

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.thebaptistchurchofgraffton.org

David and Diane Libbey, Editors

January 2019

Message From Pastor Rich

Some thoughts on being your Interim Pastor:

"I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 3:14

As we approach the New Year, with Christmas behind us, I wanted to take some time to reflect upon the excitement I feel about being your Interim Pastor. When I arrived in early November, the fall was already in full swing and of course, immediately thereafter we were into Advent and marching towards a joyous celebration of Christmas. I truly enjoyed our Christmas season and the inspiration it brought to us. Thank you for your full participation and good spirit.

The word "interim" in interim pastor means that a pastor is asked to serve a congregation for the limited period of time which usually occurs between the leaving of a "settled" or "permanent" pastor and the successor to come. In this case, the church is extending the interim period and subsequently has called a new Interim Pastor while the search continues. That fact, in itself should not affect the work of the Pastoral ministry. The Interim pastor is called "pastor" because the work being done is very similar to that of a settled pastor plus some of the special tasks that need to be accomplished as the congregation prepares itself to accept a new settled pastor.

Often, during the interim period, there is 'grief work' to be done, that is letting go of the spiritual and emotional ties to the previous pastor and 'making room' for a new pastor to take charge. It is not unusual for churches to experience conflict during this time of uncertainty. This is also a time to re-examine the church's ministry and mission, re-affirm its commitments to our American Baptist family and the neighboring sister churches in our community. In addition, this is a time to consider the spiritual and functional health of our congregation and determine how to address the most pressing areas of need. Successful completion of these important activities requires an intentional focus from both the pastor and con-

gregation. The good news is that God will lead us through it, if we but trust in God's wisdom and love.

So, during this interim or "in between time", we have the opportunity to appreciate our past, relish our present, and look forward to the new opportunities God will place before us. May we pray together for God's renewal of our life and ministry together.

I note that we haven't really had much time nor had the opportunity to discuss the church's vision for ministry or define our goals for this extended interim period. I am hopeful we will be able to create some opportunities for open, honest and caring discussion sometime in the near future.

I am enjoying the process of getting acquainted with each of you and pleased to be sharing this experience with you. I am confident that together we will accomplish great things for the Baptist Church of Grafton!

Please pray for God's wisdom, pray for our church's ministry and please pray for me as your Interim Pastor. Together we make a great team.

God's Blessings for 2019.

Pastor Rich

A Note of Thanks

Thank you!

On behalf of myself and my family, I want to express our sincere thanks and appreciation for your warm reception over these past weeks and especially for your generous Christmas gift and other remembrances shared at Christmas time. Dotty, Amy, Jason and I all have experienced your love in very real ways.

Warmest blessings,
Pastor Rich and family

Pastoral Search

I have been asked a number of questions about the Pastoral Search status – hence a brief update.

As we enter 2019, the Search process is inactive. After a two-year effort and the defeat of the Search Committee's recommended candidate in September, the entire Search Committee resigned to make way for a new committee that will

work with both a new Interim Pastor and a new Moderator. Once the Annual Meeting decides on a new Moderator, it will be that Officer's responsibility to form a new search committee and restart the search effort. I expect that this renewed search will not be brief as it will need to revisit much of the work accomplished during 2017-2018. For example, the church profile that the first Committee wrote should be carefully reviewed to ensure that it reflects the thoughts of the congregation regarding the gender and the social commitments of a settled pastor. Following this, the process will need to solicit and select candidates, interview them, discern God's vision for the Church's next settled pastor, negotiate a contract with that person, and conduct a candidating weekend. These steps are all important to a successful search process.

Diane Libbey, Moderator

Annual Crèche Display



The first Sunday in December is always "Grafton Celebrates the Holidays". For the twelfth year our sanctuary offered an exhibit of Nativity Scenes owned by members and friends of our church. With the permission of Pastor Rich, we moved our Worship Service to Russell Fellowship Hall for that Sunday, allowing our set-up crews to work several different days to prepare the sanctuary for our guests. It also allowed our members to see the creches all set up before they left church.

This year, we had well over 150 different sets on display in the sanctuary during the afternoon. For the fifth year a small creche was donated that was raffled off to a lucky visitor. No money was collected – just phone numbers. This year's winner was delighted to be chosen. Guests were also given an advent calendar as a thank-you for coming.

Downstairs, Marcia Kamilewicz chaired the refreshments for visitors, providing hot or cold drinks and cookies baked by church members.

There were a number of our church people who spent several days here, setting up, hosting and repackaging all of the crèches when the display ended. Recorded music from the Grotto added to the peaceful and joyous mood. This is a highly labor-intensive project, and it could not have been done without all of this help. Many thanks to all who assisted especially Janice King who prepares the explanation booklet and organizes the crews.

Diaconate Report

The Deacons organized the Christmas Flowers for the Sanctuary this year. Plants were purchased for shut-ins and those who have been ill and others who could use a Christmas hug. Deacons and friends delivered the plants to all and wished them a Merry Christmas. The Diaconate purchased Advent devotionals for the congregation and sent those to shut-ins as well.

The Diaconate would like to ask that we remember and make time to contact or visit shut-ins or individuals who have recently lost a loved one or have an illness in the family. If there is someone who is unable to attend church and they would like to receive communion, please contact the Church Office and a visit and communion can be scheduled. Sometimes we need to bring the solace of the church to the sick and the aged. Whether the member(s) are temporarily or chronically ill, have suffered a sudden accident or tragedy, or are confined in an institution or their own home, this contact has the unique privilege of renewing their spirits and bringing them good cheer by means of fellowship, prayer, the Scriptures, or words of friendship and comfort. It is a way of making sure members realize that the church cares about them.

The Diaconate is looking forward to 2019, and the great opportunities available to reach out to the local community, beyond the church steps to remind the local community that Christianity is very much alive and well at the Baptist Church of Grafton.

Christian Education Committee

Advent Calendars were given out at the Creche exhibit and during coffee hours on the Sundays leading up to Christmas. Many people who are not part of our church were pleased to be given a calendar as a thank you for visiting the exhibit.

The Christmas Tree in the front of the sanctuary looked lovely with its decorations of lights and warm items that were donated to the Grafton Food Bank. The Committee thanks all who brought items to share and to the children who “artfully” decorated the tree.

The Advent Candles were lit each Sunday in Advent by a different family. The candles and wall banners reminded us of the approach of Christmas, the waiting and the watching.

Annual RMMO Offering

We begin the New Year by participating in the first of our five annual special offerings. The Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering is used to address the emergency needs of the more than 3,300 retired ministers, missionaries and their families. Among those needs are medical and housing costs. Several of our former pastors and their spouses are among those who have been assisted by this offering. Please consider making a donation in their honor. RMMO envelopes are available in the pew racks throughout January.



Giving Envelopes for 2019

The **2019 Envelopes** are available just inside the front door of the church. You should receive a box of envelopes if you have returned your pledge form or are a regular giver. Your name appears on the bottom of the box. Envelopes are available at any time – just contact Chris Hoffman or speak to any Finance Committee member.

Mission Committee

The Mission Committee Chairperson welcomed Karen Davis as a new member.

Garfield Atchue collected Love Gift Boxes and will have all funds received sent to ABCUSA Love Gifts for 2018.

We learned from Annette Smith that the Children's Haven Programs run in the summer so we will schedule a visit with them in the spring. The Mission Committee plans to visit Project New Hope Inc. Worcester in January.

We have also added Veterans Inc. and their outreach program to the programs we support. We have a list of needed items such as hats, socks, gloves, underwear, razors, shaving cream, shampoo, deodorant, shoes, and boots. There will be a basket available to start receive donations on the Mission Table in RFH for starting Sunday January 6.

The Mission Committee voted to donate \$100 to Grafton Food Bank and \$50 each to Grafton Together We Can, Grafton Community Harvest Project, Inc., Friends of Grafton Elders Fuel assistance Program, Worcester County Food Bank, and Project New Hope, Worcester.

Our next Meeting will be Monday, January 14 at 10AM.

Property Committee

At the December 13th meeting the following items were discussed:

- Parsonage gutters were cleaned.
- Parsonage roof may need replacement this year. Estimates to be obtained.
- Painting at Parsonage was completed on budget with no additional expenses.
- Plaque with Rev Robison name was added to church sign out front.
- Estimates have been provided for new Church sign. Type and location to be discussed
- Lights at front of church building were removed, cleaned, and repaired.
- Contractor (Window Logic) has looked at the front doors to the church, and has determined what needs to be done for them to close properly. They said they would do the work at no charge as a community service, but would schedule it when they had time available.

Kitchen Committee Update

Our first public dinner of the New Year will be held on Saturday, January 19. We'll be serving **Richard's Swedish Meatballs**. The dinner will be served at 5:30 PM. While not required, **reservations are appreciated** by your kitchen crew. Please use the sign-up sheet in Russell Hall or call the church office (508-839-4911). Pass the word to your friends!

Our kitchen crew is looking for your assistance. Helpers are needed to set up and to clean-up after the dinners. If you can help, please remember to sign up in Russell Hall. Also, please bring your contributions for our world famous dessert table!

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



Annual Meeting SUNDAY, JANUARY 20

Please submit all committee and board reports to the church office on a disk or thumb drive or email them to officebcg1800@gmail.com on or before January 6.

The plan is for the **Annual Report booklets** to be ready for **Sunday, January 13**. This will allow time for the congregation to read the Report in preparation for the Annual Meeting.

Church family members are invited to participate in a pot luck luncheon directly after Worship on January 20. Paper plates, plastic silverware and cups will be provided by the Church along with coffee, tea and punch. Please bring a dish to share with friends, your copy of the annual report and any questions you may have about our church.

The **2019 Annual Meeting will follow the luncheon.** At this time members will hear the reports of various church boards and a report from the finance committee on church finances, and will be asked to vote on a slate of officers and committee chairs as well as the budget for the upcoming year. **Each and every person's participation is important.** Please plan to attend our Annual Meeting – it's your opportunity to ask questions, offer ideas and actively participate in directing our church's future.

In case of inclement weather, this meeting will be moved to Sunday, January 27.

Important Dates for January

| | | |
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| 1 | Tuesday | Happy New Year |
| 3 | Thursday | 10:00am Prayer Time in the Parlor |
| 6 | Sunday | 9:00am Adult Bible Video Series in Russell Hall |
| | | 10:00am Worship Service to God's Glory, Sunday School classes for our children. Coffee Fellowship following Worship. |
| | | 11:30am Choir Rehearsal with Pat Knowlton |
| 7 | Monday | 7:00pm Finance Committee with Bert Engvall |
| 8 | Tuesday | 5:15-6:15pm AA Reflections Group |
| 10 | Thursday | 10:00am Prayer Time in the Parlor |
| 12 | Saturday | 9:00am-2:00pm Quilt Class with Paula Moore |
| 13 | Sunday | 9:00am Adult Bible Video Series in Russell Hall |
| | | 10:00am Worship Service to God's Glory, Sunday School classes for our youth. Coffee Fellowship following meeting. |
| | | 11:30am Choir Rehearsal with Pat Knowlton |
| 14 | Monday | 10:00am Mission Committee with Garfield Atchue |
| | | 7:00pm Board of Directors with Diane Libbey |
| 15 | Tuesday | 5:15-6:15pm AA Reflections Group |
| 16 | Wednesday | 3:00pm Crescent Manor |
| 17 | Thursday | 10:00am Prayer Time in the Parlor |
| | | 7:00pm Property Committee with Steve Reichle |
| 19 | Saturday | 5:30pm Richard's Swedish Meatball Dinner |
| 20 | Sunday | 9:00am Adult Bible Video Series in Russell Hall |
| | | 10:00am Worship Service to God's Glory, Sunday School classes for our youth. |
| | | 11:30am Pot Luck Lunch and Annual Meeting |
| 22 | Tuesday | 5:15-6:15pm AA Reflections Group |
| 24 | Thursday | 10:00am Prayer Time in the Parlor |
| 27 | Sunday | 9:00am Adult Bible Video Series in Russell Hall |
| | | 10:00am Worship Service to God's Glory, Sunday School classes for our youth. Coffee Fellowship following meeting. [Snow date for Annual Meeting if necessary] |
| | | 11:30am Choir Rehearsal with Pat Knowlton |
| 28 | Monday | 7:00pm Deacons with Donna Nichols |
| 29 | Tuesday | 5:15-6:15pm AA Reflections Group |
| | | 7:30pm Bible Study with Meredith Christian |
| 31 | Thursday | 10:00am Prayer Time in the Parlor |

- **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 January:** Janice King and Donna Nichols
- **Tellers for the Month for January:** Please speak with Chris Hoffman if you would like to learn to be a teller. He is looking for several people to help in this capacity.

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. We have lost several pledging units this year from deaths, moving away or similar things and will need extra support to keep our Church going and growing.

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.

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.***

Crazy Quilters of our Church give back to Community

The Crazy Quilters meet at our church almost monthly. It is a group of sewers who enjoy the fellowship, learning and laughter of working together on projects. This year the group worked to create pillowcases for the women of Abby's House in Worcester. Led by Joanne St. Germain the group created over 100 cases and filled 75 goodie bags with personal supplies, candy, gloves, socks, paper and pens. The group also donated half of the proceeds from their Quilt Show to the shelter. These were delivered in time for Christmas, much to the appreciation of the clients and staff of Abby's.



Annual Meeting Reminder
January 20th right after Worship
Pot Luck Lunch followed by the Meeting
Bring a dish to share with friends!
Coffee, tea, punch and paper goods will be
provided by the Church.

Remember that your vote is important, your voice needs to be heard and your participation keeps us strong and growing.
Snow date is January 27th.