

Green Steeple

Messenger



Prepare the Way for Love

As we continue the Season of Epiphany and look forward to the Season of Lent, we recognize that all that we are called to do is to prepare the way for God's Love to be known and experienced. We hear the Scriptures. We sing the hymns. We pray and fellowship together. And then we go into the world, living out this love that we know deep in our souls. Everything we do can help prepare the way for love to be manifested.

This year, our calling may lead us in new directions as we recognize the deep injustices that our neighbors are bearing. We may be called upon to speak and act boldly. We may find new ways to help those in need. We will find comfort in new partnerships and longstanding friends. We will grow in our understanding and in our capacity to live out our faith.

First Baptist is a community of deeply committed, faithful people. It is gratifying to be in ministry with you. This newsletter has many opportunities for fellowship, learning, and service. Together, we can prepare the way for God's Love to be known.

Yours in Christ,

~ Karen

Rev. Karen A. Mendes

Pastor

Opportunities for Fellowship and Learning

There's more to Church than Sunday mornings!

LENTEN BOOK STUDY - We will read *Nonviolence; 25 Lessons from the History of a Dangerous Idea* by Mark Kurlansky as part of an Interfaith Book Group with First Congregational Church, Ohavi Zedek Synagogue, and Saint Paul's Cathedral. The first meeting will be Tuesday, Feb. 10 at 5:30pm both in person and via Zoom. Location to be determined. For more information, contact Rev. Mendes.

JAZZ SUNDAY - Transfiguration Sunday, Feb. 15, will be an exciting morning as we transfigure our worship service. Our Chancel Choir and guest soloists will lift up glorious music as we celebrate the presence of God among us. Please plan to join us and invite your friends and neighbors. After worship we will share donuts and other sweet treats as we make ready for the Season of Lent which will begin on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 18.

LENTEN PRAYER PLEDGES - During the season of Lent we will be invited to pray daily for our church and our community. Prayer undergirds all of our ministries and helps us to best discern God's call. On February 22, we will have Prayer Pledge cards on which we can share our prayer commitments.

FAMILY GAME NIGHT - Save the date for our Intergenerational Dinner and Game night on Friday, February 27th, 2026. We will start with pizza followed by board/card type games for all ages. Bring your favorite game and be ready to learn some new ones!

WEEKDAY BIBLE STUDY - Mondays at 11:30am. We are exploring the Book of Daniel. Please join in person or remotely and feel free to bring your lunch. Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86024135383?pwd=b1pWcXRqZVo1Yjl2Zmh3Q2x5MXliZz09>

CHANCEL CHOIR REHEARSAL on Thursdays at 7pm. Come sing with this melodious community! Contact Anna Roy at aroy@fbc Burlingtonvt.com for more information.

ZOOM COFFEE HOUR - Our Coffee hour happens on Tuesdays at 10am. Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89855564406?pwd=R2FtbC9tRnoyU1R1cXJTRmRsY1Vldz09>

THE SOCIAL JUSTICE TEAM - There are many opportunities in our wider communities to speak out and act on our faith such as vigils and letter writing campaigns. We know that many First Baptist folk are active in these ways. So we are organizing a new Social Justice Team through which those who are interested can receive notice of these community events and perhaps attend together. The Team might also want to organize events for First Baptist or share their experiences with the congregation. If you are interested in being part of the Social Justice Team, please respond directly to revkamendes@fbc Burlingtonvt.com.

Lenten Bible Readings

From now until Easter we will follow Jesus through the Gospel of Matthew. Reflections on the texts can be shared in our Facebook group; First Baptist Burlington VT

Week 1

Wednesday, Feb. 181:1-25
Thursday, Feb. 19 2:1-23
Friday, Feb. 20 3:1-17
Saturday, Feb. 214:1-11

Week 2

Sunday, Feb. 224:12-25
Monday, Feb. 235:1-20
Tuesday, Feb 245:21-48
Wednesday, Feb 256:1-15
Thursday, Feb 266:16-34
Friday, Feb 277:1-12
Saturday, Feb 287:13-28

Week 3

Sunday, March 18:1-17
Monday, March 28:18-9:1
Tuesday, March 39:2-17
Wednesday, March 49:18-38
Thursday, March 510:1-23
Friday, March 610:24-42
Saturday, March 711:1-15

Week 4

Sunday, March 811:16-30
Monday, March 912:1-14
Tuesday, March 1012:15-37
Wednesday, March 1112:38-50
Thursday, March 1213:1-23
Friday, March 1313:24-43
Saturday, March 1413:44-58

Week 5

Sunday, March 1514:1-21
Monday, March 1614:22-36
Tuesday, March 1715:1-20
Wednesday, March 1815:21-39
Thursday, March 1916:1-12
Friday, March 2016:13-28
Saturday, March 2117:1-9

Week 6

Sunday, March 2217:10-27
Monday, March 2318:1-20
Tuesday, March 2418:21-35
Wednesday, March 2519:1-15
Thursday, March 2619:16-30
Friday, March 2720:1-16
Saturday, March 2820:17-34

Holy Week

Palm Sunday, March 2921:1-46
Monday, March 3022:1-46
Tuesday, March 3123:1-39
Wednesday, April 124:1-51
Thursday, April 225:1-46
Friday, April 326:1-75
Saturday, April 427:1-66
Easter Sunday, April 528:1-20



Mission News

Reflecting back on 2025 and forward to 2026 in Goma

2025 is now behind us. It was a difficult year in so many ways; for our family, for health, and especially for the people of Goma as rebels took and continue to hold the city, bringing deep suffering. Yet even in the midst of these trials, the Lord opened remarkable doors to bring blessing and to touch lives for Jesus.

- When the fighting erupted in January, 58 children fled to our emergency shelter. By God's grace, 55 of them were reunited with their families over the course of the year.
- Our Sunday school ministries never stopped. On Easter morning, more than 1,600 children came to hear the Good News, and we continue to welcome over 1,000 children every Sunday.
- As malnutrition surged, we launched a daily noon meal program to ensure vulnerable children receive food and care.
- In November, we began a new Youth Program aimed at reaching unchurched young people in our community. It has grown every week, and at Christmas we celebrated as eight teenagers were baptized: a beautiful sign of new life in the midst of hardship.

Through every challenge, God has been faithful. We have seen lives touched, strengthened, and transformed. As we enter a new year, we do so with confidence that God already knows the plans He has for us. Some of those plans are already taking shape:

- Training for 63 Sunday school teachers is underway, equipping them to better serve and guide the children in our community. The first sessions will focus on Healing of Children's Inner Wounds, a deeply needed ministry after such a painful year.
- We have launched a new initiative to support 197 widows in our church who lost family members and their means of livelihood during the fighting through micro-finance opportunities and income-generating projects from community gardens to small cottage industries. We pray these women will regain stability, dignity, and hope.
- Among our young people, there is a growing hunger for learning and for spiritual growth. To meet this need, we will expand the small library we began in December and open a reading and study room where youth can access books, digital resources, and the internet. We believe this space will become a wellspring of encouragement and discipleship.

We look forward with anticipation to all that God will do in 2026. Even in uncertain times, His faithfulness remains our anchor, and His purposes continue to unfold in ways that bring life, healing, and hope.

With love and appreciation,
Ann and Bill Clemmer

Photos and Reflections



As winter continues to deepen, please be reminded that the days are getting longer. May this season serve you, shape you, and prepare your heart for spring.

*"To go in the dark with a light is to know the light.
To know the dark, go dark. Go without sight,
and find that the dark, too, blooms and sings,
and is traveled by dark feet and dark wings."*

Wendell Berry

Each day, each simple act,
humble participation in this
great mystery.





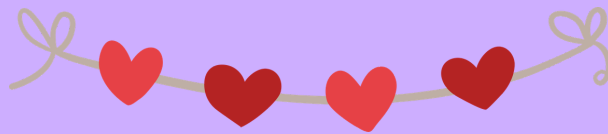
Community News

February Birthdays!

- Hto Lwee Wah 02/02
- Hser Ku 02/03
- Erin Allard 02/05
- Margaret Randall 02/08
- Joshua Roy 02/08
- Mark Paulsen 02/09
- Christine Thompson 02/09
- Ku Say Wah 02/12
- Stephanie Bergeron 02/13
- Peter Burroughs 02/16
- Larson Couture 02/18
- Virginia Girvan 02/18
- Peggy Powell 02/21
- Debbie Landry 02/24

Upcoming Anniversaries!

- Feb. 17- Mike & Lois Lynch 47 yrs.



WORSHIP SERVICE INFORMATION

Epiphany 4 Communion, February 1st

Sermon Title: Blessed Are

Scripture: Matt 5:1-12

Epiphany 5, February 8th

Sermon Title: Blessed Do

Scripture: Matt Matt 5:13-20

Transfiguration, February 15th

Sermon Title: Listen to Him!

Scripture: Matt 17:1-9

Lent 1, February 22nd

Sermon Title: Prepare the way for

Love in the Wilderness

Scripture: Matt 4:1-11

Make 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.fbc Burlingtonvt.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.



THANK YOU

On behalf of all the Staff at FBC, we offer our sincere thanks to those who supported us with a Christmas gift. Thank you for your kindness, your consideration, and for being who you are. - Pierre

To My First Baptist Family,

Thank you so much for the very generous Christmas gift. I feel blessed to have found such a wonderful retirement job. Everyone at First Baptist has been very welcoming. I am very thankful for the support that Marie provides and she and I have become friends in addition to being coworkers.

*With gratitude,
Marilyn Siple.*

Dear Church Family,

I wish to thank all who so generously donated towards my Christmas gift. Your kindness and thoughtfulness are greatly appreciated. I am truly blessed to be part of this amazing and lovely Church family.

*Grateful Thanks,
Marie*

Dear Church Family,

Thank you so much for your generous staff Christmas gift. It is a true blessing to make music with the choir and to share it with you on Sunday mornings. I am deeply grateful for your kindness.

*With gratitude,
Anna*

UGB MEETING

Our monthly meetings are open to anyone who would like to sit in on them. Please check in the church office for the Zoom Meeting ID and Passcode. They normally are the 3rd Monday of the month at 7:00pm.

Committee/Team Reports

1. Outreach Team shared that there was a meeting with ANEW Place last week at Habitat Restore in Williston. A sofa and microwave were purchased to assist 2 graduates of ANEW as they transition to apartments. \$237.10 total cost to be taken from the Local Area Missions Outreach Account.
2. Fellowship Team - A member has been laid up with a broken ankle. Things have been going fine in his absence, although we miss him.
3. Education Team has been helpful in integrating our new Director of Christian Education, who has begun meeting with the education teams and visiting classes.
4. The Property Team reported decreased activity around the church, likely due to colder weather.
5. 139 Bank Street: income is barely below the target and expenses finished well below the plan. Expenses are at 93.7% and Income is at 99.6% of target. We have started conversations with the tenant and Queen City Development Group (QCDG) about 2026 projects.

Financial Reports

1. Financial Secretary Report: A motion was raised and seconded to approve the report. All were in approval.
2. Treasurer Report: A motion was raised and seconded to approve the report. All were in approval.
3. TPF: The Financial Committee reported that FBC is in a good position for 2026.

Budget Review

1. A good discussion ensued regarding the 2026 budget. The Treasurer reviewed the projected expenses, line by line, with minor changes made. The largest item discussed was the removal of a part-time Mission Outreach position, which the team stated they are not requesting in 2026. The budget was balanced by requesting a one time donation from TPF. The Treasurer made the motion to approve the budget pending Trust Local Income account and Whitney/Shaub account final numbers. The motion was seconded. All were in favor of the 2026 budget.

Pastor's Report

Karen reviewed the events that had taken place and are upcoming. She reported that the Christmas and Advent season went well, and announced that a BHS afterschool club will use our kitchen on two Thursdays a month from 3:30 - 5:30pm to make a meal for Food Not Cops, which serves the homeless. The food will be prepared here and served at another location.

Contact Us!

Church Staff Directory

Rev. Karen A. Mendes - Pastor
Pastor Thee Say - Karen Baptist Pastor
Robert Gillespie - Director of Christian Edu
Pierre Compere - Church Administrator
Evan Allen - Organist
Anna Roy - Chancel Choir Director
Brenda Perkins - Youth Choir Director
The Karen Baptist Community - Sexton Team
Dazzling 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

CHURCH EMAIL ADDRESSES

The church office - welcome@fcburlingtonvt.com
Karen Mendes - revkamendes@fcburlingtonvt.com
Evan Allen - eallen@fcburlingtonvt.com
Anna Roy - aroy@fcburlingtonvt.com
Treasurer - treasurer@fcburlingtonvt.com
Financial Secretary - financialsecretary@fcburlingtonvt.com
Karen Baptist Community - KBC@fcburlingtonvt.com

CHURCH CONTACT

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Website: www.fcburlingtonvt.com

Visit Us On Facebook: [First Baptist Church, Burlington, VT.](#)

PAST WORSHIP SERVICES...

are available on our website and our YouTube Channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0vlptkSAyIRbAilfDb>

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