



THE  
**First Baptist Church**  
OF THE CITY OF WASHINGTON D.C.

TWICE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | NOVEMBER 21, 2016



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## FROM PASTOR JULIE



PASTOR JULIE  
PENNINGTON-RUSSELL

### Thanks•giv•ing n 1: *the act or occasion of giving thanks, especially to God.*

I'm so happy for the chance to name out loud here just a few of the many reasons why I'm so very grateful to be part of the First Baptist DC family:

- I'm thankful for worship that points us to God.
  - I'm thankful for the men and women here who, for decades, have walked beside one another in happiness and in hardship.
  - I'm thankful for a staff that laughs together, even as we lean into the challenges of ministry.
  - I'm thankful for a choir whose artistry is matched only by their camaraderie.
  - I'm thankful for young adults who forsake their warm beds every second Sunday to serve bacon and eggs to the residents at Christ House.
  - I'm thankful for the monthly bologna-and-cheese ministry of the men and women who assemble 450 sandwiches for hungry people, and have a lot of fun together in the process.
  - I'm thankful for the laypeople who show up to open our sanctuary every weekday for people seeking soul space.
  - I'm thankful for women and men who model patience in parenting and devotion in marriage.
- I'm thankful for children who show us what wide-eyed love for Jesus looks like, and for teenagers who are working out their faith as the plates shift beneath their feet.
  - I'm thankful for senior adults who tithe and support missions on their fixed income and who could write a book about faith, sacrifice and commitment.
  - I'm thankful for those who remind us that church is less about buildings and budgets and bylaws and more about Spirit and surrender and transformation.
  - I'm thankful for people who are willing to risk being transparent for the sake of authentic community.

In short, I am deeply, truly thankful for you, my FBC family. I could fill up this newsletter with names and stories of how you show me regularly what it means to be a Christ follower.

And of course, no thanksgiving tribute would be complete without an expression of gratitude for Tim, my true companion, and for Taylor and Lucy who are the "jazz factor" in our lives.

For all of this and so much more...

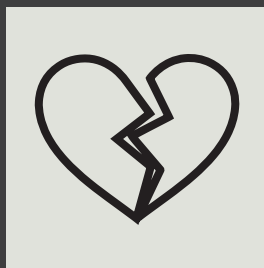
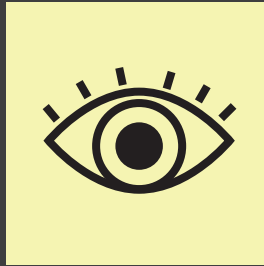
Deo gratias!



# Thanksgiving Blessings



## From Your FBC Staff



# GIFTS FOR EVERYBODY

*November 27*    ***A Gift in the Flames***  
*Malachi 3:1-5*

*December 4*    ***A Gift from a Wild-Eyed Street Preacher***  
*Matthew 3:1-12*

*December 11*    ***A Gift for the Ignored***  
*Luke 1:46-55*

*December 18*    ***A Gift for the Wrecked***  
*Matthew 1:18-25*

*Christmas Eve*    ***A Gift in Flesh and Blood***  
*4:00 pm*    *Luke 2:1-20*

*Christmas Day*    ***A Gift that Looks Like God***  
*11:00 am*    *Titus 3:3-7*





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# DIACONATE TEAM BEGINS CONVERSATIONS ABOUT FBC'S PRACTICE OF INCLUSION

For decades, the FBCDC congregation has included active members -- including many people serving in leadership roles -- who identify as members of the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) communities. However, the church for most of its existence did not have any formal policy about just how fully LGBT people could be involved in the life of the church.

In 2004, in the context of discussions around human sexuality, the church overwhelmingly voted in favor of a membership policy. It explicitly affirmed that all are welcome in Christ's body and that the only criterion for membership at FBCDC is faith in Christ.

In the last two years, our congregation has again begun an intentional conversation about further clarifying the role of LGBT people at FBCDC, including celebrating their marriages and families. The Diaconate has appointed an Inclusion Team to more closely study the issue and make recommendations to the congregation.

This team held its first meeting in mid-October. At that meeting, the team agreed to a process that will include:

- Examining Scripture and history and praying together for God's guidance;
- Studying how peer congregations have handled this issue in recent years;
- Holding small discussion and discernment groups with the congregation in the early part of 2017;
- And making a recommendation for an Inclusion Policy for the full congregation to discuss and consider.

The goal is to get the FBC family to talk to, and learn from, each other and reach a conclusion that ensures all of us are heard, valued, and loved. You'll be hearing more about the specifics of the process soon.

Team members are (l to r): Zena Aldridge, Kate Campbell, Rob Marus, Steve Netcott, Rod Coates, Paul Clark and, not pictured, Pastor Julie. Please reach out to any team member if you have ideas or recommendations to help us as we consider how best to become God's Beloved Community!



**Inclusion Team announces two listening sessions planned for January, 2017, facilitated by team members:**

- Sunday, 1/ 22 (after worship)
- Saturday, 1/28 (10am)



## THANKSGIVING EVE SERVICE NOVEMBER 23, 6:30PM

*Refreshments in the Parlor following worship*

Join us in the Sanctuary this Wednesday evening for a simple service of gratitude and praise. We'll offer prayers and sing songs of thanksgiving, and Pastor Julie will offer a Thanksgiving devotional message, A Houseless Hallelujah. If you're able, please bring a dessert or finger food snack to share. If you're coming from work, just bring yourself.

## FAMILY LIFE CHRISTMAS - LIVE NATIVITY DURING 12/4 POTLUCK LUNCH

The FBC Children and Youth will present the annual live Nativity of Christ on the first Sunday of December after all have been served lunch. The children will eat first and then come backstage to dress in their Biblical-times clothing to be angels, shepherds, wise men or part of the holy family. Any children visiting are also welcome



to dress and join us on stage, though they will not have to speak. When the children take their places on stage and all is ready we will ask for the attention of those finishing their lunch to hear the story of the birth of Christ proclaimed by our children. This is a special time for our children to share the 'good news of great joy for all people'. Our words are taken from "The Bright Star of Bethlehem" by David Mead. To close, the Christmas story will be read from Luke 2:1-20. ~ Deborah Cochran

## PHENOMENAL RESPONSE TO PLEDGE CAMPAIGN

Great news! We not only met, but exceeded our pledge goal. Earlier this fall, our stewardship team set a

"leap of faith" giving goal of \$315,000 for next year (a 12% increase over last year) as well as a pledge goal of 50 (12 more than last year). During this generosity campaign the FBC family

responded with 55 commitments in

the amount of \$310, 442. Of the 55 pledges received this year, 19 are first-time commitments. The generosity unfolding around us points to the Spirit at work in our congregation. Thanks be to God!





THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
OF THE CITY OF WASHINGTON, D.C.

# ***59th Annual Christmas Candlelight Carols***

**Sunday, December 11, 2016**

**Instrumental Prelude—4:00 p.m.**

(Brass, Organ, Timpani)

**The Runnymede Singers**

*Erica Haman, Director*

*Steven Schwarz, Accompanist*

**The First Baptist Church Chancel Choir**

*Lawrence P. Schreiber, Organist-Choirmaster*

*Neil Holliker, Assisting Conductor*

**The Holy Family Tableau**

*Julie Pennington-Russell, Pastor*

*Deborah Cochran, Associate Pastor for Children and Families*

**Free and open to the public.**

Church: 202.387.2206

[www.firstbaptistdc.org](http://www.firstbaptistdc.org)

**Valet parking provided.**

1328 Sixteenth Street (at "O"), NW

Washington, D. C. 20036

# ADVENT

## THE PAUSE THAT HEALS US

### WEDNESDAY NIGHTS IN DECEMBER

Worship @ 7:00 on Nov. 30, Dec. 7 & 14

**November 30: Pausing for Love**

**December 7: Pausing for Peace**

**December 14: Pausing for Hope**

(“Blue Christmas” service for those who grieve, see page 5)

**December 21: Carol Sing with Lon**

(After supper in Fellowship Hall)

### Church Family Supper:

6 pm, every Wednesday night during Advent

(November 30, December 7, 14, 21)

Prepared by Chef Laval. Cost of the meal is \$8.00



## WEDNESDAY SUPPERS DURING ADVENT

Our tradition of Wednesday evening supper during Advent resumes on November 30, and continues on December 7, 14, and 21. Please make a reservation for the nights you wish to attend (cost, \$8 per meal) by e-mailing D’O Dillard at [ddillard@firstbaptistdc.org](mailto:ddillard@firstbaptistdc.org). Dinner is served at 6 pm, followed by Advent worship at 7pm in the Sanctuary.



## CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE AT THE P-RS'

**December 18, 2:30 - 4:30pm**

Tim and I are hosting our church family in our home on Sunday, December 18. Come and stay, or come and go, according to your schedule. At 3:15 we’ll pause for a “house blessing” as we dedicate our home to God. All are welcome! (Fyi: access into our house, as well as to restrooms, involves climbing some stairs.) 3322 7th St. NE, Washington. Street parking available; we live two blocks from the Brookland Metro station (red line).

## POINSETTIAS & GREENERY FOR ADVENT

The order form and information for ordering poinsettias and greenery to beautify our sanctuary during the Advent season can be found on our [website](#). Please submit your order and payment by Wednesday, November 23. The poinsettias will be displayed starting the third Sunday of Advent (December 11) and available to be taken home after the Christmas Day service.







# BLUE CHRISTMAS

A SERVICE OF HOPE AND COMFORT

*Are you struggling this Christmas because of loneliness, stress or grief?  
This hour of hope and comfort may be the best gift you receive this year.*

*You are warmly invited*

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2016 • 7PM

The service will be held in the Sanctuary. Casual dress. Childcare provided.



1328 16th Street NW Washington, D.C. 20036



## Advent Devotional Book

This year's Advent devotional booklet, "From Heaven Above," by Michael Hoy, is based on Martin Luther's hymn of the same name. The author looks at a gift that comes each week of the season: love, hope, peace and life.



The devotionals are available in Fellowship Hall, the Narthex, and the 2nd Floor literature table.

## Advent Begins This Sunday

The Christian year, sometimes called the liturgical year, is a centuries-old way of marking time for Christ-followers in the global church. The beginning of the Christian year is Advent, the four-week season leading up to Christmas Day. "Advent" means "the coming." Advent is about remembering that God came to be with us once, and God is still with us, and God is coming again to set all things right. Advent invites us to resist the fever of a commercialized Christmas by taking hold of the simple joy of opening our lives to Jesus. At First Baptist, we suspend committee meetings and other "business" during Advent, allowing us to focus on worship, acts of compassion, and nurturing relationships with one another and with our neighbors.



## Save the Date: January 8, 2017 Celebration of Deborah Cochran's Ministry

The FBC family will gather after worship on Sunday, January 8, to honor and bless our Associate Pastor for Children and Families, Rev. Deborah Cochran. Deborah is retiring at the end of December. She joined the pastoral staff on February 17, 1998. Plans are underway. Stay tuned for more information. (Because of the New Year's holiday, our "first Sunday" potluck will take place on January 8, as part of our celebration of Deborah.)







FBC Kids enjoyed a sleep-over at the church, November 19-20. Thanks to our intrepid leaders: Pastor Debbie, Helen Washington and Jatoe Sapee.



## EVENTS

### Wednesday, November 23

1:30pm: Church Staff Meeting

6:30pm: Thanksgiving Eve Worship followed by Desert Social in Parlor

### Thursday and Friday, November 24-25 Bldg. Closed

### Sunday, November 27

9:30am: Church School for All Ages

10am: Chancel Choir Rehearsal (Rm 312)

11am: Worship (Sanctuary)

2pm: Worship in Spanish (Dawson Room)

## DEACONS ON-CALL WEEK OF NOVEMBER 27:



Rob Marus

## WEEK OF DECEMBER 4:



Jean Bell

*The on-call deacon is your lay contact for prayer concerns during their week of service.*

## FBC PRAYER & CARE

### New Members:

Joining by profession of faith and baptism:

- Grace Adigun and Abigail Aidgun



### You have done it again!

38 Operation Christmas Child shoe boxes filled with goodies, love and prayers are on the way to their drop off location this week.

How we wish we could thank each of you individually for the support and love you have shown for the children of this world and this project of FBC's Woman's Society. So we simply say "Thank you and bless you."



## Church Staff

**Julie Pennington-Russell**

Pastor

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**Deborah Cochran**

Associate Pastor for Children & Families

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Associate Pastor for Young Adults & Youth

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