



# THE BEACONLIGHT



Newsletter of the First Baptist Church of Fitchburg

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Dear Congregation,

Happy New Year to each of you! Our church family has been blessed to remain together for another year, even with tremendous turbulence and stress. Praise God that He has seen fit to sustain us and help us to abound in love despite the events of the past year. Though the world has changed in some way over this past year, our mission as Christians has not. Our mission for 2021 remains the same as the last. We are to:

*“Repent and believe in the gospel.’ That is the mission of believers. Until He (Jesus) returns for the final victory and consummates His kingdom, our purpose is to minister to the world” (Mark 1:15).*

How will we be able to do such a thing when everything seems up in the air and nothing seem sure about what to expect in this new year, season or era? I think the best way to follow the will of God is to start small and work our way through His commission. For example, This month is Human Trafficking Awareness month. I am sad to say that slavery is still alive and well on planet earth, no more so obviously than in the form of buying and selling our most vulnerable humans wholesale, or in part, for the profit, entertainment or the ease of others.

Centuries ago it seemed as though the world had taken a turn in voting a resounding ‘No!’ to the practice of forced servitude with the victories of Parliament votes in England, the Civil War and the Civil rights movement, yet sin still abounds here and now, to the horror of many, and as a result of the deliberate act of some to ignore the subject, as if turning a blind eye would make the problem disappear.

Only when individuals stand up as one people, deciding that each person, as being created in the image and likeness of our creator God, has the right to their own life, and the liberty to pursue their own future, so long as it does not impede on the rights of others to do the same, and takes action in support of that decision will we finally show our Heavenly Father that we have indeed repented from our wicked ways. And now that you have been made aware of the problem, “You may choose to look the other way but you can never again say you did not know” (*William Wilberforce*).

January is also the month in which we celebrate the life and achievements of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Although this man has passed on to glory, his legacy and message lives on and remains relevant. He too lived in turbulent unhealthy times, in an era of riots, anger and confusion. The task of ministering to an unjust world, which seemed to weight the words of a person by their physical appearance and cultural background rather than the content of their character, seemed insurmountable to some, yet King jr. encouraged people to have faith and push forward for freedom, reminding them that, “Faith is taking the first step even when you can’t see the whole staircase” (*Martin Luther King Jr.*).

He also encouraged those who would listen, “If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way” (*Martin Luther King Jr.*), and so can each of you, even and especially now as we stand at the head of another

year. I pray that as the Bride of Christ, the Church, having repented and believed in the Gospel will continue to set the stage for the return of Jesus, not matter how long from now that blessed event may be from today.

This will require us, as the children of God to refuse to support those industries that profit from the death or mental, physical or spiritual destruction of any people, anywhere of any age, creed, gender or race. I am sorry to say that the most practical way to begin such a task as dismantling wickedness is with our wallets. It may take denying ourselves some comforts rather than contributing to the pocket books of those who would use the profit for the harm of others.

Another tool for dismantling the trafficking industry is our mouths, through prayers and continually sharing, as is appropriate, the truth with those who are still unaware. Perhaps you may be thinking, "Pastor, I have enough problems right now without trying to figure out whether or not my money is going to support human trafficking or oppression. I'm broke. I'm stuck in my house. I'm just trying to recover from 2020". To that I respond, with love, respect and empathy for your situation that if you had the ability to choose life, to freely decide what to do with your body or freely move about your homes in safety, decide to stay home or step outside, to eat, purchase something at the store or on-line, walk a pet or use the phone then you have more freedom than you think.

Christians are not commissioned to fix the world; Jesus will do that. Jesus called us to minister to those in need with whatever blessings and strength the Holy Spirit has bestowed upon us and share the Gospel until He returns. That we can do. We accomplish these tasks by showing our care for those who are unable to meet their own needs and by, day by day, living out our lives in a way that reflects God's mercy and love toward others.

No matter what 2021 has in store, lockdowns, vaccines, prosperity or tension in our homes, each of us can make a deliberate choice to ease the burden of another this year in some way. We can chose to look past our own situation and ask if the person the Lord puts before us can be helped in some way by our word, deed or support. I feel strongly that love for others through prayer and action has never been so needed as it is right now. As Dr. King Jr. observed, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy" (*Martin Luther King Jr.*).

May this year bring you closer to Christ and those around you, may you experience God's love and provision and share them with others, and may the Lord bless and keep you throughout the coming years.

Regards,  
Pastor Meredith

# "Cupcakes and Root Beer"

(By Julie A. Manhan)

There once was a little boy who wanted to meet God. He knew it was a long trip to where God lived, so he packed his suitcase with cupcakes, several cans of root beer and started on his journey.

When he had gone about three blocks, he saw an elderly woman. She was sitting on a park bench watching the pigeons. The boy sat down next to her and opened his suitcase. He was about to take a drink from his root beer when he noticed the lady looked hungry so he offered her a cupcake. She gratefully accepted and smiled at him.

Her smile was so wonderful that he wanted to see it again, so he offered a root beer as well. Once again she smiled at him. The boy was delighted!

They sat there all afternoon eating and smiling without saying a word.

As it began to grow dark, the boy realized how tired he was and wanted to go home. He got up to leave but before he had gone no more than a few steps, he turned around and ran back to the old woman, giving her a big hug. She gave him her biggest smile ever.

When the boy arrived home his Mother was surprised by the look of joy on his face. She asked, "What has made you so happy today?" He replied, "I had lunch with God." Before his mother could respond he added, "You know what? She's got the most beautiful smile in the whole world!"

Meanwhile, the old woman, also radiant with joy, returned to her home. Her son was stunned by the look of peace on her face. He asked, "Mother, what has made you so happy today?" She replied, "I ate cupcakes in the park with God." And before her son could reply, she added, "You know, he is much younger than I expected."

Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring; all of which have the potential to turn a life around.

People come into our lives for a reason, a season, or a lifetime.

Take no one for granted and embrace all equally with joy!

# *2020 Retired Ministers & Missionaries Offering*

Congregants have always looked forward to coming together to worship in the house of the Lord. During these unprecedented times, this type of fellowship has been disrupted and pastors have stepped up to provide creative and inventive online alternatives. They have also been called to offer greater outreach to congregations and communities in need of hope, promise and support. On behalf of American Baptist Churches USA, the Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO) is a personal offering rooted in thanks for the immeasurable ways ministers and missionaries continue to guide members of the church toward faithful and committed discipleship.

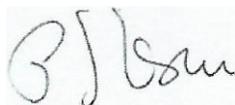
This year, to honor this tradition and acknowledge the current circumstances, we chose *Hope for Today, Hope for Tomorrow* as our theme. This theme encompasses the true strength and dedication of ministers, missionaries and their widowed spouses who have devoted 15 years or more to ABCUSA.

Christians facing uncertainty and difficult situations today can take comfort in the text from Jeremiah 29:11-13 which states, 11 "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. 12 Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. 13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."

To help your congregation organize RMMO, we provided a mix of printed and online marketing materials available at [abc-usa.org/RMMO](http://abc-usa.org/RMMO). We understand the challenges churches are facing and wanted to offer practical options for a successful campaign.

We hope you will support our ministry and partner with us to encourage participation within your congregation. Through your generosity in 2019, RMMO provided *Thank You* checks to more than 3,432 eligible recipients. Our goal for the 2020 national RMMO campaign is to reach \$1.2 million.

Honoring those who have walked and prayed with you over the years gives us everlasting  
*Hope for Today, Hope for Tomorrow.*



# Local News

Offering Envelopes 2021  
Are Ready For Pick-Up



Please Help Defray the cost of  
your Offering Envelopes... Each  
box cost \$5.00



January 1, 2021: New Year's  
Day

January 11, 2021: National  
Human Trafficking Awareness  
Day

January 18, 2021: Martin  
Luther King Jr. Day

## *Annual Meeting*

Sunday, January 17, 2021 - After Church Service

To act on Annual Reports for 2020

To act on Proposed Budget for 2021

Any other business matters

Please try to attend

## *Careful Planning Makes a Difference*

**ANTHONY V. FEROCI, JR.**  
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# Recipe of the Month

## *Dad's Leftover Turkey Pot Pie*



- 2 cups frozen peas and carrots
- 2 cups frozen green beans
- 1 cup sliced celery
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup butter
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup chopped onion
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon celery seed
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon onion powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1  $\frac{3}{4}$  cups chicken broth
- 1  $\frac{1}{3}$  cups milk
- 4 cups cubed cooked turkey meat - light and dark meat mixed
- 4 (9 inch) unbaked pie crusts

### ***Preparation:***

Preheat an oven to 425 degrees F (220 degrees C).

Place the peas and carrots, green beans, and celery into a saucepan; cover with water, bring to a boil, and simmer over medium-low heat until the celery is tender, about 8 minutes. Drain the vegetables in a colander set in the sink, and set aside.

Melt the butter in a saucepan over medium heat, and cook the onion until translucent, about 5 minutes. Stir in  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup of flour, salt, black pepper, celery seed, onion powder, and Italian seasoning; slowly whisk in the chicken broth and milk until the mixture comes to a simmer and thickens. Remove from heat; stir the cooked vegetables and turkey meat into the filling until well combined.

Fit 2 pie crusts into the bottom of 2 9-inch pie dishes. Spoon half the filling into each pie crust, then top each pie with another crust. Pinch and roll the top and bottom crusts together at the edge of each pie to seal, and cut several small slits into the top of the pies with a sharp knife to release steam.

Bake in the preheated oven until the crusts are golden brown and the filling is bubbly, 30 to 35 minutes. If the crusts are browning too quickly, cover the pies with aluminum foil after about 15 minutes. Cool for 10 minutes before serving.



### *January Birthdays*

- 02. Elaine Corzine
- 03. Victoria Poole
- 07. Linda Gosslin
- 08. Jillian Grace Poole
- 09. Faith Labah
- 13. Ed Perkins
- 16. Nancy Peters
- 20. Jackie Mora
- 23. Anna Poole
- 30. Dick Auger



### *January Anniversaries*



- 4. Irfan & Rebecca Rafiq



IF YOU'RE BIRTHDAY OR ANNIVERSARY IS NOT HERE, LET US KNOW AND WE'LL INCLUDE IT IN THE BEACONLIGHT! REMEMBER TO NOTIFY THE CHURCH OFFICE WITH ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO YOUR ADDRESS OR TO OUR MONTHLY LISTING OF BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE

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# PRAYER LIST

*Anoura Rose Angelin*  
*Annie De Martino*  
*Bette Adams*  
*Claire Budroe*  
*John Mim*  
*Cindy Beck*  
*Daniel Bascomb*  
*Susan Force (Bette Adams daughter)*  
*Kathy Gosselin*  
*Kathy Young (coworker of Diane Bigelow)*  
*Kim & Katie (Bette Adams daughter & granddaughter)*  
*Linda Gosselin*  
*Mark & Diane Bigelow*  
*Marsha – return of lung cancer*  
*Nancy Peters*  
*Roberta Poole*  
*Ed Guerard*  
*Tom and Karen Adams*  
*Karen Simpson*  
*Elaine Corzine*  
*The Blake Family*  
*Atera Mbunwe*  
*Family of Connie Gariepy*  
*Roger Abel*  
*Family of John Kacmarcik*  
*Steward family*

## ***Our Missionaries***

*Light A Candle Ministries*  
*Rovaungha Richardson, William Seo*  
*mission trip to Afganistan*

*Daniel Auguste and the Haitian*  
*Missionary Team*

## ***Other Concerns***

*The Lutheran Church*  
*1200 John Fitch Hwy, Fitchburg*

*Baptist Church of Grafton*  
*First Baptist Church of Gardner*

*First Baptist Church of Gardner*

*For those under persecution for their*  
*faith.*

*Prayers for those suffering from acts of*  
*violence around the world*



**IF YOU HAVE A PRAYER REQUEST, PLEASE, LET US KNOW AND WE'LL INCLUDE IT IN**  
**THE BEACONLIGHT!**

**REMEMBER TO NOTIFY US WITH ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THESE LISTINGS.**

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