

# BEHIND THE SCENES

Volume 7, Issue 14

December 27, 2017

FROM THE DESK OF PASTOR GREG SYKES

## A Look Back on a Historic Year at FBC

Even though we still have quite a financial hill to climb to finish out 2017, I don't believe it's too soon to celebrate one of the best years in our church's history.

From the opening of our new worship facility, to the renovation of our existing sanctuary for our collegiate students and youth, it has been an amazing year from a facilities standpoint.

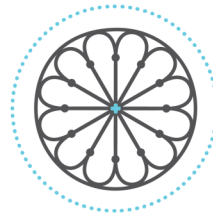
But there are other things, both measurable and immeasurable, that make 2017 special.

Our Life Action Revival, a ten-day move of God that literally reached virtually every member and every family in our church, seemed to epitomize the year.

God convicted us of our sin, drew us deeper into our practice of the basics — prayer, Scripture reading, evangelism — and left us revitalized, refreshed and more aware of the Spirit's work around us.

But we also had the incredible privilege to host the 2017 Annual Meeting of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. It was amazing to get to fellowship with our extended Southern Baptist family from around Arkansas, and the week was filled with some amazing worship music (thanks to Robert Ramsey's leadership with our own talented worship team and Larry Grayson's work with Masters' Singers) and some anointed preaching.

We were encouraged and challenged — especially by the com-



FIRST BAPTIST  
RUSSELLVILLE

missioning service for the ABSC church planters ministering around Arkansas. God is moving!

And, of course, we saw God move in and through our church. We were blessed to send over 100 individuals out of the United States on mission trips, and we were able to commission a few of our own for service with the International Mission Board.

For the church year (technically October to October), we had 72 individuals join our church via transfer of church letter or statement, and we baptized 57, for a total addition of 129.

The number of baptisms, by the way, included 10 between the ages of 18-29, the so-called "forgotten generation," a generation that statistics say are walking away from church and not looking back.

We were blessed to reach some of this generation, and you can count on some plans to target this group with increasing fervor

in the days ahead. God is indeed working and we want to join Him as He works at ATU and beyond.

And there was so much more that we take for granted — but that is worthy of celebration. During the year, we planted multiple new Life Groups and even saw several groups "flip" morning services, allowing us to open up more space and even out the attendance in our first two services.

We averaged just under 900 for Life Group attendance for the year — 889, to be exact. And that, of course, is a record.

And a fair attendance figure for our three worship services would be around 1,200 each Sunday. That, again, is easily a record and probably a conservative figure for much of the year.

Not to mention so many other special moments and "firsts." I don't know about you, but I'll always remember our first Christmas Eve Candlelight Service in the new worship facility — it was already a special place, but when all of those candles began to light up, backed by the congregational singing of "Silent Night," it really became home.

***This Sunday:***

***"The Church at Antioch"***

***Acts 11:19-30***

**FROM THE DESK OF PASTOR GREG SYKES**

FBC Russellville  
200 South Denver  
P.O. Box 36  
Russellville, AR 72801

Phone: 479-968-1316  
E-mail: [greg@fbcruss.org](mailto:greg@fbcruss.org)  
Twitter: @sykes\_light  
Church website: [www.fbcruss.org](http://www.fbcruss.org)  
Facebook: First Baptist Church  
Russellville



**FIRST BAPTIST**  
RUSSELLVILLE

**Sunday, December 31**

“The Church at Antioch,” Acts 11:19-30

*Week Ten, “The Church & the Gentiles,” sermon series*

*One Family Worship Service, 10:30 AM*

**Monday, January 1**

*Lord’s Supper Service, 9:00 AM*

**Sunday, January 7**

“The Church’s Persecution,” Acts 12:1-25

*Conclusion: “The Church & the Gentiles,” sermon series*

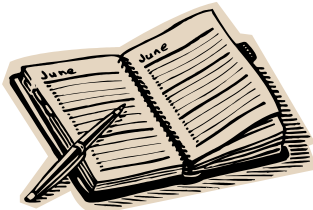
**Sunday, January 14**

“Obeying Christ’s Command,” Acts 13:1-12

*Week One, “The 1st Missionary Journey,” sermon series*

**Find our sermons online at  
[www.fbcruss.org](http://www.fbcruss.org)! You can  
even subscribe via iTunes!**

**An Crucial Update on Year-End Giving:**



Follow us on Twitter at  
[@FBCRussellville](https://twitter.com/FBCRussellville) or [@sykes\\_light](https://twitter.com/sykes_light)  
(for your pastor’s account).

As of today, with just five days left in 2017, we have quite a hill to climb to reach all of our financial goals for the year.

From a sheer look at the numbers, we have not been this far behind since 2011, the only year in the recent past when we did not actually hit our budget goals.

At this time, we’re still short

**\$79,076** to reach the annual budget.

Also, we’re **\$87,224** short of our World Mission Fund goal of \$309,000.

Added together, we’re praying for **\$166,300** between now and the conclusion of December 31st.

Of course, we’ve often closed the year with a flurry of generous giving, and that could happen again to conclude 2017. But it is worth noting that we have not had as large of a final day of giving in the last few years as we once did.

More and more of our giving is spread throughout the year, which is actually better for day-to-day operations . . . But it makes

this deficit seem a bit more daunting, of course.

Regardless, we need God to show up over the next four days. If you feel led to make a year-end gift, you’ll have several opportunities.

The church offices will be open today through Friday from 8:30 AM until 5 PM.

And we’ll continue the tradition of “Pastor’s Day” on Saturday, December 30th from 8:30 AM until 5 PM. I’ll be in the office from 8:30 AM until 12:30 PM, and Larry Walker will close out the day.

You can give during our last service at 10:30 AM Sunday, or by the mail — as long as your gift is postmarked no later than 12/31.