

**First Baptist Church in Needham**  
***One in the Spirit: Transition Prayer Resource***

**December 2022**



Transition Edition 18  
*(for whenever you are so led to pause, reflect, and pray)*

858 Great Plain Avenue · Needham, MA 02492  
[www.fbcneedham.org](http://www.fbcneedham.org)

## A Letter from the Pastor

December 2022

This morning I received a phone call from a dear friend. I don't usually get *phone calls* from them. Every now and then I'll get a text message or Facebook message of season's greetings, or more general message of love and support. But this morning they called, all the way from Arizona, just to say hello and send some love. I was so surprised and caught off guard that my instinct was to worry – I almost asked if everything was okay – I kept waiting for the reason they had called. But the reason was simply me; they called just to let me know that they were thinking of me - that they loved me. It really meant a lot to get that phone call today. In the midst of this busy season, when folks have all the reasons in the world to savor their spare time for themselves, those closest to them, and their most pressing needs, here were a few minutes offered for me. That simple, short, phone call served as a reminder that I am loved, that my presence matters to someone in this world beyond the usual suspects of immediate family and neighbors and colleagues I see week-to-week. I was reminded in that brief moment that even when I am not thinking about it or focused on it, even when I don't expect it – it's there - the kind of love that catches you off guard, that shows up when you least expect it, that doesn't expect anything in return, that offers reassurance and goodness for the journey that is life. That kind of love, offered for me this day, gave me hope and renewed my spirit.

Years ago, God showed up unexpectedly as a babe in a manger to offer a little reminder of hope and love for our world. And the equivalents of heavenly phone calls were sent – messengers brought startling, but good news of great joy to an unwed Palestinian soon-to-be-mother, to her life partner and unsuspecting soon-to-be-father, to shepherds abiding in fields, as well as wandering seekers of wisdom and light. The message came: unto YOU is born Christ, the Lord, Immanuel “God With Us”. Unto *you*. The message was simply *you*. You matter. You are beloved. God loves *you*. God loves you enough to enter into this world – to come to you with a love that is startling and surprising, that is there for you whether you are looking for it or not, that holds you in all that you are, for ever and ever and ever, offering reassurance and goodness towards your renewal. How great a love is that!

And so the message from God is simply YOU. And the message of Christmas is simply LOVE.

**+ We Hold in Prayer +**

### **My Prayers of Gratitude & Thanksgiving**

**O God, thank you for each new day and all that it brings.**

**You promise to provide all that I need, caring not only for me, but for all creation and so I rejoice...**

In celebration of all those in our circles with December birthdays, including Elizabeth Mercer! We're so glad you were born into this world and celebrate your presence in it and with us ...

For Fayrah, who is feeling much better and is home for the holidays – for the healing she has experienced, and the joy of being together ...

For Wren, who is recovering well from a recent surgery and has received an uplifting update following good test results ...

With Jim, who celebrates his family is well and for all the times we are able to say the same for those we love ...

With Marty, for Jean and Chris who have been such an incredible support, and offered amazing care and sacrificial love toward her in this time of dependence ...

With Teddy, who is loving volleyball and whose teams have won gold in recent tournaments ...

With Anne Wile, in anticipation of Susan and family visiting for Christmas Day, and that Bruce is doing well – ever cheerful; we offer thanks for the joy we feel when those we love are happy and well ...

For all those wrapping up exams and end of semesters with flying colors, and for those who are just excited to be done – we celebrate the break they will have from their studies ...

With Dot Kinne, that she was finally able to visit with her great-grandson, Bailey. For the joy of children ...

With our church Administration Ministry and the Nursery School – that the floors in the nursery school, recently damaged by flooding and requiring asbestos abatement are nearly completed, and for the team of folks that worked hard to get the work done quickly and effectively ...

That the front porch project should wrap up in the next week, and certainly before Christmas! Whoohoo! Much gratitude for all that have put their skill and efforts toward this restoration – Eric Gustafson, Tom Evarts and Yankee Steeple, Curtis Landscaping, our Administration Ministry, the Town of Needham, and other generous donors of time and resources ...

In **HOPE** for all that awaits FBC Needham and FBC Jamaica Plain – for the future that God has prepared for the legacy of ministry to our community in Needham and beyond through our commitment to a vision of creative, inclusive, collaborative and expansive possibility ...

*††† Offer your own prayers of gratitude and thanksgiving here. †††*

*Praise God, from whom all blessing flow....*

**Prayers of Personal Concern, Healing, Solace, & Courage**

**Faithful God, you know me inside and out,**

**all my hopes and dreams, fears and failures.**

**You hear your children cry out for healing and consolation, courage and strength. Send your Spirit in the sharing of the concerns of our hearts as I pray...**

For our office manager, Robin, who will be undergoing surgery this month in addition to radiation for breast cancer. We pray for her peace in the midst of treatment, and we pray for all those tending to her care and support throughout her procedure and beyond. God, we offer prayers for the wisdom and skill of the surgeons and medical team. And we ask that the prayers of our hearts would be felt and know by Robin and her family. We are wishing her an easy and steady recovery ...

For John Crimmings, who is in the hospital – may God’s love and presence surround him and his family during this time of treatment, and we pray that he is able to be home with his family for the holidays ...

For Spiro, who will undergo surgery for a hernia in the coming week. We pray for an uneventful surgery, for the skill of physicians and steady hands, and for swift healing ...

With Anne, for all those dealing with COVID and other ailments, that there would be healing for them, and that the vaccinations would continue to provide a solid defense until there is no longer a need for them – and that one day we will no longer need to worry about COVID ...

For Jim’s father-in-law, Peter, who continues to struggle with grief after the loss of his wife earlier this year. May the peace of Christ find him and offer something of comfort ...

For Dot Kinne’s daughter, Betsy, who recently received a terminal diagnosis. We hold her and her family in our hearts, and pray that God will provide for her every need in this time, that she will find the care and opportunities she needs in these last months to live meaningfully and purposefully. May God’s light and mercy accompany her in this life and into a new and beautiful way of being held in the light of God’s love. May the peace of Christ surround Betsy’s family, and fill the heart of our dear Dot in the wake of this difficult news ...

With Daryn, whose father, Linwood, will undergo surgery for prostate cancer on December 28<sup>th</sup> – for peace and comfort for Linwood, for the skill of surgeons and the wisdom of those providing care ...

With Louise, for her family’s continued health and well-being ...

With our congregation, as we continue to hold Louise in our hearts during this time of transition and hospice care ...

For all traveling in this holiday season – for traveling mercies to your destinations and home again ...

With Anthony and Liz, for **PEACE**, for inner peace, for respite from anxiety, for transformative peace in our world that leads to reconciliation and healing, for right relationship and a recognition of the belovedness and light of Christ in each one of our neighbors ...

*††† Offer your own prayers of concern, healing, solace, and courage here. †††*

*Lord, in your mercy, hear my prayer....*

### **Prayers in Our Transitions**

**God of Life, in all of life's turns – planned and unexpected – you are there.**

**For the transitions that are hard for me to bear,  
grant me the strength to be vulnerable and seek loving accompaniment.**

**For the changes I anticipate, grant me hope and wisdom.**

**Trusting your Spirit is moving to prepare a place in fellowship and community for each beloved member of our First Baptist congregation, I pray...**

For our Administration Ministry's continued good and dedicated work in preparing the next steps of our transition, and wisdom for us and for the legal counsel that is accompanying us through our process ...

For First Baptist Church in Jamaica Plain and their discernment alongside us in hopes toward beautiful possibility for a united mission and ministry ...

For each congregation member's prayerful discernment of the next step in your spiritual journey and the communities of faith who will be blessed by your presence among them going forward ...

In **JOY**, for this community that accompanies us through all of life's ups and downs ...

In **JOY**, for all of the lights and decorations that remind us in the cold, dark shadows of winter, there is light that breaks through to find us ... that Christ's light is breaking into the world for each one of us ...

*††† Offer your own prayers for our transition here. †††*

*Hear my prayer, O Lord...*

### **Prayers for the Community, Nation, & World**

**God of compassion and justice, there is so much in the news that is painful, from natural disasters to governmental actions to hunger, poverty, and violence. And there are so many instances of lovingkindness, beauty, and hope. Move among your creation and your children, as I pray...**

For the precious lives lost in the mass shooting at Club Q night club in Colorado Springs, CO, and for all those who loved them. May God hold each one in the light and love of his eternal grace and mercy, and may his presence accompany the living through this devastating time of loss. May those who mourn know they are not alone in their grief, but are accompanied by the prayers of our community and many more the world over ...

With Jim Fuller, for those still struggling for peace and resolution in Ukraine, and for all who have lost loved ones – God grant your provision to this region of our world, that they might see an end to the assaults, oppression, and violence, and have space to process their grief ...

With Marty and Dot Kinne for peace on earth – for the whole world ...

In recognition and humble acceptance of a **LOVE** that never leaves us, that never lets us go – the love of God that finds us wherever and however we are and names us - names us light, names us salt, names us good, names us beloved ...

*††† Offer your own prayers for our community, nation, and world here. †††*

*For the moving of your Spirit in hope and healing throughout our world, praise God, from whom all blessings flow ... And for your enduring presence, justice, and mercy in our brokenness, Lord, in your mercy, hear my prayer...*

*Hear my prayer, O Lord, and hold all the prayers of our community...as I pray the prayer your son taught us saying:*

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come,  
your will be done on earth  
as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread  
And forgive us our sins as we forgive  
those who sin against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For yours is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory forever.      Amen.

# Announcements

Our **church office** is open for our Office Manager, Robin Bevilacqua. We are encouraging limited visits to the church building, and all who visit are required to mask, sign-in, and socially distance. **If you need to speak with Robin, please call ahead if you can.** Office voicemail and email are being checked regularly.

.....

## *Creative Callings Year 3, Pivoting* **ADMINISTRATION STEWARDSHIP** **& PASTORAL ACCOMPANIMENT *through* TRANSITION**

With a congregational vote on Sunday, June 27, 2021, the Administration Ministry was tasked with developing a plan for closing the church. Our Administration Ministry has been diligently meeting to develop a plan to bring before the congregation, while **each member of the congregation has been encouraged to do their own good work of prayerfully discerning what community of faith they may wish to visit or consider joining.** Pastor Daryn has been available, and will continue to be available, to offer spiritual and pastoral accompaniment and reflection upon request as we move forward.

The Administration Ministry has been engaged in discernment with community partners and others in ministry around future possibilities for our resources and property. All along we have been engaged with the hopes that our resources will continue to meet the needs of our Needham community and will continue to uphold and honor the legacy of First Baptist Church in Needham's ministry within the community.

Recent discernment has led us into conversations with First Baptist Church in Jamaica Plain about the potential for a merger of our assets and ministries. This has been a life-giving possibility to hold. On November 4, 2022, The First Baptist Church of Jamaica Plain voted unanimously at a congregational meeting to engage in further discernment around the possibility of a merger between our congregations. On November 5, 2022, FBC Needham's Administration Ministry unanimously approved a recommendation "to pursue a mutually agreeable partnership in whatever legal form would be agreeable with FBCJP and enter into discussions and negotiations with them." Some implications of this partnership are that it would allow for our building and property to continue to steward inclusive, creative and meaningful ministry for the arts, social justice mission, and the overall wellness of our Needham community. It would facilitate an ongoing relationship with some of our most valued community partners, and community's social service providers, and would provide potential worship space for some of our neighboring Baptist and ecumenical colleagues who are in need of space for their ministries and the sharing of the Gospel – the good news of God's love.

The Administration Ministry is discerning with FBCJP what this might practically look like, and is in the beginning phases of imagining next steps with them. If it is determined that this is a feasible and agreeable way forward for both congregations, the next step would be a future congregational meeting, during which a vote would be taken to approve the recommendation of the Administration Ministry toward partnership. The Administration Ministry and your pastor will continue to keep you apprised of our process and provide support as you need it along this journey.

## **IMPORTANT DATES to REMEMBER:**

### **Upcoming Administration Ministry Meetings:**

Monday, December 19 @ 6:30pm

Monday, January 16 @ 6:30pm

### **Annual Meeting**

Sunday, January 22 @ 5pm via Zoom – contact the church office for the Zoom link  
781-400-5867; [churchoffice@fbcneedham.org](mailto:churchoffice@fbcneedham.org)

\*please note that this meeting will be held solely on Zoom – we will not be gathering in a hybrid or in-person format. Please request the link to join.

## **Watch for the next Prayer Resource due mid-January**

### **DINNER CHURCH**

**In Our Transition, we've been**

**gathering in Reflection, Prayer, and Communion**

**the First Sunday Evening of Every Month. We've adopted a dinner church model for the foreseeable future. We will be gathering for sustenance and fellowship and continued prayer and reflection together at various locations.**

**These gatherings are scheduled for our routine gathering time of 5pm.**

**Join us for Dinner Church!**

**First Sunday of the month at 5pm**

**\*Please note that we will not gather for dinner church in January\***

**Next Dinner Church Gathering:**

**February 5th @ First Baptist Church in Needham  
(upstairs in the parlor)**





Dec 2022 – Scaffolding has been back up since Dec 1<sup>st</sup>, in order for Yankee Steeple to complete their work on the columns and cornice piece... Dec 12 – Yankee Steeple is back to complete the project. Rumor has it, it shouldn't be long now. The columns and cornice piece, and exterior painting should be completed by Christmas (perhaps even by the end of this week)!



***Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. - Matthew 6:21***

Dear family and friends of First Baptist Church in Needham,

I urge you to consider a financial contribution toward the restoration of our historic front porch. The town of Needham has contributed \$90,200 toward the project as a Community Preservation initiative. We are grateful for their support and enthusiasm! With the gift from the town, First Baptist will shoulder upwards of \$350,000 in costs toward the Front Porch Restoration, ensuring a visible marker of our legacy, and preserving this beautiful resource for our Needham community. I thank you for considering a significant gift toward our capital fund in addition to your regular giving. What a beautiful way to offer a piece of your heart toward the future life and witness of this historic and beloved monument.

With gratitude,  
Rev. Daryn Stylianopoulos, Pastor

## **Offering**

Your continued financial support of the daily work and ministries of FBC Needham is vital, particularly as we move through this time of transition, and as we prepare to restore the front porch of our historic building. We encourage each member of our community to continue in your regular giving toward the support of our continued ministry throughout our time of transition, and also to consider giving toward the Capital Fund for our front porch restoration. Offerings can be turned in during worship, through the church website online, or via mail. May the act of giving be a spiritual practice that accompanies your daily prayer and worship.

### **Mail Checks to:**

First Baptist Church in Needham  
858 Great Plain Avenue,  
Needham MA 02492

### **Online:**

Go to <https://www.fbcneedham.org>

Click the **Take Action** link & follow the directions.

*Make checks payable to:* First Baptist Church in Needham.

Please indicate it is your offering or pledge on the check. If it is an offering toward the capital fund, please indicate that intention on the memo line.

## HOLIDAY WORSHIP & FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

with **FBC Jamaica Plain** and **FBC Newton**:



**Advent 2022**

**Sunday, November 27: First Sunday of Advent**  
Intergenerational Worship  
Hanging of the Greens after worship

**Sunday, December 4: Second Sunday of Advent**  
Community Lunch after worship

**Sunday December 11: Third Sunday of Advent**  
Congregational Meeting about the Tower after worship  
4:00 p.m. Caroling & Cookies at Lutheran Church of the Newtons

**Sunday, December 18: Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
Intergenerational Worship

**Wednesday, December 21: Longest Night**  
7:00 p.m. Longest Night Worship at FBCN

**Saturday, December 24: Christmas Eve**  
7:00 p.m. Celebration of the Incarnation and Birth of Christ



**Celebrate the Holidays  
With First Baptist!**

**December 14**  
HOLIDAY MEAL  
7 PM

**December 18**  
ADVENT 4- LOVE  
CHRISTMAS PAGEANT  
11 AM

**December 24**  
CHRISTMAS EVE  
7 PM

**December 25**  
CHRISTMAS  
11 AM

**January 1**  
NEW YEARS BRUNCH  
11 AM

### **First Baptist Church in Jamaica Plain**

633 Centre Street

Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

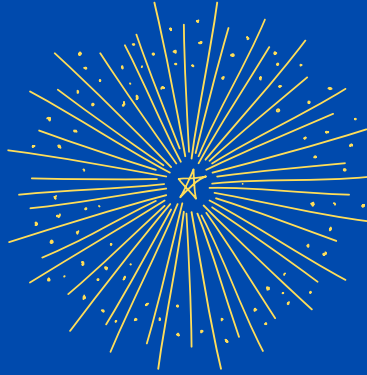
617-524-3992; [churchoffice@firstbaptistjp.org](mailto:churchoffice@firstbaptistjp.org)

### **First Baptist Church in Newton**

848 Beacon Street

Newton, MA 02459

617-244-2997; [office@fbcnewton.org](mailto:office@fbcnewton.org)



Born in a stable so bare  
Born so long ago  
Born 'neath light of star  
He who loved us so  
Far away, silent he lay  
Born today, your homage pay  
For Christ is born for aye  
Born on Christmas Day

Cradled by mother so fair  
Tender her lullaby  
Over her son so dear  
Angel hosts fill the sky  
Far away, silent he lay  
Born today, your homage pay  
For Christ is born for aye  
Born on Christmas Day

Wise men from distant far land  
Sheperds from starry hills  
Worship this babe so rare  
Hearts with his warmth he fills  
Far away, silent he lay  
Born today, your homage pay  
For Christ is born for aye  
Born on Christmas Day

Love in that stable was born  
Into our hearts to flow  
Innocent dreaming babe  
Make me thy love to know  
Far away, silent he lay  
Born today, your homage pay  
For Christ is born for aye  
Born on Christmas Day

- "Nativity Carol", arr. John Rutter

