



THE JOYBELL



of the
The Baptist Church of Grafton
An American Baptist Church
Rev. Dr. Richard Robison, Interim Pastor
(508) 839-4911 Church Office
www.thebaptistchurchofgrafton.org
David and Diane Libbey, Editors

December 2018

Message from Pastor Rich

"There was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace." Luke 2: 14

Dear Friends,

The old carol says, "Do You Hear What I Hear?" Just listen to the sounds of the season!

I heard the evening news tonight. It wasn't very good. War continues, the stock market was down, the latest economic strategies in Washington don't seem like they worked very well and the High-Tech industry is still shaky!

Then, I heard the ads in the Media. On Black Friday, everything in the stores is on sale. There are only limited supplies of specially priced items per store, so shop early. Bring your coupon and get an additional 50% off. Buy one item and we'll give you two more for free!

And then, I heard some "Christmas" Songs on Oldies radio! "Jolly Old St. Nicklaus", "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer", and "White Christmas". Psychologists tell us that if we listen to them over and over again, it can ruin our mental state.

Next, I heard some Children's interviews being broadcast: "Santa Claus has a white beard", "Parents get all stressed on Christmas because we (children) bother them so much on Christmas", or "I wrote a letter to Santa. I asked him for a Winnie-the-Pooh, a Beanie Baby and a Tickle Me Elmo".

Then I went to church and I heard some different sounds - something more: The messenger of God said: *"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Luke 2:10*

And we sang: “Away in the Manger”, “It Came Upon a Midnight Clear”, and “I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day, their old familiar Carols play... Of Peace on Earth, Good Will to Them.” Yes, I finally heard the sounds of Christmas!

In this Advent season, I hope that you will be able to hear – truly hear, the Good News of the Love of God, as though you have never heard it before. I’ll pray for you and look forward to seeing you each week as we prepare for the coming of the Christ child into our world once again.

Have a Blessed Advent Season,
Rich Robison, Interim Pastor

Christmas Nativity Display

On Sunday, December 2 from 1:00-5:00 PM, our church will host our annual Nativity Scene Display as part of “Grafton Celebrates the Holidays.” For the past 11 years, our friends and families have brought in their nativity (crèche) sets, and we have set them up in the sanctuary to display for the community. Our visitors can walk through the display, viewing and reading about more than a hundred beautiful crèches. They’ll listen to soft Christmas music, pick up an Advent Calendar for the children and just enjoy some quiet reflection on the “Reason for the Season”, the birth of our Savior, Jesus.

This year we are trying something new. The display boards were set up on November 25 right after church. Russell Fellowship Hall was transformed into a lovely intimate place of worship. We will be having Sunday Worship Service there on December 2 as our sanctuary will be all set for our Creche Sunday. If you have never been able to visit the display, this will be the perfect opportunity to stay after church and see these wonderful representations of manger scenes from just about every continent. That Sunday we will need all kinds of help. During the event, we’ll need people to staff the display and to serve cookies and hot drinks in Russell Hall. We thank Marcia Kamilewicz for again offering to head up the refreshment station. Finally, at 5:00, we will need people to repackage the nativities into their boxes and put away the shelving. Help us bring the true spirit of Christmas to our town on December 2!



Christmas Flowers for our Sanctuary

Every year our Sanctuary is decorated for Christmas Sunday with poinsettias. Following the Worship Service, many of these plants are delivered with our love and prayers to our Shut-ins. If you would like to participate this year you have three options.

- You may make a \$6 donation for a poinsettia. These poinsettias will be given to a shut-in.
- You may purchase a poinsettia for \$6 to take home after the service on Christmas Sunday.
- You may bring in your own plant. Please have your tagged plant in the Sanctuary by noon on Saturday December 22rd. **Please be sure that your name is clearly written on the plant so you can take it home after Church Christmas Sunday.**

Any contribution may be designated **In Memory of** or **In honor/Appreciation of** a loved one. Please fill out the form found in the regular Sunday bulletins or contact Donna Nichols at the church office at 508-839-4911. Our Christmas Sunday bulletin will include a list of those for whom a plant has been given. So please don't delay and miss your chance to participate. If you have any questions please contact Donna.

The deadline for ordering flowers and turning in the form is Sunday, December 16.



A big thank you to Gloria and John Renaud for the donation of poinsettias to decorate our Sanctuary during the Advent Season.

Christmas Eve Service

We will be celebrating the birth of our Savior **December 24** at our **Service of Lessons and Carols Service**. Please plan to join us for this service of prayer, Bible readings, music and candle light at **5 pm**. This is a wonderful way to start your family celebration. This is a magical night of wonder and joy. It twinkles with candles and the smiles of family and friends. It is the night of our Savior's birth – what better place to celebrate but in our own church sanctuary.

Enjoy the quiet, the beauty of the flowers, the sound of Christmas music while once again experiencing the age-old story shared in song and verse.

The Diaconate Report

We are pleased to welcome Dr. Richard Robison to be our new interim pastor. Pastor Rich plans to be at the church two days per week [Tuesdays and Thursdays] from 9:30 to 12. Please call the church office if you are planning to visit to be sure that he will be there. The Deacons continue to make visitations a priority. They have arranged for devotional books for Advent to be available to members and friends. These are located on the clock table.

The Christian Education Committee

Advent Calendars were distributed after church on November 25 and will be available on the clock table throughout the Advent Season. This year we will also have an Advent Devotional Booklet for each family. These daily readings will help to bring the Christmas Season alive.



Our “**Giving Tree**” is in place for The Advent Season. We thank Gloria and John Renaud for the gift of a pre-lit tree and the wreaths on the doors. Thanks to the crew who set it up and got the decorations ready for the Advent Season.

- This year the **tree will be the collection site** for hats, scarves, mittens and gloves in **adult sizes** to be given to the homeless served by the Worcester Fellowship Program. A special need this time of year due to the cold weather is chap stick to help protect lips.
- **Christmas Giving for Grafton Food Bank** The number of people who are in need of help this Christmas Season grows and grows. This year we are going to concentrate on **food donations** to the Food Bank. Please bring in your donations to be placed beneath our Giving Tree. **Gift certificates** for Stop and Shop or stores like Wal-Mart are always appreciated by those struggling to make ends meet.

Donna will be accompanying Alyssa Greenberg and Dumkele Osegi to Grotonwood the weekend on December 1-2 for the Fall Awakening program.

We now have two Bible study groups at church. Donna is leading a video-inspired group on Sunday mornings starting at 9. Meredith Christian continues to lead the group on alternating Tuesday evenings.

Bible Sunday saw Alyssa Greenberg and Alexa Rizkalla, two of our young people, receiving their own Bibles.

Long Range Planning Committee

This year the task of filling open positions for the Church's Officers and Chairs of the Standing Committees falls to everyone. There is a sign-up sheet on the clock table with a list of the open positions. Please read it and prayerfully consider which of these tasks you might be able to fill. We will need everyone to help this year to continue to do the great work of our church.

Mission Committee

Food Bank contributions: This year Pastor Rich challenged us to fill the chancel steps with food and personal items that could be given to the Grafton Food Bank. This was a wonderful one-week challenge and on November 18 the steps were filled with canned goods, personal care items, soaps, boxes of noodles and other much needed items. These were delivered the Food Bank to help replenish its shelves – especially welcome right after the distribution of Thanksgiving Baskets.



The committee welcomed new member Annette Smith. We are planning on visiting Children's Haven in Uxbridge to see firsthand what they do after Annette Smith shared information about some of the activities and programs that they have for young people. We also plan to visit Bill Moore and Project New Hope Inc. Worcester with donations for their Christmas Outreach.

Baptist Church of Grafton Christmas Card Display Board

We will again have a Christmas Card Display Board available on the stairway in the Narthex for the Mission Committee Members and also anyone in our Baptist Church Family to share a Christmas Card with their Baptist church Family Members. Place a card here and donate the amount that you save by putting up one card instead of sending many. It will be in place for the 1st Sunday in Advent, December 2.

Love Gift Offerings: Donations for the last half of 2018 will soon be sent to ABC USA. Garfield asks that all boxes be returned by the December 10 meeting so he can turn the money in before the end of the year.

Mission Trip

Dear Friends and Prayer Warriors,

Through Liberty University I have been accepted to go on a mission trip to Rwanda during Spring Break in March 2019. The trip is sponsored by LU Send in conjunction with Compassion Ministries International.

Now this trip is a little expensive for me. I need to raise \$3500 to be able to go. First of all I am asking you to pray for the trip and then see if God may be leading you to donate to this mission.

I know He has called me to go and to serve the people of Rwanda, but I need your help to get there. I covet your prayers for me and this journey God is taking me on.

I have set up an account at school for this trip. Please make out your check to me, Rachel Stevens, with a notation on the check – LSU Send/ Rwanda mission trip. My address is:

Rachel Stevens
1971 University Blvd. MSC Box 136540
Lynchburg VA 24515

I am excited for this opportunity and truly covet your prayers.

Love in Christ,
Rachel Stevens

Property Committee

The Property Committee has been busy working and reports the following:

- Parsonage:
 - Wall paper has been removed, the walls repaired, sanded and painted. The ceilings have been repaired and painted.
 - Electrical work and plumbing work have been completed
 - Basement has been cleaned and the trash removed.
 - Steve will arrange to have the gutters cleaned and the downspouts checked
 - Steve will arrange parsonage driveway plowing until we have tenants
- Church building
 - First snow of the year reminded us that we need to have a couple of crews ready to help clear the walks and the ramp. If you can help please let Steve Reichle or David Libbey know.
 - Steve is looking into replacing the sign on the front of the building. It is vintage 1965 and is showing its age.
 - Steve and Ed King worked on the rosette in the center of the sanctuary to get it back in place. More works needs to be done but a very tall ladder is needed. Light bulbs were also replaced in the ceiling.
 - New LED lightbulbs were installed in the Narthex to make the area brighter.
 - Kitchen sink faucets were repaired.

Annual All Church Fair

Our Fair has come and gone. It was a wonderful day with lots of family, friends and townspeople joining us for the day. It was a day of fellowship, renewed acquaintances, pies, pies and more pies. We had a steady stream of people coming through the doors to purchase pies and other wonderful baked goods, Drawffle tickets, jewelry, attic treasures, crafts, books, and cookies to decorate. We continued our expanded Attic Treasures this year and with some wonderful donations were able to provide ample choices for our buyers. We were blessed with another colorful quilt donated by Paula Moore, lots of wonderful gift certificates, and Christmas wall hanging, for the Drawffle Table among other great items. Our kitchen crew outdid themselves with coffee and scones followed by soups, sandwiches, mac and cheese with the best apple crisp for dessert.

At the close of the day, our coffers were \$4,860 richer. Sunday morning the Boutique opened for the first of several Sundays of gift purchasing opportunities with jams, jellies and gifts of all sorts. As of this writing the total for the Fair and the Boutique is over \$5,543.

We would like to thank all the people who worked so hard for so many months and weeks to make this happen. It is truly an all-church effort – without all of us it would not work.

Important Dates in December

2	Sunday	~	10:00 am Lighting of the First Advent Candle. Service of Holy Communion. Scripture – Malachi 4:2 and Luke 2:1-7. Communion Meditation – <i>Got Christmas?</i> Sunday School classes for our youth. Coffee Fellowship following Worship.
		~	11:30am Choir Rehearsal with Pat Knowlton
		~	1:00pm-5:00pm Creche Display for Grafton Celebrates the Holidays
4	Tuesday	~	5:15-6:15pm AA Reflections Group
		~	7:30pm Bible Study with Meredith Christian
6	Thursday	~	9:30am Prayer Time in the parlor
8	Saturday	~	9:00am-3:00pm Quilt Class with Paula Moore
9	Sunday	~	9:00 am Adult Bible Study
		~	10:00am Lighting of the Second Advent Candle, Scripture: Isaiah 9:2-7 and Luke 2: 8-16 Sermon topic – <i>A Christmas Peace.</i> Sunday School classes for our youth. Coffee Fellowship following Worship.
		~	11:30am Choir Rehearsal with Pat Knowlton
10	Monday	~	Mission Committee with Garfield Atchue
11	Tuesday	~	5:15-6:15pm AA Reflections Group
13	Thursday	~	9:30am Prayer Time in the parlor
		~	7:00pm Property Committee with Steve Reichle
16	Sunday	~	9:00 am Adult Bible Study
		~	10:00am Lighting of the Third Advent Candle, Scripture Isaiah 11:1-9 and Matthew 1:18-25. Sermon topic – <i>For the Person who has Everything.</i> Sunday School classes for our children and youth. Coffee Fellowship following Worship.
		~	11:30am Choir Rehearsal with Pat Knowlton
17	Monday	~	7:00pm Board of Directors with Diane Libbey
18	Tuesday	~	5:15-6:15pm AA Reflections Group
		~	7:30pm Bible Study with Meredith Christian
19	Wednesday	~	3:00pm Crescent Manor
20	Thursday	~	9:30am Prayer Time in the parlor
23	Sunday	~	9 am Adult Bible Study
		~	10:00am Lighting of the Fourth Advent Candle, Scripture Isaiah 53:1-6 and Luke 1: 26-35; 2:1-7 Sermon topic- <i>But, What do I want for Christmas?</i> Sunday School classes for our children and youth. Coffee Fellowship following Worship.
		~	11:30am Choir Rehearsal with Pat Knowlton
24	Monday	~	5:00pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
25	Tuesday	~	Christmas Day
27	Thursday	~	9:30am Prayer Time in the parlor
30	Sunday	~	9 :00am Adult Bible Study

		~	10:00am Post Christmas Worship Service to God's Glory, Sunday School classes for our children and youth. Coffee Fellowship following Worship.
--	--	---	--

- **Worship Service to God's Glory, 10:00am**, with Childcare and Sunday School Classes for children in Nursery through High School. Church Family Fellowship Time with refreshments following the Worship Service.:
- **Deacons of the Month for December** – Barry Keith, June Whitney, Yves Fleury, Donna Nichols and Pat Knowlton
- **Tellers for the Month of December** -
- Church Office Hours are Monday – Friday 9:00 am–11:30 am.
- Pastor's hours.- Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30 to noon but please call to confirm.

Kitchen Committee Report

Thank You to ALL of The Baptist Church of Grafton Family who were the Kitchen Crew Cooks and Helpers-- Dessert Buffett Cooks and Helpers and also Clean-up Crew for all that you did to make our November Pasta & Meatball Supper a big success! There were a lot of happy smiles as a warm welcome and opening prayer was provided by our new Interim Pastor Rich Robison. It was so nice to have him and his daughter Amy there.

Another addition to the evening was each table having an assigned number with each table getting its food as its number was pulled from a hat. **It made taking turns fun!** The Pasta and Meatball Supper raised a total of \$742.

Please be sure to Sign-Up on the reservations sheet in RFH for the Richard's Swedish Meatball Supper on January 19. Pass the word to your friends to let you know if they are coming so they can have you sign-up for them. Or call the Church Office at 508-839-4911 for reservations.

Annette Smith, one of the newest members of the Kitchen~Hospitality Committee, will soon be taking the ServSafe Test. This is the process for being trained and certified to work in a kitchen serving the public. If anyone else is interest in taking the test on December 8 or at another time please talk to Susanne Fleming or Marcia Kamilewicz.



Coffee Time Sign-Up Sheet: We also welcome people to Sign-Up for Food Donations for our Sunday Morning Coffee Time. This is a wonderful opportunity to show our Hospitality to our fellow church members and our visitors on Sunday Morning there is a Sign-Up Sheet on the table in RFH. Please speak with Marcia Kamilewicz if you have questions.

Annual Report Reminder!!

- ✦ **Annual Reports (except Financial) are due as soon as possible but no later than January 6, 2019.**
- ✦ **Financial Annual Reports are due Sunday, January 13, 2019.**

The Church Secretary asks that Committee reports be given to her in both hard copy and electronically wherever possible. The Annual Report Booklets will be available on the Sunday before the Annual Meeting which is January 20 (snow date January 27).

Financial Update

As of the end of October the church's financial picture is good. A big thank you to the all the people who organized and worked on the fair, the dinners, and other fund-raising events as well as to those who supported those events.

The Stewardship Campaign is underway to provide the financial resources we will need to support the church next year and continue growing our ministries and missions. If you would like to catch up on giving for this current year, now is the time! Thank you to all who are ahead or keeping current in their pledging.

2019 Stewardship Campaign - Please read carefully!

The Stewardship theme is, "Look to the future". The future of our church depends, in part, on attracting an energetic, highly qualified pastor. To attract such a pastor requires financial support of that pastor. So, please don't just pledge what you gave in 2018. Give careful consideration to the future of this church, and pledge an amount that will help contribute towards a bright future.

Here is what is needed to ensure that the mission of this church continues to be strong and effective next year and into the future:

- **Operating Expenses**
 - ***Total anticipated Operating Expenses for 2019: About \$110,000***
 - ***This is about \$2,100 needed each week to keep the church's doors open.***
 - ***Pledge Goal: \$64,000:*** Pledging is the greatest source of income (58%) towards Operating Expenses.
 - ***This pledging area needs the greatest support.***

- **Planned Missions:**
 - **Pledge Goal:** \$3,000
 - Planned Missions raises contributions so our church can support local, regional, national and international missions giving throughout the year.
- **Building Fund:**
 - **Pledge Goal:** \$2,000
 - The Building Fund accumulates money to help pay for repairs and upgrades to the church and parsonage.
- **Savings Fund:**
 - **Pledge Goal:** \$2,000
 - The Savings Fund replaces monies from the church's Endowment funds that have been used to pay for major projects such as the church roof that was installed in 2003.
 - The Savings Fund is used to "pay ourselves back" for the money we borrowed from ourselves to finance these major projects.

If you have never pledged before, it is easy! Here's some basic info about pledging:

- A pledge is what a person intends to give to the church during the year.
- Pledges make budget planning easier.
- A person is free to designate which area(s) s/he wants to make a pledge to.
- A pledge is *not* a legally-binding contract.
- Pledge amounts and designations can be changed during the year if a person's/family's financial situation changes.
- Pledge amounts are held in the strictest confidence by the Finance Committee.
- Questions? Contact any member of the Finance Committee: Bert Engvall, Chris Hoffman, David Libbey, or talk with Karen Davis

We have faith that the members and friends of this church realize how blessed our church is, and are willing to continue to support it to the best of their abilities in order to ensure that its future will continue to be bright. *We trust that every giver supports this church because s/he strongly believes in the importance of its ministry, and, wherever possible, will try to increase her or his support of it. Continuation of this ministry depends on all of us working together to meet next year's financial needs.*

For convenience, a pledge form is included in this issue of the "Joybell" for those who would like to make a pledge for this year and have not yet done so. It is our goal to complete the Stewardship Campaign by Christmas, so it will be helpful for you to hand in a pledge form soon.

The Finance Committee treats all pledges confidentially.

Thank you,
 Karen Davis
 Stewardship Chair

Baptist Church of Grafton

Planned Giving for 2019

During 2019 I/We plan to give the following amounts:

Fund	Amount	How Often (please circle)
Operating Expenses	_____	per week per month one time amount
Planned Missions	_____	per week per month one time amount
Building Fund	_____	per week per month one time amount
Savings Fund	_____	per week per month one time amount

I understand that this Planned Giving is an indication of my intention to make this contribution to The Baptist Church of Grafton, and that this is *not* a legally binding contract.

Name (Please print): _____

To return this form:

Please fold, then staple or tape this form closed. Bring it to church and put it in the offering plate. **Or hand it** to Chris Hoffman or Karen Davis. If you choose to put it in the offering plate, the offering counters will *not* open your form. It will be placed, unopened, in the Finance Committee mailbox at church.

Or mail to:

Baptist Church of Grafton
PO Box 304
Grafton, MA 01519

Attn: Pledge



Join us every Sunday in Advent for the lighting of our Advent Wreath and on
Christmas Eve for the lighting of the Christ Candle during our
Service of Lessons and Carols
December 24 at 5 PM
Spread the joy!
Invite a friend to worship with us on December 24.