

A History of Ministry – 25 Years

Rev. John M. Trojak

Sr. Pastor, First Baptist Church

The Reverend John M. Trojak arrived October 1, 1989, with wife, Marilyn and children, Joshua, 4, Jacob, 2, and Erin, 6 months. Today Josh is a seminary graduate being ordained, Jake is in his 5th year teaching physics at Iroquois High School (Lawrence Park), and Erin is teaching health, P.E. and aquatics at McDowell High School (Erie). Marilyn teaches third grade at Musser School in Sharon.

Twenty five years has provided a lot of change in the community and world – good, bad and indifferent. Some of the church's accomplishments in that time include:

- Parking lot expansion, accomplished in 1995 by the removal of two rental houses along State Street, provides great visibility of the church coming down West State Street, achieved the goals of adding significant parking spaces and a modern lighted sign.
- Other Capital Fund completed projects include: repainting the sanctuary, replacing the State St. wall, extensive parsonage renovations, repair to the bell tower, a new boiler, kitchen renovation, parlor facelift, the purchase and razing of a house at 330 A street to provide additional parking and various other projects.
- The creation in 1991 and expansion of West Hill Ministries, a neighborhood ministry, which includes First United Methodist, St. John's Episcopal, and Sacred Heart Roman Catholic churches. WHM provides daily children and youth after school programs, works with families and senior citizens. A free Children's Clothing Closet is open weekly.
- The addition of a full-time staff person, Cindy Swogger, in 1996 as Director of West Hill Ministries.
- The addition of a full-time Youth Director and Assistant director of West Hill Ministries, Joshua Trojak in August of 2009.
- The *Plant the Seed* Capital Campaign began in 2001 and culminated in the dedication of the renovated sanctuary Sept. 21, 2003. A new roof, radiators, state of the art multi-media, padded pews, carpet, paint, air conditioning, new platform, repaired stained glass windows, new paint and wood finishes made possible by sacrificial giving of over \$250,000 by the faithful.
- Established Endowment Funds, largely from the estate gift of Henry and Catherine Evans.
- 200th Anniversary celebrations throughout 2004.
- *Bethlehem Blvd.*, a walk through Bethlehem at the time of Christ.
- An experiment in rehabbing a house given the church began under the banner, Next Door Neighbors. It would take years to complete.
- Expansion of WHM into Oakland Avenue UMC in 2010 and St. Joseph's Church in 2013.
- Merge of the First Baptist Diaconate Food Pantry with that of the Episcopal Community Services (ECS) of St. John's Church in 2013.
- Licensing of Pastor Joshua Trojak, October 27, 2013

Pastor Trojak also serves/served, the Mary Budd Foundation, Christian Associates of the Shenango Valley, Sharon Hermitage Clergy, West Hill Ministries Advisory, Beaver Baptist Association, and other American Baptist committees and boards.