

TOWER TOPICS

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First Baptist Church

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First Baptist Church

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February 2022

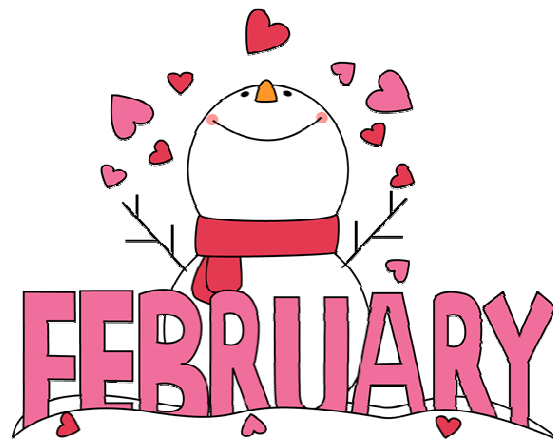
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 Sunday School and Bible Study are suspended indefinitely due to concerns over Covid-19, by order of the Diaconate and Trustees.  We still have a few boxes of candy. If you want one, let the office know.		1  Chinese New Year	2  Groundhog Day Presentation of Our Lord	3	4 10:00 AM Men's Coffee Time 	5
6 EPIPHANY 5 11:00 Divine Worship with Holy Communion Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching	7	8	9	10	11 10:00 AM Men's Coffee Time 	12  Lincoln's Birthday
13 EPIPHANY 6 11:00 Divine Worship Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching 12:15 Diaconate/Trustees Meeting	14 	15	16	17	18 10:00 AM Men's Coffee Time 	19
20 EPIPHANY 7 11:00 Divine Worship Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching	21 	22	23	24	25 10:00 AM Men's Coffee Time 	26
27 TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY 11:00 Divine Worship Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching	28	 If you did not get a copy of the 2022 budget booklet, let the office know you would like one, and we'll see that you get a copy.  Wednesday, March 2, 2022, is Ash Wednesday and the start of Lent. Can you believe it? We will have our traditional service with the Imposition of the Ashes at 7:00 PM.				

February Birthdays

28 Patricia Dibble



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.



Feb 2 Wed. PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD
No service, but read Luke 2:22-40.

Feb 6 — Sunday — EPIPHANY 5
Holy Communion
Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching

Feb 13 — Sunday — EPIPHANY 6
Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching
12:15 Diaconate/Trustees Meeting

Feb 20 — Sunday — EPIPHANY 7
Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching
Third Sunday personal items collection for Heart, Love & Soul.

Feb 27 — Sunday — TRANSFIGURATION
Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching

Mar 2 – Wednesday – ASH WEDNESDAY
7:00 Service with the Imposition of Ashes



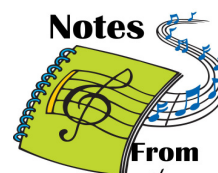


How about a new T-shirt for the New Year? We have a shipment of T-shirts with First Baptist Church, Niagara Falls, New York, imprinted on them below the “I Love My Church” slogan.

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.



From
the
Moderator

THE PANDEMIC CONTINUES and the Diaconate and Trustees work their magic to keep our services open. We had our annual budget meeting and approved the 2022 budget. We continue to pray for the health and safety of our members and their families

Looking ahead into February with all its snow and ice planning our 180th anniversary celebrations has started. Hopefully we'll meet soon in person, if not, by phone to set up a variety of different kinds of events to observe and celebrate the monumental accomplishment of surviving the Mexican-American War, the Civil War, two world wars, the Korean and Viet Nam wars, and those most recently in the near East. There was another flu epidemic in the 1900's and a Cholera epidemic in the 1800's.

All these conflicts have found their way into our hymns we use every year. There will be a new section in Tower Topics exploring who they were and what forces led them to compose or write hymns. I researched Fanny Crosby and realized how many problems she and our forebears suffered through with handicaps, finances, and crises of faith. Lewiston in 1842 where our church started was larger in population than Niagara Falls and eight families who travelled down and back up the escarpment to worship either on foot or by buggy, cart, or sleigh pulled by a horse. Having walked that path, it's a good two hours down and longer back, so it was quite a commitment. The families filed their articles of confession to start a new church in Niagara Falls in 1842, met in houses until the church was built in 1856, and collected small amounts from those who could afford to give to pay for the construction which had to be changed from brick to stone as bricks were in short supply. The Civil War was imminent, bricks were needed for construction of factories, and the rest is history.

Stay tuned for Life in the 1840's throughout this year as we celebrate and worship together. We are finishing up the candy sale. Over 145 boxes of our delicious butter walnut crunch candy was made and sold. Thank you to those who stirred, weighed, boxed and sold and bought candy this year. Keep working on those New Year's resolutions, stay safe, and God bless us all.

Donna Flood
Moderator



The Season of Epiphany



The Greek word *epiphaneia* means “to show forth,” and the Christian season of Epiphany begins on the twelfth day of Christmas and ends on the first day of Lent. January 6 commemorates both the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist, and the visit of the magi (“three kings” in some English translations) to the house where Jesus was then staying (Matthew 2:11), though in popular culture we allow that those “wise men” might have arrived at the stable twelve days earlier. In both his nativity and his baptism Jesus was “shown forth” or presented to the world. In the 21st century Epiphany is taking on new importance for Christians.



This is because it is now universally agreed that the magi were Zoroastrian priests from a religion the world has begun to take note of. Even before the prophets of Judaism, the Persian prophet Zoroaster had prophesied that a “Saoshyant” or Redeemer would be present at creation, visit the earth “in the fullness of time” and appear again at the end of time – exactly like the doctrine of Christ adopted by the early Christian Church. Zoroastrians today are increasingly inclined to regard Jesus as their Saoshyant, a Messianic figure, and so they now sing Christmas carols, and some may perhaps begin to “follow Jesus.”

Would they have to “join the church” to follow Jesus? Rev. Kath made some distinction in that regard in last month’s Tower Topics, and “Messianic Jews” are another group who follow Jesus, accepting Him as their Messiah. The organization, “Jews for Jesus” is supported by Baptist churches. It was founded in 1973 by Conservative Baptist minister, Martin Rosen, whose mother was Jewish. Worshipping in Christian synagogues, since 2003 it has grown from 150 Messianic houses of worship in the United States to as many as 438 today, with over 100 in Israel and more worldwide. Estimates for the USA are currently up to 250,000 members, some 20,000 members in Israel, and an estimated total worldwide membership of 350,000. During Epiphany some may see this as Christian activity in a new understanding of our mission.



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

Being Christian, Being Baptist – Language & Baptism

Whenever we belong to a club, or a school, or an organization ... we tend to have “lingo” that is exclusive, without realizing it. For example, if we belong to a college sorority, we probably call the other girls “sisters” even though there’s no blood relationship. If we are a Mason, words like “craft,” “degree,” and “Grand Master” are regularly used. If we are involved with the Girl Scouts, some of the words that you commonly hear are “bridging,” “day camp” (one of my favorites!), “Be Prepared,” “stewardship,” and “trefoil.” We, as Christians, sometimes fall into a language that not everyone understands, so if I use a phrase that might not easily be understood over this series of articles, I’ll be “defining” the word, too. It is too easy to make our Christianity look and sound like an exclusive club that you can’t join unless you know the words, and this is not true. Yes, we will stumble, but we need to be aware so that we don’t purposefully build walls.

This month I’m talking about baptism, one of the two ordinances in our American Baptist denomination. Ordinance: a religious observance or practice whose intent is to demonstrate a person’s faith. (When I was a Girl Scout, I recited a pledge at every meeting. This demonstrated my membership. Baptism demonstrates my faith.)

The ABC-USA (American Baptist Churches United States of America ... see, there’s another one) says this about baptism: “An act of full immersion following Christ’s example, undertaken by those spiritually mature enough to understand its profound, symbolic significance: resurrection to new life in Christ.”

More “lingo,” I hope I don’t bore you with the all the details I’m going to share. So, “full immersion” is having our full bodies lowered into the water. “Spiritually mature” – it’s an ongoing process that will NEVER END, but being spiritually mature means that our priorities have changed. We are trying to follow the example of Jesus Christ in our lives. We are spending time in prayer, Bible study, fellowship, stewardship and service. We understand that we need the Holy Spirit’s guidance to do these things. We also follow God’s calling to strive toward self-control. “Profound” – very strongly felt. “Symbolic” – representing something else ... our resurrection to our new life in Christ. “Resurrection” – transformation through the death of our old selves and the coming about of our new selves through our acceptance of Jesus as Savior. So very many words that we probably never realized could have the power to separate us from those searching for something to believe in or trying to understand the life we have chosen to live.

I read somewhere “If you’ve seen one Baptist ... all you’ve seen is one Baptist.” So a lot of what we do, say and look like changes from church to church, and sometimes even from person to person. At First Baptist Niagara Falls, when an individual realizes that their life has been changed because of Jesus’ death on the cross and His resurrection, that their forgiveness of sin comes because of Jesus’ perfect sacrifice, and then repents of their sins (“repent” - feel or show that we are sorry for what we have done, we have turned from our sins and want to dedicate ourselves to change) and asked God for forgiveness of those sins, we go to the Diaconate (leaders of the church who are especially concerned with the church’s spiritual needs, as well as its stewardship and service) and ask to be baptized to witness to our family and friends that we have come to a personal acceptance of Jesus as our Savior. We know that being baptized does not save us, but we want everyone to know that we are changed. We want to be identified as a Christ-follower!

Before being baptized, we attend a “class” with others who want to be baptized, usually led by the pastor or a deacon (someone from the Diaconate). In this class, we confirm that we are Christians and desire to be baptized. Besides learning about church history, what our faith calls us to do, and how we are encouraged to act as members of the church, we also choose a hymn and a passage of Scripture to be shared at our baptism as personal statements of faith.

On a chosen Sunday, we are baptized within the sanctuary. Some of you know exactly where, and some haven’t a clue. In the front of the sanctuary (the place we gather for church service), below the cross, below the table, below the floor, is a “pool” just the right size to be fully immersed. To the right, there are two doors, but only one is easily noticeable. Closest to the wall is a door that is opened and allows us to step right into the baptismal pool. The pastor stands in the pool, which is about waist-high, awaiting the “candidate for baptism” to enter. When baptized, you usually wear a white (symbolizing purity and a fresh start), light cotton “robe” over shorts and shirt or a bathing suit or other clothing that we can easily change out of when wet. We carry a white washcloth to cover our nose as we are submersed.

Scripture is read, prayers are said, and you are asked if you have repented of your sins and if you believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and the Son of God. When we approach the pastor, we turn our backs and the pastor holds us behind the back, as well as holding our wrist or arm in front of us. The pastor speaks from Scripture and then lowers you into the water, and then raises you up. Remember, our bodies are buoyant, so rising up out of the water is nothing to fear with the pastor’s assistance. As we rise from the water, the hymn we selected is played.

We step out of the pool and go toward the opposite door that is directly in line with the pool. You are led by a deacon downstairs, where you can change and dry your hair. The service continues while you get ready and you return to celebrate with your friends and family and to lead a transformed (changed) life! This is baptism and we welcome you!

Rev Kath Ordiway

Who Were Our Early Hymn Writers?

One of the earliest women to write hymns in the United States was Fanny Crosby (Frances Jane Crosby) born March 24, 1820, died February 12, 1915. She was born in New York State, in Brewster, was blind from a few weeks of age, educated at the New York Institute for the Blind where she attended classes from age 15 for 11 years where she met her husband, also blind, Alexander van Alstyne. She is credited for writing over eight thousand hymn texts. While being a student and then a teacher at the NYS Institute for the Blind, she met and befriended Grover Cleveland who went on to being mayor of Buffalo and President of the US. He was the secretary. Fanny attended many different churches in New York where she wrote hymn texts, worked in rescue missions, wrote cantatas and musicals.

Although her father died while she was young, she wrote hymns and lived with her mother Eunice Paddock Crosby. Her first hymn was written when she was aged eight and eventually moved to Connecticut in 1828. Her biographer Edith Blumhofer described her early homes as having “an abiding Christian faith” and with the encouragement of her grandmother; she memorized many books of the bible and attended the Methodist Episcopal Church. After her education at the NYS Institute for the Blind, Crosby joined a group of lobbyists in Washington, DC arguing for support for education for the blind, was the first woman to speak in the United States Senate when she recited a poem there and went on to appear before the joint houses of Congress, reciting a poem. The poem called for an institution of educating for the blind in every state. The effort was a success and later she performed for the president, James Polk and his wife in the music room of the White House. She went back to teach at the NYS for the Blind where her hymns were written for her by Grover Cleveland who later became President Grover Cleveland.

Crosby's earliest poems were published without her knowledge by P.T. Barnum who published them in his *The Herald of Freedom*. Her first book of poetry was *A Blind Girl and Other Poems* (1844), *Monterey and Other Poems* (1853) about the Mexican-American War. The next book was *A Wreath of Columbia's Flowers* (1858). Her works were set to music by several different composers and in early days, the composer received the bulk of the money for the work while the lyricist received \$1 or \$2. She moved to Brooklyn, joined Sixth Avenue Bible Baptist Church and served as a consecrated Baptist Missionary, deaconess, and lay preacher. She wrote hymns together with her minister Robert Lowry, such as “*All the Way My Savior Leads Me*” and many others. Having survived a cholera epidemic in 1849 her lyrics changed and she questioned her faith. She started to attend different churches and met Henry Ward Beecher who was an innovator of church music. She also attended the Dutch Reformed Churches, Methodist Episcopal Churches and evolved into following Wesleyan holiness movement where she met Phoebe Palmer and her husband Walter and became part of the camp ground movement. She met the daughter of the Palmers, Phoebe Knapp with whom she wrote “*Blessed Assurance*”. Knapp herself was a prolific composer of hymns. In 1877 Crosby met William Kirkpatrick, the most prolific composer of gospel song tunes with whom she wrote many hymns including “*I Am thine, O Lord*”.

Crosby teamed up with composer, George Root who changed his name to George Friederich Wurzel (German for Root) and both taught at the North Reading Musical Institute in North Reading, Massachusetts. They wrote songs performed by Henry Wood Minstrels.

One song that caught on was "The Hazel Dell" a sentimental ballad performed by the Christy's Minstrels. In 1854 an article in the New York Music Review listed their song with Stephen Foster's songs, "Old Folks at Home" and "My Old Kentucky Home".

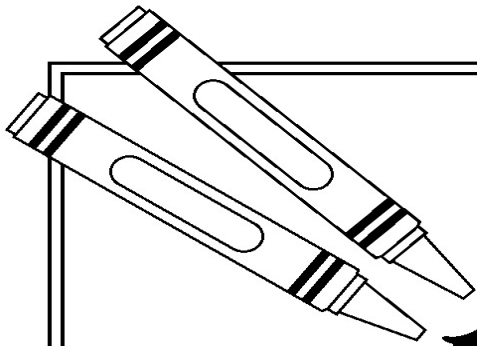
She wrote cantatas and political songs, many under names other than her own. Politically she was a strict abolitionist (against slavery) and supported Abraham Lincoln and the newly created Republican Party. She lived through the Civil War and musically collaborated with William B. Bradbury.

She remained married to Alexander Van Alstyne, but they spent most of their time apart. They maintained a friendly relationship after they parted. Although she fell on hard times, she supported missions and denied that she needed help. Her hymn writing declined in later years but she was active in speaking engagements and missionary work among the poor until she died in 1915 aged 94 and was buried at Mountain Grove Cemetery in Bridgeport, CT, near her mother and other family members. Crosby left money in her will for the sheltering of senior males who had no other place to live which led to the construction of the Fanny Crosby Memorial Home for the Aged (1925-1996). It was built after a fund drive by the Federation of Churches.

Donna Flood



Fanny J. Crosby in 1872



Just for **KIDS**

LOVE IS...

In 1 Corinthians 13 Paul writes about love. He tells us what love does and does not do. Let's find out about love!

Use the alphabet code to fill in the blanks.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

LOVE IS 16 1 20 9 5 14 20

LOVE IS 11 9 14 4

LOVE 18 5 10 15 9 3 5 19 WITH THE TRUTH

LOVE 16 18 15 20 5 3 20 19

LOVE 20 18 21 19 20 19

LOVE 8 15 16 5 19

LOVE 16 5 18 19 5 22 5 18 5 19

... THESE THREE REMAIN: FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE.
BUT THE GREATEST OF THESE IS

12 15 22 5

Answer: PATIENT, KIND, REJOICES, PROTECTS, TRUSTS, HOPES, PERSEVERES, LOVE

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: Amy Bowser (Baxter) and Adrian.

THE IMPACT OF YOUR GIVING

Gratitude to God

Global Servants Kelty & Vital Pierre



Since we are in the USA on US/Puerto Rico assignment, we are so grateful for our personal contact with the many churches who support us through online platforms. We've been able to preach, lead Sunday School and Bible studies, speak with women's groups and mission groups and connect with different churches in person in Massachusetts. Thanks to all of you for this opportunity; and for those churches we haven't been able to visit yet via Zoom, we still have openings in April, May, and June of 2022. (Because of Ketly's continuing immunotherapy treatments, we are not able to travel from state to state at this time.)

Even though we are Stateside, our ministry continues in the Dominican Republic (DR) at the Community Center. Vital spends hours every day communicating with Haitian immigrants in La Romana via WhatsApp, giving encouragement and guidance as they go through these difficult times in the DR. And Ketly continues to use online platforms to disciple women, and she is seeing fruit in their lives.