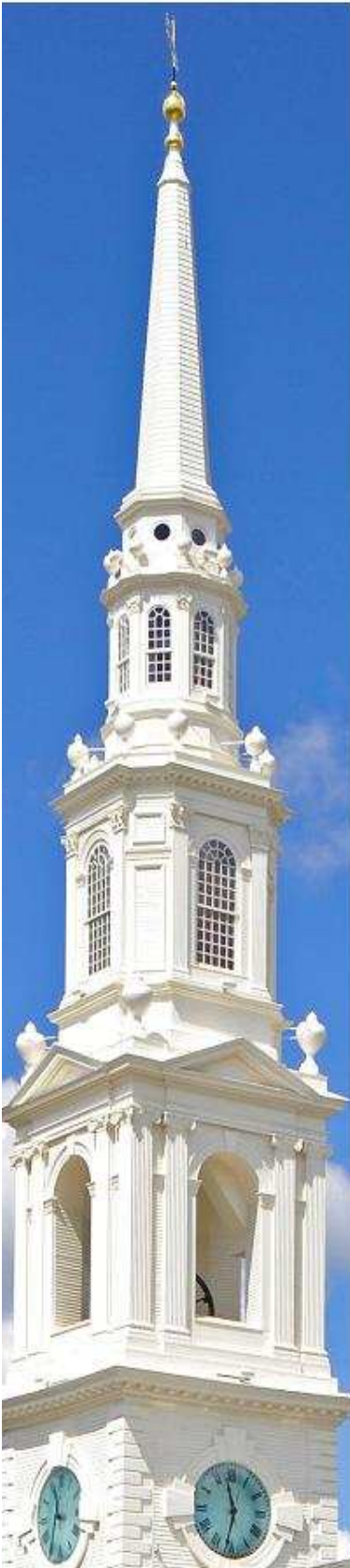


The Spire

Newsletter of the First Baptist Church in America

December 01, 2014, Volume 17, Issue 18



From The Pastor...on "Why Advent"

Advent is a season in the Christian calendar that begins four Sundays before Christmas (this year it begins on November 30) and concludes on Christmas Eve. In our secular American calendar, the Christmas season begins earlier and earlier and is driven primarily by the world of retail shopping. There is a kind of forced happiness in the secular version that rains down on us in the form of ubiquitous carols and silly songs (*Alvin? Alvin!!!*), the ever-present Santa, and a reindeer with a shiny red nose.

The church calendar is not driven by the secular calendar. In the church, Advent is a time to prepare for the birth of Jesus. That time of preparation reminds us of how much we need a Savior and how we long for the coming of Christ. The colors of Advent are in stark contrast to the secular holiday colors of red, green, and silver. The colors of Advent are purple or blue, signifying royalty and seriousness. The third Sunday of Advent uses pink to remind us of joy, but throughout Advent there is a mixture of both serious longing and joy.

Our music in Advent reflects this mixture of longing and joy. We sing Advent hymns like "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus," and "O Come, O Come Emmanuel." We are not Advent purists who refuse to sing Christmas carols until Christmas Eve! Rather, we mix in the joy of Christmas carols, increasing their frequency the closer we get to Christmas.

Taking Advent seriously can become a solution to the age-old dilemma of secular Christmas verses spiritual Christmas. In the secular version of this season we spend most of our time preparing to fulfill the demands of the season, buying presents for a lot of people and making sure they are wrapped and delivered. All of that is very nice, including the parties. But alongside those busy days, Advent reminds us that Christmas is a celebration of the birth of Jesus and a thoughtful time to consider the implications of the Incarnation.

I invite you to attend to the themes of Advent this year. Consider the readings from the Old Testament prophets used during this season, and listen to the words of the traditional Advent hymns. Your own personal experience of Christmas will be enriched, and the church will be blessed!

Thomas R. McKibbens

Linda's Lines

I'm glad we live in a country that sets aside a day for giving thanks. In our hurried lives we often forget to take time to remember the people, life events and other things for which we are grateful. I find that as I get older it is often the little things that I am grateful for: a beautiful sunset, a kind word from a stranger, the fact that I actually remembered to do something that I had promised to do! It is interesting that people who have had a serious illness or survived a life-threatening accident often have a more open perspective. They are grateful for the truly mundane: the hearing the sound of rain on the roof, the ability to take a walk, look, I can tie my own shoe! They describe seeing everything fresh and new and having a childlike sense of awe. Jesus said we must be like children, the Buddhists say we need a beginner's mind. This Thanksgiving season I will try to see with a fresh and open mind and perhaps I too will be awestruck and grateful for this amazing thing called life.

Music Notes 🎵

- ▶ Cumberland Lincoln Chorus
Will be performing at FBCIA on Saturday, December 20th at 2:00 PM. More information to follow.
- ▶ The choir will be singing many of the great Advent hymns during the month of December. A special feature will be the presentation of several settings of the beautiful hymn-tune "Nun komm der Heiden Heiland" ("Come Now, Savior of the Gentiles"), the text and tune written by Martin Luther in Wittenberg just a year before posting his famous 95 Thesis. A musician himself, Luther invited many of his composer friends to write settings of his hymn-tunes, a tradition that was continued by later composers such as Bach, and still continues among contemporary composers today. We will hear two settings by Bach, and one by a contemporary of his, Johann Hermann Schein.

Stephen T. Martorella

Christian Education

This Sunday, November 30, we will begin a four-week advent series based on Richard B. Wilke's book: Christmas: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly.

The children's Sunday school will also begin its advent series:

November 30th

"When No One's Watching"

Matthew 25: 34-40

December 7th

"A Light and a Hope

Psalm 118; 1 Peter 2:9

December 14th

"God's Long-Ago Promise"

Luke 2:1-20; Isaiah 7:14, 9:6-7

Announcement

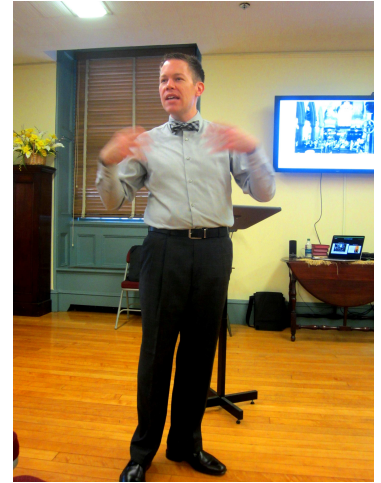
I will be out of the office
The week of November 30th.
Ann-Marie Bausserman will be
there in my absence.
If you need to contact her by
e-mail her address is:
Annmarie.fbc@gmail.com

Have a very Happy and Safe
Thanksgiving!

Holly

Church News

An animated Eric Mathis led the Sunday Morning Forum in a lively discussion of the meaning of worship. Mathis, an Assistant Professor of Music and Worship and Director of the Forum for Worship and the Arts at Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama, then directed the church choir in the worship service on November 2.



Pastor Tom McKibbens, rather like the prophet Isaiah whose text was the subject, delivered a powerful message on what is required by those who would be accounted as righteous in the eyes of God.

Pastor Tom McKibbens, Art Bone and Joanne Schneider chatted with Cheryl Dexter during the greeting time.



Ruth Marris Macaulay made a presentation on Light in Religious Art for the Sunday Morning Forum.

"SCRIBBLES" from FRIDAY SEEKERS



Last Friday, we were once again able to have a wonderful fellowship and listen to Steve Martorella share his love of music with his talk and music on THE SONG OF SONGS. This book of the Bible is actually a love song and has inspired liturgical music over the years. We learned more about Solomon and his life. Steve's focus was to show us that the Song of Songs is a song and was intended to be sung, as all Hebrew scripture was intended to be, and

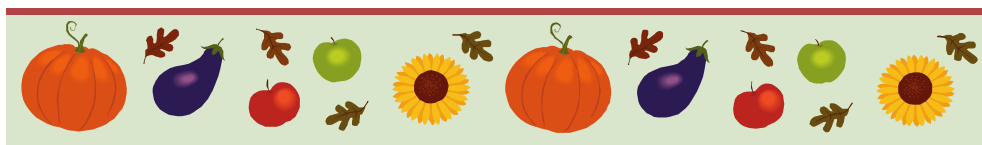
that in Judaism music in the temple is thought of and defined as prayer. We all enjoyed the beautiful words and music of this book of the Bible.

On behalf of those who attended, I would like to thank Steve for his wonderful presentation. It is such a treat to have him share his passion for music with us.

Also, I would like to thank Holly Edwards who decorated the Fellowship Hall for our theme; also to those who contributed to the abundance at our pot-luck supper.

We will be taking a break now for 2 months (December and January), but will return on February 27, 2015 when we will hear Stan Lemons talk about Roger Williams – his topic will be: **ROGER WILLIAMS WAS NOT A SEEKER! So what does that mean exactly? We know that he doesn't attend **FRIDAY SEEKERS'** but what is he seeking???? Come and hear Stan explain all of this. Mark your calendars for this date.**

HAPPY THANKSGIVING TO YOU ALL --



DIANNE THYRET – FRIDAY SEEKERS' COORDINATOR

SILENT AUCTION

to benefit

PICA

**Saturday, December 6, 2014
5:00—7:00 PM (last bid 7:00)**

Grace Church
175 Mathewson Street
Providence, RI 02903

Please join us at our
Annual Celebration and Open House
for Wine, Hors D'oeuvres,
Holiday Warmth...
and a chance to bid on a wonderful selection
of gifts and treasures of all kinds.

2014 CHRISTMAS MEMORIALS

If you would like to have a poinsettia plant in Church

Christmas Eve - Wednesday, December 24, 2014

Please fill out this form and return it to the church office
on or before, but **no later than**

Friday, December 19, 2014!

(Please Print Clearly)

IN MEMORY OF: _____

GIVEN BY: _____

Number of Plants: _____ Cost: \$12.50 each

Please make your check payable to:

The First Baptist Church in America

Payment Must Accompany Order Form!



From the Board of Missions

RETIRED MINISTERS AND MISSIONARIES OFFERING



Thank You For...

1 Thessalonians: 13 “We remember before our God and Father your work, produced by faith, your labor prompted by loved, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

During the month of December, we will be collecting the Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering. The RMMO gives American Baptist congregations the chance to show our heartfelt appreciation for the service of ministers, missionaries and their widowed spouses who have inspired us. Our offering makes it possible to provide emergency assistance in times of crisis and to send a “Thank You” check to those who are eligible. Through generous giving in 2013, ABCUSA was able to provide \$1,141,295 in assistance. The goal for 2014 is \$1.2 million. Please consider giving generously to this important cause.

Every year at Christmas, we support some immigrant families in our community by buying them gifts. In the Fellowship Hall, there will be a tree with slips of paper giving options of what to buy. Participating provides a wonderful opportunity to express the spirit of this season of Advent. We hope that you will consider joining this important endeavor.



the Giving Tree



The FBCIA Cookbooks are ready! They are in the fellowship hall by the store and can be purchased for \$10. They make great stocking stuffers! I want to thank everyone who contributed recipes and the Sunday School kids who contributed art work. The money raised will go to support mission trips to La Romana.

The First Baptist Church in America
 75 North Main Street
 Providence, RI 02903
 Phone: 401-454-3418
 Fax: 401-421-4095
 E-Mail: fbc.inamerica@verizon.net
 Web: www.fbcia.org

Thomas R. McKibbens, Interim Pastor
 Linda Bausserman, Associate Pastor
 Stephen T. Martorella, Minister of Music
 Holly B. Edwards, Administrative Assistant
 Anne Gagan, Bookkeeper
 David Michel, Sexton
 Ivy Bermudez, Child Care Worker

Advent Sunday Calendar

Sun. Nov. 30	10:00 AM	Sunday School/College Bible Class/Sunday Morning Forum
	11:00 AM	Sunday Worship: Pastor Tom McKibbens - 1st Sunday in Advent Sermon: "Journey Toward Hope" Scripture: Mark 13:32-37
	12:15 AM	Guided Tour Mary Alice Kleiber
Sun. Dec. 07	10:00 AM	Sunday School/College Bible Class/Sunday Morning Forum
	11:00 AM	Sunday Worship: Pastor Tom McKibbens - 2nd Sunday in Advent Sermon: "With Blessing in His Hand" Scripture: Luke 1:26-38 Greeters: Deanna and Sam Beachen Ushers: Donna and Henry Campopiano
	12:15 AM	Guided Tour Stan Lemons
Sun. Dec 14	10:00 AM	Sunday School/College Bible Class/Sunday Morning Forum
	11:00 AM	Sunday Worship: Pastor Tom McKibbens - 3rd Sunday in Advent Sermon: "Choices That Matter" Scripture: Joshua 24:1-3a,14-25 Greeters: Mary Alice Kleiber and Lee McDaniel Ushers: Richard Lepore and Richard Aubin
	12:15AM	Tour Guide: Joanne Schneider

Mission Calendar

- ▶ Monthly Prayer Meeting in Fellowship Hall 2nd Saturday of the Month 9:30 AM.
- ▶ PICA Sunday is the 4th Sunday of the Month, Please bring non-perishable food for the food pantry.

Executive Meeting

- ▶ The next Executive Meeting will be held December 3.