

TOWER TOPICS

The News Magazine of

First Baptist Church

Niagara Falls, New York



VOLUME 73

NUMBER 7

2021

First Baptist Church

554 Main Street









Corner of Main and Fourth

Niagara Falls, New York 14301-1584

IN THE JULY ISSUE:

- ➔ p. 5 — A Little Godly Humor
 - ➔ p. 6 — Dr. Brown Writes
 - ➔ p. 7 — Rev. Kath Writes
- ➔ p. 8 & 9 — IM Endorses Christy Lafferty
 - ➔ p. 10 — Just for Kids
 - ➔ p. 11 — Our History Corner
 - ➔ p. 12 — Impact of Your Giving

July 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 Here it is July already and we begin the second half of the year. It was just a year ago in July that we reopened our sanctuary for in person worship, while most churches did not. We are now once again going to have Processionals and Recessionals in worship – another first. The Diaconate and Trustees will be taking a break in July, but will be back to regular meetings in August to plan for greater things to come this fall!				1  Canada Day	2 10:00 Men's Coffee Time 	3 Thomas, Apostle
4 PENTECOST 6 11:00 Divine Worship with Holy Communion Rev. Kathleen Ordiway, preaching Independence Day 	5	6	7	8	9 10:00 Men's Coffee Time 	10
11 PENTECOST 7 11:00 Divine Worship Rev. Justin Marple, preaching	12	13	14	15	16 10:00 Men's Coffee Time 	17
18 PENTECOST 8 11:00 Divine Worship Rev. Kathleen Ordiway, preaching	19	20	21	22 Mary Magdalene, Apostle	23 10:00 Men's Coffee Time 	24
25 PENTECOST 9 11:00 Divine Worship Rev. Kathleen Ordiway, preaching	26 James, Apostle	27	28	29	30 10:00 Men's Coffee Time 	31

July Birthdays

2 Ward Kaiser
 14 Katona Hoopsick
 25 Brian Brown
 25 Florence Bowser



PLEASE CONTINUE TO PRAY for Hazel Baxter, William Cody, Carole and Hank Buchalski, Sara Gromniak, Janet Keebler, our Church family, our missionaries, especially Carmella Jones, our Country and all those who serve our Country, and all Christians persecuted for their faith.



July 4 — Sunday — PENTECOST 6

Holy Communion
 Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching

July 11 — Sunday — PENTECOST 7

Rev. Justin Marple, preaching

July 18 — Sunday — PENTECOST 8

Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching
*Third Sunday personal items collection
 for Heart, Love & Soul.*

July 25 — Sunday — PENTECOST 9

Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching



Church Office Hours: 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM, Monday — Friday
 716-282-4666 — nfb@niagarafallsbaptist.org — www.niagarafallsbaptist.org
 James D. Flood, FWTC, FCSM - Church Administrator and Editor



How about a new T-shirt for summer? We have a shipment of T-shirts with First Baptist Church, Niagara Falls, New York, imprinted on them below the "I Love My Church" slogan.

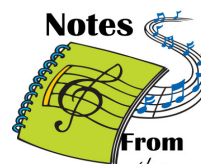
Sizes available are Large and Extra Large (they will shrink a little).

Only \$10.00 each

No shipping or tax.

Call the Church office (282-4666) or see Jim Flood or any trustee after church on Sunday.

Notes



From
the
Moderator ...

THE SEASON OF Pentecost and summertime are together and a time for vacation, rejuvenation, and rest. For many that is, but for the most of us, since many Covid restrictions have been lifted are back to some sort of "normal". At our recent Diaconate and Trustees meeting, we're continuing to keep our distance, contact trace, and postponing coffee hour. We will have an Ice Cream Social in September.

To add to the Christian Education of all, we will be using select Bible verses as responses. To add to our hymn singing, we'll have a few pre-service hymn sings. You name your favorite hymn and we'll sing part of it.

Thank you to all who donated rummage for our June sale. We received many interesting donations, so many in fact, we're going to have Rummage Sale 2.0 in August on the 6th and 7th. There are many fine items on racks, on tables, and under tables. Tell your friends!

The missions for the summer are Heart, Love, and Soul and Dimes for a Difference. The first is a collection for kid friendly foods and cleaning items and the second for Community Mission. Those small contributions of change assist people who need a little help getting back on their feet.

For the past few days, the papers and news media have been reporting on the Southern Baptist Conference. Much debate both in person and on line has gone on to determine the direction of their denomination. If you haven't been following it, there's quite a story emerging both religious and political. Our founding members were definitive about the separation of religion and state and the present dilemma confronting that group comes from mixing the two. See Rev. Brown's article.

Meanwhile, there is a membership opportunity awaiting those who wish to join First Baptist Church. Please feel welcome and speak to Donna or Rev. Kath about it. We welcome newcomers!

We've reviewed our committee list and are ready to move ahead for the benefit of our members and our church. Have a restful July and enjoy the 4th!

Donna Flood
Moderator





"Let's try that new church down the street. What harm can come from that?" you said!"



"I told you not to preach fire and brimstone with the new sprinkler system activated."



"We never talk during halftime anymore!"



"No, it's not a mistake, all bad cats go to Doggie Heaven."



"Remember all those things that used to seem like eternities?"

I THREATEN TO DIVIDE A BABY AND I'M A SAGE. I SUGGEST WE SPLIT A SANDWICH AND I'M A CHEAPSKATE. I DON'T GET IT.



My dinner with Solomon

Baptists Going in Two Directions

Baptists in the United States are going in two directions. Those like our American Baptist Church denomination are dealing with challenging issues in a positive manner despite uncertainties in changing times. It is important for members of congregations like First Baptist Church, an ABC congregation in Niagara Falls, NY, to understand the ABC trends of growth, or at least stability, and remain confident.

On the other hand, in 2006 the Southern Baptists lost 40,000 members, a trend continuing with annual declines totalling two million members since by 2019, as their own base has been shrinking in opposition to the racism, homophobia and anti-immigrant attitudes in the SBC leadership. The Southern Baptist Convention was once the juggernaut of religion in America, but in the most recent figures available, “Churches in the Southern Baptist Convention lost more than 400,000 members in 2020 and set a new record for a single-year decline amid a bitter culture war. The Annual Church Profile Report shows membership in SBC congregations declined by a staggering 435,632 in 2020, more than 50% higher than the 287,655 members the denomination reported losing from 2018 to 2019.”¹

Southern Baptist leaders were a regular presence in the Trump White House. They saw vindication for their support in his antiabortion policies and conservative judicial appointments. They agreed that Covid-19 was a hoax, stood at his shoulder as he signed executive orders and laid hands on the president as they prayed for him. Many in Southern Baptist leadership and a quarter of the membership now believe in Qanon conspiracy theories (like that Washington, the European Union and the United Nations are controlled by Satan worshipping pedophiles) and other lunacies shared with the current base of the Republican Party. Younger members and a majority of Southern Baptist women have apparently had enough. The internal division in the SBC exploded in public when Russell Moore, the SBC’s top lobbyist in Washington, announced his resignation in May. He has written articles criticizing high-ranking church officials over their handling of internal sex-abuse allegations and attitudes about race and gender issues.

I am among those thanking God for the national leadership of our American Baptist Church, the denomination to which many Southern Baptists are fleeing. Here at our own First Baptist Church we have an Administrator who understands the dynamics of church politics, a Moderator who is sensitive to societal issues, and a Pastor who preaches the gospel without restrictions toward race, gender, country of origin or other limitations. Lay Bible Study leaders, committee personnel and participants in all aspects of church life here also reflect the attitudes of Christ. My words and this analysis of the situation are merely intended to encourage everybody here to continue with confidence in maintaining a Christian perspective.

Brian Arthur Brown,
Scholar-in-Residence (despite the long-standing border closure)

¹ Leonardo Blair, *Christian Post*, May 24, 2021

Freedom from Independence

July is the month we celebrate Independence Day ... the celebration of our country's "nationhood." It's the day we celebrate the passage of the Declaration of Independence. It's the day that commemorates that we are no longer subject to Britain – we are united, free and independent. We usually have picnics, parades, fireworks and the day off of work for many people. Many take this time to travel.

Our independence, as a country, is an important thing, but what about our personal independence? Being independent means we are not controlled by something or someone else, whether that means that we can make our own decisions, or we don't rely on others for the necessities of life, or we don't have to work for a living.

What does the Bible say about independence, freedom? Galatians 5:1 says, "For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." In 2 Corinthians 3:17 we hear, "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." And 1 Peter 2:16, "As servants of God, live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil." There are definitely qualifications to our freedom – as there is in to our freedom and independence as a citizen of the United States.

Independence is good. We can worship how we choose. We have free will. After looking at all sides of a matter, we can make our own decisions. We can use our own judgment, rather than being told what, how and when to do something. We can own property and possessions. We can choose our own careers. We can dress how we wish, live where we want. But we are, and ever will be, dependent on God.

Scripture also says, "...all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers – all things have been created through Him and for Him." (Colossians 1:16) God created everything and everything is His. He grants us both the privilege and the responsibility to care for all that He has created.

One of the most well-known and loved Psalms is about our dependence on God. Psalm 23:1-2 "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside still waters." John 15:5 reminds us of our dependence on God. Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing."

We are dependent on God for our salvation, for wisdom and guidance, for protection. Our dependence does not mean that we sit back and do nothing, testing God to save us. God has given us doctors and medicine so that we can be healed. God has given us the ability to grow a garden so that we can be fed. God has given us friends so that we can uplift each other.

Being dependent on God, using the tools God has given us, actually gives us amazing freedoms. When we are dependent on God and His wisdom, we can make sound decisions that will bring us peace of mind, that will help us care for others, that will help us live by faith. Remembering that we are dependent on God protects us from letting what we own or we don't own take control of us. Psalm 62:10b – "If riches increase, do not set your heart on them" and Matthew 6:21 – "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." When we look to what is in our wallets, we rely on ourselves first, rather than on God. Our dependence on God allows us to give up the need to control everything and everyone in our lives. It is a wonderful expression of our faith. It allows us to be confident in God. Our dependence on God allows us to do wonderful things, both small and great. I remind myself though that "pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18). Because of God, I can accomplish what I have done. Apart from God, we can assume nothing.

It is not always easy to be dependent on God. We take our problems back after giving them up to God. We race into decisions without prayer. We are taken over by our human selfishness and desires. We can become angry when God doesn't answer our prayers the way that we had hoped. But when we realize that God loves us and is ever-present in our lives, we can give God our fear, our anger, our evil thoughts and claim God's peace, comfort, forgiveness, strength, guidance and so much more! We are free from our dependence on ourselves.



Christy is pictured with her husband Abel and son AJ.

*International Ministries endorses Christy Lafferty to serve
with AMOS Health and Hope in Nicaragua*

Christy Lafferty, who is currently employed by IM partner organization AMOS Health and Hope in Nicaragua, has now been endorsed to serve as a global servant jointly with IM.

Inspired by her experiences in mission through her church youth group in middle school and high school, Christy felt called to begin a lifelong commitment to international and cross-cultural ministry. After she graduated from the College of Wooster (OH) with a bachelor's degree in sociology, she was selected to serve for three years as a young adult missionary in Nicaragua and in the U.S. During that time, she was involved in training local leaders who were motivated by their Christian faith to serve their neighbors in the areas of community development, community health, and agricultural work. In 2012, in an answer to Christy's prayers, IM Global Servants Drs. David and Laura Parajón at AMOS Health and Hope offered Christy the opportunity to serve with them.

AMOS Health and Hope seeks to follow Christ's example of listening to and healing the most vulnerable, providing preventative and curative health services to remote communities where there are no doctors. Its empowering approach engages communities as full partners by training local Health Promoters.

It was through the Parajóns that Christy first learned of International Ministries. "They were incredible mentors to me at AMOS," she says. "They encouraged me to consider serving as a global servant with IM." During her process of discernment, Christy met with the IM staff members who support global servants around the world. "Christy allowed us to walk alongside her in the application process as she discerned God's will for her life," says IM Director of Mission Mobilization Rev. Dr. Rodney Ragwan. "During this time, it became very evident

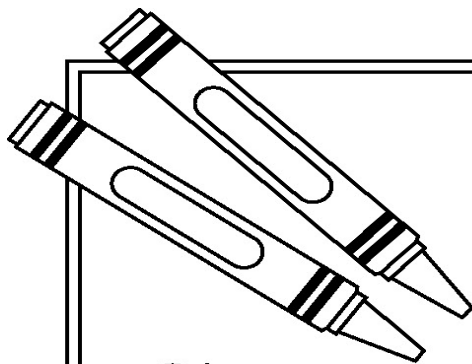
to her as well to us that God's call was for her to serve cross-culturally in Nicaragua. We are excited to be part of God's call upon her life." IM's Executive Director/CEO Rev. Sharon Koh adds, "Christy is a delight to be around, and it is with great joy that we've welcomed her into the IM family."

In partnership with AMOS, Christy will facilitate short-term mission opportunities, engage with churches and individuals as partners in long-term ministry, and create multi-media content that helps share the stories of the people impacted by AMOS. She is also honored to participate in an initiative to expand access to theological education to lay leaders and pastors in Latin America with IM and Palmer Theological Seminary. "My prayer is that my gifts and experience can be used to keep serving God and my brothers and sisters in Christ here in Nicaragua," she says. Christy wants to put into practice Matthew 22:37-40, a Bible passage with deep meaning for her personally, as well as for the ministry of AMOS: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." Christy hopes to follow Christ in such a way that her love for God and love for her neighbor could never be separated from one another.

"I am impressed by Christy's commitment to serve in any possible way," says IM Area Director for Iberoamerica and the Caribbean Dr. Adalia Gutierrez Lee. "She is a great listener and a very respected leader at AMOS as she models what she preaches. I have no doubt Christy will continue to learn and receive as much as she teaches and gives."

Christy currently lives in Managua, Nicaragua, with her husband, Abel Garache Zamora, and their six-year-old son, Abel Joseph (AJ). During the twelve years she has already served in Nicaragua, Christy says, "I have been inspired time and time again by the example of local community leaders who work so hard and sacrifice to serve their neighbors, share God's love, and reduce grave health inequities. It has deepened my faith and pushed me to want to share about this important ministry with others. I love how the ministry of AMOS embodies Jesus' example of going and doing ministry in difficult places and sharing God's love with people who are vulnerable. As an IM global servant, I am excited to continue listening to my Nicaraguan co-workers and the people in the hard-to-reach communities that they serve to keep learning how we can do this work in the best way. I'm looking forward to connecting with churches and individuals who want to come alongside the work that is already going on, and to model what it means to be in true partnership with one another. I also feel honored to be part of the incredible community of people at IM who are committed to serving God and neighbor around the world."

Christy is now working to build her Mission Partnership Team and to raise the funds needed for her ministry in Nicaragua. To find out more about Christy visit [our page](#) and to send her encouragement or support as she begins this new chapter of her work in Nicaragua, email clafferty@internationalministries.org.



Just for **KIDS**

Search for Wisdom

It's the start of a new school year! You'll learn many things and read many books. There's an important book in the Bible called the book of Proverbs. It tells us to learn about God and to search for wisdom.

Read Proverbs 2:1-5 (NIV) below, and then search the puzzle for the capital words.



"... if you **ACCEPT** my words and store up my **COMMANDS** within you, turning your **EAR** to **WISDOM** and applying your **HEART** to **UNDERSTANDING**, and if you call out for **INSIGHT** and cry aloud for understanding, and if you **LOOK** for it as for **SILVER** and **SEARCH** for it as for hidden **TREASURE**, then you will understand the fear of the **LORD** and find the **KNOWLEDGE** of **GOD**."

U	F	R	P	Q	X	I	X	H	E	A	R	T
D	N	R	D	X	R	M	P	F	I	C	O	E
H	A	D	I	Z	O	I	P	J	E	B	G	X
E	G	G	E	D	C	R	N	R	J	D	P	H
S	Y	U	S	R	E	O	U	S	E	O	C	I
E	U	I	E	V	S	S	M	L	I	Y	K	B
A	W	K	L	D	A	T	W	M	H	G	Z	P
R	X	I	P	E	T	O	A	K	A	C	H	L
C	S	D	R	P	N	J	G	N	N	N	E	T
H	J	T	J	K	O	N	O	V	D	W	D	K
H	U	Y	N	L	O	R	D	O	S	I	O	S
Z	X	Z	A	G	X	C	Z	M	U	O	N	J
A	C	C	E	P	T	S	Y	D	L	E	D	G

OUR HISTORY CORNER



We are delving into our archives to bring our wonderful past to light.

- ❖ Who is in the picture? Name them.
- ❖ What was the occasion?
- ❖ When and where was the picture taken?

ANSWERS: _____

THE IMPACT OF YOUR GIVING

"Uxolo" - Peace and Sorry in One Word

Global Servant in South Africa Faye Yarbrough



I am forever saying the Xhosa word “uxolo” meaning “sorry” these days. People have disagreements and among the people of God there is and will be disagreements, but God will show us his way through. Saying I am sorry and meaning it as the Xhosa people know are steps towards peace. I say “I am sorry” when the car momentarily stalls because I remove my foot from the clutch too fast. That peace, that only God can give me, comes and resonates in me—not the drivers’ honking. I move quickly to recover, not panicking, and get moving once again. A simple lesson, but it stays with me as an example of how to keep learning.

That little word sorry (uxolo), which also means “peace,” does bring about a peaceful resolution to some of my encounters. One such encounter was with a lady at the bank. I made an appointment online to see someone in person in the bank. There is no waiting in line because you have a code they scan when you get to the bank. I get to the bank early, but there is already a long line before the bank even opens. You can imagine the looks as the gentleman tells me that I can go to the front of the line. I say to the first person in line, “Uxolo, Mama,” show her my appointment, and let her go ahead of me. I could have held on to the fact that I had the right to be first, shown no concern for a person who may have had to take a taxi (no buses are operating), and just been disagreeable. What would my witness for Christ look like if I had done that? We were able to joke, even in my broken Xhosa. We still had to wait once we were inside, but it was not long. I showed this mother/sister some respect and got to speak the Xhosa language I was learning. God helped me to progress, and I hold on to another of his learning moments in humility and in peace