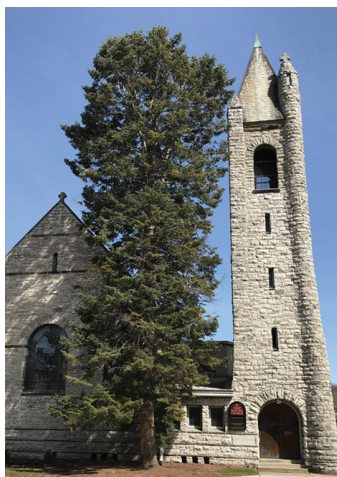


607-273-5800; www.firstbaptistithaca.org; email: fbithaca@gmail.com



First Baptist Church in Ithaca is a Nurturing and Inclusive Community. Guided by the Jesus' Teachings, We Strive for Social and Ecological Justice; and Embrace the Baptist Tradition of Bible, Soul, Church and Religious Freedoms.

Value Statement to Become Front & Center of FBC

Our church-wide visioning under the guidance of consultant Arlen Vernava concluded with two sessions, one on Friday evening March 5th and the second on Saturday, March 6th. Arlen emphasized that, now that we have created a value statement (shown above) for the church, it should be read at every church meeting and frame all our actions.

About 20 church leaders gathered in the community room to participate in exercises, led by Arlen, to reveal the personality types needed to bring a variety of perspectives to church ministry teams. The group was also asked to indulge in an exercise that explored alternate forms of church governance. We listed the benefit of having an one chamber council (Cabinet combined with Trustees) versus a two chamber council (Cabinet plus Trustees). On Saturday Arlen stepped out of his role as facilitator into his role as consultant. He advised the following.

- Cabinet meetings should not just be "a reporting" venue about what the various ministry teams have done, but rather serve as an envisioning meeting, discussing future undertakings. Arlen posed that decisions by various teams could be communicated directly to the congregation through announcements in church, emails etc..
- Rather than following Roberts Rules of Order, the church might try coming to decisions through consensus. We would have to become familiar with how consensus-decision making works effectively. Leslie Schultz and others trained in this skill could help.
- Because of its size, First Baptist might explore combining the Cabinet and Trustees into one Council that would include some Trustees and elected leaders of primary Ministry teams.

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What does the Lord require of you?

To do justice,
Love mercy and
Walk humbly with our God



NEW!

www.firstbaptistithaca.org is now live!
Check it out.

FBC Activities Reshaped by COVID-19

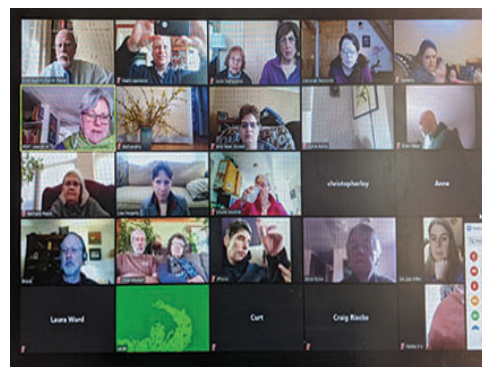
First Baptist's upcoming spring calendar was full: a Celtic and Women's retreat planned; Lenten contemplative Saturday evening services planned; and special services and activities for Holy Week planned.

COVID-19 virus has changed everything. Charged with social distancing, we are not allowed to gather together in person to worship, learn and meet. However, due to the miracle of modern-day technology (Zoom, Skype, Facetime) and the ingenuity of our tech savvy members including Craig Riecke, David Caughey, Lisa Kilgore and Leslie Scultz and the creativity of Pastor Debbie and her staff, we still are worshipping together and staying connected.

Over 55 members from Ithaca and beyond joined in for worship on March 29th.

"For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."

Matthew 18:20



Composite Zoom photo of participants at March 22nd worship service. For help joining in on Zoom, contact Leslie Schultz at ls30@cornell.edu.

Photo sent from Mark Lawrence.

From Our Treasurer

Since we will not be meeting in person for the next few weeks or months, we have been working to provide methods for members and friends to pay their pledges or make other financial donations to First Baptist. As always, you can do this by writing a check to First Baptist and mailing it to:

First Baptist Church
P. O. Box 254
Ithaca, NY 14851-0254

If some or all of your check is for some program other than your pledge, simply note that in the memo line.

You can now also pay using your debit or credit card (or PayPal account if you have one) using a link from the FBC web site (<https://firstbaptistithaca.org/>). There are "Donate" buttons near the bottom of every page. When you click on a donate button you will be taken to the FBC PayPal account. You can enter the amount of your donation; you can also make this a recurring monthly donation by clicking on the "Make this a monthly donation" check box. If your donation is for something other than your pledge, simply click on "Write a note (Optional)" and leave a note instructing how the donation is to be credited. Questions can be directed to me (Dave Caughey, dac5@cornell.edu).

We also realize that some members may be financially affected by the COVID-19 pandemic economic shutdown, and we understand if you may have difficulty meeting your pledge goal. Please let Marlene Sack (marsack8@gmail.com) know if this is an issue for you.



Flowering giant begonia

Message from Pastor Debbie Bennett Reynolds

Dear Friends,

What a strange, new reality we are all living in right now! I write this from our cottage, knowing that most of you are also at home as we try to respond to COVID -19 in ways that protect everyone. We are working and studying remotely, learning how to use new technology to stay connected and still function, and dealing with the challenges of "social distancing" and being super careful when we go out. Some of us are feeling isolated; others are feeling cranky and irritable with too much time with the same few people. Others of us are on the front-lines of responding. We have folks working very hard at Cayuga Medical Center and in other healthcare jobs. They are preparing, adapting, using all their energy and creativity to get ready for the expected wave of really sick people. Others of us are therapists, teachers, social workers, technology specialists, and all sorts of service providers who are being called on to adapt and respond to this moment. Some of us are dealing with the economic impact of this shutdown on our incomes and our businesses; all of us feel concern about our economy. These are challenging, uncertain, anxious, and even scary times for everyone.

Wherever we are, whatever we are feeling, we are in this together. Perhaps more than ever before, we are confronted with the truth that we are all in this together. All the people of the earth! What happens in China really does matter here! If we've thought it before we surely know it now in a whole new way. This experience is revealing our interdependence in dramatic ways we never thought of before. Our daughter in Saudi Arabia said to me today how strange it is that we are dealing with the same thing here as they are there. Usually our cultural contexts are so different, but today what we felt was our shared experience at this moment.

As we face these challenges, I have been reminded of our guiding question when we first began our Visioning process a year ago. What are we called to be and to do at this time? As people of faith, we have spiritual resources to help us through this time. We have faith in God's love and care to be with us and sustain us. We know we are not alone. We live out of God's love and mercy and that can give us hope and peace in the midst of anxiety and uncertainty. We know we can support and care for each other through this crisis.

Every crisis is also an opportunity: we are being forced to innovate ways of being church! So, we're learning to worship and pray online; we're figuring out how to do covenant groups and Bible study from different places, and we're adapting our giving so we can donate through our website. Who knows what we may discover and create! In all of this, we are feeling in deep and powerful ways how much we love and care for each other and want to be together. We can be a nurturing and inclusive community even when we can't physically be in the same space. We're living into that! So, we're making phone calls to check on each other, offering to help each other, providing encouragement and friendship.

We're also trying to figure out in what ways we are being called to offer compassion and care in our larger community. We can't let fear keep us from acting in loving and caring ways. From the Kitchen Cupboard food pantry to the SJCS Friendship Center (daily food and shelter services) to a new opportunity we sent out today to help sew masks for CMC, there are needs emerging and opportunities for us to respond. There are creative options being brainstormed about gardening and trash pickup that can still safely happen and can help provide food for people who need it and care for our environment. Let's continue to be who we are: compassionate, caring, creative people who are engaged in our community in the best ways we can find!

We will come through this together! God's Spirit is with us to give us strength, courage, and calm. (Yes, even calm when some of our political leaders make us nuts!) Please call me, text me or email me if you need support and encouragement. I am praying for you and am very grateful to be part of this loving community in this time of crisis.

Love and blessings,

Debbie Bennett Reynolds 607-351-4690 AND debbiebreynolds@gmail.com



Reverend Debbie
Bennett Reynolds

From Jud Kilgore

On March 11th our youngest daughter, Lisa and I are just back from an eight day tour of Iceland. It was a wonderful tour that we shared with 12 other stalwart folks from various nations, and driven, and guided by a marvelous man. We saw waterfalls, glaciers, volcanoes, snow, icy paths, black beaches, high Atlantic waves and we felt very strong, cold winds. We ate free gourmet breakfasts as part of tour, and fine, if expensive dinners. Stayed in generally very fine hotels, and learned a lot.

Now I can more or less explain lava plains, glacial fjords, and why Iceland needs to export so much seafood and import so many foodstuffs we get from locally grown sources at Wegmans. Every Icelander we met was friendly and helpful, and spoke English.

The friends we made are more memorable than any I have ever met on the other overseas tours that Sue and I took in the good old days. Lots of stories, and I will doubtless turn minor mishaps into terrific tall tales, just by slight exaggerations that are not real lies. I really liked the herring and sardines, the reindeer pate, native leg of lamb, but did miss peanut butter, crackers and buttermilk. I will really treasure this trip with Lisa forever: the sights, the friends, and the memories.



Country church



Waiting for bus. Step one in getting back to Ithaca.

Jud and Lisa Kilgore's Iceland Adventure



Jud feeding the beautiful and feisty Icelandic horses.



Jud and Lisa with new friends Lucy & Larissa and the iconic troll..



Dogs resting up before their competition



Ice caving in Jokulsarion.



Northern lights seen from Hella village.



Lisa in a blue ice cave.



Gullfoss (foss means waterfall)



Reynisfjara-black sand beach with basalt volcanic rock columns with our wonderful guide Gyflie.

Celtic Spirituality

In 664 a momentous event for Christianity took place in northeast England. There at Whitby Abby, a monastery of Benedictine monks and Celtic nuns, the most eminent clergy of the Christian Church convened to settle the dispute over which Christian tradition, Celtic or Roman, would be followed. The Roman tradition, following the teachings of Augustine, won the day and became the foundation of the Catholic Church for centuries to come.

Almost lost in the fray was Celtic spirituality that had converged with pre-existing Druid religion, and was spread by St. Columba into northern England from its historic seat at Iona, Scotland. While most of Christianity followed the Roman/Augustine, St. Peter institutional approach, more holistic Celtic Christianity continued to be practiced in pockets of the British Isles.

In January and February, a number of us at First Baptist were introduced to Celtic spirituality by Edie Reagan who led a three-part series drawn from Philip Newell's book, "Listening to the Heartbeat of God: A Celtic Spirituality," patterned after the way of St. John, who leaning on the breast of Jesus during the Last Supper, heard the heartbeat of God.

We learned that Celtic spirituality honors the presence of God in all creation and, as Pelagius taught, infants are born pure, without sin. The opposite was taught by Augustine, the ruling Catholic church and later Calvin. Without denying the presence of evil, Celtic spirituality lifts up the goodness of humanity.

While Roman Christianity generally ignored nature, Celtic Christians acknowledged the interrelatedness of all things and the thin places where the eternal breaks into this world of time and space. Celebrated are the essential goodness of creation, and its rhythms and patterns.

A planned slide presentation of Debbie Allen's pilgrimage to Iona and a one-day Celtic retreat have had to be postponed for the time being. But, "Until we meet, may the road rise to meet you, the wind be always at your back, and the sun shine warm upon your face."

Remembering Betty Brown...

By Judy Kennison

Over 20 years ago, when Marlene and I were still cutting our own Christmas tree at Hunt's Farm, I spotted wreaths that were called "kissing balls". We didn't know Betty or her sister Janet well but decided to buy one for them. They were delighted with the surprise and that was the beginning of a friendship that I have treasured over the years.

Early in those years, Betty and Janet traveled extensively so I always enjoyed hearing about their trips. In 1999 when Marlene and I were planning a trip to Ireland, they invited us to their house on Hanshaw Road to see their slides from there. Betty took the photos and Janet kept the journals, tasks Marlene and I now share.

The year Betty and Janet were to move to Kendal, the church garage sale was held at their house instead of the church. What a joy to see all these FBC folks helping them with the transition! It was a joyful community effort. I even appreciated this memory more after Marlene and I moved and had similar assistance from First Baptist friends.

It was after Janet died that Betty and I became close. We visited often in her Kendal cottage. Every week or two we would go to lunch. She loved Chinese food so that was often her first choice. Pizza at Ciao's was second. Marlene and I often joined her at Kendal for holiday meals. I remember how both Betty and I so loved the shrimp cocktail they served. And she and I both loved ice cream for dessert!

We never seemed to run out of things to talk about. She loved to reminisce about her travels, hear about ours and see our pictures. Even in the last months of her life, she enjoyed travel pictures I would share with her. I would always try to make Betty laugh and Marlene remembers how I would come home talking about having told Betty something that tickled her. Her whole face would light up.

She told me about growing up on a farm near Utica, moving to Ithaca when she was in high school, and attending Cornell University during WWII. Her professional work was first as a home economics teacher, then with the New York State Education Department supervising home economics teachers. She traveled all over the state and, until several years ago, kept in touch with many of the teachers she trained. I know since Marlene and I helped her with her Christmas cards. She would tell us about each friend as we went through her mailing labels.

It was always important to Betty that she look good. We often teased her about being the best-dressed at First Baptist. The staff at Kendal referred to her as the "best-dressed and decked out" resident. She did have a great taste in clothes and she had many to choose from. Mandy Caughey was instrumental in transitioning her from her summer to winter wardrobe to winter and then back again, a major undertaking!

During the last months of Betty's life she spent a lot of time with Janet and her dad. She told me about talking to them on the phone and of their plans for Christmas. I think this was very comforting to her and that she was ready to join her spirit with theirs. Betty's cousins, Pastor Debbie and I zoomed with Betty (facilitated by a social worker) the day before she died. Mandy Caughey Face timed with Betty on Tuesday morning. Immediately afterward, I received an email from Betty's social worker "What a beautiful experience to have had Mandy on Facetime with her joyful, faithful, bubbling love for Betty in the last moment of her life! It's as though she gently put Betty's wings on her and opened the door." What a beautiful image! In the end Betty peacefully slipped away. I will miss her. It was an honor to have been her friend.



Betty Brown, right, with friends Linda & David Caughey and Judy Kennison.

Photo Mandy Caughey

Peace of Wild Things

By Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows
in me
and I wake in the night at the
least sound
in fear of what my life and my
children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the
wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water,
and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild
things
who do not tax their lives with
forethought
of grief. I come into the presence
of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind
stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world,
and am free.

*From The Selected Poems of Wendell
Berry (Counterpoint, 1999),*

Ute Prayer

Earth teach me stillness
as the grasses are stilled
with light.
Earth teach me suffering
as the old stones suffer
with memory.
Earth teach me humility
as blossoms are humble
with beginning.
Earth teach me caring
as the mother who succors
her young.
Earth teach me courage
as the tree which stands
all alone.
Earth teach me limitation
as the ant which crawls on
the ground.
Earth teach me freedom
as the eagle which soars
in the sky.
Earth teach me resignation
as the leaves which die
in the fall.
Earth teach me regeneration
as the seed which rises
in the spring.
Earth teach me to forget
myself as melted snow
forgets its life.
Earth teach me to remember
kindness as dry fields weep
with rain.

Translation by Lakota Sioux Chieff
John Yellow Lark, 1887

The Green Team Is Growing!

Happy 1st Birthday to the Green Team – Recognition of the Green Team within the structure of First Baptist is a little over a year old. Moreover, ecological justice was called out in our recent FBC value statement that emerged from the year-long visioning process.

Lisa Kilgore and Louise Mudrak are serving as co-chairs of the team that is working to define and refine our programming within the whole of First Baptist life. As a result of recent FBC visioning process, we begin each of our meetings and projects by framing them within FBC Core Values which include environmental and social justice.

~~~~~  
FBC Green Library to have soft opening on April 22- Many in our Church community have recommended books and other media that they feel are “really good books” to help us all deal with the climate crisis in all of it’s connections to our lives. We are now busy populating the FBC GREEN LIBRARY, our sharing/ lending library. You can get a peek at what’s in it, how it’s organized as well as how you can use and contribute to it.

~~~~~  
Take Note - Green Teams Bulletin Board- The bulletin board in the community room has found new vitality and we welcome your postings and notices.

~~~~~  
Rochester Genesee Region of American Baptist Churches is growing green too. At First Baptist Ithaca we are participating in the newly forming Creation Collaborative. The meetings have been held by ZOOM and on March 14 we participated in the Creation Collaborative Gathering facilitated by Rev. Rebecca Driscoll who is a Minister for Creation Justice with our national American Baptist Churches. It is so good to see care of creation as a national, regional and FBC Ithaca priority!

~~~~~  
Media Works Green Up- The FBC Communications team has been reworking the FBC website and Creation Care has a drop-down menu that we will be populating in the next few months. Send your suggestions, questions and thoughts about what should be included.



Hiking has become a favorite past time of the Aitama-Ward family during these days of COVID virus-induced social distancing.

~~~~~  
FBC Pollinator Garden Committee Forming – The first meeting was on Sun. March 8th with a review of site assessment and discussions so far. There will be a report during the adult education hour on April 22. We are forming a Garden Committee email list that will inform you of committee activities and local native plant educational opportunities in and around Ithaca. If you want to be put on the Garden Committee list, send a request and your email address to [lfmudrak@twcnny.rr.com](mailto:lfmudrak@twcnny.rr.com).

~~~~~  
The Green Team is looking for more members to join our joyous work. Please contact Green Team co-chairs Lisa Kilgore Hogarty thelisaakilgore@gmail.com, or Louise Mudrak lfmudrak@twcnny.rr.com.



Please keep in your prayers:

- Frank Butler
- Amy Chaffee and son
- Nancy Sokol
- John Gross
- Suzanne Kilgore
- Naomi Hollister
- Laurel Lawshae
- Joan Yarborough/John Laney
- The Evans family
- Pastor André Thera
- Marge Hansel
- Ron Drummond
- Barbie Lister
- Geoff Lister
- The family of Betty Brown~ ~

“When we hear the trill of the thrush in the flowers, or the frog in the waters, we know that every living being has a song.”

Ki no Tsurayuki 905 CE

The Visitor — March 2020

Editor, publisher: Susan Eymann

Proofers: Judy Kennison Tony Lister

Contributors: Debbie Bennett Reynolds, Judy Kennison, Tony Lister, Green Team, David Caughey,

Photos: Aitama Ward family, Mark Lawrence, Mandy Caughey, Debbie Alan

Postponed

FBC Women's Retreat

Theme: Honoring Our Mother, the Earth.

Stay tuned!



Please Contribute to the Visitor

In the Baptist tradition each of us are called to be ministers. Therefore, each of you is invited and urged to contribute to our *Visitor*. Please send announcements, articles, features, pictures to: susan.eymann@transonic.com



Sea view from Iona, Scotland, the home of Celtic spirituality (see article on page 3). Photo: Debbie Allen.

Time and Talent Ministries

First Baptist Staff

Pastor: Rev. Debbie Bennett-Reynolds

Secretary: Shella Chace

Organist: Christopher Morgan Loy

Choir Director: Belinda Adams

Youth and Children's Ministries

Coordinator: Laura Ward

Nursery Caregiver: Carol Fleming

Sunday School Aide: Sarah Zipfel

Custodian: David Hopkins

Elected Leaders

Moderator: Judy Kennison

Vice Moderator: Mark Lawrence

Membership Clerk: Tina Hilsdorf

Recording Clerks: Rich Barron/Susan Eymann

Treasurer: David Caughey

Assistant Treasurer: Andrea Mooney

Financial Secretary: Marlene Sack

Board of Trustees

Anne Farrell (2022), Kris Scott (2022),

Rich Barron (2022), Hans Bump (2021),

Elizabeth Pia-Miller (2021), Amy

Chaffee (2021), Bill Phelan (2020), Josie

Zanfordino (2020), Baruch Whitehead

(2020), David Caughey (ex officio)

Trustees' Subgroups

Finance & Endowment

David Caughey, Marlene Sack, Janet

Cotracchia, Andrea Mooney, Curt Ufford

Stewardship Committee: Janet Cotrac-

chia, Bill Staffeld, Judy Kennison, Alice

Grow, Pastor Debbie Bennett Reynolds,

Andrea Staffeld (graphic), Bill Fry (letter),

Susan Eymann (*Visitor*)

Interior Decoration: Barbara Fry, Julie

Dean, Tina Hilsdorf, Bill Abeles, Anne

Farrell, Andrea Staffeld, Susan Eymann

Church Archivist: Linda Caughey

Lay Delegates:

Affiliate Organizations

Rochester Genesee Region (2 dele-

gates), ABC-USA (2 delegates): Rich

and Lil Barron, Co-chairs Ossie Heath-

Crump, Anne Farrell, Bill Reynolds

AWAB: Shella Chace, Josie Zanfordino,

Baptist Peace Fellowship: Meg Gillard,

Cornell Protestant Cooperative Ministry:

Julia Dean, Linda Nicholson,

Anne Farrell

Kitchen Cupboard: Amanda Ufford, Sue

Hemsath

Tompkins County Workers Center:

Bill Abeles

Pastoral Relations

Barbara Fry (2022), Bronwyn Evans

2022), Bill Abeles (2021), Lou Carlucci

(2021), Tim Dean (2020), Steve Farrell

(2020)

Nominating Committee

Josie Zanfordino, Adrienne McNair,

Linda Caughey, Louise Mudrak, Marge

Hansel

Personnel Committee

Tony Lister, Julia Dean, Beth Wolfer

~~~~~

### Ministry Teams

#### Worship & Spiritual Life:

Barbara Fry, Amy Chaffee, Co-chairs;

Bill Abeles, Tony Lister, Kris Scott, Edie

Reagan, Alice Grow

#### Worship/Spiritual Life Subgroups

Flower Committee: Barbara Fry,

Mariana Morse, Tina Hilsdorf,

Andrea Staffeld

Myra's Ministry: Tina Hilsdorf, Lou Carlucci, Bill Reynolds

Labyrinth: Kris Scott, Liz Wilkinson

Sound & Audio Ministry: David Caughey, Curt Ufford

### Education

#### Children's and Youth:

Carol Fleming, Tim Dean, Leslie Schultz

Christian Ed Teachers: Baruch White-

head, Lou Carlucci, Sarah Zipfel, Lil

Barron

### Christian Concern

Steve Farrell, Bill Phelan, Co-chairs;

### Christian Concern Subgroups

Circle of Care: Coordinators: Amanda

Ufford, Sue Hemsath, Linda Caughey

~~~~~

Hospitality Ministry:

Anne Farrell: chair; Shella Chace, Meg

Gillard, Tina Hilsdorf, Adrienne McNair,

Andrea Staffeld, Ella Dean, Greta

Cotracchia, Bay Ward/Aittama

~~~~~

### Communications Ministry

Shella Chace (convener), David

Caughey, Mark Lawrence, Craig Riecke,

Susan Eymann, Amy Bean, Lisa Kilgore

~~~~~

Green Team

Louise Mudrak, Lisa Kilgore (Co-con-

veners), Lynn Glase, Tony Lister, Hans

Bump, and many others

Ad Hoc Visioning Team

Bill Abeles, Julie Dean, Bronwyn Evans,

Anne Farrell, Bill Fry, Judy Kennison,

Mark Lawrence, Barb Fry, Pastor

Debbie Bennett Reynolds