



A Note From the Pastor

BY REV. TIM SCHAEFER

As we begin a new year, we do so with hope. We give thanks for the ways love showed up among us in 2025—meals shared, prayers offered, justice pursued, and grace practiced even when it was hard. And we begin this year clear-eyed about the world as it is: aching, divided, and yet beautiful.

The Christian story has never been about escaping the world, but about transforming it to fulfill God's promise of justice.



In the year ahead, may we be a community that tells the truth, practices courage, widens the circle, and insists on hope—especially when hope feels fragile.

New years are not about perfect beginnings, but faithful steps. May we walk them together, grounded in love and committed to justice, trusting that God is still making all things new.

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS & UPDATES

DEIB Task Force Update

The DEIB Task Force is currently writing its final report. While this work has taken longer than expected, we are looking forward to completing it soon. We want to share a preview of the report's focus with the congregation. Guided by our consultant, Melvin Bray, we have been examining how power shows up in our church across four areas: people and resources, practices and results, rules and stories, and options and opportunities. We are learning that many church policies are hard to access or understand, while other rules are unspoken and visible mainly to those with power. Our challenge is to reorder, repair, and reimagine these dynamics so our church becomes a truly inclusive, diverse, and equitable community where power is shared and all belong. We thank Barry Kita, who recently resigned for personal reasons, for his dedicated service. Thank you for your prayers and support. We look forward to sharing our work in early 2026.

Bryn Abramson, Beth Gunshor, Amanda Huff, Sara Kelm, Jill Thomas, Barry Trepczyk

2026 Stewardship Update

BY PAUL CHOTLOS, MODERATOR

2026 Pledge Update

Thank you for making a pledge for Church Operations in 2026. Given the financial pressures that we all contend with, these commitments are inspiring acts of love.

As of December 31, the church has received 47 pledges. Of these, 2 were first-time pledges. Our current total is \$230,489. Last year, the church received 55 pledges. If you would like to make a financial gift to the church, but have not done so yet, there is still an opportunity before the Church Council updates the proposed church budget. As always, we invite you to give out of your abundance and with a thankful heart.



CONGREGATIONAL NEWS & UPDATES

December Trustee Updates

BY BILL HAUSLER FOR THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- A workgroup has been identifying possible uses of the Russell Novkov bequest. The list was received and discussed. Other groups will also provide feedback regarding the list.
- Zach Busch continues as our Interim organist, choir director, accompanist. A search will begin for a replacement Rental Manager.
- We are in the process of getting bids for the Focus on Energy projects: Lighting and Air Conditioning. Bids will also be obtained for the Sanctuary Sound System project, which has about 75% of the projected expense already committed.
- This summer the church will be billed for its part of the cost for last summer's road reconstruction. We expect the cost to be about \$10,000 which can be paid over an 8-year period.



Financial Update

BY NANCY MOORE

November 2025 Budget Financials: *Year-To-Date Actual*

Revenues --- \$284,626.85
Expenses --- \$282,737.07
Surplus (Deficit) -- \$1,889.78

The bookkeeper's full report is available upon request. Please email Nancy Moore at bookkeeping@firstbaptistmadison.org.

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS & UPDATES

Thank You First Baptist

BY MEG NIELSEN FOR THE TRIANGLE COMMUNITY MINISTRY

Thank you to First Baptist Church for the generous donation of 2026 calendars and Christmas cards for Triangle residents. Katy Marty would have been so proud of her congregation. A faithful member of First Baptist Church, Katy was also a Triangle resident and a member of the Triangle Community Ministry Board. Though she died peacefully last December, she is still deeply missed.

Your continued support of her community and our work is truly appreciated. With gratitude from Deacon Meg Nielsen and the Triangle Community Ministry Board and residents.

Blanket Donations for the Homeless

BY BARBARA HENNING FOR THE BOARD OF OUTREACH



Madison Street Medicine is asking for blanket donations for people living outside. It is a community-focused healthcare organization dedicated to serving individuals experiencing homelessness and those with limited access to traditional medical services mostly around State Street and the Capitol. They provide free healthcare and essential supplies, **including blankets.**

Please drop off blanket donations in the drop box by the church's back door. Thank you for helping keep our neighbors warm., <https://www.madisonstreetmedicine.org/about/>.

For questions, contact Barb Henning.

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS & UPDATES

Green Team – Salt Wise this Winter

BY BARB HENNING FOR THE GREEN TEAM

Once you put salt down, it doesn't go away. Public Health Madison & Dane County recommend you become aware of the negative and harmful effects of salting. Salt changes the composition of soil, slows down plant growth and weakens the concrete, brick and stone that make up our homes, garages, bridges and roads, and salt washes into our waters, putting our [freshwater resources](#)(link is external) at risk.

Follow these tips when snow and ice hit:

Shovel snow promptly before it turns into ice.--Use the right amount of salt. A coffee mug of salt to treat an entire 20-foot driveway or 10 sidewalk squares.--Switch to sand when it's extra cold. Salt doesn't work in temperatures below 15 degrees.--Learn about it at: [Wisconsin Salt Wise](#)(link is external).

Small Group Updates

YOUNG ADULTS GROUP

Young adults—come connect this winter! Check out upcoming gatherings and find community. Upcoming events can be found at firstbaptistmadison.org/events.

SPIRITUAL RENEWAL GROUP

Meets via Zoom, 7PM, first and third Mondays of each month.

We are reading and discussing the book [Everything Happens for a Reason – And Other Lies I've Loved](#) by Kate Bowler.

Modified Reading Schedule: We will be meeting Monday, January 5th and discussing chapters 6 and 7. The group will not be meeting on the 19th – MLK Holiday. Please contact Bill Hausler with any questions at hhausler@tds.net.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Young Adult Outing

SATURDAY, JANUARY 10 | 1:30 PM

Ice Skating Fun

Enjoy the fresh winter air and great company.

Join the ice skating fun at

Lake Ridge Bank River Rink in Monona (link). This outing is a great way to stay active and connect with others. Bring warm clothing, ice skates (if you have them - rentals available), water, and a positive attitude. No experience is required. Call or contact Amanda Huff to let her know you are coming or call the church office.



Martin Luther King, Jr. Worship Service

SUNDAY, JANUARY 18 | 10:30 AM



Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

FBC and the King Coalition are hosting its MKL 2026 Ecumenical Service Celebration. Join us as we come together to honor the life, legacy, and vision of Dr. King. This special event will be a time for reflection, inspiration, and community as we celebrate the values of justice, service, equality, and unity.

Call the office or Dr. Gloria Hawkins, King Coalition's co-chair.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Retirement Celebration

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8 | 10:30 AM

Mark Your Calendar!

After many years of faithful service, Ted Reinke will be retiring.

We will celebrate and give thanks for his many years of dedication and wonderful music during worship on February 8th. Please join us as we honor his service and bid him a heartfelt farewell.



Save the Date – February 15 after Worship

11:30 AM – FELLOWSHIP HALL



Essential church business will be conducted including the proposed 2026 church budget and reports from boards and teams.

A hybrid format will be used where participants can either attend in person or online via Zoom.

BIRTHDAYS AND PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

JANUARY 2026

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



FEBRUARY 2026

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

Prayer Wall

Our Church Family & Community Members:

Barry K.; Curt Grinde, Peter Valentine; Preethi's son Joel

Our Homebound:

Linda O; Sheila D; Susan H



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

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.