

Newsletter

December 2011

Pastor's Message

Rev. Dr. Peter C. Wool

"By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and he set out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. By faith he received power of procreation, even though he was too old - and Sarah herself was barren - because he considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, "as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.'" Hebrews 11: 8-

We, as Christians, are a pilgrim people. The Christian faith is a pilgrim movement. Do you remember God speaking to Abraham at the dawn of recorded history? *"Get out of this land, follow me, and I will show you another land that you shall receive as an inheritance and, through you, all the people of the world shall be blessed."* And the Bible records the quickness with which Abraham responded to God's call: *"He went out, not knowing where he was to go."* In a sense, Abraham is the spiritual father of all of us who seek to live by faith in God.

As a nation we just celebrated the anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth. They too, went out, not knowing exactly where they were going, in search of a new land, boldly going where few had gone before. Today, we need to know what it means to be a pilgrim people of faith.

First, I believe that to live the Pilgrim lifestyle means to walk by faith and not by sight. It is to move from security to risk. It is to leave the known and to explore the unknown. To describe this style of life, we can do no better than to repeat again Abraham's response, *"He went out, not knowing where he was to go"* To live by faith is always a going out and not knowing where we might be going, because our faith is in the living God.

Our God is on the march. In the Bible there are stories of God moving forward with the people, leading them through the wilderness.

He is the pillar of fire by night, the pillar of cloud by day. He leads the people forward. Sometimes we're afraid to go forward, but God calls us as individuals and God calls us as a church to move out in faith.

The second characteristic of the pilgrim style of life that we ought to emulate and celebrate is to live in hope. Because one lives by faith in Jesus Christ, the Savior and Lord, the pilgrim can hope. Our hope is always in the Word of God.

God promised Abraham: *"I will multiply you exceedingly...I will bless Sarah, I will give you a son by her even though she is old. She shall be a mother of nations."* The Bible describes Abraham's hopefulness with the words, *"He was looking forward to a city with firm foundation, whose architect and builder is God."*

As we move and transition through all the changes here at First Baptist Church (many of which you will read about in this newsletter) it is my prayer that together we will be people who will:

- Walk by faith and not by sight as we celebrate the hope of our faith in God.
- Remember that it is God who calls us and therefore God will guide us as we go.

May this be so in your life and my life! And the life of this church!

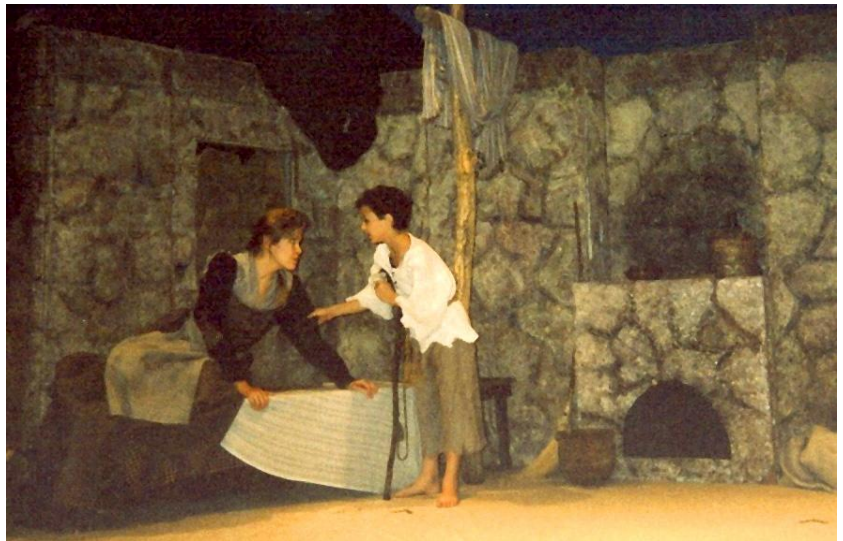
AM AHL & THE NIGHT VISITORS

December 4, 2011 at 5 PM

Tickets required. See Board of Music for information and special rate. (\$16.00)

Amahl & the Night Visitors is a child-friendly Christmas opera written by former Philadelphian Gian Carlo Menotti who studied at The Curtis Institute of Music. It is the story of a crippled shepherd boy (Amahl) who lives in poverty with his mother. They have nothing left and are hungry and cold. Amahl has a history of telling wild tales due to an active imagination. One evening there is a knock at the door and Amahl runs to see who it is. When he tells his mother there are three Kings at the door, she rages and pleads with him to for once tell the truth. The truth is that there really are three kings (seeking shelter for a night) who are following a star on their way to Bethlehem to seek a newborn child. They are carrying gold and other such lavish gifts for this child. The mother becomes bitter not understanding why her son couldn't be more privileged. During the night while they are sleeping, the mother attempts to steal some of the gold to help Amahl. The Page sees her and yells "Thief!" which awakens everyone. After a struggle she collapses into a heap both exhausted and humiliated. When the Kings realize the situation they offer her some gold saying she could use it more. She then says that no, this newborn child must be special and she wishes she had a gift of her own to offer. Amahl then offers his crutch saying, "Who knows, he may need one." When he hands it over, he is cured and suddenly able to walk, jump and run. He has been healed by the child the Kings seek. He joins them on their journey. In just under 45 minutes, this is one of the most enchanting tales filled with gloriously written music.

This production is being co-sponsored by Dolce Suono Ensemble and Choral Arts Philadelphia. This year is an important one regarding the opera since it is the 100th birthday year of Menotti and the 60th anniversary of the premier. It is believed that First Baptist is the first staged production in 1952 after the original premier the year before. It was a tradition that continued steadily until



the late 1980's and was resurrected several times during the 1990's. It was an event that packed our pews and we are expecting a full house. Members of The Philadelphia Orchestra under the baton of Matthew Glandorf will provide the accompaniment and the cast includes some of our own soloists Rebecca Carr (mother), Siddhartha Misra (Kaspar) and Reginald Pindell (Balthazar). Rebecca Carr has a special history with this work having sung dozens of performances on tour throughout the USA under the direction of original cast member David Aiken. She did this for several years and also sang several performances here at FBC in the 90's.

Christmas Day Worship

Worship at 10:30 am

On Christmas Day, Sunday, December 25, 2011 First Baptist Church and Liberti Church will have a combined worship service which will begin at 10:30 a.m.

Likewise, Philadelphia Shakespeare Theatre is a longtime tenant at Lutheran Church of the Holy Communion near 21st and Sansom; several companies use a renovated space owned by historic Christ Church in Old City, and Curio Theatre Company is in residence in West Philadelphia's Calvary United Methodist Church, which shares space with one Jewish and three Christian congregations. Across from the Kimmel Center, the Presbyterian Broad Street Ministry has gradually become a site for theater. And across the region, dozens of sanctuaries have been regular hosts to music performances.

"We realize this is not new," says Karen DiLossi, director of Arts in Sacred Places; former head of programs and services at the Theatre Alliance, she was a catalyst for the current match. "What we're trying to do is actively pursue the idea and help your typical arts group that doesn't know where to begin - how do you do it? Do you knock on the church doors, do you ask to meet the pastors?"

DiLossi is now working with a Chicago dance company looking for space in an empty convent, and with a consortium of dance companies investigating possible rehearsal space at Shiloh Baptist Church in South Philadelphia.

Arts in Sacred Places, which launched last year, is a project of a group called Partners for Sacred Places, with offices in Center City. Partners was founded in 1989 by a group of religious, preservation, and philanthropy leaders to help save the country's older religious properties. Since then it has branched out to train congregations to take care of their buildings.

Partners' president, A. Robert Jaeger, a founder of the group, made the initial contact with the Theatre Alliance, and First Baptist jumped aboard, with a rarely used large space.

Azuka has torn down the small stage in the room that's now a theater, built a new one, painted, installed a temporary lighting grid, upgraded electricity, and bought new seats. It already owned risers from former shows at the Latvian Society, off Spring Garden Street, where the company had rented.



Inis Nua also will be performing in the space, and another professional company, Simpatico Theatre Project, will be subletting it this season. There are plans to bring in more theaters from the Off Broad Street consortium next season, but a lease signed with the church last week runs to the end of the theater season next summer. Then the parties will assess the success of the deal.

No one will divulge the rent Off Broad Street is paying to the church; word on the street has it at about \$1,000 a week - competitive with other small performance spaces in the city. But the new theater comes with room to grow, for possible scenery and costume shops.

"There's a sense from everybody involved - the church and Off Broad Street," says Azuka's Glaccum, "that we really want this to be the best it can be."

Theater goes to church: 'Lady' opens along with city's newest stage



Howard Shapiro, Inquirer Theater Critic (used with permission of the Philadelphia Inquirer)

The city's newest stage officially opens Wednesday night in a Center City space with a high ceiling and 100 new seats. It doesn't even have a name yet. But already it has developed a pedigree.



The theater, on a lower floor of First Baptist Church of Philadelphia at 17th and Sansom Streets, is the first success in a project called Arts in Sacred Places, a Philadelphia-based project that will match unused spaces in holy sites with the needs of arts groups looking for room to rehearse, keep offices, perform, exhibit, and even build sets and costumes.

The theater - people are calling it *the new theater* or *Off Broad Street* for

lack of anything official - opens with Azuka Theatre's *Act a Lady*, in previews there since Thursday. Azuka is a primary force behind the new space, along with Inis Nua, another company performing there and moving its offices inside the church.

Both are members of a consortium of six Center City theaters called Off Broad Street - companies that are among the smaller of the region's 51 professional theater ensembles, but are becoming more visible and muscular each season. Inis Nua, for example, transferred a show it premiered last season in Philadelphia to Off-Broadway several weeks ago.

Partners for Sacred Places approached the Theatre Alliance of Greater Philadelphia - the umbrella organization that serves the area's stage companies - "and the Off Broad Street group felt that this was really a good mix," says Kevin Glaccum, Azuka's artistic director. "We started meeting with them and with the church in the spring. This happened very quickly. The planets really aligned."

As religious organizations with large, often elegantly designed old buildings find that they need less space and more funding sources, the arts become an option. Many performing organizations lack permanent homes and complain that traditional theater spaces are either too expensive or unavailable.

In Philadelphia during the height of the season - November and December and April and May - a frequent lament is "we need more stages"; it's also a mantra as groups look for space to perform around Labor Day during the frantic two weeks of the Live Arts Festival/Philly Fringe.

Here and in some other cities, the hookup between arts groups and churches is nothing new, despite the apparent paradox in blending the sacred with the profane. For decades now, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church at 10th and Market Streets has rented the rear of its building, the old home of Arden Theatre Company before it built its own, and the current space for Lantern Theater.

From the Board of Deacons

Vergia Stallings, chair & Servant of God

Be still, and know that I am God: Psalm 46:10

We are going through many changes in our ongoing mission, but let us not forget God is in control. He is our Creator, He is the Beginning and the End.

We remain centered, and steadfast in prayer, and faith. Your Board of Deacons continue to focus on working with Pastor Wool on the Worship Service, our members and community by doing the benevolence work of visiting and praying for the sick and shut-in, our care and grief ministry, and by being alert to the needs of the congregation.

Our first accountability is to God, and to each other. We are building God's sound foundation. So we pray: that the Lord will prepare us to be a Sanctuary pure and holy tried and true with Thanksgiving. We strive to be a living Sanctuary for you. Purify our conscience, and may your Holy Spirit this Advent Season continue your daily visitation with blessings and love.

Imagine walking by God's Side: what do you think it would be like?

LESSONS & CAROLS

December 18, 2012 at 11:30 AM

On December 18, 2011 we will celebrate the Advent season with our annual presentation of Lessons & Carols featuring the FBC Choir & Soloists. Lessons & Carols is a service of English origin dating back to 1880. During the service, scripture readings detailing the fall of humanity, the promise of the Messiah and the birth of Jesus are interspersed with hymns (carols), solos and choral music. This special service format has been adopted by numerous denominations throughout the Christian

church. First Baptist is no exception and we eagerly look forward to this special tradition of presenting meaningful and powerful music to keep us mindful of the significance of the season. Music from many lands is included in our service including English, American, Spanish, African, and the Far East. Please bring friends and family! The sanctuary will be beautifully decorated and a dinner will follow the service. This is a service not to be missed.

Prayer Requests

Board of Deacons

Please continue to pray for: Michael Gatling in the loss of his brother Reginald Gatling, Janet McNeil in the loss of her step father Alton Sutton, Barbara McKinney in the loss of her daughter Harriet, and Kathy Goree in the loss of her nephew Jimmy; and Ida Devers in the loss of her father. Also keep in prayer others

of our fellowship who through age or ill-health rarely get to worship or have other special needs: Lois Baker, Patricia Clark, Michael Cushman and his parents, Ines Featherstone, Mary E. Fuller, Helen Hannon, Carolyn Howard, Margo and Milton Hunt, Janice Knuth, and Mattie McCall.

A Note of Thanks

Barbara McKinney & Family

Dear Members and friends of First Baptist Church, With sincere appreciation for all you've done. We the McKinney Family were so pleased to see so many members of the First Baptist Church in attendance at the funeral Service of our daughter and sister,

Harriet. We thank you so much for the love and support that you have extended to us. Thank you for the gift that you sent to us. Many God continue to bless and keep each and every one of you, and may He fill you full of His infinite Grace. Love always.

Trustee News

Mary Lynn Williams, chair of the Board of Trustees

In the past few months there have been many changes at FBC, changes which are enabling us to use our building to great advantage for us and for two new groups which are using space. In the spring, Liberti Church, a Reformed Church of America congregation, began to hold Sunday services in our sanctuary before FBC's service. In the summer, Liberti Church moved into their office spaces on the second floor, just off Fellowship Hall.

In the fall, a consortium of small theater groups, to be called Off-Broad, began their move into the lower level space which we have variously called the Prayer Room or Education Hall. They opened their first play in the newly renovated space in November. With the advent of these additional users of the building, FBC will be closer to closing the deficit gap in the church's budget than we have been in decades.

The relationship between the church and the theater group is being brokered and facilitated by Partners for Sacred Spaces, a group which works to help churches with old, valuable, historically significant buildings which they can

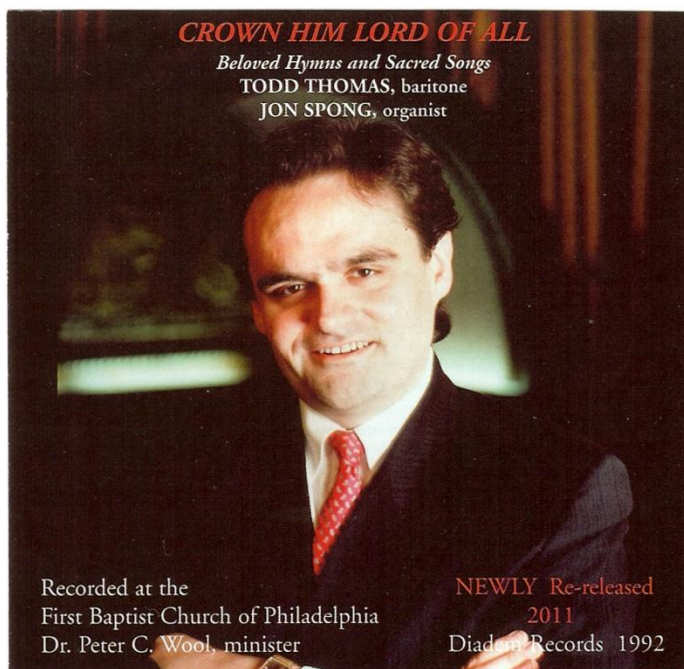
ill-afford to maintain, find uses for the spaces. Partners for Sacred Spaces hopes to use our relationship with Off-Broad as a model for other churches in other places to follow for better use of their buildings.

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Roy Harker, our Facilities Manager, who has borne the brunt of the coordination of all these changes. Without his vision and management skill, it is likely that none of these changes would have come to pass.

The Trustees and Heads of other boards have finished the 2012 Church Budget, and as mentioned above, it comes very close to being balanced. The budget will be distributed at the Thanksgiving dinner on November 20, and voted upon at a congregational meeting on Sunday, December 4.

The Trustees are very gratified concerning the financial outlook for the church in the near term, and they see God's hand in the recent changes, but they also credit the leadership of Rev. Wool in helping the congregation discern what God's will is, and in leading us to listen and be mindful of that will, and to act upon it.

CD by Todd Thomas



Twenty years ago this year, Todd Thomas, former baritone soloist at FBC, and Jon Spong, Music Director of the Church, collaborated on a recording of religious songs using FBC's Moller organ for the accompaniment. The recording was made into cassette tapes which many members and friends bought. As time has passed, few of us have retained the equipment on which to play cassette tapes; this summer, Todd had the recording re-mastered into a CD, which is now on sale at the church for \$10.00. The recording will be available at the church on Sundays after the morning service between now and Christmas; it would make a wonderful gift for family and friends. We invite you to take advantage of this opportunity to own a collection of beautiful songs, beautifully sung.

There will be a short congregational meeting on Sunday, December 4th immediately following the worship service to vote on the 2012 Budget.

ADVENT

Advent is the beginning of the Church Year for most churches in the Western Christian tradition. It begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day, which is the Sunday nearest November 30 (this year it is November 27, 2011), and ends on Christmas Eve (Dec 24).

The word **Advent** means "coming" or "arrival." The focus of the entire season is the celebration of the birth of Jesus the Christ in his First Advent, and the anticipation of the return of Christ the King in his Second Advent. Thus, Advent is far more than simply marking a 2,000 year old event in history. It is celebrating a truth about God, the revelation of God in Christ whereby all of creation might be reconciled to God. That is a process in which we now participate, and the consummation of which we anticipate. Scripture reading for Advent will reflect this emphasis on the Second Advent, including themes of accountability for faithfulness at His coming, judgment on sin, and the hope of eternal life.

In this double focus on past and future, Advent also symbolizes the spiritual journey of individuals and a congregation, as they affirm that Christ has come, that He is present in the world today, and that He will come again in power. That acknowledgment provides a basis for Kingdom ethics, for holy living arising from a profound sense that we live "between

the times" and are called to be faithful stewards of what is entrusted to us as God's people. So, as the church celebrates God's inbreaking into history in the Incarnation, and anticipates a future consummation to that history for which "all creation is groaning awaiting its redemption," it also confesses its own responsibility as a people commissioned to "love the Lord your God with all your heart" and to "love your neighbor as yourself."

Advent is marked by a spirit of expectation, of anticipation, of preparation, of longing. There is a yearning for deliverance from the evils of the world, first expressed by Israelite slaves in Egypt as they cried out from their bitter oppression. It is the cry of those who have experienced the tyranny of injustice in a world under the curse of sin, and yet who have hope of deliverance by a God who has heard the cries of oppressed slaves and brought deliverance!

It is that hope, however faint at times, and that God, however distant He sometimes seems, which brings to the world the anticipation of a King who will rule with truth and justice and righteousness over His people and in His creation. It is that hope that once anticipated, and now anticipates anew, the reign of an Anointed One, a Messiah, who will bring peace and justice and righteousness to the world.

Advent Bible Study and Prayer Gatherings

First Baptist Church's annual Advent Bible Study will begin on Tuesday, November 29, and continue through Tuesday, December 20, for a study of four weeks. The group will meet at the regular Bible Study time, Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m., at the church. The book the group will be using is *Christmas Gifts that Don't*

Break by James W. Moore, and they are available at the church for a donation of \$5.00; see either Mary Lynn Williams or Beryl Russell for information or for books. We look forward to seeing you there!

As you are probably aware, there's a good bit going at First Baptist right now! Azuka and Inis Nua Theater Companies are fully installed in their new spaces and the reviews from them and the public have been glowing. Hopefully you saw the article in *The Inquirer* featuring both the new theater companies and the new space at First Baptist. (A reprint of that article appears elsewhere in this newsletter.) We are also host, once again this month, to the Philadelphia Young Playwrights. Philadelphia Young Playwrights is an arts education organization for high school-aged students that inspires learning through playwriting that met here last Summer.

We are also hosting Singing City of Philadelphia's Holiday Concert on November 20. Singing City has been in residence at First Baptist for many years now and our association has helped to grow and compete in the Philadelphia choral scene. We also are welcoming Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, one of America's oldest choruses, back for their ongoing rehearsal schedule.

Then, in early December, First Baptist will produce *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, a holiday season classic that has its roots in many performances over the years at First

Baptist with the late Earl Ness. And, of course, we continue to host the Art Institute for a number of events both this month and next and a number of weddings and other singular events.

To better accommodate all those displaced by the creation of the Azuka Theater, and to accommodate all of the additional building use, we are sprucing up some of the rooms in the lower level. Look for new paint and lighting, and eventually, new carpeting in these areas. Their usefulness will now extend beyond the hours the support groups currently occupy these rooms. And we are in conversations now with another support group, that of people learning to manage obsessive-compulsive disorders. They will be meeting on a bi-weekly basis beginning in January.

Increased activity here at the church results in increased visibility, increased revenue, and an expanded sense of belonging and purpose to the community-at-large. Together with Partners for Sacred Places, we are squarely on the cutting edge of new-use development initiatives for religious and non-profit groups in the region – a model that Partners hope to develop nationally.

Decorating the Church for Christmas

We need volunteers on Saturday, December 17, to help decorate the church for Christmas. Because of a previously-scheduled Singing City rehearsal, the decorating will have to be divided into two parts; we will decorate the Sanctuary in the morning between 9 and noon, and Fellowship hall in the afternoon when the rehearsal is finished, beginning

around 1 p.m. We need volunteers of all ages, including able-bodied folks who can handle trips up and down stairs and do some ladder-climbing. We look forward to seeing many of you to help get the church ready for Lessons and Carols on December 18 and for Christmas Day on the 25th.

DECEMBER 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 9:30 AM Liberti Church Worship Service 10:30 AM FBC Prayer Gathering 11:30 AM FBC Community Worship 1:00 PM Church Council Meeting	28 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA 5:00 PM Amahl and the Night Visitors Rehearsal 7:00 PM Inis Nua	29 12:00 PM CC Praise Service 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA 5:00 PM Amahl and the Night Visitors Rehearsal 5:30 PM Lawyers Concerns 7:00 PM Singing City Rehearsal 7:30 PM Bible Study	30 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Mid-Day Break 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA 5:00 PM Amahl and the Night Visitors Rehearsal	1 12:00 PM Bright Hope Baptist Bible Study 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM Evangeilst Martin Prayer Service 1:00 PM SLAA 5:00 PM Amahl and the Night Visitors Rehearsal	2 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA 5:00 PM Amahl and the Night Visitors Rehearsal	3 9:00 AM Liberti Women's Brunch 10:00 AM Amahl and the Night Visitors Rehearsal 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA
4 9:30 AM Liberti Church Worship Service 10:30 AM FBC Prayer Gathering 11:30 AM FBC Community Worship 1:00 PM Deacon's Meeting 5:00 PM Amahl and the Night Visitors	5 Janet on Vacation 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA	6 Janet on Vacation 12:00 PM CC Praise Service 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA 5:30 PM Lawyers Concerns 7:00 PM Singing City Rehearsal 7:30 PM Bible Study	7 Janet on Vacation 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Mid-Day Break 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA	8 Janet on Vacation 12:00 PM Bright Hope Baptist Bible Study 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM Evangeilst Martin Prayer Service 1:00 PM SLAA	9 Janet on Vacation 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA	10 12:00 PM Emmanuel Outreach Ministry 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA
11 9:30 AM Liberti Church Worship Service 10:30 AM FBC Prayer Gathering 11:30 AM FBC Community Worship 1:00 PM Trustee's Meeting	12 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA	13 12:00 PM CC Praise Service 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA 5:30 PM Lawyers Concerns 7:00 PM Singing City Rehearsal 7:30 PM Bible Study	14 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Mid-Day Break 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA	15 12:00 PM Bright Hope Baptist Bible Study 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM Evangeilst Martin Prayer Service 1:00 PM SLAA	16 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA 2:00 PM Art Institute Commencement 5:00 PM Olivia Capone Wedding Rehearsal	17 9:00 AM Singing City Rehearsal 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA 4:00 PM Olivia Capone Wedding
18 9:30 AM Liberti Church Worship Service 10:30 AM FBC Prayer Gathering 11:30 AM FBC Community Worship 11:30 AM FBC Lessons and Carols 1:00 PM FBC Christmas Luncheon	19 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA	20 12:00 PM CC Praise Service 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA 5:30 PM Lawyers Concerns 7:30 PM Bible Study	21 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Mid-Day Break 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA	22 12:00 PM Bright Hope Baptist Bible Study 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM Evangeilst Martin Prayer Service 1:00 PM SLAA	23 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA	24 12:00 PM Emmanuel Outreach Ministry 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA 4:00 PM Liberti Christmas Service
25 10:30 AM Joint FBC Liberti Christmas Service	26 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA	27 12:00 PM CC Praise Service 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA 5:30 PM Lawyers Concerns 7:30 PM Bible Study	28 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Mid-Day Break 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA	29 12:00 PM Bright Hope Baptist Bible Study 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM Evangeilst Martin Prayer Service 1:00 PM SLAA	30 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA	31 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA

As you are probably aware, there's a good bit going at First Baptist right now! Azuka and Inis Nua Theater Companies are fully installed in their new spaces and the reviews from them and the public have been glowing. Hopefully you saw the article in *The Inquirer* featuring both the new theater companies and the new space at First Baptist. (A reprint of that article appears elsewhere in this newsletter.) We are also host, once again this month, to the Philadelphia Young Playwrights. Philadelphia Young Playwrights is an arts education organization for high school-aged students that inspires learning through playwriting that met here last Summer.

We are also hosting Singing City of Philadelphia's Holiday Concert on November 20. Singing City has been in residence at First Baptist for many years now and our association has helped to grow and compete in the Philadelphia choral scene. We also are welcoming Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, one of America's oldest choruses, back for their ongoing rehearsal schedule.

Then, in early December, First Baptist will produce *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, a holiday season classic that has its roots in many performances over the years at First

Baptist with the late Earl Ness. And, of course, we continue to host the Art Institute for a number of events both this month and next and a number of weddings and other singular events.

To better accommodate all those displaced by the creation of the Azuka Theater, and to accommodate all of the additional building use, we are sprucing up some of the rooms in the lower level. Look for new paint and lighting, and eventually, new carpeting in these areas. Their usefulness will now extend beyond the hours the support groups currently occupy these rooms. And we are in conversations now with another support group, that of people learning to manage obsessive-compulsive disorders. They will be meeting on a bi-weekly basis beginning in January.

Increased activity here at the church results in increased visibility, increased revenue, and an expanded sense of belonging and purpose to the community-at-large. Together with Partners for Sacred Places, we are squarely on the cutting edge of new-use development initiatives for religious and non-profit groups in the region – a model that Partners hope to develop nationally.

Decorating the Church for Christmas

We need volunteers on Saturday, December 17, to help decorate the church for Christmas. Because of a previously-scheduled Singing City rehearsal, the decorating will have to be divided into two parts; we will decorate the Sanctuary in the morning between 9 and noon, and Fellowship hall in the afternoon when the rehearsal is finished, beginning

around 1 p.m. We need volunteers of all ages, including able-bodied folks who can handle trips up and down stairs and do some ladder-climbing. We look forward to seeing many of you to help get the church ready for Lessons and Carols on December 18 and for Christmas Day on the 25th.

DECEMBER 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 9:30 AM Liberti Church Worship Service 10:30 AM FBC Prayer Gathering 11:30 AM FBC Community Worship 1:00 PM Church Council Meeting	28 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA 5:00 PM Amahl and the Night Visitors Rehearsal 7:00 PM Inis Nua	29 12:00 PM CC Praise Service 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA 5:00 PM Amahl and the Night Visitors Rehearsal 5:30 PM Lawyers Concerns 7:00 PM Singing City Rehearsal 7:30 PM Bible Study	30 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Mid-Day Break 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA 5:00 PM Amahl and the Night Visitors Rehearsal	1 12:00 PM Bright Hope Baptist Bible Study 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM Evangeilst Martin Prayer Service 1:00 PM SLAA 5:00 PM Amahl and the Night Visitors Rehearsal	2 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA 5:00 PM Amahl and the Night Visitors Rehearsal	3 9:00 AM Liberti Women's Brunch 10:00 AM Amahl and the Night Visitors Rehearsal 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA
4 9:30 AM Liberti Church Worship Service 10:30 AM FBC Prayer Gathering 11:30 AM FBC Community Worship 1:00 PM Deacon's Meeting 5:00 PM Amahl and the Night Visitors	5 Janet on Vacation 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA	6 Janet on Vacation 12:00 PM CC Praise Service 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA 5:30 PM Lawyers Concerns 7:00 PM Singing City Rehearsal 7:30 PM Bible Study	7 Janet on Vacation 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Mid-Day Break 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA	8 Janet on Vacation 12:00 PM Bright Hope Baptist Bible Study 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM Evangeilst Martin Prayer Service 1:00 PM SLAA	9 Janet on Vacation 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA	10 12:00 PM Emmanuel Outreach Ministry 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA
11 9:30 AM Liberti Church Worship Service 10:30 AM FBC Prayer Gathering 11:30 AM FBC Community Worship 1:00 PM Trustee's Meeting	12 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA	13 12:00 PM CC Praise Service 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA 5:30 PM Lawyers Concerns 7:00 PM Singing City Rehearsal 7:30 PM Bible Study	14 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Mid-Day Break 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA	15 12:00 PM Bright Hope Baptist Bible Study 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM Evangeilst Martin Prayer Service 1:00 PM SLAA	16 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA 2:00 PM Art Institute Commencement 5:00 PM Olivia Capone Wedding Rehearsal	17 9:00 AM Singing City Rehearsal 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA 4:00 PM Olivia Capone Wedding
18 9:30 AM Liberti Church Worship Service 10:30 AM FBC Prayer Gathering 11:30 AM FBC Community Worship 11:30 AM FBC Lessons and Carols 1:00 PM FBC Christmas Luncheon	19 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA	20 12:00 PM CC Praise Service 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA 5:30 PM Lawyers Concerns 7:30 PM Bible Study	21 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Mid-Day Break 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA	22 12:00 PM Bright Hope Baptist Bible Study 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM Evangeilst Martin Prayer Service 1:00 PM SLAA	23 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA	24 12:00 PM Emmanuel Outreach Ministry 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA 4:00 PM Liberti Christmas Service
25 10:30 AM Joint FBC Liberti Christmas Service	26 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA	27 12:00 PM CC Praise Service 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA 5:30 PM Lawyers Concerns 7:30 PM Bible Study	28 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Mid-Day Break 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA	29 12:00 PM Bright Hope Baptist Bible Study 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM Evangeilst Martin Prayer Service 1:00 PM SLAA	30 12:00 PM Al-Anon 12:00 PM Over Eaters 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA	31 1:00 PM AA (Mustard Seed) 1:00 PM SLAA