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## GOD'S FULLNESS

I write this article looking back over a full and meaningful three months, as well as a new start—to the church year, and to our regular calendars. Perhaps the busiest months of the year, November and December brought with them joyous celebrations, meaningful losses and griefs, and a fresh start for our church, once again.

We have spent the better part of the past year moving forward with our shared ReShaping dream of doing ministry in new ways, exploring new ideas together, and sharing ministry in innovative ways. The fruits of our dreaming have already paid off immensely with our growing music ministry under the direction of our shared Associate Pastor for Music & Worship David Cameron. And our dreams don't stop there, as our Personnel Committee continues its diligent and prayerful search for our new shared Associate Pastor for Families!

We have had a banner year—the Holy Spirit's energy is strong among us. I felt it in our worship, in our outreach and missions, in our study and growth. I saw it when so many stepped up with increased giving and financial pledges to see this church and its ministry into a new season in 2023 as we follow the Way of Jesus together.

Now, our new committees are busy with the work of the church in 2023. The evergreens have turned brown and been taken down. The air has been colder but the nights have grown steadily shorter. We even might be seeing a few green sprouts with our hints at springtime weather.

And with these hints of an early spring, we await the next work God has for us—meaningful work that turns our skills and passions into ministry that helps others experience what following Jesus can be like.

While there are sure to be bumps in the road as we work together to see what ministry can be at First Baptist Church, of this I am certain: God is already at work, and we are primed to join that work in this new year. We only need to join hands and hearts, continue dreaming, and reach this community and this world with the love of Christ.

I have experienced God's Fullness—of mercy and grace, of peace and hope, and of love and compassion, in these days. My prayer is that we all experience that fullness and are ready and willing to share it in new ways—together.

*By: Libby Grammer*



# Music Ministry



## WORSHIP IN SONG

November through January was a busy and wonderful time for our music Ministry here at FBC Martinsville. From Fettke's "Song of Remembrance" on All Saints Sunday through John Ness Beck's "Offertory" to close out January, the Sanctuary Choir has been hard at work making beautiful



**Piedmont Arts Caroling**

music each Sunday through anthems and also in helping to lead in singing hymns in worship.

I was especially

proud of the excellent singing the choir did in presenting Joseph M. Martin's "A Celebration of Carols" on December 18th at both FBC AND Chatham Heights Baptist. Along with the choir, Baxter Jennings has played beautiful accompaniments, preludes, and postludes. Baxter has also joined forces with John Fulcher to present multiple piano organ duets of wonderful beauty.

Our choir also sang carols at the Piedmont Arts Christmas Tree Lighting across the street from the church this year, ringing in the season together with beautiful music and lights.

I consider myself blessed to have been a part of Christmas here at FBC with all the joy and beauty of the season.

The first Christmas in a new home is always special, and I want to extend my thanks, once again, to you for the welcome and encouragement you have given me here. The joy of Christmas shared through music is one of my favorite things and I look forward to many such times ahead.



**Baxter Jennings & John Fulcher Piano Duet**

If you happen to have missed out on any of the services and the music we made together, I

encourage you to visit [fbcmartinsville.com](http://fbcmartinsville.com) and click on "Watch Worship Services," and scroll back and take a listen. Or do the same if you just want to enjoy a blessing again. We are fortunate to have the ability to replay a service with just a few steps, and I want to thank the FBC Audio-visual team for all the good work they do each week to make it possible.



**FBC Music Program Lights the Advent Candle**

Looking forward to making more music together as we praise God with hearts, and minds, and voices.

*By: David Cameron*



# Worship



## THE BEAUTY OF THE SEASON(S)

Worship services at First Baptist are always thoughtful, Spirit-filled moments, but the worship services in November-January have been extra special. From the baptism of our Early Learning Center Director Beth Kotchish on November 22nd to the Choir Cantata December 18th to the special speaker who came at the end of January, we have seen God's hand at work among us in the Sanctuary of worship.

In just three months, we have experienced four different seasons of the church year. You see, the church year, during the Season after Pentecost, ends with Christ the King Sunday (usually around Thanksgiving;



this year, we concluded the church year on Sunday, November 22nd, the day of Beth's baptism).

Then the church year begins anew with the season of Advent (usually just after Thanksgiving), a time to prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ at Christmas. For four weeks, we light the Advent wreath candles of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. This year for Advent, different ministries of the church lit our Advent candles: Adult Sunday School, FBC Kids, Missions/WMU, and our FBC Music Ministry.

Then on Christmas Eve, we light the Christ candle, to signify that the miracle of the incarnation has arrived—Jesus is born! We celebrate Christmas/Christmastide until January 6th.

This year, we also had a special morning of Christmas Day worship, as Christmas fell on a Sunday. Between Christmas Eve and Christmas

Day, we hosted not just our church family, but their families, and guests from our local area and around the country.

Heading into January, we celebrate the season of Epiphany, beginning with the arrival of the magi to the child Jesus, and walking through Jesus's life and ministry together.

This year, at the end of January, we shared in an Epiphany blessing by hosting the Executive Coordinator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Global, Rev. Dr. Paul Baxley, in our pulpit. His message of challenge from Jesus's Sermon on the Mount was a gift to us and to our sister church, Chatham Heights Baptist Church, that Sunday morning.

If you've not been to worship in awhile, I can only say: I highly recommend worshipping with First Baptist Church.

*By: Libby Grammer*



# Missions



## JOINING GOD'S MISSION IN THE WORLD

FBC Missions Committee and Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) helped to encourage our church family to reach the world with the love of Christ.



Henry Co. Food Pantry Food Box Packing

On November 12th, a team of FBC members (and friends!) packed over 100 food boxes for our neighbors in need and sorted many boxes of clothing for the clothes closet at the Henry County Food Pantry.

During December, WMU sponsored a churchwide mission project to fill shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. FBC members filled 26 shoeboxes for children around the world.

In December FBC Missions & WMU also sponsored the Heifer International offering, and the church gave \$1,868.24 to provide water, education, and farm animals to communities in need.

The FBC Missions Committee reached out financially, too, contributing \$950 to the MHC Warming Center, \$250 to the Salvation Army Angel Tree Program, \$400 to the American Red Cross, and \$200 to the Mulberry Creek Assisted Living community Christmas Store. FBC WMU also collected monetary donations for the Red Kettle Campaign in the amount of \$775.

FBC also participated in a community outreach event, "Fall" into Winter Fest in early December. The Committee contributed money for supplies



"Fall" Into winter Fest

needed for the event, which connected people from all over MHC with our church through printed and email



Christmas Shoeboxes

communications and friendly conversations at our FBC booth.

This Missions Committee also partnered our church with Good News Jail & Prison Ministry Chaplain Joe Collins to provide Christmas cards for the corrections officers.

For the 38th year in a row, FBC hosted Richard's Dinner on Christmas Day in our Fellowship Hall so no one would be alone for Christmas Dinner, and FBC Missions pledged \$500 to support the event (in addition to providing our facilities).

Last, FBC WMU members made fleece-fringe pillows for at-home members. Members also prepared Thanksgiving cards for at-home members!

- Linda Dorr, FBC Missions





## FBC CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRY



ways—from reading books to using felt figures, made star ornaments to remember the Star of Bethlehem, created “Light of the World” candles, decorated Christmas cards for our at-home members, and more.

At FBC, we want children to understand the stories of the faith at their own level, experience the seasons of Advent and Christmas beyond shopping and presents.

### **Advent Worship**

Children are always a part of worship at FBC, but this year, they got to light an Advent candle one Sunday, the Advent Candle of Hope, our first Sunday of Advent. We loved ushering in a new season with these little ones!

*By: Libby Grammer*

“The ADVENTure Afternoon at FBC continues to be an enjoyable event shared with church and ELC families to celebrate the start of the Advent season. We look forward to this afternoon being a tradition of fun and fellowship filled with joy to begin our holiday season.”

- Ruth Anne Collins, Co-Chair, Children’s Committee 2022

### **ADVENTure Afternoon**

Preparing for and experiencing the seasons of Advent and Christmas as a church family and as individual family units is important.

On November 20, 2022, our families with children gathered in the Fellowship Hall for an ADVENTure Afternoon.

Here, our FBC Kids and visiting families from the ELC made Advent wreaths to take home and use throughout the season as a family, told the Christmas story in various



**FBC Kids Light the Advent Wreath**





## First Baptist Church Early Learning Center



### WINTER HAPPENINGS AT FBC ELC

The school year is in full swing, and our children are learning with their annual curriculum, *Learn Every Day*. They also participate in outside learning opportunities as well.

In November, the children celebrated thankfulness with a Thanksgiving feast that invited the whole church staff and ELC to the table with homemade side dishes and desserts.

In lieu of a weekly chapel time during Advent and Christmas, our children prepared and performed a Christmas pageant in our sanctuary with "Pastor David," who taught them songs and helped them retell the Christmas story (photo above).



Story Time with Ms. Janet

On Thursdays, we host Story Time with Ms. Janet from the Blue Ridge Library. Our children love to hear these stories

and share in a love for reading. Monthly on Fridays, our children attend "Doodlebugs" at the Va.

Museum of Natural History next door, learning science hands-on.



Doodlebugs at VMNH

Our ELC hopes to provide well-rounded education, including a love for the arts! Monthly art classes with Mary Lewis Johnston are a hit with our children, and weekly Music classes with Pastor David help children learn pitch and rhythm.



After School Music Class



Pre-K Art Class

This year, with ELC federal/state grant money for improvements, we installed a new fire alarm system. The system has worked great in alerting us during fire drills, and our children

evacuated safely in just 3 minutes during our last drill.

We are grateful for enhanced safety equipment that protects not only our ELC but our whole church building.



Infant/Toddler Fire Drill

By: Beth Kotchish, ELC Director



# Our Libraries



## WHOLE-CHURCH & WHOLE-COMMUNITY LIBRARIES

Now that we are moving away from Covid isolation, the media center is getting back to a more normal life. We are still working on getting all media barcoded for easy access and for insurance purposes. It is a slow process and we keep “plugging away!”

We hope everyone has enjoyed the new library displays and have observed their return to the narthex cart, the office hallway, outside the library door, and the stairwell by the sanctuary. The library staff is blessed with gifted display artists who are excellent at showing the many sides of the interest housed in the media center.

The Little Free Library seems to stay busy and has attracted attention throughout the community. It has certainly been a successful outreach mission. We have received many gifts for it and have kept it pretty well filled up through the months. We even had one visitor who complimented our varied collection and choice of offerings.



Library Bake Sale

During Advent & Christmas, we had displays about the Christmas story, and in January, displays were updated to compliment various aspects of FBC life.

On December 4th, our Library was finally able to host its annual bake sale again. Coupled with the

church Christmas Dinner in the Fellowship Hall, the Bake Sale was a huge success in raising money for our libraries—we raised \$1,140.50!



Library Bake Sale & Christmas Dinner



Little Free Library



Curbside pickup offered from McCabe Library is still available for those

interested. The Library Committee (and if needed, the Admin Mary Taylor) will be glad to search for books if requested.

*By: Dottie Lewis, FBC Librarian*





## FBC AUDIO/VISUAL TEAM

Our online worship experience would not be possible without the support of the FBC A/V Team. Our A/V team is a group of dedicated volunteers who facilitate the sound and recording and streaming of our Sunday services. In addition, they help with Zoom meetings and other technology to stay connected to one another in countless ways.

**You are invited to be a member of this important outreach ministry.** Who has been impacted by our ministry? Each Sunday, this ministry reaches members of our church family and local community, even people around the globe, with the message of God's love and grace. Join us as together we *"Live Faith, Be Love, Speak Hope"* to our church, our community and the world.

Please call Church Office at 276-632-6336 or email [mary@fbcmartinsville.com](mailto:mary@fbcmartinsville.com), if you are interested in this ministry or if you know someone who might be willing to serve.

Thanks,  
FBC A/V Team

Rev. Dr. Libby M. Grammer  
Senior Pastor

Rev. David Cameron  
Associate Pastor for Music & Worship

Baxter Jennings  
Organist

Mary Taylor  
Administrative Assistant

Kaylee White  
Financial Secretary

Beth Kotchish  
ELC Director

Kenny Smith  
Support Staff

Pete Compton  
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