



## A Note From the Pastor

BY REV. TIM SCHAEFER

As we step into the new year, we acknowledge the challenges that continue to shape our world—division, fear, misinformation, and isolation. These forces dominate our political climate and the fabric of communal life. Yet, in the midst of this turmoil, the church is uniquely positioned to offer a different narrative. We are called to be centers of care and connection, places where the needs of our neighbors are not only seen but met with compassion and action.



Now more than ever, our faith community is called to be a pastoral presence, advocating for those who are struggling, isolated, or marginalized. In the coming year, let us be a source of hope and healing, showing up for our neighbors in tangible ways and fostering connection. As we continue this journey together, may we embody Christ's love and bring peace and justice to our fractured world.

# CONGREGATIONAL NEWS & UPDATES

## Poetry on the Wall

BY BRENDA LEMPP

The new display on the wall just outside the sanctuary to the right of the memorial bell is a memorial tribute of four poems chosen to display writer mentors who facilitated and participated in writing groups in our congregation. Authors and poems will be changed seasonally.

"Faith" written by Lenore McComas Coberly and reprinted from her book "For I Am Mountainborn". "Return to Green Lake" written by Louise Johnson and reprinted from "A People of Faith: Poetry of American Baptists in Wisconsin" and edited by Lenore McComas Coberly. "Christmas Is" written by Phyllis Reisdorf and reprinted from her chapbook "Water, Water Everywhere, So Many Drops to Drink." "Christmas Birds" written by Palmer Haynes and reprinted from his chapbook titled "Apprentice Haymaker."

## Board of Trustees Update

BY BILL HAUSLER FOR THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### Key items from the December Trustees Meeting:

- We continued our discussions related to cleaning services, administrative assistant, and building manager.
- We discussed a number of personnel items.
- Several thermostats with remote capability were installed with likely more to follow!
- We reviewed financial reports and discussed other financial items.
- We discussed sidewalk construction around the church due this spring.

# CONGREGATIONAL NEWS & UPDATES

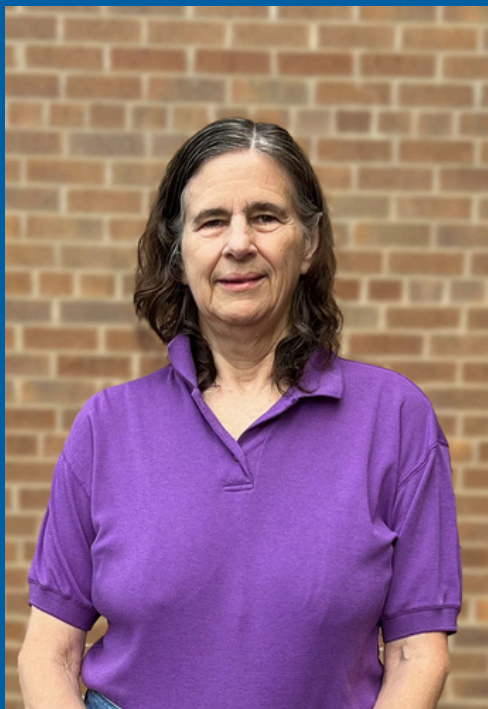
## 2025 Church Office Hours

BY BILL HAUSLER FOR THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The church office will now be staffed by our Administrative Assistant, Blanca James, from 9 AM - 1 PM, Tuesday through Friday.

### Why the change?

In assessing the tasks that Blanca has been performing we discovered that a large amount of her time was spent on building items and working with renters. Because of this (and more efficient office technology) the Trustees decided, with Blanca's blessing, to divide these tasks into two areas - office administration (administrative assistant) and rental/building related (rental manager). Until a rental manager is in place those tasks will be covered by Pastor Tim and others. Questions? Please feel free to contact me!



## Financial Update

BY NANCY MOORE

### November 2024 Budget Financials: *Year-To-Date Actual*

Revenues --- \$310,991.34

Expenses --- \$281,855.97

Surplus (Deficit) --- \$29,135.37

The bookkeeper's full report is available upon request. Please email Nancy Moore at [bookkeeping@firstbaptistmadison.org](mailto:bookkeeping@firstbaptistmadison.org).



# CONGREGATIONAL NEWS & UPDATES

## Be a Delegate at the ABC-USA Biennial

BY REV. TIM SCHAEFER

This year's Biennial Mission Summit will be held in Omaha, NE July 3-6.

The theme of this year's biennial is "Come Seek Living Water" and will feature the following keynote speakers:

- *Rev. Dr. Gina Jacobs-Strain General Secretary, American Baptist Churches USA*
- *Rev. Dr. TaNikka Sheppard Executive Minister, Cleveland Baptist Association*
- *Rev. Dr. Greg Mamula Executive Minister, American Baptist Churches of Nebraska*
- *Rev. Dr. Zau Sam Lahtaw Senior Pastor, First Kachin Baptist Church of America*

*Please contact me if you are interested in serving as a voting church delegate.*



## DEIB Taskforce Update

BY BETH GUNSHOR

The DEIB task force is in the final stages of developing a survey that will be shared with the congregation sometime in the next few months. We are also beginning to make plans to hold a series of small group sessions and interviews with members, potentially in early spring.

We are enjoying working with our consultant, Melvin Bray, and are learning a lot. If you'd like to support Melvin's brand new family business, consider purchasing a book (maybe for our Little Free Library!) from [knowledgefam.com](https://www.knowledgefam.com)



# CONGREGATIONAL NEWS & UPDATES

## Ministry Interest Group

BY DENNIS RAY FOR THE BOARD OF CHRISTIAN OUTREACH

### SUPPORTING IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

You can receive emails with information about current issues facing immigrants and refugees, and how the community is responding. There is great concern about proposed deportation actions by the incoming Administration, so much so that immigrant and refugee support groups are mobilizing, including **the Dane Sanctuary Coalition** that First Baptist Church joined in 2017.

If you would like to be kept informed of such actions and issues, your email address can be added to a First Baptist Immigrant and Refugee Interest Group that is being formed by the Board of Christian Outreach. **To subscribe, send an email to Dennis Ray at [djray608@gmail.com](mailto:djray608@gmail.com).** You can unsubscribe at any time.

## Be a Healing House Volunteer

BY DENNIS RAY

The Healing House is an 8-bed facility providing 24/7 recuperative care to members of homeless families by medically-trained staff and volunteers. Three meals a day and childcare assistance are also available.

Case management services by The Road Home Dane County helps to end the cycle of homelessness and locate permanent housing. First Baptist volunteers have been preparing evening meals for about 10 people two days per quarter.

*Contact the church office for information or volunteer.*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Spiritual Renewal Group 1

EVERY 1st & 3rd MONDAY | 7:00PM VIA ZOOM

The next book the group will start reading is "The Mystics Would Like a Word: Six Women Who Met God and Found a Spirituality for Today"

Starting January 27th (skipping the Monday of Martin Luther King, Jr Day) and will continue to the first Monday in March. At that time the group will decide to continue with this book or change to readings from "Good Enough".

Our first reading will be the intro and first chapter about Teresa of Avila.

*Contact Bill Hausler for the schedule or ZOOM information.*

### MLK Day Observance

MONDAY, JANUARY 20 | OVERTURE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

**5:00 PM – Freedom Songs Sing-Along**

**6:00 PM – Program**

#### **Welcoming Bishop Vashti McKenzie**

Bishop McKenzie was the first female elected to office in history of the AME Church. She is currently President/General Secretary of the National Council of Churches where she provides executive leadership to 37 denominations, 100,000 churches and 30 million people.

The program will also feature the MLK Community Choir and presentation of the 2025 MLK Humanitarian Awards by Madison Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway and Dane County Executive Melissa Agard.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## In Times of Uncertainty and Fear

SATURDAY, JANUARY 25 | 4:00 PM

Many of us are worried about the future. We fear for those in our community, for our loved ones, for ourselves. In a time when racial equity efforts are being banned, when LGBTQIA+ rights are threatened, when laws protecting transgender safety are at risk, when we're watching a genocide unfold before our eyes . . . when justice for all becomes more and more justice for the few, it can be hard to find a way forward.

**The First Baptist Racial Justice Team invites you to gather in community for a service of meditation and candlelight in the sanctuary.** We will name our fears, remember what comforts and sustains us, and search for a way forward.



## Hourglass Bible Study

JANUARY - AUGUST 2025 | 4:00 PM VIA ZOOM

Jeremiah was not just a bullfrog!

Beginning January 12, the Hourglass Bible Study will be undertaking the challenge of reading the book of Jeremiah, focusing both on the book's historical context and on its relevance to today's circumstances.

Join us as we explore, question, learn, and laugh together. Come enjoy our accepting and congenial group as you rummage around in the Biblical past and discover how it still is relevant today.



# BIRTHDAYS AND PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

## JANUARY 2025

1 CORAL B	29 JEFF M
4 ANN N	31 BRYN A
5 BRENDA L	
9 JUDY S	
23 PAUL C	
23 MARY R	
25 VIRGINIA E	
26 AMANDA C	
26 HERMAN T	
29 DENNIS R	



## FEBRUARY 2025

5 NATHANIEL C	21 ROBERT N
6 LYNETTE M	22 KATIE D
7 BARB H	25 MARIANNE D
7 PAUL H JR	26 JOHN M
7 EVAN Z	27 SUZANNE V
8 DIANE B	
9 BARBARA E	
14 JUNGJA HL	
14 VANESSA K	
19 SUSAN D	

## Prayer Wall

### Our Church Family & Community Members:

Chevy Bulyar; Deidra; the Young Family; Russel Novkov & the Roth Family; Judy, her son Joshua, and family; Nancy E

### Our Homebound:

Ann P; Linda O; Sheila D; Susan H



**Please visit our Prayer Wall, where you will see prayer requests from and for our members, friends, and families.**

### Share your joys & concerns with us!

To submit a prayer request or view prayer requests submitted by others, scan the QR code or visit [firstbaptistmadison.org/prayer](https://firstbaptistmadison.org/prayer).

[GO TO WALL](#)