



# FIRST & FRANKLIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

# COMMUNITY News

## JANUARY 2022



210 W MADISON STREET | BALTIMORE, MD 21201 | (410) 728-5545 | FIRSTFRANKLIN.ORG

### WORSHIP CALENDAR

January 2: Post Tenebras,  
Lux (after darkness/shadows,  
light)  
Psalm 46 (all). John 1: 1-18.

January 9: Epiphany:  
Stephen Hollaway preaching  
Matthew 2: 1-12

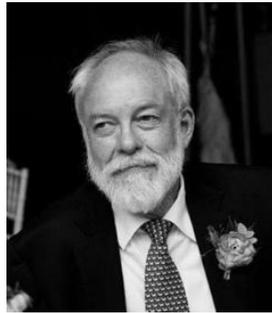
January 16: MLK: Moral  
Change and Social Change  
Isaiah 61: 3c—4, 6-9.  
Hebrews 7: 11-22

January 23: The Church  
Body and Docetism.  
Budget Discussion After  
Church  
Nehemiah 10: 32-37, 39.  
Luke 24: 36-43.

January 30: “Decently and in  
Order”  
I Samuel 13: 5-14. I Cor 14:  
26-27, 31-33, 37-40.

February 6: What’s the  
Game plan for F&F?  
I Samuel 16: 1, 5-13. Luke 8:  
11-18.  
Congregational Meeting  
After Church.

### BELIEVING, BELONGING, AND STEPPING UP FOR 2022



You may have heard of the December 22 announcement that a technology billionaire publicly resigned from the Mormon church and gave \$600,000 to Equality Utah. Jeff T Green, owner of The Trade Desk, made public a stinging letter he sent to the leadership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, clearly timing it for Christmas and the giving season:

“While most members are good people trying to do right, I believe the church is actively and currently doing harm in the world,” he wrote. “I believe the Mormon church has hindered global progress in women’s rights, civil rights and racial equality, and LGBTQ+ rights.”

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/dec/22/tech-billionaire-quits-mormon-church-jeff-t-green-and-gives-600k-to-lgbtq-group>

This is the context we are in as our church, the embodiment of our faith, goes into 2022. Culturally, there are some winds in favor of a more progressive and inclusive faith. First & Franklin has been in that struggle for some time, and we (allies included) are gaining. At the same time, money speaks louder than ever. Mr. Green knows how to speak that language. A single Senator can invoke inflation and deficit fears to destroy hopes of a child-care tax credit that would enable millions of families to obtain affordable childcare. Any “green new deal” is being strangled by the forces of economic inequality and tax avoidance.

At one level, Mr. Green has joined the culture war in a big way, and perhaps let politics replace some of his faith. According to the *Washington Post*, “Now Green, who lives in California and returns to his birthplace of Utah to ski, spends his Sundays studying philanthropy instead of attending services.”

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/religion/2021/12/21/utah-compromise-religious-lgbtq-rights/> ) In fact, however, Mr. Green remains deeply shaped by the tradition that led him to give two years of his life as missionary. That \$600,000 is not a tithe (tenth) of his fortune, but he knows well Jesus’ words, “where your heart is, your treasure will be also.”

Yes, First & Franklin needs your contributions—before year end if you still can give, and we too have an electronic link via [paypal](#): (while also accepting checks!). But we know that the struggle of the human rights is not only politics and economics. The spiritual base of progressive Christianity—going back to the Reformation with some zig-zags—has played a crucial role in shaping our expectations of society and in the waves of social reform.

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The weakness of Christianity in the US can be seen in the negativism many self-designated patriots and stridency of some advocates for change. There are fewer accepted common values about the common good, and scary numbers of people willing to die for ideology rather than get vaccinated. So the place of churches like ours remains vital.

Sometimes hanging in is the clearest statement of faith. We may disagree with particular Session decisions, and my sermons may sometimes miss. Being considerate to other people can be frustrating. We try things that don't work, we make course corrections, but living means we take some risks—and by God's great love and grace, we are alive and moving ahead. May we understand well the terrain of 2022, and move with the boldness and commitment of Jeff Green—though with more worship on Sunday mornings!

Rev. Chris Iosso

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### **AN INVITATION TO JOIN THE COUNTING TEAM**

We are developing a team of eight persons to count the Sunday morning offering. Are you willing to serve?

Two unrelated people will be counting the weekly offerings for deposit, prepare the deposit slip, and place all in a bank deposit bag to be locked and delivered to the bank's Night Deposit.

The job is not difficult, help and full instruction will be abundant. We plan a monthly sign-up to insure the Sunday will be convenient for you. We will need two each Sunday out of a group of 8.

If you would like to serve, please let the Church Office know with your name and best phone contact.

First & Franklin Office Contact Information:

Email: [information@firstfranklin.org](mailto:information@firstfranklin.org)  
Phone: 410-728-5545



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### **FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA**



Please follow us on Facebook and Instagram to keep up with the latest church news and exciting pictures!

[Instagram](#): Firstfranklinpresbyterian

[Facebook](#): Firstfranklinbaltimore

### **SANCTUARY DECORATING**

As this is written, the Sanctuary still has a Christmas tree and some other decoration still in place. The single tree this year was erected by George with assistance from Keith Spivey, a good neighbor of the church. A group of volunteers, new and old, joined in the decorating of the rest. We thank them for their adding to the joy of Advent and Christmas. Here are some of the faithful team:



"Left to right: Paul Fowler, Frank McNeil, Chris Wallace, Mike Johnson, David Wallace."

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### **ADULT FORUM: Coming Up, An Epiphany Series continues January 9, 16, and 23<sup>rd</sup>**

The pictures below are from the December Adult Forum—Sunday mornings, 9:15-10:15am on the first floor of Backus House.

In December, the Rev. Jack Hodges led a fine discussion of the two stories of Jesus' birth that occur in the first two chapters of Matthew and Luke. He used a powerpoint, with outlines and art illustrations, and Steve Hollaway (not pictured) managed the zoom transmission.



## TRAINING FOR LITURGISTS

On behalf of the Worship, Music, & Arts Committee, I would like to invite members and friends of the church to attend a training session for liturgists. It will be held **in the Sanctuary from 10 to 11:30 am on Saturday morning, January 8, 2022**, and will be led by Rev. Rhonda Cooper.

The role of liturgist is an important ministry for laypeople. It illustrates our Presbyterian tradition of lay leadership in all aspects of the church's life, including worship. The presence of lay worship leaders up front with the minister, in all the diversity of our congregation, can be a powerful witness and a spiritual joy to the liturgist.

The WM&A Committee would like to have a cohort of people who have learned the skills to lead worship with clarity and dignity, rather than relying on last-minute volunteers and recruits. Using the microphone effectively, speaking clearly, finding the right rhythm and speed, projecting the voice, and, most of all, expressing the meaning of the prayers and scripture, are all things which benefit from practice and preparation. Rhonda excels at these skills and is a supportive and experienced coach with a gentle pastoral touch - and a great sense of humor. She has prepared a short list of goals for this training:

- \* To address any challenging aspects of serving as liturgist, from the potential liturgist's perspective, as well as responding to questions about the "flow" of the service*
- \* To practice scripture reading and prayers as worship leader, from the pulpit and using the PA system, as well as back up plans if PA fails*
- \* To gain some tips about how to work best with the "preacher of the day" in worship co-leadership*
- \* To further one's discernment and decision making about serving as a liturgist.*

The final point is important: this training event is meant to help people see if this ministry is for them. Those who attend and then feel moved to sign on as liturgists can plan on serving a few times a year, scheduled in advance whenever possible. I also encourage anyone who has already served as liturgist to attend the session on January 8 as a refresher, and to share their experience with those who are exploring and considering for the first time.

Please prayerfully consider joining us. An RSVP will help us plan: [JCMcL1532@aol.com](mailto:JCMcL1532@aol.com)  
[Information@firstfranklin.org](mailto:Information@firstfranklin.org)

Peace,  
John C. McLucas, Elder

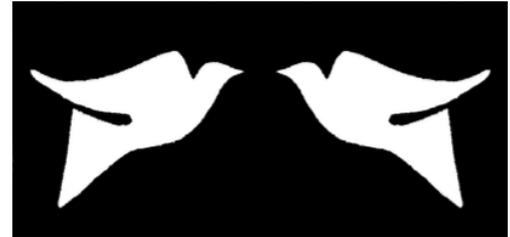
## THREE FROM F&F RUN THE CELTIC SOLSTICE 5-MILE RACE



This is an annual pre-Christmas run through Druid Hill Park. This year the interim minister joined longtime participants Doug and Jan Trammel-Savin in a happy event led by bagpipers and wolfhounds. The event is organized by a part-Northern Irish husband and his direct-from-the-Republic wife (who happen to own a running-gear store).

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## ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS MARKET UPDATE



The Peacemaking Committee would like to thank everyone for their continued support of the Alternative Christmas Market.

The 2021 Market netted a total of \$2,705 to distribute to the following 15 non-profits:

- Araminta - \$75
- Associated Black Charities - \$60
- Baltimore Dakota Learning Camps - \$190
- Baltimore Ceasefire 365 - \$75
- Baltimore Racial Justice Action - \$55
- Blue Water- \$235
- CARES - \$100
- Cuba Partnership - \$290
- Food Pantry - \$675
- Green Belt Movement - \$205
- Moveable Feast - \$230
- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance / Haiti - \$195
- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance / Hurricane Ida - \$60
- Raw Tools - \$105
- Women's Housing Coalition - \$150

## WHAT'S IN THE BUDGET DRAFT?



With the adoption of a calendar-year budget, Session has been working on revising the budget adopted last June. There have been significant cost savings in operations and increases in giving, but

we are not yet benefiting from the re-purposing of some of our property uses.

This means continued erosion of our savings-- also known as our endowment. Thus our budgeting is not easy and your support is very needed.

The Session is the body that sets the budget, with its primary recommendation coming from the Finance Committee and Treasurer. That budget is presented to the congregation at its annual congregational meeting, scheduled for February 6 after church.

Because we want the input of as many members and friends as possible, however, we want to present a draft budget after church on January 23rd. We will email a powerpoint prior to the budget presentation.

Most of First & Franklin's congregation are not "numbers people." But we all know that numbers reflect the practical expressions of our faith, both in our own household budgets, and our church's budget. Thus we invite everyone to stay after church and have a chance to understand and provide input for our church's leadership.

## GIVING ENVELOPES FOR 2022



Please email the office if you wish to receive a box of giving envelopes for 2022. They will be available in early January to pick up at the church.

## FELLOWSHIP AFTER CHURCH SUSPENDED FOR JANUARY.

As stated in the church's email on December 30<sup>th</sup>, the Session has determined the risk of omicron Covid merits sacrificing this aspect of our life. The budget gathering for the 23rd will also be reviewed.

## THANK YOU POINSETTIAS DONATIONS



A special thank you to all those who purchased poinsettias to help decorate our chancel during the holiday season. Martha Armenti rallied the deacons and other volunteers to deliver many of them to others in our church community who have not been able to attend in person. Others were picked up by those who ordered them to enjoy at home or to share with someone who needed some extra cheer this holiday season.

## RECAP OF OPEN HOUSE ON DECEMBER 26TH



We were blessed to be welcomed into the Backus House by Rev. Iosso and his wife, Robin Hogle, for a beautiful holiday open house and breakfast after service last Sunday. Thank you for the hospitality, the fellowship and the delicious breakfast.



## **Birthday & Anniversary Celebrations!**

### **Birthdays**

4 – Bill Bridges	27 – Harry MacGillis
6 – Meredith Piplani-Smith	28 – Bob Resek
7 – Jean Trout	29 – Kris Stinson
16 – Phil Adams	31 – Heidi Dessecker
18 – Betsy Wadsworth	31 – Robin Hogle
23 – James Haugh	31 – Marianne Shick

### **Anniversaries**

1 – John Kyle & Peter Satten    16 – Miriam & Mike Costa

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## **CHURCH OFFICE HOURS**



### **Regular Hours**

Monday – 9:00 am to 4:00 pm  
Tuesday – 10:00 am to 2:30 pm  
Wednesday – 2:30 pm to 6:00 pm  
Thursday – 10:00 am to 3:00 pm  
Friday – 10:00 am to 3:00 pm

### **Holiday Hours: December 22<sup>nd</sup> - January 28<sup>th</sup>**

Monday – Friday – 10:00 am to 3:00 pm

New Year's Eve – Closed  
New Year's Day – Closed

## **CHURCH KEYS**

Do you have a master key to the church? Please let [George Meagher](#) know or call the church office and inform them. Thank you!

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## **CALL FOR USHERS AND LITURGISTS**



## **VOLUNTEER IN THE NEW YEAR**

We need **YOUR** help to fill our schedule with ushers and liturgists.

Please consider this donation of your time as part of your gift to your church. Pull out your calendar and let's fill up those open spaces. Please reach out to the Worship Committee or the Church Office to sign up! Sign-up Sheets are also available on Sunday during Fellowship Hour in Reid Chapel.

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## **SHARE YOUR GOOD NEWS & IDEAS!**



We would love to receive and share your news in the upcoming Newsletters. What would you like to see? Do you have milestone events to share – graduations, weddings, family updates? Please send them to the church office. You can call, email or use the Contact Us link on the website.

**Please submit all entries for the February Newsletter by Monday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022**



