

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 2026



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

Looking Ahead in January & February

January

Thursday, Jan. 1: Happy New Year

Sunday, Jan. 4: Communion Sunday, 10am

Thursday, Jan. 8: Deacons meeting, 3pm; Music Committee, 4pm

Sunday, Jan. 11: Celebration Sunday, 10am; monthly celebration; Finance Committee meets following worship/fellowship; MLK Committee meets following worship/fellowship; Unhanging of the Greens

Sunday, Jan. 18: Worship, 10am

Monday, Jan. 19: Friendship Time, 1-3pm

Tuesday, Jan. 20: Book Club, 1pm

Wednesday, Jan. 21: Outreach Committee, 1pm

Sunday, Jan. 25: The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration, 10am

**Other meetings
will be announced.**

February

Sunday, Feb. 1: Communion Sunday, 10am

Sunday, Feb. 8: Celebration Sunday, 10 am, monthly celebration

Thursday, Feb. 12: Deacons meeting, 3pm; Music Committee, 4pm

Sunday, Feb. 15: Worship, 10am; deadline for annual reports; March-April Steeple Signal deadline

Tuesday, Feb. 17: Book Club, 1pm; Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper 5-7pm

Wednesday, Feb. 18: Outreach Committee, 1pm

Sunday, Feb. 22: Worship, 10am

Remember: Annual Meeting Sunday, March 1 following worship.



To Herald the Start of 2026: 'The Waiting Is Over, the Waiting Begins'



It's almost here –
Soon it will be Christmas
morning.
The gifts will be opened,
The smells of Christmas will fill
our homes; ham, turkey, pies,
balsam pine,
and cold winter air, as doors open
and close,
friends and loved ones come

bringing Christmas greetings,
hugs and shouts of "Merry Christmas!"
The waiting is over, Christmas is here.

And then it will be New Year's Eve,
We'll be off to a party, to herald the arrival of 2015.
Then it will all be over.
Our gifts put away, admired, perhaps played,
not a few returned from whence they came.
Exchanged for something that better suits.
We'll walk by the tree and say, "Are you still here?"

With a sigh, we'll take down decorations and pack
them away.
Remove ornaments from the tree,
and cart it away.
Or like me, you'll fold it and store its array.
Confident in its return one day.
The waiting is over, or has it begun?

Somewhere in the midst of the wrappings and toys,
there's vague memory of that child who was born;
A son, to a woman who had known not a man.
Called Jesus, by Joseph, his father on land.
In obeying an angel who spoke in a dream.
The tale we remember has angels of light,
singing anthems to shepherds who shook in the night.
Led to a stable, they knelt and proclaimed that
the child there sleeping was God all the same;
The Promised Messiah at last had arrived.
The waiting was over, the waiting began.

Mary, his mother, treasured that night,
In amazement she pondered on all she had heard.
Years went by, the stable forgotten, he grew to a
man, God's mantle upon him.
He proclaimed the Good News to the poor and the
lame, gave sight to the blind,
they knew him by name.
With holy fire he burned with God's word.
He angered the rich, the priests and the scribes,
they followed and heckled this son of mankind.
Mary watched, and she worried, and remembered the
time,
when the waiting seemed over, but the waiting began.

Spurred on by the priests, the Romans took action,

arrested a traitor, Jesus by name.
A mother's heart broken; no angel display.
No shepherd's, no manger, no cradle of hay,
But soldiers, a cross, sharp thorns for his brow.
They mocked him, they scorned him,
Crucified and left him for dead.
At last, laid hastily on a bed of stone.
All hope abandoned, no light pierced the dark.
The waiting was over, the waiting began.

In three days triumphant He rose from the tomb.
Fulfilling the scripture, God's holy word,
That all who believed in that child born small,
Who slept in a manger, would redeem one and all.

We gather this night to rejoice in the Light.
To remember the promise of that holy night.
A sky filled with wonder, of angelic voices.
While Mary there pondered the baby so humble.
"Can this be the one who will free all God's people?"
Who will lead us forever, his reign never ending?"
The story now finished, or perhaps just begun,
Of the savior who redeems each one who believes.
The tale of a child, a shepherd, a king.
The waiting is over, the waiting begins.

Mary, his mother, treasured that night,
In amazement she pondered on all she had heard.
Years went by, the stable forgotten, he grew to a
man, God's mantle upon him.
He proclaimed the Good News to the poor and the
lame, gave sight to the blind,
they knew him by name.
With holy fire he burned with God's word.
He angered the rich, the priests and the scribes,
they followed and heckled this son of mankind.
Mary watched, and she worried, and remembered the
time,
when the waiting seemed over, but the waiting began.

Spurred on by the priests, the Romans took action,
arrested a traitor, Jesus by name.
A mother's heart broken; no angel display.
No shepherd's, no manger, no cradle of hay,
But soldiers, a cross, sharp thorns for his brow.
They mocked him, they scorned him,
Crucified and left him for dead.
At last, laid hastily on a bed of stone.
All hope abandoned, no light pierced the dark.
The waiting was over, the waiting began.

In three days triumphant He rose from the tomb.
Fulfilling the scripture, God's holy word,
That all who believed in that child born small,
Who slept in a manger, would redeem one and all.

Continued

We gather this night to rejoice in the Light.
 To remember the promise of that holy night.
 A sky filled with wonder, of angelic voices.
 While Mary there pondered the baby so humble.
 "Can this be the one who will free all God's people?"
 Who will lead us forever, his reign never ending?"
 The story now finished, or perhaps just begun,

Of the savior who redeems each one who believes.
 The tale of a child, a shepherd, a king.
 The waiting is over, the waiting begins.

In Christ,
Pastor Sharon

News from the Pews

Thank You

Thank you for all the lovely cards and gifts at Christmas. I am truly blessed. – *Pastor Sharon*

Martin Luther King Jr. Event

Our annual celebration of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. will be held Sunday, Jan. 25 at 10am. Guest speaker will be State Rep. Chris Poulos. Two exemplary middle school students will be honored. A special reception will follow.



Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper



Don't miss our annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on Feb. 17, 5 to 7 p.m., presented by our Board of Deacons. Pancakes, sausage, orange juice and other treats will be

served. Donations will be accepted for the deacons fund.

Annual Meeting

Our annual meeting will be held following worship on Sunday, March 1. Lunch will follow. Please submit your reports to Pastor Sharon by Sunday, Feb. 15.



Giving Tree



The Giving Tree is still up in Fellowship Hall and donations are still being accepted. Our emphasis is on underwear for men, women and children including socks, undergarments and T-shirts. Items will be delivered mid-January to Southington Community Services. Thank you!

Christmas Baskets

As is tradition, the Board of Deacons thoughtfully delivered Christmas baskets filled with treats to our homebound members. They were much appreciated and recipients enjoyed the visits.

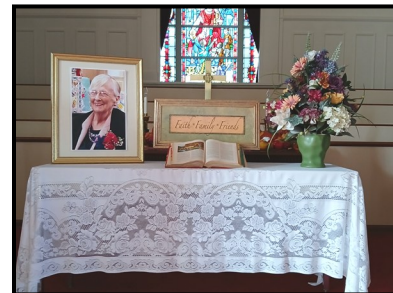


All Saints' Sunday

On Nov. 2, we observed All Saints' Sunday during which we remembered Leona Burhoe, JoAnne Myska, Alicja Marszycki (Les' mother), Charlie Leighton Lamy, and Michael Arisco (Tony's brother).

Celebration of Life

More than 125 people attended the Celebration of Life for Lee Burhoe on Nov. 15. "We want to share our heartfelt appreciation to our Mom's church family who gave her a spiritual home for over 70 years. She had always spoken of First Baptist with kind and loving words and also strived to uplift its mission and ministries. Through the years she treasured her many dear church friends. Thank you to all who prayed for her, sent cards, gifts and visited her these past months. She truly appreciated your thoughtfulness.



"We also want to extend our deep appreciation for the beautiful service and lovely reception as we celebrated her 95 years of life with us. With thankful hearts - *Lee Burhoe's family*"

We Remember

We remember Kevin Palmieri who died on Nov. 11. He and his wife, Gina, and daughter, Adriana, have attended our church for many years.



Interfaith Clergy Thanksgiving Service

Pastor Sharon was among clergy who participated in the annual Interfaith Clergy Thanksgiving Service held Nov. 25 at First Congregational Church. The event brings together people of all faiths to give thanks for our blessings.

Blue Christmas

On Dec. 9, Pastor Sharon and other clergy partnered with Plantsville Congregational Church and Plantsville Funeral Home to present the Blue Christmas Service, providing solace to those who mourn. It was very well attended.



Gift Basket Making to Begin

On Tuesday, Feb. 24 we will once again start making gift baskets for our Annual Spud Nite and Silent Auction in the spring. Stop by between 10am and 12pm downstairs and lend a hand whether creating baskets or organizing. (In case of inclement weather, we will meet on Wednesday, Feb. 25 at the same time.) New or gently used donations are always welcome. Any questions, feel free to see or call Linda Lamy at (860) 878-5310.

Thank you!

Thank you to Jon Burdeshaw for setting up the new

wi-fi configuration. It has greatly improved the broadcast of our Sunday worship service.

Valentine's Toy Express

Dear First Baptist Church, Thank you so much for letting us crash and sort toys at the church hall for the Toy Express. We so appreciate the space! Merriest Christmas wishes! Love, *Valentine the Clown, Southington Community Services and Elf Crew*

P.S. Save the date: Friday, Dec. 4, 2026!



Outreach Committee Update

Six college students who attend our church or have a connection, received gift cards during finals season thanks to Outreach. The thank you notes that the students sent to the church indicated that they appreciated our thoughtfulness.

Continued

Tag Sale Wrap-up

A HUGE thank you to everyone who helped make this year's tag sale so successful. We had tremendous support throughout the week to set up, provide tasty lunches, and much help on the day of the sale. Total sales came to \$7,362.50! We had our best year ever! Thank you, thank you and thank you! We also shared 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, the FAVRH program (supporting those with special needs), and new this year, Thy Eagle's Nest (helping the unhoused). Thank you to one and all who donated and volunteered! – *Joyce Olore and Dot Amundsen, organizers*

PS: Tag Sale Tales: Someone tried to wrench the copper bas-relief painting off the wall in the narthex to purchase it. A customer selecting a coffee cup to purchase found it already filled with coffee!



Church members gave Christmas gifts through the angel tag project of Southington Community Services. Their generosity certainly brightened the holidays for local residents.



Did you know that half of the Christmas Offering was donated to SCS's Fuel Fund?

Operation Stay Warm Coat Drive



A group from First Baptist Church distributed coats through Southington Community Services' Operation Stay Warm in November at the Winter Grove senior

community. SCS gave away 854 coats this winter! There is a lot of good going on in Southington!

Friendship Time

The Friendship Time group met for the holiday season complete with a cookie swap! (Nice Yahtzee, Ethel!) The next gathering will be Monday, Jan. 19, 1-3pm. Bring your favorite games, puzzles, crosswords,

brag photos, whatever you wish! The February date will be announced.



FBC Book Club - The FBC Book Club will meet Tuesday, Jan. 20 at 1 p.m. to discuss "Finding My Way" by Malala Yousafzai. This book is available in the town library and from several book club members. At the January meeting, we will select the book for Feb. 17. The FBC Book Club meets on the third Tuesday of the month in the parlor. Each meeting is also offered via Zoom. Everyone is welcome – even if you didn't read the book or didn't like it! To receive the emails and/or the Zoom link, contact Ginni at vlbutler@sbcglobal.net or call her at (860) 628-5014.



Donations to Community Services

- We continue to help our community with the weekly offerings to our local food pantry. Items can be left in the basket in the narthex (thank you, Keith and Marvin Choquette, for delivering

them!) or dropped off at Southington Community Services, 91 Norton St., Plantsville.

To assist Southington Community Services in filling their shelves with ample amounts of items, we are suggesting which items to donate during each month. Other items are always gladly accepted as well.

January: canned vegetables; February: deodorant; March: canned fruit; April: shampoo; May: pasta sauce; June: pasta; July: cereal; August: children's snacks; September: peanut butter; October: jelly; November: canned meats, corned beef, tuna, etc. December: hand/bar soap

Volunteer Opportunities - Are you interested in reading scripture or being a worship leader? We'd love to have you. No experience required! If you would like to volunteer, please see Barbara McKay. We can work around your schedule. Thank you for serving our church!

From Our Music Director:

Hello everyone, 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

continued



each month. Questions? Email me at ctu246040@gmail.com, or see me at the Sunday services. Thanks - *Les Marsh*

Flower News - Thank you to everyone who helped with Hanging of the Greens and "Unhanging of the Greens" this season.



And a huge thank you to Dot Amundsen who every year designs and arranges

a breathtaking cornucopia on our communion table!

The list of Christmas poinsettia donations and gifts is on page 7.

If you would like flowers for a regular Sunday, 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 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.

These are the 2026 flower coordinators:

January: Ginni Butler (860) 628-5014
February: Robin Michel (860) 620-2989
March: Dot Amundsen (860) 929-8131
April: Robin Michel (860) 620-2989
May: Joyce Olore (860) 276-8061
June: Ginni Butler (860) 628-5014
July: Joyce Olore (860) 276-8061
August: Robin Michel (860) 620-2989
September: Peg Lewis (860) 384-4123
October: Joyce Olore (860) 276-8061

November: Dot Amundsen (860) 929-8131

December: Robin Michel (860) 620-2989

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 at (860) 628-5014 if you plan on bringing a refreshment.

Willy Says: Check out Our Church Library! - All

types of books have been coming into our church library – and Willy the Bookworm encourages YOU to borrow them! Our library has 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.



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.

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? They are kept in confidence Contact Robin or Ginni.

Steeple Signal Deadline - The Steeple Signal editor apologizes for this late issue. Instead of gallivanting on a 3,000-mile road trip, she should have been home meeting her own deadline! The next edition of The Steeple Signal will be March-April 2026. Deadline is Feb. 15. Share your milestones or news with our church! Email Robin Michel at robin.leemichel@gmail.com.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays January

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

4	Rudy Cabata
8	Ted Cabata, Gary Lamy
14	Caleigh Cunningham
20	Hudson Letizio
21	Lily Dixon
25	Shirley Mason
27	Marvin Choquette

February

1	Raegan Burdeshaw
3	Archie Graikoski, Jean McKay

Anniversaries January

6	Bill & Barbara McKay
---	----------------------

Church Website

Our website is www.firstbaptistsouthington.org. Worship information, events, The Steeple Signal and more info are on the site. You can also see photos and watch our worship services on our Facebook page "First Baptist Church – Southington, CT." To join our Sunday worship services via Zoom, contact Pastor Sharon.

And Congratulations to...

Johnathan Tata

Johnathan Tata graduated from Army basic training on Dec. 18 at Fort Benning, Columbus, Georgia. In January, he will be going for advanced training in Texas. Johnathan is the son of Heidi and Eric Tata and the



grandson of Barbara and Bill McKay. Congratulations!

Welcome to the World!

Harper Fae Treibt was born on Nov. 26. Congratulations to the new family including Mom and Dad, Nicole and Trevor Treibt, grandparents Kim and Kyle Neilson, and Uncle Brody Neilson!



Enjoy Your New Home!

Margaret Shigo-Zembko moved to 292 Thorpe Ave., Apt. H2, Meriden, CT 06450. Hope you have many happy years in your new abode!

Poinsettias & Memorial Gifts 2025

Thank you to all who gave flowers and/or memorial gifts to honor or remember loved ones during the 2025 Christmas season.



Poinsettias

Anthony Arisco in memory of Angie Arisco
Barbara Burkhardt in loving memory of her family
Suzanne & Grant DeMerchant in memory of Derald DeMerchant and Kathy Schott
Bernadette & Skip Galayda in memory of Margaret & John Galayda
The Gworek Family in memory of Albert & Mildred Bassett
The Gworek Family in memory of Ted and David Gworek
Tom & Carol Kearney in memory of Mr. & Mrs. Kearney and Mr. & Mrs. Philippi, our parents
Linda Lamy in memory of Lee & Ron Burhoe and Charlie Lamy

The Olore Family in memory of Brandon Stallworth, Dr. & Mrs. Louis Olore, and Edward Schellhammer, and in honor of Avery Hunter's first Christmas

Shirley Mason in memory of the Adams-Mason families
Stefan and Nikolaus Paneczko in memory of Judith F. Barrows

Diana Raymond in memory of Alice Bogue and Al Raymond

Nancy Shaw in memory of Ron & Lee Burhoe

Cheryl Tomkiewicz in memory of my mom, dad and sister

Memorial Gifts

Barbara Burkhardt in loving memory of her family
Ginni in loving memory of her parents, Gert & Ken Butler
Mom Martha Dick and Grandma Kathy Altemus in memory of Kathryn Louise Dick

Ethel Graham in memory of Frances Vaughan, my mother

Tom & Carol Kearney in memory of Mr. & Mrs. Kearney and Mr. & Mrs. Philippi, our parents

Sharon Kupiec in memory of the Sloat and Parker families

Bill & Barbara McKay in honor of our loving children, grandchildren, and great-grandchild

Bill & Barbara McKay in memory of our parents

Jean McKay in memory of loved ones

Robin Michel in memory of her parents, Bob & Lucy Lee, and her sister, Stephanie Lee Harris

Stefan and Nikolaus Paneczko in memory of Judith F. Barrows

Nancy Shaw in memory of my loving husband, Al Shaw, from your wife

Scenes from the Season



Our beautiful
Advent Season
exhibited our love
for our church,
each other and our
community as we
celebrated our
Lord's birth.
Happy New Year!

