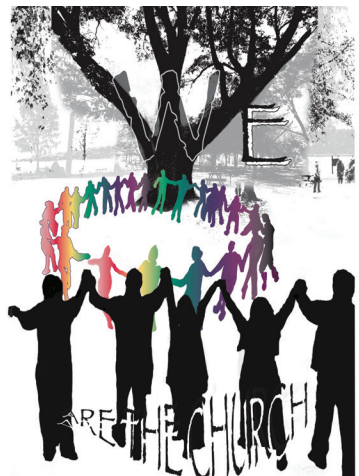




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Christmas

Epiphany

2021

2022

Advent calls us to reflect and prepare as we wait and watch for the coming of Christ anew in our lives.

ADVENT WREATH

Each week we focus on a different theme of Christ's presence – Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love – as we light the candles of the Advent Wreath

Nov. 28 – Hope – Luke 3:1-6 Prepare the way of the Lord!

Dec. 5 – Peace - Luke 1:5-25, 67-79 Zechariah and Elizabeth and the birth of John

Dec. 12 – Joy - Luke 1:26-38 The Annunciation by Gabriel to Mary

Dec. 19 – Love - Luke 1: 39-56 - Mary visits Elizabeth, the Magnificat

ADVENT REFLECTIONS

Worship team members will share a reflection on each theme as the candles of Advent are lit each Sunday. A weekly email will be sent with readings for further reflection; a time of sharing will be hosted on Zoom every Wed. evening from 7:30 – 8:15 p.m. on Dec. 1, 8, 15, and 22.

DECORATION OF THE SANCTUARY

Dec. 4th: 11:00-1:00. Refreshments provided. Donations toward poinsettias in memory of or to honor loved ones are appreciated.

CHRISTMAS EVE

Dec. 24th: Luke 2: 1-20, Matthew 1:18-25 - Emmanuel, God With Us - This hybrid 7:00 p.m. service will be in-person and on Zoom. Please plan to join in this family-friendly service of scripture readings, carol singing, and candle lighting in whatever way works for you, wherever you are!

WALKING THE LABYRINTH

As we enter the New Year of 2022, we invite you to walk a labyrinth that will be laid out in our sanctuary from Dec. 30 through Epiphany, Jan. 6. The Opening worship will be held Thurs. Dec. 30, 7-9 p.m. with the labyrinth open for individual use Friday, Dec. 31, 7-9 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 1 and 2, 2 – 4 p.m. and then from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. when the church office is open January 4, 5, and 6.

CHRISTMAS SUNDAY

December 26 - Luke 2: 21-40 – In the Temple with Simeon and Anna

EPIPHANY SUNDAY

January 2 – Matthew 2: 1-12 (13-18) The Visit of the Wise Men





First Baptist Church in Ithaca is a nurturing and inclusive community. Guided by Jesus' Teachings, we strive for Social & Ecological Justice; and embrace the Baptist tradition of Bible, Soul, Church and Religious Freedoms.

From Your Pastor Debbie Bennett Reynolds

Dear Friends,

Advent is upon us! This is one of those years when we may still be eating our Thanksgiving leftovers when we begin Advent. A quick shift from "now thank we all our God" to John the Baptist crying in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord!"



Reverend Debbie Bennett Reynolds

Advent is the beginning of the church year - a season of waiting and watching, preparing our hearts for God to come again to us. Advent reminds us that there is always more of God-With-Us for us to know and love - more mystery, more revelation, more hope, peace, joy and love. Advent calls us to find moments to pause, even if only briefly, to look for Christ's presence in our lives and in our world. We are invited to sharpen our senses, to nurture our mindfulness, to be awake and alert to the Spirit at work.

It was not accident or mere coincidence that the early church leaders, especially as they spread the Christian faith into the northern parts of Europe, chose to connect this Advent season with the approach of Winter Solstice. Here where we live, we can feel it. As the days grow shorter and the nights longer, we feel the cold and darkness growing around us as winter comes. But, our faith promises us, that is not all that is coming. In the darkness, we wait and watch for the Light of World to come! And we are reminded, God rarely comes as we imagine or expect.

Let's be alert! Let's keep awake! Let's wait and watch with anticipation and great hope!

Blessings to you,

Debbie

Moderator's Musings - Margie Latham



Margie Latham

Thank you to my First Baptist family for all the prayers, cards, emails, and beautiful bouquet of flowers (pictured on the right). I feel your support from afar. My mom is recovering slowly; now I am trying to arrange in-home assistance for her. With her right hand still in a splint, daily tasks are a challenge for her. Love to all and blessings. Margie



Myra's Memories



Myra Fincher

I have told this before, but as a young person growing up at FBC I remember how the fellowship meals were prepared and served. The kitchen was in the south side of the basement; the stove, fridge, cupboards, sinks etc. There was a dumb waiter on the west side. It is now a storage cupboard. When the food was delivered to the community room which we called the fellowship hall then, the dumb waiter was hauled up on a rope pulley to unload the food in the serving kitchen (where the kitchen is now).

I especially remember how Grace Brown, Betty's and Janet's mother hurried around in the serving kitchen helped by Grace Griffith, my friend Dorrice's mother. The teenagers often served the sit down meals on the many long tables. Sometimes, the nursery area folding doors had to be opened. There were so many folks to be served!

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~PayPal Query

At the November Cabinet meeting Treasurer David Caughey shed light on the FBC PayPal online account and what its associated fees are. He explained that through September of this year, the total income via PayPal was \$14,290 and the PayPal fees associated with that income was \$339 or about 2.38 %. That income represents about 8% of the total for combined pledge, anticipated, and plate income through the end of September. Contributors should note that about 2.4% the amounts that they give through PayPal is paid in fees.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

In Praise and Celebration of Dick and Eleanor Carr

By Josie Zanfordino and Lucinda Carr*

In 1975, two years after their daughter Lucinda came out as a lesbian, Dick and Eleanor Carr traveled to Colorado to meet her partner Nancy Hein. While there they attended a meeting of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) at the Park Hill United Methodist Church in Denver. There they met Elinor Grace Kirby Lewallen. She was a mover and shaker in PFLAG/Denver.



Dick Carr



Eleanor Carr

Elinor and Eleanor became friends. In 1980 Elinor guided our Eleanor as she created the Ithaca chapter of PFLAG in the basement of First Baptist Church. A new community resource amid the HIV/AIDS epidemic for Tompkins County was created. They supported the families and individuals struggling to define and accept their identities during very challenging times.

What does PFLAG stand for? Launched in New York City in 1973 by mothers and fathers who stood up for their gay children, PFLAG NYC started a national movement. Later it expanded to include commitment to the civil rights of bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people. Now there are more than 250,000 members in over 500 chapters throughout the United States.

When Reverend David Evans arrived at First Baptist, he and the Carrs held successful Sunday night services for LGBT people so they could feel comfortable and have a home in which to pray. The congregation gradually came to accept gay people. In 1997, David told them that they needed to vote to join the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists (AWAB). When Wendy Fambro followed David as minister, a majority of the congregation voted yes!

Around 2007, I met Eleanor after she had had a stroke. As a speech-language pathologist I was called in to work with her. Her courage in the face of a loss of words and thinking ability was enormous. Eventually, during our many sessions she and Dick spoke to me about PFLAG. Our friendship was sealed by Eleanor as she made me strawberry rhubarb pies. In his workshop Dick made me a beautiful wood desk.

These are two saints I will never forget.

**With the support of Adrienne McNair*

Vigil Honors and Celebrates Transgender Lives

Sponsored by the Cornell LGBT Resource Center and the Ithaca College Center for LGBT Education, Outreach & Services, the annual observance of Transgender Day of Remembrance honoring and celebrating the lives of transgender people taken in 2021 was held at First Baptist Church on November 18th. The event was hybrid both over Zoom and in person at the church.

Josie Zanfordino commented that it was a profoundly moving event. More than 400 names were read and the Comfort musical group AFABe sang. She offered profound thanks to First Baptist have a place to gather for this event.





Ordination of Brian Baker October 31, 2021

Photos by Tony Lister & Judy Kennison



Clergy Colleagues: A number of clergy welcomed Brian into their fold at his ordination. From left to right are Rev. Bill Reynolds, Rev. Debbie Bennett Reynolds, Pamela Goddard, Rev. Brian Baker, Rev. Timothy Dean, Rev. Debbie Allen, Rev. Ossie Heath-Crump, and Rev. Anthony Lister. Photo by Judy Kennison

Saints of First Baptist Church By Bill Fry

Proposal to Reinvest First Baptist Church Funds Endorsed by Trustees

At the November Trustees meeting David Caughey presented a proposal initiated by the Finance Committee to unify FBC's endowment investments (\$260,000) in a balanced Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) fund at the Community Foundation of Tompkins County. ESG is an acronym for criteria used by socially conscious investors to screen investments. Other FBC investments would be unified in a mix of Vanguard ESG funds.

Currently, approximately \$260,000 FBC funds are held as endowments (investment earnings are used to support the program budget; the principle remains intact). There is an additional \$256,000 in the Memorial, Building, and Piano Funds that are available to use for current expenses. These funds are currently invested in a variety of investment vehicles that produce little or no income or capital appreciation.

Advantages of the proposed strategy are:

- It would provide a uniform strategy that will provide relatively stable income for all FBC programs while supporting principal growth in an attempt to keep up with inflation;
- Greater income is projected from the investments;
- It unifies the investments for all FBC programs; reduces Treasurer's burden;
- It moves major investments to support companies and organizations with goals and values consistent with those of FBC.

After discussion a motion was made to accept the recommendation of the Finance Committee and to recommend to the congregation approval of the plan to begin moving First Baptist endowment investments to an ESG Agency Fund at the Community Foundation of Tompkins County and others to a Vanguard ESG Bond Fund with the aim of consolidating the current range of investments into funds satisfying certain environmental, social and corporate governance standards and improving the earnings and growth of capital from these investments. The motion was carried unanimously.



Bill Fry

When I learned we were to celebrate the Saints of First Baptist Church during our stewardship drive for 2022, I eagerly volunteered to participate. This is because many of you have heard me state that a big reason for me to be a member of this church is to be able associate with the many Saints in the congregation. I've felt that way for a long time. During our 200th anniversary we are celebrating some of the Saints who have gone before. When I reflected on Barb and my early years in the church, four names popped up.

Lone Mendenhall

Lone Mendenhall was one of the several older ladies who seemed to be stalwarts of the church when Barb and I joined. She and her husband had been associated with Cornell United Religious Work (CURW); he had passed by the time we joined. Lone seemed to have a lot of "presence"; when she was around, we felt that things were going to be okay. Bob Plaisted told me that Lone was a very "strong" person. It was wonderful for her to "be around".

Barbara and Rod Fellows

Next were Barbara and Rod Fellows. They were staunch Republicans. Barbara was working with the Republican Party in Tompkins County and her office was near DeWitt Park. Rod was a capitalist and had a business in Ithaca. Barb Fry and Barb Fellows shared a "program associate" position in the church after Barb Fellows retired. What I remember about Barbara Fellows is that she gave us a homemade baby quilt just before our first daughter was born and we did not know them very well. My reactions were pretty complex – surprise and confusion.

Why were they so loving and compassionate? I think they were guilty of radical generosity, and it was surprising to be on the receiving end. They exhibited the "nurturing community" that we have recently described as one of the core values of FBC. Rod was a bit scary to us younger folk. He had held about every position in the church and when he spoke everyone listened. I think he was a bit of a curmudgeon. When the church was considering leaving downtown or remodeling the current building, I had expected Rod to vote to leave. However, he voted to stay because he wanted the church to have a downtown presence. But he stated that he would abide by the vote of the majority because he had such complete dedication to this community.

Helen Jensen

Next is Helen Jensen. Helen was the wife of former pastor, Chris Jensen. We never met Chris, but Helen was certainly a presence. She never said much but people listened when she spoke. She became the church secretary and was a confidant and advisor to Dave Evans. She helped Dave a lot. Helen loved murder mysteries, and she loved to have fun, and that gave me something in common with Helen. She was instrumental in starting a lunch with several of the older ladies in the church – it was called the "let's not eat alone" lunch. Eventually, they let others join them and this morphed into our current Sunday Brunch. Eventually Helen moved to Schenectady to be near her daughter. I've always wondered if Helen didn't sneak off to Saratoga to watch the horse races every so often. She loved having a good time.

I think these people are Saints for a variety of reasons, but perhaps foremost was their willingness to be selflessly generous and loving. I'm grateful to have known them.



Joe Haines entertains residents at Hospicare.





President of the Board of Finger Lakes ReUse, Marlene Sack, on the far left, addressed the gathering at the Grand Opening of The ReUse MegaCenter at Triphammer Marketplace on Oct. 21st.

FingerLakes ReUse MegaCenter

The not-for-profit Finger Lakes ReUse has merged its two retail locations in Triphammer Marketplace - the ReUse Community Hardware (former Ace Hardware) and Triphammer ReUse Center to form one of the largest used retail locations in upstate New York. With a combined half acre of retail space, the ReUse MegaCenter features clothing, household goods, furniture, electronics, building materials, books, media and much more.

The MegaCenter has planned space for future community programming, where ReUse will engage local artists, crafters, repairists, and makers of all kinds in reuse training activities and workshops. At the rear of the building there is a convenient drop-off for donations.

“This has been an extraordinary effort during an extraordinary time. I am so grateful and proud of the focus and hard work by my many coworkers at ReUse for this beautiful, uplifting retail outlet and place to exchange not only materials but skills and knowledge. This will be an outpost for community resilience for years to come,” says Diane Cohen, Executive Director of Finger Lakes ReUse.

All purchases directly support Finger Lakes ReUse’s waste reduction efforts, job training, and community programs. Open daily from 10 am - 6 pm, ReUse would also be a good organization to “share your bounty”. reuse.org/donategoods.

Sharing Your Bounty

Submitted by Lisa Kilgore and Alice Grow on Behalf of the Green Team

This holiday season consider giving the gift of supporting organization who share your values. The Green Team suggests this short list of local programs to support.

Cayuga Lake Watershed Network	www.cayugalake.org/	Protecting Our Water in an Era of Rapid Change
Cayuga SHARE FARM	Cayugasharefarm.org/	Helps support the future of Cayuga sovereignty and rematriation
Cornell Farmworker Program	Catinyurl.com/calsfarm	Improving the living and working conditions of farmworkers and their families in New York State and beyond.
Discover Cayuga Lake	www.discovercayuga.org	Engages students, community members, and visitors in learning about the ecology and history of Cayuga Lake and its watershed and inspires people to maintain these healthy environments for future generations.
Finger Lakes Climate Fund	www.fingerlakesclimatefund.org/	Works to promote clean energy projects in the Finger Lakes area while strengthening our regional economy and assisting local families in need; provides a way for people to support our community while offsetting greenhouse gas emissions from their buildings or travel.
Foodnet Meals on Wheels	foodnet.org/	Provide meals and other nutrition services that promote dignity, well-being and independence for older adults and other persons in need in Tompkins County.
Groundswell Center for Local Food & Farming	groundswellcenter.org/	Committed to the creation of an equitable local food system
Habitat for Humanity of Tompkins and Cortland Counties	tchabitat.com/	Puts faith and love into action by building homes and hope
Ithaca Children’s Garden	www.ithacachildrengarden.org/	Connects children to nature to create a more beautiful, resilient, and just world.
Second Wind Cottages.	www.secondwindcottages.org/	Provides a place for men to learn to be sober and stable in independence and dignity
Sustainable Finger Lakes	sustainablefingerlakes.org/	Mission: weaving together a regional movement
Sustainable Tompkins	sustainabletompkins.org/	Citizen-based organization that works towards the long-term well-being of our communities by integrating social equity, economic vitality, ecological stewardship, and shared responsibility.
The Community Foundation of Tompkins County	www.cftompkins.org/giving/	Mission: Making a difference close to home

Plain Street Food Pantry

Administered by our own Leslie and James Schultz, their Plain Street food pantry provides neighborhood assistance. Recently, they were able to share several Thanksgiving dinners with those who frequent their cupboard. Donations are always welcome.





Please keep in your prayers:

- *The Tucker family*
- *John Gross*
- *Suzanne Kilgore*
- *Bronwyn Evans*
- *Jan Butler's children*
- *Pastor André Thera & family*
- *Ron Drummond*
- *Barbie Lister*
- *Pia-Miller family*
- *Abraham Phelan*
- *Anthony Halman & family*

Courage is the most important of all the virtues, because without courage you can't practice any other virtue consistently. You can practice any virtue erratically – kind, fair, true, generous – but to be that time after time, you need courage.

MAYA ANGELOU

While expressing gratitude seems innocent enough, it is a revolutionary idea. In a consumer society, contentment is a radical proposition.

ROBIN WALL KIMMERER

Love wholeheartedly, be surprised, give thanks and praise – then you will discover the fullness of your life.

BR. DAVID STEINDL-RAST



Communion table bouquet

The Visitor - November, 2021

Editor, publisher: Susan Eymann
Proofers: Judy Kennison, Tony Lister
Contributors: Margie Latham, Debbie Bennett Reynolds, Bill Abeles, Myra Fincher, Bill Fry, Lisa Kilgore, Alice Grow, Josie Zanfordino, Lucinda Carr, Janet Cotraccia
Photos: Tony Lister, Bill Abeles, Barb Fry, Leslie Schultz, Judy Kennison



After a long hiatus during the pandemic, the First Baptist Church choir is once again practicing in person weekly and singing during worship on Sunday.

Time and Talent Ministries (updated for 2021-2022)

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: Margie Latham
Vice Moderator: Andrea Mooney
Membership Clerk: Tina Hilsdorf
Recording Clerks: Rich Barron/Susan Eymann

Treasurer: David Caughey
Assistant Treasurer: Bill Fry
Financial Secretary: Marlene Sack

Board of Trustees

Anne Farrell (2022) Bill Phelan (2023)
* Bill Fry (2024) Kris Scott (2022) Josie Zanfordino (2023) Elizabeth Pia-Miller (2024) Rich Barron (2022) Baruch Whitehead (2023) Steve Hilsdorf (2024) (David Caughey, ex officio).

Trustees' Subgroups Finance & Endowment

David Caughey, Chair, Bill Fry; Marlene Sack, Curt Ufford, Janet Cotraccia

Interior Decoration: Barbara Fry, Julie Dean, Tina Hilsdorf, Bill Abeles, Anne Farrell, Andrea Staffeld, Susan Eymann

Church Archivist: Linda Caughey

Affiliate Organizations

Two Delegates each for **Rochester Genesee Region & ABC-USA** Rich and Lil Barron, Co-chairs; Anne & Steve Farrell, Bill Reynolds

AWAB: Josie Zanfordino, Shella Chace

Baptist Peace Fellowship: Meg Gillard,
Cornell Campus Ministry: Brian Baker, Linda Nicholson, Anne Farrell

Kitchen Cupboard: Amanda Ufford, Sue Hemsath

Tompkins County Workers Center: Bill Abeles

Sanctuary Alliance: Leslie Schultz, Bill Abeles, Bill Fry

Pastoral Relations

Tony Lister, Regi Carpenter (2023); Barbara Fry, Bronwyn Evans (2022); Mark Lawrence, Amanada Ufford (2021)

Nominating Committee

* Josie Zanfordino, Adrienne McNair, Linda Caughey

Personnel Committee

Bruce Chandler (2023), * Lou Carlucci (2024), * Judy Kennison (2024)

Constitution/By-Law Committee

Bill Fry, Linda Nicholson, Susan Eymann, Anne Farrell, Judy Kennison, Pastor Debbie Bennett Reynolds

Ministry Teams

Worship & Spiritual Life:

Barbara Fry, Amy Chaffee, Co-chairs; Biz Pia-Miller, Tony Lister, Kris Scott, Edie Reagan, Alice Grow, Regi Carpenter, Debbie Allen

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, Bill Fry, Bill Phelan

Education Children's and Youth: Leslie Schultz, chair Carol Fleming, Tim Dean,

Christian Ed Teachers: Baruch Whitehead, Lou Carlucci, Sarah Zipfel, Lil Barron

Christian Concern

Steve Farrell, chair, Bill Phelan, Bill Abeles

Christian Concern Subgroups

Circle of Care: Coordinators: Linda Caughey chair, Amanda Ufford, Sue Hemsath

Hospitality Ministry:

Anne Farrell: chair; Shella Chace, Meg Gillard, Tina Hilsdorf, Adrienne McNair, Andrea Staffeld, Greta Cotraccia, Ella Dean, Bay Ward/Aittama, Alice Grow

Communications Ministry: Shella Chace (convener), David Caughey, Mark Lawrence, Craig Riecke, Susan Eymann, Amy Bean Stowell, Lisa Kilgore

Green Team

Louise Mudrak, Lisa Kilgore (Co-conveners), Lynn Glase, Tony Lister, and others

Ad Hoc Reopening Committee

Pastor DBR, David Caughey, Amy Bean Stowell, Barbara Pease, Barbara Fry.

200th Anniversary Committee

Rich Barron, Meg Gillard, Linda Caughey, Mark Lawrence, Sue Eymann, Pastor Debbie Bennett-Reynolds.