



The youth playing ga-ga ball during Youth Fellowship Night (photo by Kaycee Priest)

## Our church has several steps to take before calling a new pastor

By Interim Pastor Ben Craver

Pastoral transitions are a recurring phenomenon in the life of every congregation. True, some pastors stay for decades. That is rare; most stay considerably less than a decade. In fact, Barna Research reports that mainline congregations are served by the same pastor for only about 4 years.

Thom Ranier argues, "... as our research has shown consistently, longer tenure is needed for church health. Longer tenure does not guarantee church health, but a series of short-term pastorates is typically unhealthy."

This gets to the heart of interim ministry, and why I'm called to serve in this capacity. Most churches want a rapid turnaround of pastors. Frankly, it isn't spiritually healthy to do that. There are some matters that churches must settle before calling their next pastor. I'm here to help, advise, and consult about these important matters.

So, where are we? Right now, we're in the middle—the interim—of the pastor search process. Some even refer to this time using a biblical metaphor—the Wilderness Wanderings. It can be a time of confusion, no doubt. Remember how "... all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said to them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt, or, Would God that we had died in this wilderness" (Numbers 14:2). That was a major mistake. God heard their murmuring and gave them their desires. Rather than murmuring, let's turn to praying for our current leaders and our future pastor.

What should we do in this middle or interim period? While not exhaustive, let me mention a few matters:

**1. THE LEADERS.** Traditionally, that refers to two key leadership roles. The first, you've already done; for better or worse, you have an interim pastor—me. The second is to elect a Pastor Search Committee (see Bylaws of First Baptist Church of Castroville, Article V; Section A.1.a). You're not quite ready to bring someone to the church next month. The second step below is essential.

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### June

- **Jun 2 (Sun)** - Justin Russell will be preaching
- **Jun 2 (Sun)** - Children's Camp meeting following Worship Service
- **Jun 7 (Fri)** - Set up for Community Clothing Distribution—portable building—1 pm
- **Jun 8 (Sat)** - Community Clothing Distribution—portable building—8:30 am
- **Jun 9 (Sun)** - Youth will be leading service and graduating seniors will be recognized
- **Jun 12 (Wed)** - Business Meeting—Fellowship Hall—7:30 pm
- **Jun 15 (Sat)** - Community Work Day—Church parking lot—8 am
- **Jun 17-20 (Mon-Thu)** - Children's Camp at Alto Frio Encampment in Leakey
- **Jun 20 (Thu)** - Food Truck Distribution—10 am (Volunteers needed at 8:30 am)
- **Jun 23 (Sun)** - Children's Family Picnic in the Park—after service—Castroville Regional Park at #2 large pavilion by restrooms and playground

### Mark Your Calendars

- **Jul 3 (Wed)** - Volunteers for July 4 Float decorating and water bottle labeling
- **Jul 7-11 (Sun-Thu)** - Mission Eagle Pass
- **Jul 15-19 (Mon-Fri)** - Youth Masters Camp at Alto Frio Encampment in Leakey
- **Jul 22-26 (Mon-Fri)** - Vacation Bible School 6-8:30 pm

### Regular Activities

**Ladies Bible Studies**—Tuesdays at 9:45 am and 7 pm in the Education Center

**Flourish Bible Study**—Junior High and High School aged young ladies—6:30 pm—locations vary, contact Emily Breiten 210-912-7955 for more information

**Alpha Bible Study**—Junior High and High School aged young men—Student Chapel, 6 pm

**Men's Morning Word**—Thursdays at 7 am at Sammy's Restaurant

**Prime Timer's Lunch**—Senior Adults—2nd Thursday of the month—11:30 am at Bill Miller's

# AWANA Awards Night



Cheryl Carnes gives AWANA Service awards to: Jerry Guinn, Tiffany McDowel, Sylvia Pelayo, Julia Hoover, Patti Laney, Hayley Mobley (with Paisley), and Maria Santos.



Cheryl Carnes gives AWANA Service awards to: Frankie Sandoval, Lilly Carnes, Lindsay Carnes, Debra McDonel, Cara Loser, Jennifer Hinson, and Sherry Beard.



Cheryl Carnes gives AWANA Service awards to: Dee Smith, Angel Hoover, Tina Santee, Scott Dye and Ranae Blackwood. The Carnes' congratulating Miss JoJo on 21 years of AWANA service. Charlie and Cheryl Carnes have 18 years of AWANA service.



## Congratulations to the AWANA award winners

Edward Butcher  
Ethan Dye  
Natalee Filler  
Naomi Hinson  
Ellie Kusch  
Elizabeth Loser

Ryleigh Maples  
Kinlee McDonel  
Joy Priest  
Luke Priest  
Kayleigh Ruston  
Christopher Williamson



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**2. THE SELF-STUDY.** The self-study tends to focus on two aspects of church life: One looks to our history and current situation seeking to identify where we stand. That's important since in today's fragmented Baptist denominational life, First Baptist Church of Castroville, must be able to say to any pastoral candidate, "This is the kind of Baptist Christians we are." Most pastoral candidates will want to know that, too. I would.

Two, and this one looks to the future, what kind of pastor do we need to lead this congregation in the years ahead? The typical response is, "We want God's man." Sure we do! But, God's men differ in giftedness and callings. Do we want a strong preacher, compassionate pastor, winsome evangelist, effective administrator? Of course! The problem is, we're not apt to find in one person ALL of those characteristics.

In order to locate God's man for this church, the Pastor Search Committee will need to hear from you. The best way to discover that is through a questionnaire designed to reflect the will of the congregation. That's important since, in Baptist life, the congregation is autonomous or self-governing. No agency or body directs us on what to do. We do it ourselves, through our own study of Scripture, regular and sincere prayer, and the witness of the Holy Spirit—individually and corporately. This information becomes the core of what the Pastor Search Committee will utilize when interviewing pastoral candidates and thus why it is essential to hear from everyone.

**3. THE SEARCH.** The search is carried out by the Pastor Search Committee. These are the people who, on the one hand, you've entrusted to seek, find, and bring before the congregation your next pastor. The committee, on the other hand, owes you as a congregation the fidelity to find someone who best "matches" what the congregation prayerfully said the church needs.

How long does it take? There's absolutely no way to gauge that. Sometimes, it may take only a couple of months; other times, it may take longer. The key is for neither the committee

nor the church to rush. Be patient with God's Holy Spirit. Further, the Spirit may be waiting on the church to make some needed changes within. It is patently not fair to hold off on making some of these changes until "the new pastor arrives." Why would we want to task him to do this or do that, knowing that whatever decision he makes, a good number of his new members will not like it or him? Make the hard changes now. Again, that's part of the reason I'm here.

**4. THE CALL.** Finally, the Pastor Search Committee has prayerfully and carefully found the single person they believe God is calling to FBC-Castroville. By this time, they will likely have reviewed hundreds of candidates. They should always stay within the bounds established by the self-study. Someone may ask, "What if they find someone they like who doesn't fit into those bounds?" My advice is, do not consider that person. Why not? Because, in the self-study, the church prayerfully described the person they wanted. God's Spirit spoke through the congregation; the committee should honor that.

The committee then will bring the pastoral candidate to the church field. Probably, we will want to host a Saturday evening get acquainted time. Then, on Sunday, he will preach and a vote will be taken. The results are announced to the candidate and to the church. At that point, it is up to the candidate to accept the call or decline. Most of the time, the response on both is positive. Finally, you're about to get out of the Wilderness and into the Promised Land!

This is a difficult period. You want someone and you want him now! Please do your best to avoid that. Most people don't want to rush into the purchase of a home, the selection of a job, or covenanting with a spouse for a lifetime. Calling a pastor isn't much different.

There's no better Scripture for this period than Psalm 27:14: "Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!"

Waiting with you,

**Ben**

## Prime Timers



Prime Timers meet at Bill Miller's on the second Thursday of the month at 11:30 am. Art and Estelle Akerson spend hours on the phone to get a headcount and then show up early to corral enough chairs and tables. Thanks for your ministry, Akersons!

## Community Work Day

Our church will be doing service projects away from the church building on Saturday, June 15. Our service projects will include painting a home and doing some yard work. Please bring with you any equipment (lawn mover, weed eater, paint brush, etc.) that you have to tackle these tasks. You can contact Tina Santee for details at 210-317-3020. Please meet us in the church parking lot (in front of the Student Chapel) at 8:30 am.

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."

Galatians 6:2

# Baptisms

On May 5 nine children and one adult were baptized in a touching ceremony.



Deacon Justin Russell hugs his daughter, Jiliana, after he baptized her.



Deacon Charlie Carnes baptizes Rothe Barden.

## Welcome New Members

Analee Barden	JayDee McFarland
Rhylee Barden	Ryan McFarland
Rothe Barden	Ava Weber
Averie Frankie	Emalee Williams
Kinlee McDonel	Jonah Winkler
Jiliana Russell	



## Children invited to free Vacation Bible School

Gas up the all-terrain vehicle and head out on a wilderness adventure like no other. Get up close and personal with elephants and egrets, polar bears and penguins, cockatoos and crocodiles, and so much more at this year's "In the Wild" Vacation Bible School (VBS). This summer VBS will focus on some amazing, real-life encounters with Jesus and discover the most amazing truth of all – Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of God, and by believing we can have life in His name.

Daily activities will include making crafts, playing fun games, enjoying tasty snacks, singing cool songs, and learning about missions

Our church invites all children 3 years of age through the seventh grade to join us for VBS beginning Monday, July 22 - Friday, July 26. Sessions will meet daily at 6 p.m. and dismiss at 8:30 p.m.

For more information or to register, visit [www.fbccastroville.com](http://www.fbccastroville.com), call the church office at 830-538-3220, or e-mail [childrens@fbccastroville.org](mailto:childrens@fbccastroville.org). Web registration is encouraged because slots fill up fast.

## Be part of 4th of July Parade

FBC-Castroville will continue a tradition started in 2015 of distributing water bottles during the annual Castroville 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade. We will need volunteers to ride on the float and to hand out 1,000 bottles as we walk alongside the float. Children ride the float; adults and older youth walk. We also will need someone to follow the float with their pick-up truck so we have a place for the extra coolers with water.

There's plenty to do before the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, too. Tiffany McDowell from the Communications Ministry will be designing labels to put on the water bottles. On the night before (July 3), we will meet in the Fellowship Hall to remove the Ozarka labels from the 8-oz. bottles and replace them with our labels. Then we'll place them in coolers (please let us borrow your medium or large coolers!) that night to be loaded with ice and placed on the float and in the truck the next morning.

We also need volunteers to help Children's Minister Debra McDonel decorate the float to promote VBS.

If you want to get into the patriotic mood, plan to come to the church at 7 p.m. Wednesday, July 3, and join us in the Fellowship Hall to help decorate the float and prepare the water bottles.

If you want to ride on the float or walk beside it, wear some patriotic colors, sunscreen, a hat or visor, and comfortable shoes. Watch for more details in the bulletin as we get near July!

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This newsletter is the leadership's way to keep you in the loop. To submit items, send to Jessi Rushing at [spydurpoet@gmail.com](mailto:spydurpoet@gmail.com). Deadline is the Sunday after the monthly Business Meeting. It is sent via e-mail and it is available on the What's Happening tab of the church website. Printed copies are available in the Worship Center foyer.