

Encountering God at the

# CROSSROADS

of community and mission.

Volume 36 Issue 1

January 2025

## Celebrating 45 Years of Ministry

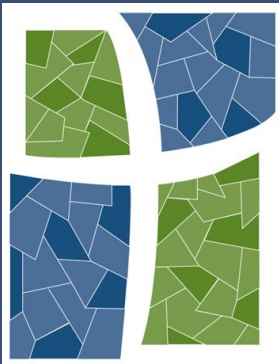
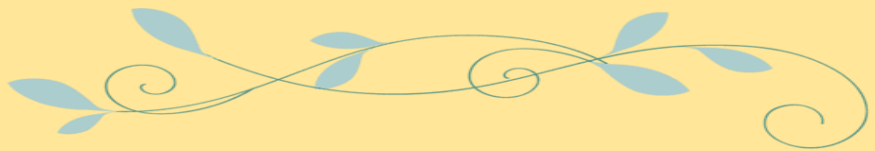
On Sunday, January 12 our church will have the opportunity to mark a major milestone as we celebrate Julia Pilgrim's 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of service to Second Baptist. Julia's ministry to our church and community extends far beyond her extraordinary gifts at the piano. She is a consistent, caring presence who comes alongside people of all ages and stages of life to guide, teach, support, and share the love of Christ. All who know Julia can attest to the fact that she is guided by a deep sense



of calling and a commitment to express her faith in every way available to her.



In worship on January 12, we will have the opportunity to formally honor her. Then, after worship we will gather in the fellowship hall for a very special luncheon where we will celebrate Julia and express our love for her faithful service to Second, even as we look forward to more years of ministry ahead.



4680 Walnut Grove Road  
Memphis, TN 38117  
[www.2ndmemphis.org](http://www.2ndmemphis.org)

### *Second Sunday Lunch*

*January 12, 2025*

Click [HERE](#) to make your reservation.

*Mixed Greens  
Chicken Caprese  
Broccoli  
Rustic Mashed  
Potatoes  
Rolls  
Dessert*



# from the pastor

## SERMON & WORSHIP THEMES

January 5: Epiphany Sunday

Title: No Explanations, Only Adoration

Text: Matthew 2:1-12

OT Lesson: Isaiah 60:1-6

January 12: Deacon Installation

Title: The Stories in the Waters

Text: Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

OT Lesson: Isaiah 43:1-7

January 19:

Title: Transformative Generosity

Text: John 2:1-11

OT Lesson: Psalm 36:5-10

January 26:

Title: Why Gather?

Text: Luke 4:14-21

OT Lesson: Nehemiah 8:1-10

### Joy in the January Winter

As a new year gets underway, how many of us have set our sights on ways we hope we will adapt some of our habits, take up some new behaviors, or let loose of some things we don't need to carry anymore?

No secrets get spilled when I say that we are facing what promises to be a tough year. Deepening divisions in our culture, persistent challenges in our community, mounting concerns for how people of faith in religious institutions like ours can contend with all that seems to compete against us: sometimes it probably feels like most of the news we hear is bad and that we have grown too accustomed to carrying around a certain heaviness of heart.

Tempting as it is to be overwhelmed by it all, I keep coming back to a bedrock truth that serves as a firm foundation for moving into this new year. Namely, that it was into a world filled with unsettling, downright frightening affairs that God first put on flesh and came to dwell.

John's Gospel captures the incarnational hope to which we cling in days like these with astonishing beauty: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

I take great comfort in remembering that God came to dwell, not above us or around us, but *among* us. In the first century, as in the twenty-first, the world was an uncomfortable place. There were refugee crises, mass deportations, clashes of values, aspiring leaders interested in laying claim to power to exploit the lives of others, and so much more. And it is into this kind of context that God comes to dwell.

In an out of the way place in a world that was downright overwhelming; amid chaos, confusion, and fear, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." Even in the face of all that, there was still room for joy.

Perhaps that ought to be both our prayer and our priority these days: to make room for joy. Those who found it that first Christmas had to go looking, of course. And I suspect we will too. But lest we let ourselves be overwhelmed with all that we cannot control, why not set out in search of joy. Then, whenever and however and wherever we find it, we can become bearers of it ourselves.

And through the likes of ordinary folks like you and me, miracle of all miracles, the Word becomes flesh once more and there is joy...Joy to the world!

Grace and peace,  
Stephen

## Deacon Installation Service

Sunday, January 12

# DEACON INSTALLATION

Our deacons are servants of the church who often do their work quietly, out of the spotlight, and in the relational ministries of tending to people in ways that do not draw vast amounts of attention. Nonetheless, their care makes deep impacts on those who are served.

On the second Sunday of the new year, in addition to honoring Julia Pilgrim's 45 years of ministry with us, we will also recognize our deacons. We will offer our prayers and words of blessing to them in their roles as servant leaders. We will also have the opportunity to hear from them about the ministry teams that serve our Second family and wider community. Make plans to take part in this sacred time of blessing those who bless so many!

## First Quarterly Congregational Meeting

Sunday, January 26



With a number of important items coming before our church this year, our congregational leadership has decided to host our quarterly meetings at a time when more of our Second family is able to engage. This year, we will hold those gatherings on Sundays immediately after worship.

The first of these will happen on Sunday, January 26. In addition to hearing reports on stewardship and generosity in 2024, we will also be asked to consider recommendations from our personnel committee related to our staffing and look ahead at several initiatives for the new year. Please make plans to be present and participate!

## Spring Chapel for PDO

PDO has thoroughly enjoyed having 2BC members share their love of Jesus with our little friends through Chapel. We would love to have you join us during the Spring semester! Please email Becca for more information:

[pdo@2ndmemphis.org](mailto:pdo@2ndmemphis.org).



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Update  
Contact Info



If any of your contact information has changed, please email updates to [info@2ndmemphis.org](mailto:info@2ndmemphis.org).

# gathered to worship

## A Morning of Interfaith Service in Our Beloved Community

Monday, January 20

*"Our goal is to create a beloved community, and this will require a qualitative change in our souls as well as a quantitative change in our lives."*

These words from Martin Luther King, Jr. help inspire a community-wide effort in Memphis to honor his life and legacy through acts of service. This year, members of Second Baptist Church and Beth Sholom Synagogue are joining one another to serve in settings that minister to the needs of neighbors in our community. Room in the Inn, First Presbyterian's soup kitchen, St. Vincent De Paul feeding ministries, and others will be among those we serve.



**MLK DAY OF SERVICE**

Join Beth Sholom Synagogue and Second Baptist Church in honoring Dr. King's legacy through service and connection

<b>MON</b> <b>1/20</b>	<b>9:30AM</b>	start at Beth Sholom; then volunteer sites
<b>DATE</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>PLACE</b>

**registration coming soon!**

The day begins with a shared breakfast at Beth Sholom and then groups will scatter to serve through the morning in different parts of the city. Watch for sign-up opportunities and more project details in Center Your Week emails and other church publications.

## A Season of Discernment

Next month, a group of our congregational leaders and staff will begin a new Dawnings experience. Through the last decade-plus, our church has utilized Dawnings as a resource to practice faithful discernment together, centering ourselves on two essential prayers: "Lord, who are you calling us to be now?" and "Lord, what are you calling us to do now?"



The leadership team will share a retreat in February. In March, both in Sunday school and worship, we will have special emphases that help us as a church engage with these prayers. As we move through the spring, we will have four congregational conversations to pray, listen, and dream together that will culminate on the day of Pentecost in early June.

Please pray for this initiative in our life together and watch for ways to engage!

Year-to-date through 12/24/24

Receipts \$ 888,908  
 Expenses 947,662  
 Net (\$ 58,754)

### STEWARDSHIP

Remember that when it comes to giving, we have several options for sharing gifts with our church:

- Cash and Checks
- Online at [2ndmemphis.org](http://2ndmemphis.org)
- Click "Giving" and follow the prompts
- Stock and Mutual Fund Transfers

To learn more about any of these, please contact our Financial Administrator, Patti Calvert, at [pcalvert@2ndmemphis.org](mailto:pcalvert@2ndmemphis.org).



## A note from Larry Denman

As we begin the new year and transition from Christmas to the season of Epiphany, we reflect on the light of Christ shining in our midst. This January, we give special thanks for Julia Pilgrim, who marks her 45th year as our pianist.

Through her music, Julia has ministered to us in countless ways, from the quiet notes that accompany our prayers to the joyful chords that lift our spirits in song. Her playing is more than a performance—it is an offering, drawing us closer to God and helping us feel God's presence in every service.

Julia's faithfulness and extraordinary talent have been a gift to our congregation, shaping our worship and inspiring generations. Join us on January 12, as we celebrate her remarkable milestone and thank her for 45 years of steadfast dedication to her ministry.

### Counting Our Blessings

I continue to be amazed at how the people of Second Baptist share their blessings with the church. As always, you gave generously, and we finished the year strong. We will publish final figures for 2024 in the February Crossroads but know that we appreciate your response to our challenges in 2024. A number of you are taking advantage of tax benefits from directing your IRA distributions directly to the church. Our number of online givers has increased, as well as recurring gifts. Through our payment processor, OneChurch, you can set up a gift to be sent to the church at the frequency you desire. It's a great way to support the Lord's work and also not have to remember to write a check or schedule a gift each time. We also accept gifts of stock.

COUNT  
\*our\*  
Blessings

Also, thank you to all who have made pledges to support Second in 2025. Many have increased their expected gifts which helps with the inflation the church feels (just as we all do in our homes). It's not too late to make a pledge if you'd like! Pick up a card in the Welcome Center or pledge online at [2ndmemphis.org/giving](https://2ndmemphis.org/giving). All pledges are confidential and are seen only by the Financial Administrator, Patti Calvert. For any assistance, please call or email me at 682.3395 or [pcalvert@2ndmemphis.org](mailto:pcalvert@2ndmemphis.org).

Thank you all for being a part of this congregation's mission and ministry, being a center of Christian Community and Hospitality.

-Patti Calvert

### Holiday Closing Reminder

Please make note that the church office and Christian Family Life Center will be closed on Monday, January 20 in observance of Martin Luther King Day. In the event of an urgent pastoral care need when the church office is closed, you may reach the minister on-call at 901.604.6686.



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January

- 1 Gibby Carlson
- 1 Dixie Knowlton
- 3 Owen Keith
- 5 Linda Serino
- 6 Joe Livesay
- 6 Josephine Piche
- 8 Joe Wallace
- 10 Bubba Davis
- 10 Bob Vecera
- 12 Kirsten Bryan
- 12 Sandra Livesay
- 19 Regina Bodiford
- 20 Larry Breland
- 25 Pat Mabry
- 31 Catherine Denman

Please send any family birthday updates to: [info@2ndmemphis.org](mailto:info@2ndmemphis.org)

# gathered to worship

**Thank You, Second Community**  
 This year's Christmas Basket ministry was another great success due to the collaboration of Second Baptist Church and our broader Second Community. In addition to generous financial gifts from church members, we also received donations from vendors that serve our church including Give Clean, Air Technical Services, Alera Benefits Group, Commercial Bank and Trust, Grinder Taber Grinder, Missional Business Services, and U.S. Lawns. In addition to funding, employees for Give Clean also volunteered to unload and fill all the Christmas Basket boxes with us. Thanks to these gifts of time and funds, we were able to provide food to 115 families this holiday season. "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!" Psalms 133:1



### Save the Date for Second's Chili Cook-Off!

Who from the Second community has the tastiest, hottest, and best overall chili recipe? Come find out during our Second Sunday Lunch in February! Watch for more details about how to take part in this year's special contest that will happen on Sunday, February 9.

### Toilet Bowl 2025

Sunday, February 9, 2025

If you thought family football games were reserved only for Thanksgiving, think again. We are calling all players and fans to come out for the Toilet Bowl, our annual youth-led football game. The competition is always fun



and exciting as our youth (and even an adult for two) showcase their "skills". Each year something fun and memorable happens and you definitely don't want to miss out! So, invite a friend! Come out to play! Come out to watch! But just come! Youth arrive at 2:30 p.m. to warm up and select teams. Kickoff is at 3:00 p.m.



### Youth Christmas Scavenger Hunt

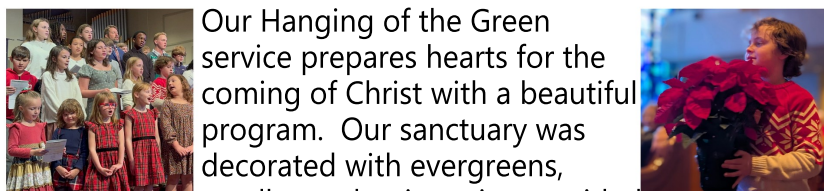
Even if some of our youth described recreating scenes from Christmas movies across the city as, "the most awkward thing ever," these pictures tell the story of an evening of fun and fellowship. A big thanks to all our adults who drove the teams and the adults who provided and set up for our dinner after the scavenger hunt.

# FAMILY ministry

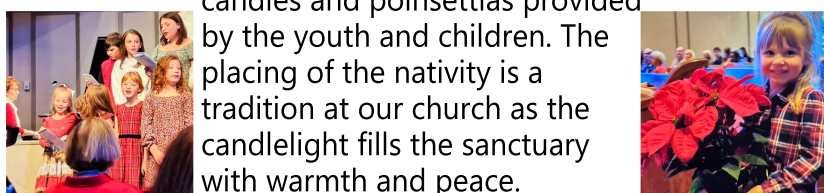
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Christmas is a time of celebration, community, and reflection on the true meaning of the season. Throughout the month of December, we host a variety of events to bring people together and spread joy.



Our Hanging of the Green service prepares hearts for the coming of Christ with a beautiful program. Our sanctuary was decorated with evergreens, candles and poinsettias provided by the youth and children. The placing of the nativity is a tradition at our church as the candlelight fills the sanctuary with warmth and peace.



Christmas caroling is a beloved tradition that brings festive cheer and the message of joy to the community. At our church, caroling is an opportunity to spread Christmas spirit to both church members and those in need of a little extra holiday warmth. Groups of volunteers, often



including families, youth, and choir members, gather to sing a mix of classic Christmas carols—like "Silent Night," "O Holy Night," and "Joy to the World"—as they visited Trezevant Manor and shared some favorite songs of the season. It's a simple yet powerful way to share the love of Christ with others, as carolers offer both song and, in many cases, a small gift or prayer. For everyone involved, the experience is a reminder of the joy of giving and the true meaning of Christmas: love, hope, and peace for all.

Our church provided once again a beautiful lunch for our Evergreen group. It was great to hear the laughter and the conversations among folks who have been friends for many years. We also had a time of celebrating the season and our beautiful Second Baptist staff. Our PDO group celebrated the season with Santa Claus paying a visit to children. The month of December has been a busy and fun time for all of our groups at Second Baptist Church.





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