



# Baptist Notes

A Publication of the First Baptist Church in Framingham

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## From the Pastor



Have you had this experience? You are in a casual moment where the conversation is free flowing and people are generally relaxed, and gathered for a common purpose. Maybe it is a wedding, backyard BBQ, or church setting, and people may or may not know one another in advance, but as small talk evolves, eventually get around to what each does for a vocation. I have, as I'm certain you have as well. And, in recent years have appreciated opportunities to discuss various vocations and learn about them, as well as opportunities to discuss what a Pastor of a church is, and what church can be in people's lives. When I identify as a Pastor, most people do what is common for all of us, retrieve what memories and understanding we have of the topic and contribute our understanding to the conversation.

Frequently, people respond to learning I am a Pastor with their own stories of church and memories of times in attendance. Not uncommonly, there is also some reflection on why they do not attend anymore, or have become less frequent in their participation. In recent months I have been in numerous conversations as I have listened to people share of how they have lost interest or stopped practicing a devout religious life.

I pray about opportunities to respond, and want to set people at ease while also offering a thoughtful response to why religion plays such a large role in so many people's lives. First, do not feel guilty if you do not regularly attend church. I say this because I have learned that many do feel guilt. In short, do not approach religious life from a feeling of guilt, but rather passion for the possibilities it holds. Second, religion is a consequence, not a primary driver for religious life. The first step we should take is to identify what is sacred in our life. For me, it is a belief in one God who creates and sustains all life. And, as part of that belief, becomes a hope for the world. A prayerful relationship with Holy Spirit and Scripture is sacred for me. It has a place in my life above all else, and moves me to seek a community to share this. Also, take steps to identify what is sacred and above all else in your life. Then, look for a community to share what is sacred for you. This is religion; a community of shared beliefs and practices where people join together to share in their experience. First Baptist is a community founded on belief in one God, and a shared hope in Christ. We gather together to build this up in one another as well as contribute to the world in the best way our faith provides.

A common pitfall I have observed is when religious life centers more on the organization and less on the sacred. Nurturing the sacred builds religious experience, while nurturing organization alone builds fatigue and ambivalence. I want to offer encouragement to us as we emerge (prayerfully!) out of the chaos of a world pandemic, and seek to increase our "in-person" times together as a congregation. Take time to reflect on what is sacred to you. And, how the sacred in your life wants to be expressed. The

*(Continued on page 2)*

sacred in your life may need to be expressed through worship, service, gathering with others in a setting that is set apart for sacred contemplation, or simply sharing casual moments with people you believe to be open to the movement of God in his or her life. Most of all, I pray you approach this fall season at First Baptist with a renewal for the truth and wisdom of God in your life, and feel no sense of guilt or judgement for what you have or have not achieved as a church attendee or member. Rather, approach the coming weeks and months with an open and willing heart to all that awaits us as people of hope and faith in a God who desires us more than we can ever imagine.

*Jason*

## Church Notes

We extend our condolences to the family of **Isabel Chute** upon her recent death. Isabel devoted a significant portion of her life to serving God and others. She was active in church life for decades at Park Street Baptist Church, holding many administrative and leadership roles, singing in the choir, serving dinners at local shelters, and leading various social groups.

Please keep **Sarah Russo** in your prayers as she continues to be hospitalized.

Congratulations to **Henry Mboowa** and **Bridget Blake-Mboowa** united in Holy Matrimony on July 17.

Congratulations to **Ransford Hamilton** and **Victory Barrack-Anidi Hamilton** united in Holy Matrimony on July 24.



### Church Rummage/Yard Sale Save the Date - Saturday, September 25

Start thinking about cleaning out your attics, garages and the basement. We will be having a yard / rummage sale on Saturday, September 25. We need your donations to make this sale a success. We will be accepting all sort of household goods and clothes. Look under the bed and behind the door - for your discards could be someone else's treasure.

For more information contact Kathie Zeman or Linda Devine.

# NEW SUNDAY SCHEDULE

## Starts on Sunday, September 12

10:00 am	Choir Rehearsal / Coffee available in Reilly Hall
10:30 am	Worship
10:45 – 11:30 am	Sunday School for nursery—8th grade
11:30 am	Fellowship in Reilly Hall

Class	Location	Teacher/s
Up to Kindergarten	Nursery	Diane Halbert, Annette Stefanini
Grades 1 - 4	Reilly Hall	Kathie Zeman
Grades 5 - 8	Jefferson Hall	Tom Stefanini

Sunday School for **high school** will be arranged directly with teacher, Lecia Shronce

**Nursery Care** is provided for infants through children age 3. Two adults are with children as they play and interact in the Nursery.

### Important Safety Guidelines:

- We ask that everyone attending worship wear a mask.
- Those participating in worship will be able to remove their masks while speaking.
- The choir will sing without masks. The first two rows of seating in the sanctuary will be roped off. This will allow for social distancing as the choir sings.

### New Adult Christian Education Opportunity

A new week night class facilitated by Paul Moore replaces the traditional Sunday adult education time. Join on ZOOM starting Tuesday, September 14 at 7:00 p.m. *Expressions of Worship: Attributing Worth to the Lord* is an eight week (9/14 - 11/2) study of praise and worship in the scriptures.

# **AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING 2021**

## For the Purpose of Equipping Saints

**EPHESIANS 4:11-13 (NIV)**

### Consider making a generous gift!

Thanks to America for Christ (AFC) Offering contributions, American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) supported communities distressed by the devastation of COVID-19 last year, as the pandemic swept our country and Puerto Rico. We also helped families who lost homes to floods, wildfires and storms, along with children living on the edge because of poverty, and seminarians preparing to devote their lives to sharing the Good News. These are just a few of the ways we minister to those in need; there are many more.

Please help us continue to bring healing and hope to communities, families, children and Jesus' disciples in 2021 by supporting this year's America for Christ Offering. We will take the AFC offering for three weeks starting on September 19. Our goal is \$500



### Asylum Family Update

Thank you to all who have contributed to the support of the family from Togo seeking asylum in the United States and being supported through the Lutheran Church in Natick. Here is a brief update on the progress of the family:

- Living in Natick – Mom, Dad, two young boys
- Need assistance with transportation – driving to appointments, etc.
- Adjusting to new types of food
- Enrolled in Mass Health, parents fully vaccinated
- Meeting with immigration lawyers



## September 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5 9:30 a.m. Worship	6	7	8	9 6:00 pm Wor- ship Committee 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	10	11
12 <b>Home Again Sunday</b> 10:30 a.m. Worship Picnic Lunch	13	14 7:00 pm A&F Meeting 7:00 pm Adult Christian Education	15 7:00 pm Executive Council	16 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	17	18
19 10:30 a.m. Worship	20	21 7:00 pm Adult Christian Education	22	23 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	24 3:00 p.m. Rummage Sale Set-up	25 9:00 am— 2:00 pm Rummage Sale
26 10:30 a.m. Worship	27	28 7:00 pm Adult Christian Education	29	30 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal		

Notes: AA meets : Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday at Noon in Reilly Hall  
 Hope Bible Baptist Church rents space Sundays 3:00 pm - 7:00 pm

*All calendar entries are subject to change*

### September Birthdays

6 Jon Harris  
 13 Kathie Zeman  
 19 Brianna Ndzi



**Worship  
Time  
Changes**

**to 10:30 a.m.  
on Sunday,  
September 12**

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## First Baptist Church in Framingham

1013 Worcester Road  
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Framingham, MA 01703



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### Home Again Sunday, September 12

Join us for a fun filled day as we gather together again following our summer vacation.

After worship we will enjoy a picnic lunch.  
Lunch served following all safety protocols.



Hot dogs, hamburgers, individual bags of chips and bottles of water or juice boxes will be supplied.



**No common dishes (potluck type) will be accepted.**