

GREEN STEEPLE MESSENGER

**First Baptist Church
81 Saint Paul Street Ste. 1
Burlington, VT. 05401**

VOLUME NO. 1

January 1, 2024

GREEN STEEPLE, GRATEFUL PEOPLE, GROWING IN FAITH, PROCLAIMING GOD'S LOVE



LOOKING FORWARD

January is a time for looking forward to new ideas and new circumstances. It is a time for making plans and for giving thanks to God for our blessings, our resources, and life itself.

In 2024, we are called to live out the ministry priorities that we discerned in October; Congregational Fellowship, Faith Formation across the life span, and Meeting Basic Needs for those in our wider communities. These priorities align with our 3 Areas of Ministry - Fellowship, Education, and Mission. Already we have increased our fellowship opportunities, strengthened our Christian Education program, and have begun to work with other downtown churches to meet the needs of folk in the Burlington area. These great initiatives will grow and strengthen in the new year.

Another priority will be to explore and reflect on Stewardship. This is a generous congregation and we are fortunate to have a good-sized endowment. But it will be to our benefit to have open and thoughtful conversations about our resources and how we use them. Money talk often causes anxiety but so does avoiding money talk! On Jan. 14, we will have a Congregational Meeting to discuss issues regarding the 2024 budget but that should not be our only conversation. Just as we discern God's call for our ministry priorities, so should we listen for God's guidance about the resources God has entrusted to us.

A final priority is to strengthen our connections with ABCUSA. In 2023, we participated in a Virtual Mission trip to Goma in the Democratic Republic of Congo, an inspiring Biennial in Puerto Rico, and a visit with the Clemmers in August. Although we have been discouraged by the actions of the ABCVNH leadership following the retirement of Rev. Dale Edwards, we can be encouraged that there are many opportunities for us to connect with our wider ABCUSA community.

This newsletter contains many opportunities for fellowship, learning, and service. It is such a joy to be in ministry with you. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Yours, in Christ,
~ Karen

First Baptist Church Staff

Rev. Karen A. Mendes Pastor
Pastor Thee Say Karen Baptist Pastor
Annie Field CE Director
Adam Chamberlain Church Administrator
Evan Allen Organist
Anna Roy Chancel Choir Director
Brenda Perkins Youth Choir Director
The Karen Baptist Community Team Sexton
Hto Lwee Wah Tech Support

Officers of First Baptist

Sarah Dopp Moderator
Mark Paulsen Assistant Moderator
Cindy Little Clerk
Beth Gamache Assistant Clerk
Chris Thompson Treasurer
Bill McCormick Assistant Treasurer
Marilyn Siple Financial Secretary
Marie Morton Asst. Financial Sec'y
Sarah Dopp Historian
Andy Farrington Parliamentarian

Sunday Morning Worship Service 10:00

Office Phone: (802) 864-6515

Conference/Kitchen Phone:

(802) 864-4721

Office Hours: M, W, F (9-1) T, Th (9-3)

Email address:

welcome@fbcburlingtonvt.com

Web Site Address:

www.fbcburlingtonvt.com

Visit us on Facebook

First Baptist Church, Burlington, Vt.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE FOR FEBRUARY IS JANUARY 15th

GIFT OF TIME VISITATION AND *Caring*

All of us are part of the First Baptist Visitation Team and can call or email our church friends or send a note or card.

Please take some time to reach out to the church members and friends who live in your town. You can access the church directory through Instantchurchdirectory.com or through the Instant Church Directory App. Try phoning someone you might not otherwise call, but miss seeing in church!



Jan. 01 – Suzanne Paulsen
Jan. 08 – Samuel Zuanich
Jan. 10 – Tracy Gilbert
Jan. 11 – Caroline Vandevord
Jan. 13 – Matthew Mugford
Jan. 15 – Chelsea Casarico
Bernice Dandridge
Jan. 19 – Stephen Perkins
Jan. 23 – Ariel Vadeboncoeur
Jan. 29 – Matthew Hall
Jan. 30 – Rebecca Benes
Nancy Danforth
Jay Hammer



Jan. 05 – David & Chris O'Brien	50 yrs
Jan. 11 – Keith & Cheryl Lawrence	49 yrs
Jan. 23 – Larry & Penny Smith	53 yrs
Jan. 28 – Peter Garrecht & Nina Wu	26 yrs

SUNDAY WORSHIP **SERVICES**

Jan 7 - Epiphany
Isaiah 60:1-6
Matthew 2:1-12
Arise, Shine!

Jan 14 - Baptism of Our Lord
Mark 1:4-11
Baptism and the Beloved
Community

Jan 21 -
Mark 1:14-20
The Good News of God

Jan 28 -
Mark 1:21-28
Authority

OPPORTUNITIES FOR **FELLOWSHIP AND** **LEARNING**

**There is more to Church than
Sunday mornings!**

**THE SILENT VIGIL FOR
RACIAL JUSTICE** will be
Sunday, January 7 at 11:30 am on
the front steps of the church.
Please join us for this important
and meaningful witness.

ARE YOU BEING CALLED TO BE BAPTIZED?

A Baptism Class for Youth (10+) and Adults will be offered starting on Sunday, February 4 during Second Hour time. The class will meet for six weeks. For more information please speak with Rev. Mendes.

COMPASSIONATE WELCOME WORKSHOP - MONDAY, JANUARY 15, 10am - 1:15pm at the First Congregational Church,

38 S. Winooski Ave. Registration required by 1/10 at <https://bit.ly/mlkevent2024>. We want to be welcoming to all peoples, including those who are unsheltered or struggling with other stressors. Sometimes we don't know how. This is a chance to learn. Based on the work of Ryan Dowd, author of "The Librarian's Guide to Homelessness," we'll offer some introductory skill-building. Just as important, we'll build community through connection & food across houses of worship in the Burlington area. Sponsored by the

Burlington Interfaith Clergy Council with a skill-building presentation by the Sunday Morning Breakfast Team from First Unitarian Universalist Society. For more information, contact Rev. Mendes at revkamendes@fbcburlingtonvt.com.

THE NEXT BOOK GROUP
will read *The Flag, The Cross, and The Station Wagon: A Graying American Looks Back at His Suburban Boyhood and Wonders What the Heck Happened* by Bill McKibben. Our first meeting will be January 22 at 7pm on Zoom.. Copies of the book are available for \$6, in the church office.

MONDAY BIBLE STUDY
Bible Study meets in Fellowship Hall and on Zoom each Monday at 11:30am. We are exploring Paul's Letters to the Corinthians. The Zoom link is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84430309219?pwd=MFlvR2Rpem9qYi8vSVRoMndvMk1Sdz09> Meeting ID: 844 3030 9219
Passcode: 303940
To Dial in +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

THE CHOSEN viewing happens on Mondays at 2pm in the Sanctuary. This television series explores the life of Jesus and his early followers. Those who would like to watch from home can access the show on

<https://www.angel.com/watch/the-chosen> or through Netflix, Amazon, or other streaming services.

FBC COFFEE HOUR meets on Thursdays at 9:30 a.m. on Zoom. All are welcome for informal chatting! The zoom link is

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89855564406?pwd=R2FtbC9tRnoyU1RlcXJTRmRsY1Vldz09>

Meeting ID: 898 5556 4406

Passcode: 993539

To Dial in +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

CHANCEL CHOIR MEETS on Thursdays at 7pm. All singers are invited to join this merry and melodious group! For more information, contact Anna Roy at aroy@fcburlingtonvt.com

PULPIT EXCHANGE ON FEBRUARY 25

Back by popular demand, Rev. Mark A. Mendes will lead worship here on February 25, while Rev. Karen A. Mendes will preach at First Congregational Church of Essex Jct.

HELP NEEDED - Jeneva Burroughs fell on Dec. 17 breaking her hip and shoulder. She is now home from the hospital and so thankful for all the prayers. Now she and Stu could use some help with meals as she recuperates. Their family has set up an online sign up calendar at <https://mealtrain.com/nv3ked>. For more information, email Sarah Burroughs Joly at skbjoly71@gmail.com.

A FELINE FEEDING OPPORTUNITY - For several years we have had a small black cat living in the foundation of our church building. This summer she was brought to the vet and lived in a home for about a month before deciding that she preferred living back here at church. At one time there was a person who regularly fed the cat but that person has

moved away so it falls to us to care for her, especially during the winter. If you are willing to donate dry or canned cat food, please drop it by the office. Thank you.

EXTRA CAROLING THIS YEAR:

In addition to the usual caroling to FBC homebound members on Dec. 17, 6 members of the Chancel Choir went to the Gazebo Apartments in South Burlington to share music with the residents there on Dec. 14. Those who participated were Stu and Jeneva Burroughs, Steve and Brenda Perkins, Bev Nichols and Sarah Dopp. Our visit was appreciated!

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Jan. 7th- Following church school we will have our annual Epiphany celebration of a 3 kings cake and the crowning of the king or queen for the day.

DECEMBER 2023

UGB MEETING

The December meeting involved 14 members and was held on ZOOM, as usual. The primary work of the meeting centered on preparations for the annual meeting - reports due for the printed annual report, nominations to be brought forward, and most importantly, the budget. A subcommittee had worked on the income side the week before. At that time a large shortfall was projected in the budget. On the plus side, pledging has nearly matched that of last year, though four remain outstanding. We are pleased that a good income stream will again be coming from 139 Bank St. The chief trouble comes from the fact that there is no Undesignated Fund within the TPF to lend extra support this year, over and above the customary 3% regular distribution. The reasons for this state of affairs are several-fold. One is that we have used Undesignated Funds to balance the budget for several years. Another is that we spent a large amount on the brick work project. The poor state of the economy during most

of 2023 meant that we were not able to recover as well by year's end as usual. We have felt these forces in our home budgets and we are feeling them at church. The miracle is that the overall portfolio stood at \$1,942,252 on Dec. 18 (compared to \$1,953,094 on Jan. 1). We remain hopeful that the market recovery will continue and we will use the Dec.31 value for our calculations vs. the Nov. one. Other budget adjustments were made during the meeting and more will be done in the Jan. 15 meeting, but it is likely that a deficit budget will be presented at the annual meeting. Prior to that, on Jan 14, there will be a congregational meeting to act on several recommendations for partial solutions.

Other Ministry Team reports were also given at the meeting. These will be reported elsewhere in the newsletter and annual reports, so I won't repeat them here. It has been a very active and festive time at First Baptist during the Thanksgiving through New Year's period.

-Sarah Dopp, Church Moderator

BRIEF CONGREGATIONAL MEETING JAN 14, 2024 (Changed from Jan 7th)

The congregation is hereby warned of a meeting following worship on Jan. 14. The Nominations Committee is bringing a motion to suspend the Bylaws, to allow Stu Burroughs to serve up to two additional years on the Trustees of the Permanent Funds. The Bylaws define continuous service on TPF to be only two 6-year terms, but this will allow Stu to serve 1-2 more years to provide a bridge and train incoming new members. He is willing to serve in this way. In addition, there are 2 recommendations relating to the 2024 budget. The preliminary 2024 budget has a large shortfall. In recent years we have been able to close budget shortfalls with "undesignated" invested funds, but this year there are none. There are two designated funds, which are governed by congregational decisions, which could be tapped to help. There is unspent accrued income from the Pastoral Housing Fund and also this year's income from the Dinwiddie Fund. The UGB moves that we use income

(not touching principal) of these two funds. If the congregation authorizes these uses, \$35,000 could be provided to help (though not erase) the budget deficit.

\$2,000 TO ANN AND BILL CLEMMER, OUR AB MISSIONARIES IN GOMA, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO.

Ann and Bill shared a potluck salad supper with 28 of our First Baptist members and friends in August. They were in the states at their home base in Maine, visiting children/grandchildren and area churches. They work with IM partners Heal Africa and IMCA World Health in the town of Goma. Bill works with local health care workers, hospitals, and clinics to provide life-saving maternal and child health services while Ann facilitates Sunday School with over 800 children, Day School, street children program (counseling and emergency shelter), goat project for widows, cooperative gardens, etc.....all of which are funded with gifts from our American Baptist and partner churches through donations sent to International

Ministries and labeled “Clemmer Specifics”. In December, \$2,000 was given to the Clemmers through IM. This money was made possible from 2023 mission earnings in our Elsie Dinwiddie Fund.

RETIRED MINISTERS AND MISSIONARIES OFFERING

There is still time to give to this offering as a thank you to our retired ministers and missionaries and their widowed spouses. So far, First Baptist has given \$218.

JUMP ONLINE AUCTION

The fourth “Show Your Love for JUMP”; Online Auction is taking place January 31 - February 9, 2024. It is always great fun and a great fundraiser for JUMP. The last auction raised over \$13,000 for JUMP and we hope to do the same in February. Do you have a craft item, gift card or service you would like to donate? All donated items need to be new/never used. Be sure to obtain a retail value of the donated item from the donor. Please contact JUMP’s Online Auction Coordinator, Margaret

Welch (802-862-2428 or auction@jumpvt.org) when you have secured the items so arrangements for picking up the items can be made. All items must be secured by Friday, January 26, 2024. Everyone who visits JUMP receives assistance for groceries or utilities, vouchers for thrift shops and laundry, and a bag of personal hygiene items. In this post-pandemic year of transitioning from online services to reopening our in-person Outreach Center, through the end of October JUMP provided nearly \$81,000 in vouchers including over \$38,000 in food vouchers and \$12,000 in utility assistance. The support, hospitality, and caring however, is priceless.

FEEDING THE HOMELESS AT FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, BURLINGTON

The First United Methodist Church is reimagining the Sunday Night Soup Suppers they offered to the homeless and hungry on Sunday evenings before the pandemic. This is being called “The Share” and is a simple meal of soup, sandwich, and beverage.

The event begins at 4:30 and is done by 6. For more information or to volunteer, please speak to Sarah Dopp, Steve DeRestie, Lois D’Arcangelo, or Beth Gamache.

MAKING YOUR FINANCIAL DONATION

If you are unable to attend worship in person, you may mail a check to the church office or give electronically through the donate button on our church website: <http://www.fbcburlingtonvt.com> or through **the smartphone app called Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement**. Our ministries depend on the generous gifts of our members and friends. Thank you for your participation in sharing the love of God in our community and our world.

SACRED HARP SINGING

1st and 3rd Wednesdays,
6:00-8:00pm in Fellowship Hall.
Please join us for shape note singing from *The Sacred Harp*, a shape note hymnal in continuous use since 1844! The Burlington Sacred Harp Singers meet regularly to sing traditional early American, 4-part harmony, a

cappella hymns. All are welcome, no experience or audition necessary. We welcome singers of all levels and backgrounds, as well as listeners, any week. Free; donations welcome. Any questions, contact BSHsteeringcommittee@gmail.com

PAST WORSHIP SERVICES...

are available on our website and our YouTube Channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0vIptkSAyIRbAilfDbGFIw>

THANK YOU NOTES

Dear Church Family,
Thank you so much for the generous Christmas gift given to me. It is such a joy to minister with you. I so appreciate all the many ways in which we share God's love. You all are great blessings to me!
Merry Christmas!
~ Karen

Thank you so much for the Christmas gift. I greatly enjoy working with Marie and other church members. I'll probably use the money to treat my husband and myself to dinner!
Regards, Marilyn

Thank you all so much for the very generous gift. I feel extremely appreciated by everyone!

Adam Chamberlain

FLOWERS FOR WORSHIP

All are invited to provide flowers for a worship service. This can be a meaningful way to memorialize a loved one or commemorate an important event and bring God's beautiful creations into the sanctuary to enhance our spirit of praise and joy in worship. Please call the church office to sign up for a particular Sunday.

THE CHURCH OFFICE HOURS FOR JANUARY ARE -
Monday/Wednesday/Friday 9-1
Tuesday/Thursday 9-3

CHURCH EMAIL ADDRESSES

The church office (Adam Chamberlain)- welcome@fbcburlingtonvt.com

Karen Mendes - revkamendes@fbcburlingtonvt.com

Annie Field - afield@fbcburlingtonvt.com

Evan Allen - eallen@fbcburlingtonvt.com

Anna Roy - aroy@fbcburlingtonvt.com

Treasurer - treasurer@fbcburlingtonvt.com

Financial Secretary - financialsecretary@fbcburlingtonvt.com

Karen Baptist Community - KBC@fbcburlingtonvt.com