

First Baptist Church of Southington

581 Meriden Ave.

Southington, CT 06489-3901

An American Baptist Church ABCUSA

Telephone: (860) 628-8121

www.firstbaptistsouthington.org

Ministry Team:

The Rev. Sharon R. Holt, *pastor*

The Rev. Peg Lewis, *associate pastor*

Director of Music: Les Marsh

Newsletter Editor: Robin Michel

Church Office Hours - Please call Pastor Sharon before coming to the church

Email:

Pastor.sharon@firstbaptistsouthington.org

Visit us on Facebook:

First Baptist Church - Southington, CT



January-February 2025



Sunday Worship at 10am: in-person, via Zoom and on Facebook Live

Looking Ahead in January & February

January

Sunday, Jan. 5 – Worship, 10am, MLK meeting follows

Thursday, Jan. 9 – Board of Deacons, 3pm; Music Committee, 4pm

Sunday, Jan. 12 – Worship, 10am, Finance Committee meets after worship/fellowship; undecorate the church

Wednesday, Jan. 15 – Outreach Committee, 1pm

Sunday, Jan. 19 – Worship, 10am

Tuesday, Jan. 21 – Book Club, 1pm, parlor

Sunday, Jan. 26 – Martin

Luther King Jr. Celebration, 10am, followed by a reception

February

Sunday, Feb. 2 – Worship, 10am

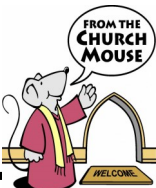
Sunday, Feb. 9 – Worship, 10am; Annual Reports due by 5pm

Saturday, Feb. 15 – Steeple Signal deadline for March-April issue

Sunday, Feb. 16 – Worship, 10am

Tuesday, Feb. 18 – Book Club, 1pm, parlor
Thursday, Feb. 20 – Friendship Time, 10am to noon

Sunday, Feb. 23 – Worship, 10am; Annual Meeting follows, lunch will be provided
Check announcements for other meetings



Don't miss our Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration!

Our annual Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration will be held Sunday, Jan. 26 as part of the worship service. Guest speaker for the "Serving the Least of These" program will be Connecticut's 75th Secretary of State Stephanie Thomas, the first Black person to be elected to this position. Music will be provided by Saul Olivas. Two middle school students will be honored. A special reception will follow.

The Minister's Musings



During the Sundays of Advent every week we light a new candle. The candles represent four themes: Hope, peace, joy, and love. On Christmas Eve we light the white center candle which represents Christ, the culmination of all our longings and expectations.

As we welcome the arrival of a new year, may we carry the themes of Advent with us as we greet 2025.

Hope – In 2025 may you always embrace hope.

Hope for a better tomorrow. A tomorrow where there is justice, mercy, food, shelter, and freedom from fear for all.

Peace – That 2025 would bring an end to the conflicts in Ukraine, Syria, Israel and throughout the world. May we learn to live together without conflict, seeking to solve our differences large or small with dialogue, compromise that will result in reconciliation, not conflict.

Joy – May there be joy in our homes, our towns, our country, and our world in 2025. May human rights be embraced so all can aspire to and attain education, health care, shelter, and sufficient food so no one goes to bed hungry, longing for a day when their stomach is full, their bookshelves overflowing and robustly healthy to face the challenges of our world.

Love – It is said that the world needs love. As the New Year dawns, it does, desperately. Let us embrace Christ's command that we love our neighbor as ourselves. That means we must first learn to love ourselves; to accept who we are as God's beloved sons and daughters; we are then empowered to love others. Our neighbor is not just the person who lives next to us, they are everyone we encounter as we travel the roads of life. May we be emboldened to live our lives as a testament to love.

Finally, may Christ shine in your lives throughout 2025. May His presence guide and bless us all. May His light shine before us so that we can find our way through the darkness leading everyone we encounter into His marvelous light.

May we be filled with Hope, Peace, Joy, Love and Christ in 2025, and in all the years beyond. Happy New Year!



In Christ, *Pastor Sharon*

News from the Pews



Annual Meeting

Our annual meeting will be held following worship on Sunday, Feb. 23. Lunch will follow. Please submit your reports to Pastor Sharon by

Sunday, Feb. 9.

Our Giving Tree Continues in January
Southington Community Services has asked for our help by providing socks, tee-shirts and underwear for our Christmas giving tree this year. All items are needed in men's, women's and children's



sizes. Our Giving Tree is located in Fellowship Hall and will be there until the end of January. Thank you for helping our neighbors in need.

Thank you, Flower Committee

Thank you for the stunning harvest arrangement and the poinsettias display. Your artistry truly enhances our worship.

All Saints' Sunday

On Nov. 3 we observed All Saints' Sunday during which we remembered longtime church member Roger Badgley and Stephanie Lee Harris, Robin Michel's sister.



Interfaith Clergy Thanksgiving Service

Pastor Sharon was among clergy who participated in the annual Interfaith Clergy Thanksgiving Service held Nov. 26 at St. Dominic Church. The event brings together people of all faiths to give thanks for our blessings.

Blue Christmas



On Dec. 10, First Baptist Church partnered with local clergy and Plantsville Funeral Home to present the Blue Christmas Service – providing solace to those who mourn. It was very

well-attended.

Tag Sale Wrap-Up

Our annual tag sale on Nov. 2 was once again very successful, raising more than \$5,686 for the general fund and missions. We also share the “wealth” (leftover items) with



Southington Community Services, The Summit (for residents’ holiday giving event), as gift basket items for various non-profits and our own events, and new this year, the FAVRH program. Thank you to one and all who



donated and volunteered!

FBC Book Club

The FBC Book Club will next meet on Tuesday, Jan. 21 at 1 p.m. to discuss “The Vanishing Half” by Brit Bennett. Bring your suggestions for books to read in 2025! We take turns hosting the meetings.

Each book club meeting will also be offered via Zoom in addition to meeting in the parlor. Notices and the Zoom link will be sent out in advance of each meeting. Everyone is welcome – even if you haven’t read the book or didn’t like it! To receive the emails and/or the Zoom link,



contact Ginni Butler at (860) 628-5014 or email vlbutler@sbcglobal.net.

Project Stay Warm



The Rev. Sharon Holt and other church members helped with Southington Community Services’ Project Stay Warm distributing coats and winter accessories at a housing complex. Nice work!

Volunteer Opportunity

Are you interested in reading scripture or being a worship leader? We’d love to have you. If you would like to volunteer, please see Barbara McKay. We can work around your schedule. Thank you for serving our church!

D.R. Mission 2025!

Be a Part of this Life-Changing Experience

The Dominican Republic Mission Team, based in Wallingford, began sending short-term teams



to volunteer in LaRomana, DR in 1990. Since that first team of 11 volunteers, thousands of people of all ages and from all over the United States have had the privilege of serving.

On Sunday, Feb. 9, we will welcome John Powers, the Mission Team coordinator since 1990, and his wife, Aimee, to be part of our church service to uplift this amazing ministry and will also join us during fellowship hour with more information and answer questions.

2025 Mission Trip dates for the Dominican Republic are:

- Week 1 – Friday, June 27 to Saturday, July 5
- Week 2 – Saturday, July 5 to Saturday, July 12
- Week 3 – Saturday, July 12 to Saturday, July 19

Our church has sent volunteers on DR Mission trips through the years. It is our prayer that persons from our church will once again be a part of this amazing experience. We are also in need of sponsors and prayer partners to support this opportunity.

The cost of the trip will

continued

be shared between our church and also a portion provided by our missionaries. Participants are responsible for acquiring their own passports. Registration is beginning. Questions? Feel free to contact Joyce Olore at (860) 276-8061, isolore@aol.com; Linda Lamy at (860) 283-6734, lindalamy8@gmail.com; or Pastor Sharon. Please prayerfully consider this mission opportunity whether as a volunteer, a sponsor or a prayer partner.



Friendship Time!

We have held several Friendship Times to chat, play games, color and just have fun. Next Friendship Time will be Thursday, Feb. 20, 10 a.m. to noon, in Fellowship Hall. Bring your games, knitting, photos and coloring books to enjoy with beverages and a snack. Need a ride? Ask Ginni. Snow date is Feb. 27, 10 a.m. to noon.

Fellowship Hour Help

Thanks again to everyone who has been helping with our Fellowship Hour. Anyone is welcome to help whether it is hosting, setting up, serving, bringing goodies, cleaning up, etc. - Please call Ginni (860-628-5014) if you plan on bringing a refreshment.

Southington Community Services Needs Us!

We continue to support Southington Community Services with our weekly donations. Particularly needed are personal care items which are not covered by Connecticut Food Share. Items can be placed in our collections basket in the narthex. Please consider donating liquid dish detergent, small-

size laundry detergent, shampoo, and bars of hand soap. Thanks in advance for providing these non-food, but very necessary items.

Bulletin Board

Our bulletin board in the Narthex is beautifully decorated by Linda Lamy – its inspirational art and quotes welcome us to worship. Would you like to share your ideas and skills to beautify this display? Linda would love to speak to you!

From Our Music Director:

Music is an integral part of our worship and you can be part of that. Even if you don't read music, you can join our Singing Ensemble and the Bell/Chime Ringers to share your love of music with the congregation. Our rehearsals occur before the service several times monthly. We typically perform once each month. Questions?

Please email me at ctu246040@gmail.com, or see me at the Sunday services.

Thanks - *Les Marsh*



Bulletin Deadline

The deadline for submission of notices for our weekly bulletin insert is 12 p.m. on Tuesdays. Please email them to pastor.sharon@firstbaptistsouthington.org or drop them off at the church office.

Bloomin' News

Want Flowers?

For regular Sundays, flower signup sheets are posted in the narthex. If you would like to give flowers on a specific Sunday, write your name and phone number on the form. Please call that month's flower coordinator *continued*

Celebrations!



Birthdays

Belated happy birthday to Lisa Wallace on Dec. 14!

January

- 1 Jason Urso
- 13 Liz Harwood
- 17 Phyllis Wade, Sarah Cabata
- 17 Sarah Cabata
- 30 Amanda Olore

February

- 1 Raegan Burdeshaw
- 3 Archie Graikoski, Jean McKay
- 4 Rudy Cabata

- 8 Ted Cabata, Gary Lamy
- 14 Caleigh Cunningham
- 21 Lily Dixon
- 25 Shirley Mason
- 27 Marvin Choquette

Anniversaries

Belated happy anniversary to Kim & Kyle Neilson on Dec. 29!

January

- 6 Bill & Barb McKay
- 10 JoAnn & John Myska



coordinator so she doesn't also provide flowers. If you are unable to shop, we are happy to get the flowers for you.

Pastor Sharon needs the dedication information by Tuesday at 12 p.m. to include it in the bulletin. Questions? Call Robin Michel, (860) 620-2989.

Flower Coordinators 2025

January: Ginni Butler (860) 628-5014
February: Peg Lewis (860) 384-4123
March: Dot Amundsen (860) 929-8131
April: Robin Michel (860) 620-2989
May: Joyce Olore (860) 877-3417
June: Ginni Butler (860) 628-5014
July: Joyce Olore (860) 877-3417
August: Robin Michel (860) 620-2989
September: Peg Lewis (860) 384-4123
October: Joyce Olore (860) 877-3417
November: Dot Amundsen (860) 929-8131
December: Robin Michel (860) 620-2989

Prayer Requests

If you have a prayer request, feel free to write it in the prayer book located on the table in the parlor. Prayer requests made on Sundays and on our Facebook page are included in prayers during the week. Questions or requests? Contact Robin Michel or Ginni Butler.

Willy Says: Check out Our Church Library!

Willy, our resident bookworm, is encouraging everyone to stop by our library to discover a world of great books. There are many inspirational Christian books to help us along our spiritual journey. Devotionals to inspire, encourage and heal us in our daily lives. Biographies to learn more about famous people from presidents to movie stars. Lots of wonderful fiction written by secular and Christian writers. And there are children's books as well. Have ideas or want to help? See Margaret Shigo-Zembko.



Let's Celebrate!

Shirley Mason's granddaughter Olivia Shay Jones graduated in 2024 from UConn Law School and passed the Connecticut Bar Exam! Congrats to the new attorney!



Scenes from the Season

The Christmas season is always busy - from Blue Christmas, Hanging of the Greens, searching for the Wise Men, lighting the Advent Candles each Sunday, wearing our PJs, and enjoying a brunch to culminating with our moving Christmas Eve Service of Lessons & Carols. We celebrate that Christ is born!



Oh, Holy Night



Christmas Flowers & Memorial Gifts

Thank you to all who gave flowers and/or memorial gifts to honor or remember loved ones during the 2024 Christmas season.

Christmas Flowers

Anonymous in memory of Bubs
Jean Cook in memory of Lori Cook
Suzanne DeMerchant in memory of Kathy Schott
Jennifer Egan in memory of Florence & Maurice Howes
Sarah Gadarowski in honor of Margaret Shigo-Zembko
Laureen Galayda in honor of this congregation

The Gworek Family in memory of Al & Mildred Bassett
The Gworek Family in memory of Ted & David Gworek
Shirley A. Mason in memory of Mason-Adams Families
Bill & Barbara McKay in honor of our beloved children, grandchildren and great-granddaughter
Neilsons in memory of Maryann & Wilda
Olore Family in memory of Brandon Stallworth, Dr. and Mrs. Louis Olore, Edward Schellhammer
Diana Raymond & Tony Arisco in memory of Alice Bogue, Al Raymond, Angie Arisco
Nik & Stefan Paneczko in memory of Judith F. Barrows
Margaret Shigo-Zembko in memory of Stephen Zembko and John & Elizabeth Shigo
Cheryl Tomkiewicz in memory of my dad, mom, sister and Aunt Beverly
Phyllis Wade in memory of Willie Bobby Wade and Ora Travis
"Your 502 Girls" in memory of Carmella & Garland Hooper

Memorial Gifts

In memory of Ronald Burhoe by his wife, Lee Burhoe
Barbara D. Burkhardt in memory of Ernie Burkhardt Jr. and Ernie "Chip" Burkhardt III
Ginni Butler in loving memory of Gert & Ken Butler
Martha Dick and Katherine Altemus in memory of loved ones
Sharon Kupiec in memory of Rene Piquette
Bill & Barbara McKay in memory of our beloved parents
Jean McKay in memory of beloved family members
Robin Michel in loving memory of her sister, Stephanie Lee Harris, and parents,
Robert & Lucy Lee