

TOWER TOPICS

The News Magazine of

First Baptist Church

Niagara Falls, New York



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First Baptist Church

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December 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 December is a special month and 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 12.			1	2	3 10:00 Men's Coffee Time 	4
5 ADVENT 2 10:00 Sunday School and Bible Study 11:00 Divine Worship with Holy Communion Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching	6	7	8	9	10 10:00 Men's Coffee Time 	11
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19 ADVENT 4 10:00 Sunday School and Bible Study 11:00 Divine Worship Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching	20	21  Winter Begins	22	23	24 Christmas Eve 5:30 Pre-service Music 6:00 Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols	25  Christmas Day
26 CHRISTMAS I 10:00 Sunday School and Bible Study 11:00 Divine Worship Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching 	27 John, Apostle and Evangelist	28 The Holy Innocents, Martyrs	29 Stephen, Deacon and Martyr	30	31 	

December Birthdays

9 Jeanette Heasley
 10 Kathleen Buckley
 17 Donna Flood

december



PLEASE CONTINUE TO PRAY for Hazel Baxter, William Cody, 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. 5 — Sunday – ADVENT 2

Holy Communion
 Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching

Dec. 12 — Sunday – ADVENT 3

Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching
 12:15 Diaconate/Trustees Meeting
 2:00 Christmas Organ Concert

Dec. 19 — Sunday — ADVENT 4

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

Dec. 24 — Friday — CHRISTMAS EVE

5:30 Meditation Music for Christmas
 6:00 Candlelight Service of Lessons
 and Carols

Dec. 26 — Sunday — CHRISTMAS I

Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching





How about a new T-shirt for Christmas? 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

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

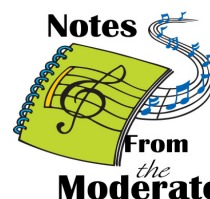
A Note from Our Library

Have you checked out the display shelves from our library in the Friendship Room? New books are added all the time. One of the latest is a volume of Christmas stories by New York Times bestselling author Max Lucado of heartwarming classics of angels, a manger, and the birth of Hope.

Another new book is an autobiography of a former member of St. Paul’s UM Church who now lives in York, Pennsylvania, Theodore Budrow. He tells of the joy of everyday living.

Also remember the book about the story of the boy who flew his kite across the Niagara gorge as described by Rev. Brian Brown in last month’s Tower Topics.

Our library is a valuable resource to our members, with reference books, classic texts and various inspirational volumes. Take advantage!



I HOPE YOU CAN BE AT CHURCH while we are candy making to enjoy the seasonal aromas of our Butter Walnut Crunch. This year’s candy makers are Ron Bowser, Kay Buckley, Connie Davis, Doug Garis, Joe Heasley, Margie Blakely, Donna Flood and Sally Denny. The sale is one of our important fundraisers.

Bible Study is well under way with leader the Rev. Justin Marple starting at the beginning with Genesis. Rev. Kath continues the effort with a study on alternate weeks. Exploring two important books of the Bible in an informal setting enables participants to ask questions. Christian Education has started with three teachers working with our youth.

Our external repairs are finished for this season, now we have internal work to do.

This year’s Mitten Tree donations of gloves, socks and underwear for men will be given to Community Mission. There will also be a publicity themed tree from us in the Power Authority’s Festival of Trees. December frolics continue with “Ho! Ho! Homicide” dinner theater on December 11th. See Rev. Kath for tickets. If you wish to assist with the basket auction, bring your basket to her office at the church.

We will have a Bring a Friend Sunday on December 5th. Enjoying the candle lighting and our service with Christmas music is a nice way to introduce a friend to our church. The Deacons and Trustees will meet after the service on December 12 and the Christmas Organ Concert by Jim Flood follows the meeting, a very busy day. The following Sunday, December 19th the Christmas Tea at 3:00 p.m. will be held in person and virtually in our Friendship Room. At this writing the Covid rates are rising, if there are changes, we’ll announce them as needed. It was virtually last year and we had tea with friends in Niagara Falls, Buffalo, California and Clarence.

Christmas Eve is on Friday, December 24th and the candles will be lighted, carols sung and the word spoken from the Bible. Pre-service music on piano and organ starts at 5:30 PM with lessons and carols at 6:00 PM.

Have a Blessed and Merry Christmas!

Donna Flood
Moderator



"First Church raised over \$5000 with the 'Communion Olympics'."



"Wow! Talk about family values!"



"Sure, I can explain this. Gravitational pull."



"Do you want to hear my theory of moral relativity?"



"What a morning! The angels were devils and the wisemen were wise guys."

The Christmas Paradox

Around this time of year, the media saturates the airwaves and publications of all sorts with Christmas, ads, stories and imagery, but has difficulty explaining its meaning. Or perhaps the media correctly refrains from attempting to explain the overarching phenomenon of the season. But Christians should know its meaning, so in addition to the celebrations, which themselves are beyond words, we try to get our heads around it, beginning in Advent. The season comes early this year with Advent I (the fourth Sunday before Christmas) falling on November 28 in 2021. So let me be the first to make an in-house attempt to truly understand the good news of Christmas as part of our Advent preparations.

Advent is a preparation for Christmas, which is itself is a paradox: that God can become human. It is like everything else in Christianity that is paradoxical, concluding that death can become life, the theme of Easter. The paradox is that this faith puts the teaching that “the first shall be last, the last shall be first” at its center – like the story of exodus in which the slaves are the favorites of God, or again the crucifixion and the resurrection, that the cross becomes the emblem of triumph over worldly empire.

So beginning with Advent leading to Christmas, our faith ends up becoming the most globally successful way of explaining what our faith is for: turning the upside-down world right side up. Is there anybody whose life has not been turned upside down? Let me assure you from personal experience (the only way to give testimony) that if your life has been turned upside down, you can always get right side up.

So steep yourself in the paradoxical sights and sounds of Christmas, knowing that in Christ, God has come to turn your life right side up, and so that everyone who trusts in Him can live the fullness of life according to God’s purpose no matter what challenges we face in the upside-down world.

“Merry Christmas” hardly says it all, but it is a good place to start on Advent I



Rev. Dr. Brian Arthur Brown, FRSA, is Scholar-in-Residence at First Baptist Church, Niagara Falls, NY

Christmas Joys



"Joy" is found close to 200 times in the Bible. As Christmas nears, we easily think of Matthew 2:9-10 "And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy." And Luke 2:10 "But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you Good News that will cause great joy for all the people.'" We can only imagine the joy experienced by the wise men of old when they saw the brilliant star that led them to the baby Jesus.

So what is joy? It's a gladness of heart. It's dependent on Jesus rather than on ourselves. It comes from the Holy Spirit. It's the presence of hope. In John 16:22, Jesus said, "So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you." Biblical joy is knowing Jesus and being filled to overflowing with the need to rejoice. It's having faith in God's Word, in God's promises.

Any happiness or joy that we create for ourselves is temporary. The joy we receive through Jesus Christ is permanent. To find Christ's permanent joy, we need to set aside time to rejoice, to celebrate, to give praise for what God promises us!

We experience joy when we see God's creation all around us. We know true joy when we acknowledge the blessings that we've received through the presence of our children, our family and our friends. And we share that joy by introducing others to our Savior, to that innocent Babe in the manger, to that God Man who hung from the cross for our sins. Our joy is doubled when those we love also love Jesus. 1 Peter 1:8-9 says, "Although you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls."

We strengthen our joy when we share it, when we become like that star that guided the magi to the Baby Jesus. "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth." 3 John 1:4. We strengthen our joy when we spend time with God – in God's presence we experience true joy. Psalm 16:11 – "You make known to me the path of life; in Your presence there is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore." Proverbs 12:20 says that "those who promote peace have joy." We strengthen our joy when we abide in Jesus' love. John 15:10-12 tells us, "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love. I have said these things to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

This Christmas season we are especially called to share the joy that we know, to let others know that they are loved, they are important, that God is calling to them, guiding them, wants to comfort them. It's probably the most important gift that we can give anyone – the joy that they are loved, the joy that they are not alone. We are to "rejoice in the Lord always" (Philippians 4:4), knowing that God freely offers the gift of salvation to everyone. If we could put it in a box, wrap it with beautiful paper, add a bow and ribbons and present it to everyone ... what a wondrous gift, what a gift filled with in-imaginable joy!

Wishing you all the most blessed and peaceful, joy-filled Christmas!



Rev Kath



"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit, you may abound in hope." Romans 15:13

First Baptist Church of Niagara Falls, NY

HO, HO Homicide

**Interactive
Dinner
Theatre and
Basket
Auction
Fundraiser!**



**A MUST ATTEND
EVENT!**

**5:30PM-10PM
\$35 Entry
PRESALE
TICKETS ONLY**

REINDEER | ELVES | SANTA | MURDER!

Niagara Riverside Resort

7001 Buffalo Avenue, Niagara Falls, NY 14304

FOR MORE INFO OR TO BUY TICKETS

CALL US AT (716) 286-5317

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

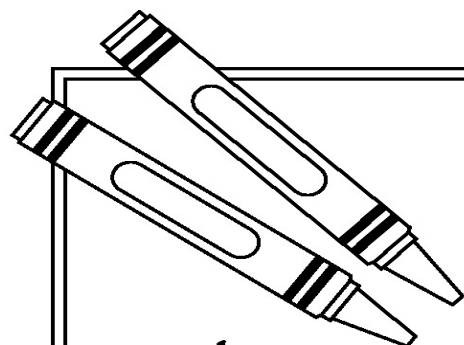
Haiti — Clean Water Project



GOAL The goal of this project is to provide safe, clean water for thousands of families in Haiti.

SUMMARY This project seeks to raise \$66,360 to provide 14 villages in Haiti with water pumps to prevent the spread of waterborne illnesses like cholera, dengue fever and chikungunya.

DESCRIPTION Since the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, there have been cholera epidemics and outbreaks of dengue fever and chikungunya. People rely on dirty river water they share with cows and other livestock. The people of Haiti need access to safe, clean water. Digging to reach clean water is expensive—nearly \$2,000 per well, which is far beyond the reach of Haitians who earn \$1 a day. There are additional costs, including moving the drilling equipment to a village, installing casing and pipes and flushing and cleaning the system. Having clean, safe water for drinking, cooking and washing will reduce the spread of waterborne illnesses so people can go to school and work to provide for their families. This project will be managed by IM missionary Nzunga Mabudiga. It is anticipated that this project will not only provide water that is safe for drinking, cooking and washing, but also promote health and improve the economic status of the villagers.

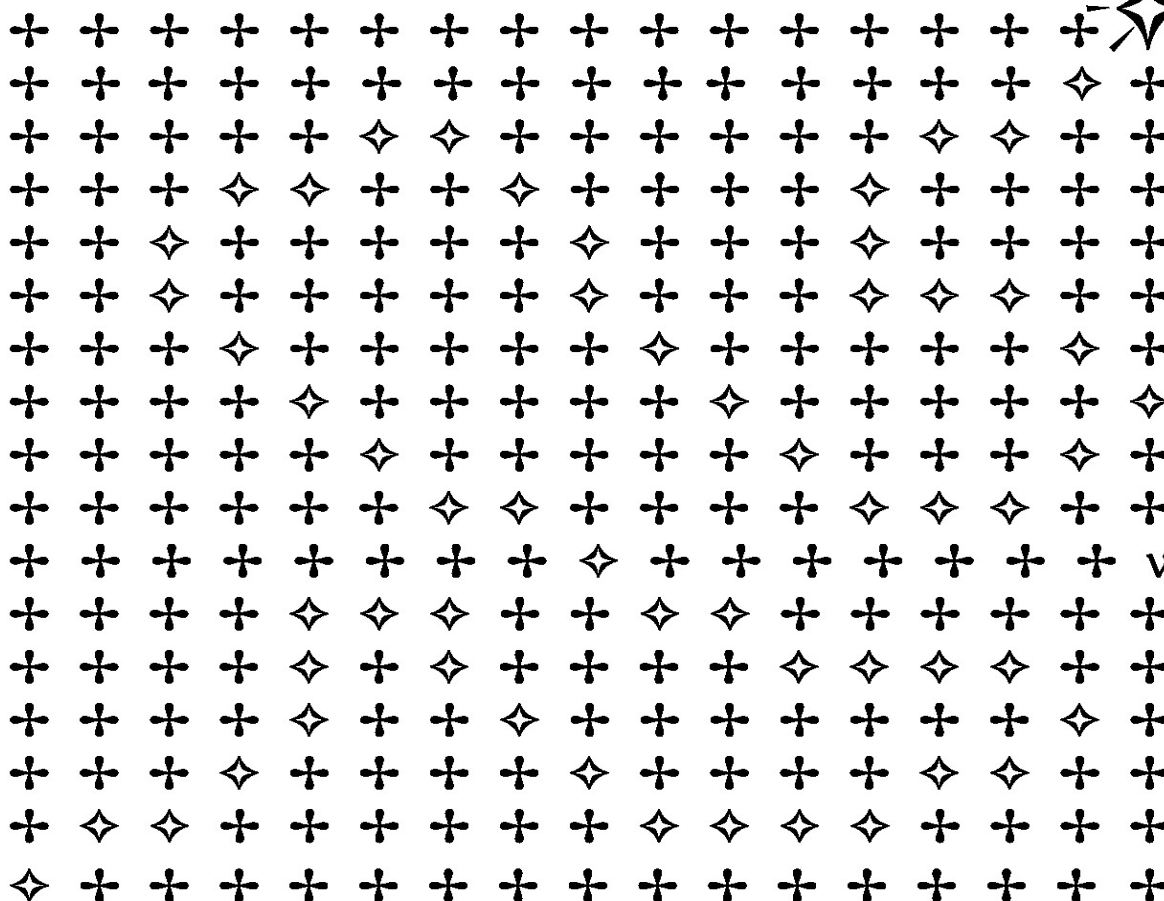


Just for KIDS

The Star that Led to the King

The wise men from the East saw a bright star. They followed it to the place where the child who would be King of the Jews was born. When they went inside, they saw baby Jesus with His mother, Mary. They bowed down and worshiped Him. *(Read Matthew 2:1-11.)*

Help the wise men follow the star ✧ path that leads to baby Jesus.



↑
START



Use the code to fill in the blanks and find out what gifts the wise men brought.

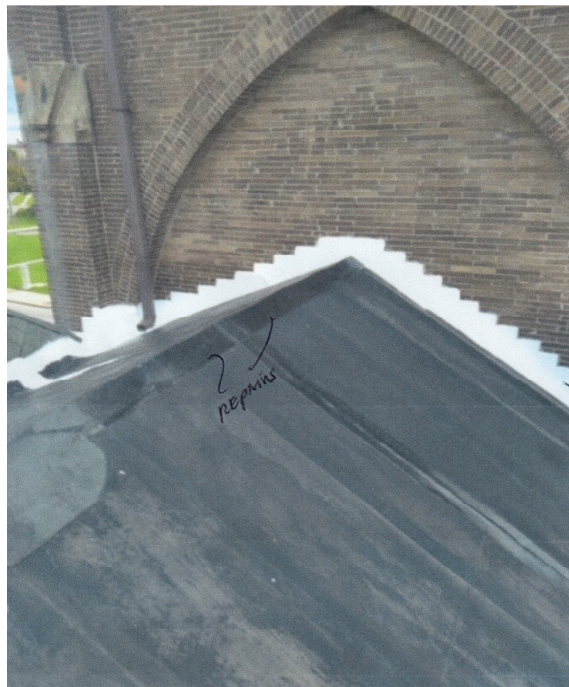
♥ = A ✿ = E † = I ⊙ = O * = Y

G _ LD FR _ NK _ NC _ NS _ M _ RRH



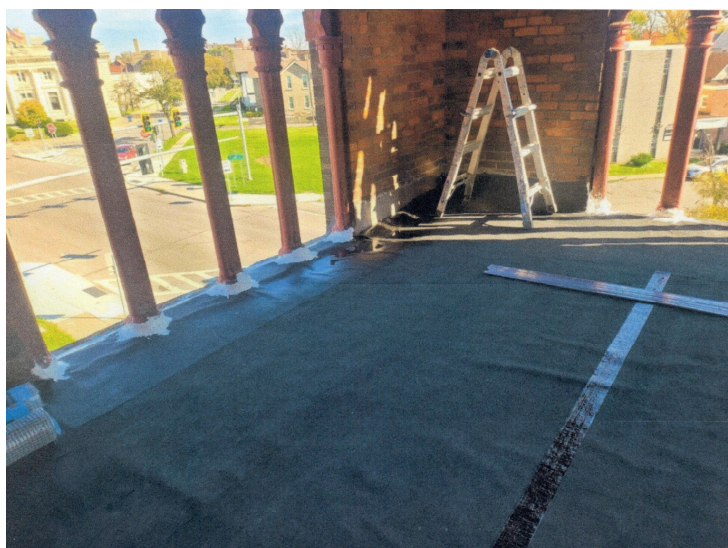
Answers: GOLD, FRANKINCENSE, MYRRH

Views of Recent Building Roof/Tower Work



View at rear of Tower – new flashing.

Views inside Tower with repair work.
Repair work to columns.





New Roof sections



New roof sections with parapet repair with new flashing.



OUR HISTORY CORNER



We are delving into our archives to bring our wonderful past to light. If you look closely at this picture you can place it.

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

ANSWERS: _____

ANSWER TO LAST MONTH'S HISTORY CORNER: Unknown. Picture taken in the Friendship Room.

THE IMPACT OF YOUR GIVING

Back to school 2021!

Global Servants Becky and Larry Stanton



Larry & Rebecca Stanton

BECKY and LARRY serve with International Ministries partners Hungarian Baptist Aid and the Baptist Union of Hungary. Becky works with schools in the eastern region of the country, primary and elementary community schools in Téglás and a college-prep high school in Debrecen. Larry assists Serbian Baptist churches in Stara Moravica and Paçer with their service to the community and to refugees along the Balkan route. Larry and Becky's three daughters attend local schools, learning Hungarian and teaching English as only children can.

Remember, also, that Carmella Jones, whom we help support, also teaches and works in Hungary.