

Baptist Notes

A Publication of the First Baptist Church in Framingham
 PO Box 2415 ~ Framingham, MA 01703-2415
 508-872-1176
firstbaptistframingham@gmail.com
www.firstbaptistframingham.com

From Your Temporary Shepherd



As we turn the seasonal page into Advent, I am often reminded of a song that Simon and Garfunkel released in 1966, *7 O'clock News/Silent Night*. It was a blending of the popular carol with a reading in the background of news items about the Vietnam War, interracial violence, political tensions, and drugs as the volume of the speaker's voice gradually increased. It was a powerful picture of the times — the heavenly peace of Jesus' birth against the backdrop of real-world news. (If you're too young to remember or want a refresher, check it out on [YouTube](#).) Early in my ministry I used the song in Christmas services for several years, until it became less relevant. Unfortunately, that was not because wars and violence had ceased, but because the memory of the original number, and even the singers, was fading.

The news continues to bring us similar stories, and as we prepare for the journey to Bethlehem, the hope of Christ's peace is a stark contrast to terrorism and the news of international and national tensions. How do we celebrate Christmas in the midst of the world we live in? Where are the hope — the peace — the joy — the love? Is this whole journey, this story, just a fairy tale?

That is what the Advent season is all about. This is a time when we focus on God's sacrificial love and how God revealed that love — by sending not a warrior with flaming sword and heavily armed troops, but a helpless newborn. Jesus was dependent on others from the very beginning; he fled for his life while he was still in diapers, and he grew up in a real family living in a small town in an occupied country. He knew how the world was — and in giving his life, he reminded us that love is still stronger than hate, and the way to peace comes not through the world's power, but through God's. Even for Christ's people, that's not an easy thing to remember.

So during the next few weeks, as we tell and retell the Christmas story, waiting for the miracle to be revealed, I encourage you to take the opportunity to practice the spiritual disciplines of prayer and meditation, generosity and service, silence and reflection. Light the Advent candles in your own homes. Read the stories of Jesus' birth once again, from Matthew and Luke, chapters 1 and 2.

The story of how *Silent Night* came to be written is an amazing one — a perfect example of how God transforms a problem into something beautiful. (You may hear this story on Christmas Eve.) But what is even more amazing is the transformation of our hearts, our lives, our families — and our churches — when we remember, and really believe, in the power of God's love. "Be not afraid," the angels said — another thing we do well to remember this year.

I look forward to celebrating the Advent and Christmas seasons with you

Be well — be safe — be blessed,

Pastor Jerrie

Rev. Jerrie Shepard Matney
revjasm@gmail.com | 518-331-0390

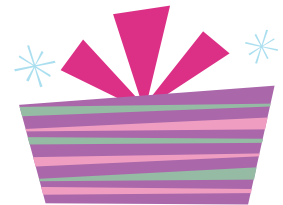
December 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Advent Begins 10:30 am Worship Pledges due 11:30 am Potluck	2	3	4 7:00 pm Advent Study	5 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	6	7
8 Advent 10:30 am Worship	9	10 7:00 pm Executive Council	11 7:00 pm Advent Study	12 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	13	14
15 Advent 10:30 am Worship & Pageant 11:30 am Lunch, Gifts	16	17 7:00 pm A&F	18 7:00 pm Advent Study	19 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	20	21
22 Advent 10:30 am Worship	23	24 Christmas Eve 5:00 Service	25 Christmas	26	27	28
29 10:30 am Worship	30	31 New Year's Eve				

Notes: AA meets Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday at noon in Reilly Hall.
 Hope Bible Baptist Church rents space Sundays, 3–7 p.m.

December Birthdays

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 2 Ray Zeman | 20 Henry Mboowa |
| 6 Eric Reilly | 21 David Mayrand |
| 8 Virginia Stearns | 25 Angel Erguiza |
| 14 James Donovan | 26 Jay Reilly |
| 14 Dawn McCormack | 26 Marilyn Wakeman |
| 14 Josie Thompson | 26 Jim Stone |
| 18 Theresa Abiola-Gamba | 31 Winston Lewis |
| 19 Jeanne Emmons | |



Save the Date: Annual Meeting

Sunday, January 26, 2025 (At the church and online)

Executive Council News

Executive Council met via Zoom on November 12. Here are highlights of the meeting:

- The Cherry Road house (parsonage) is not yet rented.
- Stewardship Letter has gone out. Pledge cards are due back on December 1.
- New Visitor Cards are in the pews.
- We will have Advent candles and liturgy; readers will be needed. Children will participate on December 15, and lunch and presents will follow that worship service.
- Christmas Eve Service will be held at 5:00 p.m.
- The Ecumenical Thanksgiving service will be held on Sunday, November 24, at 5:00 p.m. at Edwards Church.
- Decorating the church for Christmas (wreaths, candles) will be on Saturday, November 30.
- OGHs offering total was over \$2000 (including \$1000 from the Deacons fund).
- Many church leadership positions are open. The Nominating Committee will ask people to stay on boards for stability during our interim period.
- Bible study continues on Wednesday nights. December will be an Advent study.
- Pastor Jerrie will be off after Christmas (December 29).
- Donations from the Thanksgiving ingathering on November 24 will go to A Place to Turn.
- Christmas Offering will go to the [Pearl Street Cupboard & Café](#).
- We will celebrate the church's 200th anniversary in 2026.
- Annual Meeting is January 26, 2025. Reports are due to Linda Devine by January 12.

The next Executive Council meeting is Tuesday, December 10, at 7:00 pm via Zoom.

Members of Executive Council are Linda Devine, Kathie Zeman, Jay Reilly, Al Harrington, Francesca Cerutti-Harris, Lecia Shronce, Naomi Stanley, Judy Llewellyn, Diane Halbert, and Pastor Jerrie.

Other church members are invited to attend Council and Board meetings as observers.

December Worship Schedule

Following is the worship schedule for December:

Date	Scripture/Program	Sermon/Theme	Advent Candle
December 1 Communion	Isaiah 9:6-7, 11:1-12	Why We Need Advent	HOPE
December 8	Luke 1:5-25	How the Story Begins	PEACE
December 15	Children's program	Jesus' Birthday Party	JOY
December 22	Luke 2:1-14	Bethlehem, House of Bread	LOVE
December 24, 5 p.m. Christmas Eve	Candlelight Worship	Lessons and Carols	CHRIST
December 29 Rev. Linda McKenzie			—

Stewardship of Talents and Resources

By now, you likely have received a letter from the Stewardship Committee, inviting you to support the 2025 needs of The First Baptist Church in Framingham. Also, the nominating committee is working to fill open positions — the *talent* part of giving — as the Board of Administration & Finance creates next year's budget — the *resources* part of giving.

Please speak to **Diane Halbert**, nominating chair, about your volunteer role in the new year. As for your financial participation, commitment cards were included in the stewardship letter and are available at the back of the sanctuary. Please fill out your card and give it to FBC Financial Secretary **Neil Halbert**, drop it in the offering plate, or mail it to the church by Sunday, **December 1**. You also may email your intentions (or questions) to n.halbert@verizon.net.

Please support your church as you are able, sharing a portion of your income as well as your talents on boards and committees. Thank you in advance for doing your part to help meet the congregation's financial, spiritual, and outreach goals and for being an active and vital part of First Baptist Church in Framingham.

Pastoral Search Committee Update

We want to thank everyone who took the time to respond to the Pastoral Search Committee Survey. Our next step is to compile your answers and create a church profile. After we have Pastor Jerrie review and provide feedback to our document, we will submit it to ABC/Valley Forge to add to its listings of churches that are searching for a new pastor. We will then review information on candidates who submit their names for consideration to determine if we feel they might be a good fit for our church.

As we go through these steps, we will keep you updated on our progress. Please continue to pray for us as we seek God's guidance during this time.

Jay Reilly (chair), Tom Stefanini, Robert Rowe, Ceil Robertson, Wilson Ndzi, Henry Mboowa, Ethel Luton-Campbell, Judy Llewellyn, Cathy Azurin

Staff Appreciation Gift for Christmas

The Executive Council invites you to contribute to a Staff Appreciation Gift, which provides a monetary donation to our staff members: Rev. Jerrie Shepard Matney, Rev. Linda McKenzie, Sarah Russo, Linda Devine, and Felix Castillo. If you are so inclined, this effort provides you and your family with a convenient and confidential way to express your thanks to our hardworking staff. Donation envelopes will be in the Sunday bulletins. You also may mail your contribution to the church post office box to the attention of Neil Halbert. We would like to give out the gifts for Christmas Sunday, December 22, so please contribute by **December 18**.

Holiday Happenings at FBC in Framingham

Giving Tree Project

We are providing three Christmas gifts each for 10 children through the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Clothing sizes and non-clothing suggestions are on the tags on a small Christmas tree at the back of the sanctuary. You may select one or more tags and may take all three for one child if you so desire.



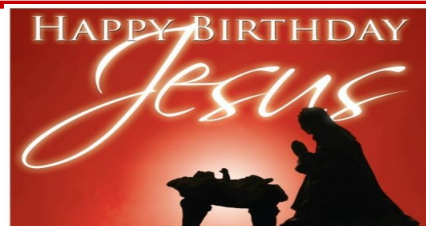
PLEASE RETURN YOUR UNWRAPPED GIFT(S) WITH THE GIFT TAG(S) ATTACHED BY SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15.

Thank you for your help in bringing joy to these children this year!

Poinsettias to Brighten the Sanctuary



It's time to order Christmas flowers to decorate the sanctuary and, later, your home or that of a shut-in. Either fill out a form at church or mail a check to the church to the attention of Judy Llewellyn by **December 8**. Be sure to indicate if you would like a *red* or *white* plant, if it is *in honor of* or *in memory of* a loved one, and if you would like it to go to a shut-in after Christmas. The cost for a single plant in a 6-inch pot is \$14, and the cost for a double plant in a 7-inch pot is \$22.



You Are Invited to Celebrate Jesus' Birthday

When: Sunday, December 15, 2024
Where: The First Baptist Church in Framingham
Time: Worship at 10:30 am

Join us on December 15, when, during the morning worship service, the children will share the many talents that God has given them. Then come downstairs for lunch. We will have a birthday cake for Jesus!

Sharing with the Community

This year's Christmas offering goes to the [Pearl Street Cupboard & Café](#) in Framingham. One of the largest food pantries in Massachusetts, it serves thousands of local residents who struggle to make ends meet. Individuals and families in need receive a monthly supply of nutritious foods and grocery items to prepare meals at home. A community meal is served 5 days each week for residents of Framingham and surrounding towns. You may use the special Christmas offering envelope to drop your donation in the offering plate Christmas Sunday and Christmas Eve or mail a check to the church. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.



Christmas
Offering

Stillman Christmas Concert

As a Stillman Association church, we are invited to gather with our brothers and sisters of Lincoln Park Baptist Church at 1450 Washington Street in West Newton for a special Christmas Concert on Saturday, December 14, at 7:00 p.m.

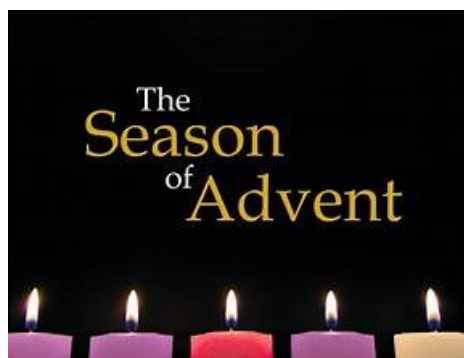


Opportunity to Become a Long-Term-Care Ombudsman

Springwell is looking for volunteers to serve in its Long-Term Care Ombudsman program at Carlyle House Rehabilitation and Nursing Facility on Winter Street in Framingham. These volunteers visit the facility to hear concerns in confidence, advocate to protect residents' rights, and provide information and resources. The volunteers receive extensive training from Springwell, a nonprofit organization providing support services like Meals on Wheels, In-Home Care and Case Management, Protective Services, and other volunteer services to thousands of older adults in MetroWest and Greater Boston. To volunteer or learn more, you may contact a coordinator at 617-926-4100 or volunteer@springwell.com.

Silent Auction to Support Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity MetroWest/Greater Worcester will conduct an Online Silent Auction (www.habitatmwgw.org/2024silentauction) December 2–9. You can register and preview items now. The organization's mission is to build homes, communities, and hope for local families and veterans, and its vision is that everyone has a decent place to live. Habitat builds affordable homes in partnership with volunteers and families. "Help us celebrate 40 years of service providing local families and veterans with safe and affordable housing."



Community News

Holiday Tree-Lighting Ceremony

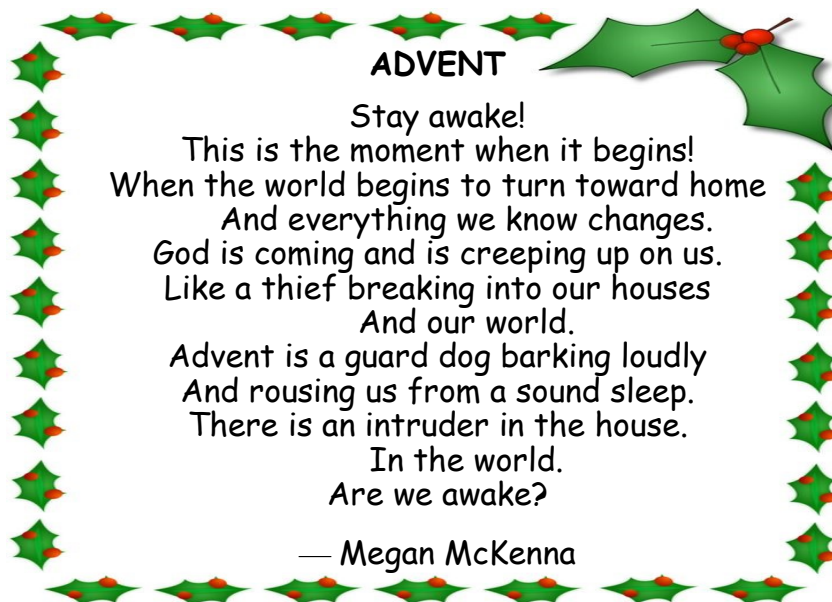
Join your friends and neighbors for the tree-lighting ceremony and block party in downtown Framingham on December 6 from 5 to 7:30 pm.



Setback Tree-Planting Program

The City of Framingham invites homeowners and property owners in eligible neighborhoods to participate in the revitalization of the City's Setback Tree Planting Program, designed to strengthen the community's urban forest while promoting environmental stewardship and climate resiliency. The program focuses on planting trees on private property within the 20-foot setback area adjacent to the City's right-of-way. These trees are planted at *no cost* to property owners, with the agreement that participants will water and maintain the trees to ensure their healthy growth.

[Click for additional requirements & link to apply for a tree.](#)



First Baptist Church in Framingham

1013 Worcester Road
PO Box 2415
Framingham, MA 01703

