



# THE BEACONLIGHT



Newsletter of the First Baptist Church of Fitchburg

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**NUMBER 01**

Dear Congregation,

Welcome one and all to a new year of faith, fun and (Lord willing), fulfillment. This past year has been taxing and challenging for many. Families have moved, people have changed jobs, faced health challenges, gained independence and grieved the loss of loved ones.

There have also been many changes, and challenges here in our house of worship. Over this past year we have collectively worked diligently in 2019 to reestablish this church in physical form, mental objective and in our attempts to reenergize our individual spiritual walks. I pray that you acknowledge the changes we have created together and find them "very good". I am honored to serve with each of you as hands and feet of Christ.

As I look ahead, with new vision for this new year, I am in mind of some advice from one who was given more wisdom than any other person on earth (save Christ Jesus of course). It is called *Saying 21*:

*"By wisdom a house is built and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures" (Proverbs 24:3-4).*

This house of God, our church building, has indeed been rebuilt, in many ways, through understanding. It has been through the careful listening and respect of our family members and neighbors that we have become a productive home for ourselves and many others in our Fitchburg, and Fitchburg adjacent, communities. Our rooms are being filled with rare and beautiful treasures; people.

The people that are starting to fill our halls and clutter up our calendars are each answers to past prayers of our parishioners to give us people to love and care for, to let us be of help to our community, to feed, cloth and educate those who have been detached from support because of transition or trauma, and I am grateful that God has blessed us with a hope and a future. I pray that we continue to build our home on the foundation of Jesus and His abiding love for all, that we may continue to see our rooms filled with treasures and treasure those who fill our rooms as we move forward into this new year together, with love and understanding.

May the Lord bless and keep you throughout the coming years.

Regards,  
Pastor Meredith

January 6, 2020: Visiting Pastor: Rev. Dr. Mar Imsong

January 7, 2020: ESL classes start.

January 20, 2020: Martin Luther King Jr. Day

# 2019 Retired Ministers & Missionaries Offering

In celebration of the rich 40-plus year legacy of the Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO) on behalf of American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA), we gratefully acknowledge the loving devotion of those who have so faithfully answered their call to serve God. Our theme this year, RMMO – Honoring the Service of God’s Servants uplifts the generosity, grace and tireless work of retired ministers, missionaries and their widowed spouses and families who have dedicated their lives to serving the body of Christ.

As Christians, we are called to honor one another with the love of Christ as found in the scripture from 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 (NIV) which teaches, “Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work.”

The long-standing tradition of the RMMO established in 1977 supports ministers, missionaries and their widowed spouses who have devoted 15 years or more to ABCUSA. As one of four offerings from ABCUSA, this offering is unique because it provides individual recognition to those who have served the ABCUSA family. The RMMO is a personal offering, one rooted in thanks for the countless ways ministers and missionaries guide members of the church toward faithful and committed discipleship and diligent service in mission.

This year we want to commemorate the unique legacy of RMMO and remember those who play a vital role providing guidance and inspiration to their congregation and community.

Your church’s participation in RMMO makes it possible to provide emergency assistance in times of crisis and to send an annual “Thank You” check to those who are eligible. Through your generosity in 2018, RMMO provided “Thank You” checks to more than 3,497 recipients.

Our goal for the 2019 national RMMO campaign is to reach \$1.2 million. We hope you will partner with us and encourage participation within your congregation.

This year’s RMMO marketing materials are created to support and help your congregation organize a successful campaign. Remember, paying tribute to those who have walked and prayed with you over the years is an example of Honoring the Service of God’s Servants.

Thank you.

Rev. Dr. Perry Hopper

Associate Executive Director MMBB Financial Services

The start of a new year is an ideal time to reflect on the past, take account of your Christian walk, and consider the direction God may want to lead you in the coming days. Set aside some time to pause and evaluate your spiritual condition as you seek God's presence with this prayerful collection of New Year's poems for Christians.

## **A New Year's Plan**

I tried to think of a clever new phrase—  
A slogan to inspire the next 365 days,  
A motto to live by this coming New Year,  
But the catchy words fell flat to my ear.

And then I heard His still small voice  
Saying, "Consider this simple, daily choice:  
With each new dawn and close of day  
Make new your resolve to trust and obey."

"Don't look back, caught in regret  
Or dwell on the sorrow of dreams unmet;  
Don't stare forward anchored by fear,  
No, live in this moment, for I Am here."

"I am all you need. Everything. I Am.  
You are held secure by my strong hand.  
Give me this one thing—your all in all;  
Into my grace, let yourself fall."

So, at last, I'm ready; I see the way.  
It's to daily follow, trust, and obey.  
I enter the New Year armed with a plan,  
To give Him my everything—all that I am.

--Mary Fairchild

## **His Unfailing Presence**

Another year I enter  
Its history unknown;  
Oh, how my feet would tremble  
To tread its paths alone!  
But I have heard a whisper,  
I know I shall be blest;  
"My presence shall go with thee,  
And I will give thee rest."  
What will the New Year bring me?  
I may not, must not know;  
Will it be love and rapture,  
Or loneliness and woe?  
Hush! Hush! I hear His whisper;  
I surely shall be blest;  
"My presence shall go with thee,  
And I will give thee rest."

--Unknown Author



Remember to mark your Offering envelopes so we know where to credit the money...

If the total amount of cash or check is going to one account, just place an **X** on the proper line i.e Current.

If the total amount of cash or check is to go to more than one account please write the dollar amount on the line below proper account.

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

Thank you  
Your Stewardship Committee



# Local News



**Sunday, January 19, 2020**

**After Church Service In West Room**

**To act on Annual Reports for 2019**

**To act on the Nominating Committee Report**

**To act on Proposed Budget for 2020**

**Any other business matters**

**Please try to attend**

## Little Feet

50 little pairs of feet,  
Off to school they go,  
Up the hill and down the hill,  
To their classes they go.

50 little pairs of feet,  
Each a special pair,  
Dear to mom, dad and others too,  
Treat all with loving care.

50 little pairs of feet,  
With heart and sound and mind,  
No two alike, as snowflakes,  
To all be gentle, kind.

Pray keep these precious little feet,  
Safe both here, abroad,  
They are our prized little tots,  
Each one a child from God

M. Carter



Troop 65127

Meets 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>

Wednesday @ 5:30 P.M.

For more information call Stacey Phillips-Year @ 978-413-0372

*Let May Goff know your favorite hymn  
We will sing one a week as long as they last*

## *Careful Planning Makes a Difference*

**ANTHONY V. FEROCI, JR.  
ATTORNEY AT LAW**

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Elder and Disability Law  
Medicaid Planning  
Estate Planning



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# Recipe of the Month

## Hot Chocolate Truffles



### **Ingredients:**

50 vanilla wafer cookies  
3 envelopes (0.96 oz each) Swiss Miss Simply Cocoa Dark Chocolate Hot Cocoa Mix  
1 pudding cup (3.25 oz each) Snack Pack® Chocolate Pudding  
2 seconds Reddi-wip Original Dairy Whipped Topping (about 1/2 cup)  
1/2 cup miniature marshmallows  
1 cup white baking chips  
1 tablespoon vegetable oil  
Coarse colored sugar, optional

### **Preparation:**

Line shallow baking pan with parchment paper; set aside. Place wafers and cocoa mix in food processor bowl; pulse wafers into fine crumbs. Add pudding and Reddi-wip; pulse until mixture comes together and forms a ball. Add marshmallows; pulse until marshmallows are cut into small pieces.

#### **Step two**

Roll wafer mixture into 1-inch balls; place on pan. Freeze 30 minutes or until set.

#### **Step three**

Place morsels and oil in small microwave-safe bowl. Microwave on HIGH 30 seconds; stir. Microwave on HIGH 30 seconds more or until softened; stir until mixture is melted completely. Roll a truffle in mixture until evenly coated. Remove with fork, letting excess drip off. Place on pan. Immediately sprinkle with some colored sugar, if desired. Repeat with remaining truffles. Refrigerate 1 hour or until firm. Store in airtight container in refrigerator.

#### **Tips**

- *If Swiss Miss® Simply Cocoa Dark Chocolate Hot Cocoa Mix is unavailable, substitute Swiss Miss® Milk Chocolate Hot Cocoa Mix.*

# 7 Things You Should Know About Your Charitable Contributions

Here are some tips I picked up from a pamphlet I came across last year written by Richard Hammar, JD, LLM, CPA regarding 7 things every church member needs to know.

**1. If I make a contributions in early January 2014, can I claim it on my 2013 taxes?** No. Charitable contributions must be claimed in the year in which they are delivered.

*Example: Mary writes a check to her church on December 31, 2013, and deposits it in the church offering on Sunday, January 5, 2014. Her check is not deductible on her 2013 taxes. She can claim it on her 2014 tax return.*

**2. If I mail my contribution in December 2013 but it does not reach my church until January 2014, for which year should I claim it?** On your 2013 tax return. A check that is mailed to a charity is deductible in the year the check is mailed (and postmarked), even if it is received early in the next year.

*Example: Mary mails (and postmarks) her check in December 2013. Her church doesn't receive the check until January 2014. The check is deductible on Mary's 2013 tax return.*

**3. Can I deduct the volunteer work I did for the church?** No The value of personal services is never deductible as a charitable contribution. However unreimbursed expenses you incur in performing services on behalf of a church or other charity may be.

*Example: John is an electrician and donates 10 hours of time to his church's construction project. He cannot deduct the value of his donated labor, but he can deduct the value of the materials he purchased in performing the donated labor.*

*Example: Several church members go on a short-term missions project to another country. The value of their labor is not deductible but they can deduct their unreimbursed travel expenses (transportation, meals, lodging) incurred in performing the project.*

**4. I gave \$135 to my church when I registered for a spring retreat, Can I deduct that?** No, assuming you received benefits (e.g., lodging, instruction, materials) worth \$135 or more. Charitable contributions generally are deductible only to the extent that they exceed the value of any premium or benefit received by the donor in return for the contribution.

**5. Is there any limit to the amount of my contributions I can deduct on my taxes?** Yes. A contribution deduction ordinarily cannot exceed 50% of a donor's adjusted gross income ( a 30% rule applies in some cases). Donors who exceed these limits may be able to "carry over" their excess contributions and deduct it in future years.

**6. I designated my contribution to the church benevolence fund. Is it deductible?** That depends. "Designated contributions" are those made to a church for a specific purpose. If the purpose is an approved project or program of the church, you can deduct the contribution (if you claim itemized deductions on Schedule A). If you designate \$100 gift to the church benevolence fund, it is deductible unless you specify that your contribution be applied to a named individual, then no deduction is allowed.

*Contributions to a church or missions agency that designate a particular missionary may be tax-deductible if the church or missions agency exercises full administrative control over the contributions and ensures that they are spent in furtherance of the church's tax-exempt purposes.*

**7. What kind of records do I need in order to prove my contribution?** For individual cash contributions of under \$250: You must have a bank record (such as a cancelled check) or a receipt from the church containing the church's name, and the date and amount of each cash contribution.

For individual contributions (cash or property) of \$250 or more: You must receive a written receipt from your church that includes the church's name; the date of the contribution; the amount of any cash contribution; a description (but not the value) of non-cash contributions; and one of the following: (i) a statement that no goods or services were provided by the church in return for the contribution; (ii) a statement that goods or services that a church provided in return for the contribution consisted entirely of intangible religious benefits; or (iii) a description and good faith estimate of the value of goods or services other than intangible religious benefits that the church provided in return for the contribution.

The church may either provide separate receipts for each single contribution of 250 or more or one acknowledgment to substantiate several single contributions of \$250 or more. Separate contributions are not aggregated for purposes of measuring the \$250 threshold. If you've made individual contributions of \$250 or more, don't file your federal income tax return until you receive a contribution statement from your church that satisfies these requirements. Otherwise, your contributions may not be deductible.

Canceled checks cannot be used to substantiate cash contributions of \$250 or more. For non-cash property valued at \$500 or more: Other rules apply (see the instructions to IRS Form 8283). If the value is more than \$5,000, you must obtain a qualified appraisal of the property and attach an "appraisal summary" (IRS Form 8283) to the tax return on which the contribution is claimed. Some exceptions apply. For contributions of cars, boats, or planes: If a church sells the donated property without significant use, the donor's contribution deduction is limited to the sales proceeds.

In addition, the church must provide the donor, and the IRS, with a written acknowledgement (use IRS Form 1098-C) by the deadline prescribed by law. If the church significantly uses the property, the donor can deduct the market value. However, the church must still provide Form 1098-C to the donor and the IRS. Qualified appraisal and appraisal summary requirements apply if a deduction exceeds \$5,000 (see instructions to Form 8283).

*Richard Hammar is a graduate of Harvard Law School, is an attorney and certified public accountant specializing in legal and tax issues for churches and clergy.*






*January Birthdays*

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



*Happy Anniversary*

*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  
 978-345-5622  
 E-MAIL: [FBCBEACONLIGHT@COMCAST.NET](mailto:FBCBEACONLIGHT@COMCAST.NET)

# PRAYER LIST

Anoura Rose Angelin  
Annie De Martino  
Bette Adams  
Claire Budroe  
John Mim  
Cindy Beck  
Connie & Will Gariepy  
Daniel Bascomb  
Susan Force (Bette Adams daughter)  
Kathy Gosselin  
Kathy Young (coworker of Diane Bigelow)  
Kim & Katie (Bette Adams daughter & granddaughter)  
Linda Gosselin  
Lorraine (friend of Pam Chapman)  
Matthew  
Mark & Diane Bigelow  
Marsha – return of lung cancer  
Nancy Peters  
Paula Ustin  
Roberta Poole  
Ed Guerard  
Tom and Karen Adams  
Karen Simpson  
Elaine Corzine  
The Blake Family  
Renee Brideau - Crohn's Disease  
The Steward Family  
Roger Abell  
The Yangsi Family

Pastor Becky  
Martha Quinn  
Brady, Amy Giordano / Weeks  
Pastor Garcia & his ministry

## **Our Missionaries**

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

Daniel Auguste and the Haitian  
Missionary Team

## **Other Concerns**

Baptist Church of Grafton  
First Baptist Church of Gardner

For those under persecution for their  
faith.

For our civic leaders- local and  
national

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.**

CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE

978-345-5622

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