

# PERSPECTIVES

HONORING THE PAST, SECURING THE FUTURE

News and Views on the Capital Stewardship Campaign – Final Issue

First Baptist Church Raleigh, North Carolina

## FBC members pledge \$2.9 million in response to building needs

On Sunday, May 16, more than 400 family and friends of First Baptist enjoyed an old-fashioned Sunday dinner, the music of a Dixieland band, and a festive atmosphere of spring flowers, balloons and streamers. The celebration marked the successful conclusion of our capital stewardship campaign—and the day's receipt of a generous \$2.75 million in pledges.

Overflowing the Fellowship Hall and filling the surrounding hallways, the celebration crowd was the largest ever served for a church event.

"When the pledge cards were tallied following our commitment service on May 16, we were amazed by the

total pledged by First Baptist people," read a report in the First Baptist edition of the *Biblical Recorder* on May 29. "Truly we have 'honored the past' and helped 'secure the future' of our downtown Baptist witness and ministry."

As of Monday, June 7, the church had received 317 pledges totaling more than \$2.9 million. Members began fulfilling their pledges on Sunday, June 6, by giving more than \$200,000 at the "in-gathering" service. Overall, contributions received as of June 7 total more than \$1 million.

"We rejoice over the generous pledges made by our members and this in-gathering response," said Mary Nash Rusher, campaign coordinator. "At the same time, we realize the volatility of construction programs and their costs. The facilities improvement committee is diligently at work making efficient use of the promised funds, but we will not know the bottom line balance of our 'construction' account for another two to three years."

While most of those who have worked on the capital stewardship campaign are sitting back and enjoying the successful results, one group



At the celebration event, campaign leaders announce the total pledges received in the Commitment Service. *Photo by Jane Doby.*



More than 400 people attended the Celebration Luncheon on May 16. *Photo by Jane Doby.*

has only just begun its work. "The follow-up committee will be working over the next three years to be sure that we remember the promises we have made and honor them in a timely manner so the pledges are converted to dollars in the bank account," said Rusher. (See related article-page 2.)



The music of the Moore Square Dixielanders added to the celebration. *Photo by Jane Doby.*

## Minding the Lord's business

I recently came across the 1998 edition of *The New York Public Library Desk Reference*, a 1040-page compilation of answers to the questions most frequently asked that library's reference librarians. It's the nearest thing on earth to the heaven of heavens for infoholics and therefore a delight for yours truly.

One tidbit I found within it begged for use sometime during our capital stewardship campaign. However, I never found the proper occasion. Perhaps now is the time, so here's the tidbit:

A penny minted in 1727 was the first U. S. coin to have the words "United States of America." It also bore the motto, "Mind Your Own Business."

I chuckled when I first read this because of what it reveals about our historic privacy desires. But now that our campaign is concluded I'm chuckling for a far better reason.

I chuckle because in the past month you said you sincerely want to "mind the Lord's business" with your money. You said that what happens to us is more important, important enough for you to rearrange your personal priorities, schedules and comfort zones. Many made significant stewardship journeys and submitted pledges that place you on a faith pilgrimage.

Whatever the sum, I sincerely thank you for the prayer, the love, and in many cases, the sacrifice you have offered. Your unselfishness will be rewarded in more ways than you can imagine. You may already have noticed an increase in legitimate, personal pride; it feels good to be a giver. You may have sensed a stronger relatedness; mutual commitment creates community. You may have been heartened by fresh confidence; hope is awakened when you see what we can

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## A Word of Thanks

by Mary Nash Rusher, Campaign Coordinator

Hundreds of people at First Baptist made our capital stewardship campaign a resounding success. The enthusiasm and excitement of those working on the campaign, as well as those who heard the message, grew over the last three months, resulting in an overwhelmingly positive response to our church's needs. I will try in some small way to recognize the groups who participated.

To Max and Doris Baldwin and Robert and Jan Ponton, our Campaign Directors, our profound thanks for their tireless leadership and work behind the scenes. I am certain Max and Doris spent more hours at the church than in their own home during the past three months.

Thank you to the leaders of our home fellowships, Ed and Laura Ann Vick and Hayden and Cathy James, and to their committee members who opened their homes and VCRs to FBC members.

Kay and Barbara Huggins, Steve and Marie Sumerel, and their Vision Awareness Committee did an outstanding job explaining the physical needs and the spiritual possibilities that could arise from the campaign. Similarly, Mike and Mary Lou Dodd and their committee did an excellent job of integrating the stewardship message into Sunday school programs for the children and youth.

The Mailing Committee, led by Carol Millen and Lilo Goodman, spent countless hours disseminating information. I am sure they are still recovering from the paper cuts and sore wrists but I do hear that they had some fun.

The work of Walt and Libby Barnes, Mike and Meg Dare, and the Spiritual Life Committee will continue to influence the life of the church in years to come. The prayer vigil was moving and meaningful, and they helped us realize that this campaign was more than just another fund drive.

Dawn Stuart and Gene Puckett were the master minds behind the campaign media. Dawn took the laboring oar, obtaining the logo, overseeing the video, doing newsletter layouts, and ordering print materials. Thanks both to her and to all those who contributed articles, photos, ideas, and editing and production assistance.



Mary Nash Rusher

Donnie and Henry Helms, Tom and Karen Jordan, and the Hospitality Committee called every resident church member, and in the process updated the church's mailing list to give us more accurate addresses and phone numbers.

Carolyn and Kent Dickens, Linda and Sam Carothers, and their crew threw a marvelous party on May 16. Our church still reflects the beauty of that day.

Charlie and Peggy Barham, Linville and Mary John Roach, and their committee members telephoned those church members who by May 23 had not yet had the opportunity to participate. We thank them for their dedication.

*see Thanks continued on page 3*

## Follow-up work just beginning

by Chuck and Susan Nichols, Follow-Up Directors

To facilitate our building improvements, we must turn our tremendous pledge card response into dollars. The Follow-Up Committee has the task of making sure that we remember the promises made in our capital stewardship campaign and that we honor them in a timely manner.

To accomplish this task, committee members will be sending out peri-

odic reminders, accompanied by payment envelopes; using visual tools in the Lewis Building to keep us all apprised of our progress toward the goal of collecting pledges; and making regular reports to the congregation as to the status of the fulfillment of pledges.

The committee's work will continue over the next three years.

# Campaign results in more than raising funds

by Meg Dare, Spiritual Life Director

When asked to write this article about the spiritual life of our church during our campaign, I knew I could not speak for how the campaign affected each of you spiritually. So instead I am sharing with you my own spiritual journey during these past few months.

Let's start back from the beginning. . . when that "megabuck" number was thrown at us. So much money for our building when we worship a Lord who had no place to lay his head, I thought. I went to the meeting that first Saturday morning because I love my church. I felt if I was going to have an opinion (which I did) then it was at least going to be an educated one! After a couple of cups of coffee, a few doughnuts, and a bagel or two, my position mellowed.

I was intrigued by the spirit and direction in which this campaign was being led. It became obvious this campaign was about so much more than just raising money. In fact, we were repeatedly told that if all we did was raise money then we would have failed. This campaign was to be about a closer walk with God. It was about developing a bond within the church that would continue long after the repairs to the building were done.

From the Spiritual Life team's very first meeting, I felt a bond, a spirit of unity between us. Team members' high attendance at meetings reinforced for me the power of prayer. Immersed in prayer, we were inspired, willing and eager to serve as we began planning for the 18-hour prayer vigil.

Then day-to-day living set in. Phone calls, follow-up phone calls, articles to write, deadlines to meet. Vigil guides, schedules, coordinators, security. Meetings to attend, babysitters to schedule, etc. During this same month, our vehicle broke down on three occasions, we had a plumbing leak in our

house, and we had some unexpected health concerns and doctor's visits regarding my pregnancy. And then there were the constant joyful demands of having a two-year-old. I confess, I was feeling spiritually broken by this point.

On the day of our prayer vigil I attended an out-of-town reunion with more than 100 people. A loner at heart, I came home exhausted. Leaving home and seeing more people was the last thing I wanted to do. But I was scheduled for a shift at the vigil. I knew in my position I had to go. Mike convinced me I would feel differently once there.

Imagine my dismay when the very first prayer card I read was a child's request to "Pray for the love and joy of other people." I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. As I looked up to acknowledge God's sense of humor, I was struck by the awesomeness of our sanctuary. There were only a few other individuals in the candle-lit room. I looked around and above me. I immediately went from being humored to being humbled. I sat there in silence remembering the significance this church has had on my life over the past ten years and I was overcome with gratitude. Card by card I prayed for the needs and concerns expressed. I left in peace feeling renewed and revived. My spiritual life, once again, was brought back full circle.

During the campaign, I have experienced a true sense of community within our church. I have developed friendships that will far exceed the "to do" lists which originally brought us together. Above all, I know I have grown spiritually. This church gives me space to breathe and room to grow. My prayer is that you too will feel nurtured and cared for here. Our campaign is over but what we're about as Christians begins anew each day.

*Minding continued from page 2*

do whenever we pray as though all depended on God and work as though all depended on us.

Other good surprises await us on this journey. Listen for the stories that will emerge from people's involvement in this campaign. Watch for the spiritual growth that comes as we honor the pledges we have made. Who knows? All of this may be grand enough for us to publish our own reference book: *The First Baptist Digest of Faith Surprises*. I'll buy a copy right now.

Dan Day

*Thanks continued from page 2*

The work of Chuck and Susan Nichols, follow up directors, has only just begun and you will certainly be hearing from them in the months and years to come.

We cannot stop without thanking the staff, in particular Kay McLean and Marie Carter who came in on their days off to tally pledges and handled extra duties and endless phone calls.

Our last and perhaps biggest thank you goes to Dan Day, our tireless leader, who was there with moral support, spiritual guidance, and his physical presence through the entire process.

I am sure that I have left someone out of this list—a testimony to the number of people involved. The campaign has been a huge success, both in terms of the dollars raised and the spirit of commitment and togetherness it has fostered in the congregation. I hope we can apply this same spirit and enthusiasm to the many great goals we have set for ourselves.

## Another "Thank You"

by Max and Doris Baldwin, Campaign Directors

We sincerely thank Mary Nash and John Rusher for coordinating a very successful campaign. Their gifts of time and talent, dedication, leadership, and exemplary participation all contributed to our success.

# Building work to begin right away

by Don Kline, Construction Committee co-chairman

Many have asked about the schedule for getting started on our building projects. This is the first of many efforts to keep you informed of the work to which we have pledged our support.

The facilities improvement committee has begun to turn the report on our needs into construction documents. We have developed a broad outline of the time line for the various projects.

## Life Safety

Deficiencies in these areas are top priority. We will begin with upgrading our electrical system and fixing drainage problems. Much effort has gone into the details of how access, removal, and replacement of some items will take place with a minimum of disruption and delay.

We expect to award the life safety contract in August and be able to begin construction in September. At some time, perhaps in November, we will switch over all our electrical power from the old main switch to a new one. That will require a total shut-down of all our power for about three days. After that critical step is completed, more localized and shorter power outages will take place through-

out the buildings until all the circuits are individually cut and reconnected to four new distribution panels.

The drainage work will also begin this summer. As part of that work, we will install a new pipeline under the play area to relieve our overloaded (and probably partially obstructed) main drainage line. This excavation will extend into the parking lot and then to Edenton Street.

## Heating and Cooling

Improvements in this area will start with the replacement of some heavy equipment in the basement. Some of the McDowell Street parking lot will be blocked off for contractors' trailers. Plans will be developed for the complete upgrade, extending the improvements throughout the building all the way to delivering the tempered air to each room.

The life safety and heating and air conditioning projects are planned to be completed by January, 2000.

## Kitchen and Preschool

Design and planning for the kitchen and preschool will take place over the winter. Work in the kitchen and interior preschool areas should take place next summer when the program needs are lighter.

## Roof and Sanctuary Exterior

The last packages to be designed and bid will be the roof and sanctuary waterproofing improvements. Naturally, any emergencies and routine maintenance activities will be carried out if needed before we get to the rehabilitation contracts. We hope these improvements will be undertaken in the fall of 2000, depending on the flow of funds and how many unforeseen problems crop up.

## "While you're at it" work

Ministers and committee members have received several suggestions, items that have been described as "while-you're-at-it" work. The committee and the architects have consciously recognized that we have two (conflicting) goals: not to overlook something that should and can be done along with the other work we have set out to do, and not to get too sidetracked and lose focus on the major deficiencies that we have all set out to correct. Within those broad guidelines, we welcome all ideas for consideration.

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