

The Friendly Communicator

January 2025

A Word from the Pastor

Happy New Years, church family! As we look back on 2024, I want to express a heartfelt thanks to all our church leaders who served so faithfully and selflessly throughout the year. Your dedication and hard work have made a lasting impact on our church and community. I also want to welcome and pray for those who will be stepping into new leadership roles in 2025. May God continue to equip, inspire, and guide our church leaders in the year ahead.

As we begin this new year, we are also excited to offer additional classes for all ages to grow in our faith. I want to invite all students in middle school and high school, as well as adults who are **considering baptism or becoming members** of our church, to a special informational meeting on **Sunday, January 12th**, immediately following the worship service. This meeting will provide an opportunity to learn more about what it means to follow Christ through baptism and what church membership involves. It's a great chance to ask questions about our American Baptist heritage and our Christian faith.

Additionally, I want to remind everyone about our **Quarterly Congregational Business Meeting** on **Sunday, January 19th**, also immediately following the worship service. This is an important time for us to gather as a church family to reflect on the work God is doing in and through us, discuss upcoming plans, and vote on key decisions that will guide our ministry in the months ahead. Your voice and participation matter, and I encourage all members to attend and engage in the vision and direction of our church in this new year.

May we continue to serve one another with love and unity as we seek to fulfill God's mission together in the year ahead. Blessings to each of you!

Warmly,

Pastor Stephen
Office: (414) 258-7400

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JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

3	Sue Brown
4	Sarah Byleen
4	Pastor Stephen
8	William Thayer, Jr.
13	Jake Brophey
14	Karl Byleen
15	Heather Leitner
23	Ted Hertel, Jr.
27	Sarah Smith

If we have inadvertently missed your special day, please let the office know—our apologies.

2025 Annual Meeting

The 2025 Annual Congregational Meeting and Potluck will be held Sunday, January 19th after worship. Annual Report booklets, 2025 Church Directories, and 2024 financial statements will be distributed. Be sure to attend the meeting and make your voice heard!

Suggested items for the third Sunday (January 19th) food and hygiene collection for the Milwaukee Christian Center are **pasta sauce** and **toilet paper**. Please place your donations in the bins inside the office door entrance.

Golden Guys & Gals in 2025

Members of the 3Gs: Please mark your calendars for 1:30 pm, Tuesday, Feb 18, 2025, to see George and Martha Washington portrayed at Clement Manor. Details will appear in the February Communicator.

The leadership committee is planning a mix of new activities and perennial favorites for 2025, guided by the results of the survey which was conducted at the Dec 14 Christmas Party at the Brass Key Restaurant.

The survey confirmed that the organ concert performed by Mary Schecher, the picnic at the Jaeck home on Phantom Lake, and the Annual Christmas Party continue to be favorites.

Skydiving plummeted to the bottom of the survey's preference list, even though five members expressed a strong interest in the activity.

Remember, if you are age 50 or older you are automatically a member of the 3Gs. Dues are \$5.00 per year, payable to Kathy McDonald. If you haven't yet participated in any of our activities, we invite you to join us. Keep an eye on the Communicator for upcoming events.

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November 2024 Financial Income Report

General Receipts

Envelopes	\$15,825.00
Loose Offerings	99.00
Church School	106.90
Thanksgiving	35.00
Christmas	60.00
Total	\$16,125.95

Miscellaneous Receipts

Milwaukee Myanmar Christian Church	300.00
Stained Glass	3,289.86
Total	\$3,589.86

Communion Offering

Guest House	72.00
Total	\$72.00

Mission Offering

America for Christ	20.00
Grand Avenue Club	150.00
Milwaukee Christian Center	150.00
World Mission Offering	850.00
Total	\$1,170.00

Deposited Total **\$20,957.81**

Baptism & Church Membership

Have you considered being baptized? Or becoming a member of First Baptist Church? If so, please come to the informational meeting on Sunday, January 12 after the worship service. Adults as well as students in middle school or high school are invited to attend.

Fellowship Fund Offering

The Communion Offering for January is designated for the Fellowship Fund.

The name “Fellowship Fund” may be confusing. People associate the name with the fellowship time that follows Sunday worship in Fellowship Hall, and mistakenly think that the fund is used to buy coffee, cookies, and treats. But that’s not it at all.

Instead, the Fellowship Fund, according to the Church Constitution, “is for the needy members of the Church and Community”. One of the responsibilities of the Diaconate is to distribute money from the Fellowship Fund. Such disbursements are made discreetly and confidentially.

Trustees at Work

The Trustees thank John House for his craftsmanship and patience in repairing the Christmas decorations closet twice in 2024. The closet, adjacent to the stairs going downward from the office door entrance, had sustained water damage over the years. It was not until the repairs were completed, and damaged again, that the true source of the problem was revealed by heavy rain: a drainpipe under the wheelchair ramp was plugged. Hydro-jetting was required to remove the plug. Then the ground between the building and the ramp was carefully graded to insure the same water problem does not reoccur.

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FROM THE DIREKTR

New beginning

Every day is a fresh start

Walk with the Lord every day

You can make a difference in someone's life

Each act of kindness has a ripple effect

Always trust in the Lord

Remember, God loves you!

As we begin 2025, let's fill our lives with hope and love. Let's try each day to bring joy to someone – even if it is only with a smile. Look for opportunities to share God's love. Let these be your new year's resolutions and we will change the world!

A special "Thank You" to all the musicians who provided music during Advent and Christmas. Your hard work is appreciated and adds so much to worship! Enjoy your two weeks of rest – you deserve it!

Mary Schecher

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RING OUT THOSE GOLDEN CHRISTMAS BELLS!



Welcome sign at Library Square



The crowd gathered early to get the best seats

Our bell choir, the Jubilation Ringers, made a Christmas Season visit to the seniors who reside at Library Square, just a few blocks from the church. Our five ringers, plus director Mary Schecher, played a half hour concert of Christmas music in front of a full lobby. Among others were such favorites as *Let It Snow*, *Frosty the Snowman*, *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*, *Jingle Bells*, *Winter Wonderland*, and the ringers concluded with *We Wish You a Merry Christmas*. The audience enjoyed it so much that they sang right along as the bells rang out!



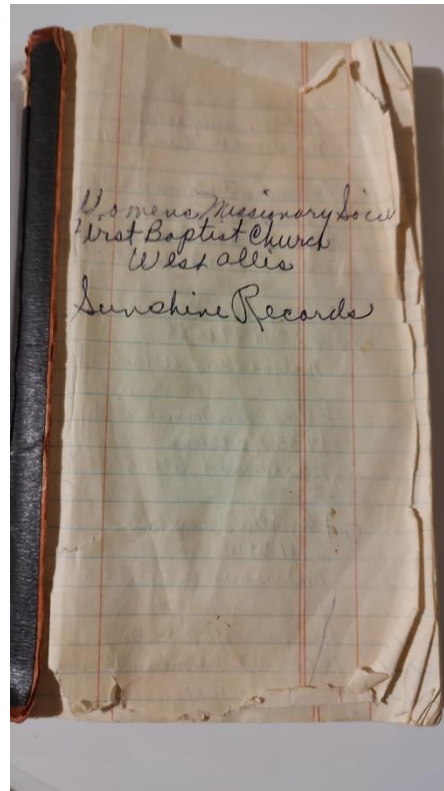
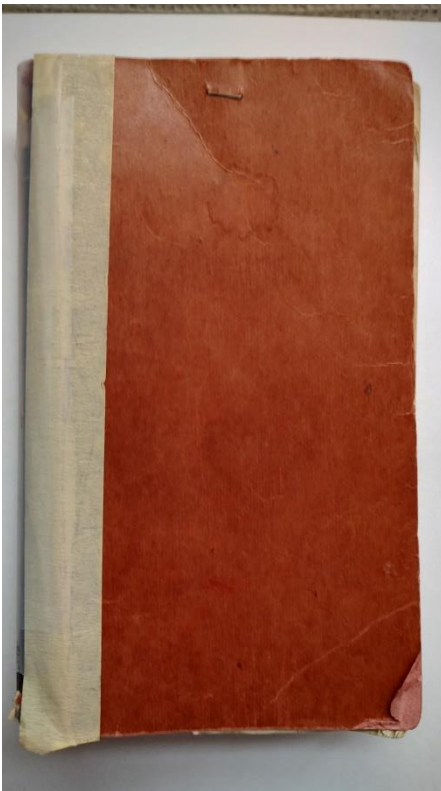
The full concert was repeated the following Sunday in Fellowship Hall after the worship service so that the entire congregation (including visitors from Underwood) could enjoy it.

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HISTORY ROOM DONATION

Occasionally a church member (or former member) will come across a significant piece of First Baptist Church history and donate it to the church's History Room. This time our thanks go to Terry Arnold for his contribution. His wife, Sharon, had been the longtime chair of the Sunshine Committee of the AB Women's Ministries. As such, she kept meticulous records of cards sent to church members in a little book titled "Women's Missionary Society Sunshine Records." Terry recently donated that record to the History Room (by way of the ABWM).

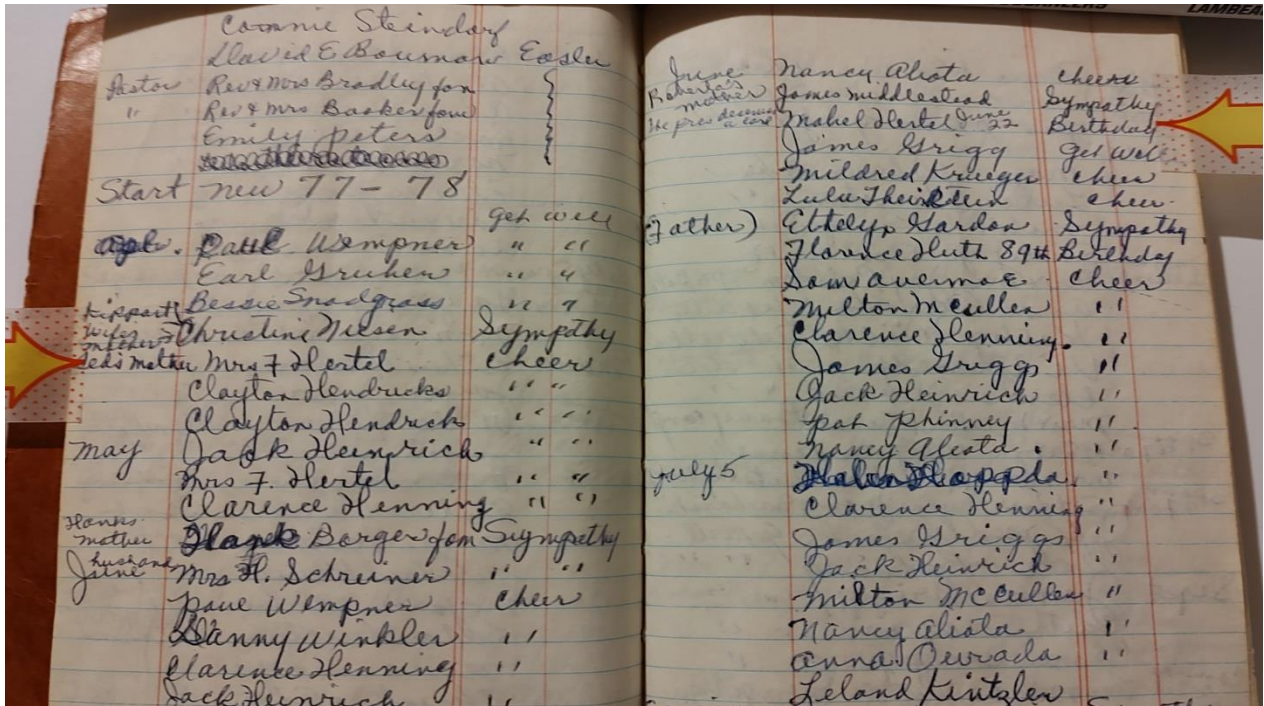


The book dates back fifty years, to 1975 and is filled with all sorts of historical information. The introductory portion contains a listing of hospitals and nursing homes, presumably so that the person responsible for sending cards could have ready access to addresses of members who were receiving care but were not recuperating in their homes. The next section (1975-1982) contains a list of (doubtless reimbursable!) expenses for cards and stamps, as well as receipts of cash contributed to the fund. While an assortment of handwriting appears, two names are signed to the records of this section: Ruth Dalberg and Luella Wassweiler.

The final – and by far the longest – section contains records from 1976 through 2022. Here there are meticulous entries for every card sent during those years, whether for birthdays, Easter, Christmas, get well, or sympathy. Notations of the cost of stamps in those years are also interesting. For example in 1985, stamps were 22 cents with gradual increases over time to 58 cents in the final (2022) entries.

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Entries from 1977 showing names, including “Ted [Hertel Sr]’s Mother” and “Mabel Hertel”

11-26	Kathy Schuttler	Idm	GW		
12-16	Jean Nowakowski		Christ.	.47	
12-16	Charlotte Laeck		Christ.	.47	
12-16	Susan Simons		Christ.	.47	
12-16	Charles Graham		Christ.	.47	
12-16	Arlene Canity		Christ.	.47	
12-16	Floora Radmer		Christ.	.47	
12-16	Gloria Darcy		Christ.	.47	
12-16	Virginia Junright		Christ.	.47	
12-16	Ed. Kohler		Christ.	.47	
12-16	Mary Beldin		Christ.	.47	
12-16	Jane Cordie		Christ.	.47	
12-16	Frances Wilbur		Christ.	.47	
12-16	Althea Zimmerman		Christ.	.47	
12-16	Jean Nowakowski		GW	.47	
2018					
1-31	Ellen Ribbink		Sym.	.47	
1-31	Charles Graham	Fam.	Sym.	.47	
2-1	Susan Simons		B.D.	.47	
2-12	Anne Wyszowski		B.D.	.47	
3-19	Rosemary Vales		B.D.	.47	
3-20	Kim Drost		B.D.	.47	
4-1	Maryne Japinski		Easter	.47	
4-1	Mary Beldin		Easter	.47	
4-1	Arlene Canity		Easter	.47	
4-1	Jean Nowakowski		Easter	.47	
4-1	Floora Radmer		Easter	.47	
4-1	Ellen Ribbink		B.D.	.47	
4-1	Dot Phinney		Easter	.50	
4-1	Gloria Darcy		Easter	.50	
4-1	Marilyn Hazard		Easter	.50	
4-1	Ed. Kohler		Easter	.50	
4-1	Virginia Junright		Easter	.50	
4-16	Stamp from ABW			25.00	20.00
4-22	Cal Stanke		B.D.	.50	
4-25	Mary Beldin		B.D.	.50	
4-28	Trudi Madorado		B.D.	.50	
4-17	Kathy McDonald		G.W.	.50	
4-17	Lynn Kelly		G.W.	.50	
5-12	Maryne Japinski		B.D.	.50	
5-22	Rev. Arlo Reichter		B.D.	.50	
5-29	Carol Kosobucki		B.D.	.50	
5-16	Nancy Byleen		G.W.	.50	
5-16	Harry Hertel		G.W.	.50	
6-12	Fred Wilson		B.D.	.50	
6-12	Jane Zunker		G.W.	.50	

2018 entries made by Sharon Arnold. Note all the familiar names and the changing stamp prices.

Thanks again to Terry for donating this fascinating look into the previous fifty years of FBC WA and AB Women’s history – and to Sharon and the women over that time who made it possible!

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Baptism



In memory of Jennie Nobles

The sacrament of Baptism is symbolized by the water, shown in three stylized waves. The dove refers to the Baptism of Christ in the Jordan: “And behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him” (Matt 3:10). These two symbols – the water and the dove, illustrate also the words: “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). The rays coming down from heaven signify the grace of God bestowed on the faithful in the Holy Baptism.

The Baptism Window will be the topic of a January sermon.