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# Keystone **BAPTIST**

Official Paper of the Pennsylvania Association of Regular Baptist Churches

## ***Doing the Church's Business***

by Pastor Charles L. Dear  
Crescentville Baptist Church, Philadelphia



If we would discuss the "Church's Business," most would immediately think of its ministries and testimony before others. Certainly, we recognize that the local church has the priority of knowing Christ and making Him known, both far and near. However, the manner in which the local church conducts its business affairs with the community and the outside world is also a significant part of its accountability, to the members of the local church and its testimony to the community.

There seems to be a trend that is broadly accepted by some Baptist churches and their leadership. We should be particularly concerned when the leadership and decision-making have funneled down into the hands of a few leaders, like a church Board, or in some cases into the Pastor's hands alone. In like fashion, and perhaps a prelude to the above, there are some churches which have begun a similar trend. This is reflected in dwindling practices of church business meetings, the distribution of regular financial reports to church members, requiring church membership voting on the annual budget, distributing regular missionary updates, and church ministry reports.

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## **Confidence in Uncertain Times**

By Pastor Allen G. Harris  
Hope Baptist Church, Hanover, PA



Fear and uncertainty are on the minds of many. These have a way of intimidating into silence or causing one to hide and flee from public scrutiny. These are not new tools that are being used by Satan to undermine the work of God, they have been used for centuries. David tells us in Psalm 11 what a right Christian response should be to this kind of fear.

Psalm 11:1-3 tells us that David is surprised when those around him are encouraging him to run in fear when there is an attack from others. Some think this is a reference to Absalom's deceit and attempt to take the kingdom from his father. This was vicious, deadly, and full of ugly verbal and later military attacks. But

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**“Yes, All Things”**

With the pandemic/ COVID19 Communist China virus and then the wide spread fraud issues with our national election, many souls are struggling with an element of fear. The

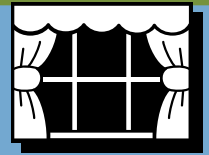
proven biased news media seems to have their own agenda of promoting liberal negative reporting. It is enough to cause many to be overtaken and controlled by fear.

Having said that, however, we Christians do need to keep a biblical perspective in all this. God does not want us fretting over an election, pandemic, cancer diagnosis, heart problems, tired muscles and achy joints, baldness and/or halo tosses. Seriously though, it is very healthy for us to be reminded of what the Word of God say: **“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”** (II Timothy 1:7)

That is a tremendous statement and declaration. Our God, our loving God, does not want us in any way entertaining fear and all its torment. Instead, our God has given us power through the ministering of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). And our Lord has given us the spirit of love in and through Jesus Christ. Please note I John 4:17-18; **“Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because**

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From the  
Parsonage Window



**The Bummer**

Recently, I read the following article posted somewhere on social media. The information is so relevant to those whose lives have been saved by Good Shepherd and as approach the Christmas season, those who need to meet the Shepherd. The article said:

*Every once in a while, a ewe will give birth to a lamb and reject it. There are many reasons she may do this. If the lamb is returned to the ewe, the mother may even kick the poor animal away. Once a ewe rejects one of her lambs, she will never change her mind.*

*These little lambs will hang their heads so low that it looks like something is wrong with their necks. Their spirit is broken. These lambs are called “bummer lambs.”*

*Unless the shepherd intervenes, that lamb will die, rejected and alone. So, do you know what the shepherd does? He takes that rejected little one into his home, hand-feeds it and keeps it warm by the fire. He will wrap it up with blankets and hold it to his chest so the bummer can hear his heartbeat. Once the lamb is strong enough, the shepherd will place it back in the field with the rest of the flock. But that sheep never forgets how the shepherd cared for him when his mother rejected him.*

*When the shepherd calls for the flock, guess who runs to him first? That is right, the bummer sheep. He knows his voice intimately. It is not that the bummer lamb is loved more, it just knows intimately the one who loves it. It's not that it is loved more, it just has experienced that love one on one.*

*So many of us are bummer lambs, rejected and broken. But Jesus is the good Shepherd. He cares for our every need and holds us close to His heart so we can hear His heart beat. We may be broken but we are deeply loved by the Shepherd.*

As we approach Christmas, how many bummer lambs are yearning for hope and love. How many bummer lambs are rejected and lost? Christmas is a wonderful time to tell the lost about the Shepherd.

-Sheila Walsh, “Loved back to life” (Copied)

There have also been concerns regarding a Pastor's regularly counting the offerings and spending church funds as he sees fit with no accountability offered to the membership. Even church benevolent funds can be at risk for abuse without accountability. What should be clear, according to the Scriptures, is that there is no rationalization for a Pastoral Autocracy.

Where such things are threatening the peace and welfare of a Baptist church and congregational polity is still in force in the church's Constitution, it falls to church members to require such reports and information be provided to all active members on a regular basis, as prescribed in the church's Constitution. Where there is no Constitution present, such as in a new church work, an appropriate Constitution is usually employed until the new work becomes organized sufficiently to become recognized as an independent Baptist Church. The point is that there should always be a church Constitution to which members subscribe, which defines the foundation, principles, and practices of a Baptist church.

Both Pastor and members must recognize the need for a mutual accountability between church members and Pastor. Congregational polity requires an actively engaged church membership, if members are to avoid/prevent problematic leadership and where decision-making has been left in the hands of the few. For those of us in Pastoral Ministry, the burden for increased transparency versus secrecy cannot be ignored. While there are confidences that must be maintained, we still must seek informed consent to the leadership we exercise. The Church must have confidence in their Pastor, but blind confidence cannot be demanded. Hopefully, we have earned the confidence of our people because, even when they may not have understood the issues at the moment of decision, hindsight has proven us trustworthy after all the details have been revealed. The Scriptures say that we are accountable for our stewardship, to both Christ and His Church which called us to lead the local assembly (I Corinthians 4:1,2). We will consider some Scriptural principles and examples "for our learning/instruction."

Let's begin with I Corinthians 14:40, "Let all things be done decently and in order." An amplified version of the same verse reads thus, "But all things should be done with regard to decency and propriety, and in an orderly fashion." Interestingly, both "decent" and "honest" in our English Bibles are drawn from the same Greek term *eusxhmonws*, which is used in Scripture specifically regarding our testimony before the unbelieving world. One of the foremost elements of a church's testimony is how it conducts and reports its business affairs, whether with the members of the church or in its interactions with the community.

Secondly, may our Pastoral attitude reflect the attitude of the Apostle Paul found in II Corinthians 11:28, "...the care (merimna, anxiety for) of all the churches." Paul's burden for the welfare of the churches, to which he had ministered, eclipsed any cares for himself personally.

Lastly, we can turn back to the election of Deacons for the local church (Acts 6) by the "multitude" of believer-members, which was met with the approval of the Apostles. The directions they were given were to "look ye out among yourselves." There should be no doubt that the early church demonstrated congregational polity in coordination with pastoral leadership and obedience to the Word of God.

David's trust is in the LORD. How can he flee if there is confidence in his God. Our reactions tell the world around us where our faith really lies and the reality of our faith. Verse two indicates that the attack was already underway either verbally or militarily. David realizes in verse 3 that the foundations of the nation have been undermined and destroyed. This refers to the Word of God, specifically the Law. If there is no regard for God, truth, and right, then what will the righteous do. Those advising David to flee are looking at the things around them instead of on God Himself.

David turns his attention to God. While man threatens, and some shake in fear, God is still in His holy temple. What does this mean to you? Is it just an academic knowledge that God is still on the throne, but you don't trust Him to actually flex His power for you? Or is He the God of heaven that shut the mouths of lions, crushed the walls of Jericho, and drowned the chariots of Egypt. God sees all you do. How you react is noted by God as well as by the world around us.

David reminds us of God's love for His people and His hatred for evil. It is this love that causes God to get personally involved in the lives of His children. David closes with a triumphant confidence in the near and ultimate judgment on the wicked. This kind of faith causes believers to stand for God and impact a fallen world for Christ. It is the power of the gospel that changed us and will change others around us.

David's encouragement is clear. We can trust God in times of uncertainty. He has not changed in power or in His rule. The test is to our faith. God will act on behalf of His children when they trust Him. Like the priests putting their feet in the Jordan first before the river parts, God encourages us to faith and rewards that faith.

So how will we respond in this day of uncertainty? Will we be silent and disobey the command to go and share the gospel? Will we hide in obscurity? Or will we repent of having been afraid of sharing the gospel and ask for the boldness of His Spirit and trust God to do mighty things?

We may not know tomorrow, but we do know the God who holds it, and us, in His hands and heart. So, what will you do? Don't let fear rule where Faith should be king.

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## Churches Searching for Pastor

As of November 2020

First Baptist Church – Corry  
 Springside Baptist Church Distant (New Bethlehem)  
 Grace Baptist Church – Hazleton  
 East Lawrenceville Baptist Church—Lawrenceville  
 First Baptist Church – Roulette  
 Carmel Baptist Church – Saegertown  
 Tidioute Baptist Church – Tidioute  
 Calvary Baptist Church – Union City



**Next Town Evangelism – Faith Baptist Church, Bradford**  
*Pray for Pastor Gary Smith as he is in need of PARBC Churches supporting him and thus be able to receive matching funds from the PARBC for his support in his effort to build back up FBC.*

## 2021 Activities for Our Fellowship

### **Youth Retreat and Talents for Christ**

Calvary Baptist Church, Bloomsburg

**Date: April 16 – 17, 2021**

See [www.parbc.org](http://www.parbc.org) (Teen Activities)

### **Spring Conference – April 12-13, 2021**

First Baptist Church of Ogden, Boothwyn

Hosts: Pastor Dan Hicks & Congregation

Speaker: Dr. Marty Marriott

Maranatha University

### **Fall Conference – September 13-15, 2021**

Hope Baptist Church, Hanover

Hosts: Pastor Allen G. Harris & Congregation

### **Spring Conference – April 25 & 26, 2022**

Grace Baptist Church, Kittanning

Hosts: Pastor Nathan S. Bramlet & Congregation

# **TALENTS FOR CHRIST CATEGORIES**

## **Calvary Baptist Church, Bloomsburg, PA**

### **April 16-17, 2021**

**Extemporaneous Writing**

**Bible Knowledge: Old & New Testament**

**Art: 2-Dimensional, 3-Dimensional**

**Photography**

**Home Economics: Baking, Needlework/Handiwork, Sewing**

**Bible Quizzing Team**

**Vocal**

**Male & Female Solos**

**Large & Small Groups**

**Instrumental\***

**Brass: Cornet, Trumpet, French Horn, Trombone, Baritone, Tuba, Sousaphone**

**Strings: Violin, Viola, Cello, Bass, Classical Guitar, Folk Strings**

**Woodwinds: Bassoon, Oboe, Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, Alto Saxophone,**

**Tenor Saxophone, Flute**

**Piano**

**Large & Small Group**

**Speech**

**Oral Interpretation**

**Public Speaking: Male & Female**

**Visualized Bible Teaching**

**Puppetry**

**Digital Media**

**Digital Presentation**

**\*Exceptions can be made to these categories and instruments with prior approval from the Talents for Christ Committee.**

## **DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION IS**

### **APRIL 2nd**

**PRESENT EVERY MAN PERFECT IN CHRIST JESUS.**

**COL. 1:28**

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## A Resolution on the Responsibility of the Local Church to Civil Authority

**Whereas** the Bible clearly states that the Lord Jesus Christ is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Ephesians 1:21; 1 Timothy 6:15) and is the Sovereign Head of and Supreme Authority for the Local New Testament Church (Ephesians 1:22, 5:23; Colossians 1:18); and

**Whereas** the Bible clearly states that the Lord is the One who appoints civil leaders and government officials (Romans 13:1); and

**Whereas** the Bible goes on to say that Christians should trust the Lord, submit to every ordinance of government in their personal lives for the Lord's sake (1 Peter 2:13) and seek to live peaceably among all men (Romans 12:18; I Tim 2:1, 2); and

**Whereas** the scriptural example is to obey the ruling authorities until they overstep their authority and seek to govern the things of the Lord (Ex. 1:15-21; Josh. 2:1-4; Dan 1:3-9; Acts 4:18-19, 5:29); and

**Whereas** the Lord has given the rule of the Local Church to itself as an autonomous body and it is to be governed by the body under the leadership of those men called to serve as the Pastor/Elder/Bishop according to the Word of God (Acts 15:19, 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5; Hebrews 13:7, 17; 1 Peter 5:1-4); and

**Whereas** the Bible describes the Local Church as the Body of Christ (Romans 12:4-5; 2), the Bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-27) and a called out assembly which is commanded to not forsake gathering together (Hebrews 10:25);

**Be it, therefore, resolved** that the messengers of the Pennsylvania Association of Regular Baptist Churches meeting September 14-16, 2020, in Jersey Shore, Pennsylvania, do hereby stand upon the clear teaching of Scripture concerning adherence to state ordinances concerning meeting together during this time of pandemic.

**Be it, therefore, resolved** that we will do all within our power to live peaceably among all men by conducting ourselves in a reasonable, respectful, and responsible manner (Romans 12:18); but if the state ordinances infringe upon our responsibility to serve the Lord and conduct the affairs and meetings of the church as is clearly stated in Scripture, we will obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29; Col 3:22).

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**Be it, therefore, resolved** that we admonish all civil authorities to respect all rights endowed to churches by our Creator as “inalienable,” including the right to freely assemble, according to the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights.

**Be it finally resolved** that we will declare the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as the only true answer for hope and peace in this world and that will be our message now and throughout any calamity until the return of our Lord for us in the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

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## A Resolution on Rejecting the Defunding of Police Forces

**Whereas** the Bible clearly states that Law Enforcement Officers are ordained by God (Romans 13:1, 6); and

**Whereas** the Bible clearly states that the purpose of these officers is to enforce the laws of society and punish those who would break those laws, as “ministers of God to thee for good” (Romans 13:3-4); and

**Whereas** the Bible clearly states that Christians should submit to their authority in civil and legal matters in obedience to the Lord and being good citizens (Romans 12:18, 13:5); and

**Whereas** the Bible also states that these officers are to be honored for their service to society and ultimately to the Lord (Romans 13:7); and

**Whereas** the Bible also states that these officers are to be funded by the taxes of those within the society of which they serve (Romans 13:6-7);

**Be it, therefore, resolved** that the messengers of the Pennsylvania Association of Regular Baptist Churches meeting September 14-16, 2020, in Jersey Shore, Pennsylvania, do hereby stand upon their support for the men and women of law enforcement in each of our respective communities.

**Be it also resolved** that we reject the radical and disruptively sinful ideology of any movement which would cry out for the defunding of police forces, especially any groups which have at their foundation a political agenda which would seek to undermine the Biblical foundation of our country. America was founded upon Biblical principles and such movements seek to change it at its moral core.

**Be it further resolved** that we call out to all law abiding citizens, especially the children of the Lord, to rally behind the faithful servants of their local police force by declaring the cry for defunding police forces as foolish, unbiblical and wicked.

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## A Resolution Regarding Race and Ethnic Division

**WHEREAS** all persons are created in God's image and, therefore, have inherent worth (Genesis 1:27, 9:6; James 3:9); and

**WHEREAS** the Bible teaches that all mankind are of one blood, the only race defined as the human race (Acts 17:26); and

**WHEREAS** the concept of race defined by our society is a social construct, having no biblical foundation; and

**WHEREAS** from a genetic perspective, there is a 0.2 percent difference between any people groups; and

**WHEREAS** we live in a time where skin color is being used to divide one from another and incite animosity and hatred; and

**WHEREAS** through faith in Jesus Christ, both Jew and Gentile, bond and free, barbarian and Scythian have all been made one in the body of Christ (Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 2:14; Colossians 3:11); and

**WHEREAS** the elevation of one ethnic group above another, demanding attention and special treatment, violates the very core of treating people based upon their character and NOT the color of their skin (Philippians 2:3); and

**WHEREAS** many of these toxic divisions have been fueled by the erroneous philosophy of "scientific" racism which emerged from Darwinian evolution;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that we, the messengers of the Pennsylvania Association of Regular Baptist Churches meeting September 14-16, 2020, in Jersey Shore, Pennsylvania, do hereby affirm that God created all men equal and that each person should be treated with the respect and dignity deserving of all law-abiding citizens.

**WE FURTHER RESOLVE** that we will cherish the sweet spirit of unity that God gives like-minded believers of every nation and tongue, working to encourage such unity within our fellowships (John 13:34-35; Colossians 3:14; 1 Peter 1:22).

**WE FURTHER RESOLVE** to pray for our country that God would have mercy on us and turn the hearts of our fellow man to Jesus Christ, the only source of peace and harmony (Galatians 5:6).

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**as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.**"

So, no matter what we are facing – pandemic, wide spread national election fraud, etc., our Lord has instructed and provided a means to have hope because of the love of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Having said all this let me remind all of us about Romans chapter eight and verse number twenty-eight: **"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."** Does that mean all things? Yes, ALL THINGS work together for good. That means the bad, the unpleasant, the painful, the unexpected and the sad things, as well as, the good, the pleasant, and wonderful things all work together for good for we who are born again and are in His will. Our Lord doesn't say a few things will work for good. He says all things. So, the difficulties we face in 2020 and perhaps in 2021 we know will all work for good to those who love the Lord. I do not have to fear. My God is still in control and loves me and walk with me through all this!



## Season's Greetings

*We want to wish each and every one of you*

*A very Merry Christmas*

*And a Happy New Year!*

*May our Lord bless and allow us all*

*To serve Him faithfully in coming days.*

*Paul & Judy Connor*