

THE SPIRE

First Baptist Church in America Newsletter

December

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR JAMIE

In this season of Advent, as we prepare for Christmas, I offer this meditation by Howard Thurman. May God's most precious gifts be in your home and heart this season and throughout the year.

*I place these gifts on my altar this Christmas;
Gifts that are mine, as the years are mine:
The quiet hopes that flood the earnest cargo of my dreams:
The best of all good things for those I love,
A fresh new trust for all whose faith is dim.
The love of life, God's precious gift in reach of all:
Seeing in each day the seeds of the morrow,
Finding in each struggle the strength of renewal,
Seeking in each person the face of my brother.
I place these gifts on my altar this Christmas;
Gifts that are mine, as the years are mine.*

Howard Thurman, *The Mood of Christmas* (1973), 26.



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FBCIA NEWS

Christmas Breakfast

The Board of Christian Education is hosting a Christmas Breakfast on Sunday, December 21st from 9:30 - 10:30am.

A signup sheet is posted in Fellowship Hall, please bring either an egg casserole, baked goods or fruit salad to share.

Camp Wightman

2026 SNOWBALL SLEEPOVER Traditional Camp Reunion

January 30 - February 1, 2026

January 30 - Feb 1. Drop-off is between 6–7 p.m. on Friday, and pickup is after lunch around 2 p.m. on Sunday. All meals on Saturday and Sunday are included. \$100.00

Sunday Morning Forum for December

12/7: Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day - Steven Seay

12/14: Lectio Divina - The Birth of Jesus - Ken Clauser

12/21: Christmas Breakfast!

12/28: Sharing our Stories - Nancy Wake

Birthdays in December

December 6, Martin, Zachary

December 6, Shinn, Allen

December 7, Ivins, Dan

December 11, Libertini, Jessica

December 11, Töppel, Heidi

December 12, Lepore, Kelsey

December 13, Puckett, Donna

December 13, Lepore, Emma

December 14, Beachen, Deanna

December 25, Kiana Folgo

December 30, Gendron-Petroff, Sharon

December 30, Martorella, Stephen

Special Meeting

**There will be a special meeting on
December 14th immediately after the
worship service, to affirm the desire of
a new member to join our church family.**

Snow Closures

When there is a parking ban in the city of
Providence due to inclement weather, church
services and other activities held at the church
will be cancelled until the parking ban is lifted.

Please tune in to your local television and radio
stations.

Pledges

It's not too late to send in your 2026 Pledge.

There are forms available on the Welcome
Table or you can call the church office.

2025 CHRISTMAS MEMORIALS

If you would like to have a poinsettia plant in Church on
Christmas Eve Wednesday, December 24, 2025
Please fill out this form and return it to the church office

I will take the plant home with me _____

I will donate the plant to a shut in _____

In lieu of flowers you may also make a donation to Better Lives RI

(Please Print Clearly)

IN MEMORY OR HONOR OF: _____

GIVEN BY: _____

Number of Plants: _____ Cost: \$17.00 each

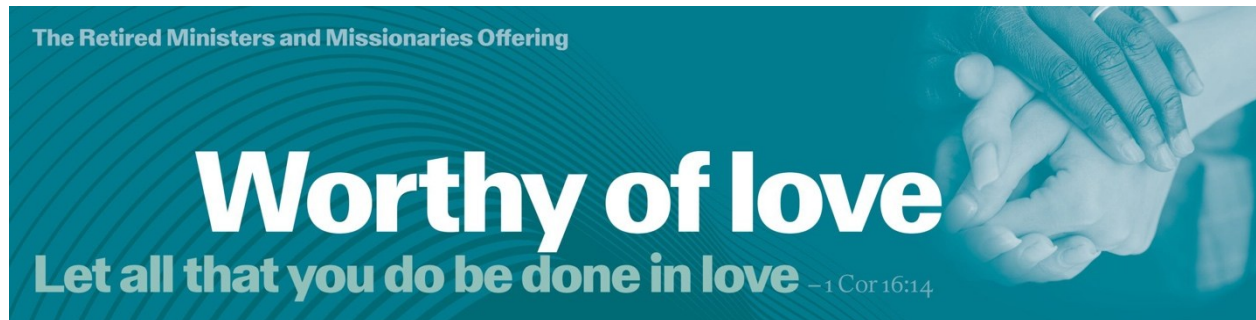
Please make your check payable to:

First Baptist Church in America (FBCIA)
with either Flowers or Better Live Rhode Island (BLRI)
in the memo line.

on or before, but no later than Monday, December 15, 2025!



Missions and Outreach



Every December, we remember the pastors, missionaries and leaders who have served American Baptist Churches USA churches and its ministries with the Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering. In 2024, ABCUSA distributed 3,331 thank you checks averaging \$174, a modest amount in which the gesture says far more than the dollars. Please consider donating generously to this offering. If you write a check, make it out to FBCIA with RMMO on the memo line. You can also donate in a church envelope and write RMMO on the outside.



In November, 10 of us toured Crossroads, the largest provider of housing and services to those experiencing homelessness in Rhode Island. We were able to visit the newly opened Summer Street apartments, which include 176 apartments for single adults experiencing homelessness. These individuals, who previously lived in single rooms with no kitchens and shared bathrooms, now have their own apartments with kitchens and private bathrooms. However, they are moving in without kitchen supplies. One way we can help is by donating pots and pans, dishes, silverware and food storage containers. Remember that these are single people cooking for one - so the equipment shouldn't be too large. These donations should be in good condition, something that you yourself would use. You can donate these items in the Fellowship Hall.

or school supplies. These items are free for them on a weekly basis. You can donate these in the Fellowship Hall.



During the winter months, we will be collecting hats, gloves and scarves for individuals in our community who need them in the cold weather. These may be given to people in our church family, used in Blessing Bags or sent to Crossroads. Please consider donating to help our neighbors stay warm. You may bring these items to the Fellowship Hall.



Although **SNAP food benefits have been restored, that does not mean that the food shortage is ended.** In 2024, approximately 38% of households in Rhode Island were food insecure. Our support of the Better Lives Rhode Island food pantry is crucial, especially during the winter months. Bins are at the top of the stairs as you enter the Meeting House. The need is great; so please, consider donating.



Blessing Bags

We distribute our Blessing Bags to individuals in need. These include peanut butter crackers, granola bars, bottled water, sanitary wipes, socks and a list of available resources. You can leave these items in the bins in the Fellowship Hall. And please, take bags to distribute.



We are also collecting supplies for Youth Pride Rhode Island. Youth Pride hosts a community pantry that serves over 700 youth each year. The pantry is open during the week for young people in need of food, clothes, toiletries, and/or school supplies. These items are free for them on a weekly basis. You can donate these in the Fellowship Hall.



The focus for Sunday November 2 was the 23rd Psalm. Pastor Jamie Washam and Rabbi Emily Goldberg Winer shared the pulpit in the morning worship.

The clergy led the people in a consideration of the 23d Psalm through *lectio divinio*, reading various translations of the psalm, small group and general discussion, and the sharing of personal meanings of the words of the psalm

In a dialogue in the pulpit, Pastor Washam and Rabbi Goldbreg Winer shared ideas and insights about the 23rd Psalm.



Our own Rev. Cheryl Harris, the preacher on November 16, engaged with Heidi Toppel as Pastor Jamie Washam beamed. David & Karen McVicker are in the background.



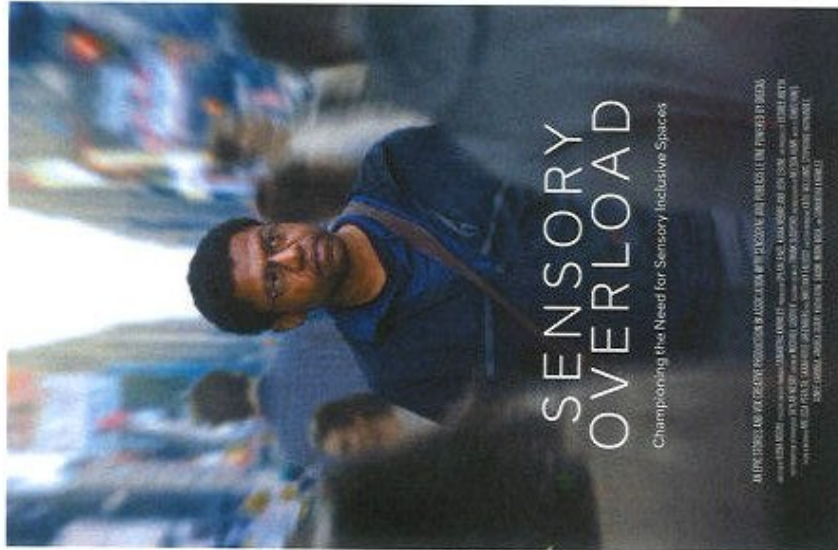
Ary Peralta, our Sunday sexton, has moved to Florida, but he remembered us and ordered a box of Dunkin' Donuts for the coffee hour for Sunday November 23. Over the years he usually brought donuts for folks to eat. Cindy Martorella is holding the gift.

Our Hearty appreciation to Cindy for all her help while we look for our new Sunday Sexton.

Joseph Georgiav Kolishovski was born November 25, and the church celebrated his arrival with our traditional red rose on Sunday, November 30. We joined his parents, Naledi and Georgi Kolishovski, celebrating this wonderful event.



SENSORY OVERLOAD



DECEMBER 14th AT 1:00PM

THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN AMERICA

75 N Main Street, Providence, RI 02903

SENSORY OVERLOAD

So much of the world still views neurodivergence as negative, and sensory sensitivities as strange. The groundbreaking documentary, *Sensory Overload*, directed by Tribeca X winner, Kiana Moore and produced by Oscar shortlisted director, Samantha Knowles, is shifting that narrative, telling the true stories of individuals who prove that these aren't deficiencies - they're just differences.

In the film, you'll meet a neurodivergent lab technician and labor advocate, a dentist and father specializing in sensory sensitive care, and a mother adapting to the needs of her neurodivergent children. You'll also hear from advocates and experts in the fields of neurodivergence, policy, and health care, including a Haleon changemaker lobbying on behalf of the sensory sensitive community.

Through their voices and stories, viewers will gain a better understanding of how all brains function. We'll gain a window into the often-overlooked connection between sensory sensitivities and oral care. We'll witness the ways neurodiversity can be a superpower, how it exists on a spectrum that touches so many of us, and how a deeper understanding of neurodiversity can help to create a more inclusive-and wonderfully sensitive-world for everyone. This isn't just a film about the neurodivergent spectrum, it's about the spectrum of human experience.

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Phone: 401-454-3418
E-Mail: fbcia1638@gmail.com
Website: www.fbcia.org

Rev. Dr. Jamie Washam, Pastor
Stephen Martorella, Minister of Music
Holly Edwards, Administrative Assistant
Anne Gagan, Bookkeeper
Tony Zambarano, Sexton
Victoria Pfanstiehl, ASL Interpreter
Ashley Muchiri, Nursery Room Assistant
Jayonna Harris and Mangye Walanga,
Elementary School Teachers

Statement of Welcome

Roger Williams gathered the First Baptist Church in America in 1638 on the bedrock of religious liberty, with its principles of soul freedom and the separation of church and state. Together, we continue our ministry of welcome and liberation.

This congregation honors its Baptist heritage. Many of our members are lifelong Baptists and others come from varied denominational and religious backgrounds. We welcome all people of every age, race, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, cultural background, socio-economic status, mental or physical ability, marital status, and any other distinctions of society. We are diverse people united in Christ. We remain a safe harbor.

Driveway Parking

A gentle reminder that parking in the church driveway on Sunday is reserved for those with mobility issues and small children. You do not need a handicap placard. Please try to pull up when parking so others are also able to park there. Thank you.

Little Free Library

Our Little Free Library is always in need of more books. If you have some to share, please place them in the little library directly (and do some browsing while there!) or leave them in the office for distribution over time. Thanks!