



AT FIRST BAPTIST

DANIEL MCDOWELL
Acting Senior Pastor

MILLARD COOK
Interim Pastor Senior/Adult Ministries

SUE NEELY VANBRUNT
Minister of Music

BRUCE LAVERTY
Director of Family Ministries

ROBERT FAULDS
Organist

PENNY SOROKES
Church Secretary

MICKI ELLIS
Audio Visual Specialist

BONNIE KETTLE
Financial Secretary

GERALD NUTT
Custodian



GIVING THANKS DINNER

Plan to join with your church family on Saturday,

November 19, at 6:00 pm as we celebrate our many blessings. The Fellowship Committee will provide the turkey, stuffing, gravy, cranberry sauce and beverages. Please sign up to bring potatoes, vegetables, or desserts according to your last name using the following schedule: A- H - vegetables; I-P - desserts; Q-Z – potatoes. The "price of admission" is a canned or dry good to be donated to the Olean Food Pantry. Sign up on the bulletin insert or call the church office by November 13.



HANGING OF THE GREENS ON SUNDAY NOVEMBER 20

Advent begins on Sunday, November 27!! Join us for lunch after Sunday School on November 20 (the Sunday before Thanksgiving) and help us put up the Christmas decorations! Together we can make our church appropriately festive and set the mood for a wonderful holiday season. Sign up on the bulletin insert or call the church office so we can plan for the food.

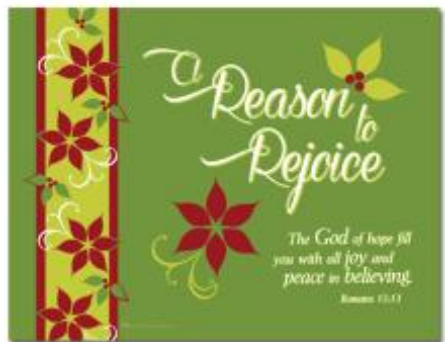


NOVEMBER IS "THANK GOD FOR RECOVERY" MONTH AT FIRST BAPTIST!

Did you know our church hosts more than 8 recovery groups every week? Narcotics Anonymous groups meet in our church on Monday night at 7:30, Tuesday morning at 10:00, Wednesday afternoon at 1:00, Wednesday night at 7:30, Friday night at 7:30 and Saturday evening at 6:45. An Alcoholic Anonymous group meets here on Wednesday and Saturday nights at 8:00 and an Al-Anon (support group for the families of alcoholics) meets here on Friday nights at 7:00.

Every Sunday School class, music group, Bible study and board has been challenged to adopt one of these groups this month and to "bless" them somehow through your prayers, notes, cards or by leaving some food for them to enjoy. Please do so without infringing on the anonymity of the participants.





“A REASON TO REJOICE” is the theme of our Fourth Annual Ladies FREE Christmas Retreat on Saturday, December 10. The activities will begin at 10:00 am in the sanctuary with some Christmas Carols, Scripture, a message from Pastor Dodi McIntyre of Creekside Chapel (and a door prize or two!). After worship, we’ll move to Fellowship Hall for brunch and a time of fellowship and fun (and more door prizes!). We’ll also continue our tradition of delivering cookie trays to the Olean emergency response groups. Please bring a dozen homemade cookies or candy to contribute to the effort.

Mark your calendars..... Save the date! You’ll want to be here for this time to get away from the stress of the holiday season for a few hours, soak in some divine inspiration, relax with friends, and charge your battery for Christmas. The cost is FREE but *Reservations are required by December 4*. Tickets are available in the church office.

Come and bring a friend....or a few!

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” Romans 15:13



THE ANNUAL COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING SERVICE (And lighting of the

Crèche) will be held at 5:00 pm on Sunday, November 20 at Trinity United Methodist Church. Pastor Dodi McIntyre will bring the message. A dinner will be held after the service with Trinity providing the meat; attendees should bring a side dish or a dessert.



ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING – TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 7:00 PM PLEASE PLAN TO HAVE A MEMBER PRESENT FROM EACH BOARD OR COMMITTEE.

ANNUAL REPORTS DUE

Please note that all annual reports from staff members, boards and committees are due in the church office by **December 30**. Electronic submissions are appreciated! Reports received after this date will not appear in the full report.



CONGREGATIONAL/CORPORATE MEETINGS NOTICE

The Annual Meetings of our church will take place on **December 6, 2015, and January 17, 2016**. The December Congregational/Corporate meeting will be held in the sanctuary immediately following the 9:30 worship service. The purpose of this meeting is the election of officers, boards and committees for 2017. Fellowship Time will be held after the meeting. The January Corporate meeting will review the annual reports from 2016 and enact a budget for 2017. Church members are encouraged to attend both meetings.

On **SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13**, we’ll pay tribute to



our veterans during the morning service. A special fellowship time will be held in their honor following worship.

On **Thursday, November 11**, Epic Church (in coordination with the Greater Olean Association of Churches) will host a free breakfast featuring pancakes, scrambled eggs, sausage, ham, hash browns and beverages from 8-9:30 am. This meal is offered in honor of military veterans and active service members and is free of charge for them and their families. Everyone is welcome to attend. Donations are welcome but not required. Let Pastor Dan or Penny know if you are willing to volunteer to cook, serve or clean up for this breakfast.

The FBC Women’s Ministry will be providing the annual Christmas Card fundraiser on November 6, 13 and 20. Donations to have your name included on the All Church Family Christmas Card will be taken each Sunday in the lobby following worship **until November 20**. The card will be available in your church family mailbox or mailed to our shut-in and long-distance family members.



LIGHTING THE LONGEST NIGHT FOR GENESIS HOUSE



December 21st is the longest night of the year. To the homeless person, it can be lonely and scary.

Please help brighten our area by joining our Fourth Annual Luminaria Sale to benefit the work of Genesis House. Kits are \$10 and include 10 bags, 10 votive candles, sand, and directions. Please contact Donna DeLong at 557-8323 or the Church office. Orders are due by Dec. 1st.



November Board Meetings
Sunday, November 13 @ Noon
 Board of Christian Missions
Monday, November 14 @ 5:30 PM
 The Board of Christian Education
Tuesday, November 15:
 Diaconate @ 6:30
 Trustees @ 7:00



POINSETTIA DONATIONS

Donations for the flowers and decorations for the sanctuary will be received in the church office until December 11.

Please indicate, along with

your check, who you would like to have honored or remembered. Also let us know if you will be taking a plant with you following worship on Sunday, December 25. The Diaconate has decided to deliver the poinsettias to our shut-ins at the beginning of the Advent season rather than waiting until the week of Christmas. Your donations will still be used to make those gifts possible. A donation of \$10 per plant is suggested.



Our Pastor is inviting any and all retirees in our church family to a Christmas Party/Luncheon on

Monday, **December 5** at noon. He will offer some devotional thoughts as well as an opportunity for food and good fellowship. We will have a white elephant (or dollar store) gift exchange as well! Transportation to this event is available for any who need it. There is no charge but donations will be gratefully accepted. Please sign up on the bulletin insert or call the church office by Thursday, December 10, if you would like to attend.



Homebound Christmas Outreach

During the upcoming Christmas season, the Diaconate will be sponsoring some special ways for the congregation to reach out to our shut-in/homebound family members.

- 🕯️ Poinsettia plants will be delivered during the first week of Advent (beginning November 27) along with a cd of FBC Christmas cantata favorites so that they can be enjoyed during the Christmas season
- 🕯️ Advent Calendars will be posted on the café windows for each of our shut-in/homebound members. We are asking the members of the congregation to sign up for one day (or more!) to be in touch with one or more shut-ins. You can send a card, visit, call, etc. Use your imagination...just be in touch in some way to brighten their day at this special time of year

Please join us in making this Christmas Season blessed is special ways for our family members who can't be with us physically to celebrate the birth of our Savior.



CHRISTMAS CANTATA PLANS UNDERWAY!

Can you believe it almost December? For some, that is great news and for others – a dread of coming winter begins to crawl into their thoughts. Regardless of your feelings about the weather...most everyone enjoys the music that accompanies the Christmas season that is about to begin.

This year's Senior Choir cantata, *O Holy Night*, is filled with songs of joy about the coming of the Christ Child that night long ago. This work combines some best-loved carols with meaningful narration woven throughout. How fitting it is that this cantata will be presented on December 24th, Christmas Eve at 7 pm!

Rehearsals have just begun for this cantata, so if you would like to be a part of this seasonal ministry, it's not too late! Please talk to Sue or simply come to rehearsal this Thursday at 7 p.m. Won't YOU join us?

Family of God

WELCOME TO THE FAMILY!!!

On Sunday, October 16, Katie DeGroff, Leah O'Dell, Bobbi Kirkwood, Diane Gilbert, and Anthony Ratzell committed their lives to Christ by walking through the waters of baptism. We welcomed Katie, Leah, Bobbi and Diane to the FBC family on Sunday, November 6, by offering the Right Hand of Christian Fellowship.

DIRECTORY CHANGES

Grace Thurston
500 E. Spring St.
Apt. # 8
Olean, NY 14760

Tim Sherlock
42 Cummings Pl. #2
Wellsville, NY 14895-1215

THANK YOU'S

Thank you for your generous gift of 4 bags of varied items. Donations such as yours enable Genesis House to continue ministering to temporarily homeless people. Blessings, Linore



STEWARDSHIP REMINDER COMMITMENT SUNDAY

is **November 6.**
Remember to turn in your
pledge card.



RING THE BELL FOR THE SALVATION ARMY RED KETTLE

The FBC Mission Board has selected Monday, December 5 between 9 am and 6 pm to ring the bell for the Salvation Army at the Front St. Park n Shop. A sing-up poster will be available in the lobby on November 20 and November 27.

The Red Kettle started in 1891. Today, the Salvation Army assists more than 4.5 million people during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. The Kettle tradition has spread not only through the United States, but all across the world. Contributions to the Salvation Army Kettles enable the organization to continue its efforts at helping those who would otherwise be forgotten. There is also some help with utilities, clothing, and housing.

The Salvation Army's message is based on the Bible. Its ministry is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination.

Please prayerfully consider supporting the FBC Red Kettle Bell Ringers and discover the joy of giving back to your community.

OUR STRONGHOLDS

From *Glory Days* by Max Lucado

Does a stronghold have a strong *hold* on you? Do you feel nothing but despair? Do you think thoughts of defeat? A stronghold is a false premise that denies God's promise. 2 Corinthians 10:5 says "it sets itself up against the knowledge of God." It attempts to magnify the problem and minimize God's ability to solve it.

God could never forgive me-- That's the stronghold of guilt.

Bad things always happen to me-- That's the stronghold of self-pity.

I have to be in charge-- The stronghold of pride.

I don't deserve to be loved-- The stronghold of rejection.

Most Christians don't recognize strongholds. But we don't have to be among them. Our weapons are from God and have divine power to demolish strongholds. Isn't that what you want?

Keep God at center stage. Turn off the computer and open the Bible more! And turn to God for help.



THE GRACE OF GRATITUDE

“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”
I Thess. 5:18

When Robinson Crusoe was wrecked on his lonely island, he listed in two columns what he called the evil and the good. He was cast on a desolate island, but he was still alive – not drowned, as his ship’s company were. He was divided from humankind and banished from human society, but he was not starving. He had no clothes, but he was in a hot climate where he did not need them. He was without means of defense, but he saw no wild beasts such as he had seen on the coast of Africa. He had no one to whom he could speak, but God had sent the ship so near to the shore that he could get out of it all the things necessary for his basic wants. So he concluded that there was not any condition in the world so miserable but that one could find something for which to be grateful.

I think the apostle Paul had such in mind when he wrote this his First letter to the Thessalonians. If ever there was a man who knew a variety of perils through which to live suffer, and endure, it was Paul. Like Crusoe, let us then examine our text and Paul’s life in twofold manner:

I. A Negative Approach

Paul did not thank God for the possession of material abundance. He did not have the affluent standard of living most of us in modern America know. (Phil. 4:12)

Paul did not thank God for any superior standing among others. He was not like the Pharisee who prayed, “God, I thank thee that I am not as other men...” (Luke 18:11) Rather he said “For I am the least of the apostles, that I am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.” (I Cor. 15:9)

Paul did not thank God for an easy time; instead, he had a thorn given to him. (II Cor. 8:7ff) He knew the pain of suffering, the bitterness of persecution. He was stoned, ship wrecked, jailed and finally martyred.

II. The Positive Approach

First acknowledge the Will of God. “This is the will of God”. Refuse to let any incident, circumstance, event, calamity, or other experience stifle you into the extinction of your spirit of gratitude. God has a plan for this day and I must rejoice in it.

Winston Churchill was a 21 yr old 2nd Lieutenant in India when he hurt his shoulder getting out of a boat.

This injury would bother him the rest of his life. Later while serving in the Sudan he was leading a cavalry charge. The officers would use their sabers for hand to hand combat. But because of his shoulder injury he could not swing a saber therefore he used his pistol. After the charge he knew that the pistol had saved his life. He wrote to mother and said “One must never forget when misfortunes come that it is quite possible they are saving one from something much worse.”

Then we must be willing to take inventory. Paul could look at his life, his suffering, his troubles and still say “having food and raiment let us therewith be content.” (I Tim. 6:8) So Paul would give thanks for his bread (Acts 27:35) as we should. He would give thanks for Christian brothers and sisters. “First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all...”(Rom. 1:8) Praise God that you have a church home with people who will support and strengthen you. And even the memory of those Christian friends was a blessing to give thanks to God for. (Phil. 1:3)

Most importantly, Paul had his priorities right. He understood that there were far more important things than just the events of this day. So he would say in II Cor. 9:15 “Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift” realizing that the eternal salvation that was his would outweigh any temporal trail that this would could offer.

Today we should reflect on this text, count our blessings, and try to enumerate the things for which we should be grateful. Gratitude helps us over the hills and through the valleys of life. It makes loads lighter, sorrow and sadness brighter. It turns grief into comfort, defeat into victory, doubt into assurance, fear into faith, hate into love, darkness into light, death into life and mourning into joy.

Why does this grace work such wonders in the human spirit? Because gratitude grows as it is given away. If you will express it, you will see it increase.

~Pastor Millard



**Pastor Dan and Pastor Millard
want to say
“Thank You”
for the wonderful
Pastor Appreciation Celebrations
you offered in October
We love you too!**



From the Pastor's Heart...

What a difference a month makes! Last month at this time I was preparing to say goodbye to you and hello to a new congregation in a place I was afraid I would never grow accustomed to. But here I am and happily so.

Since this is the month for Thanksgiving, I thought I would spend my time in this column listing some of the things I am most thankful for. There are a lot of them!

On November 26, 1959 was Thanksgiving Day. My mom had just sat down to eat dinner with her newlywed husband and several of her in-laws. That's when I decided it was time to make my entrance. I took my time getting around to it though, so I wasn't born until the wee hours of black Friday.

I was the first of four children my mom had with my natural father. After his death and her remarriage I was blessed with two more sisters. As you know I lost my mom and my oldest sister in the past few years but I am blessed with a great family of origin. My dad's parents as well as his brothers and sisters were all instrumental in my upbringing. Most of them are with the Lord now too, but I will never cease to be grateful for their presence in my life.

November 27 will be my 57th birthday and it will occur on the first Sunday of Advent. 17 years ago my birthday fell on the same Sunday while I was serving the church in Medina. We spent a good portion of the afternoon decorating the church and when they called us to the Fellowship Hall afterwards for dinner, I had the surprise of my life. Terri and the girls had prepared the mother of all surprise birthday parties for my 40th. The walls were plastered with pictures and newspaper articles of me throughout the years and old friends and extended family members came from long distances (or shared memories through the mail and email). One of my great friends in that church put together a slide presentation retrospective on my life using the old "This Is Your Life" TV show as the theme. I was awe struck by the whole occasion. I will never forget it.

My oldest daughter Laura was born on Veteran's Day. She came almost 2 weeks after her due date but she was worth the wait. I will never forget holding her for the first time and looking into her little eyes with wonder. What would she become? Would she have the kind of opportunities I wanted her to have? That was 1986 – 30 years ago. Since then she traumatized me by going off to Kindergarten and in so

many other ways. She survived 2 years in the Peace Corps, spent summers at Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks and in Alaska and a winter in Miami and the Florida Keys. Now she is making a life in Buffalo, working her way up the career ladder and getting ready to start a family of her own. I am grateful for her adventurous spirit, her love of people and her dedication to our family. She is a great sister, a wonderful daughter and soon she will be a fantastic aunt to my new grandson.

I said this was a month for birthdays in our family and that is the other one I have in mind. Sarah is due to give birth on November 20. She is telling us that she is starting to think the baby won't wait that long. We will see. My mom's dad died long before I was born from a heart attack when my mom was just 15 years old so I never got to know him. My dad's dad also had a heart attack that forced his early retirement from the railroad but he lived for 30 more years and was the most prominent male influence on my life as I was coming of age before my mom's remarriage. His faith and his dedication to his church were huge influences on my calling into the ministry. He also demonstrated deep dedication to his family and his wife. It never occurred to any of us that he would outlive my grandmother by more than 20 years but he did and I am grateful for the things he showed me about finishing well despite grief and loneliness.

All of that is the prelude to telling you that I am grateful that this month, God willing, I will become a grandfather for the first time. I see it as a pay-it-forward opportunity and I hope I can be as influential on my grandchildren as my grandparents were on theirs. Either way, this month will be monumental in the history of our family.

There is so much more I could give thanks for today. My wife who for more than 35 years of marriage has shown me what unconditional love really means. Sarah, my youngest daughter and soon-to-be mother of my grandson (did I mention that already?!) Her husband and my son (he is more than a son-in-law to me now) Alfonse, who will be a great dad and who inspires me with his faith and ambition in ministry. My middle daughter Deborah, who has this mystical way of succeeding at anything she puts her mind to. You have heard her play her horn and the piano. You should see the house she is fixing up.

And after another great Pastor Appreciation month I also need to say thank you for your friendship, for your gifts, for your grace and for 14 ½ years of happiness during the time I have been privileged to serve beside you. These have been great years. Thank YOU! ~Pastor Dan



Integrity: Don't Leave Home Without It

by Dr. O.S.
Hawkins from
[The Daniel Code](#)

It seems with each passing day we are sinking a little deeper into the quicksand of cultural collapse. For those of us who, like Daniel, seek to live in the world but not of the world, what is the single most important attribute we need as we strive to influence the culture in a positive and productive way?

Some people quickly point to intellect. After all, they argue, knowledge is power in our world. The greater our intellectual edge over others, the better we can gain the upper hand. Others quickly say that it isn't intellect as much as it is intensity, that passion accompanied by a spirit of conquest becomes contagious. Still others argue it is insight, that is, good old common sense, the ability to see wisely into the issues, and discernment for addressing them. However, in the final analysis, the single most important attribute of those who make a lasting difference for good in a collapsing culture like our own is... integrity!

We have all known men and women who possessed tremendous intellect and persuasive abilities to influence many, but who ended up having little to no integrity and have since been forgotten. We can also remember those who possessed an inordinate amount of intensity and passion for their task. However, they had little to no integrity, so they, too, offered the culture little, if any, positive influence. We have also come into contact with those who possessed keen insight and the ability to make wise decisions, but who ultimately revealed they had no integrity. They lost their voice as well.

If we are going to find our way in a culture that has lost its way, we must be people of lasting integrity.

Integrity Illustrated

Daniel certainly had a high level of intellect. We read that he was *gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge*. — Daniel 1:4 And talk about intensity for the task! He was the epitome of passion. He *purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself*. — Daniel 1:8 As for insight, not only was he gifted in wisdom and knowledge; he was *quick to understand*. — Daniel 1:4 He keenly discerned the meaning of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and described in detail the message of the handwriting on the wall of Belshazzar's palace. However, it was Daniel's personal integrity that truly set him apart from all others in the kingdom and enabled him to achieve such incredible success.

The Bible says, *Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him*. — Daniel 6:3

Daniel is exhibit A of the fact that those who influence others and engage their culture for good are men and women of impeccable integrity. Integrity can be defined as “the steadfast and constant adherence to a moral or an ethical code.” It is “the state or quality that strives to be complete, free of the corrupting influences of improper motives or methods.” The thesaurus pairs integrity with such words as honesty, completeness, and incorruptibility. In the language of the New Testament, the word integrity translates a complex Greek word containing a negative prefix, the preposition through, and the noun corruption. The word very literally describes a man or a woman in whom runs “no corruption through them.” Integrity suggests a consistency between what we do in public and who we are in private. That is to say, what you see in public of a person of integrity is what he or she is in private.

Integrity is what causes the professional golfer to report his disqualifying infraction when no one else even noticed it. It is what motivates a witness to tell the whole truth from the witness stand when no one else would know if she were less than truthful. It is personal integrity that keeps men and women in the workforce from cheating on overtime hours and expense accounts. And it is our personal integrity that serves to keep us honest when April 15 rolls around each year and the IRS comes looking for our money. Integrity is what keeps us faithful to our spouses when we are away from home on a business trip.

Our contemporary culture is desperately in need of men and women of integrity. Too many of our national leaders, on both sides of the political aisle, have failed miserably on this point. With increasing regularity, another gate swings open to reveal high-profile individuals living with little or no integrity. Our culture has gone from Watergate to Irangate to Monicagate and on and on. Our corrupt culture is the product of leaders in high places who are still debating what “the meaning of is is.” No wonder our young people question if character really counts anymore.

Our culture is crippled by a lack of integrity at every level of society. Too many local municipalities, like my own, have been dragged through the mire of widespread corruption and investigations of wrongdoing in their city governments and school systems. It is not uncommon to hear of those who resign from public office in disgrace before they are publicly exposed or indicted for some form of corruption. Sadly, there are religious leaders who score no better on the report card of personal integrity. Even as I type these very words, I heard just today of another high-profile pastor who has resigned due to a lack of personal integrity.

Character Counts

What does all this have to do with the familiar story of Daniel in the lions' den that we now approach in Daniel 6? If, as a child, we ever heard Bible stories, the story of Daniel in the lions' den was more than likely near the top of the list. Pictures of Daniel lying down with the docile lions adorn the walls of many nurseries. For most, the focus of the story is Daniel's miraculous deliverance. But the real message has to do with Daniel's conduct not while he was in the lions' den but before he ever got there! It is a message about integrity: character does count, and God Himself honors integrity.

Throughout these pages we have watched Daniel, time and again, impact the culture around him. He could have lived with resentment and joined the other exiles in hanging their harps on the willows and losing their song. But he rested in the fact that God was in control, that God Himself held the remote control in His own hand. Daniel knew that God also kept His finger on the thermostat when his three friends ended up in the fiery furnace.

Daniel influenced a pagan culture primarily because he lived a life of integrity.

You might have the highest intellect in the room, you might be moved and motivated by an intensity manifesting itself in contagious passion, you might have keen insight to cut through to the heart of the issues of life, but if you don't live with integrity, you will join the many others on the ash heap of what might have been.

Character does count, and those who influence their culture have one thing in common: like Daniel, they are men and women of integrity.

Integrity is your most valuable attribute. Don't leave home without it.

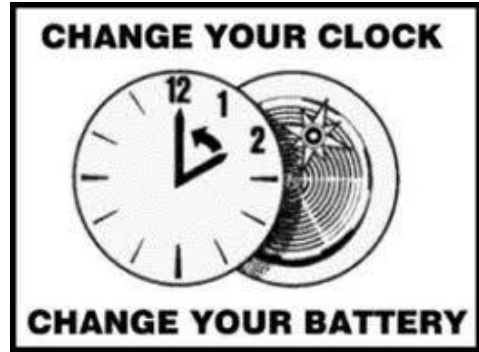


Happy Birthday!

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Rhiannon Peck
- 4 Marilyn Piepho
- 9 Jeff Nutt
Dan Sorokes
- 10 Jim Kirkpatrick
- 11 Julie Barnes
Bud Fortner
Laura McDowell
Mark Taylor
- 13 Zach Faulds
- 15 Michele Cone
- 16 Carol Walker
- 17 Travis Buckley
- 19 Micah Collins
- 20 Bob Ketchner II
- 21 Chris Rosel
- 23 Carol Mahoney
- 24 Ashley Sage
- 26 Josh Anderson
- 27 Lori Funden
Dan McDowell
Ken Wallace
Eli Rust
- 30 Linda Anderson
Cheyenne Rust

**STANDARD TIME BEGINS
SUNDAY,
NOVEMBER 6**



**TURN YOUR CLOCKS BACK
ONE HOUR
BEFORE YOU GO TO BED ON
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5**



*Articles and information for the
December Issue of
At First Baptist
Are due by Wednesday, November 16*



- 8 Bruce & Carole Laverty
- 25 Harley & Donna DeLong
- 28 Don & Jodie Martin

**THE RETIRED MINISTERS &
MISSIONARIES OFFERING**

In the month of December we will receive the Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering, which provides a special honorarium (just in time for the holidays) to the missionaries, pastors and their spouses in our denomination who served us so well for so long! This is a tremendous blessing for them; let's do our part!