

First News & Notes

December 2025—January 2026



Christmas or Xmas

Every December, we are surrounded by coloured lights, music, sales, decorations, and well-intentioned cheer. And yet, as Christians, many of us sense a tension in our hearts. Something feels missing.

C.S. Lewis once said that we celebrate two different holidays on December 25th: one called Xmas, and the other called Christmas.

It's important that we separate the two holidays in our minds because though the Grinch can steal Xmas, the Grinch can't steal Christmas.

On the Xmas side, we have a figure, Santa Claus. And on the Christmas side we also have a figure, Jesus.

Xmas is loud, fast, and demanding. It's powered by advertising and the pressure to perform. Xmas has its own heroes and symbols — Santa, elves, reindeer, pine trees, ribbons, stockings.

And because Xmas depends on circumstances, it is fragile. A lost job, a tough year, an empty chair at the table or a strained relationship can make Xmas feel hollow.

Xmas comes from the outside — created by culture.

Christmas comes from heaven — “When the right time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman.” Galatians 4:4

Xmas depends on what we do. *Christmas depends on what Christ has done.*

Xmas keeps us busy. *Christmas invites us to worship.*

Xmas fills our calendars. *Christmas fills our hearts.*

Xmas lasts for a season. *Christmas lasts forever.*

Christmas joy roots itself in Christ — when our joy is anchored in Him, nothing can steal it.

And, unlike Xmas, doesn't depend on us at all. It rests entirely on what God has already done.

While Xmas gives us trinkets that break or fade, Christmas gives us the one gift no one can take away: Christmas is Christ — God's indescribable gift. (2 Corinthians 9:15)

Its symbols are quiet but powerful: a manger, shepherds, wise men, star and a young mother holding God's promise in her arms. God's indescribable gift given for us, unchanging and eternal.

~ Pastor Alex



December
 5 Ruth Park
 14 Jean Bradshaw
January
 11 Connie Lrantfy
 24 Janice White

A Vintage Christmas

First Baptist Ladies Christmas Party

Wednesday, December 3 6:30 pm—Fellowship Hall

Sign up sheet at the rear of the sanctuary or RSVP to Cheryl or Wanda



Church Family Christmas Dinner



Sunday, December 14 following the service

Roast turkey and all the trimmings—each family is asked to bring a dessert

Always a great meal and blessed time of fellowship!

Please please please be sure to sign up on the sheet at the back of the sanctuary



Sing for Joy

An uplifting celebration of Christmas!

December 16 — 7 pm

Refreshments to follow

Family & friends welcome!

Our next Seniors' Lunch & Hymn Sing will be Thursday, January 15*



Noon—Fellowship Hall

****weather permitting***



Baptist Women's 75th World Day of Prayer

Donna McAuslan

On Monday, November 3rd, eight ladies from our congregation attended Central Baptist Church in Sarnia to participate in their 2025 Baptist Women's Day of Prayer. We started our morning warmly welcomed by the ladies there and enjoyed fellowship with refreshments prior to the formal program. It was good to be together!

The theme was "Living The Good News", based on Luke 4:18-19. *The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*

**We want to intercede for our communities.
We want to make a difference.**



There are real women with real struggles around the world. Together, we stand united in prayer for the various requests. On this day, we prayed for restoration to the communities after natural disasters, financial struggles, domestic abuse, upheaval in government, raising up strong leaders, war/violence, revival, crime, and mental health just to name a few. So many of the Unions had the same prayer requests so we know that it is far reaching throughout the world. Day of Prayer also provides an opportunity to give in support of the global projects of Baptist World Alliance Women and the seven Continental Unions. These Unions are Asia Baptist Women's Union, Baptist Women of North America, Baptist Women of the Pacific, Baptist Women's Union of Africa, Baptist Women's Union of Latin America, Caribbean Baptist Women's Union, European Baptist Women United. Our monetary gifts *do* make a difference to provide help for women who apply for grants. We heard about the literacy program in Papua New Guinea where women students now have a chance to learn to read their Bibles for the first time!

75 years of faithful prayer. What a legacy!

Four FBC ladies attended the Pregnancy Centre Gala in November at the Four Points Sheridan in Point Edward. The meal was fantastic as was the atmosphere. The live auction raised almost \$20,000. More came in from the silent auction.

To date, \$243,255 in total has been raised year — all from donations! The Centre does not receive any government financial support.



Middlesex-Lambton-Huron
Association
Missionfest
November 1, 2025
Poplar Hill Baptist Church



From left to right: Andrew Emmott, Susan Plumridge (current MLHA moderator), Harald Rust and Joe Bridi.

And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Hebrews 13:16

Over \$30,000 was raised by 14 Baptist Churches within Middlesex, Lambton and Huron Counties. Each church has their own approach to raising money to support this annual Mission Project.

Our church raised over \$5,000!

THANK YOU!

CBOQ will be dividing all the funds between the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Lebanon and Ban Lau Lai Church in Thailand which will use the money to start a cattle and fish farm to support their church and school.

**"The New Year is a canvas;
faith is the paint; God is the artist."**



1 Peter 4:10

Each of you should
use whatever gift
you have received to
serve others, as
faithful stewards of
God's grace in its
various forms.



Heartfelt thanks to everyone who has agreed to serve on our various committees for the upcoming year. We appreciate you sharing your time and talents in service to God, each other and our community.

CRANBERRY BARS

The dish that doesn't know if it's a side or a dessert!

1 can whole berry cranberry sauce

1 large box raspberry jello 6 oz

8 oz plain cream cheese

1 small can crushed pineapple

Walnuts and raisins for topping (optional)



In a saucepan, heat the cranberry sauce with the jello powder until dissolved.

Pour into a lightly oiled 8 x 8 baking dish.

Chill until firm.

Beat the cream cheese and pineapple until smooth and creamy and spread over the cranberry jello mixture.

Sprinkle with walnuts and raisins, if desired.

Chill again until serving.

Slice into squares.



**Our next PA Day Camp will be
January 30
9:00 am – 3:30 pm**

**We need leaders, volunteers
and a prayer team**

Afternoon theme: Pioneer school history in Petrolia

Chalk slates; old school books; pioneer toys

**If you have any books, photos, props or know anyone with some of this history of our town,
please talk to Connie Lorantfy or Sara Rust.**



Our PA Day program on November 21st was boisterous with 14 local children in attendance. The theme was the birth of Jesus using railroad lingo, crafts and games. Imagine playing musical chairs arranged like a train or following the tracks to find all the pieces of a Bible verse puzzle. Everything looked great, including the western wear worn by the volunteers!

*** Quick note: Many of the props and decorations were donated/shared by other churches that had done the same program.**

Miranda Cole
2m • 📷

Thank you First Baptist Church, Petrolia for the wonderful PD camp yesterday! The kids had the best day learning about trains and building nativity sets! We are so thankful for the volunteers that helped make it possible! We live in a great town!





**Fluffy flakes of falling snow
Coloured lights in windows glow
Greeting cards from across the miles
Sweeter hugs and warmer smiles
Wonder in a small child's eyes
Shortbread cookies and mincemeat pies
The fresh cut scent of fir and pine
Decorations that sparkle and shine
Gifts piled high under the tree
Precious time with family.
The beloved Christmas story
Favourite carols sung to His glory
May our Lord and Saviour bless
Your holidays with happiness
And may you always feel Him near
Now and each day of the coming New Year.**

~ Janice White

**“What the new year brings to you will depend a
great deal on what you bring to the new year.”**

– Vern McLellan





Straighten Your Crown
Remember who you belong to

A women's event celebrating fun, faith and fellowship—presented by Wyoming Baptist
Saturday, January 24; 1-4 pm

Keynote Speaker: Tess Scott

Workshops, networking, live music, door prizes, refreshments and more!

FREE — donations for the Womens' Interval Home & the Pregnancy Centre accepted at the door



Thank you for supporting this year's "shoebox campaign"!

24 boxes sponsored by folks in our congregation will soon be winging their way to children in need around the world thru Samaritan's Purse. Wonder where they will wind up?



"The most important resolution you can make...is to open your heart and life to Jesus Christ, and commit your life to Him. Don't waste your time on resolutions that don't ultimately matter; resolve instead to live for Christ."
- Billy Graham

Shortbread Cookie Bites

1 cup butter, cubed
3/4 cup sugar
1 1/2 tsp vanilla
2 1/4 cups flour
Sprinkles of your choice (optional)

Preheat oven to 350F.

Beat butter and sugar together.

Mix in vanilla.

Add flour and beat well. (Dough will have a sandy texture.)

Add sprinkles and beat again.

Work dough with hands until it forms a ball.

Press dough into a 9x13 pan lined with parchment paper.

Chill for 1 hour.

Grabbing the parchment paper, remove the dough from the pan and cut into bite size squares.

Place squares 1 inch apart on a greased cookie sheet.

Bake for 9-11 minutes or until bottoms begin to brown.

Makes about 80 bites.



Finding Rest in the Rush

The holiday season often brings a flurry of activity: shopping, decorating, cooking, traveling, visiting...so many demands on our time and energy. In the midst of the hustle and bustle, it can be easy to lose sight of the true meaning of the season and feel weary and burdened. Jesus offered a timeless invitation that speaks directly to our overwhelmed hearts, especially at this time of year:

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Matthew 11:28-30

This Christmas, a moment to pause and reflect on this invitation. The true gift of the season isn't found under the tree or on a perfectly set table; it is the gift of Jesus himself, who brings hope, peace, and rest to a hectic world.

The Bible is a fascinating book! Did you know...

Adam lived to be 930 and knew Methuselah for 243 of those years. Methuselah, the longest-living person on record, made it to 969 years, dying a year before the Great Flood.

(Genesis 5:5 Genesis 5:27)

There are 10 generations from Adam to the Great Flood.

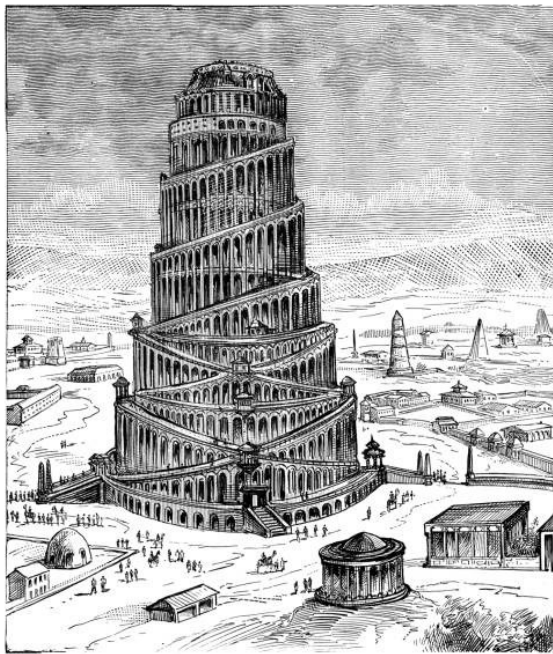
101 years after the flood, the Tower of Babel was built by a single-language humanity to reach the heavens to make a name for themselves. Displeased, God confused their language, causing the project to fail and scattering the people across the earth.

2,613 years after Adam's death, the Ten Commandments were given to Moses.

Genesis covers 2,369 years of history. The Old Testament covers 3,607 years.

There were over three million people who left Egypt and crossed the Red Sea in 1491 B.C.

Source: Adams' Synchronological Chart First published near 1852. And Josephus The Complete Works (translated from Greek in 1737)



ATTEMPTED RESTITUTION OF THE TOWER OF BABEL, BY FATHER KIRCHER.

