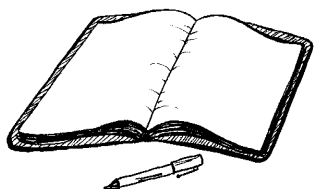


Baptist Notes



A Publication of the First Baptist Church in Framingham
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From the Pastor



Holy Scripture is an inspiration. The Psalms, or songs, are prayers and readings that may illuminate our souls to dance, enable our eyes to see, and encourage us in our spiritual journey to the house of God. Psalm 84 is one example of a psalm that has significance for me and is meaningful in my life and worship. Psalm 84 is believed to be a liturgical account of the annual pilgrimage to the temple at Jerusalem. Early worshippers of God would unite each autumn for a fall harvest festival and worship. The journey to the house of God would have been a holy experience, uniting people as they prepared to worship their God. “How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts! My soul longs, indeed it faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God. Happy are those whose strength is in you, in whose hearts are the highways to Zion. As they go through the valley of thirst, they make it a place of springs; the early rain also covers it with pools.” (Psalm 84:1-2, 5-6)

Centuries later, we still journey to the house of the Lord, uniting to worship the one, true God. Today, as before, we journey together, hope filled, anticipating something truly miraculous. In the ancient world, pilgrims may have feared drought, robbery, illness, or any number of obstacles on their journey to the House of God, but they persevered because their lives, and the fullness of them, depended on their arriving together to worship.

As we approach the House of God today, we too might be deterred along the journey. Certainly, we suffer from natural disasters, illness, war, and at times, personal ambivalence. These do not have to be permanent obstacles. When we believe, whole-heartedly, that our lives depend totally on uniting with Holy and Creator God, we will become encouraged and skilled at overcoming any obstacle that might otherwise deter us from worship. Furthermore, we do not journey alone. Although it is painful to see the havoc in people’s lives that storms, political upheaval, and spiritual desolation can bring, we are also presented with an opportunity to help one another. We have opportunities to lend our hands, our hearts, and our willingness that no person be left in the valley of thirst and desolation, but rather be lifted and strengthened so that he or she might also have an opportunity to give adoration in the House of the Lord.

My encouragement today is that we all take time to ask what might prevent us from taking a drink of living water and then be willing to ask for help in overcoming any obstacle. My encouragement for each of us today also is that we consider lending our hands, our hearts, and our lives to help people who are left out so that all may be renewed in the Holiness of God. First Baptist Church is a House of Worship, a place for service, and a congregation of people bonded together who believe in the power of God. Be encouraged that there is no obstacle that cannot be overcome through the Holiness of God.

Jason

Church Notes

We extend deep sympathy to the families of Lewis Oxford, who passed away on January 24, and Frank Schneider, who passed away on January 30.

A memorial service for Lew will take place on Saturday, February 10, at 12 pm at John Everett and Sons Funeral Home, 4 Park St. in Natick. Calling hours are from 10 am until noon. Arrangements for Frank are incomplete at this time.

February 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 7:00 pm Choir Practice	2	3
4 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Potluck	5	6	7	8 7:00 pm Choir Practice	9	10
11 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Communications	12	13 7:00 pm Exec. Council	14 Lent begins	15 7:00 pm Choir Practice	16	17
18 10:30 am Worship	19 Presidents Day	20 7:00 pm A&F	21	22 7:00 pm Choir Practice	23	24
25 10:30 am Worship	26	27 7:00 pm Deacons	28	29 7:00 pm Choir Practice		

Notes: AA meets Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday at noon in Reilly Hall.

Hope Bible Baptist Church rents space Sundays, 3–7 p.m.

All calendar entries are subject to change.

February Birthdays



5	Marques McEwan	23	Jane Williams
5	Emmanuel Badoo	24	Akosua Badoo
9	Oshin Samuel	24	Carlota Velazco
13	Henry Carlson	26	Nancy Devine
13	Martin Hennelly	26	Scott Llewellyn
14	Cheryl Perry	26	Kate Thompson
14	Velissa Velazco	27	Patrick Watton
20	Lynn Monaco	28	Roberta Hannon
22	Lecia Shronce		

Executive Council News

Executive Council met via Zoom on Tuesday, January 9, 2024. Here are highlights of the meeting:

- General fund pledges are at \$79,094. A&F is budgeting a 5% salary increase for all staff.
- We will look into renting a machine from Home Depot for Felix to use to clean carpets.
- Deacons fund balance is \$2,333.77. Deacons and Jason have been providing gift cards.
- Henry Mboowa has an interest in the AV setup and will join the team investigating an upgrade.
- The Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO) will be taken January 14 to January 28.
- We will not have an Ash Wednesday service.
- We will take an all-church picture on Easter outside if weather permits.
- The talent show is scheduled for Sunday, April 7.

Members of Executive Council are Linda Devine, Kathie Zeman, Jay Reilly, Al Harrington, Lecia Shronce, Francesca Cerutti-Harris, Naomi Stanley, Judy Llewellyn, Diane Halbert, and Pastor Jason.

Happy Birthday Baby

Happy Birthday Baby, a program that falls under the church's Board of Missions, continues to provide baby baskets to many teen and low-income moms in our area. In 2023, the group made 34 baskets, 10 of which were requested by Early Childhood Alliance for asylum families who had been bused to and housed in Framingham. Some supplies are in stock, but items such as boys' blankets, baby shampoo, baby lotion, diaper cream, hand sanitizer, and baby socks are still needed. To learn more about the program or to donate items, please speak to Lorna Mailhoit or any member of the Missions Board. We are very appreciative of any help with this mission in the coming year.



Update from the 2024 Annual Meeting

Thank you to everyone who was in the sanctuary and online on January 28 when members of the church gathered for the annual meeting. To begin, Clerk Kathie Zeman led a remembrance of Cathy Lewis, Carolyn Reilly, and Gail Harrington, members and friends who passed away in 2023. We reviewed reports from 2023 and voted on budgets for 2024 as presented by Treasurer Ray Zeman and Missions Board Cochair Francesca Cerutti-Harris. Motions to accept those budgets passed unanimously after members asked questions and expressed appreciation for the work of the boards and individuals involved. Diane Halbert, our nominating committee chair, presented for approval a slate of nominations for 2024, which also was unanimously accepted. She did note some openings on the Board of Missions and the need for a delegate to TABCOM, encouraging people to volunteer. (The slate of nominations is included in this newsletter.)

At the end of the meeting, Pastor Jason announced that he will be leaving the pastorate of First Baptist Church in Framingham to become Executive Director of the Massachusetts Baptist Charitable Society, effective after the Easter worship service on March 31, 2024. We greatly appreciate the 12+ years of his ministry and leadership with us, and we wish him all the best. Fortunately, he will continue as an active member of our church and will return to worship with us in the future.

We are forming a nine-member pastoral search committee, representing all areas of church life, to find a new pastor. Some volunteers have come forward, but we need a few more to join the committee. If you would like to be part of this important group, please contact Linda Devine or any other Executive Council member or email the church at firstbaptistframingham@gmail.com. After the committee is complete, the slate will be submitted to the membership for election at a specially called church meeting.

Thanks go to our pastor, Christian Education coordinator, music director, church officers, board chairs, fund treasurers, internal auditors, and all board and committee members for their dedication and hard work throughout the year. Special thanks to Francesca Cerutti-Harris for hosting online meeting attendees and projecting documents for everyone to view. Also, extra appreciation goes to Ray and Kathie Zeman for helping to assemble the annual reports.



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN FRAMINGHAM SLATE FOR 2024

Nominating Chair: Diane Halbert

CHURCH OFFICERS: *Elected Annually*

CLERK:	2024	Kathie Zeman
TREASURER:	2024	Ray Zeman
FINANCIAL SECRETARY:	2024	Neil Halbert
MODERATOR:	2024	Linda Devine
CHAIR of A&F:	2024	Al Harrington

CHURCH DELEGATES: *Elected Annually*

TABCOM:	2024	Naomi Stanley	2024	OPEN
STILLMAN ASSOCIATION:	2024	Naomi Stanley	2024	Kathie Zeman

CHURCH BOARDS

(Elected for three-year terms)

DEACONS/MINISTRY BOARD: *(Suggested organization is Chair, Care and Concern, Christian Education & Discipleship, Hospitality & Fellowship, Worship, etc.)*

2024	Diane Halbert	2025	Jay Reilly
2024	Ethel Luton-Campbell	2026	Annette Stefanini
2024	Emmanuel Badoo	2026	Tom Stefanini

Visitation Manager: Position to be filled internally by the Board of Deacons/Ministry.

ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE BOARD: *(Suggested organization is Chair, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Church Building, Church Grounds, Parsonage, Pleasant St., etc.)*

Church Officer A&F Chair:	Al Harrington		
Church Treasurer (ex officio A&F)	Ray Zeman		
Church Fin. Sec. (ex officio A&F)	Neil Halbert		
2024	Wilson Ndzi	2025	Naomi Stanley
2025	Akosua Badoo	2026	Scott Llewellyn

MISSIONS BOARD: *(Suggested organization is Chair, Local Missions Coordinator, Local Events, National & International Coordinator, Outreach, Treasurer, Secretary, etc.)*

2024	Lecia Shronce	2025	OPEN
2024	Rev. June Cooper	2026	Lorna Mailhoit
2024	Cheryl Perry	2026	OPEN
2025	Francesca Cerutti-Harris		

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL:

Church Moderator, Church Clerk, Board of A&F Chair, Board of Deacons/Ministry Chair, Board of Missions Chair, Communications Committee Chair, Nominating Committee Chair (attendance expected only Oct. thru Jan.), At-Large Members
Recommended, nonvoting: Christian Ed Coordinator and Stewardship Chair (Oct. thru Dec.)

Communications Committee Chair: Annually 2024 Francesca Cerutti-Harris
Nominating Committee Chair: Annually 2024 Diane Halbert
At-Large Members: Annually 2024 Naomi Stanley, 2024 Judy Llewellyn

CHURCH INTERNAL AUDITORS:

Annually 2024 Nancy Devine 2024 James Wakeman Sr.

CHURCH COMMITTEES

Boards and the Executive Council appoint committee positions as indicated. Each year, the boards and Council must confirm the appointments.

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE: (Exec. Council – 3-year term on rotating basis)
Francesca Cerutti-Harris, Naomi Stanley, James Wakeman Sr., Cheryl Perry

HISTORIAN(S): (Executive Council)
Tom Stefanini

MUSIC COMMITTEE: (Deacons/Ministry)
Music Director Sarah Russo

FLOWER COMMITTEE: (Deacons/Ministry)
Judy Llewellyn, Francesca Cerutti-Harris, Diane Halbert, Ceil Robinson, Naomi Stanley

USHERING COMMITTEE: (Deacons/Ministry)
Diane Halbert

WORSHIP COMMITTEE: (Deacons/Ministry)
Naomi Stanley, Kathie Zeman, Music Director Sarah Russo

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE: (Administration & Finance)
OPEN

SPECIAL FUNDS

Campership (Deacons/Ministry): Kathie Zeman, Treasurer

Deacons (Deacons/Ministry): Tom Stefanini, Treasurer

Levin/Chute (Deacons/Ministry): Diane Halbert, Naomi Stanley, Kathie Zeman (Treasurer)

Memorial (Administration & Finance): Kathie Zeman, Treasurer

NOTES

- The pastor is an ex officio member (without a vote) of all boards and committees.
- Board members may serve on only one board but also may serve on committees.

First Baptist Church in Framingham

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Framingham's next Repair Café will be Saturday, February 24, 2 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Scott Hall, 24 Vernon Street in Framingham. Volunteers at the Repair Café can help fix many items for *free*. They specialize in clean, mendable clothing; lamps; small ap-

pliances; computers and other electronics; bikes; batteries; toys; jewelry; and sewing machines. They also will have a station for sharpening knives, scissors, and garden tools. If you know what parts are needed for your job, you can save time by getting them in advance. Refresh yourself with a free drink and a snack while you work with a volunteer to repair your broken item. Donations are accepted.

For more information, visit TransitionFramingham.org/repair-café or the Facebook Event at <https://www.facebook.com/events/1050599026210883>. To volunteer, go to tinyurl.com/FramFixVolunteer or call/text Alex at 508-379-3971. This event is an all-volunteer project of the Framingham Rotary Club with support from Transition Framingham.