

THE SPIRE

First Baptist Church in America Newsletter
November, 2022



◇RIPPLES IN THE POND

Have you ever done something that you considered to be relatively trivial, only to learn later that your act had great meaning and importance to somebody else? In the 1870s, there was a woman whose name is lost to history. She lived at the Tewksbury Almshouse, a desperate place for desperately poor people. She was kind to a small girl who was living there with her brother, Jimmie. When Jimmie died, Annie was left bereft, with no support and no hope. The kindness and encouragement of this woman helped Annie to regain her equilibrium and to overcome the circumstances in which she found herself. Annie grew up to be Anne Sullivan, the renowned teacher of Helen Keller, who helped change the way that persons with visual and hearing impairments are treated to this day. A small pebble tossed in a pond in the 1870s is still causing ripples centuries later.

A similar story can be found in our own American Baptist history. While studying Scripture on board their respective ships to India where they were to serve as Congregational missionaries, both Luther Rice and Adoniram Judson became convinced of the Baptist principle of believer's baptism. Upon their arrival in India, they were baptized and became Baptists. While far from trivial, this one action has created a tidal wave of good which exists to this day. Ann and Adoniram Judson became the first American Baptist international missionaries, while Rice returned to the United States to drum up enough support to keep them there. There are Baptists in Burma (now Myanmar) today who can still trace their family heritage to the one who heard the Good News from Adoniram Judson. And the Triennial Convention that Rice helped create is the parent body of all of the Baptist groups in America.

What lessons do these stories have for us today? Several come immediately to mind. One is that God is certainly at work in our world, helping our small efforts grow and flourish. Another is to be careful that the ripples we send out are positive ones. Perhaps the best way to view these stories, however, is as lessons in stewardship. God doesn't require that we plan the results of our actions. God simply asks that we give of the best we have to give. The unknown worker in Tewksbury, Massachusetts, gave love and concern to a small orphan child. Ann and Adoniram Judson gave their whole lives. Each of us as Christians needs to examine our resources and make sure that we are giving of our best. When we contribute to United Mission, when we agree to teach Sunday School, when we volunteer to go to New Orleans to build homes, when we assist refugees moving into our communities, we cannot know all of the ways that God will use those gifts. We can know, however, that he certainly will use them, allowing us to serve as God's hands and feet in our world.

"As you know yourselves, Philippians, in the early days of my mission, when I set out from Macedonia, you alone of all our congregations were my partners in payments and receipts; for even at Thessalonica you contributed to my needs, not once but twice over." *Philippians 4:15-16*

We see that ripples have been going out from the giving of unknown individuals even as long ago as the first century, when Paul's travels were funded by the sacrificial giving of the church at Philippi. We don't know the names of those individuals, but we certainly know the results of their stewardship. What ripples are you sending out from your actions today?

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◇ An Invitation from ABCORI

Dear Friends,

We are excited to announce a special event that we hope will be of interest to you and your congregation.

After being unable to host our annual Thanksgiving meal for the ABCORI family for the past two years, we invite you to join us at noon on **Saturday, November 12**, for a **Giving Thanks Luncheon**.

In addition to a delicious traditional turkey meal, the luncheon will feature an interactive program about giving thanks.

The cost is \$20 per person. Reservations may be made by contacting
(401) 522-9731 or info@abcori.org
by November 6.



◇ Sunday Forum for November

13th

Faith of Our Fathers: The Religious Beliefs of the Founding Fathers

Ruth Marris-Macaulay

20th

The Humanitarian Crisis in Ukraine

Myron Stachiw

27th

Advent Series I : Hope

Ruth Marris-Macaulay

◇ From the Finance committee

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS

At the annual meeting several years ago, it was agreed that members of the Charitable Baptist Society would be reminded before the end of the year that they needed to be a “contributor of record” of at least \$50 in order to maintain their membership in the CBS. The by-laws provide that if one is not a contributor of record each year, one is automatically dropped from the CBS. It is the Clerk’s responsibility to announce at the annual meeting the names of any and all persons being dropped. If you have a question about whether you are a member of the Charitable Baptist Society (the corporate entity for our church), please contact the Clerk, Stanley Lemons.

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Dr. Jamie Washam, Pastor
Stephen Martorella, Minister of Music
Holly Edwards, Administrative Assistant
Anne Gagan, Bookkeeper
Tony Zambarano, Sexton
Mauwa Bilobi, Childcare worker

◇ **Around FBCIA**



Stephen Martorella, our minister of music, spoke to the Adult Forum on the first Sunday of October on "Acknowledging the Heritage of African-American Spirituals."

Amber, a golden retriever, was the subject of the children's sermon on Sunday, October 30. Larry and Colleen Whelply explained how the dog is being trained to be "service dog," how going to church is part of that training.

