

Light of the World,

*open our hearts
to Your presence,
our minds
to Your glory,
our lives
to Your love...
as we open
the Gift of You
this
Holy Season.*

*God so loved
the world
that he gave
his one
and only Son.*

John 3:16 (NIV)



Morning Worship

Fourth Sunday in Advent

December 21, 2008 10:00 AM

Please turn pagers and cell phones to silent mode.

Nursery care is available for children during the worship service.

Please speak to one of the ushers for assistance.

PRELUDE Two Carol Settings.....Emma Lou Diemer
Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence b. 1927
Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Please rise and begin singing the Processional Hymn at the conclusion of the Prelude.

***PROCESSIONAL HYMN 185** *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*Mendelssohn

***LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH**

Leader: We praise you, O God, for this wheel of time that marks our days of preparation for Christ's Advent.

People: As we light the candles on this wreath, open our eyes to see your presence in the lowly ones of this earth.

Leader: Enlighten us with your grace, that we may sing of your advent among us in the Word made flesh.

All: Grant this in the spirit of Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near! AMEN! [Fourth candle is lit.]

***INVOCATION (unison)**

Eternal God, your love is boundless; your mercy is without measure. We gather today to join all creation in praying for the birth of heaven's peace in our world. Your word sustains us; your presence uplifts us; your comfort encourages us; your Spirit inspires us. In this holy hour, lift us above all things mundane and prosaic, to a level where our very souls will magnify the Lord, and our spirits may rejoice in God our Savior. In the spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray: Our Father...(debt).

***GLORIA PATRI 734**.....Creatorex

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Thomas R. McKibbens

ANTHEM *Magnificat* Jack Ossewaarde

AN ADVENT LITANY Thomas R. McKibbens, Heather Kattan

God of ages past and ruler of all that is or shall be; we lift our hearts in praise, adoration, and hope. We bless you for all the holy stories and poignant memories that cluster around these days.

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!

Once and long ago, you sent your Son to Bethlehem's far hills. Send him now again, we pray, and let the angels sing over our troubled world, so that all people may know peace and your glory may shine on all.

He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

To those who bring their pain and want and fear, to those who see the good and generous and gracious, but turn their backs upon it, to people everywhere who turn away from goodness,

Let Christ enter their hearts with love and healing!

To those whose eyes are blind to that which you intend life to be; to those who yearn for faith, but find in their souls not trust, but fear; to those long blessed with all the good which you can give, but burdened so with riches that they cannot find peace...

To these and all those who hunger and thirst for you, let Christ be the Way, and the Truth, and the Life.

Send now your Christ again, as each of us has need, and grant us grace to open our hearts to Christ's coming.

Show us the Word made flesh, until in him we see the very image of yourself, your Spirit and your purpose opened, and your glory open to mortal eyes.

We are yours, O God; use us to spread glad tidings of peace and hope and justice in our world.

May we proclaim to all what is the height, and the depth, and the breath of your love, which you once revealed to us in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Nothing is impossible with God!

Here we are, the servants of the Lord. Let it be with us according to your Word. AMEN!

THE READING OF HOLY SCRIPTURE..... Heather Kattan

Luke 1:26-38 (pg. 831)

The angel Gabriel brings the surprising and fearful announcement to Mary that she will have a baby.

Unison Reading of Luke 1:46-55 (pg. 832)

Mary's song, called the "Magnificat", a title that comes from the first word of the Latin translation.

LET THE CHILDREN COME Cradle Song
Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay close by me forever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care, and fit us for heaven, to live with thee there.

AFFIRMATION OF THE CHILDREN..... Heather Kattan
(Children who would like to participate in a Children's Worship Experience are invited to join their worship leader following the Message.)

SERMON *Birthing a Promise* Thomas R. McKibbens

***HYMN 169** The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came Gabriel's Message

THE OFFERING OF OUR PRAYERS

THE OFFERING OF OUR GIFTS

Offertory Anthem Gabriel's Message Eleanor Daley
b. 1955

***Doxology 34**.....Old Hundredth

***Prayer of Dedication**

THE OFFERING OF OUR LIVES

***CLOSING HYMN 232** Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence Picardy

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence Peter Pindar Stearns
b. 1931

**Those who are able may stand.*

*Chancel Choir
William Ness, Minister of Music & Arts*



Next week our returning college students will lead our worship service. David Goff will preach, and there will be special music by a jazz ensemble. Be sure to attend and enjoy this wonderful service and welcome back those who have been away working hard on their studies!

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH VALUES STATEMENTS

INCLUSION

We welcome all in Christ's love.

FREEDOM OF FAITH

Individual interpretation of God's Word and freedom of expression are cornerstones of our faith.

SERVICE

We seek to be a Christ-like presence in the world.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

We encourage all to seek Christian growth.

ABOUT TODAY'S SERVICE & PROGRAMS

WE WELCOME YOU...to the Morning Worship of the First Baptist Church. If you are a guest, we express a special word of welcome and invite you to fill out the Welcome Card found in the pew rack. We are honored by your presence and hope you will return whenever you are able. The congregation of First Baptist Church, believing that God's unbounded love and grace are offered to all and meant to be shared and celebrated by all, embraces persons of every age, race, sexual orientation, denomination, cultural background, and economic means as vital and integral members of God's family. We welcome everyone to participate in the membership, life, worship, and activities of this church. 🙏

HEARING AIDS AVAILABLE DURING THE SERVICE...If you would like to take advantage of our hearing aids, please speak with one of our ushers, who will explain this simple yet effective device. 🗣️

LARGE PRINT BULLETIN AVAILABLE...with the Order of Service. Please speak with one of our ushers to receive a copy. 👁️

CHANCEL FLOWERS...We thank our Floral Arts volunteers for the lovely arrangement of poinsettias. Please refer to today's insert for the list of dedications. Poinsettias will be distributed to our shut-ins. ✨

COFFEE AND...Christmas Reception! Join with the FBC family today as we take a moment to share holiday wishes in Gordon Hall. ✨



CHORAL EVENSONG THIS EVENING...Plan to join us for the annual Service of Lessons and Carols featuring the work *Ceremony of Carols* by Benjamin Britten with harpist Lira Cady this evening at 5:00 PM. Conducted by William Ness, Minister of Music & Arts.

PAGEANT REHEARSAL TODAY...We will rehearse the pageant for the Christmas Eve Family Service at 11:45 AM today in Gordon Hall. Please meet Heather up by the stage promptly so we can get everything done by 12:30 PM.

YOUTH GROUP CHRISTMAS OUTING AT LAZERZONE! Meet in the lobby outside the Church Office at 12:30 PM. We will depart the church at 12:45 PM. Our game starts at 1:30 PM. **Please bring \$15.00 to cover costs** (includes 2 slices of pizza & a soda, unlimited popcorn, and all the fun you can manufacture) **and a completed permission slip.**

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES...will be held at **5:00 PM** and **7:30 PM**. The Family Service will be at 5:00 PM in Gordon Hall, *with rehearsal for the pageant at 4:00 PM*. Come and enjoy a theatrical and musical presentation of the story of Jesus' birth. The second service is our traditional **Candlelight Service**, with carol singing, held in the Sanctuary. **In both services, we will collect warm hats, gloves, scarves, and coats, for the Victory center in Worcester.** Items may be new or gently worn and cleaned—there is no need to wrap these items. Please plan to attend!

THANK YOU...to everyone who purchased gifts for our Angel Giving Tree! This year is going to be particularly tough for families who are in need, and your generosity will go a long way to ensure the children of these families have a Merry Christmas! **ANOTHER THANK YOU...**to Tiffany and Morgan VanDuesen, Lauren Landgren, and Nereo Joseph for lighting a candle on our Advent Wreath last Sunday.

PASSAGES OF LIFE: A GROUP FOR WOMEN (AGES 50 – 65)

Life certainly has its many phases and stages. And we are finding that what used to be very characteristic of certain stages back in the 1960's and 1970's are very different in many ways in the year 2008. Statistics prove that we are, indeed, living longer and the roles that were once considered typical for women do not always apply today. Gail Sheehy wrote about many of these ideas in her 1976 book entitled *Passages*. Yet, in a more updated and recent version of this, entitled *New Passages: Mapping Your Life Across Time*, Sheehy shares incredible insights and stories as to how we, and those around us, have experienced changes in those roles and expectations of our life phases and stages.

If you would be interested in joining a 4-6 week discussion group about this book and these life topics please **contact Brenda Baker, FIELD EDUCATION INTERN**. Once we see how many women would be interested in participating we will determine whether this will be an offered during Wonderful Wednesdays in the Spring (Feb. 25 – April 1) or on a Sunday. **Contact Information:**

By Phone: Church (508) 755-6143x234

Cell (919) 749-5899

Email: Brendab@fbc-worc.org

Brendabaker37@aol.com

Prayer...

*Father, let me hold Thy hand and like a child walk with Thee down all my days,
secure in Thy love and strength.*

~Thomas à Kempis

Please pray for...

- Thomas McKibbens, Heather Kattan, William Ness, and staff
- The Choral Evensong with the Chancel Choir
- The Christmas Pageant and the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
- Families to experience a joyous and peaceful Christmas season
- Each person who is anticipating surgery or medical intervention
- Those with chronic illness; those in frail health
- Those who are confined to home or a care facility
- Our military as well as the citizens of war-torn countries
- Those affected by our series of ice storms!



Do you have a prayer request? Simply complete a prayer request card located in the pew rack and then post in one of the three Prayer Mailboxes located outside the Sanctuary.

HOPE FOR HOUSING—FOR THE HOLIDAYS... During this holiday season, we encourage you to do your holiday shopping and consider purchasing grocery cards to slip into your greeting cards, or to donate to a local food pantry. Remember, you will get full card value for your grocery shopping, and the store contributes 5% of each sale to the emergency fund administered by the Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance for families with children who are at risk of homelessness.



The First Baptist Church Mission Statement

*We are a community of believers who seek to grow in our faith
and understanding as we live the Way of Jesus Christ.*



OUR CALENDAR—YOUR OPPORTUNITIES

TODAY, December 21 — Fourth Sunday in Advent

- 10:00 AM Worship
- 10:30 AM Park Congregational
- 11:15 AM Coffee and...Christmas Reception
- 11:45 AM Christmas Pageant REHEARSAL; BP Check
- 12:30 PM Youth Group Christmas Outing
- 1:00 PM PIB
- 5:00 PM Choral Evensong

- Tue., December 23
- 10:00 AM Weekly Staff Meeting
 - 7:00 PM Board of Deacons

Wed., December 24 — Christmas Eve, Office Closes at 12:30 PM

*Collection of hats, scarves, gloves, and coats
for the Victory Center during both evening services.*

- 5:00 PM Christmas Eve Family Service, Gordon Hall
- 7:30 PM Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
- 11:00 PM Park Congregational Service, Davis Chapel

Thu., December 25 — Christmas Day, OFFICE CLOSED

REJOICE... *for our Saviour is born!*

Fri., December 26 — OFFICE CLOSED

- Sun., December 28
- 10:00 AM Worship
 - 11:15 AM Reception for Returning College Students

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