

First Baptist Church of Central Square

December 2023

701 North Main Street
P.O. Box 476
Central Square, NY 13036

www.fbc-cs.com
315-668-2138
fbccsny@gmail.com

Birthdays:

Alexander Springer 8
Stephen Springer 8
Matt Shanahan 10
Heather Bettinger 12
Ed Baxter Jr 15
Shaylee Woolson-Smith 15
Hannah DeFalco 23
Stewart McLain 25
Joshua Heitmann 26
Dale Bort 27
Nicholas Heitmann 31
Nathan Heitmann 31

Anniversaries:

Please submit witness articles and prayer requests to
fbccsny@gmail.com

Watch Past Services

<http://www.fbc-cs.com/media.htm>

Sunday School

Join us at 9am for Sunday School this advent season.

Food Pantry

Holiday Fixings

Christian Education

White gifts will begin now! See Roxanne for the tags. Please return gifts UNWRAPPED with the tag adhered to it by December 17th. Consider donating wrapping paper, scissors, and tape.

Diaconate Updates

Yes...we are all in Our Savior's Birthday season...a time to celebrate His love for and with all of us. Yet...many are still in need prayer and concern having spent time in a hospital, varieties of sickness and more. In November Sam Heer made his final journey and Delores Olin has now joined her husband, Ray, in Hillside Cemetery.

If anyone knows of other specific needs, the Deacon's Fund is available as a contribution from all of us to share and use at times when needed. Please contact Rich, Maggie, Don or Pastor Lilly at any time needs occur.

Thank you to those who came to assist with Christmas tree assembly, lighting and ornaments. Our continuing goal remains as we reach out to those we haven't seen for a while.

Many blessings to all as we move through a meaningful Merry Christmas and a New Year filled with Joy and Love!

Trustee Updates

Please consider getting needed supplies for the church.



Food Pantry - Cereal & Mac & Cheese

Christmas Offering 2023



FBC Giving Tree
Take a leaf...fill a need!

There are many little items that keep our church functioning and clean. Please stop by the table and grab a leaf to help support us financially.

Most items are probably a duplicate item on your shopping list!

If you are unable to stop by and grab a leaf or two and still want to support

Women's Group



Please see Maggie.

Fundraising Committee

Be on the lookout for upcoming fundraisers!



From the Pastor

Be still and know I am God. Psalm 46:10

In this busy time of year, the psalmist offers this Word from God. Lately, my brother has been lamenting on his honey-do list. It seems to get longer instead of shorter. It reminds me of a jingle from the days of Captain Kangaroo. "I'm busy doing nothing; working the whole day through..." I'd have to google the rest of the words, if I really cared enough to sing it. But that's how our lives go. We work and work and we are still behind. It seems we have been busy doing nothing. We never seemed to catch up enough to discard that honey-do list.

That is especially relevant at this time of year. So much to do; so little time. Well maybe we should be like the stores and start sooner. Just kidding. Seeing the shelves filled with Christmas things before Halloween rankles my nerve endings.

Sometimes we do remember the "reason for the season". When we take time to bask in the presence of God, we are blessed. Unfortunately, we only grab a moment here and there between the hectic preparations. This is not God's plan. He commanded a time of Sabbath. Sabbath means rest. He wants more than anything else for us to rest in Him. So my advice for this month is put God on your calendar. Give Him some extra time to rest with Him and then maybe you won't be tearing your hair out by the time Christmas Day comes. Yes, it's important for us to be prepared but will 15, 30, or 60 minutes spent with God really keep us from accomplishing all we THINK we have to get done? I think not. Trust Him, He'll help you get it done.

Have a blessed month, resting with Jesus, preparing for His return and celebrating His birth.

Pastor Lilly

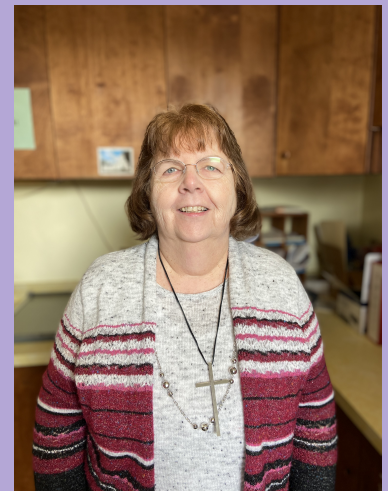
our fundraiser you can give any monetary amount by mailing it to the church:

First Baptist Church of CS
PO Box 476
Central Square, NY, 13036
Attn: Cherie House/Money
Tree Fundraiser

These funds will be used for larger projects that the Trustees are working on.



From our Pastor





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December 2023
This is your copy of *The FBC Witness*:



The Innkeeper's Tale by Dr. Ralph F. Wilson

They think I'm some kind of cruel, heartless landlord. Someone must have told them that. But they're wrong, just plain wrong, and it's time to set the record straight, once and for all.

People say I'm an innkeeper. I suppose you'd call it an inn. To us it's just a big house. My grandfather, Joshua ben-Yahoudi, built it back when his trading business was at a peak. And he built it big enough to fit all fourteen kids.

Well, a few years ago, the missus and I were just rattling around in that big house--kids grown up and all--and we were thinking, maybe we could take in a few travelers. Rachel has always been mighty good in the kitchen, so we just let out word that we'd take people in, and they started to come. Every night we'd have a person or two, sometimes more. People would always come back when they came to town again, intent on another bowl of Rachel's lamb stew.

Then came that blankety-blank census the governor thought up. Taxation, pure and simple! People from all over the province flooded into town that week. Filled us clean up. Rachel and I slept in the main room where we always do, and we started putting guests in the other three rooms. They kept coming. Then we doubled up two or three families to a room. They kept coming. Finally, when we had filled the main room with four families plus Rachel and me, we started turning people away.

I must have gotten in and out of bed ten times that night, stumbling over bodies to get to the door. "No more room, sorry folks. No more room. Come back in the morning. We have a couple of families leaving then." They'd mutter something and head back to their party, and sleep somewhere next to a house under the shelter of a blanket. I just couldn't make any more room. That's the honest truth.

But I did make room for one more couple. Joseph was a burly man with big arms and strong hands, down from Nazareth, I think he said. He wouldn't take "no" for an answer. I would say, "No, I'm sorry," and he'd tell me about his "little Mary." Well, when I saw "little Mary" she wasn't very little. She was just about as pregnant as a woman can get, and awfully pale. While Joseph was pleading, I saw her grab her tummy in pain, and I knew I couldn't let her have that baby outside in the wind and sleet.

The barn. That would just have to do, I told myself, and led them and their donkey out back. Now it was pretty crowded, so I shooed several animals into the pen outside to make room in one dry corner. Joseph said, "We sure are grateful, sir." Then with a serious look, he asked me, "Do you know where I can find a midwife in these parts? We might need her tomorrow or the next day."

That man didn't know much about having babies, it was plain enough to see. I ran to Aunt Sarah's house and pounded on the door until her husband came. "One of the travelers is having a baby," I told him. "I'll wait while Aunt Sarah gets dressed." I stopped a moment to catch my breath. "And tell her to hurry."

By the time we got back to the barn, Joseph had "little Mary" settled on some soft, clean hay, wrapped up in a blanket, wiping the perspiration off her brow, and was speaking softly to her as she fought the waves of pain. Aunt Sarah sent me to get my Rachel, and then pushed Joseph and me out of the barn. "This ain't no place for men," she said.

We waited just outside in the shelter of the barn for hours, it seemed like. Well, all of a sudden, we hear a little cry. "You've got a baby boy," Aunt Sarah was saying as we peeped around the corner. She hands the young-un to Rachel, and she wraps it up in those swaddling bands she had saved. Cute little thing, I tell you.

Well, Joseph goes over to Mary and gives her a big hug, and a kiss on the cheek, and Rachel hands Mary the baby, and then comes over to me and takes my hand. "Remember when our Joshua was born?" she whispers.

The lantern was blowing almost out, the cattle were lowing softly, and baby Jesus was asleep in his mother's arms. That's how I left them as I walked Aunt Sarah home. Chilly wind, though the sleet had stopped.

By the time I got back, Rachel was in bed, and I was about ready to put out the light, step over sleeping bodies, and get under the warm covers, when I heard some murmuring out by the barn.

I'd better check, I told myself. When I peeped in, I saw shepherds. Raggedy, smelly old shepherds were kneeling down on the filthy barn floor as if they were praying. The oldest one was saying something to Joseph about angels and the Messiah. And the rest of them just knelt there with their heads bowed, some with tears running down their faces.

I coughed out loud, and Joseph looked up. I was almost ready to run those thieving shepherds off, when Joseph motioned to me with his hand. "It's okay," he whispered. "They've come to see the Christ-baby."

The Christ-baby? The Messiah? That was when I knelt, too. And watched, and prayed, and listened to the old shepherd recount his story of angels and heavenly glory, and the sign of a holy baby, wrapped in swaddling bands, to be found in a stable-manger.

My Lord, it was my stable where the Christ-baby was born. My manger he rested in. My straw, my lamp, my wife Rachel assisting at his birth.

The shepherds left after a while. Some of them leaned over and kissed the sleeping Christ-child before they departed. I know I did.

I'll always be glad I made room in the barn for that family-- that holy family. You see, I'm not some mean inn-keeper. I was there. I saw him. And, you know, years later that boy came back to Bethlehem, this time telling about the Kingdom of God. Oh, I believe in him, I tell you. I was there. And, mark my words, if you'd seen what I've seen, you'd be a believer, too.