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## Faithful Mosaic Stewardship Poster

Assembled by Andrea Staffeld. Cutouts created by FBC members and friends at the Casowasco all-church retreat.

## Our Faithful Mosaic - THANK YOU!

The Stewardship Committee and the Church Cabinet want to share the wonderful news of an over-subscribed pledging campaign. The draft budget for 2023 which was presented at the November 6th Congregational Meeting had a target amount of \$215,116 for income from pledges. According to our Financial Secretary, Marlene Sack, we have received pledges from our members and friends which total to \$225,732! WOW!

This seems to me to be a reflection of the positive energy and excitement I experienced in person at our Fall Retreat at Casowasco, at a Trustees' workday in June, and among those of us who participated in the Ithaca Festival parade. I sense this same energy and excitement percolating through our worship services, education times, and other gatherings, even though I am participating by

Zoom.

Thank you to ALL, regardless of whether you did or did not pledge anything in dollars. Our church would not be a Faithful Mosaic without everyone's pledges of time, of skills, of energy, of love, of compassion, of presence. What opportunities await us in 2023? What can we create together with the guidance of the Spirit?

Please save the education time after worship on Sunday, January 22nd for further conversation about our proposed 2023 budget. Then, on January 29 after worship we will hold our Congregational Meeting to vote on this budget.

Margie Latham, Moderator, for the Stewardship Committee and the Cabinet

## All-Church Retreat at Casowasco - A Great Success



**All-Church Retreat:** Damp, cold weather and gray skies did not dampen the spirits of those who attending the all-church retreat at Camp Casowasco on November 12-13. The planning committee offered a myriad of activities including Lectio Divina, drumming (see Jan Butler on right), archery and line dancing. About 60 attended for some part of the retreat and 40 stayed overnight. The church covered the costs but retreat donations were welcome. More pictures on pages 6-7.



Jan Butler drumming at the retreat.

## Congregational Meeting Set for January 29th

The annual Winter Congregational meeting will be held on January 29th following worship. This is the meeting during which our proposed 2023 budget will be presented for passage by the Congregation.

On January 22, 2023, there will be a meeting to explain and discuss where the monies from the 25% tithing of undesignated bequests of more than \$50,000 can be applied, and the process for securing these funds.

## In Memoriam - Helen Freeman

Helen Everhart Freeman, 87, passed away Wed. Dec. 14, 2022 at Beechtree Rehab Center from pneumonia and declining health. A longtime member of First Baptist Church, Helen will be remembered fondly for her beautiful smile and wonderful hats. She served as a Trustee at First Baptist and for years she joined Dick Fielding in bringing the offering to the Communion table and saying a prayer as the offering was presented.

After graduating from Ithaca High School in 1952, Helen served in the Navy Reserves for 4 years. She was a bookkeeper until her retirement. Helen enjoyed bowling and participated in many teams throughout the years. When she was younger, she enjoyed going to the Ithaca Yacht Club, sewing, baking and playing bridge.

Helen is survived by her sister Margaret Wiiki; her children: Cheryl Freeman Baker and Douglas (Mary) Freeman, Jr; seven grandchildren and five great grandchildren. A celebration of Helen's life will be held in the spring of 2023.



Friends: Helen Freeman & David Caughey marching during the 2014 Ithaca Festival Parade to "Walk in the Way of the Lord" (hence the feet on David's head).

## Beautification Award

The Community Beautification Awards for a Non-Profit were presented to First Baptist Church for its Pollinator Garden in front of the church facing DeWitt Park and to Tompkins Learning Partners. Kudos for the over FBC 40 members and friends who worked in the garden and to the congregation as a whole for supporting the project.



**Giving Tree for Enfield School:** Organized by Sue Hemsath & Linda Caughey, and with help from Tam Hemsath and FBC donors, Enfield children, moms and dads received a total of 27 Christmas Gift bags. Included were 12 mom and 5 dad bags filled with an assortment of items such as: hats, mittens, socks, coin purses, hot chocolate, candy, kitchen towels, rolls of tape, toothbrushes, floss, notepads and pens, a tote bag, etc. Above are the presents of toys and clothes for the children.

Photo David Caughey

## From Your Pastor Debbie Bennett Reynolds

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! Welcome to 2023!

*As our beloved Earth begins to turn slowly, slowly back toward longer days and more light, we can wonder what will come in this year. We're living in interesting and challenging times. Who knows what may come next? At the edge of the unknown, we always have a choice of fear or curiosity. It's easy to let anxiety and fear control us when so much is happening in our world.*

*But, I invite us in faith and hope to lean into curiosity about this new year. We can trust that whatever comes we are always being held in God's love and being guided by the Spirit. "Nothing can separate us from the love of God shown us in Christ Jesus." Of course, there will be challenges but that means there will also be great opportunities. The verse that has been coming to me lately is "behold, I am doing a new thing!" Let's be praying with hope and curiosity, open to see what new things the Spirit of God is going to do in our individual lives and in our life together as First Baptist Church. What we already share together is so good. We can trust the future and know that God is always at work in us to bring love and light to us and to the community around us. Let's see what 2023 will bring!*

Love and blessings,

Debbie Bennett Reynolds



Rev. Debbie Bennett Reynolds



**New Creation Singers Perform:** On December 12th, the New Creation Singers performed Hallalujah by Leonard Cohen. The lyrics of the fourth verse were written by David Caughey.

**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.**

## Bylaw Roll-out & Vote Schedule

The Bylaw committee has spent the last year and one-half reviewing and revising the Bylaws of FBC. They will present the fruits of their labors to the FBC congregation as follows:

- February 12th: The congregation will be introduced to the new proposed bylaws at a special Congregation meeting. The new bylaws propose a unicameral governing body for the church (a Council) to replace the existing bicameral governance of the Trustees and the Cabinet. This fundamental change will be explained in depth at the meeting.
- February 26th & March 12th, 2023: Two adult Sunday School sessions on have been set aside for discussion of the proposed Bylaws. There is an option to have a third discussion on March 226th.
- April 2nd, 2023: Special Congregational meeting to vote on the proposed Bylaws.

*What does the Lord require of you?  
To do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God.  
Micah 6:8*

## The Rolex Mirindo Story

*Submitted by Josie Zanfordino*

*I met Rolex Mirindo of Kenya through a friend on Facebook in late 2020. He is the second oldest of six children and the oldest male. Since his father, Joseph, fell ill then died, Mirindo has become the major provider for his impoverished mother and children. He left his home on Mfangano Island on Lake Victoria and traveled nine hours to the capital Nairobi where he found work. He teaches computers and agriculture to elementary school children at Faith Baptist Church School in Nairobi. His students love him because "he is the only teacher who learns their names instantly." He sends most of his salary home and continues to mentor his brother Peter and sister Mary as they prepare for admission to High School. My new 25-year-old friend is a hero in his family.*

*Early on in our relationship I learned that although he had completed all the requirements for graduation from college he did not have \$100 to get his diploma. I helped him with this. He told me he thinks of me as his grandma and I am thrilled.*

*First Baptist Church has joined me in our interest in this family. When his dad was ready to be released from the hospital FBC contributed to the cost. Then, when his dad passed we contributed to a proper funeral.*

*Mirindo joins us for Sunday services from Kenya via Zoom most Sundays.*

*He comes from the Luo people and has patiently taught me about the customs of his people.*



Rolex Mirindo



Rolex Mirindo at father Joseph's funeral

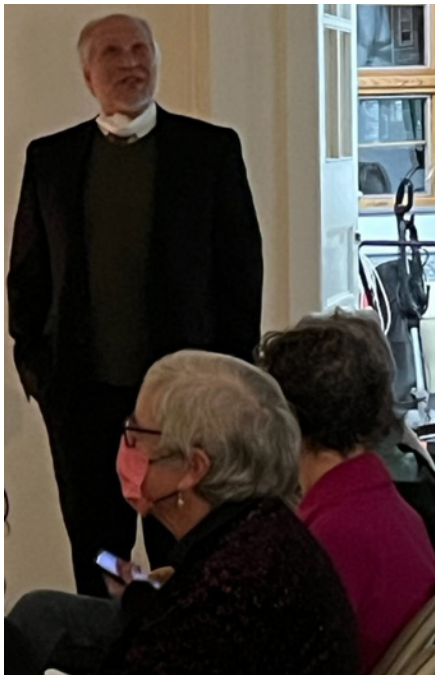


*The envelope laden with stamps that Rolex used to send Josie and Adrienne pictures of his family.*



*Rolex's siblings Mary and Peter Mirindo*

# Candlelight Christmas Eve at First Baptist



## O Holy Night (1847)

Each Christmas Eve service we are transfixed by Mark Lawrence's breathtaking rendition of "O Holy Night" in French, English and German. Follows is the story behind the Carole.

In 1847, a French priest commissioned this song for his parish. Lyricist Placide Cappeau wrote the lyrics poem, and pleased with his work, asked Adolphe Charles Adams to compose the music. The song was sung during the Christmas Eve mass.

Initially, *Cantique de Noel* was widely loved. But after leaders learned that Cappeau was a socialist and Adams a Jew - and the song was barred. Nevertheless, the French loved it so much that they continued to sing it.

Ten years later, John Sullivan Dwight introduced it to America. An abolitionist, he was moved by the third verse (*Chains shall not break for the slave is our brother*). Although banned in France it became popular in America

On Christmas Eve in 1871, in the midst of fierce fighting between France and Germany during the Franco-Prussian War, an unarmed French soldier jumped out of the trenches, walked onto the battlefield and started singing the song's first line in French. After singing the three verses, a German soldier emerged and started singing a sacred German hymn. Fighting stopped for the next 24 hours in honor of Christmas Day. Temporary peace was initial by *O Holy Night*.

In 1936, Reginald Fessenden figured out that the radio could do more than just transmit the Morse code but could also transmit speech and music. He sent the Christmas story from Luke and performed *O Holy Night* on his violin across the air waves.



Advent Wreath

## Moderator's Musings by Margie Latham

### What Time Is It?

I recently read a transcript of Ezra Klein's (*The Ezra Klein Show, Dec 13, 2022*) interview with Professor Dean Buonomano of UCLA. Klein titled this podcast, "Time Is Way Weirder Than You Think." If you have access to the digital NY Times, I recommend it to you. Professor Buonomano studies the relationship between time and the human brain. In this interview, he talks about the different ways in which human beings experience time and the different ways in which we keep track of time. By the time you read this musing, time will have passed and what I have written will be in the past.



Margie Latham

Yesterday was January 6, the 6th day of the new calendar year of 2023. It was more or less an ordinary Friday in our little town of Middlebury. Our public schools are back in session. Middlebury College's "J-Term" has begun, so the college students have returned from their holiday break. People who have "9 to 5" jobs were back at their offices. The USPS workers were delivering our mail.

On the liturgical calendar which our church follows, January 6 is Epiphany, which always falls on the day after the 12 days of Christmastide. It doesn't matter what day of the week it is. Also, on this calendar, January 6 is the 41st day of our liturgical year. Our Christian new year begins on the first Sunday of Advent.

On the Christian liturgical calendar which our Orthodox brothers and sisters follow, January 7 is Christmas. Their liturgical new year begins in September. Our Jewish brothers and sisters celebrate their liturgical new year during Rosh Hashanah, which in 2022 started at sunset on September 25 and concluded at sunset on September 27. The Chinese Lunar New Year occurs on January 22, 2023, and we move from the "year of the rat" to the "year of the rabbit."

Over the eons, humans of different cultures have developed ways to keep track of our experience of chronological time, through the use of calendars and clocks. The syncing of time across cultures using a shared civil calendar is a relatively recent occurrence in human history. Even more recent is the syncing of civil clock time to a standard of Coordinated Universal Time (UTC).

The human experience of time, however, is not necessarily only chronological. Hence we have the expression "time flies when you're having fun." Also, we have the experience of time passing slowly, as in "are we there yet." For many of us, our experience of clock time was disrupted substantially during the first year or longer of our recent and continuing pandemic. Many of us felt lost and untethered. Our experience of time is more fluid than our calendars and clocks.

In the 2nd Testament of our Bible, the Greek word transliterated as *kairos* also means "time." The Epiphany, or revealing, of the star to the Magi, and their journey to see the newborn child with his mother Mary (Matthew, Chapter 2) is this kind of time. It is an understanding of time as revelation, as opportunity, as fulfillment. When we are live in *kairos* time, we experience chronological time as full of possibility for the future.

What time is it at First Baptist Church in Ithaca? Chronologically we are in our 202nd year of being church together, of being a Faithful Mosaic. I believe this can be a *kairos* year for us, a year when we experience time as full of possibility for the future of this community. We have the opportunity to dream and to make choices with the guidance of the Spirit of God revealed in the life and teachings of Christ Jesus. As Jesus constantly told his followers, "Do not be afraid." May the Peace of Christ be with us.

# FBC All-Church Retreat - Nov. 12-13

## Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Prayer

Refrain: Repeat after each paragraph.  
**Now our minds are one.**

Today we have gathered, and we see the cycles of life continue. We have been given the duty to live in balance with each other and all living things. So now, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to each other as people.

We are thankful to our mother, the Earth, for she gives us all that we need for life. She supports our feet as we walk upon her. It gives us joy that she continues to care for us as she has from the beginning of time.

We turn our minds to Water and the Fish life who give themselves to us as food.

As far as the eye can see, the Plants grow working many wonders. With our minds gathered, we give thanks and look forwards to seeing Plant life for many generations to come.

We give thanks to the Animal life in the world who have many things to teach us. We are honored that they give up their lives so we may use their bodies as food.

We thank the trees who provide us with shelter and shade, fruit and beauty, and who are a symbol of peace and strength.

We thank the powers we know as the Four Winds. We hear their voice in the moving air as they refresh us and purify the air we breathe. They help us to bring the change of seasons, who from four directions bring us messages and strength.

We thank our eldest Brother the Sun, the source of all the fires of life.

We thank our eldest Grandmother the Moon, who lights the night-time sky. She governs the movement of the ocean tides. By her changing face we measure time, and it is the Moon who watches over the arrival of children here on Earth.

We thank the enlightened Teachers who have come to help throughout the ages. When we forget how-to live-in harmony, they remind us of the way we were instructed to live as people.

We turn our thoughts to the Creator, or Great Spirit, and send thanks for all the gifts of Creation. Everything we need to live a good life is here on this Mother Earth.

We are grateful for each other.

**Now our minds are one.**

This prayer was derived from the Mohawk version of the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address published in 1993 and provided courtesy of the Six Nations Indian Museum and the Tracking Project.



Group gathered for instructions before break-out opportunities.



Bill Abeles drumming



Line Dancing



Dining



Tina Hilsdorf leading Qigong to Bill Phelan



1000 piece puzzle begun at the retreat and completed by Margie Latham in Vermont.



Elena Adams drumming



## Reminders of Fall Glory



Bittersweet & Money Plant



Pollinator Garden November 6th



Photo by Bill Fry

## FBC All-Church Retreat - Nov. 12-13 cont.



David Caughey singing at worship service designed by attendees Sunday morning.



Chapel at Casowasco

## Tim Hembrooke Community Dinner



**Tim Hembrooke Community Dinner:** On December 17th, friends and members of FBC gathered for the annual Tim Hembrooke Community dinner organized by the Christian Concerns team led by Baruch Whitehead. Children from the community with their families enjoyed a bountiful feast. Several of the guests participated in the entertainment. Each guest received a gift bag donated by Marge Hansel..

## Halloween Trunk or Treat in the Parking Lot

### Letter to the Editor From Dr. Judson Kilgore

The America Medical Association (AMA) has grown in wisdom and stature in my 60 years membership. Their flagship *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA) was initially noted for scientific studies, practical advice for doctors, and, before Medicare, being a fierce opponent to any government entry into the payment of doctors. I remember a time there were ads for cigarettes in the *Journal*, and when pushed by front-line surgeons, radiologists, and pathologists, warned that cigarettes were dangerous, and advised against smoking in bed, rather than stop smoking.

I am proud of today's *Journal*. It not only has up-to date scientific papers, editorials decrying racial and economic inequities, and reports on health issues worldwide in enough detail to keep readers up to date on problems from Covid to recent polio, from America to Africa and Asia.

My personal gratitude, however, is the major professional and public stand on gun violence and abortion rights. The cover article in the September 27th issue was on gun violence and the need for stricter laws nationally to make America at least closer to every truly civilized country on Earth, with an inclusive range of problems and remedies. The message can be easily reached by typing "AMA issue on gun violence" into Google.

The November 1st issue is on the new, frightening dangers for the medical profession, its patients, the curtailing of on-hands OBGYN education, and the threat of losing medical licenses. Those most at risk to suffer lack of care or death were again the poor and non-white, especially in rural areas. This issue can also be studied by typing into Google "The AMA and Roe v. Wade" This is a truly major catastrophe. Unexpected by most since Roe v. Wade is so well accepted by 61% of Americans, it obviously raises political issues (such as Supreme Court appointees lied at confirmation hearings) as well as the age-old domination of men in power dictating what happens to their women folks. As the father of three, I am proud of my wife and our three children but watching her through the total 27 months of pregnancy made me glad my part was so easy, and wishing there were more women serving as Supreme Court Judges, fanatic Red State lawmakers and citizens now wanting to ban abortion pills and even birth control. Turning back our clock one hour is fine; turning back our country a century is not.



Cute as a chick



Halloween tricksters Tina Hilsdorf and Triplet

### Decorating for Christmas Dec 3rd

Photos by Tony Lister



Curt Ufford placing lights on the cairn.



On October 30th the FBC parking lot served as a site for Trunk or Treat. Here Elena and Lily Adams team up with Pastor Debbie at her NFL-inspired trunk.

Photos submitted by Debbie Bennett Reynolds





Please keep in your prayers:

- Marge Hansel
- Zetta Pederson
- John Gross
- Suzanne Kilgore
- Jan Butler's children
- Pastor André Thera & family
- Ron Drummond
- The Phelan family
- Anthony Halman & family

Gratefulness is a touchstone, offering us what we need not simply to survive difficult times but to appreciate them for their exquisite complexity, buried blessings, rich opportunities, and deep teachings.

KRISTI NELSON

Gratefulness allows us to nurture a keener eye that no longer rushes past the small everyday moments that make up the larger part of our lives.

GURI MEHTA



December flowers

### The Visitor - January 2023

Editor/publisher: Susan Eymann  
Proofers: Judy Kennison, Tony Lister  
Contributors: Debbie Bennett Reynolds, Linda Caughey, Sue Hemsath, Margie Latham, Josie Zanfordino, Jud Kilgore  
Photos: Tony Lister, Judy Kennison, David Caughey, Bill Phelan, Bill Fry, Margie Latham, Bill Abeles, Debbie Bennett Reynolds



**Nativity in the Community Room on Christmas Eve:** Frigid temperatures moved the scheduled Christmas Eve outdoor caroling and live nativity before the Christmaas Eve service into the Community Room at FBC.

## How We Are Involved (updated November 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

Bill Fry, chair (2024); Baruch Whitehead, (2023); Bill Phelan (2023); Josie Zanfordino, secretary (2023); Elizabeth Pia-Miller (2024); Steve Hilsdorf (2024); Kris Scott (2025); Marlene Sack (2025); Carolyn Young (2025); David Caughey, (ex officio)

### Trustees' Subgroups

**Finance & Endowment**  
David Caughey, chair; Bill Fry; Marlene Sack; Curt Ufford; Janet Hansel

**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.

**AWAB:** Shella Chace

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

**Kitchen Cupboard:** Amanda Ufford; Sue Hemsath.

**Tompkins County Workers Center:** Bill Abeles.

**Sanctuary Alliance:** Bill Abeles; Bill Fry; Leslie Schultz

### Pastoral Relations

Tony Lister; Regi Carpenter (2023); Mark Lawrence (2024); Amanda Ufford (2024); Judy Kennison (2025);

### Nominating Committee

Leslie Schultz; Meg Gillard; Tina Hilsdorf; Susan Eymann

### Personnel Committee

Bruce Chandler (2023); Lou Carlucci (2024); Judy Kennison (2024)

### Constitution/By-Law Committee

Bill Fry; 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; Tina Hilsdorf; Andrea Staffeld

**Labyrinth:** Kris Scott

**Sound/Audio Ministry:** David Caughey; Curt Ufford; Bill Fry; Bill Phelan; Leslie Schultz

#### Education Children's and Youth:

Leslie Schultz, chair; Carol Fleming.  
**Christian Ed Teachers:** Baruch Whitehead; Sarah Zipfel; Meg Gillard

#### Christian Concern

Baruch Whitehead, chair; Bill Phelan; Bill Abeles; Amanda Ufford, Marge Hansel, and others

#### 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; Steve Farrell; 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); and others

#### Ad Hoc Reopening Committee

Pastor Debbie Bennett Reynolds; David Caughey; Amy Bean Stowell; Barbara Pease; Barbara Fry