

Baptist Notes

A Publication of the First Baptist Church in Framingham
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From Your Temporary Shepherd



Christmas cards and letters always bring news of the year from distant friends: births of babies, deaths of parents, health concerns, changes in jobs, moves, marriages, divorces, sorrows, and celebrations. I am always amazed at the rapid growth of children — who seem to be in kindergarten one day and are graduating from college the next! Where does the time go?

It's easy to be reminded of the past, especially at this time of year. The way things were — the way we'd like them to be. It's an intense time, when joys are more joyful, losses more tragic — a mixture of nostalgia and hope, magic and reality.

Beneath it all is the message that God is giving us another chance, a new beginning, to remind us again and again, year after year, that God is with us. And that those who are confused, anxious, tired, lonely and wounded are the ones who need this message the most.

So we stand at the beginning of a new year, with the God who makes all things new — makes us new, makes the church new, and makes the world new. Yes, some of the problems and challenges of 2024 will follow us right into 2025. But we also take the opportunity to reaffirm our faith in the One who calls us here — to turn over to God our questions, our doubts, our disappointments, intercessions and impatience. And especially when we can't clearly see the road ahead, to reaffirm our faith in the One who never leaves us in the dark. The star is still there, even if we can't always see it.

I am confident that you will be calling a new pastor in 2025. Yes, there are a lot of uncertainties around this — Who will it be? When will it happen? These are the primary concerns, but there are other questions of detail as well. We are reminded, at the year's beginning, that this is a God-directed journey. We hold this process, and specifically the Search Committee, in prayer during this time.

Many, many thanks to all of you who helped make the Advent and Christmas seasons so special at First Baptist. Remember, my friends, that the Christmas season goes until Epiphany, January 6. I will see you in worship then as we greet the Wise Men from the east.

Looking forward to being with you in 2025 — or part of it.

Blessings to you all,

Pastor Jerrie

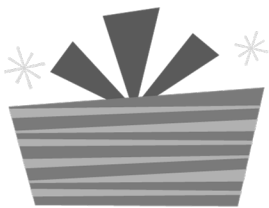
Rev. Jerrie Shepard Matney
revjasm@gmail.com | 518-331-0390

January 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 <i>7:00 pm Deacons 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal</i>	3	4
5 <i>10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Potluck</i>	6	7	8 <i>7:00 pm Bible Study</i>	9 <i>7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal</i>	10	11
12 <i>10:30 am Worship RMMO</i>	13	14 <i>7:00 pm Execu- tive Council</i>	15 <i>7:00 pm Bible Study</i>	16 <i>7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal</i>	17	18
19 <i>10:30 am Worship RMMO</i>	20	21 <i>7:00 pm A&F</i>	22 <i>7:00 pm Bible Study</i>	23 <i>7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal</i>	24	25
26 <i>10:30 am Worship RMMO 11:30 am Annual Mtg.</i>	27	28 <i>7:00 pm Deacons</i>	29 <i>7:00 pm Bible Study</i>	30 <i>7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal</i>	31	

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

All calendar entries are subject to change.



January Birthdays

1 Annette Stefanini	16 Ryan Braz
6 Linda Devine	16 D. Paul Moore
9 Jacob Gogan	22 Phyllis Devine
10 JG Omans	24 Patrick Gogan
11 Jubilee Rutherford	25 Naomi Stanley
11 Charlie Poole	25 Emmit Tucker
12 Karen Shea	27 Andrew Brown
15 Walter Ross	29 Nelson Samuel
15 Jason Rutherford	29 Mayda Velazco

Have you moved or changed your email address? Please send updates to firstbaptistframingham@gmail.com or leave word at 508-872-1176. Also, if you receive your newsletter in the mail now and would be willing to get it via email instead, please provide your email address.

Executive Council News

Executive Council met via Zoom on December 10. Here are highlights of the meeting:

- The rental property on Cherry Road has a one-year lease effective 12/01/2024.
- Cleanup day is postponed until spring 2025.
- The Retired Ministers and Missionary offering (RMMO) will be taken in January.
- There is still a concern about the congregation in the sanctuary and online hearing speakers during the service, particularly prayers and concerns and announcements.
- Pastoral Search Committee received about 30 survey responses and is processing the data. The committee will meet after the new year to review the results.
- Annual Meeting is January 26, 2025. Reports are due to Linda Devine by January 12.
- Ash Wednesday is March 5, 2025.
- Talent Show is scheduled for March 30, 2025.

The next Executive Council meeting is Tuesday, January 14 , 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.

January Worship Schedule

Date	Scripture	Sermon
January 5 Epiphany Communion	Matt. 2:1-12	"What the Wise Men Teach Us"
January 12	Luke 2:22-38	Simeon and Anna "Holding the Promise"
January 19 MLK Sunday	Micah 6:6-8	"When the Dreamer Dies"
January 26 Annual Meeting	TBD	TBD

Church Notes

We extend sincere sympathy to Pastor Jerrie on the loss of her sister Maren on December 22.

Annual Meeting on January 26

We look forward to taking care of the yearly administrative work of the church after worship on Sunday, January 26. Please plan to stay in the sanctuary or on Zoom as we vote on budgets, nominations, and more. Because we need a quorum to decide any questions brought before the meeting, it is important that as many members as possible be present. If you are responsible for information to be included in the annual report, your contribution is due to Linda Devine by Sunday, **January 12**.



Update on 2025 Pledges and Budget

Many thanks to everyone who made a pledge to FBC for 2025! The Board of Administration and Finance will complete the church budget in the next couple of weeks and is grateful that we can continue to support our mission and facility in the new year. If you haven't yet submitted a pledge card with an estimate of your giving, you may contact Financial Secretary Neil Halbert at n.halbert@verizon.net or drop the card in the offering plate.

Just a reminder that pledges do not carry over from one year to the next. Even if you have pledged in the past, we need current information from you about your intentions for 2025. The theme for our recent stewardship drive was **hope**. "Hope is a powerful force that sustains us through challenges and guides us toward a brighter future. It is the hope in God's promises that inspires us to act with generosity and compassion."

Gifts of Talents

We know that you have gifts that go beyond the financial ones. We are happy to offer you ways to express your gratitude for the blessings you have received and for the blessings God calls all of us to be. If you would like to use your time, talents, and treasures for your church in any of the following areas, please be in touch with Nominating Chair Diane Halbert in person or at halbertdv@gmail.com.

Audiovisual help	Hospital and home visits or phone calls
Building maintenance	Kitchen help and/or maintenance
Choir or musical instrument	Mission projects or trips
Communications, website, social media	Pastoral relations committee
Fellowship time refreshments	Prayer chain
Fundraising events	Sunday school volunteer
Greeter and/or usher	TABCOM representative
Grounds and/or garden maintenance	Worship leader
<i>Other: How is God leading you?</i>	

The Work of Christmas

By Howard Thurman

When the song of the angels is stilled,
 When the star in the sky is gone,
 When the kings and princes are home,
 When the shepherds are back with their flock,
 The work of Christmas begins:
 To find the lost,
 To heal the broken,
 To feed the hungry,
 To release the prisoner,
 To rebuild the nations,
 To bring peace among people,
 To make music in the heart.

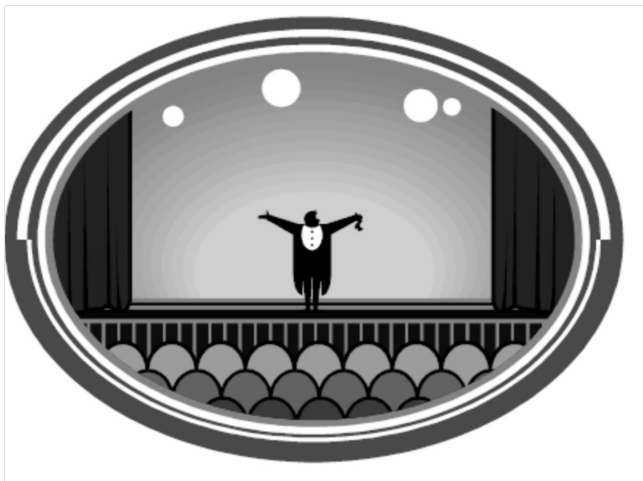
Christmas Spirit at First Baptist Church

The Sunday School classes were inspiring during a presentation at the service on December 15. Following worship time, they celebrated Jesus' birthday with a delicious lunch, birthday cake, and Christmas gifts.

We are grateful to **Ed Zeman, Naomi Stanley, Henry Mboowa, Sarah Russo, Kathie Zeman, and the choir** for their beautiful musical offerings during the Christmas season. Additional thanks to those who purchased poinsettias to beautify the sanctuary.

Your generosity is greatly appreciated by the [Pearl Street Cupboard & Café](#). The Christmas offering collected for this charity on December 22 and 24 totaled nearly \$800! Thank you too for shopping for local foster children by taking a tag from our giving tree. Kathie and Ray Zeman delivered your gifts in time to give the kids a happy Christmas.

You Can Be A Star!!



Our Annual Talent Show will be held after lunch on **Sunday, March 30**.

This event is always a lot of fun but more importantly is a major fundraiser for the Levin/Chute Scholarship Fund. Please think about sharing your talents (whatever they may be) or just being part of the audience. Desserts and snacks will be on sale at intermission, and we will take a freewill offering for the Scholarship Fund.

Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering

Together, We Remember. For three Sundays in January, we will collect the Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO) during worship. We remember pastors, missionaries, and leaders who have served American Baptist churches and ministries. Those who have celebrated the wondrous works of Christ will be remembered in the form of a thank-you check, a tangible expression of our enduring gratitude for their service. Since 1935, American Baptists have taken up this offering to show appreciation for their commitment, service, and spiritual guidance. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

First Baptist Church in Framingham

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POSTING

Annual Meeting: Sunday, January 26, 2025

This is the posting for The First Baptist Church in Framingham Annual Meeting, Sunday, January 26, 2025, following the morning worship service.

The meeting will be a hybrid model with in-person and online participation. The purpose of this meeting is to receive the annual report, to elect officers and members of the Executive Council and boards to replace those whose terms have expired, to take action on the budget, and to transact such other business that may come before it.

