



FBC First Baptist Church

Family By Choice all are welcome...really!

# VISIONS December 2019

A Welcoming & Affirming  
Congregation

## Advent at FBC



As we approach the Advent season this year, I invite you to join us for worship and Learning Community as we seek a deeper understanding of the Biblical stories that surround the birth of Jesus and consider this season as an opportunity to set the stage for a new year of justice making in our community. Woven into the narratives about singing angels, fluffy sheep, and tender babies, are powerful words that challenge the status quo, then and now, inviting us to create a new world of justice and peace. Consider this word for yourself and for FBC's ministry in our neighborhood and world. O come, all you faithful!

### Advent Worship: Where Justice Gets Done

1/1 Where Justice Gets Done, Words Matter  
2 Kings 22:1-10 & 14-20, 23:1-3

1/8 Where Justice Gets Done, Places Matter  
Isaiah 40:1-11

1/15 Where Justice Gets Done, Community Matters  
Ezra 1:1-4, 3:1-4 & 10-13

1/22 Where Justice Gets Done, Mystery Matters  
Luke 1:5-13 & 57-80

### Advent Learning Community : *The First Christmas*, Marcus J. Borg, John Dominic Crossan

12/1 An Angel Comes to Mary: Conception Stories  
Mt 1:18-25, Lk 1:26-38

12/8 David's City of Bethlehem  
Old and New Testament references to  
"Bethlehem"

12/15 Christmas Luncheon, Carol Sing and Cookie Swap

12/22 Light Against Darkness  
Gn 1:3-5, Is 9:2, Is 60:1-3, Mt 1-3, Lk 1-3,  
Jn 1:4-5, Rv 21:22-25

12/29 Jesus as the Fulfillment of Prophecy  
Lk 1:46-55, 68-79; 2:29-32

**Christmas Eve Worship will be at 7 pm.** Join us for carols and candlelight as we celebrate the birth of Jesus together.

Blessings,  
Marcia



## Sing a Song of Christmas Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup> at 2pm



Our Christmas Concert and Art Show are here! On Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup> at 2pm, eight talented musicians will fill our Sanctuary with the sounds and joy of Christmas. The luminous drawings of artist Anthony Riker will also be on display. You don't want to miss it!

Admission is free, and tickets can be picked up in Echo Hall. You can also get tickets at the church office (Tuesday – Thursday 11am-3pm and Friday 11am-2pm) or at the TriCounty Chamber of Commerce (152 E High St #360, Pottstown).

Help us spread the word about this wonderful event. On Facebook:

1. Search for "First Baptist Church, Pottstown, PA" on Facebook.
2. Once you are on our FBC Facebook page, click Events from the list on the left.
3. Scroll down and click on Sing a Song of Christmas.
4. Select a button for Interested or Going.
5. Click Share as Post to add this event to your Facebook page.

Thank you for helping us make this beautiful Christmas Concert and Art Show a success. Grab your tickets and invite a friend!

Lucky Number: 26

## Save the Date! All-Church Retreat Feb 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>

Mark your calendar for our Strategic Planning Retreat on February 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of 2020. We'll meet on Friday evening and all day on Saturday. Rev. Dr. Marcia Patton will join us as facilitator.

## Christmas Luncheon & Cookie Swap!



Celebrate Christmas with us after worship on Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup> when we will have a festive luncheon, carol singing and a cookie swap! Bring a dozen cookies for us to "sample" (eat!) and another dozen to swap! Or just come and enjoy! Look for the sign-up sheet in December.

## Shining a Light on the Season



Please help us collect empty 2-liter bottles for luminaries this Christmas season. We need 75 2-liter bottles by Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup>!

We also need volunteers to help assemble the luminaries on December 15<sup>th</sup> as well as helpers to light the luminaries on Christmas Eve. Anyone able to help on either date, please contact Nancy Unruh.

## Lucky Number 7



The winner of our November Lucky Number Scavenger Hunt is Deb Brauner! Deb will receive Wawa coupons for breakfast and lunch.

Want to participate in the December Lucky Number Scavenger Hunt? Just look for **Lucky Numbers** as you read this newsletter. Email the lucky numbers you find to the office at [office@fbcpottstown.org](mailto:office@fbcpottstown.org), and you'll be entered into the drawing for a surprise. Each lucky number is another chance to win, so find them all!

## “What Does the Bible Really Teach Us About Jesus’ Birth?”



That’s the question we will try to answer in our Nov/Dec Adult Learning Community with the help of *The First Christmas*, a scholarly yet accessible book by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan. As we read the stories of Jesus’ birth in Matthew and Luke, we will consider questions like: What kind of stories are these? Why are only Matthew and Luke concerned with Jesus’ birth? What do these stories actually mean to our faith today? Together we will explore the biblical texts, both Old Testament and New, in order to more deeply understand and appreciate the Advent and Christmas season.

## Connecting with the FBC Family



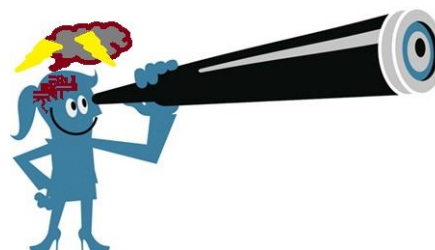
Our church directory, the “Community of First Baptist Church”, is still being updated. Thank you to everyone who was able to confirm/update their contact information so far.

If you can’t make it to the church, you can send any changes/additions (to your phone number, address, email, or cell phone numbers) to the church office! Send information to [office@fbcpottstown.org](mailto:office@fbcpottstown.org), or call 610-326-2273.

The Diaconate Board will be making phone calls to spread the word about all of the events and services coming up this month. We look forward to chatting with you.

– from the Diaconate Board  
Debra Brauner, Chairperson  
Board members – Jane Gruen, Ruth Chonka

## Looking Ahead with Christian Ed



The CE Board met briefly in November. We are starting to brainstorm ideas for the 2020 Community Summer Fest. We will start discussing our ideas at the December meeting and build on our plans as the year goes by. If you would like to be part of this fun filled event or if you have any ideas to make FBC’s Community Summer Fest event even better, please join us at our meeting on December 8<sup>th</sup> or talk with one of our CE Board Members.

Please remember to keep saving those Redners-Save-A-Tapes!

-from the Board of Christian Education  
Chairperson: Nancy Unruh

Board members: Lauren Emmell, Dennis Landon, Kathy Purington, Joel Dugan

## Blanketing Our Community



In December, the Cluster’s Bring the Basics campaign has a goal of 31 bed pillows and 31 blankets. All donations can be placed on the shelves in Echo Hall.

The Cluster also needs volunteers to both pack and/or deliver orders. If you are interested, please call the Cluster at 610-970-5995.

Cluster Fundraisers: Professional Pharmacy register tapes (includes prescriptions). Place in Ruth Chonka’s mailbox.

Pamphlets are available on the tables in Echo Hall and the Sanctuary to help explain the services available at the Cluster in Pottstown.

-from Cluster delegate Ruth Chonka

Lucky Number: 12

## Make a Joyful Noise



The Christmas concert will be on Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm with an art show and a reception sponsored by Fran Heffner. Come enjoy the music, art, and fellowship! In preparation, both the organ and the piano in the Sanctuary were tuned recently. Come listen to the joyful noise for Advent!

The Worship and Music Board met on November 3<sup>rd</sup> after the church services. Much of our discussion related to the upcoming concert (tickets, reception, advertising, etc.).

We also discussed using white gloves to handle the brass when it is moved from the office to the Sanctuary, keeping the brass cleaner. And, we discussed asking Dennis Landon to our next meeting to talk about special music services to be held at various times through the year and how to implement those.

The next meeting will be on Sunday, December 1<sup>st</sup> at 12:00 pm.

- from the Board of Worship & Music  
Chairperson: Corinne Griffiths

Board members: Kathy Ballein, Tim Raub,  
Teri Hoffman, Dr. Myra Forrest & Doris Stutzman

## Holidays at the Cluster



We again collected gravy for the Cluster's Holiday Food baskets, and we thank all who donated! We collected 209 cans of turkey gravy. Thank you also to everyone who donated toys to the Cluster this Christmas! We collected over 70 toys for children this year.

- Our Missions

Chairperson: Kathy Purington

Committee members: Jane Gruen & Ruth Chonka

## Don't Be Alarmed



The Trustees are happy to report that the YWCA has replaced two broken windows facing the courtyard. In addition, all of the computers in the office have been upgraded to newer models with newer software.

The company that monitors FBC's fire alarm is scheduled to perform annual testing on December 10<sup>th</sup> around 11am.

If you notice any repairs needed around the building, please contact John Forrest or Rick Unruh.

- from the Trustees

Co-Chairpersons: Richard Unruh & John Forrest

## Bringing Our Pledges

Last Sunday we received 19 pledges totaling \$60,580. That's a wonderful effort toward our proposed budget goal of \$65,000. You may, of course, still pledge! If you haven't pledged for 2020, please join us in supporting God's ministry in this place by helping us close this gap so that we can do all we envision for the year ahead! (Pledge cards are available in Echo Hall.)

In January, we will vote on the finalized budget, adjusted in response to your pledges.



## December Birthdays

- 1 Nandi Bangura
- 2 Isaiah Oberg
- 3 Joyce Nichols
- 4 Charles Golden
- 6 Joan Breidenbach
- 11 Kyra Gauger  
Shirley Holloway
- 12 Gift D. S. Bender  
Bill Jackson  
Tanner Jolley
- 14 Susan Heinz
- 15 Michelline Bender
- 20 Amy Shenk  
Mary Lou Sarni
- 21 Joyce Bagiraneza
- 23 Elisabeth Ziherambere  
Samuel Ziherambere
- 28 Will Bagiraneza
- 30 Joe Alden-Sawtelle
- 31 Terry Gauger  
Keith Grohoski

Are we missing your name? Send us your birthday so we can invite others to celebrate with you!

## December Anniversaries

- 13 Bob & Susan Kelly
- 14 Tim & Athena (Grace) Bair
- 16 Drew & Maggie Kurtz



Did you find all the lucky numbers? Email the all the lucky numbers to [office@fbcpottstown.org](mailto:office@fbcpottstown.org) for entries into the December Scavenger Hunt drawing.

