



## Draw the Circle Wide

Words by Gordon Light;  
Music: Mark A.Q. Miller

Draw the circle wide, draw it wider still.  
Let this be our song: no one stands alone.  
Standing side by side, draw the circle, draw the circle wide...

God the still-point of the circle  
Round you all creation turns  
Nothing lost but held forever  
in God's gracious arms

### Refrain

Let our hearts touch far horizons  
So encompass great and small  
Let our loving know no borders  
Faithful to God's call

### Refrain

Let the dreams we dream be larger  
Than we've ever dreamed before  
Let the dream of Christ be in us  
Open every door!

### Refrain

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

### Beloved FBC Community,

As we embark on this year's Stewardship Campaign, we are inspired by the beautiful and inclusive theme, "Draw the Circle Wide." These words, penned by Gordon Light and brought to life through Mark Miller's music, remind us of the calling we share to extend the circle of our love, our generosity, and our community ever wider.

We strive to live out our core values by embracing all who come through our doors and extending our hands to those in need. "Draw the Circle Wide" challenges us to think about how we can continue to build a more nurturing and inclusive community. It calls us to look at the ways in which we give not only our financial resources, but also our time, our talents, and our care for one another.

The past year has provided many examples of the ways in which FBC already draws the circle wide.

- Our hybrid worship services reach across the miles from Tucson, AZ, to Kenya, Africa, inviting all to join with us in worship, at our communion table, and to participate in our church committee/activities;
- Our exceptional music program invites all to participate to enhance our inspired worship services led by our Pastor, Debbie Bennett Reynolds;
- We hold one another in prayer through our weekly expressed Joys and Concerns;
- Our Friendship Lunches, Kitchen Cupboard, Circle of Care, and Sanctuary volunteers reach out to those in need with food and support;
- We offer youth and adult education programs, and support the continuing education of students both here and in Mali and Kenya;
- Our devoted nursery caregivers nurture the youngest in our community;
- Our Pollinator Garden serves as a living example of our commitment to ecological justice and sustainability;
- We supported a Guatemalan cross-cultural mission experience for our youth and adults, who also participated in the annual Ithaca MobilePack drive;
- We offer community groups space for rehearsals, meetings, etc.

As we move into the 2025 fiscal year, we invite each of you to reflect on how you can widen your own circle of stewardship. Whether it's through volunteering your time, offering your skills, or giving generously from your heart, every act of giving strengthens our collective ability to further our mission of creating a world rooted in justice and peace.

Let us be bold in our giving, confident in our calling, and united in our purpose. As we draw the circle wider, may we open our hearts to new opportunities to serve, uplift, and extend God's love to all. You can do this in two ways: (1) by filling out the Online time and talents survey (see survey access and (2) by pledging your financial commitment (details also on next page)

With gratitude and hope,

The Stewardship Committee: Sarah Fishel, Janet Hansel, Judy Kennison, Andrea Mooney, Susan Eymann



**CELEBRATE DIVERSITY**

## Time & Talents Online Survey

Please use the Online survey to indicate what committees or FBC activities you would like to be involved in. Your will find two links in an email that will be sent to you. They can also be found on FBC's Facebook Internal Group Page, or in the membership section of our website. One link is to the Time and Talents Survey. The other is to a Pledge form. The Online survey makes tabulating the results much easier than dealing with paper responses. If you are unable to go Online, a Stewardship Committee member will help you fill it out at church. Also, hard copies of the survey also will be available. See the page 4 sidebar in the October Visitor to read about the missions of the seven church committees or find descriptions of the committees in the membership section of our website: [FirstBaptistIthaca.org](http://FirstBaptistIthaca.org).

## 2024 New First Baptist Members/Friends:

- Bruce Chandler
- Anne Horst
- Hope Decker
- Lynda Myers
- Joe Haines
- Cindi Zorokong
- Mickey Stevens
- Marti Kosztyo
- Jacquie Lewis
- Jim Evans

## A Strategy for Giving From Your IRAs

A popular strategy for reducing your income taxes is donating money from your IRAs annual mandatory distribution (RMD) to an eligible charity such as First Baptist. The IRS allows you to donate up to \$100,000 a year from an IRA without having to pay income tax. The money you withdraw will still count toward your RMD so you don't have to worry about a 50% tax penalty for failing to take distributions. To make this transfer of funds from your IRA to First Baptist, contact your IRA custodian. You're not allowed to claim the donation as a charitable deduction on your taxes. If you have further questions, please contact Curt Ufford at (607) 386-0741 or [cufford100@gmail.com](mailto:cufford100@gmail.com) who is happy to help.

# “Draw the Circle Wide”

## 2025 Call for Your Time, Talents & Resources

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

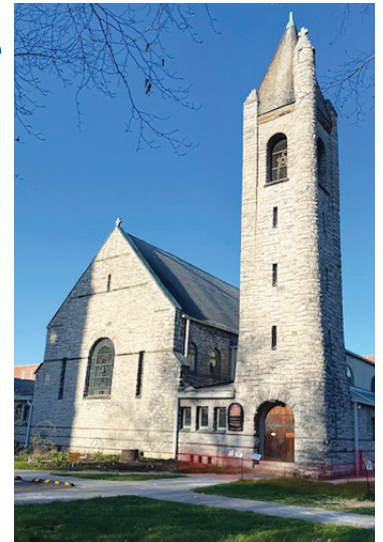
*He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more 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.”*

First Baptist Church Core Values (adopted 2023)  
 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.

2025 Budget Needs	2024 Projected	2025 Target	% Increase
Total Giving	\$253,519	\$252,411	<b>0.50%</b>
Program Pledges	\$240,371	\$244,069	<b>1.58%</b>
<b>2024 Disbursements</b>	<b>\$265,317</b>	<b>\$273,519</b>	<b>2.29%</b>
Personnel	\$196,714	\$201,794	<b>2.5%</b>
Ecological Justice	\$1,000	\$1,000	
Education	\$2,000	\$2,500	
Hospitality & Nurture	\$4,300	\$4,300	
Service & Social Justice	\$13,025	\$13,425	
Resources	\$44,000	\$45,000	
Welcome & Outreach	\$3,500	\$2,500	
Worship, Spiritual Life & Music	\$3,000	\$3,150	



At the Heart Center Meditation group led by Laura Peters at the 2023 All-Church Retreat were: standing from left to right: David Caughey, Bill Abeles, Anne Farrell, Adrienne McNair, Tony Lister, Barb Fry, Josie Zanfordino and Susan Eymann. Sitting left to right, Colin Kerr-Carpenter, Laura Peters. Biz Pia-Miller, Lydia and Bud Dolch.



## Time & Talents Appeal

Whatever your talents/interests may be — a heartfelt response to friends in need, preparing nutritious meals, a welcoming nature, gardening, photography, painting, writing, arranging flowers, knowledge of scripture, contemplative leanings, musical talents, leadership of adult education or discussion groups, teaching/nurturing youth, undertaking ministry leadership, visiting, championing causes etc., we ask you to pledge your time and talents generously to help us live into First Baptist's Core Values. In return, you will experience the love, support and joy of this unique faith community.

## 2025 Financial Appeal

We ask that you give as you are able to realize our 2025 financial goals (outlined in the table.)

Please complete the online Pledge Form which is only viewed by our Financial Secretary, Marlene Sack (link can be found in an email, at the end of the Time and Talents survey, on our Facebook internal group page, or on the members portion of our website). If you would prefer your can email or mail your pledge, directly to Marlene at: Marlene Sack, 222 Tareyton Drive, Ithaca, NY, email: [marsack@gmail.com](mailto:marsack@gmail.com) as soon as possible.



Please keep in your prayers:

- Rebecca Dolch
- Lil Barron
- Kris and Danny Scott
- Suzanne Kilgore
- Kendrick Kemp
- Ron Drummond
- Abraham Phelan
- Anthony Halman & family
- James (Nico) Schultz
- Hope Decker
- Meg Gillard
- 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.

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From left to right, Bill Abeles, Tina Hilsdorf, Carolyn Young and Barb Fry are set to deliver 60 lunches to the Friendship Center on the third Thursday of each month. Amanda Ufford, Steve & Anne Farrell and Tony Lister assemble and deliver lunches on the first Thursday. Linda Caughey, Leslie Schultz, Sue Hemsath and Lou Carlucci also help provide fixings.

## FBC Organization (updated October, 2024)

### 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 Specialist: Sarah Zipfel

### Elected Leadership

**Council Trustees**  
 Moderator: Judy Kennison  
 Vice Moderator: Carolyn Young  
 Clerk: Margie Latham  
 Treasurer: Brian Baker  
 Ecological Justice: Josie Zanfordino  
 Education: Debbie Allen  
 Hospitality & Nurture: Anne Farrell  
 Resource: Bill Fry  
 Service & Social Justice: Bill Abeles  
 Welcome & Outreach: Steve Farrell  
 Worship, Music & Spiritual Life: Tony Lister  
 Member-at-Large: Susan Eymann

### Non-Council Officers

Assistant Treasurer: David Caughey  
 Financial Secretary: Marlene Sack  
 Assistant Financial Secretary: Elizabeth Pia-Miller:

### Nominating Committee

Susan Eymann (chair), Bill Fry, Margie Latham, Louise Mudrak, Josie Zanfordino, Alice Grow

### Pastoral Relations

Judy Kennison (chair), Bill Abeles, Carolyn Young, Lil Barron, Barbara Pease, Barb Fry, Baruch Whitehead.

### Reps to Affiliate Organizations

Two Delegates each for Rochester Genesee Region & ABC-USA  
 Anne & Steve Farrell; Rich & Lil Barron;  
 ACT (Area Congregations Together): Shella Chace  
 AWAB: Shella Chace  
 Baptist Peace Fellowship: Leslie Schultz  
 Cornell Campus Ministry: Mark Lawrence  
 Kitchen Cupboard: Amanda Ufford; Sue Hemsath  
 Sanctuary Alliance: Anne Horst (chair), Bill Abeles; Barb Fry; Anne & Steve Farrell, Tony Lister, Jan Butler

### Council Committees

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

### Education

Debbie Allen (chair), Debbie Allen, Leslie Schltz  
**Christian Ed Teachers:** 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

### Subgroup

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

### 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

### Subgroups

**Finance Committee:** Brian Baker, Janet Hansel, Marlene Sack, David Caughey  
**Stewardship:** Janet Hansel, Andrea Mooney, Sarah Fishel, Susan Eymann, Judy Kennison

### Service & Social Justice

Bill Phelan, Bill Abeles (co-chairs), Amanda Ufford, Shella Chace, Hope Decker, Cindi Zorokong, Bud Dolch

### Welcome and Outreach

Steve Farrell (co-chairs). Anne Farrell, Alicia Dixon-Garrard, Baruch Whitehead,

### Subgroup: Communications

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

### Worship, Music & Spiritual Life

Tony Lister, Biz Pia-Miller (Co-chairs); Barb Fry, Kris Scott; Edie Reagan; Debbie Allen, Bronywn Evans

### Subgroups

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

### Labyrinth:

Kris Scott

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

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