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Our purpose is to bring people to Jesus  
Christ as we love, learn and live the  
word of God.

DECEMBER 2022



## Contact Us!

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## FBC Food Collection:

December—Canned Fruit

January—Canned Hash, Stew, Chili

February—Vegetables

## In This Issue: November 2022

- ⇒ Get Your Poinsettia!!
- ⇒ Advent is Here!!!
- ⇒ Another Pot Luck!!!
- ⇒ An Archived Message From Pastor Paul!!
- ⇒ Mission Goals Reached!!
- ⇒ New Missions to Support!!
- ⇒ And More!

## **Poinsettias are the Flowers that say Christmas**

Poinsettias are considered the Christmas flower, and many people give them around Christmas time as a gesture of good will and community spirit. In religious communities, the shape of the poinsettia flower is thought to symbolize the Star of Bethlehem and the red leaves of the poinsettia representing the blood of Christ.

We will again decorate our church with poinsettias starting on December 18 through Christmas Eve and beyond. If you would like to purchase one, fill out the order form found at the back of the church. Single red poinsettias can be purchased for \$9.00 and are yours to take home after the Christmas season.

Place your order in the donation plate or give it to Ray or Chris Hartmann

## **The First Advent Candle has been lit.**

The sanctuary is adorned with the colors and symbols of the season. Christmas music is in the air.

On the first Sunday of Advent, November 27 some of us strung lights and hung greens, while others practiced special music for later in the month. All of this was in preparation for the birth of our Lord and Savior on Christmas.

There are more Advent preparations scheduled and you won't want to miss any of them.

**Bell Sunday is December 4.** Bring a bell to ring every time you hear the special word (this year Angel) sung or spoken. Pay attention so you don't miss a single ring! The following week, **December 11, is cookie Sunday** when we bring Christmas cookies to share at a special fellowship hour after worship. Bring for favorite cookie recipe. Extra cookies are packed up for you to take home. Our new First Baptist choir will perform with some special music for an **Advent music Sunday on December 18.**

The highlight of the Advent season will be the **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service** on Saturday December 24 at 7:00 PM. Join us for a very special worship service as we celebrate the greatest event of all time—the Birth of Jesus Christ.

There will be NO church service on Christmas Day.



## Here Ye! Here Ye!

Everyone is invited to our Annual Congregational Meeting to be held on Sunday, January 15<sup>th</sup> following our Worship service. Of course, it goes without saying, that since we are Baptists we will share a Pot-Luck lunch first.

Please join us for some food, fellowship, and a look back at 2022 and a peek ahead to 2023.

## We Are Buying Goats!

At least 15 Haitian children will be able to afford an education for the rest of their lives thanks to the gift of goats that our congregation has so generously purchased! My target was \$250.00 for 5 goats in the Kids for Kids mission project. We surpassed that three times thanks to the caring and generous Family at First Baptist. Words of thanks and congratulations are not enough.

Once the goats are purchased and distributed, the children will be instructed on their care and upkeep. Some of the goats will be bred and offspring sold for a profit. Some will provide a steady source of milk and milk products. The money earned will be used for school supplies, uniforms and transportation.

Thank you for your amazing support!

Chris, Mission Chair



## Other Mission News

Those of you who heard Mike Reid preach on November 27 will agree that his Seneca Gospel Mission does some amazing work in the South Buffalo community. We will be adding this organization to the list of community organizations we support with Christmas and other monetary donations.

FISH of East Aurora is still in need of food donations for Christmas dinners for their clients as well as new unwrapped toys and gift cards for children and youth. Donations can be taken to the FISH building behind Nativity Lutheran Church or brought in to church. Deadline for toy donation is December 6, food donations December 15.

## Spaghetti Dinner and Basket Raffke

Back by popular demand ... A delicious spaghetti dinner is being planned for February or March. Your help WILL be needed. More details to follow.

But, in the meantime, you can start working on creating some baskets for the raffke. Gift cards, lottery tickets/wine/booze baskets are popular. Theme baskets, homemade crafts or regifting that 'special' gift from some past event.

Take advantage of the sales over the next few months. Get creative (as you always are!) Working together, we can make the return of this event a great success!

## Trees. Stars. Bells. Ever wonder what all these Christmas symbols might mean?

With all the hype of the holidays, you're sure to see Christmas decorations everywhere. It's a huge part of celebrating Christmas! But have you ever thought about how some of those traditional decorations can help us get in touch with the true spirit of the season? If we look at them in the right way, we can allow them to help us remember Jesus Christ in our Christmas celebrations as Christians have done for centuries.

**Christmas lights and candles** can remind us that Jesus Christ is the Light of the World. Candles have brought brightness and warmth to the season. They can also remind us to be lights to others and to help others come unto Christ.

Even before Christ's birth, **trees** that stayed green all year long carried special meaning for people. A green, thriving tree in the dead of winter reminded people of hope and new life. Because of Jesus Christ, we can have *everlasting* life so we can choose to see the *evergreen* tree as a natural symbol of Him and His gift to us.

The **star** is one of the most recognizable symbols of the holiday. It represents the star that guided the Wise men to the Christ child. They remind us we should diligently seek Him every day.

**Bells** symbolize the announcement of the birth of Christ when angels in heaven praised God and declared, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men". For centuries bells have been used to announce special events.

Because its red berries and prickly green leaves last all year round, **holly** is used as a Christmas decoration all over the world. The sharp edges of the holly leaf can remind us of the crown of thorns placed on the Savior's head. The red holly berry can remind us of His blood shed for all of us.

Perhaps a better name for the **candy cane** is "candy crook." Shepherds used crooks to bring their sheep back into the fold. As you enjoy a candy cane, remember that Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd. If we choose to follow Him, He will gently lead us to safety and peace.

**As you open your brightly wrapped presents on Christmas morning, remember that the Savior is the true gift of Christmas.**

## Send a Christmas card and Bring Joy!

Please consider sending our friends a Christmas card who aren't able or aren't always able to make it to church on Sunday!

- ◇ Gwen Fowler  
98 Delaware Rd.  
Kenmore NY 14217
- ◇ Winnie Bove  
32 Balcom Dr.  
East Aurora NY 14052
- ◇ Shirley Sack  
Elderwood Assisted Living at Cheektowaga  
Room 173  
229 Bennett Rd.  
Cheektowaga NY 14227
- ◇ Elaine Rickettson  
4080 Reiter Rd.  
East Aurora NY 14052

## In The Next Column

You will find thoughts from pastor Paul from the year 2020.

The pastor has spent the last week on vacation, so we chose to use a 'Pastor's thoughts' from a previous year. This message is still true and also serves as a reminder to be thankful that we are not where we were in 2020.

This year we can all gather with friends and family without fear! We can stand in line without being 6 feet apart while shopping (some may have liked it better the other way). Once again we can stand to sing on Christmas eve... and so much more!

Here are a couple of pictures from pastor Paul's vacation in Europe.



## Pastor's Thoughts (2020 Addition)

As we look out into the world, it can be easy to be discouraged, pessimistic and even cynical. The memories from this year were not our best. Or maybe they were; maybe they bring to mind opportunities to determine what matters in life but they are mixed with bad ones as well. Whatever this year has meant to us it doesn't take long to look around and realize the world is full of hurt, violence and brokenness. Sometimes it can be hard to see any silver lining or any light on the horizon. It is in these moments we need to be reminded most of the greatest story of all--the story of when love came to earth, the light of the world. Jesus brings hope for all and hope for a better and redeemed future.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. <sup>4</sup> In him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (John 1:1-5)*

The light of the world comes and shines a light and reveals what is genuine and what is counterfeit. **So, what does this light reveal exactly?** Jesus, as the light of the world, reveals to the world what God is really like and sets the record straight about who God is. As well, He shows us what true humanity is supposed to look like, by both redeeming it and leading us to a better way--full of life.

As you enjoy your McDonald's Peppermint Hot Chocolate, or my favorite Tim Horton's Peppermint Mocha, driving around checking out Christmas lights while listening to the Christmas Carol station, after you have strung your own lights and finished your decorating, please remember that the Light has come. Even when the seemingly necessary chores to celebrate the season weigh heavy on you, the Light has come. Even when we make the difficult decisions regarding how we socialize and celebrate, the Light has come. And after the calendar has flipped and we are looking forward to a new year, the Light has come.



The First Baptist Church of East Aurora  
591 Porterville Rd/ East Aurora NY 14052

Please Pray for :

Vigo Meyer\*  
Tom Heineman\*  
John Kenny\*  
Becky Steffenhasen  
Tim Lowrey\*  
Brett Begley\*  
Scott Rickettson\*  
Dave B\*  
Odyn Hankey\*  
Elaine Rickettson\*  
Greg Docenko\*  
Dave Clark\*  
Linda Bessey  
Geoff Begley\*

Rebecca Reimer\*  
Angela Docenko\*  
Joan Reif\*  
Kara\*  
Dawn\*  
Dave Stolzenberg  
Carl Mende\*  
Heidi Brown\*  
Jeff Scott\*  
Carl  
Brian  
Rose Gassman\*  
Jason Vorhis  
John Hausauer  
Sue

Happy **December Birthday** to:

Mike Dziak on Christmas eve , the 24th