

# The Messenger

A Monthly Newsletter of First Baptist Church of Rochester

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## PASTOR'S COMMENTARY

### Anticipation

*With my apologies to those who heard this story in a recent second hour forum, it was simply a beautiful reminder of the reason for the season. I hope it will be for you too...*

There is a lot going on in our world that we wish God would intervene in directly and swiftly. Even so, we wait. Advent is about recognizing our need to wait on God even if we don't understand why we much wait. Even so, we wonder. What does it mean to wait? Are we really even capable or have we simply forgotten how to wait?

In January, 2012 I found myself in the international airport in Frankfurt, Germany. I was on my way to Rome. Before I ever reached the eternal city, the recognized centuries old epicenter of the church, I had something of a spiritual experience. There was construction in the airport which required us to disembark our first flight and go through security again with our bags. Having found mine on the carousel I stepped aside out of the crowd and took a seat to wait for my traveling companions. That's when she caught my eye. Just outside the arrivals door leading from the main concourse to the baggage claim area there was a little girl absolutely bouncing with excitement. She was maybe 5 years old. The woman with her, her mother I guessed, held onto the hood of her puffy, pink coat to keep her from being separated in the crowd. Her eyes were fixed on the automatic doors and she waived a sign. I don't know what it said only in part because it was written in German, mostly because the neatly



scribed writing had been largely covered with glitter and multicolored paper cut outs. I didn't need to read it though to recognize this was a very special art project meant to welcome someone very special. Perhaps a grandparent, or a parent, or a friend of the family, but clearly someone very, very loved.

I started to notice that I was not the only one who had seen the little girl. As people hurried past between us I noticed several stressed travelers' faces as they took notice of the little girl now positively vibrating with anticipation sort of running in place and waving her sign. Without fail, each intentioned scowl gave way to a knowing smile. One woman actually stopped entirely, standing one of her rolling suitcases long enough to free a hand to point the little girl out to the man she was travelling with. They shared a laugh before carrying on their way.

The little girl though, was undeterred by any of this. She had no idea that in a sea of activity she had become a focal point of an international audience. I think that's what was so spiritual about the moment to me. Just there in that area there were travelers from all over the world, maybe 20 or 30 or more different languages represented among those claiming their bags. Not one of us needed a translator to understand what was happening. I didn't take a count by any means, but by sure probability there were almost certainly citizens of nations at war with one another together in that room. For just a moment though, international politics faded, hostilities died as together representatives of the world looked on to a little girl who simply waited for her love to come through the arrivals door.

Cute as she was, another thing happened that I thought even more incredible. A man in shirt and tie apparently headed for some business meeting somewhere saw the little girl before turning to head somewhere near where I was seated. He saw me. I was grinning from ear to ear and felt a little self conscious about how silly I might have looked smiling at a little girl in an airport, but he was smiling too, I saw it. As we made eye contact for only a moment we both chuckled. I saw some others notice one another too even while others scurried by unaware that a spiritual moment was transpiring. Without words and without intention a story was unfolding in front of us and by noticing one another it was clear that it was a story understood across cultures and beyond borders. We didn't even speak the same language, but we all understood the plot of this story intuitively. It was a story about waiting for love to arrive.

I'd like to tell you about who arrived, but my traveling companions found their bags and we moved on. I never saw the arrival. I suppose in a way I'm still waiting. We all are. But even though the need to wait has a kind of sting to it, that little girl convinced me that day that we not only know how to wait or that waiting is worth while, but even that in waiting love is made known.

I watched in those moments as a little girl's fully consumed anticipation of the arrival of one she loved became manifest as love in the hearts of travelers bound for every corner of the globe. In the hours following that love bore wings and reached the ends of the earth. And so too, we wait.

*Pastor Brent*

## We want your ideas...

The 200th Anniversary Planning Team is beginning to work toward a wonderful celebration of our 200 year history. We will be looking at our past, present, and future. Each of these periods is exciting and they are what make First - Rochester, us!

With a 200 year history which is rich and full, we need sufficient time to fully appreciate it. We plan to find ways to celebrate, learn, and envision through a year of events, forums, concerts, studies, discussions, activities, and celebrations. This will take place from the fall of 2017 into the fall of 2018 ending with our Celebration Weekend on Oct. 5, 6, & 7th.

**Do you have ideas of what we might do?** We would love to hear your thoughts and ideas and we will incorporate as many as we can. You may email us at: [200th@fbcrochester.net](mailto:200th@fbcrochester.net) or place a note in the suggestion boxes located in the foyer and on the Vitality Table.

One idea that has already been suggested is to collect items for a "museum" at FBCR. So we ask... Do you have any church or Rochester(ville) documents, letters, pictures, books, history, or artifacts which you might consider donating or lending to the church? If so, contact any member or the office.

Thank you. Your 200th planning team: Jack Auer, Pastor Brent, Michele Hunt, Ivan Marable, Lynn McClellan, and Janet Richardson. *If you would be interested in joining our planning team, we would love to have you!*



# Holiday Happenings

## CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

### YOUTH AND CHILDREN LED

On Sunday, December 4th with song, scripture, and history, our youth and children will lead the congregation in a musical program of Christmas Carols.

They will share the story of our coming Savior in a very interactive way. The congregation will participate as we sing favorite carols which we all love. The history of some of these carols and the lyricist or composers will also be shared. It will be a great way to begin your journey through Advent and get into the spirit of the season.

The program will begin at 5:30 PM. Plan to support the youth and children of the church, even if you can not stay for the dinner.

Following the Christmas Program, at 6:30 PM, we will gather as a family in Hubbell Hall to share in a festive time of fellowship, food, stories, and fun.

## CHRISTMAS DINNER

### CHURCH FAMILY EVENT

This is an event for old friends and family to come and join in with those new among us. It is a time to feel the warmth and the spirit of the season with good food and special fun for all ages.

A special mystery guest from far away in the north is sure to make an appearance and give gifts of love. The favorite poem *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* will be shared as wide eyes gather around.

The Pensgens will once again provide a delicious meal of an old-time church family favorite (from the Lays era) consisting of: Swiss Steak, Carrot Coins, and Mashed Potatoes.

The hall will be transformed into an evening of elegance. **We hope you will bring to share a favorite dessert for our dessert bar.** Seating may be purchased in advance. Adults and Teens are \$6, Children, ages 5-11 are \$3, and Children 4 and under are free. Seat sales will begin soon.

## ADVENT TAIZÉ SERVICE

### TIME OF REFLECTION AND SERVICE

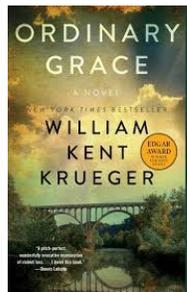
On Wednesdays, December 7th and 14th in the Chapel, we will have a candlelit, prayer-filled, reflective service that will add some peace and calm in the busy Advent season.

Join us at 6:00 PM for a time of reflection. The service itself will start at 6:30 PM. A Brown Bag Fellowship will begin at 5:30 PM in the Garden Room.



## BOOK CLUB

### COMBINED NOVEMBER/DECEMBER GATHERING



Because of the November and December holidays, the FBC Book Club will meet on Tuesday, December 13, at 11:30 AM at the church. The book for discussion will be *Ordinary Grace* by William Kent Krueger. In this novel, a middle-aged man reflects on his teenage experiences when during one summer many tragic events involve his family and community.

## ELDERGARTEN

### HOLIDAY CELEBRATION

#### CHRISTMAS LUNCH at the BACK NINE RESTAURANT

3500 East Avenue, Rochester, NY  
Thursday, December 15<sup>th</sup>  
12 Noon

Eldergarten will gather this month for a Christmas Luncheon at the Back Nine Restaurant on East Avenue on Thursday, December 15th at 12 noon. We will be located in their private back room for lunch and fellowship. Please bring with you a memory of a past Christmas, a favorite song, or poem to share. We can order off the menu. Sign up on the Vitality table by December 11<sup>th</sup> so we can make reservations. Don't forget to put this date on your calendar.

*Eldergarten is a group of seniors over age 55 who meet for fun and fellowship on the third Thursday of every month through May.*

All are welcome....Merry Christmas!

Jo Ann Trolley

# Holiday Happenings

## GIVING TREE

FOR CAMERON COMMUNITY MINISTRIES



Our Giving Tree is up and waiting to be decorated with your gifts. Not ornaments and tinsel or even lights, but with the gifts of hats, scarves, mittens and other needed winter items for the children at Cameron Community Ministries (CCM).

At the Christmas Party for the children at CCM, it is their hope to give each child at least one winter item. We can help with that goal. ... and wouldn't it be wonderful if it could be more than one item? Through our Giving Tree we can help make this possible. Help us, help CCM by purchasing, bringing, and decorating the tree with colorful varieties of boys' and girls' hats, scarves, and mittens.

Your donations may make it possible for a child in need to be able to stay warm on his/her walk to school this winter, so please be generous and hang your unwrapped gifts right on the tree.

We will dedicate these gifts on December 18th during our time of fellowship.

## CHRISTMAS CANTATA



DECEMBER 11<sup>th</sup> @ 10AM  
DURING WORSHIP

## LABYRINTH WALK

A CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER-FILLED WALK

During Advent, we will be laying out a labyrinth in Hubbell Hall for anyone who wishes to use this form of prayer, meditation, and time of reflection to draw nearer to God. The labyrinth will be available to use whenever the Hall is not in use and the pattern will be laid the week after the Christmas Dinner.

Scripture references will be available for those who wish to reflect, either before, during, or after their walk. Special lighting and soft contemplative music will be available beginning at 6:00 PM and ending soon after the conclusion of choir rehearsal each Wednesday. Come and reflect as you journey, in spirit, toward Bethlehem with other Advent travelers and anticipate the birth of Christ.

A dark blue background with a lit candle in the foreground. The text "Candlelight SERVICE" is written in a white, elegant script font. Below it, the date and time "Saturday, December 24 7:00 PM" are written in a white, serif font.

Candlelight  
SERVICE  
Saturday,  
December 24  
7:00 PM

# OUR COMMUNITY

Reaching out to others



## The Brighton Food Depot

**Holidays from school are fun, but when you are hungry and depend on school meal programs, they can be long.**

Thank you very much for your on-going gifts of food to help those in need. Through your ministry of giving food donations, 100 needy children at School #4 in the city take home a grocery bag of 10 items each month. That is 1000 items of food that leave the Depot each and every month!

**For December we are collecting:  
Peanut Butter and Mac 'n Cheese**

Remington-Hubbell Circle  
**Women's Luncheon**  
December 8 @ Phillips European @ 11:45 PM



Remington-Hubbell Circle will meet at Phillips European restaurant at 11:45 on Thursday, Dec. 8th for our Christmas Luncheon.

Many thanks to those who bought pecans from us again this year.

With the profits we made we will be able to continue supporting several mission outreach programs both local and beyond.

Thanks again for your continued support.

Flora Holt

## An Artistic Advent



The gospel story is the way in which we order our faith and our lives as a Christian. It also orders our calendar. This is the time of year when we begin again, a whole new year when we flip over to the beginning of the story once more. We begin before the birth of Christ... We begin with anticipation... We begin with waiting... We begin Advent! We wait not only for the birth of Jesus, we wait also for a new heaven and a new earth. In this season we call Advent, we stand in between. Just as we look forward to the beginning of the story, we also look forward to the culmination of the

story. This year we are going to symbolize that standing in between, that anticipating the birth of Christ and the birth of a new world, in a particular way.

We invite you to participate in Advent outside of the church. How might we experience that most holy thing - that process of a birth in the world during Advent. Not all of us are capable of fully experiencing a birth, but there are those among us who can - artists. Those who know what it means to have a thing grow within them for a time, to worry about it, to fear, to have some anxiety, and ultimately to see it born into the world. Artists know a little something about birthing a thing. What if... we celebrated Advent together by producing some art. So we invite you, all of you this Advent, to do some piece of art: paint something, write something, draw something, sculpt something. Come up with a musical piece, a monologue, or a drama. Do something artistic... produce a thing. Then on Christmas Eve, as we gather for worship, we will put those things, as long as you are willing, on display for everyone to see what we have come up with.

Now here is the thing. It is not about how beautiful, how wonderful, how perfect the art you produce is. What we are looking for this season is to experience, in producing a piece of art, the same feeling that we might experience as we work out the birth process of bringing to bear a new heaven and a new earth.

**You are invited, encouraged, and even begged to try to produce something in the next several weeks of Advent.**



# GOINGS ON

## OCCURRENCES OF INTEREST

### **Saturday, December 3**

Pageant Rehearsal 1:00 to 3:30 PM

### **Sunday, December 4**

Worship 10:00 AM - *Communion*

Fellowship 11:00 AM

Forum - Trustees Budget Projections

Christmas Program 5:30 PM

Christmas Dinner 6:30 PM

### **Wednesday, December 7**

Brown Bag Fellowship 5:30 PM

Taizé Mediation 6:00 PM

Taizé Service 6:30 PM

Adult Choir 7:15 PM

### **Thursday, December 8**

Remington Hubbell Luncheon at Phillips

European at 11:45 AM

RPC Dinner Fellowship & Vespers 4:00

PM

### **Sunday, December 11**

Worship 10:00 AM - *Cantata*

Fellowship 11:00 AM

Youth 11:30 AM Time of Fellowship

### **Monday, December 12**

Welcoming and Affirming 6:30 PM

### **Tuesday, December 13**

FBC Book Club 11:30 PM

Trustees 6:30 PM

### **Wednesday, December 14**

Staff Mtg. & Gathering 11:30 PM

Brown Bag Fellowship 5:30 PM

Taizé Mediation 6:00 PM

Taizé Service 6:30 PM

Adult Choir 7:15 PM

### **Thursday, December 15**

Eldergarten — 12:00 PM

Lunch at the Back Nine on East Avenue

### **Sunday, December 18**

Worship 10:00 AM Fellowship 11:00 AM

Forum 11:30 David Labman - *Adoption*

Youth 11:30 AM—Lesson and Fellowship

### **Monday, December 19**

Library Team Gathering **12:00 PM**

Council 6:00 PM

### **Wednesday, December 21**

No programs

### **Saturday, December 24**

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**

7:00 PM with Art Show to display your

Advent artistic creations

### **Sunday, December 25**

Worship 10:00 AM

### **Monday, December 26 - 31**

Limited Office hours

Messages retrieved periodically

# FBCR ACTION:

TODAY AND TOMORROW

## CONGREGATIONAL CARE:

Pastor Brent, using the recommendations from the Deacon/Congregational Care Task Force has convened a small group to plan a pilot program for congregational care. The members of this group are Marge Forth, Jean Garling, Daryl Hunt, Jake Richardson, and Linda Schlosser.

Exploration of participation in Stephen Ministries continued by attendance of four FBCR members at a workshop, held at De Witt, New York on October 15<sup>th</sup>.

## OUTREACH TO POVERTY POCKETS IN OUR COMMUNITY:

A task force was formed to explore opportunities for our church family to reach out to our community where poverty is known. The task force is on a holding pattern at this time so that information can be obtained that will guide future action. Such information gathering has included:

- ◆ Discussion with Dr. Nelms, Superintendent of East High School re: the program at East High School—located on the fringe of the EMMA/BEECHWOOD Community.
- ◆ Attendance by Ken Dodgson, Daryl Hunt, and Lynn McClellan at the first meeting of the EMMA/BEECHWOOD Connected Communities, Inc. for Faith Communities. Continued inclusion in this group will guide our future involvement in the fight against poverty in these neighborhoods.
- ◆ Recent donation by the Missions Committee to a Child Care agency in support of the Beechwood neighborhood.

## THE 2016/2017 FBCR NOMINATING COMMITTEE:

The Nominating Committee was appointed in early November and has been very active, meeting frequently to fill the various positions. Members of the Committee are Diane Ashley, Doug Trolley and Betsy Vipperman. Please, if you would be interested in serving as an officer of the Church or as a committee member, contact one of the members of the Nominating Committee.

## MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR:

And now, after a year of anticipated and actual change, growth and progress, we have celebrated the beginning of Advent. Special programs have been planned at our church - the Cantata, other special music, the bell choir, the Children's Program and Dinner, and the Christmas Eve Service. Plans have been made by you for your families and friends.

May we as a church family know peace, share hope for the future of our church, community, country, and world as we look to 2017. And may we share a blessed Christmas.

Your Church Council