

TOWER TOPICS

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March 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 7:00 Virtual Lenten Vespers	4	5 10:00 Men's Coffee Time 	6
7 THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT 11:00 Divine Worship with Holy Communion Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching	8	9	10 7:00 Virtual Lenten Vespers	11	12 10:00 AM Men's Coffee Time 	13
14 FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT 11:00 Divine Worship Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching 12:15 Diaconate/Trustees Meeting <i>Daylight Savings Begins</i>	15	16	17  7:00 Virtual Lenten Vespers	18	19 10:00 AM Men's Coffee Time  <i>Joseph, Guardian of Jesus</i>	20  Spring Begins
21 FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT 11:00 Divine Worship Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching <i>Third Sunday personal items collection for Heart, Love & Soul</i>	22	23	24 7:00 Virtual Lenten Vespers	25 <i>Annunciation of Our Lord</i>	26 10:00 AM Men's Coffee Time 	27  Passover
28 PALM SUNDAY 11:00 Divine Worship Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching	29 Monday in Holy Week	30 Tuesday in Holy Week	31 Wednesday in Holy Week	☩ April 1 – 7:00 PM Maundy Thursday Service April 2 — Good Friday Ecumenical Three Hour Service divided into Seven segments, based on the Seven Last Words of Christ from the cross. In person and on line.		

March Birthdays

19 Kristy Engel
 24 Marge Bozigar
 25 Ron Bowser
 29 Elaine McGrath
 29 Joseph Mark Hoopsick III
 30 Tim Baxter



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.



March 3 — Wednesday

7:00 PM Virtual Vesper Service
 Log on to Facebook and search for
 First Baptist Church Niagara Falls, NY

March 7 — Sunday — LENT 3

Holy Communion
 Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching

March 10 — Wednesday

7:00 PM Virtual Vesper Service

March 14 — Sunday — LENT 4

Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching
12:15 Trustees/Diaconate Meeting

March 17 — Wednesday

7:00 PM Virtual Vesper Service

March 21 — Sunday — LENT 5

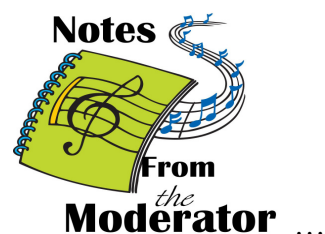
Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching
*Third Sunday personal items collection
 for Heart, Love & Soul.*

March 24 — Wednesday

7:00 PM Virtual Vesper Service

March 28 — Sunday — PALM SUNDAY

Rev. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching



ASH WEDNESDAY HAS COME AND GONE and given the weather problems, our Wednesday evening Vespers will be virtual. The Vesper series will be on the Parables from the final week of the life of Christ. The Sunday services will focus on the lectionary for March and April.

Our mission for February was the CWS (Christian World Services) Blanket Sundays which include blankets, clean up supplies and buckets, and personal hygiene kits for those who have been in weather related events, fires, political upheavals, or other tragedies which happen. The list of problems in this world is endless and united Christians help when and where we are able. Our Easter offering envelopes and flower orders will be available soon in bulletins as well as this Tower Topics. Lilies and hyacinths will decorate our Easter service and memorialize or honor our loved ones.

Holy Week is at the end of March and beginning of April. Stay tuned for the services which will be either virtual or in person. During Lent we have our "Sanctuary for Lent 2021" personal meditation books that were mailed out earlier. Taking extra time to prepare for Easter is a worthwhile effort spiritually. Planning ahead is what we really want to do, but there are the pandemic problems that interfere.

Regardless, pandemic or not, the Rev. Dr. Brian Brown had his book launch virtually on Feb. 1, 2, and 3. We congratulate and commend Brian Brown for the success of the launch of *Seven Testaments*, his latest book. Over 300 people from around the world participated and the long term effects of the book series will be felt for years into the future. The United Nations now has a department of religion trying to solve world problems, disagreements and disputes. The scholarship, study, and insights that the series has brought to the attention of the world is inclusive of many religious backgrounds and outlooks. The investigation of the roots of all these religions lead us back to Zoroaster, in ancient Persia, and earth penetrating radar will be used to search for his burial location and more of his writings. More religions and writings will be studied in the future which leads us forward into future discoveries.

Donna Flood
Moderator

Gladys D. Hogan

Dec 2, 1929 – Jan 23, 2021

Gladys D. Hogan, 91, of Niagara Falls, NY, passed away on Saturday, January 23, 2021 at Schoellkopf Health Center. Born in Niagara Falls on December 2, 1929, she was the daughter of the late Harvey and Jessie (Hoey) Roush.

She is survived by her children, Bonnie Cooke, Janet Tisdale, Ruffin "Harvey" Lewis, Vincent (Iwalani) Sullivan, John (Darlene) Clark, and James Sullivan; 18 grandchildren; many great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild; sister, Laura Smith; and several nieces and nephews. Besides her parents, she was predeceased by her sons, Richard Clark and Robert Hogan; and daughter, Bertha J. Lewis-Bissell.

Friends may call on Wednesday, January 27 from 5-7 PM at ZAJAC

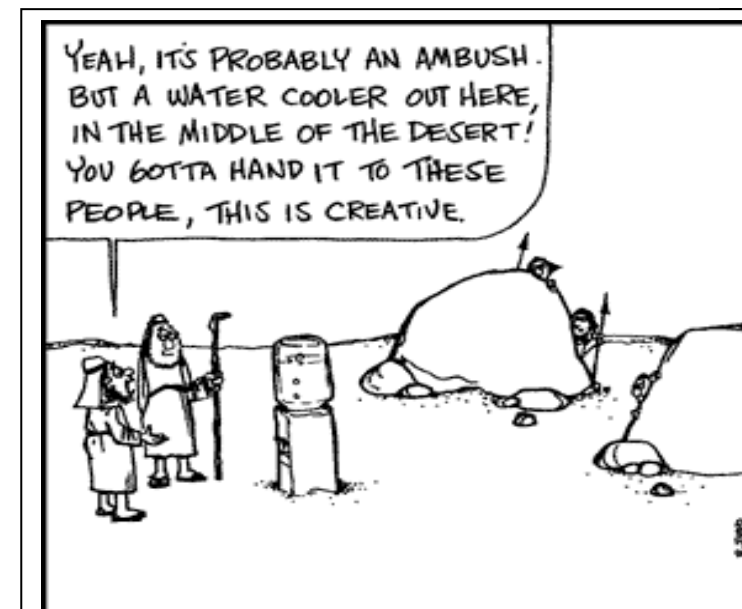
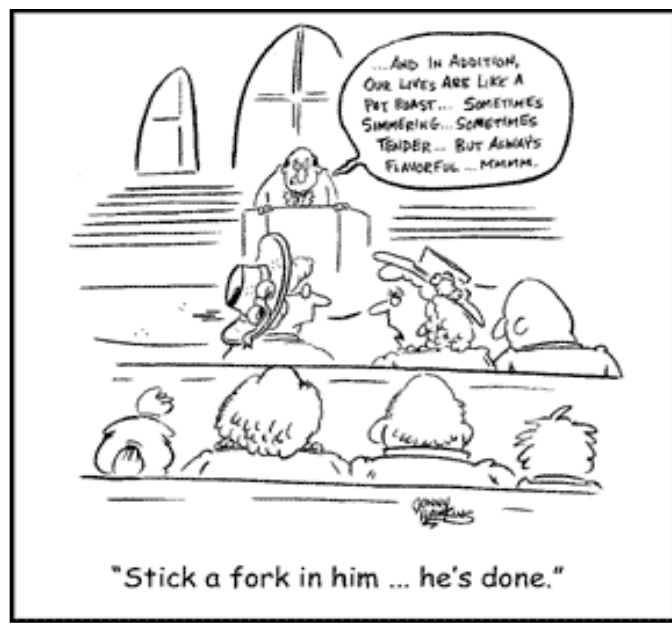


FUNERAL HOME INC., 319 24th Street, corner of Welch Ave., Niagara Falls, NY, where funeral services will begin 11 AM on Thursday, January 28th with Pastor Kathy Ordiway officiating. Burial following in Niagara Falls Memorial Park Cemetery, Lewiston, NY.

Arrangements entrusted to ZAJAC FUNERAL HOME INC. Visit zajacfuneralhomeinc.com for online condolences.

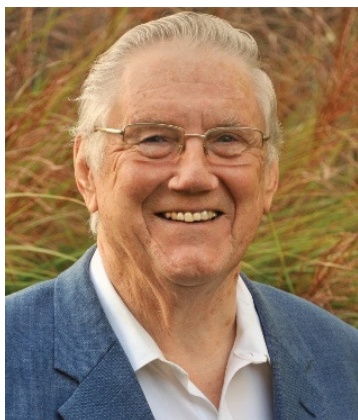


319 24th Street
Niagara Falls, New York 14303
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The 2021 United Nations Week for Religious Harmony

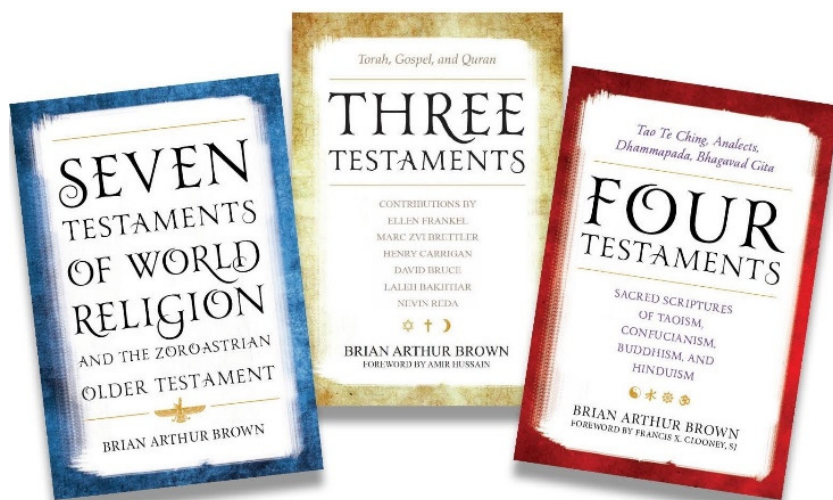
It all began with a ZOOM conference to introduce and promote historic breakthroughs in religious understanding in the *Seven Testaments Trilogy*



"In the 1960s, we were entering the era of Comparative Religions, with the goal of comparing and understanding differences between religions ... today, with the Parliament of the World's Religions, and projects like the Seven Testaments Trilogy we are moving from Comparative Religions to Religious Studies – a new approach where we move from 'comparing' to 'sharing,' and find our own traditions enriched by learning from each other," said Brian Arthur Brown [photo left] in his introductory remarks at the 3-day ZOOM conference for the United Nations Week of Religious Harmony.

The Conference featured internationally renowned educators, scholars and practitioners to introduce and promote historic breakthroughs in religious understanding as presented in the *Seven Testaments Trilogy*. The United Nations has recognized that in the quest for world peace religion is often part of the problem, and needs to become part of the solution based on understanding and the mutual respect represented by Brown and his colleagues in this work, supported also by the Parliament of the World's Religions.

The Seven Testaments



In his quest for peace and harmony among religions, Brown professes that all religions of the world are interconnected and each has gems to share. This compelling message is expressed in his three volumes of the Seven Testaments Trilogy, the culmination of two decades of research.

In *Three Testaments* (2012) he explores features of the Jewish Torah, the Christian

New Testament and the Islamic Quran.

Four Testaments (2016) analyzes the texts of the four Eastern traditions – Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism and Hinduism, exploring areas of uniqueness, connection and divergence.

In *Seven Testaments of World Religion and the Zoroastrian Older Testament* (2020), Brown presents the debt owed to Zoroastrianism by all seven world religions: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism and Hinduism. He points out references in the Zoroastrian Avestan texts to creation stories and apocalypse, Satan, final judgment, the Messiah, salvation, heaven and hell, and other elements of religion appearing again in the seven testaments of his trilogy.



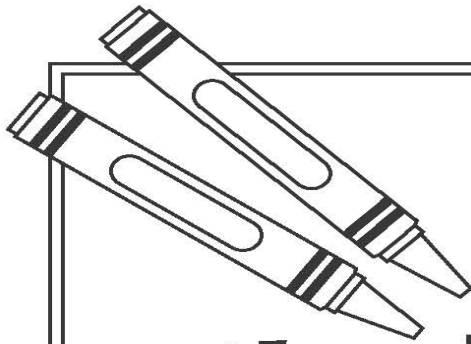
Officials of the United Nations and the Parliament of World Religions are pictured from off-site locations with Brian Arthur Brown at the virtual head table. Conference host was James Flood, top centre, of First Baptist Church, Niagara Falls, NY where Brown is Scholar-in-Residence. Technicians John Bedell and contributor William Thomas provided administrative support for the conference from St. John's Stevensville United Church with co-hosts (centre) Cheryl Wood Thomas of Niagara and James Christie of St. James Church in Montreal on location at Brown's library research office.

Search for the Tomb of Zoroaster and the Dead "Zee" Scrolls

Another quest embarked upon by Dr. Brown is to find the lost portions of the Avestan writings that were destroyed, first by Alexander, and again by Arab armies. He believes these missing chapters still exist, like the "*Dead Sea Scrolls*" of the Hebrew Scriptures. He dubs them the "*Dead Zee Scrolls*."

Conference participants were captivated with the "big reveal" – identification of the tomb of Zoroaster in a crypt beneath the Blue Mosque, Mazar-i-Sharif ('Tomb of the Exalted') in Afghanistan [photo left]. University of Wisconsin Professor Harry Jol presented site plans of the Mosque and non-invasive techniques of ground penetrating radar techniques to be used at the site of this archeological expedition, planned for as soon as the security situation there permits, likely in late 2021 or sometime in 2022. Interested persons are invited to join this expedition. For further information, visit www.BrianArthurBrown.com or contact BrianArthurBrown@gmail.com.

*Roshan Rivetna, Fezana Journal, Chicago
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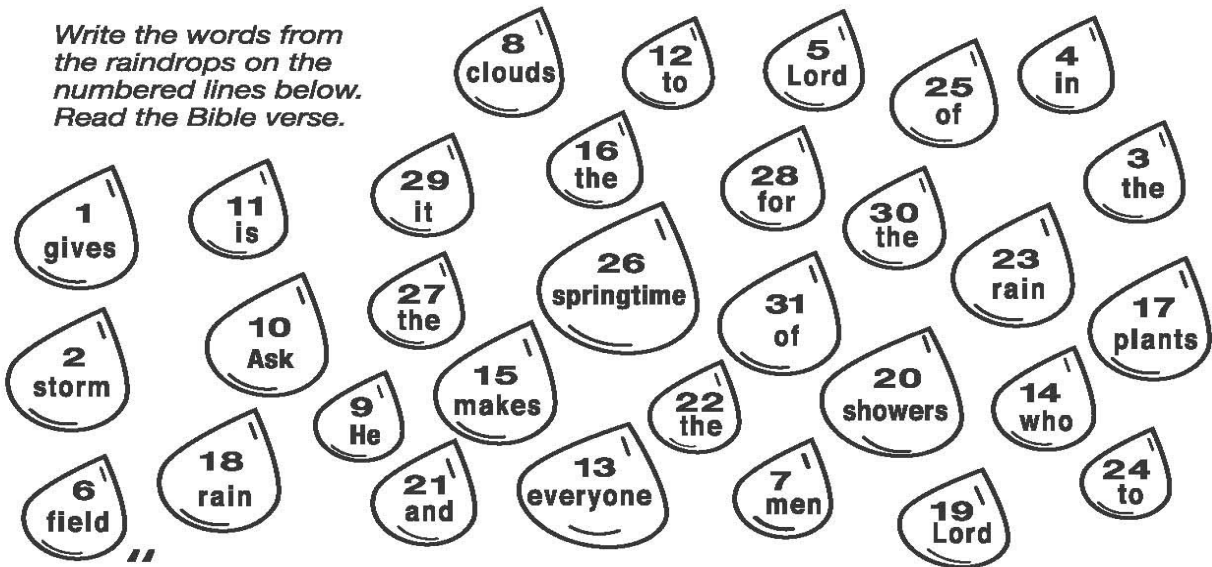
Just for

KIDS

Thank God for Rain

Each spring the Lord sends April showers to water the earth. Without rain to nourish our trees, plants, flowers, fruits and vegetables, there would be a poor growing season and very little to harvest. Thank God for rainy weather!

Write the words from the raindrops on the numbered lines below. Read the Bible verse.



10	16	5	28	18
4	22	26		
29	11	3	19	14
	27	2	8	
9	1	20	31	23
12	7	21	17	25
30	6	24	13	

Zechariah 10:1 (NIV)

Answer: "Ask the Lord for rain in the springtime; it is the Lord who makes the storm clouds. He gives showers of rain to men, and plants of the field to everyone." Zechariah 10:1

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. 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: An outdoor gathering. Left to right: Ada Belle Nickerson; Ruth and Joe Patruno; and Rhea Hunt.

Lonely, I'm Mr. Lonely, I have nobody for my own

This song by Akron was briefly number one in 2004, and these days we hear that many are echoing its mournful tone, thanks to Covid-19. Even Justin Bieber, before he recently “got religion,” was baptized and became active in church, penned a similar sentiment.

*Everybody knows my name now But somethin' 'bout it still feels strange Like
lookin' in a mirror, tryna steady yourself And seein' somebody else And
everything is not the same now It feels like all our lives have changed.
What if you had it all But still felt weak and small? Maybe then you'd know me
'Cause I've had everything But no one's listening.
And there is nobody I can call.*

But Bieber has experienced connection in this last year similar to what many in our First Baptist congregation are experiencing despite the pandemic. Between Sunday services and people joining in by livestream, or visiting the later recording (where I usually fit in), we have more participants on Sunday now than we have had for years. Bieber earlier had nobody to call, but he does now and so do you.

Our Pastor Kath and our administrator Jim reach out to us in special ways and regular contacts: cards from Jim, phone calls from Kath, Internet connections and Tower Topics. We also have on line Wednesdays in Lent. Ash Wednesday was unfortunately only on line. Some of you even shared my 3-day Zoom Conference to launch the 2021 United Nations Week of Religious Harmony. Hosted by Jim Flood, we had 300 participants from around the world, but I saw you and you saw me for the first time in almost a year.

Through technology and by other means, those who have a church connection are said to be fairing better than others in society during these troubled times. Other agencies, clubs and association are struggling and many may never open again, but present indications are that the church is going to come out of the pandemic stronger than ever. This is what has happened following previous crises, wars, depressions and other plagues in the more distant past, when the church is faithful to its people and the people are faithful in their connection.

I don't know if it is still on the school curriculum, but probably most of us read *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint Exupéry in High School. Do you recall the scene where the alien boy, having just landed on Earth, climbs a mountain in search of a connection. From its peak he calls out “Hello.” Then, confusing his own echo for the voice of someone, he calls out again, “Can we be friends? I'm lonely.” The echo simply answers, “I'm lonely.” That will not happen when you reach out or call First Baptist.

Another congregation with which I am connected on the Canadian side of the Rainbow Bridge recently brought in a huge truckload of 18,000 pounds of food, distributed to cars from a large parking lot in Fort Erie, not just to our own people having difficulty in shopping or in finances, but to all the hungry, many of whom are also lonely – some of them needing food delivered at home by the congregation's van. I know that if anyone at First Baptist is hungry, they would be looked after. If anyone needs a ride for a medical appointment, just call the church. But just as important are all the other ways, new and old, in which we stay connected. The links we share are life-giving, but chief of all is the fact that we are here reminded of our connection with God.

Rev. Dr. Brian Arthur Brown, FRSA,
Scholar-in-Residence, First Baptist Church

Spring Is on the Way

Springtime!

Your message of hope
to a world tiring of winter's starkness,
longing for that first crocus
to push through snow's icy blanket
and spread its leaves,
like arms outstretched,
to its creator.

Springtime!

Our yearly reminder, if we needed one,
that to a world that was dark and cold,
a world devoid of love's sweet warmth,
you sent your Son
to break through sin's icy blanket,
and, arms outstretched
on a cross,
he brought us
hope.

Thank you

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https://www.faithandworship.com/Prayers_Spring.htm#gsc.tab=0

SPRING IS STILL A FEW WEEKS AWAY – but aren't we all ready for its arrival? I'm not a fan of the cold and I greatly dislike (hate? Such a strong word!) driving in the snow! The promises of spring fill me with excitement.

What I like to see most that reminds me that it's almost spring are the birds. We make a big deal about seeing the first robin, but The Old Farmer's Almanac quotes a weather proverb that says, "Bluebirds are a sign of spring; warm weather and gentle south breezes they bring." We look for the "backyard birds," the ones who are coming to our birdfeeders and looking for any leftover berries on our bushes!

I came across the above prayer / poem and was so moved. Our world is facing so many "dark and cold" spots and we need the promise of new birth, of change, of hope so that we can break away from "sin's icy blanket."

I'm looking toward change, so I'm not going to list the darkness we've gone through, but instead I'm going to remember that we are promised change, peace, brightness. Maybe today, maybe tomorrow, maybe not until we've left this world ... definitely when Jesus returns, but there will be change.

We don't have to wait for the season to change, or even for the world to change, to create a change in our own lives. We can truly know the hope, the love, the sweet warmth that we are promised through Jesus Christ, who willingly went to the cross to sacrifice His pure life for our salvation. His sacrifice defies logic. How many people do you know who would sacrifice their own life for a stranger?

So come to Christ, be reminded of His sacrifice, and know His love. Then makes changes in your own life. Sacrifice some of your comfort for another person – (do you really need 8 hoodies in your closet?) Be reminded of how God desires for us to live. Start seeing God's presence all around you ... watch for that first bird of spring, look for God's love reaching out to you through a friend or a stranger, realize we are blessed, even in the darkness.

Rev Kathleen Ordiway

THE IMPACT OF YOUR GIVING

God is faithful

Global Servants Jill and Mike Lowery



Greetings in the new year from California! Mike and I have been so blessed to be able to celebrate the holidays with our children in California and their families, and to have a much-needed break from our ministries in the Congo.

You can imagine how surprised we were by the events that took place last week in the capitol. It feels almost unreal to me, like something you'd see in a movie. One of my Congolese friends echoed my thoughts when she said, "In Congo, we're used to these types of events, but not in the U.S. What's going on?!!" It's unsettling to see the same things happening here that we've witnessed in the developing world. These events combined with the disruptions of the pandemic can be pretty overwhelming. Thankfully, our God is faithful and He is not surprised! We hold tight to His empowering words: "In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

Looking back over the year, 2020 was certainly like nothing we've ever experienced. I'm sure, wherever you are in the world, you can say the same thing. I praise God that despite all the disruptions, He made a way for us to move forward in ministry and to complete several projects, some we'd been working on for many years.