



# LaCrosse Baptist Church Newsletter July – December 2022

## **From the Newsletter Editor – Don Loftus**

As you can see from the date listed above, I'm covering the last six months. The reason we didn't do a July to September newsletter is that nothing much happened during that time. But some of what I'm presenting happened during that time so I'm now including those months.

Pastor Howard's last sermon was on June 19, 2022 and that began the process of getting preachers to come and provide services for the church until we could find a new pastor, its called "Pulpit Supply". During this time our church switched from the New River Baptist Association in Stark, back to the North Central Florida Baptist Association in Gainesville. We originally switched because Pastor Joey Hay was familiar with New River and felt they could benefit him more that North Central. Pastor Joey was at LaCrosse for 5 years and then New River helped us with interim pastors until Pastor Howard Adam's became our pastor. He was with us for 2 years and was a wonderful preacher. The one thing we noticed was that our pastors were having to travel a long distance to get to our church, so we decided to switch back to North Central after Pastor Howard left. There was never anything wrong with either Association, it was just a matter of what worked best for our pastors and our Church. We had several people preach at our church as we looked for a replacement, some we knew, some we didn't. On July 10<sup>th</sup> we had a Pastor visit with us that had an open schedule and could cover more Sunday's in a row and we gave him the opportunity to preach more often. He did a wonderful job, presenting God's Word with enthusiasm, clarity and zeal. Pastor Troy Turner was unanimously voted to be our new Bi-Vocational



Pastor! Having him as our interim pastor for so many months allowed us to really become acquainted with his Christian outlook and we are so pleased that God has sent him to us. If you have been watching his Sunday morning sermons posted on our Facebook page, you will understand why we are excited to have him.

### **Church Work Day**

Our church needs a little tender loving care once in a while and on November 14<sup>th</sup> we had a church work day to trim the bushes, clean the playground and a few other spots that needed attention. Thanks to; Pastor Troy, Tobie and Carolyn, Gerry, Harry, Sonny and Kay, Pat, Ermida and Don for their willingness to give up a few hours to help make our church look better.





### **Church Replanting**

On November 17<sup>th</sup> Tobie, Gerry, Pastor Troy and Don went to a meeting at the North Central Florida Baptist Association on the topic of declining church attendance and how to do we get growing again. Bob Beckford, Executive Director of Replanting, North America Missions Board was our guest speaker.

The problem of declining church membership is not just a Baptist thing, it is happening to all churches and there is no single cause, it is a problem with multiple reasons. One of the most important things for Churches to keep in mind is that Jesus is the most important part of church growth. Just as it is with our personal relationship to God, "Spiritual Issues" are the most important aspect of the church message. Don't let the world dictate your message or your directions ... it's all about Jesus. An interesting fact about Baptist



churches is that 66% are 100 members or less. The mega churches, while impressive, are not truly representative of the trend with church growth. Smaller churches, like ours, are important and carry out an important role and that is why evangelism in our community is so necessary. The purpose of this meeting was to start a conversation about what churches need to do and to realize they are not alone. Once we have a new Pastor we will take a closer look at what issues we need to look at, all while maintaining the message of Jesus and spiritual issues.



### Thanksgiving Dinner

Our church tries to have a lunch once a month as a fellowship time and as an opportunity to invite quests to visit our church. Once a year we have a special lunch because it is Thanks Giving Sunday and, along with the sermon, is a time to reflect on the blessings of God in our lives.

This year Pastor Troy preached on “David’s Lesson on Gratitude”. King David, as we read in the Bible, was many things including a man after Gods own heart. But he was a man who also messed up a lot. He always repented and it is why he had so much to be thankful for. You can find that sermon, and many others, on our Facebook page at:  
<https://www.facebook.com/lacrossebaptist/videos>

After the sermon Pastor Troy and his wife Nina helped us celebrate with a terrific pot luck lunch.



If truth be known, we should be thankful every day of the year for what God has done for us through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Because of the gift of grace, regardless of what happens in the world, we know the battle is already been won, and THAT is a reason to be thankful.

### **Christmas Decorations**

On Dec 5<sup>th</sup> Kay, Pat, Carolyn, Tobie and Barbara came together to put up the Christmas decorations in our sanctuary, on the fence and in the fellowship hall. The decorations were beautiful, as usual and made things a bit more festive for the holidays. Thank you to the Turlingtons and Kay for taking the decorations down after the holidays.

### **Christmas Carols**

The church Carolers visited the homes of 5 shut ins/elderly on the evening of December 18 before returning to the church for a meal of soups, chili, and desserts. A fun time was had by all participants. It was delightful to see faces light up from the music and to hear pleasures expressed. What a great blessing!

### **Lottie Moon**

Every year our church participates in the Lottie Moon fund raising effort. Here is what the Lottie Moon web site has to say about it's history, "Lottie Moon was sent as a Southern Baptist missionary to China from 1873 to 1912. She saw firsthand the world's greatest problem — LOSTNESS. Meeting so many people who had never heard the gospel compelled her to write letters to American churches describing the need for a greater missionary presence. She pleaded for increased prayer and financial support to send and sustain more missionaries. This challenge became known as the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering®."

Our goal was to raise \$200.00 but we did much better by raising \$355.00. For more information here is the Lottie Moon web site address, then click on "Lottie Moon" at the top of the page: <https://www.imb.org/generosity/>

### **Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child**

In November, Gerry Forbes, the coordinator for this ministry, delivered 20 boxes to Trinity Baptist Church in Keystone Heights, the center that collects the boxes before sending them to Samaritan's Purse. A big THANK YOU to Gerry and to all who contributed to this very important ministry.

### **Helping Hands Ministry Christmas Gifts**

In December, our Church was approached by the North Central Florida Baptist Association to help with the Helping Hands Ministry Christmas gift bags, either with cash donations or items from a list that was provided. Seventy bags are provided for the homeless people, both women and men and contain toiletries and other useful items. NCFBA and churches within the association work hand in hand with the First Methodist Church in downtown Gainesville to reach these homeless people for Christ by meeting their physical needs. Praise God for the privilege LaCrosse Baptist Church had to participate.

### **Another Helping Hand from our Church**

Our church had a request to let a pastor and his family use the Lighthouse building to live in while they look for a permanent residence. We don't have any Sunday School classes going on in the building right now so it seemed like a good thing to do. Alex and Molly Lanou, along with their children will be staying at the Lighthouse for an undetermined length of time. Alex has just become the Pastor at Hague Baptist and had to move out of the Children's home down the road from us due to regulations.

Give the housing situation around Gainesville and Alachua County, finding a house at a reasonable price may take some time. We have set up a rent agreement for a nine month period with an increase in the event it takes longer, but the agreement can be terminated in less time if they do find a house sooner. We are praying for the family that everything will fall into place and we can help them get situated as quickly as possible.

### **WHAT'S COMING UP**

Farm Share – On February 18<sup>th</sup> we are scheduled to have another food handout that's the people at Farm Share. They do wonderful work and only need locations and volunteers to hand out the food. During these rough economic times, Farm Share is really helping a lot of families.