

## THE MESSENGER

# NOVEMBER 2023

**FROM MIKE WILKINS**

I love Christmas time. I love the music, the movies, the giving and receiving of gifts, the delicious foods, the decorations, and the gatherings with family and friends.



And I especially love the Christmas lights. (I confess however that I don't enjoy putting up the lights so Lucy takes care of most of that!) There's a sense of hope created by all the lights shining in the darkness. That's appropriate because Christmas is the story of how God sent his light into our sin darkened world that first Christmas.

John's gospel puts it this way: "In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God... The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it...The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. (John1:1,4-5,9 NLT)

These are dark times for many in our world and, truth be told, for many of us too. At times the darkness can seem overwhelming. But Christmas reminds us that there is hope because Jesus Christ, the light of the world, has come to light our way in the darkness.

So here's my challenge to you. As you see the Christmas lights this year, whether the displays are complex or simple, take a moment to thank God for sending Jesus Christ, and the light he brings, into our lives and into our world.

Glad to be your Interim Pastor,  
Mike



# FEATURE ARTICLE

By Josh Gibson

To my friends at FBCJC:

During the two years I've been with you, I have learned and experienced so much. You have shown me what it's like for a congregation to dream new dreams and plot new courses into the future. You've done the hard work of transition, you've embraced your historical tendency toward inclusion, and you're nearing the end of a pastor search that many thought would be impossible. It fills me with pride to know and to be known, to love and to be loved by the lot of you.

I myself am in a bit of a transition. I have accepted a call to be the Executive Pastor at First Baptist Knoxville. This wasn't something I was looking for, but I am excited about the vision the church is chasing, and the opportunity to participate in it. At the same time, I grieve my own loss of this community of faith, the closeness to the friends I've made here, and the opportunity to take part in what is to come here. This community of faith has been shaping me longer than the two years I've been on staff. Your people have been important to me far longer than that, and it is because of this church that I am who I am today.

You are deeply loved, each one of you. Our time together will come to a close at the end of the year so that I can begin training for my new position, but the significance of this church to my own story cannot be overstated. I am excited to see how all the hard work you have done during this season of transition will lead into the future God has for you. If God is anything, God is faithful, and it is my prayer for you that's God's faithfulness will be revealed to you through the work we've been blessed to do together.

With all hope and love,  
Josh Gibson

## **FUTURE MESSENGERS**

Beginning in 2024, in an effort to lower mailing costs, we ask that you notify the church office if you wish to continue receiving your Messenger by mail. If you do not, please note that there will be digital copies available on the church's website: [www.fbcjeff.org](http://www.fbcjeff.org).

# FINANCIAL UPDATE

By Josh Gibson, Administrative Coordinator

## Summary of Operational Budget Income & Expense through October 2023

### Items of Interest

- **Online Giving** is simple and convenient, and you do not have to set up a Realm account to give online. Visit: <https://onrealm.org/fbcjeff/give/now> to initiate an online gift today!
- **Designated Benevolence Fund total** (as of 11/28/2023) = \$0.00
- Please remember there will be a called business meeting immediately following worship on Sunday, December 3 to vote on the amended 2024 Budget Proposal.

	July	August	September	October
<b>Income</b>	\$25,612.44	\$18,237.70	\$21,909.44	\$41,537.86
<b>Expenses</b>	\$29,765.49	\$26,372.43	\$23,614.63	\$25,566.67
<b>Net</b>	<b>\$4,153.05</b>	<b>\$8,134.73</b>	<b>\$1,705.19</b>	\$15,971.19
<b>YTD</b>	\$3,581.12	<b>\$4,553.61</b>	<b>\$6,258.80</b>	\$9,712.39

## ATTENDANCE

SUNDAY	BIBLE STUDY	IN-PERSON WORSHIP
November 5	56	83
November 12	56	84
November 19	50	90
November 26	51	86

## DEACONS & MINISTER OF THE WEEK

**December 3:** Susan Garber & Carey Herring/Chad Hartsock

**December 10:** Ken Morton & Ann Porter/Nenette Measels

**December 17:** Carolyn Blevins & Heidi Thomas/Josh Gibson

**December 24:** Bruce Davenport & Jim Wilson/Chad Hartsock

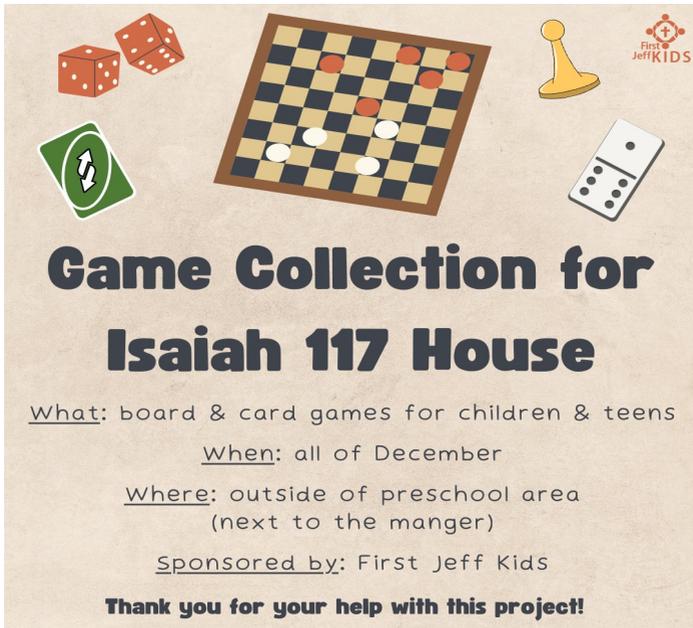
**December 31:** Ray Dalton & Betty Watkins/Nenette Measels



# CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

By Bethany Davenport, Chair, Children and Youth Committee

As 2023 comes to a close, I am so grateful for our children's ministry here at First Baptist Church. It has been a wonderful year of learning, fellowship, and fun, and as both a member and a parent, I am excited to see what the next year holds. Thank you to each and every person who has supported our children's ministry through volunteering and prayers, and a special thank you to our Children and Youth Committee-- Sierra Bevins, Donna Dobyns, Susan Garber, Ami Harsock, and Kristi Sanford--whose work and support mean more to me than they know.



**Game Collection for  
Isaiah 117 House**

What: board & card games for children & teens  
When: all of December  
Where: outside of preschool area  
(next to the manger)  
Sponsored by: First Jeff Kids

**Thank you for your help with this project!**

---

## DEACONS' MEETING SUMMARY

The Deacons held their monthly meeting on November 15, 2023 in the Agape SS class at 5:00 p.m. Twelve deacons were present. A welcome was extended to the newly elected deacons: Peggy Dalton, Angie France, and Mel Hawkins. New officers were elected for the coming year as follows: Jim Wilson, Chairman; Pam Hester, Vice Chairman; and Betty Watkins, Secretary.

Interim Pastor Mike Wilkins joined the meeting and offered the following suggestions for our church to consider as we welcome a new pastor:

- Get the word out about being a different type of Baptist Church using new forms of social media to target strengths and differences.
- Show up at events that reflect the Church's core beliefs and be a supportive presence for groups like LGBTQ.
- Review the role of deacons and be open to new ways of ministry.

John Burton will present a report from the Pastor Search Committee to the church on November 19, 2023.

Jim Wilson reported on the English Class and indicated there is a need for more teachers and babysitters.

Offering collections will be reinstated starting Sunday, December 3. Deacons of the week will serve as ushers.



## 2023 Advent Services Schedule

### **DECEMBER 3 - LIGHT OF HOPE**

SERMON: *TAMAR, BATHSHEBA, AND RAHAB*  
MATTHEW 1:1-6, 16-17

### **DECEMBER 10 - LIGHT OF PEACE**

SERMON: *THE ADVENT OF PEACE (PASTORAL CANDIDATE)*  
MARK 1:1-8

### **DECEMBER 17 - LIGHT OF JOY**

SERMON: *RUTH*  
RUTH 1:7-8; 14-18  
GUEST MUSICIAN; BECKY BURTON WALKER, HARPISIT

### **DECEMBER 24 - LIGHTS OF LOVE AND CHRIST**

SERMON: *MARY*  
LUKE 1:26-38  
**NO EVENING SERVICE**

### **DECEMBER 25 - NO SERVICES**



## Angel Tree GIFTS

**Due December 2nd!**

Drop-off Locations:

- Customer Service Center, Jefferson City  
Walmart
- Jefferson City, New Market, and White Pine  
Volunteer Fire Departments





**GIVE TODAY**  
through your church or  
at [www.cbf.net/ogm](http://www.cbf.net/ogm)

A PLACE AT THE

**TABLE**

FOR EVERYONE

**100%** OF YOUR GIFT

to the Offering for Global Missions will support the presence of CBF field personnel serving in the U.S. and around the world.

**LUKE 14:12-14**



**OFFERING FOR GLOBAL MISSIONS**  
BECAUSE PRESENCE MATTERS

Our offering goal through the end of December 2023:  
**\$5,000**

**SUNDAY WORSHIP TIMES**

9:30am Sunday Bible Studies  
10:45am Worship Service

**CONTACT INFO**

(865) 475-3826; (865) 262-9026 (Fax)  
**Church Office Hours:**  
Monday-Thursday, 8:30am to 4:30pm

Find us at [www.fbcjeff.org](http://www.fbcjeff.org) or follow us online on *Facebook* and *YouTube*

**STAFF**

Sierra Bevins ([sbevins@fbcjeff.org](mailto:sbevins@fbcjeff.org))  
Angie France  
Josh Gibson ([jgibson@fbcjeff.org](mailto:jgibson@fbcjeff.org))  
Chad Hartsock  
Steven Lloyd ([slloyd@fbcjeff.org](mailto:slloyd@fbcjeff.org))  
Nenette Measels  
Cameron Rowlett  
Gage Rustin  
Melanie Simpson

Ministry Assistant  
Organist  
Administrative Coordinator  
Interim Minister of Youth & College Students  
Facility Caretaker  
Interim Minister of Music  
Video Editor  
Youth Ministry Intern  
Pianist

*The Messenger* (ISSN 766010) is published monthly by First Baptist Church, 1610 Russell Ave., Jefferson City, TN 37760-2299. Periodicals Postage Paid at Jefferson City, TN POSTMASTER. Send address change to *The Messenger*, 1610 Russell Ave., Jefferson City, TN 37760-2299.

