

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

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

When everything went into shutdown mode during the pandemic, the Zoom worship at First Baptist became my lifeline. Zoom is so much better than a live-stream on YouTube, because Zoom is interactive. What a delight to be able to worship from Vermont with my home church! Thank you also for inviting me to be a part of a wonderful group of leaders. God is good.



Margie Latham

More than a faith community, First Baptist has become for us an extended family. We rejoice with others as they celebrate milestones, we grieve as they experience sorrow, we delight in the children, we treasure and lift up our elders, our pastor, our music and choirs, and the incredible talents expressed by so many in our church community. In short, FBC enriches us and our lives. It makes us better. Glory be to God!



Susan Eymann

In times of loss - there is support without judgment, the most valuable gift in the world. It gets you through the darkest night...



Linda Caughey

In times of celebration — our joy expands the heart and touches the soul with countless blessings of many. It is a reminder of strength beyond words...

We are better together because we are not alone. We have fellowship, forgiveness, belonging, acceptance and a love that emanates from God. It provides an opportunity to be ourselves and bring about change.

Beloved FBC Community,

Almost a decade ago, in preparation for the Ithaca Festival Parade, David Caughey felt inspired to write the song "Better Together," whose rich lyrics reflected his own experience at First Baptist Church. David's lyrics ring as true today as they did almost a decade ago.

Four years ago, after a year of discussion, brainstorming and discernment, the members and friends of First Baptist codified its values in our succinct Core Values statement:

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

Our Core Values mirror the message in David's lyrics and vice-versa.

Over the past three years a dedicated group of members revised and streamlined the Church's Bylaws to better manifest those values. In April, we voted to approve and implement these revised Bylaws. New Ecological Justice and Welcome and Outreach Committees were formed. Our first-of-its-kind in Ithaca Pollinator Garden and the recent Porchfest "Friendraiser" are tangible fruits of the labors of these two new committees. Our newly structured Resource Committee ensures that our convenient downtown church location is available for use by others in the Ithaca community. Our Hospitality and Nurture Committee is offering monthly Sunday brunches again. Our Education Committee provides us with timely information and conversation on current events, spirituality, inter-cultural exchanges, and more. Our Service and Social Justice Committee helps us to pool our time and treasure to reach out to people in need in our community, nation, and world. Our Worship, Music, and Spiritual Life Committee brings us meaningful worship, annual retreats, and other events to deepen our connections to each other and to the Creator who sustains and guides us. Our beloved Pastor, Debbie Bennett Reynolds, and all our church staff, work with us and among us to help us to walk hand in hand, spreading love throughout the land.

Now as we move into the 2024 fiscal year, and continue our 2023-2024 program year, we ask for your continued support of First Baptist with your time, talents, and resources. There are myriad ways in which you can help us to be better together. New this year will be an option to complete an easy time and talents survey online, or you can still complete the survey with pen and paper. With all of our participation we can truly be *Better Together* as we manifest our Core Values in 2024.

The Stewardship Committee: Linda Caughey, Janet Hansel, Susan Eymann, Margie Latham, Andrea Mooney, Debbie Bennett Reynolds

Better Together

Words & Music: David A Caughey

Chorus:

We are better together, walking hand in hand; Celebrating differences, proud to take a stand. We know God made ev'ry one of us according to His plan; We are better together, spreading love throughout the land.

1. We are from First Baptist, and we want you all to know: God delights in ev'ryone, God makes our spirits glow. Whether you are young, or old, black, white, or straight, or gay; You are God's beloved child, and that is why we say: Chorus:

2. God delights in colors, God makes the rainbow shine. God wants ev'rybody to reflect the light divine. Mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters, joining the parade; You are God's beloved children, that is why we say: Chorus:

3. God's not narrow minded, God loves you as you are. Who are we to criticize, or dim your shining star? Strengthen'd by the ties that bind us, love is on display; You are God's beloved child, and that is why we say: Chorus:



Genesis of *Better Together*

By David Caughey



David Caughey

Over the years when First Baptist has been one of the few churches that have marched in the parades that have launched the Ithaca Festivals, I have written a couple songs that we have used to which we would march. Probably the best remembered of these songs in the one I wrote for the 2015 Festival Parade when the Festival theme was *Better Together* – and that was the name of the song. *Better Together* was also the song that was easiest to write because the theme seemed so naturally to describe the fellowship at First Baptist:

*We are Better Together, walking hand in hand;
Celebrating differences, proud to take a stand.*

We know God made ev'ry one of us according to His plan;

We are Better Together, spreading love throughout the land.

The theme is basically one of community and, especially, inclusiveness, with verses that lead back to the chorus with phrases like:

Whether you are young, or old, Black, White, or Straight, or Gay

You are God's beloved child, and that is why we say: We are Better Together ...

And, with reference to the rainbow flag:

God delights in colors, God makes the rainbow shine;

God wants everybody to reflect the light divine.

Mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters, joining the parade

You are God's beloved children, that is why we say:

We are Better Together ...

And, finally, with shameless reference to the classic hymn *Blest Be the Tie that Binds*:

Strengthened by the ties that bind us, love is on display

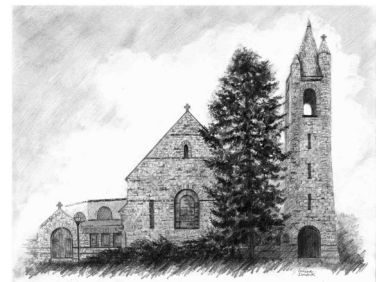
You are God's beloved child, and that is why we say:

We are Better Together ...

I'm honored and humbled that the Stewardship Committee has chosen to use this song as the theme for this year's Stewardship Drive.

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# Call for Time, Talents and Resources



Whatever your unique gifts may be – a welcoming hospitality, a heart-felt response to friends in need, gardening, photography, painting, social media, writing or floral interests, scriptural knowledge, contemplative leanings, musical talents, discussion group, and/or ministry leadership, championing causes that you are passionate about, and/or simply financial support – we ask you to pledge generously your time, talents and resources to First Baptist Church for 2024. Together, we are better as we live into First Baptist's Core Values. In return, you will experience the love, support and wonder of participating in the First Baptist faith community.

Please use the online survey and/ or the enclosed form to pledge your gifts for 2023. Return to the FBC office as soon as possible so that the 2024 budget can be finalized.

| 2024 Budget Needs                                      | 2023        | 2024 Target | % Increase |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| Total Receipts                                         | \$249,753   | \$263,529   | 5.5 %      |
| Program Pledges                                        | \$225,732   | \$234,529   | 5.5 %      |
| <b>2024 Expenses (Projected)</b>                       | <b>2023</b> | <b>2024</b> |            |
| Personnel                                              | \$188,103   | \$197,504   | 3.2 %      |
| <b>COUNCIL COMMITTEES</b>                              |             |             |            |
| Ecological Justice (Formerly Green Team)               | \$1,000     | \$1,000     |            |
| Education                                              | \$2,000     | \$2,000     |            |
| Hospitality & Nurture                                  | \$4,000     | \$4,300     |            |
| Service & Social Justice (Formerly Mission & Outreach) | \$13,350    | \$13,025    |            |
| Resources (Formerly Trustees Property and Maintenance) | \$37,800    | \$39,200    |            |
| Welcome & Outreach (New, includes advertising)         | -           | \$3,500     |            |
| Worship, Music & Spiritual Life                        | \$7,500     | \$3,000     |            |

### The Widow's Mite, Mark 12:41-44 (NRSV)

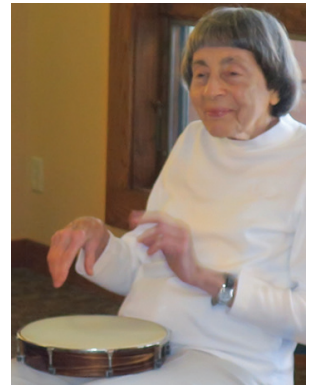
*He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."*

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In Memoriam: 2023

- John Gross
- Elaine Haines
- Rev. David Evans
- Helen Freeman
- Norm Rollins



~~~~~  
"We Are Better Together  
Walking Hand in Hand"  
~~~~~



CELEBRATE DIVERSITY



Please keep in your prayers:

- Bill and Debbie Reynolds
- Kris and Danny Scott & Zeta Pederson
- Suzanne Kilgore
- Kendrick Kemp
- Ron Drummond
- Marge Hansel
- Abraham Phelan
- Anthony Halman & family
- The people of the Middle East, Mali and Niger

First Baptist Polity

As stated in the 2023 FBC Bylaws

FBC embraces the Baptist tradition of Bible, Soul, Church, and Religious freedoms.

1. Bible Freedom:

We acknowledge that the Bible is central to the life of FBC and its congregants are both free and have responsibility to study and interpret the Scriptures for themselves.

2. Soul Freedom:

Every person has the inalienable right and responsibility to relate to God and seek their own unique spiritual path without imposition of a creed or intervention by clergy.

3. Church Freedom:

The local church is free to determine its membership and leadership, to order its worship, to ordain whom it perceives as gifted for ministry, and to participate in the larger Body of Christ. The authority and responsibility for governing the affairs of each Church are vested in its membership.

4. Religious Freedom:

Baptists protect religious liberty for all and defend the separation of church and state.

*When the power of love
overcomes the love of power,
the world will know peace.*

JIMI HENDRIX

First Baptist Church in Ithaca



DeWitt Park

www.firstbaptistithaca.org

We Welcome All!

FBC Organization (updated October, 2023)

First Baptist Staff

Pastor: Rev. Debbie Bennett Reynolds
 Office Manager: Janice Nigro
 Organist: Christopher Morgan Loy
 Choir Director: Belinda Adams
 Youth and Children's Ministries
 Coordinator: Laura Ward
 Nursery Care Coordinator: Carol Fleming
 Nursery Care Assistant: Sarah Zipfel
 Custodian: David Hopkins
 Native Plants Garden Specialist: Sarah Zipfel

Elected Leadership

Council Trustees

Margie Latham: Moderator
 Andrea Mooney: Vice Moderator:
 Susan Eymann: Clerk
 Brian Baker: Treasurer

Council Committee Trustees

Josie Zanfordino: Ecological Justice
 Leslie Schultz: Education
 Anne Farrell: Hospitality and Nurture
 Bill Fry: Resource
 Bill Abeles: Service and Social Justice
 Steve Farrell: Welcome and Outreach
 Amy Doyle: Worship, Music and Spiritual Life

Council Member-at-Large

open

Non-Council Officers

Bill Fry: Assistant Treasurer
 Marlene Sack: Financial Secretary
 Elizabeth Pia-Miller: Assistant Financial Secretary

Nominating Committee

Andrea Mooney (chair) + 4 open positions

Pastoral Relations

(2024): Mark Lawrence, Amanda Ufford, Barb Fry; (2025): Judy Kennison (chair) Bill Abeles, Carolyn Young; (2026): Lil Barron, Barbara Pease.

Reps to Affiliate Organizations

Two Delegates each for Rochester Genesee Region & ABC-USA
 Rich and Lil Barron; Anne & Steve Farrell.

ACT (Area Congregations Together): Shella Chace

AWAB: Shella Chace

Baptist Peace Fellowship: Leslie Schultz

Cornell Campus Ministry: Brian Baker

Kitchen Cupboard: Amanda Ufford; Sue Hemsath

Tompkins County Workers Center:

Bill Abeles

Sanctuary Alliance: Anne Horst (chair), Bill Abeles; Bill Fry; Leslie Schultz and others

Council Committees

Ecological Justice

Josie Zanfordino, Louise Mudrak (Co-chairs); Barbara Pease, Alice Grow, Amanda Ufford

Education Children's and Youth:

Leslie Schultz (chair), Debbie Allen.

Christian Ed Teachers: Baruch Whitehead; Sarah Zipfel; Meg Gillard

Hospitality and Nurture:

Anne Farrell (chair); Shella Chace; Meg Gillard; Tina Hilsdorf; Bruce Chandler, Andrea Staffeld; Steve Farrell; Alice Grow, Craig Riecke, Laura Peters

Resource Committee

Bill Fry (chair); Brian Baker, Rich Barron, Lou Carlucci, Dave Caughey, Steve

Hilsdorf, Mark Lawrence, Bill Phelan, Marlene Sack, Kris Scott, Carolyn Young, Josie Zanfordino

Service & Social Justice

Bill Abeles (chair); Bill Phelan, Amanda Ufford, Marge Hansel, Shella Chase

Subgroup

Circle of Care: Linda Caughey (chair) Amanda Ufford; Sue Hemsath

Welcome and Outreach:

Steve Farrell (chair). Anne Farrell, Alicia Dixon-Garrard, Baruch Whitehead, Joe Haines.

Subgroup: Communications:

David Caughey; Mark Lawrence; Craig Riecke; Susan Eymann; Amy Bean Stowell; Lisa Kilgore

Worship, Music & Spiritual Life:

Amy Doyle, Biz Pia-Miller (Co-chairs); Tony Lister; Barb Fry, Kris Scott; Edie Reagan; Alice Grow; Regi Carpenter; Debbie Allen

Subgroups

Flower Committee: Barbara Fry; Tina Hilsdorf; Andrea Staffeld, Carrie Stern

Labyrinth: Kris Scott

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

Please contact Susan Eymann (susan.eymann@transonic.com) to make corrections/additions to this list.

Your 2024 Time & Talents for Our Church Ministries

Name(s) _____ : Phone/Cell _____

This year we invite you to either use an online survey or this page to make your annual commitment of Time and Talents & Financial Resources to our Church Ministries. Each committee listed below has differing meeting times, many are monthly, but some are less frequent. Indicate your interest in learning more about a committee and someone will contact you to answer any questions. If are using this paper version of the survey, please mail this sheet to the church office at: First Baptist Church, Attn. Marlene Sack, 309 Cayuga St., Ithaca. NY or fbithaca@gmail.com.

ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Guides the Church to be stewards of the earth within the Church community and beyond. This includes leadership in environmental projects, educational programs, and worship, and providing input to other committees on environmentally sound practices, including building projects and church maintenance

- I currently serve on this committee
- I would like to serve on the Ecological Justice Committee
- I would like to learn more about serving on this committee

I would be interested in supporting the following goals of this committee: (committee membership not required)

- Providing education about ecological justice
- Helping with Pollinator Garden
- Helping with local cleanups
- Planning worship emphases and prayers

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Plans and coordinates FBC's educational programs: Sunday School for all ages, as well as youth and children's programming. It oversees the budget for youth and children, teacher training, adult education, and other educational purposes and is responsible for selecting curricula and recruiting and training Sunday School teachers. The Committee administers scholarship funds, soliciting applicants and selecting scholarship recipients.

- I currently serve on this committee
- I would like to serve on the Education Committee
- I would like to learn more about serving on this committee

I would be interested in supporting the following goals of this committee (committee membership not required)

- Leading adult education classes or workshops
- Teaching children (Sunday School and/or substituting)
- Working with youth

HOSPITALITY AND NURTURE COMMITTEE

Creates an atmosphere of inclusion and promotes community. It seeks to nurture relationships and encourage participation in the life of the Church by organizing regular Church gatherings, special events and celebrations. The Committee assists in welcoming and orienting new members. It helps coordinate care for congregants in need of extra support and nurturing.

- I currently serve on this committee
- I would like to serve on the Hospitality and Nurture Committee
- I would like to learn more about serving on this committee

I would be interested in supporting the following goals of this committee (committee membership not required)

- Providing calls, cards and/or visits to those who are ill and/or isolated

- Making/delivering food for those who are ill and/or isolated
- Organizing/delivering holiday gifts for those that are ill and/or isolated
- Organizing and/or participating in small groups in-person or virtually

RESOURCE COMMITTEE

Oversees facilities, finances, and personnel, via respective subcommittees. Subcommittee conveners are members of the Resource Committee.

- I currently serve on this committee and/or subcommittees
- I would like to serve on the Resource Committee and/or subcommittees
- I would like to learn more about serving on this committee and/or subcommittees

The FACILITIES Subcommittee

I would be interested in supporting the following goals of this committee (committee membership not required)

- Providing building upkeep and/or repairs
- Participating in church clean-up days
- Helping with interior decorating projects

CHURCH COUNCIL'S AD HOC STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Encourages congregants to expand their relationship with FBC by committing their time, talent, treasure and voice. It strives to assure a reliable source of revenue through pledges and other giving through the design and administration of an annual stewardship campaign.

- I currently serve on this committee
- I would like to serve on the Stewardship Ad Hoc Committee
- I would like to learn more about serving on this committee

SERVICE & SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Promotes the flow of God's all-inclusive love through the Church & into the world. It coordinates service, outreach, and actions to address social injustice and support needs within the local community and beyond.

- I currently serve on this committee
- I would like to serve on the Service & Social Justice Committee
- I would like to learn more about serving on this committee

I would be interested in supporting the following goals of this committee (committee membership not required)

- Promoting ABC/USA mission offerings
- Representing FBC at ABC Region/AWAB/Baptist Peace Fellowship events/meetings
- Working with Sanctuary Alliance
- Volunteering at Ithaca Kitchen Cupboard
- Making Friendship Center lunches or contributing items
- Riding and fundraising for the Ride for Life
- Participating in other local outreach projects
- Liaising with local organizations -Area Congregations Together (ACT), Tompkins County Workers Center (TCWC), etc.

WELCOME AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE T

The Welcome and Outreach Committee welcomes/introduces persons into FBC's community of faith. The Committee coordinates the Church's creative engagement within the larger community. It recruits and trains greeters and coordinates visitor follow up in collaboration with the Pastor. The committee oversees a Communications Sub-Committee.

- I currently serve on this committee
- I am interested in serving on the Welcome and Outreach Committee
- I am interested in learning more about serving on this committee

The COMMUNICATIONS subcommittee

Manages FBC's hybrid programming to internal and external audiences. It also produces traditional and digital promotional materials to publicize ongoing and special events; oversees website creation/maintenance and content updates; manages FBC's presence on various social media platforms; and periodically publishes and disseminates a church newsletter.

- I would like to learn more about serving on this subcommittee

I would be interested in supporting the following goals of this committee (committee membership not required)

- Participating in Communication Team-technology, communications, publicity
- Helping with website, Facebook and social media pages
- Providing photography and videography
- Working on The *Visitor* newsletter
- Managing audio and zoom videos for worship services

WORSHIP, MUSIC AND SPIRITUAL LIFE COMMITTEE T

In collaboration with the Pastor and the music staff, this committee creates rich worship experiences that inspire deeper spiritual connections. It arranges and sets-up monthly communion services, recruits and trains ushers, and offers special programs that enhance the spiritual life of the Church. It coordinates special worship events including baptisms, ordinations, funerals, and memorial services. The committee meets with prospective members to explore their desire to join the church; in consultation with the pastor it makes recommendations regarding membership to the church council; and it introduces new members to the congregation.

- I currently serve on this committee
- I am interested in serving on the Worship, Music and Spiritual Life Committee.
- I am interested in learning more about serving on this committee

I would be interested in supporting the following goals of this committee (committee membership not required)

- Serving as an Usher (helping with Sunday morning offering and/or administering communion)
- Preparing communion
- Helping plan worship services
- Providing flowers for worship
- Helping plan for Advent and Lent Services
- Leading meditation or evening prayer
- Planning and leading retreats/spiritual life events
- Performing special music in-person or by recording
- Singing in the choir
- Reading in worship

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Affords members and friends of the church an opportunity to use their unique gifts and talents to carry out the work of the church by inviting them to accept elected positions in the church.

- I currently serve on this committee
- I am interested in serving on the Nominating Committee
- I am interested in learning more about serving on this committee

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE T

Supports and advocates for the Pastor by helping the Congregation and Pastor understand the role of Pastoral leadership, by fostering constructive communications between the Congregation and the Pastor; and by discussing with the Pastor work/life balance, continuing education, and formulation of sabbatical plans.

- I currently serve on this committee
- I would like to serve on the PASTORAL RELATIONS committee
- I would like to learn more about serving on this committee

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

What are three words that describe why we at First Baptist are "Better Together"?

Any additional comments?

2024 Financial Pledge to First Baptist Church in Ithaca

Please consider making a financial pledge to FBC. Your pledges support our church and its ministries by providing a reliable source of income. Pledges are confidential.

Name(s) _____

Phone/Cell _____ Email: _____

To help manifest First Baptist's Core Values through her 2024 ministries and church life, I/we pledge \$ _____ (underline or circle) weekly, monthly, annually, other to support First Baptist Church of Ithaca during 2024.

Please mail this Time, Talents and Financial pledge page to the church office at:
First Baptist Church, Attn. Marlene Sack, 309 Cayuga St., Ithaca. NY
or email to: fbithaca@gmail.com.