



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
A community for all people

The Visitor

A newsletter for members and friends
of First Baptist Church, Madison, Wisconsin

No. 23 December 18, 2017 Vol. 60

Dear Friends:

How are you with miracles? Do you believe in them?
Have you experienced one?

In a recent Advent sermon, I quoted St. Bernard, who said there were three miracles in the story of the angel visiting Mary. She learned from the angel the news she would bear the son of God. The first miracle is that both humanity and divinity would be fully joined in a child. It is an extraordinary bit of news that the creator of the cosmos, would be born into the cosmos of his own design.

The second miracle was that Mary would remain a virgin. An amazing matter to ponder--that the creator of the cosmos, the creator of life, the creator of new life, would bring to life a savior within a woman's womb.

Finally, St. Bernard saw a third miracle which was that Mary had such faith to believe these miracles would be accomplished in her. He saw that the miracle of her belief was as great as the miracles of incarnation itself.

So, where are you with miracles? In your observance of Christmas, do you make the events you've learned a matter of history? Is it all something to remember? Or do you take the prophet Isaiah at his word that "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given?"

This is the miracle before you—not so much believing a savior was once born but that the savior is now born. Is born for you. The child named "Immanuel" God with us is now with you in particular. No history but a current event. Do you join with Mary in the miracle of belief that God is in this very moment of your days? Do you share in the miracle of belief that all of heaven's rescuing saving love is now come to you?

Just as Mary found she was with child, the apostle Paul made a similar discovery. He wrote, "It is not I who live but Christ within me." There was within him the stirring of a life which was not his. He was alive with the stirrings of divinity. And miraculously, Paul believed he was pregnant with divinity alongside Mary.

These are the miracles awaiting your belief. Not history but current event. Do you experience this miracle? Do you, will you, give yourself over to belief. It is yours to finally trust all you have heard and been told. God's rescuing love, a current event, is born to you for your sake, in you for the world's sake, fall for Christ's sake.

I pray all the blessings and riches the Christ child brings will now be yours. I pray you to believe in miracles. Let us then join together. Let us be poised to celebrate, not some history of Good News, but Good News which is truly news because it is now. The Good News is all yours. Good News that a child is born to you. Good News of God with you.

It is all quite miraculous. Let us meet these miracles with the miracle of our own belief. May God bless you in Christ's birth.

In peace,

Rev. Mark

***The Visitor* Publication Schedule**

January 8, 2018

January 22, 2018

**Article deadline is 9 a.m.
on day of publication.**

Email to: fboffice@firstbaptistmadison.org

Worship With Us

December 24, 2017

11:00 a.m. – Shared Worship Service, Sanctuary,
Rev. Mark Clinger

7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service,
Sanctuary, Rev. Mark Clinger

December 31, 2017

11:00 a.m. – Shared Service,
Fellowship Hall, Rev. Jason Mack

*If you would like to make a confession of faith in Christ and be baptized into his body, to become a member of this congregation, or renew your Christian commitment, you are warmly invited to call
Rev. Mark Clinger or Rev. Jason Mack (233-1880).*

Phone (608) 233-1880 * FAX (608) 233-2814

E-mail: fboffice@firstbaptistmadison.org

Web Page: www.firstbaptistmadison.org

Prayer Concerns

Church Family: Beverly St. Clair; Julie Blankenburg; Wynn Davies & family; Jan Arneson; Joanne Berg; Kathryn Hill; James & Karen Evans family; Wayne Bischel's father, Jack; Ann Nelson & family; John Hebblewhite (Art's brother); Art Hebblewhite family; Bill Lutter; Paul Brynelson; Katy Marty; Atlee Wilson; Lance Dockter; Jeff & Jeanette Kersten & family, and Jeanette's father; Ruth L. Parfrey; Paul Husting's friend, David Baer; Sheila Donald; and Linda Stamm's sister, Karen Coleman.

Our Shut-ins: Mercile Lee, Connie Smith, Pat Young; Phyllis Reisdorf; Jeanne Maruska; Linda Olson; and Joyce Tardrew.

Expecting Parents: Renally & Joab Dorea and Andy & Nikki Borchardt (May 2).

Others: Those whose names and needs are unspoken.



On Sunday morning December 24, the fourth Sunday of Advent, we will have a shared worship service in the sanctuary at 11:00 a.m.



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 7:00 p.m., Sanctuary

. This year we will be blessed by our sister church, the Hispanic Missionary Church, joining with us in this occasion of welcoming our savior.

On New Year's Eve, December 31, ours will be a shared worship service in Fellowship Hall at 11:00 a.m.

Fresh News

Annual Church Dinner Cancelled This Year

There will be no cooks in the kitchen this year as the annual church dinner has been cancelled. Feel free to invite church family members to your home to share this special holiday festivity.

Celebrate the New Year with the Bunch



The annual Bunch Tubesteak Roast and White Elephant Gift Exchange will be Sunday, Dec. 31. We will start with a tubesteak (or your meat of choice) roast at the second fire ring on Picnic Point. Meet at the Picnic Point parking lot at 5:30 pm. Bring some firewood for the fire and your own food.

Afterwards we will warm up at the Emmerts (2820 Marshall Ct., Unit #1). Bring a dessert to share and one white elephant gift per person. In case you don't know what a white elephant gift is, it is something you no longer want, but is too good to throw out. Don't go out and buy something to give; that is against the rules.

The faint-hearted and those with schedule conflicts or mobility problems may come directly to the Emmerts at 7:30 pm. Call Gil or Nancy (tel. 467-6064) after Dec. 27 if you have questions.

Vacation

Mark will be on vacation from December 25 through January 7. He will return to the office on January 8. If there are pastoral needs or emergencies during his absence, please contact Jason.

Church Office Holiday Schedule

The church office will be closed the afternoon of Friday, December 22 and Monday, December 25 and Tuesday, December 26 in observance of the Christmas holiday.

The church office will also be closed on Monday, January 1 and Tuesday, January 2 in observance of the New Year holiday. In case of an emergency, please contact Rev. Jason Mack.

November Financial Report

Our year-to-date budget deficit almost doubled in November, from \$7,831.96 at the end of October, to \$15,327.96 at the end of November.

Pledged income is what is behind--we have received less than 10-months' worth of the amount pledged through 11 months. Our total budgeted expenses are also under budget, having spent about 10.5 months of the budget in 11 months.

The only budget line that has newly exceeded its annual budget in November is Worship & Ministry Expenses, now 1/3 over its annual budget of \$800. (Other lines that have exceeded their annual budget lines so far in December are Office Expenses and Telephone/Internet--only slightly at this point, but I expect more expenses later in December.)

We currently have a high balance in the checking account (designated fund) in anticipation of having to remit the money to Amity for the Chinese orphans soon.

Don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. Reminder: Copies of the financial reports and a short overview of FBC financial system may be found posted outside the church office.

Nancy Moore, Bookkeeper



Camp Tamarack Winter Youth Retreat (for those in 7th-12th grade)

It is that time of year again. For those interested in attending the youth retreat at Camp Tamarack, please see information below. First Baptist Church has a dedicated account available to use for any youth who wants to attend Camp Tamarack. So, if you are interested, the cost to attend will be covered! To make sure the check can be sent in a timely manner, please let the church office know the name(s) of youth who would like to go by December 29. If you have any questions or are interested in sharing transportation, please contact Erica Kersten at 223-1744.

Check in from 6-8 p.m. on Friday, January 19
Check out/pick up 10:30 a.m. Sunday, January 21

To see the brochure and to register online
[Camp Tamarack - an American Baptist Owned Retreat Facility in Waupaca, WI.](#)

Interfaith Hospitality Network Shelter Program Ending

The IHN Shelter Program for families is ending. First Baptist has been a buddy church with Covenant Presbyterian, providing meals, overnight stays, and children activities for many years. The reasons for ending the program are explained in the letter below from Kristin. She will be speaking at the Third Tuesday lunch in February to talk about the change, and about other emerging volunteering and donation opportunities.

Letter from Kristin Rucinski, Executive Director, The Road Home

Since The Road Home's founding in 1999, we have continued to grow and adapt to best serve the needs of homeless families in our community. As we have done this, we have increasingly seen the importance of helping families secure and maintain affordable housing. To focus more effectively on housing, we have decided to phase out our shelter program by March 31, 2018. This decision comes after careful consideration and with the unanimous support of our Board of Directors. Homeless families needing shelter space will continue to be served by existing agencies and we will continue to provide case management to these families.

We know that the efforts of our committed Interfaith Hospitality Network Shelter volunteers through the years have provided desperately needed respite for many families experiencing homelessness. We also know that shelter is not a permanent solution. Research continues to confirm that the solution to homelessness is housing.

Unfortunately, our community suffers from a documented lack of affordable housing. That's why for years, The Road Home has played an expanding role in securing funds and support for affordable housing and providing case management to help families find and maintain that housing.

Although homelessness continues to be an issue in our community, we have seen a steady decrease in family homelessness the past few years. To continue this progress, we must all work together, something we do more effectively now than ever before. By closing our small shelter, we will be able to focus our efforts and resources on permanent housing. We remain committed to our vision that every child deserves a home and are excited to continue partnering with our donors and volunteers as we take this next step. Together, we can increase our ability to make a long-term impact in the lives of families in our community who need secure housing.

For more information, go to <http://trhome.org/>.

Thanks for Helping Make the Advent Kickoff a Success

The BOE would like to thank all the folks who helped make the Advent kickoff weekend a success by helping to decorate the church on Saturday and by making Sunday morning such a blast. Special thanks to: The Deacons; Paul and Deb Chotlos; Dennis & Mary Ray; Bill and Mary Fiore; the Mack family; the Lara family; Pastor Mark; the Kersten family; Paul Husting; Julia & Garrett Voss; John Mueller; the Hebblewhite family; Sue Lutter; Aaron Berkshire and probably some others we have forgotten (sorry!). It was a great weekend that took a lot of hands to make it happen. Thanks all!

Longest Night of the Year Remembrance for Those Who Died Without Housing

Each year for the past 8 years we have gathered on the longest night of the year to remember our brothers and sisters who died without housing. We hope you will join us on December 21.

The service begins at 3:00 p.m. with a brief service of remembrance on the Capitol Square and then a procession around the square and to First United Methodist Church where we will gather at 4:00 p.m. for a soup and bread dinner and fellowship, followed by an interfaith service of light and remembrance at 5:00 p.m. at First United Methodist Church. We hope you can join us on December 21.

Linda Ketcham
Executive Director
Madison-area Urban Ministry

Christmas Letters

There are recent letters from Ruth Mooney and Daniel and Sharon Buttry, International Ministries (ABC), on the bulletin board in the Gathering Space. Please take a few minutes to read the news from these FBC friends.

We have also received a Christmas letter from The Rev. Dr. Paul Gettys Gillespie, Pastor Emeritus. It is also on the bulletin board in the Gathering Space for all to read.

Address Change

Jan and Ken Arneson will be at the following address until further notice.

Jan & Ken Arneson
Tall Grass Senior Living
605 Chase Blvd., Apt. 304
Sun Prairie, WI 53590



Human Rights Day Celebration

Saturday, January 6, 2018

“Reaching for Wholeness in Solidarity
with God’s Creation”

9:00 a.m. Brunch

9:30 a.m. Welcome and Announcements

10:00 a.m. Human Rights Day Worship Celebration

Monona United Methodist Church
606 Nichols Rd.
Monona

Reminders

Allied Drive Food Pantry Needs Volunteers

The Allied Drive Food Pantry needs volunteer help. The pantry is open every Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. The volunteer takes a shopping cart and assists the shopper in selecting their allowance of food. We need male and female volunteers and you may work as many Wednesdays as you like. You will be trained and can enjoy visiting with residents of Allied Drive. Please call Eileen Dresser at 608-698-9922.



Salvation Army of Dane County Bell Ringers Needed

Are you looking for an easy, fun and rewarding way to volunteer as a family this Christmas season? The Salvation Army of Dane County has an opportunity for you! By ringing bells for only two hours, you will raise over \$90 to help house the homeless, feed the hungry, and provide mentoring and education to at-risk children. The Christmas Red Kettle campaign runs from now through December 23, with many locations and shifts available. Please go to ringbells.org to sign up or call 250-2235 for more information.

Get your Christmas Shopping Done at the Porchlight Products Holiday Store!

Open noon to 6:00 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 1704 Thierer Road, Madison. Making and selling these products provides employment and job training for homeless persons in our community. Here is what's available:

Jams and Jellies



- Apple Butter (8 oz.)
- Apple Sauce (16 oz.)
- Rhubarb Jam (8 oz.)
- Strawberry Jam (8 oz.)
- Strawberry-Rhubarb Jam (8 oz.)

Pickled Products



- Curtido (12 oz.)
- Dilly Beans (12 oz.)
- Sauerkraut (16 oz.)

Pancakes and Scones



- Multi-Grain Pancake Mix (16 oz.)
- Blueberry Scones (17.2 oz.)
- Cherry Scones (17.2 oz.)
- Cranberry Scones (17.2 oz.)

Warm Stomachs and Hearts this Season of Christ!

Each December the people of First Baptist have a tradition of delivering "Meals on Wheels" to the many disabled and home-bound people in our community who look forward to a friendly visitor bringing them a warm noon meal. Can you spare a couple of hours on one of the upcoming December weekends to be one of those "friendly visitors?" You would pick up the meals for approximately 11 home-bound persons insulated containers at Oakwood West on Mineral Point Road at 11:00 a.m. and be done within two hours. Please contact Wynn Davies at lorwyn@sbcglobal.net or phone 608-238-1817.



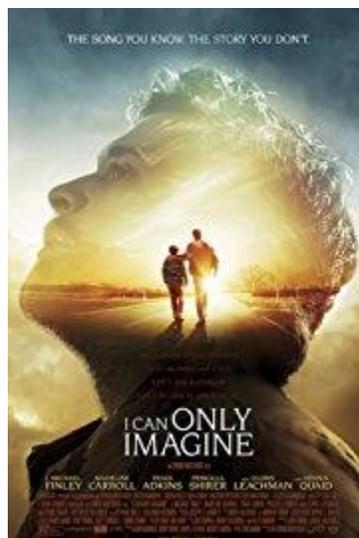
Pick up your 2018 Offering Envelopes in the Gathering Space.

Upcoming Events for the New Year



Recycle the Warmth Blanket Drive Is Approaching!

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul's Recycle the Warmth Blanket Drive is approaching! This year will mark their drive's 26th year of collecting warm blankets and bedding to be distributed throughout the year to families who visit their service center seeking assistance. The 26th Annual Recycle the Warmth Blanket Drive will take place the weekend of January 26-28, 2018. Watch for the collection box for the bedding donations in the Gathering Space.



"I Can Only Imagine"

Opening in theatres
March 16, 2018.

The inspiring and unknown true story behind MercyMe's beloved, chart topping song that brings ultimate hope to so many is a gripping reminder of the power of true forgiveness.

The Visitor

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

518 N Franklin Ave, Madison WI 53705-3699

(608-233-1880)

(Affiliated with the American Baptist Churches, USA)

Worship Schedule

11:00 a.m. - Traditional Worship

11:00 a.m. - Contemporary "Common
Table" Worship

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

TIME VALUE: DATED MATERIAL -

MAILED - 12/18/17