



December
2023

Second Baptist Church
Open and Progressive since 1833



Christmas at Second Baptist

There's lots going on at Second Baptist this Christmas season, beginning with caroling on December 2 and ending with the Christmas Eve service on December 24. Come join us!

Christmas caroling



Christmas caroling on Saturday, **December 2!** All those interested will meet at the church at 2:00 to organize car pools. We will travel around that afternoon to sing at the homes of folks who aren't able to come to church easily anymore. Addresses and lyric sheets will be provided, and all are welcome.

Advent begins Sunday, December 3.

Annual Christmas Luncheon and Entertainment

You are invited to join your church family for a celebration of the holidays as we gather at 11:30 a.m. on Sunday morning, December 10, in Fellowship Hall.

We will begin with a delicious catered luncheon. The cost is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children (2 years old through 12). The maximum cost per family is \$26.00.

Following the meal, we will enjoy a fun time together watching the many talented performers in our Annual Talent Show. There will be singers, musical performers, good humor jokes, a skit, poetry reading, dancing and a few other surprises. Then a special visitor from way up North will bring some special things for the children.



It will be great fun. Make your reservation on the church bulletin insert or call the church office (314-991-3424). See you then.

Linda Marks

Christmas musical events on the next page

Songs and Sonnets service



We eagerly await this year's Songs and Sonnets Service! It will be December 17 at 10:30 a.m., featuring original Christmas poetry written by our own congregants. The choir will present four special anthems for that day: The first piece will be an evocative arrangement of the traditional German carol "**Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming**," by Jay Rouse, including a quotation from "Of the Father's Love Begotten." The choir will also sing the lilting "**Sussex Carol**" arranged by Elaine Hagenberg. Next will be a jazzy rendition of the familiar carol "**It Came upon the Midnight Clear**," arranged by Joel Raney. The choir will close with an a cappella setting of the challenging Howard Thurman text "**The Work of Christmas**," composed by Dan Forrest. The service will also feature a piano duet of "**Angels We Have Heard on High**," by Judi Mechem and Marilyn Short.

It will be an inspiring morning of celebration and worship. Please plan to come join us, and bring friends and family.

American Chamber Chorale concert



We are excited to host an upcoming American Chamber Chorale concert at our church on Sunday, December 17 at 3 p.m. They will perform Part I of Handel's *Messiah*. The chorale is an auditioned ensemble, accompanied by an orchestra of professional players. The event will be open to the public, and admission is free.

Christmas Eve service



We are looking forward to the church's annual Christmas Eve service, which will be held Sunday, December 24, at 5 p.m. The choir's anthem that evening will be the lovely "**O Precious Child of Bethlehem**," with words by James Barnard and Barbara Furman and music by Vicki Tucker Courtney. The congregation will sing several Christmas carols and then close with the traditional candle lighting and singing of "**Silent Night**." Please plan to join us for this memorable, family-friendly evening of worship and warmth and homecoming!

—Marilyn Short

Choir rehearsals will start at 6:30 p.m. and last until 8:00 p.m. on Thursdays. The choir will also rehearse at 8:45 on Sunday mornings.

Sunday School for all ages at 9:15 a.m. Note: There will be **NO Sunday School** on December 17, 24, or 31.

Second Sunday Choir practices right after church on Sundays. This group will sing in worship on Sunday, December 10. That morning they will rehearse at 10:10 a.m.



Worship service Sundays at 10:30 a.m. In person or live on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/155120191289/live/> or later at 2ndbc.org/sermons.

A service in the Karen language is held in Fellowship Hall after the Sunday worship service.

Christmas caroling on Saturday, **December 2!** Meet at the church at 2:00 p.m. Details on p. 1.

Advent begins Sunday, **December 3.**

Annual Christmas Luncheon and Entertainment Sunday, **December 10**, at 11:30 a.m. See p. 1 for details.

The Book Group will meet in the Community Room on Tuesday, **December 12**, at 1:00 p.m. to discuss *The 13th Gift*, by Joanne Huist Smith. Joy Gardner will lead the discussion.

The Faith Support Group will meet via Zoom Monday, **December 11**, at 6:00 p.m. The link is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81521781156>. Passcode: faith.

Men's Breakfast Group will meet Saturday, **December 16**, at 8:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall.

Songs and Sonnets Service Sunday, **December 17** at 10:30 a.m. See p. 2.

American Chamber Chorale Concert Sunday December 17, at 3:00 p.m. See p. 2.

The Church Council will meet Monday, **December 18**, at 6:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve candlelight service **December 24**, at 5:00 p.m.

Looking ahead to January:

The **Social Justice Group** will not meet in December. The group will resume on Tuesday, **January 9, 2024**, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84904265696?pwd=ajB3czZFaHU3M3ZOWDNCQmRlOStwQT09> Passcode: justice.



December reflections

December 3	Eskanosen John 1:14
December 10	Meeting Jesús Hebrews 13:1-2
December 17	Songs and Sonnets
December 24	Tekein Luke 2:6
December 31	Rev. Jerry Keeney preaching

We will once again have live poinsettias in the Sanctuary during Advent. You may donate a poinsettia "in honor of," "in appreciation for," or "in memory of a special person in your life" by filling out the form in the bulletin or by calling the office by December 10th. The cost is \$15.00.



Poinsettias will be displayed on the chancel from December 17 through Christmas Eve. You may take yours home after that.

November men's breakfast



On Saturday, November 18th, the men held their monthly breakfast. The subjects were viruses, COVID-19, and the Great Pandemic of 1919, better known as the Spanish Flu.

Men from Dayspring and women from Second were also represented. Jay Jensen and Ron Barbre led the discussions and fielded various questions. Most interesting were the numerous personal experiences the group shared regarding COVID. Fred Weir of Dayspring, for example, explained that his uncle died of the Spanish Flu while serving in World War I.

And as always, the food was plentiful and delicious. Look for future programs and breakfasts coming soon.

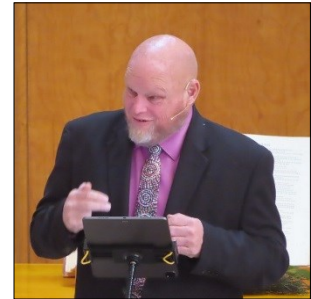
Ron Barbre

From our pastor. . .

Hi,

The holiday season is upon us. Lights are up, trees are decorated, nativities are displayed, parties are planned, merchants count their profits, cookies are baking, anxiety levels are rising, carols are playing, and hope is in the air.

Christmas, however, is not the only holiday at this time of year. The following is just a partial list of holidays that people in America celebrate between November 1 and January 1:



- Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) - originally a Mexican holiday in which prayers are said for the dead
- Diwali - a Hindu holiday celebrating light over darkness
- Thanksgiving - an American holiday
- Bodhi Day - a Buddhist celebration commemorating the day Buddha achieved enlightenment
- St. Lucia's Day - a Nordic celebration of Lights
- Hanukkah - the Jewish Festival of Lights
- Las Posados (The Inns) - a Latin American holiday celebrating Joseph and Mary's travels
- Asarah B'Tevet (10th of Tevet) - a Jewish day of prayer
- Winter Solstice - a celebration of new beginnings
- Festivus (yes, Festivus now makes the list of holidays)
- Christmas - the celebration of the birth of Jesus
- Zarathosht Diso - a Zoroastrian holiday commemorating the death of Zoroaster
- Boxing Day - British holiday that began as a day to give gifts to the poor
- Kwanzaa - a celebration of African-American culture
- Yule - a festival celebrating the winter season
- New Year
- Karen New Year - the first day of the month, Pyatho (actually not until January 11 in 2024)

Of these holidays I intentionally celebrate Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, and I have been to several Karen New Year's celebrations. I celebrate these particular days, but I genuinely respect the other holidays and the people who celebrate and love them. With so many holidays during this period of time, and since I don't always know what people celebrate, I like to use "Happy Holidays" as a greeting during this time of year. Of course, I also say "Merry Christmas," and "Happy Hanukkah," depending on whom I am addressing.

It seems strange that I would have to explain this, but in the weirdness of our times, I must state that my use of the greeting "Happy Holidays" is not political or strategic. Saying "Happy Holidays" does not indicate that I have taken a stance in some mythical war on Christmas, but rather, it is simply a greeting intended to show respect to those who do not celebrate the same holidays that I do.

Over the next few weeks, you will undoubtedly read headlines or hear pundits say that the greeting "Happy Holidays" short-changes Christianity and is a weapon for those waging war on Christmas. Forgive my bluntness, but such a claim is ridiculous. To say "Happy Holidays" to someone when you don't know what they actually celebrate is simple respect.

And respecting others is one way we show our Christian faith. Respect is one of the best gifts we can give, and after all, it is the season to give.

Let's take care of each other,

Steve (he, him, his) 🤞

Packing Thanksgiving meals at Antioch Baptist



Folks from Antioch Baptist and Second Baptist packing Thanksgiving meals. Members and friends of Second Baptist contributed \$1500 toward this project of providing Thanksgiving meals for 385 families in Antioch's neighborhood.

Second Baptist Church of Greater St. Louis



An American Baptist Church
9030 Clayton Road at McKnight
St. Louis, Missouri 63117-1094

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

Sunday School for all ages at 9:15 a.m.

Worship service 10:30 a.m.

Worship in the Karen language 11:30 a.m.

Telephone & fax (314) 991-3424

E-mail: office@2ndbc.org

Website: www.2ndbc.org

Rev. Stephen Mechem, Pastor

stevemechem@gmail.com

Richard Heller, Moderator

Oops!



As the children were performing their Christmas play, one boy was heard enthusiastically singing, "While shepherds washed their socks by night. . ."

One pastor was sharing the Nativity story when he bumped the button on his singing Christmas tie, which didn't have a mute button. So congregants had to listen to the entire verse and chorus of "Jingle Bells" before he could finish the story.

A child discovered a live mouse in his chocolate-filled gift bag on Christmas Eve. Although the creature jumped out and scurried out the door, worshipers saw it return for the next service.

After flames were distributed for the candlelight service, a pastor said, "Now that we're all good and lit. . .," causing laughter throughout the pews.