

THE MESSENGER

JANUARY 2023

FROM THE TRANSITIONAL PASTOR

Dear Friends,

Allow me to share a snapshot of what's coming our way early in 2023.

Starting the first Sunday in January, I plan to preach a sermon series titled: "You Don't Have To Be A Star." We'll consider some of the "little people" of the New Testament and the role they played in God's work in the world. Start thinking about Ananias, Phoebe, Lydia, Philemon, Priscilla and Aquila, and John Mark in preparation for the series. Reserve February 12 on your calendar and plan to participate in the Lord's Supper during morning worship. Soon afterwards, we'll move into the Season of Lent and start our journey toward Easter.

Early in 2023 we'll launch a church-wide prayer emphasis focused on preparing for a search for a pastor, preparing ourselves for new pastoral leadership, and opening ourselves to whatever future God has in mind for the congregation. We hope to offer opportunities for prayer in the prayer room, Sunday Bible study classes, small groups, at home, congregationally, and individually. Watch for further information.

Starting January 22, I will provide a series of presentations on LGBTQ and the Church. We'll look at relevant scriptures and the interpretative issues associated with each, history, science, experience, the role of the Holy Spirit, biblical analogies, and stories of how various congregations have dealt with the challenge. Watch for additional announcements.

Finally, I hope we'll soon start the task of pulling together a Pastor Search Committee. My personal hunch is that the committee, once approved by the congregation, will navigate a search unique in the history of First Baptist Church. Its members will need our prayers and support along the way.

Welcome to 2023!

Mike



The CHURCH and LGBTQ

Dr. Mike Smith will lead **FOUR** presentations on *The Church and LGBTQ* in the Fellowship Hall on the following Sundays:

January 22

January 29

February 5

February 12

There will be pizza and beverages provided immediately following morning worship, and the presentation will begin once the meal has been completed.

No Reservations are Required

The presentations will be recorded but not live streamed. For more information, contact the church office at (865) 475-3826.



HYMN HIGHLIGHT

By Nenette Measels, Interim Minister of Music

Christmastide is the twelve days after Christmas on the Christian Calendar. The season of Epiphany (meaning “appearance” or “manifestation”) begins on January 6 observing the occasions when Jesus was revealed to be the Son of God—the visit of the Magi, his baptism, the miracles (especially at the wedding at Cana), and his victory over temptation in the desert. The emphasis on Christ’s transfiguration comes at the end of this season.

A time-honored classic Epiphany hymn is “We Three Kings of Orient Are”, #151, *Celebrating Grace Hymnal*, written by John H. Hopkins, Jr. in 1857. The kings named were most likely the Magi mentioned in Matthew 2:1: “After Jesus was born in Bethlehem . . . Magi from the east came . . .” The Magi were astrologers from lands east of Palestine, whose vocation was to study the stars in the attempt to discern the favorable conditions under which important decisions should be made. These kings were obviously well-versed in and favorably disposed toward Old Testament scriptures. The hymn begins with a narration of their journey, relentlessly following the star to find another king who, according to prophecy, would be born in Bethlehem. Verses describe the symbolic gifts they brought and their intent, concluding with a doxology of alleluias*. Space in this column won’t permit all the stanzas; I hope you will open a hymnal and reflect on the light the Magi pursued and the light we seek and celebrate in the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

We three kings of Orient are;
bearing gifts we traverse afar,
field and fountain, moor and mountain,
following yonder star.

Refrain:

O star of wonder, star of light,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.

*(Adapted from *The Worshipping Church: A Hymnal, Worship Leader’s Edition*, Hope Pub. Co., 1991)

A TIME TO . . .

By Sierra Bevins, Ministry Assistant

Ecclesiastes 3: 1-6 (NIV) reads: “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend.”

Beloved Church family, as we enter a new year, I am reflecting on this scripture passage. This life we share with one another is presented to us in moments – some profoundly significant and others fleetingly small – woven together throughout each season. In preparation for a new year, may we take time to acknowledge, with intentional care and grace for ourselves and others, the moments we have lived thus far. Perhaps this past year, your seasons held more weeping than laughter, more mourning than dancing, searching without finding. Perhaps all the while, new life stubbornly broke forth; long awaited healing took place; and you embraced yourself and those around you. It is not only possible, but quite probable, that our realities hold both of these seemingly opposing experiences at the same time: weeping *and* laughter, searching *and* letting go. Whatever our past, current, and future experiences, may we allow them to bind us to God and enable us to draw nearer to one another. As written in Ecclesiastes 3:11, God makes “everything beautiful in its time.” When I look around at our community and each individual member, I am in awe of the ways in which beauty is made out of so many circumstances, through God’s ever willingness to work with and through our human minds and hearts. Thank you for being present for this life and sharing it with this community. Rest in the knowledge that whatever seasons 2023 brings, you are never experiencing them alone; you are always held – by God and those of us around you – with love. Happy New Year.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASS

By Carey Herring, Church Deacon

The English language class for internationals established by the deacons had a very successful fall semester. The class concluded the term with a Christmas celebration in which Kristi Sanford read a child’s version of the Nativity, Marilyn Barr led in some caroling, and Charlie Wilson read in Spanish the Bethlehem story. After refreshments gifts were distributed. The children each received Bible story books in English, and the adults each received a Spanish-English parallel edition of the Bible. Because our two Japanese students can already read our language, they were presented Bibles in English. Of the \$3,750 budget approved by the budget committee for the class, a total of \$1,775 was expended for teacher training, curriculum materials, Wednesday night suppers for teachers and students, childcare, and Christmas gifts. We remain grateful to the church family for your enthusiastic support of this ministry and to the Lord for His abundant blessings.

Beginning January 11, 2023, **English Languages Classes will continue in 2023 on Wednesdays from 6:00-7:30 pm in Room 301**, with free dinner offered at 5:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

By Josh Gibson, Administrative Coordinator

Summary of Operational Budget Income / Expenses through November 2022

	August	September	October	November
Income	\$28,447.60	\$36,108.73	\$25,667.61	\$39,351.33
Expenses	\$39,806.33	\$36,958.54	\$26,097.44	\$23,891.41
Net Income	(\$11,359.33)	(\$ 849.81)	(\$ 429.83)	\$15,459.92
YTD	(\$16,033.95)	(\$16,883.76)	(\$17,133.59)	(\$ 2,034.62)

Items of Interest

- **Online Giving** is simple and convenient, and you do not have to set up a Realm account to give online. Visit: <https://onrealm.org/fbcjeff/give/now> to initiate an online gift today!
- **Designated Benevolence Fund total** (as of 12/31/2022) = \$0.00
 - In November 2022, the committee assisted 9 neighbors and dispersed \$1,503.04 in funds.
- **Forward in Faith Capital Campaign:** Updated through November 22 (*pledge period is September 1, 2018 – August 31, 2023*):
 - Total campaign pledges = \$318,250.00
 - Total pledge gifts received = **\$277,663.50**
 - Total pledges outstanding = \$ 44,586.00
 - Fund balance = \$ 26,841.19
- **Our Forward in Faith Capital Campaign comes to a close in 8 months.**
- **Tax statements will be emailed but if you would like a copy mailed to you, please email Josh at jgibson@fbcjeff.org or call the office, (865) 475-3826.**



DEACONS' MEETING SUMMARY

By Heidi Thomas, Deacon Chair

A deacons meeting was held on December 14, 2022 to elect officers to replace Bill Rosser, who resigned as chairman, and also to elect a Vice Chairman and Secretary. The following were elected to serve for 2023:

Heidi Thomas, Chairman
Jim Wilson, Vice Chairman
Betty Watkins, Secretary

Dr. Mike Smith joined the meeting and announced he will hold sessions beginning in late January on LGBTQ as requested by the Transitional Team. He suggested, after the first of the year, it was time to select a pastor search committee.

DEACONS & MINISTER OF THE WEEK

January 1:	John Burton and Ann Porter / Chad Hartsock
January 8:	Pam Hester and Heidi Thomas / Nenette Measels
January 15:	Bruce Davenport and Ken Morton / Josh Gibson
January 22:	Ray Dalton and Betty Watkins / Chad Hartsock
January 29	Leon Shoemaker and Karen Smith / Nenette Measels

FUTURE MESSENGER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our church newsletter is a monthly format so please plan ahead if you have items to announce. Submit items to the church office (sbevins@fbcjeff.org) by **Tuesday, January 24** for the **February Messenger**. Thank you!

2023 SUNDAY MORNING SERMON SERIES



You Don't Have
to be a
STAR



Too often we start to think, "I'm only a small person. I can't make much of a difference for God or do anything that might change the course of history. You don't have to be a star to partner with God! Most of God's work is done by small hands."

- January 1 Ananias: The Reluctant Emissary, Acts 9:10-19
- January 8 Phoebe: The Woman Who Broke New Ground, Romans 16:1-2
- January 15 Lydia: Hospitality Matters, Acts 16:11-15
- January 22 Philemon: The Pebble in the Church's Shoe, Philemon vv.8-22
- January 29 Priscilla and Aquila: The First Husband-Wife Ministry Team, Acts 18:1-3; 18-20;24-28
- February 5 John Mark: If At First You Don't Succeed, Acts 13:1-5, 13, Acts 15:36-41; Philemon v.23

Watch the services live at www.facebook.com/firstbaptistjeffcity or later at www.youtube.com

5:00 pm | Sunday,
January 15, 2023

Church
Ministries Night

FELLOWSHIP HALL

Meeting materials
will be emailed on January 12

SENIOR FELLOWSHIP



G A M E

D A Y



TUESDAY, JANUARY 17
12-NOON

Fellowship Hall

Bring a bag lunch, drink,
and your favorite game

GIVE TODAY
through your church or
at www.cbf.net/ogm

A PLACE AT THE
TABLE
FOR EVERYONE

100% OF YOUR GIFT
to the Offering for Global Missions
will support the presence of CBF
field personnel serving in the U.S.
and around the world.

LUKE 14:12-14

**OFFERING GOAL
\$4 MILLION**

cbf OFFERING FOR
GLOBAL MISSIONS
BECAUSE PRESENCE MATTERS

OUR MISSION

As a community shaped by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, we are called to worship God, share the Good News, foster spiritual growth and meet the needs of hurting people.

SUNDAY WORSHIP TIMES

9:30am Sunday Bible Studies
10:45am Worship Service

CONTACT INFO

(865) 475-3826; (865) 262-9026 (Fax)

Church Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday, 8:30am to 4:30pm

Find us at www.fbcjeff.org or follow us online on *Facebook* and *YouTube*

STAFF

Sierra Bevins (sbevins@fbcjeff.org)	Ministry Assistant
Angie France	Organist
Josh Gibson (jgibson@fbcjeff.org)	Administrative Coordinator
Chad Hartsock	Interim Minister of Youth & College Students
Jessica Lawson (cdo@fbcjeff.org)	Children's Day Out Director
Steven Lloyd (slloyd@fbcjeff.org)	Facility Caretaker
Nenette Measels	Interim Minister of Music
Cameron Rowlett	Video Editor
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Melanie Simpson	Pianist
Mike Smith	Transitional Pastor
Kathy Wiesner (kwiesner@fbcjeff.org)	Ministry Assistant

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Happy New Year *Happy New Year* *Happy New Year*