

“SoJourn in this land, and I will be with you, and bless you!” (Gen. 26:3)

A Word from Wes

The church received the gift of a piece of art, recently. Julia Grace Harrison wanted the picture to come here and to be seen by our children and youth. It is now placed in the Youth Lounge.

I find it to be an intriguing piece.

At first viewing, one sees a representation of Jesus. A closer look reveals that the form is comprised of words. When Grace Charbeneau’s young eyes were focused on it, she began to read what the words said; starting with, “In the beginning was the word...” In fact the face of Jesus is made up of the entire Gospel according to John! Imagine the workmanship. Thanks are due to Grace Harrison for having given this picture to the church.

As I have thought about this, my mind turned in several directions. Whether the artist did this intentionally or not, the way that Jesus is presented wonderfully matches the message of the Gospel of John for we encounter the “Word made flesh” in Jesus Christ. That truth is essential to the message of Advent and Christmas. With his coming, God’s love is made visible.

Further, I would point out that when it comes to matters of our personal faith and of our life together as a congregation. Looking closely and looking thoroughly is important as we seek

God’s will in our lives. Another word to describe this process is discernment. The picture, given, might challenge us to look deeply, to see what is not immediately obvious, to consider the shades and the shapes, and to appreciate the letters and the spaces between them.

We are attempting to think deeply and to act faithfully as a congregation. We are making progress in our efforts to claim and vision and to move toward that vision in what we determine to do together. We continue to need to be discerning. This is an appropriate perspective for Advent.

Perhaps in your life you are recognizing the need to set new priorities. It may be you are feeling the wind of the Spirit stirring in your heart. I pray that the Season of Advent and of Christmas will be a time of hope, joy, peace and love that opens your eyes to see more deeply God’s purpose and to hear God’s call.

May it be that our lives present a picture of the living Christ so that others may be touched by his love and grace.

There could be no better gift at Christmas time.

Wes

SENDING PRAYERS TO OUR FAMILY OF **FAITH**

Please remain in prayer for these people who are or have recently been under doctor's care: Patty Babian, Ray Sharp, Collin Trask, Kelly Kestel, Vicki Schettling, Sandra Paran, Barbara Diederich and Esther Houston.

Please also keep in your prayers our homebound friends: Alice Adams, Enid Holliday, Norma Moore, Ray Sharp, Evelyn Morrell, Phil Lett, Patty Babian, Margaret Edgington.

Please pray for Ray and Nancy Sharp and thir family as Ray is continuing to face health challenges.

We continue in prayer for the Trask Family.

We keep Patty Babian and her family in our prayers.

Please keep our snow birds in your prayers: Phyllis Bourgois, Jack and Sally Casement, Dave and Shirley McEwen.

Our prayers are with Jackie Erhardt who has recently fell and hurt her foot.

Be in prayer for Angie Willingham suffered a fall at home was hospitalized.

Continuing to remember Lois Blaesing's sister Eunice.

Sandy McMurray, Hazel Boltwood's daughter. is receiving treatments. Please keep the family in your prayers.

Mary Johnson, Pastor Babian's mother has been a patient at Bircham Hills in East Lansing.



Happy December Birthdays!

December 1 Archie Black
 December 3 William Chartier
 December 4 David Drake
 December 7 Jon Burleigh
 December 8 Mark Sackett
 Wendy Schaffer

December 10 Marilyn Lin
 December 12 Tonya Cheney
 Ray Gardner

December 14 Margaret Edgington
 December 16 Robert Washburn
 December 17 Myra Trask
 Christie Camaio

December 18 Janelle Jones
 December 19 Kelsey Darin
 Glenn Howard
 Marjorie Eberly

December 20 Joyce Griffin
 Kirk McWilliam

December 24 Harriet Stewart
 December 26 Harriet Kleinfelder
 December 27 Chares Griffin



Annual Offering ...

We will collect our annual Christmas offering throughout the Advent season. Please prayerfully consider your gift. Thank You.



A Look at the Financials

As of October 31, 2011

Pledged Income Actual	\$145,356
Pledged Income Budget	<u>\$157,394</u>
Pledged Variance	(\$12,038)
YTD Total Actual Income	\$227,710
YTD Total Actual Expenses	<u>\$ 241,793</u>
Variance	(\$14,083)

2012 Mission Encounter Tour to Alaska: May 18-27, 2012

Co-sponsored by American Baptist Women's Ministries and American Baptist Home Mission Societies. The beauty of Alaska can take your breath away. But distances between communities and long periods of darkness present special challenges for evangelism and church planting. Plan now to join this exciting home-mission encounter!

On this encounter you will:

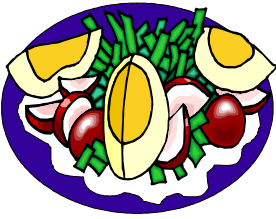
- Visit American Baptist mission sites in Anchorage, Cordova and Kodiak
- Meet American Baptist missionaries who serve in our 49th state
- See Woody Island, where American Baptist mission in Alaska began in 1893
- Learn about special needs in small villages

• **Alaska Children's Services** provides residential and home-based treatment for youth with severe emotional and behavioral disturbances. With a broad range of services, Alaska Children's Services is able to provide the level of treatment the child needs in as least a restrictive environment as possible—from residential treatment to therapeutic foster care to home-based case management and therapies.

• **Kodiak Baptist Mission**, as a social service organization, the purpose of Kodiak Baptist Mission is to improve the quality of life of children and their families by ministering to their unmet physical, social, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual needs, by following the examples set forth by in the life of Jesus Christ.

• **Camp Woody** is located on Woody Island, where the first American Baptist mission in Alaska was founded in 1893. The camp offers hiking, adventure-based programming, and camps with daily Bible study.

• **Cordova Community Christian Center** is an integral part of the community of Cordova and is a witness of love and faithfulness to all who come to its programs and ministries. At the center those who come find the many people who volunteer to make these activities possible ready to meet and greet them and share the gospel of Christ. We are always grateful for the love and thoughtfulness of our dear family in Christ who provide the supplies and most importantly of all, the love and prayers that undergird the ministries of the Christian Center. Together we serve Christ in this remote and isolated spot in Alaska. (ref: ELink)

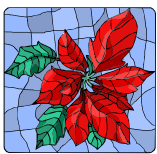


ABW Lunch!

Tuesday, December 13
at noon at Peabody's
Restaurant in Birmingham. A favorite spot!

Save the Date!

All are welcome to the
December 17th Adult
Christmas Party! Save the
date! More details to be announced.



Order A Christmas Plant!

Christmas plants can be purchased in honor or in memory of a loved one. The plants will adorn our sanctuary beginning Sunday, December 19th. Gifts will be recognized in the bulletins beginning December 18. Plants cost \$7.50 each. Cards are available in the Welcome Center.

Special Meeting of Congregation - December 4: Council has called a Special Meeting of the Congregation immediately after church December 4th to approve a Capital Funds Drive to cover the cost of replacing the North Educational Wing Entrance doors and supporting glass work. It is important that members attend this meeting so that work can proceed.

TAPESTRY OF LIGHT **TO BE PRESENTED ON DECEMBER 18, 2011**

The Chancel Choir, once again joining forces with the David Reed quartet, will produce Joseph Martin's newest Christmas cantata, on December 18th. We've done Joseph Martin's "Journey Of Promises" and "Legacy Of Faith" in previous years. "Tapestry Of Light" is a joining of traditional carols, primarily from the British Isles, with scripture reading and candle lighting. Our anthem today is based on the beloved Scottish song "Brother James' Air" Please plan on attending on December 18th....and bring your friends.

THANKS WE GIVE FOR ALL THESE THINGS

"For all the blessings you have granted us, Lord give us thankful hearts, we pray:"

The Ellis' clan has much to celebrate this Thanksgiving season

"For life and health and happiness, And for the gift of each new day;"

We are thankful that you've opened your hearts to us for 22 plus years

"For all the families and loved ones, The friends we meet along our way, We thank you, Lord, they are your gifts:"

We appreciate the conclusion of the organ project (completed except for some trim work and the dedication.) It sounds amazing!

Lord, we praise you, Lord, we bless you, In your service let us all your love repay.

We appreciate the leadership of Wes, Leslie, moderator Dave Brault, and chair of the organ committee Bill Olsen! Quality people!

"Look all around you: You'll see a miracle or two;. And there is One who never changes:

We appreciate a Brilliant Bell Choir and a Courageous Chancel Choir.

"Through all eternity the same: Be with us, Lord, for evermore."

So, here's to many more years in ministry together.....

Jack and Jo Ellis



Judy Sutterlin, IM missionary in China, receives 2011 Charity Award from Chinese government (News by Catherine Nold, October 31, 2011)

Judy Sutterlin, American Baptist International Ministries (IM) missionary in China, is a recipient of the Charity Award from the Jiangsu provincial government of Jiangsu Province, China. This award recognizes Judy as a “most caring and benevolent model” demonstrated through her service in the Province. She is the only foreigner among the thirty plus award winners to receive this honor. The award ceremony for this first-ever Jiangsu Charity Award took place on October 12 in the ancient capital city of Nanjing.

Judy thanks American Baptists for enabling her service in Jiangsu Province and IM’s partner, the Amity Foundation, for recommending her for this award. In 2008, Judy received the Friendship Award from the Ningxia Province for her contribution to building and supporting village clinics among Muslim communities.

Judy Sutterlin serves as a missionary with Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, where she teaches General, Biblical and Theological English. As faculty and students improve their English skills, they gain access to additional Bible study resources, increase their ability to dialogue with Christians from around the world, and acquire proficiency that can enable them to lead English outreach ministries now existing in some city churches.

“Judy has been recognized as a caring and benevolent model,” commented Dr. Reid Trulson, executive director for American Baptist International Ministries, “because her work demonstrates care for the whole person - intellectually, spiritually, relationally and physically. In addition to her theological and academic work through the Seminary, Judy helps with the orientation and care for the Amity Foundation's English teachers and serves as a liaison to Amity projects supported by IM. Those include help for children orphaned by HIV/AIDS as well as support for remote village clinic work, drug rehabilitation and economic development projects.”

The Amity Foundation, an independent Chinese voluntary organization, was created in 1985 on the initiative of Chinese Christians to promote education, social services, health, and rural development from China’s coastal provinces in the east to the minority areas of the west. (ref: ELink)



Adult Learning Community News

Thanking Scott Moore for his leadership. Jim Poe will begin teaching Journeys in a few weeks.



Will Olsen In-Gathering: A Wonderful FBCB Tradition!

A whopping
25 bags
of groceries were delivered to Judson Center for their families.
What a beautiful gesture!



Communion

Our December
Communion
Offering will go in support
of the Detroit Baptist
Manor.



ETS features Rev. Dan Buttry at Advent service (ETS News Release)

DETROIT -- Ecumenical Theological Seminary (ETS) will complement its annual Advent service with a special reading by author Rev. Dan Buttry, from his new book, *Blessed are the Peacemakers*, on Thursday, December 8, at 7:30 p.m. The reading will follow the seminary's Advent service, which begins at 6 p.m.

Registration is free. ETS is located at 2930 Woodward Avenue, Detroit, 48201. For information, contact Cathy Maher at 313-831-5200 x210.

"In these pages, you will meet more than 100 heroes, but most of them are not the kind of heroes our culture celebrates for muscle, beauty and wealth. These are peacemakers. They circle the planet. A few are famous like Gandhi and Bono of U2. But, most of them you will discover for the first time in these stories. Watch out! Reading about their lives may inspire you to step up into their courageous circle," notes David Crumm, managing editor of ReadtheSpirit.com, an online publication and publisher of *Blessed are the Peacemakers*.



Save the Date!

All are encouraged to attend the annual Camp Lael/ Friendship House Comedy Fundraiser, Thursday, February 16, 2012, 8 p.m. at Mark Ridley's Comedy Castle. Headliner will be Rocky LaPorte. Details to follow.

Youth Learning Community News ...

We are looking for volunteers to help support our Youth Learning Community program. A sign up sheet is next to the church office. We are looking for help with snacks, clean-up and assisting the teachers. Can you help?

The Youth Art Room Needs...

- Sewing machine (good/working condition)
 - Tea kettle
 - Art supplies / Craft supplies
 - Adult size artist's easel
-

Good Work!

Many thanks to everyone who worked so hard on our Fall Work Day. We accomplished much! Well Done!

Crismons ...

Each year, shortly after Hanging of the Greens, a group of ladies from the church gather at the church to decorate our Christmas trees with our **Crismons**. Crismons are delicate, hand-made ornaments that have been made over the years by the women of the church. Some are very old, but all are very beautiful. If you are interested in participating in this annual event, please contact Leslie in the church office. It is a real treat to see these treasures up close and be a part of a lovely tradition at FBCB.



Christmas Eve Worship Services

We will again this year have two Christmas Eve celebrations. The early service at 4:30PM will include participation from our youth. They will present a wonderful program sharing the Nativity story. This is a wonderful opportunity to share the Good News with family and friends.

Then at 11:00 PM we will come together to worship in our beautiful, candle-light service that is truly a wondrous sight.



Our next B'Jazz Vespers
will be held on Sunday, December 19,
5 to 7PM with the

**“A Special Christmas Concert
for Jazz Lovers
(and all music lovers).”**

featuring the Paul Keller ensemble:

•Paul on bass •Ellen Rowe, piano •Bill
Lucas, trumpet •Keith Kaminsky,
sax •Terry Kimura, trombone •Shawn
Dobbins, drums •Susan Chastain, vocals



Christmas Youth Party!

The youth December event will
be on December 3rd. We will
have a Christmas Tea Party,
White Elephant Gift Exchange
and rehearsal for the Christmas

Eve service that the youth will participate in.
Noon to 3PM. Bring something from your
home for the gift exchange or please do not
spend over \$5 at a store.



Daily Prayers For This Month

Each morning when you get up, take a brief moment to say the prayer written below. See if, by the end of the week, having made this time for God's word, somehow, your life has changed for the better, your outlook has become brighter, your spirit, stronger. These prayers are taken from the “Seasons of the Spirit” lectionary materials.

November 27, 2011

In the changing seasons of life we acknowledge your presence in our lives and in our space, Creator God. Still, Holy One, we wait longingly for the time when we live in unity with your will for the world. Amen.

December 4, 2011

In the midst of the chaos of life around us, O God, we seek patience to wait, to listen, and to act with integrity. In our decision making and in our actions with one another, may we seek and find your comforting presence. Amen.

December 11, 2011

Earth-maker, our world is abundantly rich with everything we need to live a bountiful life. Yet it seems all too easy to covet more that is justifiably ours, creating need in others. Show us the ways in which your abundant gifts to us can be used to restore hope. Amen.

December 18, 2011

There are times, Comforting One, when I feel puzzled by what I sense your Spirit is leading me to do. In those times, I feel afraid and very alone. Let me hear, in my heart, the message to “not be afraid” and the reminder that you are with me. Amen.

Upcoming Sunday Morning Worship at 10:30 AM

First Sunday in Advent
November 27, 2011
“Longing” ~ Isaiah 64:1-9

Second Sunday in Advent
December 4, 2011
“Words of Comfort” ~ Isaiah 40:1-11

Third Sunday in Advent
December 11, 2011
“Hope Restored” ~ Psalm 126

Fourth Sunday in Advent
December 18, 2011
“God With Us” ~ Luke 1:26-38

SoJournal

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Periodical

November 27, 2011

Visit Our Websites at: firstbaptistbirmingham.org and bjazzvespers.org
E-Mail: firstbaptistbirm@sbcglobal.net