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ABOUT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH-LEWISBURG

We are an American Baptist Church in the tradition of Roger Williams, thus we accept no humanly devised confession or creed as binding. We are a Biblical people who pursue the study of Scripture as a mandate for faith and practice, and we seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit for its understanding.

As individual reflections of the image of God, we welcome and affirm all persons with full respect to gender, sexual, racial, and ethnic identities. We hold space for all persons with varying abilities, social standing, and economic status.

As a congregation we strive to follow Christ's example to live lives of service to others. We believe that a life of devotion and a life of service inform and support one another. Thus we have affirmed the following ethos for our church life: Free to Think, Bound to Serve.

We are a small, vibrant congregation occupying one of the most beautiful church spaces in Lewisburg. Our worship service is traditional in its simplicity, and appeals to many guests and newcomers because of its familiarity.

Our music ministry, including vocal and handbell choirs in addition to a rich collection of hymns, is led by one of the foremost gifted young musicians and creative artists in our area. Growth goals include identifying ways to appeal to younger generations in order to attract young families and single adults, while at the same time remaining true to the character of our heritage and institutional memory of our longstanding members. By increasing the number of worshipers and participants in church activities, we hope to strengthen First Baptist so that it may continue to serve others.
"I was baptized and confirmed in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, a faith community I left in my early twenties due to their anti-LGBT stance. I converted to Judaism and remained a Jew for the next 25 years. I had never really stopped being a follower of Jesus, I was just rebelling against Christianity which didn’t seem to want me. I found FBC of Lewisburg through my friend, the church’s music director. I had no idea Baptists could be progressive and welcoming of EVERYONE. I feel strongly that FBC takes Jesus’ commandment to love each other as he loves us seriously. This is my faith home."

"The First Baptist Church is a smart, humble, inspired place. It’s respectful and it’s plain. It celebrates independence and individuality. It loves Jesus in the most liberal and compassionate ways."

"The simplistic beauty of the sanctuary helps define what First Baptist means to me. As Baptists, we don’t necessarily stand for symbolic figures, but we rely on our “free to think, bound to serve” motto. We end our service with that pledge to do a deed. We are strong in tradition but open to new challenges."

"The credo of First Baptist Church, FREE TO THINK, BOUND TO SERVE, sums up the values we hold for our church. Over the years the church has maintained these values in spite of societal struggles, our financial struggles or policy disagreements. People with varying viewpoints have been able to learn and grow in Sunday School, discussion groups and Bible Study. This has not been easy, but given the rich history of First Baptist and the amazing leadership of both staff and members this richness endures.

Raising our children in First Baptist was a gift. The intergenerational experiences were treasured, as Grandparents were far away. In one instance, a child was having some real doubts about some Pastor’s Class teachings and questioned whether Baptism should happen. A meaningful, nonjudgmental discussion with a deacon enabled the child to make the decision to be baptized and join the church. The many examples of unconditional love for them made them feel part of a family. So for all of us, First Baptist Church has a special place in our hearts."
“First Baptist Church means many things to me, but probably the most important is the opportunity for worship as a community, with traditional liturgy and music and thoughtful, challenging sermons.”

“First Baptist is very special to me since I have been a member for 58 years when our family moved to Union County. The church members are like an extended family – loving and respecting each other regardless of different opinions, etc., but as a democratic society all working together to worship our Savior, Jesus Christ.”

“COVID-19 forced us to look at everything we did as a church congregation and find new ways to move forward. It literally put a stop to everything we had done in the past. What we soon discovered was how thoughtful and creative our church family is. We are strong and resilient. We adapt well to change, and we want to move forward. We seek a pastor who will continue this growth, who will continue to challenge us spiritually and who will lead us forward in this new world we are experiencing.”

“If I were to describe First Baptist in a single word, I would say: Support.

On a personal level, the worship service deepens my faith and understanding so that I can face difficult decisions knowing that God’s love and guidance are ever-present. Within our church family, we work together to help fellow members in times of need, offering both practical aid and friendly encouragement. Even when life is going smoothly, there is strength to be found in worshiping and working in each other’s company. Reaching out as a church, we strive to live up to our motto of “Free to Think, Bound to Serve” by assisting missions and relief programs worldwide as well as in our own community.

Just as our church extends support on many levels, may we uphold First Baptist with our own commitment to its mission.”
“The folks at First Baptist Church are a warm and welcoming group. I first got to know them as a guest preacher 15 years ago when I was asked to fill the pulpit, as I was not serving in a local church at that time. I then returned once a year until I went back into parish ministry at the beginning of 2022. The church I am now serving, Beaver Memorial UMC which is directly across the street from FBC, partners with FBC and two other churches in sharing a youth ministry staff person who runs the United Youth Group. FBC members have also been generous in donating to Beaver’s Beacon Ministries Free Shop which gives away personal hygiene and cleaning products, now that the local food pantry has moved to a different church. For many years the food pantry was housed in FBC and the hospitality of FBC was quite wonderful.”

“About 8 years ago, a staff person at Beaver married his husband, and the ceremony was held at FBC due to the prohibition of United Methodist Churches hosting homosexual weddings. When I share this info with those not familiar with FBC, they often express surprise that a Baptist Church would do that. I then explain that it is not Southern Baptist, but a progressive American Baptist Church. I also often ask if they knew that FBC was the original site of what was founded as the University at Lewisburg by Baptists [now Bucknell University]. Many are also surprised at this information. I appreciate the ecumenical connection FBC has with the wider community and look forward to it continuing.”

— Rev. Sue Jamison
Pastor, Beaver Memorial United Methodist Church
Lewisburg

“First Baptist is a congregation rooted deeply into the community, having offered a vital service for this community for years and having members who are deeply connected to their church, the businesses, and the non-profits of our area. As a neighbor of First Baptist I am grateful for the ways they communicate with their houses around them. Any work projects or things going on at the church that may disrupt normal day-to-day activities, I always receive a small note on my house.”

“As a colleague in ministry, First Baptist is always willing to partner with people and do ministry together. Their collaborative spirit is something that makes navigating the challenging waters of ministry a much better endeavor. They have excellent music in their worship services and beyond. While they have their traditions, they are always looking at improving and often trying new things. They are committed to speaking about matters of faith and justice in our church and in our world.”

— Rev. Daniel Wilt
Pastor, St. Paul’s United Methodist Church
Lewisburg
First Baptist Church seeks a full-time pastor who shares the congregation’s progressive outlook and commitment to accepting and supporting people from all backgrounds throughout their lives. The ideal candidate will possess the following interests, skills, and characteristics:

- Ability to prepare and deliver inspiring, engaging, well-researched sermons
- Intellectual curiosity, open mindedness to different viewpoints (reflected in both personality and in sermons)
- Ease in communicating a comprehensive understanding of the Bible and Christian theology
- Dynamic personality with the ability to attract and speak to young families
- Interest in and proven ability to relate to youth and youth ministry
- Ability to make both formal and informal connections with church members or others in their homes, at work, and in other settings
- Sincere care and concern for the church family offering support in times of bereavement, convalescence, or crisis, as well as sharing in joys and accomplishments
- A proven ability to connect with marginalized people
- Skill in personal counseling (individuals, couples, families and/or groups)
- Ability to work effectively and respectfully with church staff
- Commitment to maintain a regular, visible presence in the church beyond Sundays, through established office hours and other means
- Interest in and ability to work cooperatively with churches/leaders from American Baptist and other denominations including but not limited to the Lewisburg Council of Churches
- Engagement with the Lewisburg community
OUR CHURCH ORGANIZATION

The Constitution of First Baptist Church of Lewisburg sets forth the responsibilities of the Pastor and of its elected Officers and Deacons. Congregational business meetings are held on a quarterly basis, with elections held at the January meeting.

Passages from the Constitution describing this model appear below:

THE BOARD shall consist of nine elected Deacons plus ex-officio members, including the Pastor, Moderator, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary. Such ex-officio members shall have voting privileges.

THE PASTOR shall minister to the needs of the congregation and perform the various other services pertaining to the office. The pastor shall be a member, without voting privilege, of all standing committees except a pulpit committee. His/Her duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Supervise the preaching and teaching ministry of the Church and the administration of the ordinances.
- Advise the Church membership in matters of spiritual welfare.
- Counsel Church officers and other workers in the performance of their duties.
- Provide administrative leadership and supervision of Church employees, and all other members of the professional staff such as the choir director and organist.
- Report regularly to the Board of Deacons and to the congregation regarding his/her church-related and community service activities, suggested goals for the church, and his/her evaluation of the progress of the church.

THE MODERATOR shall preside at business meetings of the church and of the Board of Deacons, and shall be an ex-officio member of all standing committees. The Moderator is charged with expediting the work of the lay officers and committees in carrying out the temporal details of their assigned tasks and responsibilities, thus freeing the Pastor to devote his/her time to pastoral and spiritual matters. To the extent that the church is a legal corporation, the Moderator shall act as President of the corporation.

DUTIES OF THE BOARD. In general, the Board shall be responsible for the management of both the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Church, subject to the authority of the Church membership. More specifically, the Board shall:

- Develop appropriate policies and, along with the Pastor, coordinate the various ministries of the Church.
- Supervise all officers, committees, special task groups and organizations of the Church.
- Recommend working goals and objectives to the Church membership for approval.
- Receive and act upon recommendations from committees and task groups.
- Delegate duties and impose goals upon committees and task groups, establish accountability and evaluate results.
- Recommend the annual budget for adoption by the congregation.
- Administer the budget, determining the priority of needs as funds are available.
- Approve applications for Church membership or transfer.
- Act as fiduciaries or trustees to receive, hold and administer for the Church all property, real and personal, which at any time is owned by the Church.
- Assure that all legal and financial responsibilities of the Church are met on a timely basis.
- Conduct an annual audit of financial records by two active church members who are not officers or member of the Board of Deacons, Property Committee, or Committee on Finance and Promotion.
- Oversee and supervise the hiring, termination, and contracting with church employees.

**BUDGET**
The 2022 budget is made up of these broad categories:

**Revenue:**
- $85,250 - Subscriptions and plate offerings
- $91,965 - Dividends and Interest from our endowment
- $19,000 - Other Revenue
- **$196,215 - Total Revenue**

**Expenditures:**
- $14,445 - Missions, which is based on a % of the subscriptions and plate offerings.
- $128,011 - Personnel, including payroll for all staff, pastor’s benefits and parsonage expenses
- $42,845 - Operations, including insurance, utilities and office expenses
- $16,175 - Other expenditures
- **$201,476 - Total Expenditures**

The expenditures are higher but there was a sizable carryover from the previous year to cover the difference.

**ENDOWMENT**
First Baptist Church has a sizable endowment that is managed by Merrill Lynch, which is the source of the funding for the $91,965 that was included as Dividends and Interest in the 2022 budget. The Finance Committee is responsible for managing the endowment and meets regularly with Merrill Lynch to review the allocations and discuss current market conditions.

**DEACONS** shall be elected for a term of three years, with terms so arranged that at least three of their number shall be elected each year, and after serving for one full term, a retiring member may not be re-elected until after the expiration of one year unless their past term is one year or less. Each nominee for the Board of Deacons shall be designated to serve as chair of a specific standing Committee.

**STANDING COMMITTEES**
- Discipleship
- Watchcare
- Worship
- Fellowship
- Christian Education
- Church School
- Christian Missions
- Property
- Finance and Promotion
WHAT FIRST BAPTIST DOES

CONGREGATIONAL EVENTS
Community Trick or Treat
Easter Egg Hunt
Fellowship special occasion celebrations
Graduate Sunday Celebration
Halloween party for children
Haven Ministry Shelter meal provision
Ladies Night Out dinners
Lenten Potluck and Book Discussion
Little Free Libraries (2, for adults and children)
Sunday School for children & adults
Wednesday Night Bible Study
Women’s Bible Study
Youth Sunday

ECUMENICAL ACTIVITIES
CROPWALK
Lenten Soup & Scripture
Pub Theology
Rejoicing Spirits worship services for special needs participants
Senior Center luncheon program
Souper Bowl of Caring
Trivia Night Youth Mission Trip Fundraiser
United Youth Group
Women’s Retreat Weekend
Youth Lock-in

BUILDING USAGE
A.A. meetings
Lewisburg House Tour
Live from Lewisburg: Into the Light concert series
Susquehanna Valley Chorale

PUB THEOLOGY
3rd Thursday of the month
6 PM
Meeting at Bull Run Tap House
All perspectives welcome

CROP HUNGER WALK
ENDING HUNGER ONE STEP AT A TIME

POETRY PATH
Fried Beauty
Metaphysical poems

UNITY SERVICE RECOVERY

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COVID-19

In March of 2020 FBC moved to online services, thinking at the time it would only be for a few weeks. Of course that didn’t turn out to be the case as we were virtual for most of 2020 and 2021. This was particularly difficult on Christmas Eve and Easter Sunday, but also allowed for creativity during worship that we would not have needed to consider otherwise.

Keeping the congregation connected during COVID-19, particularly lock-down, was a challenge. We instituted a variety of activities including:
- a virtual coffee hour via Zoom after worship
- virtual VBS
- virtual hymn sings organized by our Music Director
- dropping off candy for our church school children in lieu of a Halloween Party
- delivering bulletins and candles for participating in the Christmas Eve service
- a socially distant picnic at the Sunbury Marina.
- several committee members took responsibility to send handwritten cards and phone calls to all members numerous times throughout the shutdown.

Some community self help groups were no longer able to meet in the building for almost two years. As a church we were dismayed by this, as we value being a safe place for such groups, but they’ve slowly returned in 2022. The groups remain small and we now ask that the group leaders record the numbers of attendees during their meetings so we have a record for health purposes, but no other information is recorded to respect their privacy.

LIVE STREAM

Our live stream came about out of the necessity to make group worship possible during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly during lock-down. Our Music Director, Brett Hosterman, took the lead in figuring out the technology to develop our live stream from a quarter hour “service” on Facebook Live to a regular stream on YouTube with multiple cameras. Find us on YouTube under “First Baptist Church Lewisburg PA”.

We have a small but loyal group who watches the live stream every Sunday. Some are homebound, others are out of town. We also make use of YouTube for special events, such as memorial services for which family members cannot be present and Sundays impacted by inclement weather.

UNITED YOUTH GROUP

United Youth Group, open to kids from 6th to 12th grade, was the brainchild of its Director, Mindy Moore. Mindy, a member at Beaver Memorial UMC, wanted to create a safe space for the youth in the three churches (FBC, Beaver, and St. Paul’s) while providing fellowship and Bible study.

From a practical standpoint, this effort also combined the resources of the churches to offer a more impactful program than the individual churches could provide on their own. After a couple of years we were joined by Christ’s Evangelical Lutheran Church’s youth and it is now a four-church group, with youth leaders from all four churches. We see this joint ministry as something to invest in for the youth, our ministerial partnership, and to combine our resources.
OUR WORSHIP LIFE

First Baptist is a progressive congregation with a traditional worship service. Our Sunday morning service follows a traditional order of worship, enhanced by the beauty of the sanctuary and complemented by the music selected to support the message of the day.

SCRIPTURE and PRAYER
A lay reader opens with the Call to Worship, leads the congregation in the unison prayer of confession and in the responsive reading, as well as reading the Scripture and Gospel passages. The Pastor offers an Declaration of Forgiveness following the confession and leads the Lord’s Prayer. The Pastor also conducts the Service of Giving, offers a Pastoral Prayer following the sermon, and closes the service with a benediction.

Prayer concerns may be conveyed to the Pastor in person or in writing on the pew cards collected following the service. Members are also encouraged to contact the Prayer Chain maintained by the church. With permission, names of those requesting congregational prayers are printed in the weekly bulletin.

PREACHING
Over the years, First Baptist has been blessed with pastors inspired to preach sermons that are meaningful, thought-provoking, and carefully prepared. The sermons primarily have a Biblical focus.

COMMUNION and BAPTISM
First Baptist practices open communion, with the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper observed in alternate months, as well as on Christmas Eve and Maundy Thursday. The Pastor leads the service of communion, but the elements are passed throughout the pews, with all partaking in unison.

A service of Baptism is traditionally held during the Palm Sunday worship service. In addition, the church’s constitution allows First Baptist to receive members by letter from a church of recognized Christian standing or with no letter but by experience, that is: upon profession of faith, by evidence of satisfactory Christian living, and upon the recommendation of the pastor and the Board of Deacons.

CHILDREN
Children and youth are a treasured part of our worship services. A children’s message is included in the service each week, and young people often participate as readers and ushers during the weekly worship service. They also take part in special children’s services each year such as presenting the annual Christmas pageant during worship each Advent. We also have a special Children’s Service every May that includes our newly baptized youth presenting a sermonette. Nursery is provided for infants during the worship service when needed.

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**MUSIC MINISTRY**

First Baptist Church of Lewisburg has a long standing history of quality, traditional church music. Our current pipe organ is hybrid, with Moller and Austin components, and contains 1834 pipes among 30 ranks and musically leads our worship each week. Since a major sanctuary renovation in the 1960s, the organ and choir can be heard resonating from the rear balcony, allowing worshipers to meditate on the message of the piece during musical offerings rather than focusing on the musicians themselves. The sanctuary also features a grand piano which is frequently played by during services by the Music Director, guests and member musicians.

First Baptist is proud of our church choir which participates in and leads worship from September through May. The size of the choir has fluctuated over the years, especially during the recent pandemic, however the choir members remain strong and faithful. Benefiting from the sanctuary’s excellent acoustics, the choir is able to sing without electronic amplification.

In 2020, Music Director and Organist Brett Hosterman started a handbell choir. The handbell choir has proven to be an excellent way to get more individuals involved in making music and has been a exciting enhancement to our musical offerings. The addition of the handbells has also enabled smaller groups of ringers to perform during services. The handbell performances have received the congregation’s overwhelming support.

The current hymnal is *Worship & Rejoice* (Hope Publishing Company, 2001) with an abundance of copies throughout the sanctuary. Typically, three congregational hymns are included in the service, as well as the Doxology sung during the Service of Giving. On Communion Sundays, the service closes with the congregational singing of the *Jubilee Hymn*, composed for First Baptist of Lewisburg by the noted hymn writer, Robert Lowry. The Music Director draws on many centuries of Christian works, ranging from classical compositions to contemporary pieces. Vocal solos are featured periodically in addition to the adult choir’s weekly performances. Local musicians are also a welcome addition to our worship services, with instrumentalists occasionally performing in addition to or along with the church’s musical ensembles. First Baptist is fortunate to have many of these musicians within its own church family.
Congregational information as reported by the Financial Secretary

At present, there are 111 individuals counted as church members, participants and children:

- 22 couples are married (44 people) with no children at home
- 9 couples (18 people) are married with children/youth at home
- 5 single parents with children
- 14 children
- 5 youth
- 10 young adults
- 5 people living together as adult and parent
- 25 single adults

Age breakdown:

- 13 under age of 19
- 11 individuals 20 – 29 years of age
- 13 individual 30 – 45 years of age
- 6 individuals 46 – 54 years of age
- 11 individuals 55 – 65 years of age
- 15 individuals 66 – 74 years of age
- 25 individuals 75 – 80 years of age
- 17 individuals 81 years and older

Employment breakdown:

- 53 people are retired
- 27 people have full time jobs
- 6 people have part time jobs
- 4 people are home makers/unemployed
- 9 people are students

Economic breakdown:

- 34 people are believed to have an approximate income under $45,000
- 42 people are believed to have an income exceeding $45,000

While our current ethnic makeup is minimally diverse, it is fairly representative of our Susquehanna River Valley locale.
Our Heritage
The First Baptist Church of Lewisburg was organized on January 3rd, 1844. The founding of the First Baptist Church of Lewisburg and the founding of the University at Lewisburg (now Bucknell University) are intertwined. James Moore, III, a citizen of the central Susquehanna Valley, is credited with both the determination to found a Baptist college and the desire to locate the school at Lewisburg. To found a Baptist institution at Lewisburg, however, required, first of all, that there be a Baptist Church in the community.

At the time, there were only 30,000 Baptists in all of Pennsylvania, and the Baptist church nearest to Lewisburg was four miles away in Milton, where Moore and his family were already members. By 1840, Moore had purchased a farm just outside Lewisburg, and had moved his family to the community. The founders of the Lewisburg church included Moore and his wife, plus six others who transferred their membership from the Milton church, as well as a group who had recently been baptized in the Susquehanna River following a series of evangelical meetings.

Following its organization in 1844, the Church immediately was recognized by the Northumberland Baptist Association on January 4th, 1844, with Eugenio Kincaid, the noted Baptist missionary to Burma, serving as moderator. Funds were raised, with James Moore, III, contributing approximately one-third of the $7,000 construction cost for the erection of a church building on a site on South Third Street, now the municipal parking lot. It was a modest brick structure with a small clock tower. The lintel piece is now installed on the wall in the Founders’ Room of the present church building.

In September of 1846 the basement was opened for preaching and Sunday school, and the new university began instruction there for boys and girls of the community in college preparatory classes. The church building was dedicated on November 15th, 1846, and college classes continued to be held there until the spring of 1849 when the university occupied what is now Taylor Hall, the first building on College Hill.

The close relationship of First Baptist and Bucknell University continued through the first century of their existence. Bucknell faculty members and their families formed the backbone of church membership. Students at the institution attended services and were an important part of the congregation. Faculty members served as pastor of the Church, notably George R. Bliss and Robert Lowry. John T. Judd, who was pastor of the church from 1884 to 1919, served as Treasurer of the University. As late as 1950, Gordon Poteat served as both pastor of the Church and lecturer at the University. However, while the college had once operated as a Baptist institution, requiring that a majority of the Board of Trustees be Baptists, explicit ties to the denomination had disappeared by the 1950s.

First Baptist’s special heritage also derives from its pastorate by Robert Lowry (1869-75), one of the great hymn writers of the last century, possibly best known for composing Shall We Gather at the River. First Baptist has been blessed by the Jubilee Hymn which Lowry wrote for us in 1894 for the 50th Anniversary of the Church and which we to sing on communion Sundays to this day.
From its very beginnings, our church has been dedicated to the realization of the basic functions of the Christian religion: worship, evangelism, missions and education. It has recognized the spiritual contribution of music in worship. It has been consistently loyal to the Baptist principles of freedom, democracy, and local autonomy. It has been and continues to be a “cooperating church.” First Baptist belongs to the Lewisburg Council of Churches, the American Baptist Churches of Pennsylvania and Delaware, and through it, the American Baptist Churches U.S.A.

First Baptist emphasizes the importance of individual spiritual growth. It is a circle of liberal Christian fellowship which does not exclude those who think independently, but which includes and takes in all who believe in God, who accept Jesus as Savior and who see His greatest commandment to be “love.” As Robert Lowry put it in the Jubilee Hymn, it is “the love that brightens all our way.”

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Based on a history compiled by John F. Zeller III

**Our Facilities**

When the Church outgrew its original building, the present edifice was constructed in 1869-70 on plans provided by Bucknell’s President Justin Loomis, modeled on a chapel which he had observed and admired in Europe. When no one else could be found to shingle the spire, Justin Loomis did it himself.

The sanctuary of First Baptist was remodeled in 1925. In 1932, the “chapel,” used as an assembly room for Sunday School, was gutted by a fire which also damaged the organ in the sanctuary. The chapel was rebuilt as an educational facility, and the organ was restored. The sanctuary was again remodeled in the 1960s when the organ and choir were removed to the balcony in the rear of the sanctuary, an area once used as additional seating. The architectural changes have remained in place to this day. The sanctuary is designed to draw the worshiper’s eye to devotional themes, removing the possible distractions of the previous configuration. Whereas the pastor formerly spoke from a central pulpit, with the choir seated directly behind him facing the congregation, the new arrangement accommodates preaching and reading with a separate pulpit and lectern, one on each side of the chancel. The center of the chancel quietly communicates the primary message of the church with the simple wooden cross suspended in front of the tall baptistry doors.

Over the years, changes have been made within the part of the building used for classrooms, offices, and social gatherings. A large room on the ground floor was converted to a parlor known as the Friendship Room, where Sunday morning coffee hour and other gatherings are held. A small kitchenette was installed adjacent to that room. In recent years the ground floor has also been equipped with an accessible family bathroom.

Renovations have also included the addition of a concrete entry ramp with an ADA accessible automatic door opener and an elevator that provides access to all three floors of the building for those with movement challenges. The church also provides enhanced listening devices for those with hearing issues. There are microphones located on the pulpit, lectern, and the sanctuary piano to provide better audio within the sanctuary and for our online participants.
The basement level includes a larger social area, the Founders’ Room, which accommodates church suppers and luncheons, and also serves as a meeting room during the week for self-help groups. Long-range projects significant to the life of the church family that have been completed in recent years include the installation of an elevator providing access to all floors and air conditioning throughout the building. In response to COVID, sound and video equipment were added to allow for online streaming of our weekly worship services.

Our parsonage was built circa 1850 and is located adjacent to the First Baptist Church’s building in the Historic District of Lewisburg. The parsonage is one block from the post office and Market Street where you will find ample shopping, restaurants, and entertainment venues. It is also an easy walk to Bucknell University’s campus.

This historic property includes two rental units above the recently renovated ground floor pastor’s residence. You may enter the main living area of the home from the center hall into either the living room or the gathering room which a decorative fireplace and dining area. The home contains three bedrooms and two baths, a fully equipped eat-in kitchen, laundry closet with washer/dryer, plus a study with the most beautiful, original-to-the-home, wood paneled ceiling, doors, and parquet flooring. The covered rear porch overlooks the spacious yard with barn (garage) storage for your car. Amenities include hardwood and laminate floors, decorative fireplaces, and central air.
Overall Community

The Lewisburg community, combining the borough with its surrounding residential areas, may be defined best by the 17837 zip code territory, which covers just under 70 square miles. Total population as of July 1, 2022, is 19,294.¹ With substantial acreage devoted to farmland, the population density per square mile of the zipcode area is 270², compared with 5,745 within the borough itself³.

The 17837 zipcode area is made up of 6,540 households, with almost 60% (3,872) Family Households. Owner-occupied housing units make up 55.2% of the total, with another 35.6% renter-occupied, and 9.2% vacant⁴.

The US Census 2011-2015 American Community Survey (most recent census data available for the zip code) shows a median age of 35.67 within the 17837 zip code area, with residents aged 15-24 years accounting for 25.8% of the population. Those between the ages of 25 and 64 total 43.8%. Children under age 15 represent 12.7%, and residents over age 65 total 17.7%⁵.

The ACS survey describes the zip code territory’s population as 98.1% of one race and 1.9% of two or more races. Within the single-race numbers, 88.3% are listed as White, 5.5% Black or African American, 2.5% Asian, with various other ethnic groups comprising the remaining numbers⁶.

Household income figures for the zip code territory are shown as $64,224 (median) and $90,233 (average)⁷. The US Census 2011-2015 American Community Survey estimates that 14.8% of the zip code area’s individuals fall below the poverty level⁸.

Home values for the zip code area are $222,537 (median) and $283,153 (average)⁹. Median rent is $702 per month¹⁰.

¹ https://pennsylvania.hometownlocator.com/zip-codes/data,zipcode,17837.cfm
² Ibid.
³ https://pennsylvania.hometownlocator.com/pa/union/lewisburg.cfm
⁴ https://pennsylvania.hometownlocator.com/zip-codes/data,zipcode,17837.cfm
⁷ https://pennsylvania.hometownlocator.com/zip-codes/data,zipcode,17837.cfm
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Lewisburg Borough
According to the PA HomeTown Locator Gazeteer’s numbers as of July 1, 2022, Lewisburg borough is a town of 5,591 residents, encompassing an area just under a square mile in size. It is the county seat of Union County, Pennsylvania.

Households within the borough number 1,921, with 717 described as Family Households. Owner-occupied housing units in Lewisburg borough account for 28.7% of the total, with another 56.9% renter-occupied, and 14.4% vacant.12

Historically, a limited number of Bucknell students have accounted for a portion of renters in the borough. University policy has been modified in recent years to require on-campus residency.

The US Census 2011-2015 American Community Survey (most recent data available) shows a median age of 24.6 within the borough, with residents aged 15-24 years accounting for 41.3% of the population. Those between the ages of 25 and 64 total 34.3%. Children under age 15 represent 9.8%, and residents over age 65 total 14.7%.13

As indicated above, the number of college students living in off-campus housing is are reflected in the high proportion of residents 15-24 years of age.

The ACS survey describes the borough’s population as 98.6% of one race and 1.4% of two or more races. Within the single-race numbers, 90.3% are listed as White, 3.5% Black or African American, 4.1% Asian, with various other ethnic groups comprising the remaining numbers14.

Inside the borough, household income is listed at $39,937 (median), and $62,271 (average)15. The US Census Bureau Quick Facts estimates that 25.4% of Lewisburg borough’s individuals fall below the poverty level.16

Home values in the borough stand at $196,633 (median) and $215,866 (average).17 Median rental cost is $733 per month.18

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11 https://pennsylvania.hometownlocator.com/pa/union/lewisburg.cfm
12 Ibid.
15 https://pennsylvania.hometownlocator.com/pa/union/lewisburg.cfm
16 https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/lewisburgboroughpennsylvania
17 https://pennsylvania.hometownlocator.com/pa/union/lewisburg.cfm
First Baptist Church is located in the heart of the small town of Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, with most of its members living in the borough and the adjacent areas. Lewisburg is situated on the Susquehanna River, sixty miles north of Harrisburg. Surrounded by farmland and smaller municipalities, Lewisburg is the county seat of Union County and home to Bucknell University. The historic downtown area, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, features numerous locally-owned shops and restaurants that draw visitors from near and far. Family-friendly activities are abundant in the area, including the Lewisburg Children’s Museum, Donald Heiter Community Center, Clyde Peeling’s Reptile Land, T&D Cats of the World, and Knoebel’s Amusement Park.

**Food and drink**
Host to a diverse collection of restaurants, Lewisburg boasts culinary offerings that can satisfy any palate. The area features Italian; Mexican; Chinese; Japanese; Middle Eastern; and Thai restaurants; as well as a selection of taverns; diners; a new wine, beer and cheese bar, and fast-food establishments.

For those who prefer farm-to-table restaurants, area fixtures Elizabeth’s Bistro, Brasserie Louis, and Ard’s Farm Restaurant proudly serve locally sourced meats and vegetables. Much of that locally grown fare is also available at the Lewisburg Farmers Market. Open on Wednesdays, the farmers market is a popular destination for residents of Lewisburg and nearby communities. Dozens of vendors arrive each week, selling everything from specialty cheeses to coffee to home-made jellies.

The Lewisburg Farmers Market also sells craft beer, a product that’s proliferated in Central Pennsylvania in recent years. Lewisburg is home to a microbrewery/restaurant, and there are six other craft breweries within a 15-mile radius of the borough. In addition, the area is home to five wineries, a distillery, and a hard cidery.
Historical Interest
The borough’s website summarizes the town’s history, tracing its beginnings to 1769. The mid-nineteenth century brought many advances, including improved access to Lewisburg in 1833 through the completion of the Pennsylvania Canal; the founding of the university in 1846 by the First Baptist Church of Lewisburg; the 1856 relocation of the county seat from New Berlin to Lewisburg; and the arrival of train service in 1869.

Of note are the unique street lamps found throughout Lewisburg Borough. As stated on the borough’s website, “During the early 1900s, one particular point of interest was the introduction of street lighting. The Borough of Lewisburg holds a unique patent on the design of its streetlights; a cast iron standard with two arm lights and one top light, originally enclosed in round glass globes.” On the corner of Third and Market Streets is the town’s Post Office. The building is now owned by Bucknell University, with administrative departments located on the upper floors.

Nearby historic sites include the Dale/Engle/Walker House, operated by the Union County Historical Society; the Priestley House Museum in nearby Northumberland, the home of British scientist Joseph Priestley, who discovered oxygen and was a noted political and theological figure of the 18th century; and Mifflinburg’s Buggy Museum, which offers a peek into a restored buggy factory.

Outdoor Recreation and Sports
The Greater Susquehanna Valley is home to four state parks – Sand Bridge, Raymond B. Winter (within the Bald Eagle State Forest), Milton, and Shikellamy – as well as lakes, trails and the Susquehanna River itself. These sites offer year-round opportunities to enjoy everything from hiking, biking and camping to water sports and nature appreciation.

The Buffalo Valley Recreation Authority (BVRA) oversees the Lewisburg community swimming pool and the adjacent recreation park, as well as the outdoor ice skating rink in the same area. BVRA offers a variety of other activities including gymnastics classes in both recreational and competitive programs. The BVRA’s facilities also include the Buffalo Valley Rail Trail, a scenic 10+ mile long trail used for walking, running and bicycling.

Hufnagle Park in downtown Lewisburg offers green space, an iconic gazebo, and the recently updated Kidsburg playground for children. The park hosts a variety of outdoor music concerts; the annual Ice Festival, Wooly Worm Festival, and Arts Fest; and other events throughout the year.

The area boasts many other recreational opportunities such as the YMCA at the Miller Center, SportsZone indoor sports complex as well as numerous activities for all ages. Twenty-three miles north of Lewisburg is Williamsport, home of the Little League World Series, the Peter J. McGovern Little League Museum, and the minor league Williamsport Crosscutters baseball team.
Visual and Performing Arts
Downtown Lewisburg is home to the historic Campus Theatre. Built in 1941, the recently restored theater is one of the few remaining single-screen Art Deco movie houses in the country. The theatre presents films, lectures, and hosts special events.

Numerous performing arts organizations provide an assortment of entertainment throughout the region. The Weis Center for the Performing Arts at Bucknell University, Susquehanna University’s Weber Chapel Auditorium, Lewisburg’s River Stage Community Theatre, the Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble, and the Williamsport Community Arts Center provide a full and varied schedule of performances including live theatre, dance, comedy, and concerts.

Bucknell University’s Samek Art Museum includes a gallery in the Elaine Langone Center on campus and the Downtown Gallery in the heart of Lewisburg. Susquehanna University’s Lore Degenstein Gallery and Bloomsburg University’s Haas Gallery of Art also offer fine art exhibitions.

The Lewisburg Arts Council, in operation since 1968, sponsors several annual events: Celebration of the Arts in April which features a juried Arts Festival that runs the length of Market Street; Music in the Park outdoor concerts throughout the summer; and a Friday-evening Stroll through the Arts in the fall.

Health Care
The Lewisburg area has several healthcare facilities to meet patient needs:

Evangelical Community Hospital — a nonprofit, community hospital in Lewisburg – has provided convenient, accessible, and affordable health care for nearly 90 years. The hospital offers a full spectrum of inpatient and outpatient services. The Hospital is a major employer, serving residents of Snyder, Union, Northumberland, and Lycoming counties and their surrounding areas.

Geisinger Health System — a physician-led, integrated health system — is the nation’s largest rural health services organization, serving more than 2.6 million residents throughout 44 counties in central and northeastern Pennsylvania.

UPMC (University of Pittsburgh Medical Center) is currently expanding into the central Pennsylvania region with a network of physician offices and local hospitals in Williamsport and Muncy.
Education K-12

The Lewisburg Area School District is made up of 4 schools and covers 41.7 square miles. There are 1878 students currently enrolled in the District. The schools are:

- Kelly Elementary: Grades PreK, K-3
- Linntown Elementary: Grades 4-5
- Donald H. Eichhorn Middle School: Grades 6-8
- Lewisburg High School: Grades 9-12.

The new Lewisburg High School was built in 2016 and sits on 200 acres. It features a state-of-the-art auditorium with an orchestra pit, a competition-sized gymnasium, an auxiliary gym, a school store, and a TV studio. Outdoor facilities include a turf soccer field, a baseball field, multiple practice fields, 500 solar panels and wetlands that science classes use for instruction.

Academics

The graduation rate is 95.5% with 77% of the students going on to post secondary education. 6.1% of students enter the military and 29% go directly into the workforce. In 2019, Lewisburg HS was ranked as one of the best High Schools in US News and World Report. In recent years, the District has received the following accolades:

- Designated in the top 50 High Schools in PA on SAT scores with the average score being 1260.
- Ranked in the top 10% of 500 school districts on state exams
- The Middle School achieved Blue Ribbon Status and the Keystone Award of Excellence
- Ranked top 5% of 500 districts in educating economically disadvantaged students

The most recent test scores available indicate proficiency or above rates of 88% in math, 91% in reading and 83% in science. The average teacher to student ratio is 14 to 1.

Students who are interested in careers are able to attend SUN Technical Institute in their last year of HS. The District also offers a virtual option through Lewisburg eSchool for students at all grade levels.

Athletics


The Arts

The Lewisburg Area School District was ranked as one of the best communities in the nation for Music Education by the National Association of Musical Merchants (NAMM). Music classes are offered at the elementary level. Beginning in 4th grade students can participate in chorus, band and orchestra. In addition to band/orchestra and chorus a fall play and a spring musical are offered at the High School level.
Higher Education
Colleges and universities located in the surrounding area include Bucknell University (Lewisburg), Susquehanna University (Selinsgrove), Lycoming College (Williamsport), Pennsylvania College of Technology (Williamsport), Bloomsburg University (Bloomsburg) and Pennsylvania State University (State College).

For more information, visit the following web sites:

**Lewisburg**
Bucknell University. . . www.bucknell.edu
Buffalo Valley Recreation Authority. . . www.bvrec.org
Campus Theatre. . . www.campustheatre.org
Donald Heiter Community Center. . . www.donaldheiter.org
Evangelical Community Hospital. . .www.evanhospital.com/
GSV Chamber of Commerce. . . www.gsvcc.org
Lewisburg Area School District. . .www.lasd.us/
Lewisburg Borough. . . www.lewisburgborough.org
Lewisburg Children’s Museum. . .www.lewisburgchildrensmuseum.org
Lewisburg Downtown Partnership. . . www.lewisburgpa.com
The YMCA at the Miller Center. . . www.millercenterlewisburg.com
RiverStage Community Theatre. . . www.riverstagetheatre.org
Susquehanna River Valley Visitors Bureau. . . www.visitcentralpa.org

**Nearby**
Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble. . . www.bte.org
Bloomsburg University. . . www.bloomu.edu
Clyde Peeling’s Reptiland. . . www.reptiland.com
Geisinger Health System. . . www.geisinger.org
Knoebels Amusement Park. . . www.knoebels.com
Little League Museum. . . www.littleleague.org/world-of-little-league/
Lycoming College. . . www.lycoming.edu
The Pennsylvania State University. . .www.psu.edu
Pennsylvania College of Technology. . . www.pct.edu
Susquehanna University. . . www.susqu.edu
T&D Cats of the World. . . www.tdscats.com
UPMC. . .www.upmc.com
Williamsport Community Arts Center. . . www.caclive.com
PASTORAL COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

First Baptist Church will consider a package of Salary, Housing Allowance and Benefits on an annual basis as negotiable.

Salary and Benefits: Negotiable, with increases on an annual basis based on performance.

Housing: The congregation owns a property adjacent to the church building with the ground floor available as a parsonage, utilities included. This is a 3 bedroom unit, recently remodeled. The pastor may forgo use of the parsonage and negotiate a housing allowance based on the purchase of a personal property or other housing arrangements.

Health Insurance: The candidate will supply their own.

Continuing Education: The 2022 budget includes $500 for the Pastor’s continuing education. That amount is negotiable.

Mileage: Reimbursed at the current Federal rate for work-related travel

Vacation Time: 4 weeks of paid vacation annually

Moving Expenses: Negotiable
Jillian came to FBC from St. Louis after being in youth ministry for five years. During her time at FBC Jillian not only found great joy in getting to love the people of the church but also in preaching and planning worship services, particularly introducing the Hanging of the Greens service on the first Sunday of Advent. During Jillian’s tenure she restarted Adult Sunday School and spent considerable time developing the church’s ministerial relationship with Beaver Memorial UMC and St. Paul’s UMC, including three joint annual Lenten Services (Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday), a shared Women’s Retreat, United Youth Group, and Pub Theology.

In addition to our ministry partnership, Jillian’s other focuses were social justice and helping FBC develop as a welcoming and affirming congregation. Much of her preaching focused on inclusion and was social justice oriented. She worked to provide space in worship to acknowledge and process national and international events such as Ahmaud Arbery’s murder, January 6th, and the more recent Roe v. Wade decision. Jillian also worked with our Music Director, who is also a graphic designer, to include Pride flags on our church marquee and the homepage of our website to make it clear we’re a safe and loving place for the LGBTQ+ community. In June of 2021 we began including small Pride Flags in the flowers on our 3rd Street steps and received several lovely messages from people in the community thanking us for being visible in our inclusion.

Pastor Scott’s long tenure testifies to his caring relationship with the congregation. His carefully prepared sermons and meditations were balanced by his ease in conversation with members of the church family and the community at large. Acting as liaison with the self-help groups meeting at the church, Reverend Scott also served as the church’s representative in a number of its charitable endeavors, including leadership of the community CROP Walk for many years. He helped to facilitate the “Heartland Fellowship,” a cooperative group of four American Baptist congregations in central Pennsylvania, who occasionally meet for worship and fellowship. Pastor Scott was responsible for proposing the words, “Free to Think, Bound to Serve,” which the congregation has wholeheartedly embraced.

Reverend Kurtz continued the church’s legacy of social justice work. The church’s role as host of the Eastern Union County Supplemental Food Program dates from his time, as does First Baptist’s part in Yokefellow prison ministry.

Nationally known as an author and by nature a teacher, Dr. Shrader shared his scholarship both through his preaching and through special classes in contemporary theology and Bible history. He encouraged the sanctuary remodeling in 1963, the third renovation since the building of the church in 1870.
FROM CALLING AN AMERICAN BAPTIST PASTOR

The following list of responsibilities are those outlined in the resource, *Calling an American Baptist Pastor*, in the section “What We Want to Do and What We Want Our Pastor To Do,” found on pages 63-64. Churches seeking candidate referrals through the ABC denomination are asked to list the strengths and skills considered most important in the selection of the new pastor, and to identify the activities for which the congregation has major responsibility. The numeric codes are used by the ABC regional consultant in matching the church’s ministry needs with the professional strengths of potential candidates.

The chart below shows these items as prioritized by First Baptist Church in their current search for a new pastor. The key to the color coding indicates how the responsibilities are shared with the congregation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FBC Priorities: Pastoral &amp; Congregational Responsibilities</th>
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<tr>
<td>PS210 Provide by word and presence an empathetic understanding of and concern for persons in the routine and joys as well as the crises and transitions of life, giving assistance where appropriate and feasible. (pastoral care)</td>
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<td>PS130 Communicate a comprehensive understanding of the Bible and Christian theology in terms relevant to persons’ lives. (interpreting the faith)</td>
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<td>PS230 Support the preaching ministry with time for preparation/reflection on the Word, and commitment to listen for the Word’s power and its implications for individuals, the church, the community and the world. (preaching)</td>
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<td>PS060 Provide opportunities (a place and/or persons) for individual, couples, families and/or groups to enter a healing relationship. (counseling)</td>
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<td>PS300 Make formal and informal connections with church members or others in their homes, at work or in other settings. (visitation)</td>
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<td>PS310 Participate actively in worship, offering feedback and suggestions for greater participation and effectiveness in the expression of praise, thanksgiving and devotion to God. (worship preparation and leading)</td>
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<td>PS080 Provide a teaching ministry that is based on theological, educational and historical foundations. (education)</td>
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<td>PS190 Create an atmosphere in which persons feel accepted, included and cared for and can identify with the group. (nurturing fellowship)</td>
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<td>PS260 Seek to be aware of justice issues in the community and the world; then discover ways to act toward eliminating the cause of injustice. (social action enablement)</td>
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<td>PS050 Resolve conflict situations with persons and groups for the sake of the church’s ministry. (conflict management)</td>
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<td>PS120 Cooperate with churches/leaders from Baptist and other denominations. (interchurch cooperation)</td>
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<td>PS220 Enable the staff to accomplish their duties and responsibilities and encourage their personal and professional growth. (personnel supervision)</td>
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