts Wendy Heagey Danielle Heagey	Sonny Grooms Chelle Grooms
Crawler & Walkers (Seahorses)	Cynthia Monroe Meagan Suarez	Cynthia Monroe Meagan Suarez	Cynthia Monroe Meagan Suarez	Cynthia Monroe Meagan Suarez	Cynthia Monroe Meagan Suarez
Twos (Jellyfish)	Abby Stanford Ann Rose	Abby Stanford Connie Nathan	Abby Stanford Ann Rose	Abby Stanford Connie Nathan	Abby Stanford
Threes & Fours (Dolphins)	Lenora Horton Mary Lawrence	Lenora Horton Mary Lawrence	Lenora Horton Mary Lawrence	Lenora Horton Mary Lawrence	Lenora Horton Mary Lawrence

first foundations preschool 10:30 a.m. schedule

Weekly Coach	Victoria Hertenstein	Darleen Block	Kim Bell	Jackie Haight	Darleen Block
10:30 a.m.	Jan. 1	Jan. 8	Jan. 15	Jan. 22	Jan. 29
Desk	Sue Horton	Evy Vogler	Angie Heath	Cindi Clayton	Herb Holk
Infants (Otters)	Kelly Pruett Shirley Crosswhite	Sue Beran Caitlin Beran	Erin Deloach Trudy Dodson	Sue Beran Caitlin Beran	Trudy Dodson Kelly Pruett
Crawler & Walkers (Seahorses)	David Adetutu Dee Dee Adetutu	Sandy Jorgensen Jan Burns	Jessica Ayers Kathy Kelly	Emily Jones Debbie Lail Danielle Lail	Stephanie Ranthum
Twos (Jellyfish)	Linda Pittman Caroline Brinson	Jackie Snider David Snider	Diane Meyer Paul Meyer Marie Kelly	Emily Roman Kevin Roman Maria Brawne	Doug Jones Lynn Jones
Threes & Fours (Dolphins)	Joe Teasley Stephanie Teasley Leanna Watts	Tim Grimes Emily Morgan Nikki LaMay	Jennifer Harris Brian Harris Olivia Dodson	Mark Evans Kim Evans Justin Evans	Nate Tyler Jessica Ayers Olivia Dodson

january 2012

connections

keeping you connected to the people & ministries of first baptist church of tampa

2012

Happy New Year!

Staff Perspective

2012: THE YEAR OF NEW

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” 2 Cor. 5:17 ESV

“Hello. First, I’m Kevin Cook...the ‘new guy.’” I actually LOVE being the “new guy.” Do you remember that first day on the new job? The “new guy” gets to do all kinds of cool things like:

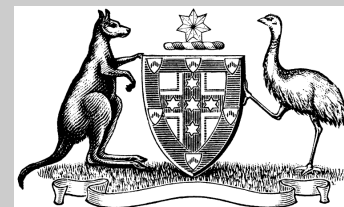
- Meet 200+ people at a time and forget all of their names
- Interrupt important meetings to ask directions to the restroom
- Slow down staff productivity because we’re a church and Jesus would want everyone to stop working and listen to the long version (you’ll find that a painful experience...just ask Chad and Erin DeLoach!)
- Embarrass myself as I try to figure out who goes to what, where
- And many more duties as assigned

I also get to work with an amazing group of passionate, caring, focused people who have a heart for the gospel changing this city. If I can’t be an excited “new guy” at FBC, I need to be ushered over to Tampa General for some heart work. This is truly a thrill for my family two years in the making.

My father, an Air Force First Sergeant, my hero, the consummate “new guy,” could reach his base, meet his men, win them over, brief mom on the life of the area, unpack, and schedule a dinner with his officer in command before I could get home from school. I loved to hate it: making friends within five minutes of arrival because I wasn’t sure if we’d get to unpack or not. At the age of six I experienced spiritual renewal, accepting Christ. It was made easier because, as my dad explained, “your heart is the vessel God wants to make new. You make the vessel as available as you can for Him and others...and God will provide all the change it will take to keep it that way.” To be new is to not only be changed, but to greatly influence change through the power of Christ.

New is awesome. New is my friend. New reminds me that there is always hope and that God created us to progress every day, moving closer to His image with every passing moment. New motivates us to keep going and not give up.

I love Australia. Perhaps it’s the youth of the country or the accents, but it’s pretty cool. A few years ago I noticed on the Australian coat of arms a picture of an emu and a kangaroo. I watched Mutual of Omaha’s Wild Kingdom as a kid and remembered these two animals share a characteristic that



appealed to our forefathers. Both the emu and kangaroo can move only forward, not back. The emu’s three-toed foot causes it to fall if it tries to go backwards, and the kangaroo is prevented from moving in reverse by its large tail. Those who truly choose to follow Jesus become like the emu and kangaroo, moving only forward, never back. (Sounds like a missions trip to Australia is in order as soon as Pastors Bob or Brian can polish the facts into a three-point sermon.) Happy New Year. I can’t wait! Thank you for letting my family take this NEW journey with you.

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connections is published each month by the First Baptist Church of Tampa.

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For Your Calendar

Happy Birthday

1.1 Lisa Rustrian	1.16 Pep Perilloux, Shirley Vogler
1.2 Jenelle Taylor	1.17 Olivia Chittenden, Don Jones, Brad Hertenstein, Charles Hutchinson, Eniola Adetutu
1.3 Harry Livingston	1.18 Alvis Clark, Evy Vogler
1.4 Charles Pittman, Susan Finch, Seward Ryals, Emily Williams	1.19 Michael Gruber
1.5 Doris Finch, Addison Hollonbeck, Mya Germino	1.20 Adania Flemming, Caitlin Beran, Logan DeSort
1.8 Steven Hoffstetter, Ellie Cagle, Zan’ee Crawford	1.21 Lois Williams, Emma Sanders
1.9 Irene Durfee, Donna Beard, Tyler Webb, Erin Caplinger	1.22 Abraham Lineberger, Luke Roman
1.10 Carmen Muniz, Christy Cahill, Eli Zuspan, Trevor Jay	1.23 Sue Howard, Angela Llewellyn
1.11 Rosetta Jimerson, Daniel Bell, Maggie Mozanowski, Natalie Waller	1.24 Marlina McClure, Larry French, Becky Lind, Sofia Farmer, Olivia Ramirez
1.12 Danielle Heagey, Emily Teasley	1.25 Vickie Bray
1.13 Frank Clark, Carol Linsky, Connie Nathan	1.26 Ed Clayton
1.14 Karen Hegemeier, Stephanie Ramthun	1.28 Victoria Hertenstein, Dawson Hollonbeck
1.15 Jean Bond, Aurelia Miller, Irlande Napoleon, Matt Kendrick	1.29 Larry Stephens
	1.30 Earnest Horton, Emily Morgan
	1.31 Herb White

Bible Reading Plan

January

1.1	Genesis 1-3
1.2	Genesis 4-7
1.3	Genesis 8-11
1.4	Genesis 12-15
1.5	Genesis 16-18
1.6	Genesis 19-21
1.7	Genesis 22-24
1.8	Genesis 25-26
1.9	Genesis 27-29
1.10	Genesis 30-31
1.11	Genesis 32-34
1.12	Genesis 35-37
1.13	Genesis 38-40
1.14	Genesis 41-42
1.15	Genesis 43-45
1.16	Genesis 46-47
1.17	Genesis 48-50
1.18	Exodus 1-3
1.19	Exodus 4-6
1.20	Exodus 7-9
1.21	Exodus 10-12
1.22	Exodus 13-15
1.23	Exodus 16-18
1.24	Exodus 19-21
1.25	Exodus 22-24
1.26	Exodus 25-27
1.27	Exodus 28-29
1.28	Exodus 30-32
1.29	Exodus 33-35
1.30	Exodus 36-38
1.31	Exodus 39-40

Looking Ahead

February

4	Upward Practices Begin
5	Genius of Generosity Week 1
9	Men’s Prayer Breakfast
12	Genius of Generosity Week 2
14	Women on Mission
14	JOY Club
18	Upward Games Begin
19	Genius of Generosity Week 3
24	Disciple Now
26	Genius of Generosity Week 4

March

5	Advisory Council
4, 11, 18, 25	Beyond Membership Course
15-17	Ligonier National Conference
17	Evangelism Training
24	Egg Hunt Flier Distribution
25	Business Meeting

April

1, 15	Spiritual Gift Workshop
4	CrossTraining Spring Semester
7	Egg Hunt
8	Easter
13/14	Upward Awards Night

Happy Anniversary

1.1	Chris & Allison Moore, 3 yrs
1.3	Chris & Rebecca Lind, 3yrs
1.10	Marc & Sandy Ayers, 25 yrs
1.14	Daniel & Stephanie Farmer, 12 yrs
1.16	Jose & Lazara Escandon, 24 yrs
1.17	Clark & Glenda Barlow, 15 yrs
1.20	Joe & Daryle Whitaker, 11 yrs
1.26	Brian & Jennifer Harris, 4 yrs
1.27	Earnest & Lenora Horton, 33 yrs

Dinner Menu

January 4

BBQ Ribs or **Pulled Pork** served with hash brown casserole, baked beans, coleslaw, corn bread, and triple chocolate bundt cake or apple crisp w/ vanilla ice cream

Light Options: Pizza; Chicken & Dump-ling Soup

January 11

Swiss Chicken Breast served with rice pilaf, steamed broccoli, Greek salad, mini croissant, and cheesecake or bread pudding w/vanilla sauce

Light Options: Pizza; Broccoli & Cheese Soup

January 18

Glazed salmon served with roasted potatoes, vegetable medley, Caesar salad, dinner roll, and Mississippi Mud Cake or lemon meringue pie

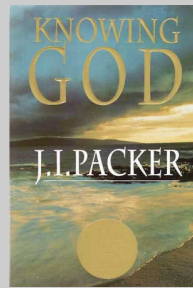
Light Options: Pizza; Mulligatawny

January 25

Shepherd’s pie served with green beans, baked beans, bacon mandarin salad, yeast roll, and glazed lemon cake or cheesecake

Light Options: Pizza; Lentil w/Kielbasa

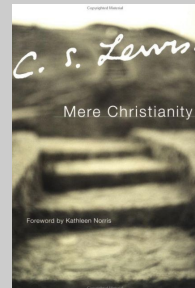
check these books out...



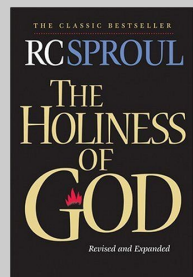
Knowing God
by J.I. Packer

In 2006, *Christianity Today* voted this title to be one of the top fifty books that have shaped evangelicals! During the past twenty years, J. I. Packer's classic has revealed to over one million Christians around the world the wonder, the glory, and the joy of knowing God.

Mere Christianity
by C.S. Lewis



A forceful and accessible discussion of Christian belief that has become one of the most popular introductions to Christianity and one of the most popular of Lewis's books. Uncovers common ground upon which all Christians can stand together.



The Holiness of God
by R.C. Sproul

Central to God's character is the quality of holiness. Yet, even so, most people are hard-pressed to define what God's holiness precisely is. Many preachers today avoid the topic altogether because people today don't quite know what to do with words like "awe" or "fear." R. C. Sproul, in this classic work, puts the holiness of God in its proper and central place in the Christian life. He paints an awe-inspiring vision of God that encourages Christian to become holy just as God is holy. Once you encounter the holiness of God, your life will never be the same.

These books and other classics are available in the church library.

"Big Deal" Coming for Students

January is a big deal for student ministry. Beginning in January, on the first Wednesday of every month, FUEL middle school worship will host "Big Deal" nights. Dinner will be served at 5:45 p.m. followed by a themed night which will be centered around an evangelistic message from God's Word. Middle school students are encouraged to invite their friends to "Big Deal" nights to allow them the opportunity to respond to the Gospel. EPICENTER high school worship service will have its evangelistic emphasis on the first Sunday of each month.

On Saturday, January 14, the FBC Tampa student ministry will join a few thousand folks for Winter Jam, a concert festival held at the St. Pete Times Forum. This year's lineup includes Skillet, Sanctus Real, Group 1 Crew, Peter Furler, Building 429, and Kari Jobe. The cost is \$10 per person; students should bring this in cash for entrance into the venue, plus additional money for food and concert merchandise. The bus will leave FBC at 5 p.m. and return at 11 p.m. Parents and students can find more information and register online at fbctampa.org.

Student ministry families are encouraged to serve together on Monday, January 23 at Amazing Love Homeless Ministries in Ybor City. Families and students should plan on meeting at Amazing Love (2801 N. 17th Street) at 6 p.m. and plan on leaving at 8:30 p.m. No supplies are required other than a compassionate heart!

Uncle Charlie Is Coming

One of America's best-loved children's worship leaders, Charlie Bancroft, will be our special guest on January 4, 2012 as we inaugurate First Baptist Church of Tampa's newly renovated Kids Zone. Charlie has been traveling the US and abroad leading kids worship for fifteen years. He got his stage name, Uncle Charlie, in Uganda, East Africa where he has ministered to orphan children under the care of Watoto Childcare Ministries.



Charlie's goal is to use concerts and camps to promote awareness for being a "Music Missionary to the Overlooked." Along with high energy, fun, kids worship, Uncle Charlie and his ministry teammate Callie Aultman emphasize the importance of being mission-minded and reaching out to children who are less fortunate, disabled, and disadvantaged. Kids and adults can have a "hands-on" part in Uncle Charlie's mission through his "Each One Reaches One" campaign.

Preschoolers through fifth graders are invited to join us on Wednesday, January 4 at 6:30 p.m. for this one-hour concert. Parents are welcome to attend the concert with your child. There is no admission charge for this event. For more information, contact Helen Jones at hmfj1023@gmail.com or visit unclecharlie.com.

FEATURES

- 4 **Missions in Our Church**
Plan on being part of the "Venture 2012 Ministry & Missions Fair" on January 29; Souper Sunday is coming; the Kids On Mission sponsor a child from Southeast Asia.
- 6 **Upward Basketball & Cheer-leading**
Be a part of this exciting new ministry

COLUMNS

- 2 **Staff Perspective**
Welcome our newest staff member, Kevin Cook.
- 5 **1st Person**
Renee McCummings reflects on ministry.

REGULAR CONTENT

- 3 **This & That**
- 4 **Missions Moment**
Meet the Ropp family and their vision with the Philippines
- 8 **Ministry Notes**
Be sure to check out upcoming classes, events, and needs of our church ministries
- 10 **Check These Books Out**
Three more great books to read.
- 11 **For Your Calendar**
January birthdays, anniversaries, Bible reading plan, and Wednesday dinner menus; January and February calendar highlights.

this and that...

Average BIBLE STUDY Attendance to Date
225

Average WORSHIP SERVICE Attendance to Date
309

Average PARAMOUNT Attendance to Date
19

Average EXTENDED CARE Attendance to Date
26

GIVING to Date
\$1,052,709²⁸

Over/(Under) Need
\$142,183⁴⁸

You have to eat... You have to pray...

Men's Prayer Breakfast

**Thursday
January 12
8:00 a.m.**

The Ropp Family

Called to the Philippines by God and associated with the Bob Tebow Evangelistic Association, this family gives praises to God for all He is doing in this ministry.

The family has been in the ministry for over twenty years. They are currently raising support for upcoming mission trips to the Philippines with a goal of serving there long-term.

They are asking for prayers and support to accomplish this goal to bring Christ to the Filipino people.

'12 Mission Trips

You don't have to just read about missions, give to missions, and pray for missions! As vital as those activities are, you can also GO on mission through FBC Tampa.

Look for news of several upcoming mission trips planned for 2012 including return trips to Brazil and Korea plus new opportunities to Guatemala, and other international, national, or local destinations.

What if every one of our members went on mission this year?

2012 Ministry & Missions Fair

If you have spent much time at FBC Tampa you have heard the staff and leaders talk repeatedly about disciples being "missional" and have heard and seen the phrase "everyday, everywhere, everyone." The concept is that every follower of Christ should be living on mission, much like a missionary, in his or her everyday life by playing a role in impacting our community with gospel words and deeds.

On Sunday, January 29 you will have an opportunity to take this from the conceptual level to a practical one at the "Venture: 2012 Ministry & Missions Fair." The 10:45 a.m. worship service on this day will center around each of us finding a place of service in the church and/or outside of it.

A number of informational booths will be set-up allowing for interested individuals to gather more information about opportunities and to make contact with leaders for that ministry or organization.

Some of the outside agencies that will participate include: The Spring of Tampa Bay, Mission Tampa, Hillsborough House of Hope, Dress for Success Tampa Bay, Florida Baptist Children's Homes, Life Impact Network, and Tampa Port Ministries.

Souper Sunday on February 5

The Women on Mission once again are sponsoring a food drive for the less fortunate in our community in conjunction with the NFL's Super Bowl in February. All members of the congregation are encouraged to participate in Souper Sunday by bringing canned foods and other non-perishable foods during the month of January leading up to Super Bowl Sunday on February 5, 2012. A barrel will be placed in the dining room for you to place items into.

All items will be given to Mission Tampa (missiontampa.org). Contact Diane Meyer (meyd3@inbox.com) for more information.

Child Sponsored by Kids on Mission

The Kids On Mission will be sponsoring a child from Southeast Asia. This sponsorship will cost \$420 for a year and the kids are working hard to earn this money. The children will make a personal connection by receiving this child's story and then exchanging letters and pictures throughout 2012. The Kids on Mission will make a difference not only in this one child's life, but in his/her entire community by providing for clean water, food, healthcare, and education. We challenge our FBC family to continue in your generous support of our mission projects. You will find a support envelope in your January 8 Sunday Worship Folder. Please help us in this endeavor with our children.



Women's Ministry

Winter Bible Study

The Shaunti Feldman *Life Ready Woman* study groups begin on Monday, January 2, at 7 p.m. and on Tuesday, January 3, at 9:30 a.m. Registration is available at fbctampa.org/registration.

Missional Ministry

VENTURE: 2012 Ministry & Missions Fair

January 29, 2012 @ 10:45 a.m. Plans are presently underway for what we hope will become an annual or biannual church event: a ministry and missions fair that will help match each of our members with ministry opportunities in our church, local community, state, nation, and world. This year's theme is VENTURE, a journey that is taken even in the midst of uncertainty or risk. While serving in ministry may be quite a venture for some of our church members, we hope it proves to be an exciting and rewarding adventure for all.

If you direct, or represent, a church ministry or community organization and would like to participate in VENTURE by setting up an informational booth, please contact a member of the Ministry Committee, Nate Tyler at nate@fbctampa.org, or Brian Dembowczyk at brian@fbctampa.org. Limited space is available but the goal is to represent as many opportunities as possible.

Sports Ministry

Upward Basketball & Cheerleading

We are continuing to recruit leaders for Upward Basketball &

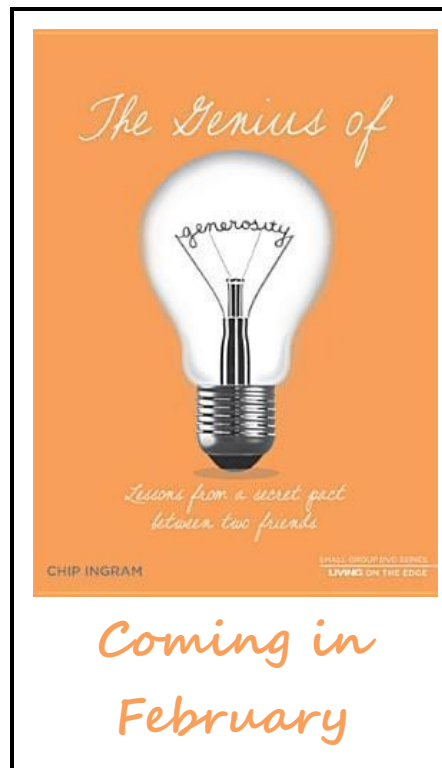
Cheerleading including basketball coaches, referees, cheer coaches, scorekeepers, concession stand workers, prayer partners, emcees, greeters, and more. Visit fbctampa.org/upward for information or contact Brian Dembowczyk (brian@fbctampa.org) if you want to partner.

Registration is available for participants K5 through 6th grade. Registration brochures are available in the church office or registration is available online at fbctampa.org/upward. Participants must attend one of the two Evaluation days, either Saturday, January 7 or Saturday, January 14. Practices begin in February. The season runs through April.

Life Stewardship

The Genius of Generosity

A special stewardship campaign will be held in February. During this month the Sunday morning Bible study groups will be temporarily regrouped into four larger groups to participate in Chip Ingram's *The Genius of Generosity* DVD-driven study. You can learn more about this study at generouschurch.com. A special preaching series will also be shared during this time. For more information about the campaign, contact Pastor Bob (bob@fbctampa.org) or for *The Genius of Generosity* study contact Brian Dembowczyk (brian@fbctampa.org).



new members

by Letter

Joey Stemple
Kent Hollonbeck
Dawn Giel

by Baptism

Tammy Hollonbeck
Robert Rudawski



Next Meeting
TUESDAY, JANUARY 10
@ 10 a.m.

Preschool Ministry

■ Study Theme

Our little ones will be learning that Jesus loves everyone and so should we. Our 3s and 4s will learn that God Knows Me and Made Me Special.

■ Volunteers Needed

Volunteers are the backbone of our ministry. We thank God for everyone. God is blessing us with families with young children. If you are looking for a place to serve God and love children, please contact Darleen Block (darleenblock@hotmail.com).

Children's Ministry

■ Sunday Morning Theme

Our children are really enjoying their new Kids Zone area. Their study theme for January will be *Inked: Reading and Writing about God*.

■ Kids on Mission

Our Kids on Mission will be sponsoring a child from Southeast Asia as a wrap-up to their study. They will also begin learning about Feeding the Hungry/India this month.

Student Ministry

■ Winter Jam

January 14 @ 5 p.m.
Students will attend Winter Jam at the St Pete Times Forum. Cost is \$10 plus money for food/merchandise. Plan on picking up your student from church at 11 p.m. that evening. Contact John Sanders (john@fbctampa) for more details.

■ Amazing Love Ministries

January 23 @ 6 p.m.
Students and family will meet at Amazing Love Ministries (2801 N.

17th Street) to help with this homeless ministry. Contact John Sanders (john@fbctampa.org) if you need directions or further information.

■ "Big Deal" Nights

These nights in January have an extra "big deal" attached to the worship service. Dinner will be served at a cost of \$3 per person. January's theme is Hat Night: wear your favorite or goofiest hat.

Young Adult Ministry

■ Paramount

Join our group on Jan 8 and 15 as we ask God what vision He has for our ministry in 2012. Then on January 22 we will begin a new series on relationships.

Senior Adult Ministry

■ Joy Club

There will not be a meeting during January.

■ Joy Club Singers

We will resume practices on Wednesdays at 10 a.m. in January. Practices occur in the first floor rehearsal room. Contact Mike Horton (mike@fbctampa.org) for more information.

■ Senior Adult Bible Study

Look for another exciting study to begin in January. This study is led by Mike Horton and takes place on Thursdays at 10 a.m. in Room 300.

Worship Ministry

■ Kevin Cook Arrives

Kevin Cook, the new Associate Pastor of Worship & Music will begin his ministry on Sunday, January 8.

Discipleship Ministry

■ Thrive Special Study

January 15-29 @ 9:15 p.m.
The Sunday morning Bible study groups will participate in a special three-week study on Sunday January 15, 22, and 29. The study called *Thrive* will parallel a sermon series during that time span and will address the purpose of FBC Tampa and how it relates specifically to the Bible study ministry. Teachers can attend a lunch meeting to help them prepare for the study on Sunday, January 8 at 12:30 p.m. in Room 400. Register online for the lunch at fbctampa.org/registration.

■ Winter Cross Training

January 4 @ 6:30 p.m.
Registration is now open online for our winter classes that begin in January. Four courses will be offered:

- Introduction to Doctrine 2
- So You Want to be Like Christ?
- The Life of David
- Financial Peace University

Doctrine 2 is a CORE course. There is a \$100 fee for *Financial Peace* which may be paid online at fbctampa.org/payment-giving. Register for all classes online at fbctampa.org/registration.

■ The Truth Project

January 3 @ 6:30 p.m.
Jeff and Anne Weihe will be leading a study of *The Truth Project* in their home on Tuesday nights beginning on January 3. The group will meet from 6:30-8:30 p.m. This 12-13 week study is limited to the first 12 participants. You can learn more about *The Truth Project* at thetruthproject.org or register for this at fbctampa.org/registration. Contact Brian Dembowczyk at brian@fbctampa.org for info.

The Message within Ministry

by Renee McCummings

I didn't always actively pursue ministry opportunities but when I first woke up to the fact that I was simply taking up space in my church in Miami it was like God lit a fire in me. I desperately wanted to make-up for the time I wasted only attending church by praying for God to bless me, to change me, and to make my world right. I was so bent on giving back that I tried to jump into more active participation in church. I knew that my organizational skills, gift of gab, and sense of humor would surely be of value to this small, yet thriving church. Was I wrong!

When I approached the pastor and his wife with ideas to *help* them do things better, I was met with, "Have you attended the new member class? Once you do that, we'll see where we need you." and "That sounds great, but we're not ready for that right now." The bottom line was that I had to wait! I couldn't believe it. I didn't want to wait. I was doing all the right things, attending church every Sunday, sometimes twice, going to Bible study, even tithing. How was it that God couldn't use me? I was ready, or so I thought. I did as they asked. Bit by bit I got involved in various activities and had lots of opportunities to help organize church events. But I still wasn't satisfied. My pride wanted more.

It was during the Annual Men's Appreciation Breakfast that I finally got what I like to call, the *message within ministry*. My initial excitement about the event fled when I learned that I wouldn't be speaking, coordinating, or have a significant role at all. These things were reserved for the wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters. More than anything I wanted to be celebrating the blessing of a loving husband and father. A single mom and recovering nomad, I had no family there. I was riddled with envy and surely didn't want to be on the sidelines pouring juice!

He let me know that I was there... to serve Him... to please Him... not for me ... not for the people there... but for Him and Him alone!

easy, but they're not the same stumbling block of my past.

It was obvious to others that my spirit was troubled. When asked, I added lying to my list of sins. (Yes, we sin in the midst of ministry.) Full of conviction and guilt I realized that I wasn't going to make it through the morning "white knuckling it" on my own. As I prayed for strength I asked God why He put me there when He knew it was so difficult for me. He let me know that I was there... *to serve Him... to please Him... not for me... not for the people there... but for Him and Him alone!*

What a corner I turned that day. I realized that I had to get my focus off me, to simply embrace His love for me and trust that love to put me right where I needed to be; when I was supposed to be there. Once I did that I was able to serve others with a true joy of the Lord. I wish I could say that envy and pride haven't ever gotten in the way of a ministry effort again. It's not

Since then I've been involved in countless ministries, small groups, women's Bible studies and activities, organizational and administrative support, children's church, dinners, church committees, and my favorite, workplace ministry. But it's no longer about the task completed, the service rendered, or always doing things right. It's about seizing opportunities to be the eyes, ears, mouth, hands, feet and most certainly the heart of God.

Ministry, as God intended, indeed meets needs. It also delivers the message of God's love. The wonderful thing about this message is that while it is intended to be shared with others, it's just as often meant for US!

In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another; in diligence not slothful; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing steadfastly in prayer; communicating to the necessities of the saints; given to hospitality.

Romans 12:10-13



Basketball & Cheerleading Begin with Evaluation Days Saturday, January 7 & 14

Practices begin February 4; Games begin February 18

6 Ways You can be Part of the Upward Action

- 1.) **Basketball Coach:** Help children develop as basketball players and more importantly as children made in the image of God. Only a passing knowledge of basketball is necessary for the younger leagues. This is a plug-and-play opportunity with everything provided including practice schedules, drills, etc.
- 2.) **Referee:** Part of the Upward experience is emphasizing a respect for authority and promoting an always positive attitude. Referees play a big role in teaching this. Training is provided.
- 3.) **Cheerleading Coach:** Cheerleaders will be on hand to cheer on whoever is playing games during the morning. Girls will develop basic cheerleading skills while also learning the same character traits that the basketball players will.
- 4.) **Scorekeeper:** Two games run simultaneously requiring two individuals to keep score of their respective games.
- 5.) **Concession Worker:** Drinks, hotdogs, candy, and other snacks will be sold at cost for the families and other participants.
- 6.) **The Voice of Upward:** Have a “radio voice?” We need you to introduce the players and be the voice of Upward.

Upward Sports (upward.org) provides a fun kids sports experience based on healthy competition. Last year, more than 550,000 K5 through sixth-grade kids had a great basketball, soccer, flag football, or cheerleading experience through one of 2,400 leagues or camps. This year FBC Tampa will be added to the list of churches partnering with Upward Sports as we host a Basketball & Cheerleading league for the families of our community.

Some may ask why we are starting a new sports league when there are so many other opportunities in our community. It's a fair question that deserves an answer. The reason is that the Upward experience is vastly different from any other sports opportunity for children and families. In addition to striving to provide a platform for children to compete and learn how to be better athletes, Upward also provides a spiritual undergirding that is not confrontational or compromised. Each practice includes a brief devotion that affirms a character trait that is developed from Scripture. In addition, a gospel-oriented resource will be given to each family at the conclusion of the season. However, those are not the main way that Upward seeks to impact families with the gospel. The primary vehicle for accomplishing this is through the believing families who participate.



Ideally, Upward will be comprised of a roughly equal number of church and unchurched families. The idea is for the church families to see this as a missional opportunity and to naturally develop genuine friendships with unchurched families who participate. Inviting these families to share post-game meals and to celebrate birthdays are ways this can be accomplished. In addition, you will have at least one hour of practice time each week and one hour of games to sit next to these individuals and get to know them. This is the power of Upward: each follower of Jesus simply befriending someone else. It's that simple.

Upward Basketball and Cheerleading tips-off here on Saturday, January 7 for the first of two player evaluation/sizing days. Families have been asked to bring their player or cheerleader to the church gym between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. Players will be evaluated so that teams can be formed evenly. These are not tryouts: every kid makes a team.

We need twenty or more volunteers to help conduct these Evaluation Days. Volunteers are needed to greet and direct families to the gym, register and check registration information, size players and cheerleaders for their uniforms, run registration information between stations, and conduct a few brief player evaluations. There is an opportunity for everyone to be on the Upward Team even if you don't know anything about basketball!

For more information about Upward or to volunteer to help at Evaluation Days contact Brian Dembowczyk at brian@fbctampa.org.