

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

**VOLUME NO. 3**

**March 1, 2025**

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

**WE JOURNEY WITH JESUS  
AND JESUS JOURNEYS WITH US!**

During the season of Lent we often think of this time as a journey with Jesus toward the cross. We listen to the Scripture texts and we wonder what we would have done if we had been there in Galilee with Jesus and his disciples. It feels remote even as we know that the cross comes ever closer each week.

This year it strikes me that even as we journey with Jesus toward the cross, Jesus is journeying with us as we deal with our own trials and difficult circumstances. This does not feel remote at all!

We are living through an extraordinary time in history. (Frankly, I am tired of living in extraordinary times!) Jesus calls us to put our faith into action; feeding the hungry, serving the poor, welcoming the stranger, and advocating for the vulnerable. He calls us to do this especially now when caring for others has somehow become controversial. This is hard work which is stretching us and challenging us in new ways. But as we live out our faith, Jesus is journeying with us! He is guiding us, encouraging us, and empowering us to speak and act boldly, to lift up love in places of despair, and to banish fear with courage and empathy.

This newsletter is full of opportunities to strengthen your faith through worship, study, fellowship, and service. We will journey together through these extraordinary days and we can rest in the truth that Jesus is journeying with us. It is a great blessing to be in ministry with you.

Yours, in Christ,  
~ Karen  
Rev. Karen A. Mendes  
Pastor

## **First Baptist Church Staff**

Rev. Karen A. Mendes ..... Pastor  
Pastor Thee Say ..... Karen Baptist Pastor  
Evan Allen ..... Organist  
Anna Roy ..... Chancel Choir Director  
Brenda Perkins ..... Youth Choir Director  
The Karen Baptist Community Team ..... Sexton  
Daz Diadem ..... Tech Support

## **Officers of First Baptist**

Cindy Little ..... Moderator  
Mark Paulsen ..... Assistant Moderator  
Beth Gamache ..... Assistant Clerk  
Frank Swasey ..... Treasurer  
Daz Diadem ..... Assistant Treasurer  
Marilyn Siple ..... Financial Secretary  
Marie Morton ..... Assistant Financial Secretary  
Pat Reasoner ..... Historian  
Mark Paulsen ..... Parliamentarian

**NEWSLETTER DEADLINE  
FOR APRIL  
IS MARCH 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!

## **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](mailto:welcome@fbcburlingtonvt.com)

**Web Site Address:**

[www.fbcburlingtonvt.com](http://www.fbcburlingtonvt.com)

**Visit us on Facebook**

**First Baptist Church, Burlington, Vt.**



Mar. 03 – Linda Garrett  
04 – Betty Capponi  
Jed Perkins  
11 – Erin (Gosselin) Galinus  
12 – Bob Blow  
Tom Couture  
Moo Thay Lay Htoo  
14 – Jeneva Burroughs  
Scott Harrington  
15 – Annabella Bergeron  
16 – Peter Brault  
Marion Croto  
17 – Pat Boyden  
Christine Godaire  
Pat Reasoner  
19 – Amelia Briggs  
Amy Daudelin  
20 – Ben Block  
21 – Joanne Rittwage  
La Wah Moo  
22 – Jeneva Stone  
23 – Baw mu law La  
Melanie McCormick  
25 – Savanna Mott  
Sarah Wright  
26 – Sophia Channell  
Heather (Little) Cooper  
Barbara Moquin  
Mar. 27 – Grace Courville  
29 – Faith Landry  
Mary Swasey  
Russell Willis  
31 – Jane Floyd  
Evan Smith

Mar. 01 – Scott & Sara Zuanich 16yrs.

### **SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES**

March 2 - Transfiguration Sunday  
Communion  
Transfigurations  
Luke 9:28-43a

March 9 - Lent 1 -  
In the Wilderness  
Luke 4:1-13

March 16 - Lent 2 -Herod Again  
Luke 13:31-35

March 23 - Lent 3 -  
Suffering and Figs  
Luke 13:1-9

March 30 - Lent 4-  
Abundant Foolishness  
Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR FELLOWSHIP AND LEARNING**

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

**WINTER BOOK GROUP** - We are reading *The Divine Dance; The Trinity and Your Transformation* by Richard Rohr. We meet on Tuesdays at 7pm on Zoom. Books can be purchased from your favorite bookseller or we can order some as needed. The Zoom link is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86392397962?pwd=ZEdnWXA5Y0NNNGFxK3d1b0IPd0JBdz09> Meeting ID: 863 9239 7962 Passcode: 972707

### **MONDAY BIBLE STUDY**

Our Bible Study meets in Fellowship Hall and on Zoom each Monday at 11:30am. We are reading the Gospel of Luke. The zoom link is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84430309219?pwd=MF1vR2Rpem9qYi8vSVRoMndvMk1Sdz09> Meeting ID: 844 3030 9219 Passcode: 303940 To Dial in +1 646 558 8656 US (New York) Meeting ID: 844 3030 9219 Passcode: 303940

### **FBC ZOOM COFFEE HOUR** meets

on Thursdays, from 10-10:30 a.m. All are welcome for informal chatting! The zoom link is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89855564406?pwd=R2FtbC9tRnoyU1R1cXJTRmRsY1VIdz09> Meeting ID: 898 5556 4406 Passcode: 993539 To Dial in +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

### **LENTEN BOOK STUDY**

We will read *How to End Christian Nationalism* by Amanda Tyler from the Baptist Joint Committee and

discuss it on Sundays during Second Hour beginning on March 9. Books are available from the church office for \$22. Contact Rev. Mendes for more information and to RSVP.

**THE SEASON OF LENT** will begin on March 5 and we have a number of opportunities to explore and deepen our faith as we prepare for the celebration of Easter. The theme for the season is **We Journey with Jesus (and Jesus Journeys with Us!)**

Daily Devotionals - 2 options! - The Hardest Part - Hurt We Carry, Hope We Find

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rKArf4KNtxnX8yvkKGUac7rdRrDk0X73/view?usp=sharing> and Seeking Creation -

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1A\\_8W66239VwKsF55BHC14i\\_QCiGHYVgF/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1A_8W66239VwKsF55BHC14i_QCiGHYVgF/view?usp=sharing) Paper copies of either/both are available by request.

Daily Scripture Readings from the Gospel of Luke - These are printed at the end of the newsletter.

Lenten Book Study - Sundays during 2nd Hour - *How to End Christian Nationalism* by Amanda Tyler

Weekly Prayer in Sanctuary - Thursdays at 11:30am - This is an opportunity to step aside from our busyness for a time of silent prayer.

Holy Week Plans  
April 13 - Palm Sunday  
Combined Worship 10am

- April 17 - Maundy Thursday Service with Soup Supper 6pm
- April 18 - Good Friday service 12pm
- April 20 - Easter Sunrise service - 6am, Easter Combined Worship - 10am

## **FEBRUARY UGB MEETING 2/17/25**

### **ACTION ITEMS:**

- 1. Active to inactive list: We will restart a review of Active and Inactive members.
- 2. Realignment of Treasurer's Chart of Accounts: This will change from our old board centric model to our new Unified Governing Board and Ministry Teams structure. This change will be in 2026.
- 3. Signage for church offices designating Private- Members Only: The goal is to ensure that the law is followed. Church services are currently considered public space. Karen will continue a discussion with downtown clergy.
- 4. Heim Scholarship Funds for Biennial delegate's registration, travel and hotel expenses: Stu will contact Peter Heim to ascertain if Heim Scholarship funds can be used for a Biennial delegate from FBC to be used for registration, travel and hotel expenses. Motion made for a cap of \$2000.00 per delegate not to exceed 3 delegates from the Heim fund.

- 5. Hosting an Informational Meeting regarding Overdose Prevention Centers. Karen will discuss further with Melissa from VT Interfaith Action and report back to us next month.

### **COMMITTEE/TEAM REPORTS**

- 1. Outreach Report: See Mission News below.
- 2. Fellowship Team. Communion for March 2 is set. Marie Morton is co-officiant. Servers are Beth Gamache and either Sarah Wright or Lynn Blodgett.
- 3. Education Report: See Church School News below.
- 4. Property Team: Dave Little and Jim Calder sent the report for review. Joan expressed a need for an additional handicapped parking space which will be discussed in the spring.
- 5. 139 Bank St. Team: Frank and Joe have a rescheduled meeting planned with Matt Boudreau for a walk-through February 20.
- 6. Fundraising Team: Joan announced that the I89 Fundraiser will be 10/4/25. Northbound only.
- 7. Green Steeple Task Force: The first meeting of this group will be February 20. Members include Bill Mason, Deb Holonitch, Karen and Cindy.

### **FINANCIAL REPORTS**

- 1. Financial Secretary: Stu submitted a report.

2. Treasurer: Report emailed by Frank. First payment received from TPF early February, not January. Daz reported he is continuing to learn this new role. Frank added that we value his work.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

1. Website needs updating. Will be a spring project.
2. Archives Update: Mary Swasey is overseeing the plan and working with Pat, Cindy and Jeneva Burroughs. This group is making progress. Stu reached out to the UVM Archives and is awaiting direct communication.
3. Big Question for next meeting: Brainstorming positive ways to respond to changes in the US. (10 minutes)

## **PASTORS REPORT**

1. The Sunday after Easter, Karen will be in Boston for the Youth Mission Trip. Karen's suggestion for the service at FBC is a breakfast downstairs entitled "Worship Around the Table". Mark and Cindy will work on a worship agenda.

Our next meeting is 3/17/25 at 7:00pm on Zoom.

## **CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS**

Reports from Lois and Brenda Perkin: Weather and illness have at times impacted both the teachers and students of our Sunday School. The

classes continue studying Bible stories which may or may not coincide with the lectionary. The youngest class is now focused on learning stories about Jesus. With Cindy taking on additional leadership responsibilities, it would be helpful to add another person to our team. If you know of a person who is interested in supporting the kids and youth of our church please contact Lois Lynch. The High School group is finishing up its study of the Old Testament. On Epiphany Sunday one student and Brenda discussed the visit of the Magi as told in Matthew 2:1-12. They printed on "glow-in-the-dark" stars showing places in their life or the world where they pray for God's light to shine. These are now on the ceiling in their Sunday School room. They also spent one class watching the video of Bishop Budde's plea to President Trump to have mercy, discussing its impact on them and how it impacted the President. The class then wrote letters to Bishop Budde, thanking her for her courage and, in some letters, sharing their fears for the future. On 2/9 they studied and discussed the book of Esther, where God is not mentioned. God still works in and through us when his name is not always on our tongue or in our thoughts as occurred in Esther's story. They learned that the Jewish holiday of Purim came from the story of Esther. Next week they plan to make

Hamantaschen, fruit filled cookies, traditionally served during Purim.

## **YOUTH MISSION TRIP TO BOSTON**

On April 24-27 our Youth (with 3 adults) will travel to Boston to serve at the First Baptist Church of Jamaica Plain's Food Justice Program. We will be boxing up groceries and helping with a community meal. We will sleep at the First Baptist Church of Newton (where Rev. Mendes worked from 1996-2001). We will also have an opportunity to go into downtown Boston and learn about the history and the needs of the city. We will be doing some fundraising soon! There is space for 2 more youth to join us. Speak to Rev. Mendes if interested.

### **MISSION NEWS**

#### **OGHS Emergency Relief Funds to Goma, DR Congo: More Help Urgently Needed**

International Ministries has sent an initial grant of \$25,000 in One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) emergency relief to HEAL Africa in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Funds will provide humanitarian relief and medical services to the victims of the armed conflict between the warring militias and government groups.

Over the past several years, this conflict has displaced more than 2 million people. Most of those who fled settled in and around Goma, where IM global servants Ann and Bill Clemmer serve with IM partner HEAL Africa. On January 29, 2025, following three days of intense fighting, the militia group overcame the government and UN forces, and Goma is now under their control. Over 3,000 people were killed, with thousands more injured. Disturbing accounts of rampant sexual violence and other atrocities during the conflict continue to surface. The HEAL Africa hospital is facing an extraordinary number of trauma cases, including gunshot wounds, burns, lost limbs, and fractures. There are severe shortages of medical supplies, fuel, and food. Essential services, including water and electricity, remain sporadic after three weeks of disruption. Hundreds of children have lost their parents and extended family members due to the violence and are particularly vulnerable to severe exploitation.

Working together with HEAL Africa, the Clemmers continue to respond to multiple needs, ranging from providing medical care and food for those displaced to education, protection, and shelter for the hundreds of children who have come off the street. The Enfants Bien Aimee (EBA) program is adjusting its services to care for the increasing

number of children who need 24/7 emergency shelter and care.

International Ministries (IM) is deeply concerned for the safety and well-being of our global servants, partners in the region, and the communities they serve. Ann and Bill can continue to serve in Goma on a daily basis but have relocated nearby for their own safety.

HEAL Africa needs medical supplies, medicine, and food for its patients and all those traumatized by the violence in the region. The EBA program needs mattresses, clothing, food, medicine, and additional staff to care for the influx of children who need 24/7 housing and services.

IM calls for urgent prayer and support for all those affected by the violence. Donations can be made through First Baptist. Please designate your contributions “OGHS–Goma Relief” in the memo line of your check.

### **THANK YOU NOTES**

We have received a thank you letter from ABHMS for our \$442 contribution to OGHS for disaster relief for “Southern Storms”. That was meant for Hurricane Helene relief. Also, a thank you from Association of Africans Living in Vermont (AALV) for our \$500 contribution to them and a Certificate of Appreciation from Rev. Dr. Ron Bouthillette, Interim

Executive Minister of VT/NH region for our contribution to United Missions and America for Christ Offering.

### **LOCAL MISSIONS**

The director of JUMP’s outreach and development, Matt Van Wagner, visited our church on 2/23/24 and met with the mission team with a quick update on JUMP’s recent activities and plans for the months ahead. We will work with CE to work on a job description for a part-time person to assist with Christian Ed and mission outreach.

### **AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING....**

*Grace Upon Grace  
Grace in Turbulent Times  
“Be kind and compassionate to one another; forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” Ephesians 4:32*

During the month of March we contribute to the America for Christ offering which allows our American Baptist Home Mission Societies to partner with ABC churches, community groups, ABC seminaries and institutions to financially support them in:

- cultivating strong leaders to advance the mission of faith communities.

- equipping disciples to broaden the understanding of what it means to be a follower of Jesus.
- healing communities with the power of Christian love which will change the world.

(100% of your AFC donation is utilized to support and fund these ministries. ABHMS does not retain any AFC funds for its own purposes. When you support AFC, you support your community and communities across the US and Puerto Rico. One third of the offering supports our region.)

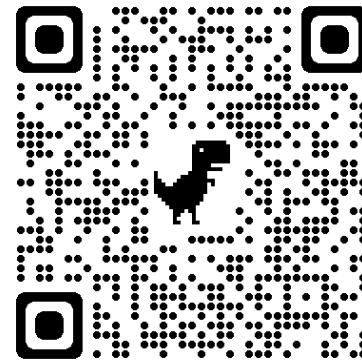
### THE SHARE

We at First Baptist would like to thank all of our loyal soup makers: Ginger Calder, Dave and Cindy Little, Lois D. and Pat Reasoner, Jamie Burke and her mom, Jill Soter, Beth Gamache. Karen Pope for cookies and Lois D. and Beth for helping to serve the homeless at FUMC most every Sunday evening. The Share committee (Lois D. and Beth Gamache) are in need of two more people to help coordinate and feed the homeless on Sunday evenings from 4 – 5:30. A commitment of once a month is recommended. There is also a need for more soup makers. First Baptist missions will reimburse soup makers for their expenses if you bring receipts for food purchases.

### 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. You can also give using this QR code.



Thank you for your participation in sharing the love of God in our community and our world.

### 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.

## **Lenten Daily Readings 2025**

We will journey with Jesus through the Gospel of Luke. We can share our reflections on our church Facebook page, First Baptist Church, Burlington, VT.

Ash Wednesday 3/5-  
Thurs 3/6 - Luke 1:1 - 1:38  
Fri 3/7 - Luke 1:39 - 1:80  
Sat 3/8 - Luke 2:1 - 2:40

Sun 3/9 - 1st Sunday of Lent  
Mon 3/10 - Luke 2:41 - 2:52  
Tues 3/11 - Luke 3:1 - 3:20  
Wed 3/12 - Luke 3:21 - 4:13  
Thurs 3/13 - Luke 4:14 - 4:37  
Fri 3/14 - Luke 4:38 - 4:44  
Sat 3/15 - Luke 5:1 - 5:39

Sun 3/16 – 2nd Sunday of Lent  
Mon 3/17 - Luke 6:1 - 6:26  
Tues 3/18 - Luke 6:27 - 6:49  
Wed 3/19 - Luke 7:1 - 7:35  
Thurs 3/20 - Luke 7:36 - 7:50  
Fri 3/21 - Luke 8:1 - 8:25  
Sat 3/22 - Luke 8:26 - 8:56

Sun 3/23 – 3rd Sunday of Lent  
Mon 3/24 - Luke 9:1 - 9:56  
Tues 3/25 - Luke 9:57 - 10:24  
Wed 3/26 - Luke 10:25 - 10:42

Thurs 3/27 - Luke 11:1 - 11:28  
Fri 3/28 - Luke 11:29 - 11:54  
Sat 3/29 - Luke 12:1 - 12:34

Sun 3/30 – 4th Sunday of Lent  
Mon 3/31 - Luke 12:35 - 12:59  
Tues 4/1 - Luke 13:1 - 13:21  
Wed 4/2 - Luke 13:22 - 14:14  
Thurs 4/3 - Luke 14:15 - 14:35  
Fri 4/4 - Luke 15:1 - 15:32  
Sat 4/5 - Luke 16:1 - 16:18

Sun 4/6 – 5th Sunday of Lent  
Mon 4/7 - Luke 16:19 - 16:31  
Tues 4/8 - Luke 17:1 - 17:37  
Wed 4/9 - Luke 18:1 - 18:17  
Thurs 4/10 - Luke 18:18 - 18:43  
Fri 4/11 - Luke 19:1 - 19:27  
Sat 4/12 - Luke 19:28 - 19:48

Sun 4/13 – Palm Sunday  
Mon 4/14 - Luke 20:1 - 20:19  
Tues 4/15 - Luke 20:20 - 21:4  
Wed 4/16 - Luke 21:5 - 21:38  
Thurs 4/17 - Luke 22:1 - 23:25  
Fri 4/18 - Luke 23:26 - 23:56  
Sat 4/19 – No reading

Easter Sunday - 4/20  
- Luke 24:1 - 24:35  
Mon 4/21 - Luke 24:36 - 24:53

**THE CHURCH OFFICE HOURS FOR MARCH ARE -**  
**M/W/F 9-1 T/TH 9-3**

**PAST WORSHIP SERVICES...**

are available on our website and our YouTube Channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0vIptkSAyIRbAifDbGFIw>

**CHURCH EMAIL ADDRESSES**

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