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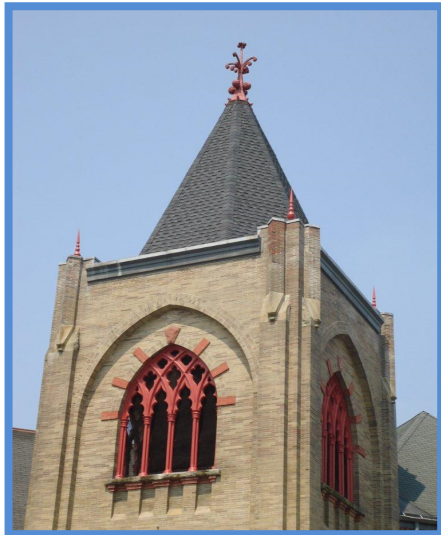
# TOWER TOPICS

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF

## First Baptist Church

NIAGARA FALLS, NEW YORK

2014



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## First Baptist Church

554 Main Street  
Corner of Main and Fourth  
Niagara Falls, New York 14301-1584

# January 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>❄ Be sure to read the script review of Brian Brown's play, <i>Some Year in Jerusalem</i>. We will be reading the last two scenes on January 12.</p> <p>❄ Plan to stay after church for 10 – 15 minutes on January 19<sup>th</sup>. We need a quorum to pass the 2014 budget, copies of which are on the table in the Friendship Room for your advance inspection.</p>			<p>1 OFFICE CLOSED</p> 	2	<p>3</p> <p>10:00 Men's Coffee Time</p>	4
<p>5 EPIPHANY (Observed)</p> <p>10:00 Pre-service Fellowship 11:00 Divine Worship with Communion Mrs. Kathleen Ordiway, preaching 5:00 L.I.F.E. "Winterfest"</p>	<p>6 EPIPHANY</p> 	7	<p>8</p> <p>Rev. Wes in his office</p> <p>7:00 Diaconate/ Trustees Meeting</p>		<p>10</p> <p>10:00 Men's Coffee Time</p>	11
<p>12 BAPTISM OF OUR LORD</p> <p>10:00 Pre-service Fellowship 11:00 Divine Worship Rev. Wesley Bourdette, preaching 12:15 Second Sunday lunch with conclusion of <i>Some Year in Jerusalem</i></p>	13	14	<p>15</p> <p>Rev. Wes in his office</p>	16	<p>17</p> <p>10:00 Men's Coffee Time</p>	18
<p>19 2<sup>ND</sup> SUN AFTER EPIPHANY</p> <p>10:00 Pre-service Fellowship 11:00 Divine Worship Third Sunday Food Collection Mrs. Kathleen Ordiway, preaching 12:15 Annual Budget Meeting</p>	<p>20 OFFICE CLOSED</p> 	21	<p>22</p> <p>Rev. Wes in his office</p>	23	<p>24</p> <p>10:00 Men's Coffee Time</p>	25
<p>26 3<sup>RD</sup> SUN AFTER EPIPHANY</p> <p>10:00 Pre-service Fellowship 11:00 Divine Worship Rev. Wesley Bourdette, preaching</p>	27	28	<p>29</p> <p>Rev. Wes in his office</p>	30	<p>31</p> <p>10:00 Men's Coffee Time</p>  <p>Chinese New Year</p>	<p>Have you picked up your church envelopes?</p>



### JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

5	Ken Bowser
13	Sara Gromniak
14	James Flood
14	Joseph Heasley
22	Betty Richardson
22	Gisela Scott



PLEASE CONTINUE TO PRAY for Ron Bowser, Dorothy Jackson, Lucas Standish, Janet Keebler, Celia Krasinski, Neal Jacobs, Gisela Scott, Gladys Lewis, Dawn (Schutz) Lynn, Bertha and Harold Bissell, our Church family, our missionaries, our Country and all those who serve our Country.



### LOOKING AT THIS MONTH

#### January 1 - Wednesday

**NEW YEAR'S DAY**

No Inasmuch in January

#### January 5 – Sunday

**EPIPHANY (Observed)**

10:00 AM	Pre-service Fellowship
11:00 AM	Divine Worship - Holy Communion Mrs. Kathleen Ordiway, preaching
5:00 PM	L.I.F.E. "Winterfest"



#### January 8 - Wednesday

7:00 PM Trustees/Diaconate Meeting

#### January 12 – Sunday

**BAPTISM OF OUR LORD**

10:00 AM	Pre-service Fellowship
11:00 AM	Divine Worship Rev. Wesley R. Bourdette, preaching
12:15 PM	Second Sunday Lunch with Program

#### January 19 - Sunday

**SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY**

10:00 AM	Pre-service Fellowship
11:00 AM	Divine Worship Mrs. Kathleen A. Ordiway, preaching <i>Third Sunday Food Collection</i>
12:15 PM	Annual Budget Meeting

#### January - 26 - Sunday

**THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY**

10:00 AM	Pre-service Fellowship
11:00 AM	Divine Worship Rev. Wesley R. Bourdette, preaching

**L. I. F. E.**

Lively Interesting Fellowship for Everyone

**Sunday, January 5, 2013****5:00 PM****“Winterfest”**

Pot Luck.

Bring a dish to pass.

Sign up in the Friendship Room.

**Do We Have Your Birthday?**

If your birthday doesn't appear on our list, please call the office to let us know your special date so we can include it.

**BOOKSHELF CORNER****Play Compared to Fiddler and Roots**

After a fall run at First Baptist Church in Niagara Falls, NY, and a Dec. 11 presentation at the YMCA in St. Catharines, Ontario, a noted critic offered this script review for the media. Playwright Brian Arthur Brown, a United Church minister in Niagara Falls, Ontario, is Scholar-in-Residence at First Baptist Church in Niagara Falls, NY.

**Reviewed by Ellen Frankel**

In his recent book, *Three Testaments: Torah, Gospel and Quran*, Brian Arthur Brown bound together for the first time the foundational scriptures of three world religions, all heirs to the family of Abraham. This play, based upon that book and subtitled *Some Year in Jerusalem*, dramatizes the shared story of these three faith communities, separated by conflict and competing truth claims, but ultimately bound together by their common story and by their interwoven sacred texts.

This play addresses some of the thorniest political and religious issues of our time in a manner

that engages the imagination and the heart. Populated by familiar characters drawn from scripture—the Hebrew prophet Jeremiah, Queen Esther, Jesus, Muhammad and his daughter Fatima—as well as exotic figures, both historic and imagined, such as the Persian prophet Zoroaster, the 10<sup>th</sup> century Caliph Abd Al-Rahman III, and a trio of talking birds—the play brings to life many of the scholarly controversies that have led to much bloodshed throughout history: Is the Bible the true word of God? Which of these three Scriptures holds the ultimate truth? Which faith has legitimate claim to the land of Israel? Where did such radical theological concepts as Satan, the Messiah, and Judgment Day originally come from? Can the Children of Abraham ever live together in peace?

Just as the musical *Fiddler on the Roof* helped American Jews move into the American mainstream and the novel *Roots* restored to its community the lost African-American story, so too this drama, with its focus on the roots and influence of the Quran, may open the door to and for North American Muslims. Although that is not the point of this play, it may be an unintended and fortunate consequence.

One of the strengths of the play is to draw parallels between pivotal religious turning points in the ancient world—5<sup>th</sup> century Jerusalem and 7<sup>th</sup> century Persia before the Common Era; Tyre in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, Medina in the 7<sup>th</sup> century and Cordoba in the 10<sup>th</sup>—and our own times, awakening us to unknown or forgotten connections that may yet help the Children of Abraham realize our common humanity. In its inspiring conclusion, the play imagines a day, not far off, when a peace accord is reached between Palestinians and Israelis, and when the world gathers to celebrate this long-awaited event at a United Nations meeting in Jerusalem.

Perhaps the greatest challenge to the success of this play is its audacious ambition to translate a work of sacred scripture and scholarship into a work of imagination. According to playwright Brian Brown, *Three Testaments: Shalom, Peace and Salam* dramatizes the argument that “Jews, Christians and Muslims have entered a new interfaith era in which they are able to help each other to understand their own and each other’s scriptures in the quest for



peace.” But can an argument be effectively dramatized? Can polemics work as theater? William Butler Yeats once astutely observed that “Out of the quarrel with others we make rhetoric; out of the quarrel with ourselves we make poetry.” That will be the ultimate test for this play: whether an interfaith project, which began as rhetoric, by binding together rival scriptures in a symbolic act of reconciliation, can now lead to poetry, to an experience of catharsis that constitutes successful theatre?

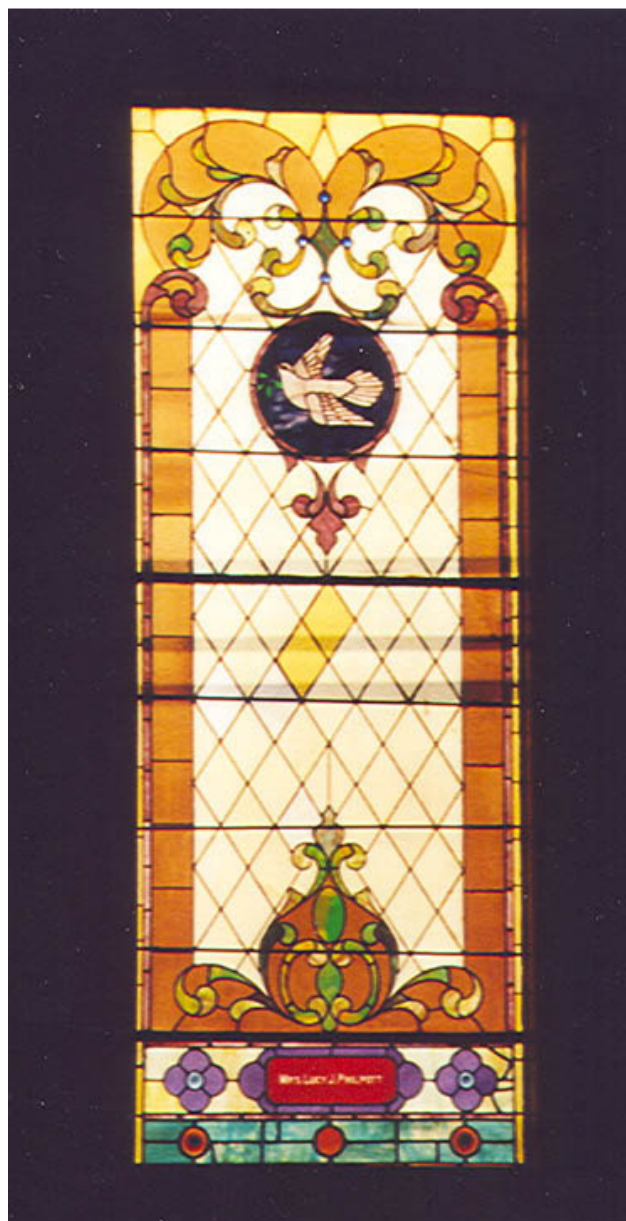
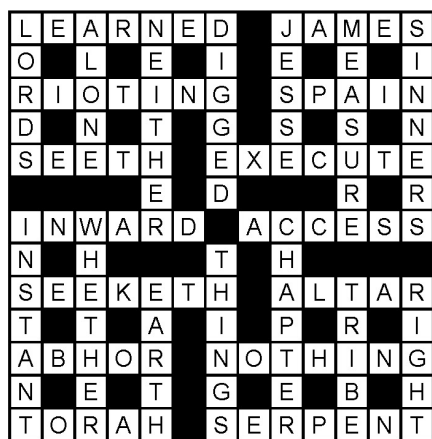
On January 22, 2014, *Three Testaments: Shalom, Peace and Salam* will be presented in a staged reading Off Off Broadway in New York City. I intend to be there to see if this play can pass the test.

*[Ellen Frankel is Editor Emerita, The Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, which she headed for nearly 20 years as CEO and Editor-in-Chief, author of ten books, noted opera librettist, and well qualified theatre critic.]*



## *And how did we do with Romans?*

### Romans



WE ARE INDEED FORTUNATE to have many beautiful stained glass windows in our church, especially the two very large triple lancet windows in the sanctuary. Several years ago work was done on the west side windows (the alley side) and they are in good shape. Now we are looking at several sections of the east side windows that need work very soon. Bids have been received and the Jerome Durr Studio, LLC, in Syracuse, NY, has been chosen to do the restoration work starting in 2014.

As they say, “stay tuned” for more information when the work starts and as it progresses.

*“In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”*

—1 Thessalonians 5:18

This culture of gratitude — where spiritual leaders give thanks for the church’s fellowship and God’s followers give thanks for ministers’ and missionaries’ spiritual guidance — is deeply ingrained in the Christian faith.

Since the mid-1930s, American Baptist congregations have received a Communion Fellowship Offering on the first Sunday of each month to support needy and elderly clergy within their churches. In 1948, churches began donating to the November Communion Fellowship Offering, providing financial assistance to the denomination’s elderly ministers, missionaries and their widowed spouses. In 1977, American Baptist Churches USA officially launched the Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO) to continue this tradition of thankfulness. Since 1980, MMBB has sent “Thank You” checks drawn directly from the MMBB endowment to eligible retired lay church employees.

The Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering commemorates the anonymous gift in 1981 of a Vietnamese refugee woman worshipping with the First Chinese Baptist Church of Fresno, California. Not knowing the full intent of the offering, but understanding the words “thank you” printed on the offering envelope, she slipped off her wristwatch, her only possession of value, and placed it in the envelope.

The Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering is a personal offering, one rooted in thanks for the countless ways ministers and missionaries guide each member of the church along their spiritual journey. It provides a tangible way for American Baptist congregations to say “Thank you for ...” the commitment, service and spiritual guidance of retired ministers, missionaries and their widowed spouses. The offering supports those who have devoted their lives to God’s service by providing emergency assistance in their times of need and, for those eligible, a “Thank You” check at the end of each year. In 2012, RMMO provided Thank You checks to more than 3,300 recipients. For 2013, the national RMMO goal is \$1.2 million.

This year, RMMO will showcase this gratitude by offering your congregation, along with retired ministers and missionaries, a chance to say...

*Thank You!*







*Carole Buchalski asks:*

*Please help us to meet our White Cross challenge by placing your "extra" pennies in our Penny Jar. The jar is on the table in the Friendship Room. Many thanks.*



## THIS came FROM COMMUNITY MISSIONS:

[Monday, December 23, 2013]

Good morning,

On behalf of Community Missions, I would like to thank you all so very much for your generosity and participation in our 2013 Christmas Program. Your donations of new toys, gift cards and/or food baskets, truly made this an unforgettable Christmas for families in need throughout Niagara County.

This year was especially amazing in that with your help, we were able to provide for 162 families, a total of around 440 children! This was our biggest gift distribution to date and we could not have done it without each and every one of you. The families we encountered this year were so appreciative and overwhelmed by the generosity you all showed.

It is because of donations and support such as this that allows us to continue our long-standing mission of serving and caring for the growing number of people of all ages who come to us in need. Thank you again, on behalf of all those we serve, for caring about our community.

We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Best,  
Andrea

**Andrea Gray**, Events & Volunteer Manager  
Community Missions, Inc.

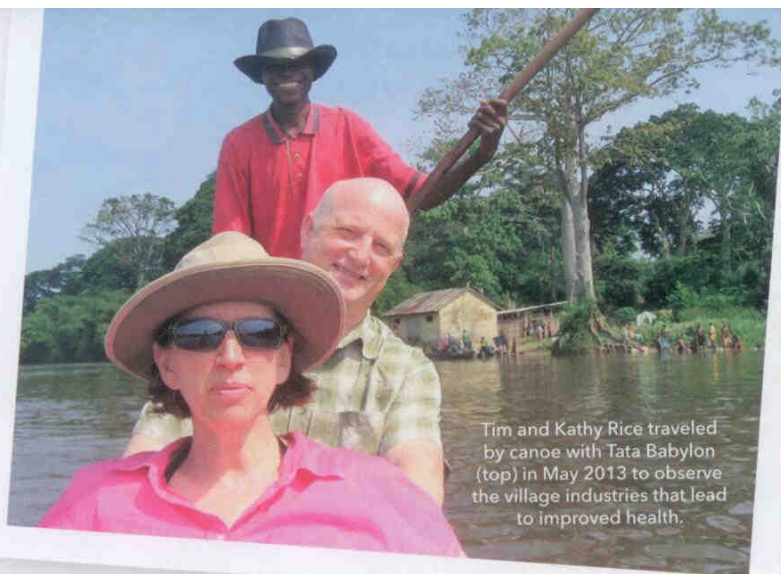
1570 Buffalo Ave. Niagara Falls, NY

Office: 716.285.3403 x. 2225

[www.communitymissions.org](http://www.communitymissions.org)

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## Three Former Volunteers Become IM Missionaries in Africa



Tim and Kathy Rice traveled by canoe with Tata Babylon (top) in May 2013 to observe the village industries that lead to improved health.

### MINISTRY FOCUS: Health & Healing

After making four trips, beginning in 2006, to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) as volunteers, **Timothy D. Rice, M.D.** and **Kathleen H. Rice, R.N.** have been endorsed as International Ministries (IM) medical missionaries. The Rices will serve with an IM partner, the Baptist Community of the Congo, at the Vanga Evangelical Hospital. Dr. Tim, a faculty member at the Saint Louis University School of Medicine, will train doctors in internal medicine and pediatrics, and Kathy will assist with nursing and the training of nurses.

Vanga is a 350-bed teaching hospital that serves thousands in the DRC. It oversees a network of rural health clinics for people who otherwise would have little or no access to healthcare. This ministry grew out of the dream of American Baptist missionary Dr. W. H. Leslie, who established the Vanga station around 1900. It was strengthened in the latter part of the century by Dr. Daniel and Miriam Fountain's 35-year ministry.

Building on this legacy, Dr. Tim says, "We feel called to continue the important work of providing medical training for Christ-centered, whole-person care in a resource-limited environment." Kathy adds, "We will also be hosting visiting medi-

cal teaching teams, giving God the opportunity to open their eyes to medical mission even as they teach."

The Rices see their ministry of training to provide care for the body, mind and spirit as a response to Isaiah 58:10-11 (ESV)—*If you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday. And the LORD will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong...."*



Kathy Charland feels called to serve in Africa as a result of her 2007 volunteer pastoral ministry work in Zambia.

### MINISTRY FOCUS: Opening the Mind, Empowering the Heart

An Associate Minister from the Progressive Community Baptist Church in Springfield, Massachusetts has been endorsed for missionary service through International Ministries (IM). **Kathryn M. Charland** will partner with the Baptist Community of the Congo (CBCO). She will work at the Mitendi Center in Kinshasa, which provides training in job and life skills

to women at risk. IM missionary **Jill Lowery**, who has served at the Center since its doors opened in 1999, will be Kathy's mentor. She says, "The CBCO women and I are very excited to work with Kathy in ministry."

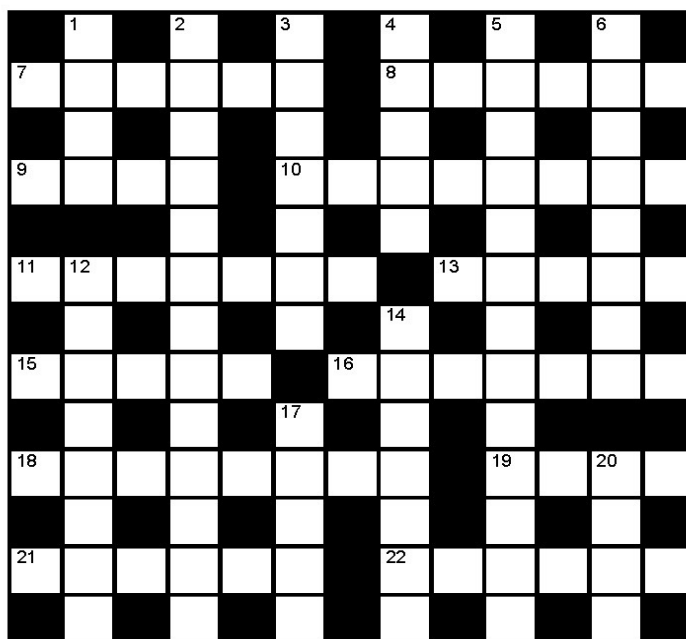
Presently, Kathy not only serves her church but is also a teacher at a private Christian school and the registrar and an instructor for the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts' School of Ministry, which provides courses for lay leaders. The Executive Minister, the Rev. Dr. Anthony G. Pappas, says: "Her colleagues have long known that Kathy's heart was in serving the Lord, and we are thrilled that such a significant opportunity is opening up. Our prayers and blessings go with her!"

A major factor that led Kathy to embrace the cause of mission was her 2007 volunteer work with IM missionaries **Charles and Sarah West** in Zambia. She observes: "I was struck by the vast disparity between those who live comfortably and those who do not, and I wondered how best to assist people like those I met there. I sense God calling me to serve internationally, and I look forward to sharing life and building relationships with the Congolese. I also anticipate helping people grow in their discipleship, and I hope to contribute toward poverty relief efforts."



## Bible Crossword Puzzles (King James Version)

## 1 Corinthians



## Across

- 7 Paul encourages us that God will always make a way to do this when facing temptation. 1 Cor 10:13 (6)
- 8 The Hebrew name for God. (6)
- 9 The third son of Jacob. (4)
- 10 1 Cor 13:4 says, "charity \_\_\_\_\_ not itself." This word means to boast or puff up. (8)
- 11 "But take heed lest by any means this \_\_\_\_\_ of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak." 1 Cor 8:9 (7)
- 13 Paul's second missionary journey included a visit to the church in Corinth and ended in this region that describes the southern portion of Israel. (5)
- 15 "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man \_\_\_\_\_ is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body." 1 Cor 6:18 (5)

- 16 Paul asked that "no man \_\_\_\_\_" Timotheus, who was coming to visit Corinth. 1 Cor 16:11 (7)
- 18 "God is \_\_\_\_\_." 1 Cor 1:9 (8)
- 19 "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole \_\_\_\_\_?" 1 Cor 5:6 (4)
- 21 If I have faith that could \_\_\_\_\_ mountains, but don't have charity, I am nothing. 1 Cor 13:2 (6)
- 22 "Doth not even \_\_\_\_\_ itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?" 1 Cor 11:14 (6)

## Down

- 1 Where Paul and the crew of his ship wintered in Acts 28:11. (4)
- 2 "But the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." 1 Cor 12:7 (13)

- 3 According to 1 Cor 14:22, the gift of prophesying should \_\_\_\_\_ those who believe rather than those who do not. (7)
- 4 "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord \_\_\_\_\_ Christ." 1 Cor 15:57 (5)
- 5 Two words. The Roman governor of Judea during the time of Christ. (7, 6)
- 6 The church has often been under persecution and affliction. Paul describes it as "the present \_\_\_\_\_" in 1 Cor 7:26 (8)
- 12 A type of person that Paul warns not to keep company with in 1 Cor 5:11 (8)
- 14 One of the gifts of the Spirit described in 1 Cor 12:7-10 (7)
- 17 "For as \_\_\_\_\_ as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." 1 Cor 11:26 (5)
- 20 One of the gospel writers. (4)

## From the Moderator...

The holidays have passed and our Prayer List has several updates. We lost Katona Hoopsick's mother-in-law, Mrs. Jean Penque; Doug Garis' father, Otis Garis, and Bob Hogan, long time member and son of Gladys Lewis. We will continue to hold in prayer the families of the recently deceased as they all mourn. The prayers continue for the others on this list and wish quick recoveries for those who've had surgery.

If you make New Year's resolutions keep in mind they're hard to keep if they're too big, so break them down into little steps. Do you have triggers that lead you astray? Coping strategies when temptation arises mean change and change is not going to work if you don't practice the change. I've learned that cleaning out the extra calories from the refrigerator can help with food issues. Change the environment, move things (food or beverages) out of sight to keep you focused on healthy eating.

Do you need gear? Refresh your exercise wardrobe, carry bag, towels, and cosmetics to keep things fresh at the gym. Change up your workouts, change up your diet, and give yourself a break if things don't work quickly. Do what you can do to make 2014 a healthier year. A friend of mine recently went for a physical and knowing how much she dislikes doctors, I complimented her on her courage and encouraged her to get all those screenings whether she had symptoms or not. Many things creep up and are unseen until it's too late. Change your toothbrush, buy a new pillow, change the filters in the furnace, and don't forget to check smoke and carbon monoxide detector batteries. You can't see many things in the air that mess up your health, so do that once a year preemptive fix.

Our mission for January is the Retired Ministers and Missionaries Fund (RMMO) which supplies an end of year donation to our retired religious people. We thank them for their lifetimes of service and spiritual guidance. The offering supports those who have devoted their lives of service by providing emergency assistance in

their time of need. The RMMO provided "Thank You" checks to more than 3,300 recipients. For this year the goal is \$1.2 million.

Our thanks also go to those who donated to the Community Missions this December and especially to Kath Ordiway for delivering those special gifts. Our food and personal hygiene donations went to Heart, Love & Soul mission. Those on public assistance cannot use it for personal hygiene products, but only food.

We wish the Rev. Brian Brown the best of luck with his production of *Some Year in Jerusalem* in its off Broadway presentation this month in the "big apple," aka NYC. We've had fun with the dialogue, the masks, talking about the scriptures and learning so much about the Old Testament. This unique literary experience has enriched us all and given many insights into the roots of Christianity and the history shared with Islam and Judaism.

The Big Clean Out: yes, our gym is getting the big clean out and the donated items will be sent to Community Missions. It's a big task and helpers are needed. The tables need to be taken down and the floor swept. The inside of the gym hasn't made the repair list for this year, but it is a very large space that needs upkeep. It's a wonderful room and the exact right repurposing has yet to be made. Any idea that comes up needs consideration and follow through. The ideas are easy, but the follow through takes sweat and effort, whatever it is. I guess we're looking for a package deal with both parts of the equation. As we have continued to clean up, clean out and restore our building, we have learned that nothing is cheap, everything needs a plan, but working together, anything is possible.

Our Christmas Tea was postponed so stay tuned for a January date to gather for fellowship and fun over tea and treats. It's always a comfort to come together with friends to celebrate and socialize what has been a good year for our church.

*Donna Flood*