

The Friendly Communicator

December 2025

A Word from the Pastor

Our Congregation's Values:

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| 1. Community (belonging, fellowship, togetherness) | 4. Care for each other |
| 2. Worship | 5. Mission work (time, talents, & offerings) |
| 3. Music | 6. Welcoming the stranger |

As we enter this holy season of Advent and Christmastide, I give thanks for how we've explored our congregational values together over the past year. Each of the values listed above reflects the very heart of Advent—our longing for Christ's light to enter our world anew—and the joy of Christmas, when that light shines brightly among us. In community we feel a sense of belonging; in worship and music we lift our hearts in hope; in caring, mission, and welcome we reflect the love of the One who came as a child to redeem all creation. As the prophet Isaiah reminds us, "*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light*" (Isaiah 9:2), and it is through these values that we carry that light into our daily lives.

Throughout this season, I invite you to reflect on how these values shape not only our life together but also the ways we prepare for Christ's coming. Advent teaches us to wait with expectation, but also to act with love—reaching out to one another, serving our neighbors, and making room for the weary and the wandering. When we embody our values, we become a living sign of God's promise, a community where hope takes root and grows. As we sing hymns of anticipation and carols of Christmas, may our worship this month draw you into deeper wonder, and may our fellowship remind you that you are never alone on the journey.

I also want to extend my heartfelt thanks to every person who volunteered for our annual Holiday Bazaar in November. Your time, talents, creativity, and generosity made the event a joyful success. The warmth and teamwork were yet another expression of our values in action—community, service, and welcome woven together in beautiful and practical ways.

Finally, as we approach Christmas, I warmly invite you and your loved ones to **join us for our Christmas Eve candlelight worship service on Wednesday, December 24th, at 6:30 p.m.** This cherished service is a moment for us to gather, lift our voices in song, and celebrate the radiant gift of Christ's birth. May the peace of Christ fill your homes and hearts this season and may God's light guide your way into the new year.

With thanks and joy,

Pastor Stephen

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October 2025 Financial Income Report

General Receipts

Envelopes	\$9,125.00
Loose Offerings	64.00
Birthday	3.00
Church School	89.00
Thanksgiving	60.00
Christmas	60.00
Total	\$9,401.00

Miscellaneous Receipts

Pow wow	50.00
MMCC	2900.00
ABF-3 rd Qtr.	729.01
Total	\$3,679.01

Communion Offering

Hunger Task Force	80.00
Guest House	10.00
Total	\$90.00

Memorial Fund

Brenda Graves (Camp Tamarack)	75.00
Total	\$75.00

Mission Offering

World Mission	531.00
Grand Avenue Club	150.00
Milwaukee Community Crossroads	200.00
Total	\$881.00

Deposited Total **\$14,126.01**

Suggested items for the third Sunday (Dec. 21st) food and hygiene collection for the Milwaukee Community Crossroads are **Beans/dried or canned & shampoo/conditioner**. Please place your donations in the bins inside the office door entrance.

December Birthdays

22 Eric Holcomb
22 Mason Smith
24 Eric Winski
28 Charles Winski
28 Trish Sauer
29 Alex Holcomb
30 Ben Byleen

December Anniversaries

5 Glenn & Adell 43 years

If we have inadvertently missed your special day, please accept our apologies, and let the office know so we can change our records.

Save The Date!

Jan. 4th, 2026 – following worship.

Learn what God is doing at Deborah's house inTijuana.

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3Gs Christmas Party

The 3Gs (Golden Guys and Gals) will continue their Christmas party tradition this year but at a new location. We will gather at 12:00 noon on Thursday, December 11, 2025 in the private dining room at Steak House 100, 7246 W Greenfield Ave in West Allis. There is free parking on the street and in the lot just north of the restaurant.

We have arranged four possible entrées: Sirloin Steak, Rotisserie Chicken, Tenderloin Tips over Noodles, and Fried Cod. Included in the price of \$25 per person are your choice of soup or salad, breadbasket, potato, coffee or soda, dessert, tax, and tip. Please pay Kathy McDonald or Karl Byleen at the restaurant [cash only, please].

Please select an entrée on the sign-up sheet in the Education Wing foyer on or before Thursday, December 4.

Remember, everyone who is 50 or older is automatically a member of the Golden Guys and Gals. We don't check IDs. We do give door prizes, and holiday cheer, at the 3Gs Christmas Party!



Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering

Throughout the month of December, we join other American Baptist Churches to collect the Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO). Funds received are distributed as thank-you checks to ABCUSA ordained ministers and commissioned missionaries who have devoted fifteen years or more to our denomination.

The Communion offering on Sunday, December 7 will also go to the RMMO.

Express your gratitude for the service of our now-retired pastors and missionaries by making a generous contribution to the Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering.

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"Christmas is coming,
The goose is getting fat.
Please put a penny
In the old man's hat."

This old English Christmas carol first appeared in 1885. It was very popular as a round that could be easily sung by people when they gathered to go Christmas caroling. It seems like just a simple, silly song for the holidays. However, if you dig a little deeper, there are some tidbits in this lyric that offer some good advice for this time of year.

First of all, the goose is getting fat! Well, we all know what's going to happen to the goose.

☹️ This tells me that the person singing the song has some resources for the holiday – at least they have the main course.

Next, we are asked to donate to an old man – not much - just a penny. Well, given that we seem to have some resources (a fat goose), a penny doesn't seem like much. So what does all of this mean?

To me, it means that no matter what your situation is at this busy holiday time- no matter how blessed you are with food and resources – don't forget about those who have less. You don't have to solve everyone's problem – just help a little bit. It all adds up. If we all give out of our abundance, many people will be blessed.

Mary Schecher

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THE PASSING OF THE SANTA TORCH

Did you notice that there was something new this year at the Holiday Bazaar? Terry Arnold, who has played the part of Santa for at least sixteen years, has retired from his much-beloved starring role. During those times he was often accompanied by Sharon, dressed in red, as Mrs. Claus. Both of them were absolutely perfect in their roles.



Santa Terry (2023)



Santa T (2025)

But time passes and Terry has now decided to retire from his long-time role. While Terry's portrayal will never be forgotten, the torch has now passed to T Quiles, who like Terry has the perfect beard for the position! We hope to see him for many years playing Father Christmas. See if you can tell them apart in the picture below (taken by Pastor Stephen)! Thanks to both of you for your willingness to entertain boys and girls of all ages!



The Torch Has Passed!

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ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL ABWM BAZAAR!

Once again the women of the church (along with the occasional helping hand of some of the men) worked hard to make the annual holiday bazaar a resounding success! This was the 55th anniversary of the marketplace, selling baked goods, serving meals, offering Christmas decorations, and (of course!) attic treasures. This year a new idea was implemented for the sale of those “treasures:” rather than the very time-consuming effort needed to mark the cost on each individual item (and there were hundreds of them!), customers could pay what they thought the item would be worth to them (note the green sign in the photos below!). The reports were that people were more than generous since all the funds were going to missions.



As can be seen in the photos, at times (especially Friday evening) it was standing room only!



The ABW supports many missions with the funds received from the bazaar: the four main ABCUSA offerings, New Life Center in Thailand, MCC, Camp Tamarack, Project Focal Point, St Ben's meal program, Inner Beauty Center, Street Angels, Good Samaritan Outreach, and Meta House, as well as the ABWM at the national level! Over \$4,000 was raised this year to put toward these good causes! Thanks to all for your support! *And* we got to enjoy all those delicious sloppy joes, Italian beef sandwiches, hot dogs, and those marvelous homemade pies: pecan, pumpkin, lemon meringue, apple and more ! YUM!

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There was something for everyone at the bazaar, whether it was Santa (see the separate article about Santa in this issue), the food, the treasures of all types, or the camaraderie of gathering with friends and church neighbors to welcome in the holidays.



A Visit from Saint Nicolas!
Jonathan Wood on Kitchen Duty!

The Holiday Bazaar continues to be a favorite event every Fall. Hopefully you had the opportunity to attend, sample the food, shop for Christmas gifts for friends and family, and enjoy the usual FBC WA fellowship. Thanks to all who put in the time and effort to make this event the wonderful one that it is!

[Thanks to Mary Schecher for the photos and to Becky Holl, chair of the bazaar, and Barb Winski for the statistics!]