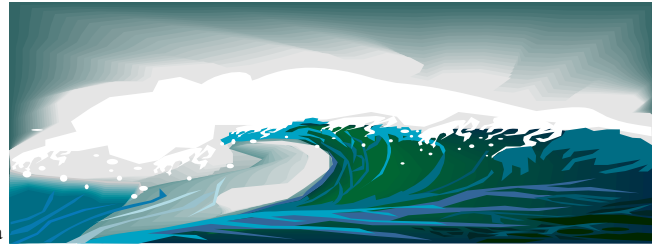




The *December 2024*  
**Anchor**

We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul...Heb.6:19a



Christmas is a holiday that either you love or dread over the fear of increased depression and anxiety. Many adults feel joyous but overwhelmed this time of the year. A November 2023 article published by the American Psychological Association concluded nine in ten adults say that concerns over not having enough money, missing loved ones, and anticipating family conflict cause an increase in their stress at Christmas. Data indicate that 43% of those surveyed cited stress as the primary reason for their inability to enjoy the holiday.

How can we find joy and reduce our stress during Christmas? Here are five action steps we can take to make Christmas more enjoyable:

1. Focus on the significance of Jesus' birth. Take time to read the Nativity story in the Gospels (Matthew 1-2, Luke 1-2) and reflect on what it means for you personally and for all humanity. My family always reads the Christmas story before opening the first gift at our family Christmas celebration. You can try that, too. It's funny how kids pay extra close attention to that story to get to opening gifts. Last year, I had my grandson Xavier read the story to us. It was great.
2. Participate in special Christmas services at First Baptist. Make sure you attend our worship services all season as we countdown to Christmas together. We will have a children's play, a Cantata, a three-week Christmas Bible study, various uplifting sermons, and, of course, we will get to sing carols as part of our worship service. At First Baptist, each Sunday before Christmas, we celebrate Advent, the anticipation of Christmas, with the lighting of candles and a special reading of a devotional by various families in the church. These activities deepen our joy for celebrating Christ's birth and uplift our spirit while bringing a sense of belonging.
3. Explore ways to serve others in need during the holiday season, such as volunteering at a food bank, taking non-perishable food items to a blessing box in Ripley or Ravenswood, participating in a toy drive, or even sending a card of thanks to the local first responders who will be working during Christmas. These acts of kindness create joy in our hearts as we fulfill our Christian calling to love and serve others.
4. Develop family traditions that emphasize the joy of giving while reducing the stress of buying gifts by spending time together. This includes making homemade gifts, baking together, watching a Christmas movie, sharing a meal, reading the Christmas story aloud, and even writing a handwritten letter of appreciation to those you love in your family. If you miss a loved one who has passed away this year, you can keep their memory alive at your celebration. It is normal to miss them. Do not hesitate to mention their name at this year's celebration. Chances are, others in your family miss them, too. Sharing in that loss is a way we share love. This year will be my first without my mom, so I want to heed my advice. Most of all, try to surround yourself with family who love you.
5. Focus on the eternal perspective, knowing that Christmas is not just about the here and now but also about the hope and joy of eternal life through Jesus. A relationship with Jesus is one of the most extraordinary things you can ever do for yourself. His death on the cross, burial, and resurrection allowed our sins to be forgiven and the gift of eternal life to be ours (John 3:16).



To that end, by considering these simple practices, one will find a more profound joy in the true meaning of Christmas and celebrate the hope and love that Jesus brings to the world. Remember, God's presence is the greatest Present we can ever receive this time of year. Receive it. The greatest gift you can give this season is to give your heart to Jesus. The greatest gift you can give others is your time. I love each of you. You mean so much to me. I want to say thank you for another great year at First Baptist Church of Ravenswood. It's a blessing to serve you.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Pastor Toby

# Merry CHRISTmas!





In the Month of November, **Moving Mountains Youth** is staying busy! We have seen a few new faces stop by on Sunday evenings this month, which we are always excited about. Played some new games like "spikeball" that the students have quickly gotten better than Pastor Ethan at...and most importantly continued diving deep into Gods Word.

We are still hearing sermons this month on the book of John, however we stopped one evening to have an interactive Bible study on Psalm 51. We looked at the character of David's heart after his sin, and what it means to truly repent, and then put our faith in God.

Senior High Convention was also this month, we attended Saturday the 9th for the full day and had tons of fun. We got to hear multiple amazing sermons and worship God throughout the day!

If you'd like to keep updated with the youth, please follow our new Instagram, [moving\\_mountains\\_youth\\_](https://www.instagram.com/moving_mountains_youth_).

See you there!

Pastor Ethan







**Pastor Ethan**

**And**

**The Moving Mountains Youth**

**Invite you to their**

**Ugly Sweater Party & Games Night**

**December 22 at 6:00**

**Games!!**

**See who wins! Adults vs Students**

**Enjoy the food and drink provided**

**Lots of laughs!**



**VS**



**Come out and enjoy this evening of intergenerational fun!!**



The Handbell Choir under the direction of Ann Johnson will be performed on December 22.

Practices will be Sunday, December 15 at 5:30, Wednesday December 18 at 5:30 and Sunday December 22 at 10:15.

*Be prepared for a beautiful sound!*



## *Give the gift of life!*

The Red Cross will be having a blood drive on Monday, December 2 from noon to 5:00. You can sign up online or contact Susan to register.



If you can help with registration, please contact Susan.

Once again, we will display the Beautiful luminaria on Christmas Eve for the annual Cantata. The choir will be performing ***One Noel*** at 7:00. Following the music, we will light the final advent candle and share the Light of Christ.

If you are able to help set the lights up on Christmas Eve about 5:00, please let Susan or Pastor Toby know. Thank you.



(If you haven't ordered a luminaria for a loved one yet, see Susan. )



It's that time again! Our traditional Christmas activity at FBC— the annual *Progressive Dinner* sponsored by the Women's Circle. This year we will kick off the season on December 7 at 5:00.

We will begin the fun at Connie & Tim Staats home at 906 Adams Avenue to sample some delicious appetizers - tasty enough to be a whole meal! Take in the decorations and have a great time - laughing, eating and just enjoy being with each other.

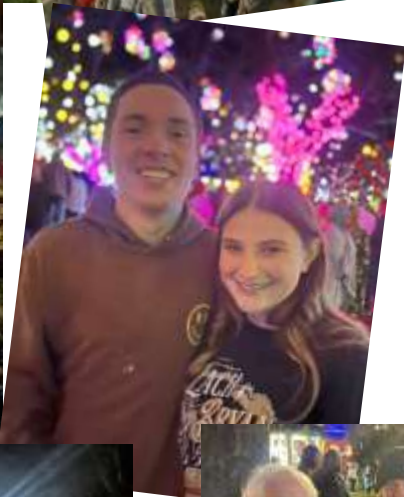
After the appetizers, we will take off to Sherman to Deb and Doug Bashaw's home at 196 Watkins Lane. The Bashaw's have been a great place to end our travels each year. It will take a lot of time to see all the decorations they have put up. Then after filling up with out of this world desserts, the fun begins again. This time for the annual Ornament Exchange. See the battle begin as each ornament is up for grabs as soon as the package is opened. The laughter will fill the rafters!

All adults, men, women, wives, husbands, are invited. Bring you favorite beverage and join in the fun. The ornament exchange is optional. If you can bring an appetizer or dessert, sign up soon so we can see how much to expect.





# Gallipolis In Lights! For Christmas!





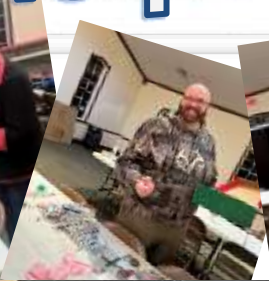
# 237 Boxes for OCC!



Packing



5,243 people reached!



749 area boxes!!



Praying



Loading up the area Christmas Shoeboxes was a labor of love. May the child who receives a box feel that love.

Thanks to all who helped throughout the year with the shoeboxes. Special thanks to Talia Martinez and Jordan Williams for the hours of work they put in. Great Job Ladies!!



# Out with the old....





# In with the new!!





The kids department is preparing for their fabulous Christmas Program on December 15 during the morning worship service.

Ann Johnson has joined with Jane Moore, Ashlee Wyant and Brittany Pistelli to help with the music for the program.

Be sure to join us the 10:45 that morning for a great production!



The youngsters at FBC participated in our Veterans Day Program. They heard a children's message from Pastor Ethan and were given roses to give to a veteran they may know.

The God's Cadets kids helped pass out the church gift, a water mug, to the veterans in attendance to show our appreciation for their service.



# Veterans Sunday 2024

Special Guest Speaker Tom Dunn spoke at First Baptist on Veterans Sunday, November 10. His message **“Regular Dudes”** was about his time with the 25th Infantry Division before and during his tour of duty in Afghanistan 20 years ago. A reception for our veterans was held in the Fellowship Hall following the morning worship service.



# Big Bell Ringers!



Jack Leasure



Adalee Leasure



Landon King



# Pew Dedication

One Sunday in the Fellowship Hall then.... Celebrating to God be the Glory for our new pews! Our dedication was November 24. Many came to join in prayer and praise for the blessings God has given us.





# Getting Ready for the Season







On Monday, November 4 our American Baptist Women joined with Calvary Baptist for Baptist Women's World Day of Prayer. FBC presented the program as we prayed for women on each continent with needs varying from addiction, family, stronger faith, leadership and more.



Co-president of the FBC Circle Kathy Hudson led the group as others offered information and prayer for women near and far.

Others who presented prayers were Jo Hendricks, Gusta Arrington, Sandy Confer, Susan West (not pictured), Ellen Varner, Amy Starkey and Sherry Dzierzanski.

Following the program, a delicious meal of soup, sandwiches and desserts was served by our hosts.





# Thanksgiving 2024





# Painting with Cheryl



When: Saturday December 14 at 2:00

Where: First Baptist Church  
Fellowship Hall  
215 Ann Street

Cost: \$45.00 (includes all supplies)

Come join us for a fun time of painting, snacks and fellowship!

Please RSVP to the office asap

We will be painting the sled above; "O Holy Night" lettering is optional. We need at least 10 people to register for this activity.



## *Christmas Season Activities*

Dec. 1 Advent Begins

Dec 4 Wednesday Night Christmas Bible Study Begins

Dec. 7 Progressive Dinner @ 5 pm (Staats' then Bashaw's)

Dec. 8 Second Advent

Dec.10 *A Christmas Carol* play in Athens

Dec.14 Painting with Cheryl

Dec 15 Third Advent; Kids Christmas Program; Bell Choir Practice at 5:30 pm

Dec.18 Bell Choir Practice at 5:30 pm

Dec. 22 Fourth Advent; Bell Choir practice at 10:15, Perform Bell Choir, Youth Christmas Ugly Sweater Generational Games Challenge at 6:00 pm

Dec. 24 Fifth Advent; Luminaries, Cantata and Candlelight Service 7 pm

Dec. 25 Happy Birthday Jesus!

*At the center of all our fun is Jesus!*



# For Unto Us a Child Is Born

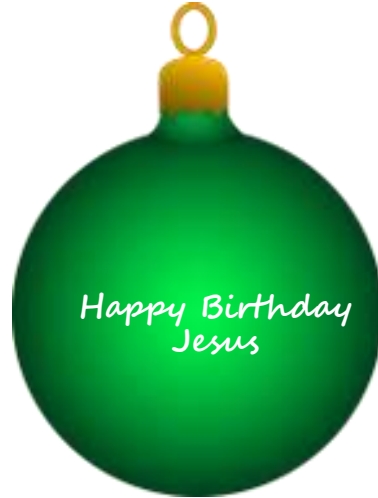
## Christmas Memorials

FBC will be displaying memorials for our family and friends.

We have memory bulbs that have been purchased with your loved ones name on it to decoration our memory tree. The cost of each is \$5.00. You can choose the name you would like on the green bulb.

The luminarias will be on display around the church sidewalks on Christmas Eve. Each bag will show your loved ones name lit by the light of the luminaria. The cost of each is \$2.00.

Contact the office for questions.



the Spirit of advent



John 1:14 'The Word was made flesh'

**Focus on Sunday School:**



***My Christmas List***

***A home: In my Father's house are many mansions...I go to prepare a place for you. John 14:2***

***Nourishment: I am the bread of Life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry. John 6:35***

***Family: The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. Romans 8:16***

***Laughter: He will once again fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy. Job 8:21***

***Love: For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him, shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16***

***Merry Christmas to All!***

*It's amazing what you can learn in  
Sunday School!  
9:30 a.m.*

**December Birthdays**



Megan Watkins 12/2  
Ben Mize 12/4  
Melissa Bennett 12/7  
Tom Stephenson 12/8  
Carolyn Mellinger 12/10  
Mark Gerstell 12/14  
Kevin Woods 12/14  
Brent Confer 12/16  
Shawn Cole 12/17  
Landon King 12/19  
Jo Hendricks 12/22  
Katie Woods 12/23  
***Jesus 12/25***  
Nancy McCoy 12/26  
Bob Martin 12/27  
Dorothy Varney 12/28  
Sherry Walker 12/30

**December Calendar**

Dec 1 First Advent  
Dec 2 Red Cross Blood Drive, Trustee Meeting  
Dec 4 Christmas Bible Study Begins  
Dec 7 Progressive Dinner  
Dec 8 Second Advent; Deaconess Meeting  
Dec 9 BOCE  
Dec 10 *A Christmas Carol* Play in Athens  
Dec 14 Painting with Cheryl  
Dec 15 Third Advent; Children's Christmas Play; Handbell practice  
Dec 17 Finance Meeting  
Dec 18 Handbell Practice  
Dec 22 Fourth Advent; Handbell Practice & Performance; MMY Ugly Sweater and Games Party  
Dec 24 Office Closed  
Dec 24 Fifth Advent; Christmas Eve Cantata & Lighting of Christ Candle  
Dec 25 Merry Christmas! Office Closed  
Dec 29 Officer Installation  
Dec 31 New Year's Eve Silent Prayer

\* Game Day every Thursday 1:00-3:00 (not on holidays)

**Bible Book of the Month  
December  
Luke**



**CommUnity Kitchen**

**Dec 7 Al & Gusta Arrington  
Dec 14 Abbi Woods  
Dec 21 Sherry Walker  
Dec 28 Glow Movement**

**Please consider helping  
with CommUnity Kitchen  
in 2025. Sign up today!**



## CHURCH PRAYER CALENDAR

Prayer for our fellow members is an important part of our relationship with the Lord and helps us to grow closer as a church family. Each day during this month there is a different individual or family that you are asked to include in your prayers.



# December 2024

| Sun                                     | Mon                          | Tue  | Wed   | Thu  | Fri                            | Sat                                 |
|---|------------------------------|--|---|--|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1<br>Juanita Raines                     | 2<br>Lee & Connie Reynolds   | 3<br>Tyler & Michelle Ritchie<br>Mary & Josh | 4<br>Brent & Angel Ritchie, Conner,<br>Lincoln, Beckham | 5<br>Gary & Rhonda Samples                           | 6<br>David & Felisha Scott     | 7<br>Josh Scott                     |
| 8<br>Grace Shirley                      | 9<br>Darrell & Camille Smith | 10<br>Jim Speer                              | 11<br>Tim & Connie Staats                               | 12<br>Diana Staats                                   | 13<br>Jamie Standridge         | 14<br>Ron & Amy Starkey             |
| 15<br>Warner Stephens                   | 16<br>John Stephenson        | 17<br>Tom & Bev Stephenson                   | 18<br>Glenn & Rose Stevens                              | 19<br>Ralph & Jen Taylor, Kelly,<br>Hunter, McKenzie | 20<br>Mark & Amy Bowles Taylor | 21<br>Destiny Thomas                |
| 22<br>Stephen & Leeanne Thompson, Ryley | 23<br>Randy & Carolyn Torris | 24<br>Jared Torris                           | 25<br>Jody Tolbert                                      | 26<br>Dale & Anna Vanderlaan                         | 27<br>Ken & Perry Vintorini    | 28<br>Toby & Jen Wagoner,<br>Hannah |
| 29<br>Aaron Wagoner                     | 30<br>John & Grayce Wagoner  | 31<br>Pauline Walker                         |   |  |                                |                                     |
|   |                              |  |   |  |                                |                                     |

