

TOWER TOPICS

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December 2020

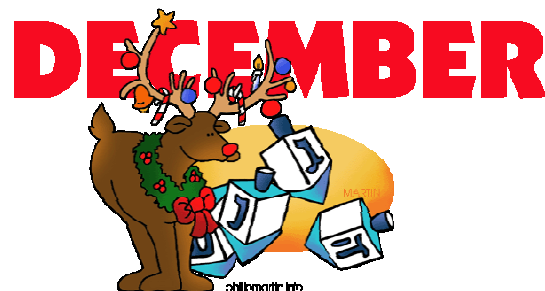
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 December is a special month and even though the pandemic rages on, we are having the traditional candlelight service on Christmas Eve with lessons and carols at 6:00 PM and pre-service music at 5:30 PM.  There is the annual Christmas organ concert at 2:00 PM on Sunday, December 13.		1	2	3	4 10:00 Men's Coffee Time 	5
6 ADVENT 2 11:00 Divine Worship with Holy Communion Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching	7	8	9	10 	11 10:00 Men's Coffee Time 	12
13 ADVENT 3 11:00 Divine Worship Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching 12:15 Trustees/Diaconate Meeting 2:00 Christmas Organ Concert	14	15	16	17	18 10:00 Men's Coffee Time 	19
20 ADVENT 4 11:00 Divine Worship Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching 3:00 Christmas Tea via Zoom	21  Winter Begins	22	23	24 5:30 Pre-service Music 6:00 Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols	25 	26  Stephen, Deacon and Martyr
27 CHRISTMAS 1 11:00 Divine Worship Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching	28 The Holy Innocents, Martyrs	29 John, Apostle and Evangelist	30	31 		

December Birthdays

2 Gladys Lewis
 9 Jeanette Heasley
 10 Kathleen Buckley
 17 Donna Flood
 21 Mark Clark, Jr.
 27 Jason Clark
 28 Bonnie Cooke



PLEASE CONTINUE TO PRAY for Hazel Baxter, Elaine Meranto, 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.



Dec. 6 — Sunday — **ADVENT 2**

Holy Communion
 Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching
 “No Spots, No Blemishes”

Dec. 13 — Sunday — **ADVENT 3**

Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching
 “A Christmas List a Mile Long”
12:15 Trustees/Diaconate Meeting
2:00 Christmas Organ Concert

Dec. 20 — Sunday — **ADVENT 4**

Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching
 “Obedient Faith”
3:00 PM – Christmas Tea via Zoom

Dec. 24 — Thursday — **CHRISTMAS EVE**

5:30 PM Pre-service Music
**6:00 PM Candlelight Service
 of Lessons and Carols**

Dec. 27 — Sunday — **CHRISTMAS I**

Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching





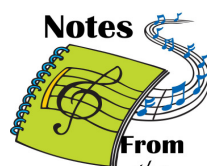
How about a new T-shirt for winter? We have a shipment of T-shirts with First Baptist Church, Niagara Falls, New York, imprinted on them below the “I Love My Church” slogan.

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.



From the Moderator ...

THANKSGIVING HAS PASSED and the season of Advent is upon us. The Rev. Kath Ordiway will be preaching a series for the four Sundays: “What Do We Do While We Wait?”; we will light the Advent Candles which illuminates the way to Christmas Eve and continue to cope with the world around us. Pledging was completed and now the December work for the church is to make a budget. The time and talents part of pledging comes and continues through the year. Our Mitten/Mission Tree efforts this year as part of our giving to the community will be collecting socks instead of mittens and scarves. Community Mission will be the recipient of the sock collection so bring in a pair, a package or funds to purchase them.

The time and talent volunteers at this time are candy makers; Kay Buckley, Connie Davis, Dave Martin, Ron Bowser, Doug Garis, Cheryl and Chris Taylor, Herb Lewis, and yours truly at this writing. The candy is weighed, boxed and ready for sale at the low cost of \$10 per box. It’s truly a taste of the season for those of us who enjoy Christmas treats. Send or call in your orders and delivery can be drive through or in person. Call the office at 282-4666 for phone orders and credit cards are accepted.

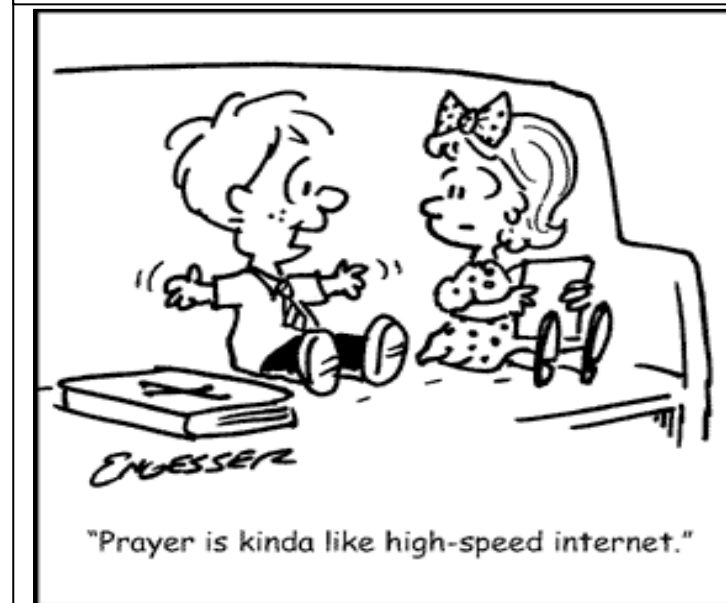
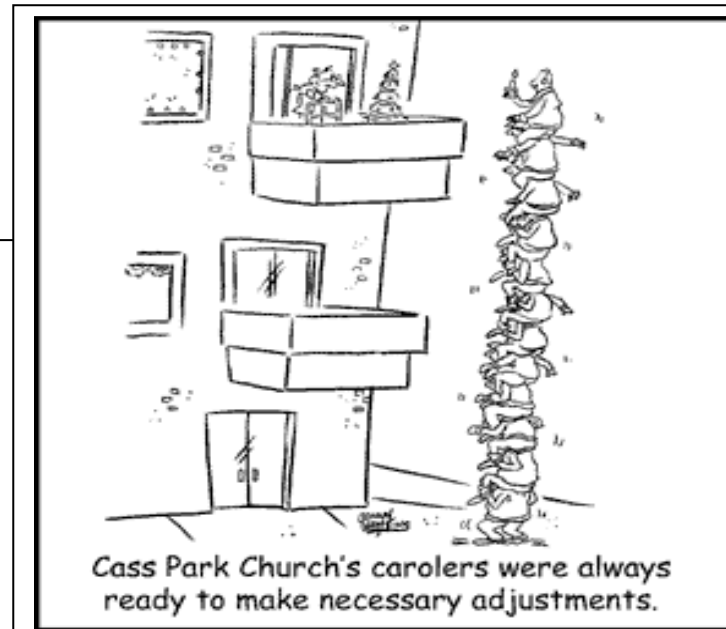
The Christmas season would not be complete without an organ recital by Jim Flood which will be December 13 at 2:00 PM in person or on Facebook. Holiday favorites by a variety of composers will be featured by Jim for the first time, live on our Facebook page. Another Christmas favorite, our Christmas Tea will be virtual on December 20 with a zoom call. Prepare your computer, your tea and treats and tune in at 3:00 on our zoom call and enjoy a chat with Kath, Donna, Katona and all our church friends. We’re working on those logistics at this time so stay tune for developments. Who does not enjoy a good Christmas story? Katona will be telling stories via Facebook for our Sunday school group and may be joined by her family members in the narration. We think this might be fun for adults as well as children and details are coming via Facebook or Zoom, or E-mail.

Our theme for the pledge drive was “you are a light for the salvation of the world”. As we explore coping with the pandemic situation we have virtual visitors from all over; California, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Oregon, Florida, North Carolina, Canada, and Yeovil in England. There’s a silver lining in all of our trials.

Christmas Eve service will start at 5:30 PM with piano and organ music and at 6:00 PM the service of lessons and carols narrated by Christopher Taylor and the Rev. Kath Ordiway. We are a Beacon of light unto the world. Merry Christmas and God’s blessing to all!

Donna Flood
Moderator





**SO TEACH US TO NUMBER OUR DAYS, THAT WE MAY GAIN A
HEART OF WISDOM. (PSALM 90:12)**

Last month I used my space in *Tower Topics* to begin an in-depth study of Hebrew words which give us a more profound understanding of biblical wisdom. The light came on for one reader who realized for the first time how the translation of adam as “man” or “mankind” works. In the Bible it got spelled with a capital A in the poetic Genesis account of the beginning of Mankind, as if the author had called this representative of the species Mr. Man.

A common misunderstanding among those who read the Bible literally in English concerns their mistaken belief that in the story of creation, each day (“yom” in Hebrew) consisted of 24 hours. This gets them into all kinds of trouble in a fake conflict between religion and science, and their failure to recognize the movement of God’s hand in evolution over time.

Yom does not just describe a day, but time in general. When the Bible speaks of what happened “in the day of David,” it is not suggesting that David lived for only 24 hours. When we ourselves speak of “this day and age” we are not speaking of 24 hours. So we ourselves use the word yom or day in the same poetic and profound way as it is used in Genesis. To give a few more examples, “In my grandfather's day, cars did not go very fast” or “In the day of the dinosaurs there were not many mammals.”

Those who are not yet convinced that Genesis, Chapter I is a beautiful poem with profound truth might check all the other places in the Bible where day or yom clearly means more than 24 hours. In our pew Bibles at First Baptist Church, “yom” is translated as “time” in Genesis 4:3 and in Isaiah 30:8, but also as “year” (I Kings 1:1, 2 Chronicles 21:19, Amos 4:4), or “age” (Gen 18:11, 24:1 and 47:28; Joshua 23:1 and 23:2) or “always” (Deuteronomy 5:29, 6:24 and 14:23, and in 2 Chronicles 18:7), or “season” (Genesis 40:4, Joshua 24:7, 2 Chronicles 15:3) and can be translated as epoch or era (Genesis 1:5,8,13,19,23,31), except that it then loses its poetic beauty.

Why does it matter that we understand the days of creation as epochs or eras, lasting a billion years or more each? Partly because people who are counting the hours of the “days” even before the creation of the sun give religion a bad name among others who think religious people are stupid. Then they won’t listen to us when we have something important to say about how we should live ... how we should spend our “time” ... getting now to the real heart of religion.

But even more than that, a shallow understanding of only the surface meaning of scripture prevents Christian believers from appreciating the depth of meaning in the Bible, and the ways in which God works in our own lives today. God works in God’s time, not in our petty measurements by the ticking of the clock or by the pages of the human calendar. God shapes our lives in a manner which allows us to participate in the creativity that leads to progress and fulfillment.

Each day counts, but only when seen in the larger context of the way in which God answers prayer and draws each willing person into his purpose. The time of your life is not limited to just the hour you first believed, but to the eternity in which the days of your life are played out in peace, security and purpose. In an alternate translation of the title above, we might ask God to

"Teach us to value our time, that we may gain *a heart of wisdom.*"



Brian Arthur Brown
www.BrianArthurBrown.com

ABWM of West Virginia aids Christian Center via White Cross



Members of ABWM of West Virginia drop off supplies at Weirton Christian Center.

Clothing, school supplies, postage stamps, camping supplies, hygiene kits, office supplies, sheets, pillows and towels. These items are just a few of those that American Baptist Women's Ministries (ABWM) of West Virginia have been supplying over the years to Weirton (W.Va.) Christian Center through American Baptist Home Mission Societies' (ABHMS) White Cross ministry.

An American Baptist ministry since 1917, the center is a partner of ABHMS' Community Outreach Ministries. The center offers free preschool classes with a Bible-based, hands-on curriculum. The 3- to 5-year-olds learn scriptures and enjoy free lunch daily. The center not only offers a free safe-haven after-school program that serves at-risk students in kindergarten through middle school but also a leadership program for high school students.

Center partners provide free piano, guitar and ukulele lessons as well as special educational programs on healthy food choices, fitness, drug abuse, violence prevention, safety, self-reliance and responsibility. If that's not enough, the center also offers daily devotions, Bible study and scripture memory contests to encourage relationships with the Lord.

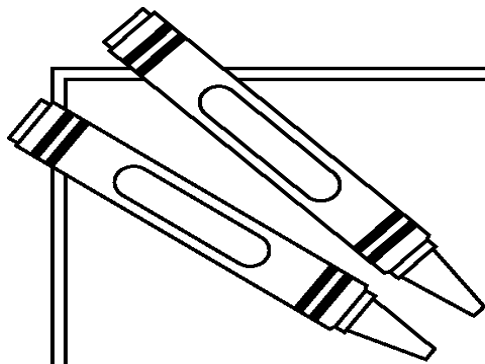
On a daily basis, the staff provides homework help, tutoring and computer access to Lexia Core Reading and iXL for science, math and social studies. The Quarters for Grades program provides incentive for good grades and attendance. Students receive dinner and a snack daily as well as "Blessing Bags" of food to take home over long school and center breaks. During the summer, offerings are a reading-focused program and church camp.

Kim Weaver, the center's executive director, notes that donations have come from ABWM groups across the state. Many groups recently donated books for the center's library. "Each year," she says, "we have a group of ladies who make quilts for our children and others who make and send hats, scarves and gloves."

The value of White Cross items received in 2019 was \$14,636, according to Weaver. "Since we have no billable services, and our grants are all very specific to particular programming or requests, we have to focus on taking care of payroll and operational expenses," she says. "If it were not for all the supplies and gift cards that the ladies provide us with, it would be a huge expense for us. Our ministry would not be the same without being able to provide our children and families with their donations."

Weaver has nothing but high praise for the women who contribute via White Cross. "I have never seen a more powerful group of ladies," she stresses. "They have a mission, and it's always accomplished. I have seen small groups of older women do some powerful things. Their hearts for the Lord—along with wisdom and experience—are invaluable."

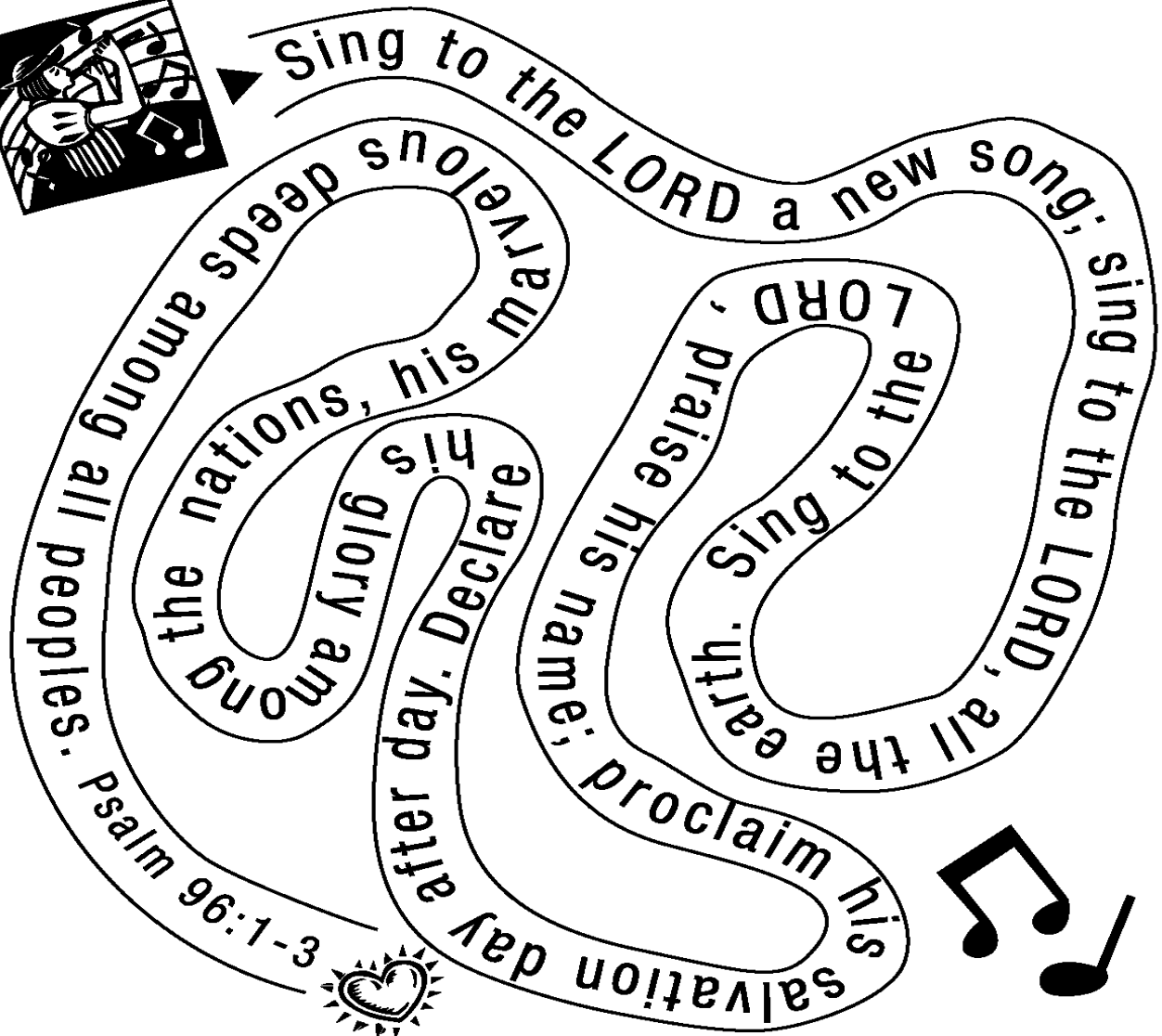
ABHMS has phased out its White Cross ministry, but continues to serve the underserved in neighborhood Christian centers, children's homes and mission schools around the United States and Puerto Rico through the new ["Operation Planting Hope."](#)

**Just for****KIDS**

David's Psalm of Praise to God

When we welcome the New Year, let's not forget to praise God!
In the Bible, David praised God often in his psalms.

Follow the path to read David's Psalm of Praise.



OUR HISTORY CORNER



We are delving into our archives to bring our wonderful past to light. Read the answer below to last month's picture. This month is not so tough. Do you know who and when and what?

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

ANSWERS: _____

ANSWER TO LAST MONTH'S PICTURE: Junior Diaconate meeting in the Dining Room.



For unto you
is born this day
in the city of David
a Saviour,
which is Christ the Lord.

Luke 2:11

A NOTE FROM REV. KATH

I HOPE EVERYONE HAD A PEACEFUL THANKSGIVING. I know that it was probably very different then years past, but taking time to be thankful is very important and should certainly happen every day. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 – *Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

No matter how we celebrate Christmas, I hope everyone finds time to be in God's presence and celebrates the real reason for the Christmas season. Take time every day to read the Advent devotional and "prepare" yourself for Jesus' arrival. Refresh your relationship with God, appreciating the blessings you have received and continue to receive. This is probably a good year to keep Christmas simple – homemade gifts, tasty treats, reading a Christmas story, watching a Christmas movie, snuggling with the kids, putting a wreath on your door, bringing a plate of cookies to the neighbors. John 3:16-17 - *For God so loved the world that he gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him.*

I've set my dad up with Zoom so that he can visit face-to-face with my sister in California and my brother who is going nowhere but work. This allowed my dad to see his kids on Thanksgiving, share memories and remind each other why we are thankful. As I'm writing this, my dad is in my "circle" so we try to get together once a week. By the time this newsletter comes out, that may have changed, and I'll be able to Zoom with him if we can't visit in person. The internet is something to be thankful for!

Speaking of the internet ... since March, we have had an online presence for our church service every Sunday. While the church building was closed for all those months, I was blessed to be able to lead worship from my living room, but we were without music. When we were able to open the sanctuary for worship, we decided to continue our online presence so that people who are not able to attend church service with us, could still worship with us... and be blessed by music. We will continue this important ministry. Matthew 18:20 tells us *For where two or three are gathered in my Name, I am there among them.* Although some will question the validity of this, in these crazy and unusual times, I believe that God considers us "gathered together" even when we are worshipping via the internet. Of course, being present together, sharing encouragement, joining our voices is best, but it's just not always possible.

If you have not yet "checked us out" online, please give it a try. We don't know if COVID-19 will cause us to close the church again, but watching online is also a wonderful opportunity to worship when you're feeling under the weather, when you are away from home, when you don't live in the area, and even when you have to work on Sunday morning ... because the service remains available on our Facebook page to view whenever you would like to watch it. We have found that some of our family and friends (my dad included!) attend their own church service and then watch ours at another time.

If you have a Facebook page, but you don't yet follow the church page, please search for us: "First Baptist Church, Niagara Falls, NY." Go down to "Videos" and you will find them all. Each week is labeled with the date and is followed by the sermon title or scripture reference. If you don't have your own Facebook page, you should still be able to find us by going to Facebook.com and then searching for the church page.

On any given Sunday, we have had 5, 6, 10, 15 people watching live and another 50 to 250 watching later in the day or during the week. We encourage everyone to "share" the church service on their page so that friends and family can join us in worship and also see what's going on at First Baptist!

May God continue to bless you and yours!

Wishing you a blessed and joy-filled December!

Rev Kathleen Ordiway

*But when
the fullness
of time
had come,*



*God sent his
Son....*

Galatians 4:4