



# HIGH TIDINGS Online

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FIRST BAPTIST  
CHURCH  
OF ROCKPORT

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## Expectation of Advent

Much like the angels that appeared to the Shepherds as they watched their sheep by night the season of advent is about to burst forth upon us. As we tend to daily tasks of our lives, the brilliant majesty of the Christmas season will soon be all around. It is a time which forces us to alter our schedules and break from the routine tasks that can easily entangle us. As we pause to likewise hear and join in with the singing of the angels, it is good to reflect upon Advent.

Advent is unique in that it is a celebration honored by Christians all over the globe and is one that has been honored for centuries. Advent literally means "coming". Today Advent is considered the four weeks leading up to the Christmas celebration. Advent recalls the messianic expectation witnessed throughout the Old Testament. As the Angels proclaimed, Jesus was the one that had come and the one to whom the law and prophets of the Old Testament pointed. Messiah means "Anointed one" and refers to Jesus' identity as God in flesh. God came in flesh. God in flesh changed the course of history through his work on the cross and resurrection from the grave. Advent also recognizes the promise that Christ will come again and establish his Kingdom. This is the second aspect to which advent should direct our attention. Advent celebrates the first coming of Christ but points us towards his promised second coming.

The twofold focus of advent should then remind us of our responsibility to live as Christ followers and Christ worshippers in this period between the two "advents". The response of the Shepherds was to run towards the manger and worship the new born king. As they ran towards this child, they certainly could not help but proclaim the news which the angels declared. As we remember and look forward to Advent may we worship, proclaim and be transformed by Him for whom the angels sang.

*The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. Revelation 11:15*

Matt Wigton,

Pastor

## Youth Groups

Apparently, the most desirable object in our living room is a soft green blanket that drapes over our couch. Each week, the race is on to see who will claim the soft blanket. Once a winner is determined, the evening unfolds with conversations of both depth and silliness coupled with hot tea (usually many cups) and a lively game of *Apples to Apples* or *Catch Phrase*. The High School Group has five attendees and we meet on Thursday nights at the parsonage. We have been moving through the book of James and asking questions about what it means to live out the Christian life. This is a group of thoughtful and intentional young people; I am more and more amazed by them each week.

On Friday nights the Middle School Group gathers at the same location and similarly, negotiates over the green blanket. Rather than tea, we enjoy cookies or brownies. Our time together is very interactive as everyone is encouraged to participate in both games and discussions. Our lessons are based on the chapters of Kevin Johnson's book Trust, part of a series of books that addresses topics of faith for Middle School students. We have had nine total visitors, but our attendance varies from week to week. This group is eager and energetic. I am thankful for all their thoughts and words, from the most expressive to the quietest.

If you know any High School or Middle School students who would be interested in attending one of these groups, let me know ([meganwigton@gmail.com](mailto:meganwigton@gmail.com)).

Megan Wigton



High School youth group with Megan



Middle School youth  
with Megan

## Upcoming Events at First Baptist

Sunday, November 29	
Christmas Decorations After Church	
Saturday, December 12	3:00 PM
Christmas Caroling – Harvey Park	
Friday, December 18	7:00 PM
Christmas Dessert Party at the Parsonage	
Thursday, December 24, 2009	7:00 PM
Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols Service	
Thursday, December 31, 2009	All Evening
Rockport New Year's Eve	
Friday, January 16, 2010	7:00 PM
Middle School Lock –in	
Friday, January 29, 2010	7:00 PM
High School Lock –in	
Saturday, February 13, 2010	2:00 – 4:00 PM
2009 VBS Reunion - Hawaiian Luau	
Tuesday, February 23, 2010	7:00 PM
VBS 2010 Planning Meeting	

### Pastor's Office Hours by appointment and

Monday 7:00 -11:30 am

Tuesday 7:00 -11:30 am and 6:30 -7:30 pm

Wednesday 1:00-3:00

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Parsonage Phone: 978-546-2036



# Ruth's Christmas Story

Ruth grabbed her jacket and gave a last glance around the living room. With a quick plump of the sofa pillow, she hurried out the door. Jeremy's bed was made, the turkey was ready to pop in the oven, the apple pie was cooling on the counter and the Christmas tree was decorated. "I've got plenty of time to deliver my 19 meals before Jeremy gets here," she assured herself as she climbed into her Chevrolet.

Ruth fairly danced up the steps to the Meals on Wheels office. She spotted Audrey in the office waiting to pick up her assignments. "Audrey!" Ruth called to her friend. "Guess who's coming to dinner tonight...and spending Christmas Day with me?"

Audrey didn't have to guess twice. "I know! You look like a little kid expecting a visit from Santa. But, I think it's better than that. It has to be Jeremy!" Ruth laughed. "Yes, you've heard me talk about him enough! Well, he's finished his first semester at military school, and he's coming to spend Christmas Eve and Christmas day with his Grandma."

The two women compared plans as they walked to their cars, lugging boxes of lunches. After loading up, the friends hugged good-bye and with a "Merry Christmas," they were off. "Have fun with Jeremy!" Audrey called as she sped away.

Ruth hummed as she glanced at her list of familiar names and addresses, but she stopped at the last entry. "315 Holiday Lane," she mused. "Looks like a new one. I've never been there, but know the general area. I'll make Holiday Lane my last holiday stop...perfect!" She smiled and stepped on the accelerator.

The first 18 visits went like clockwork, with lots of smiles and 'Merry Christmas' wishes from Ruth's folks.

Doing good," Ruth observed, glancing at her watch. She drove slowly now, scanning the street signs for Holiday Lane. "There it is," she said aloud, taking a sharp right. "Funny I never noticed that little lane before." Ruth's Chevy hesitated before each of the long, shaded driveways while she read the numbers on the mailboxes..."313 on the left, 314 on the right... 315 will be next on the left, but where is it?" The house that should be 315 had no number on the mailbox. A two-story home, unusual for Florida with its white columns, set back on the carefully tended lawn. Ruth drove down the curving driveway that was lined with sable palms, poinsettias and a host of tropical plants. Pulling in front of the house, Ruth looked at the two entrances and wondered which one to try. She could not see a number on the house, but felt sure this had to be 315.

Ruth carefully picked up the last lunch, walked to the nearest door and rang the bell. No answer. She rang again, pressing harder and longer this time. Still no answer. "Must be the other door," she reasoned, walking down the pavers to the further door. She repeated the process with the same result. There was no response, no matter how long and hard she rang the bell.

Then Ruth noticed the garage to the side of the house with one of its double doors open. "O.k.," she thought, "This must be it." She walked into the garage and saw a Cadillac parked to the right. Straight ahead on the wall, she spotted a button and a door into the house. "There's the inside door and its doorbell...Great!" she



Karen at Workday

said with relief.

Clutching the lunch, she strode to the button and pushed it. To her surprise, the garage door behind her rumbled into action and began to close. Ruth jumped at the noise and instinctively began to run toward the closing door. By the time she got to it, the door was over halfway down, with no space to even duck under. There was not a window in the entire garage, and Ruth was enclosed by total darkness. Turning around, she lost sense of where the wall button had been. Moving tentatively ahead, she bumped into the Cadillac. Feeling her way along, she reached the hood and bore left, finally touching the wall.

Groping the flat surface and moving right, she passed the corner and tripped over a rake, dropping the lunch. Regaining her balance, Ruth groped the floor until she felt the paper bag. Grasping the lunch with her left hand and scanning the wall with her right, she finally felt the button and pushed it. The garage door began to open, giving her enough light to turn and run toward it. Just as she got there, the door reached its halfway position and started down. There was no time to dash through! Darkness again.

This time, Ruth was more successful in returning to the back wall. But she was confused...was the button to the right or left? She carefully went right for 10 steps, feeling along the wall. No button. She changed directions for 10 steps, then 10 more. Adding 10 steps each time, she repeated the process three times and on the fourth rotation, she found the button. She wiped her wet forehead with the back of her free hand and realized her mouth was almost too dry to swallow. "Got to have some water," she mumbled as she jabbed the button. Again the garage door began to open, and Ruth ran toward it. Again, it went halfway up and closed before she could get out.

Tears streamed down her cheeks as she stumbled back to the wall and began her search for the button. "This is probably the wrong house, the people have probably gone north, nobody knows I'm in here, and I'll never get out," she cried. Panic closed her dry throat and breathing became difficult.

Reaching the button, she waited a minute. "I've got to pray. That's what I have to do." She could concentrate on her prayer for only a few seconds, but a feeling of peace began to replace her panic. Carefully, she pushed the button again, but waited against the wall this time. The door went up halfway, closed and darkness returned. "It's just not going to work. I'll have to stand here and get half-door glimpses of light until someone sees the door going up and down." So Ruth did that. She continued her door ritual for at least 15 more tries.

Ruth thought about Jeremy. He'll find a locked door when he arrives and no smell of roasting turkey to greet him. And no Grandma to give him a hug. She felt a pain in her chest that matched the one in her heart.

At that moment, the door into the house opened and a woman peered out. "Who's there?" she called, switching on the garage light.



Terry at Workday

"It's me, Ruth from Meals on Wheels!" Ruth yelled. "Don't close that door!"

I though I heard the garage door going up and down. What are you doing in here?" the woman asked.

Ruth was so relieved that she could not speak. She stood there holding out the wilted lunch.

When she regained her composure, Ruth asked, "Are you Mrs. Hark, number 315 Holiday Lane?"

Yes," the woman replied.

"Didn't you hear me ringing your doorbells?" Ruth asked.

"No, didn't hear a thing except the garage door going up and down," Mrs. Hark answered.

Ruth felt like running away and taking the lunch with her. "Why don't you have your house number on the mailbox?" she asked.

Mrs. Hark looked surprised. "Why, it is!" she said. "Just go look!"

"No, it isn't," Ruth answered. "Come on with me, I'll show you."

Ruth watched in amazement as Mrs. Hark pressed the garage door button, held it in and the door opened fully. And stayed open! "So that's it! I needed to hold the button in!" Ruth exclaimed. It seemed so simple now.

The two women walked out the garage and down the driveway to the mailbox. Mrs. Hark looked carefully but no numbers were there. "I don't know where they went!" she exclaimed.

"Never mind," Ruth said. "But, I think you need to fix your doorbell and put numbers on your mailbox!"

"Yes, I do. Thank you, Ruth," Mrs. Hark said softly. "I'm sorry for your trouble. My husband is in the back bedroom. He's been sick a long time, and I think I need a lot of help."

Ruth's heart melted. 'This is what Christmas is all about,' she realized, reaching out to touch Mrs. Hark's hand. "I understand," Ruth said. "How about if I bring my grandson over tomorrow to fix your doorbell and take care of the house numbers? We'll be cooking a turkey for Christmas day. Could we bring you dinners with all the fixings?"

A smile lit up Mrs. Hark's face. "That would be nice," she said.

Ruth gave the lunch to her new friend and drove home with a thankful prayer.... and a plan to order pizza for Christmas Eve.. Jeremy would like that!

***Based on experiences of Ruth Douglas, Venice FL***  
***Written by Kay Thorpe Bannon, email: [gtortoise@comcast.net](mailto:gtortoise@comcast.net)***  
***Ruth has delivered Meals on Wheels for 25 years.***

# Stewardship

In early November a letter was mailed to the church community explaining the current deficit and the rough amount needed to break even in order to avoid using reserve funds for the 2009 fiscal year. While the deficit amount may seem large, each dollar makes a difference. As a community, only a small increase in individual giving could easily eradicate deficit spending in future years.

In early December another letter will be mailed encouraging offering and tithe pledges for the 2010 fiscal year. This letter will lay out in more detail this specific needs and goals for the 2010 fiscal year. During the worship service on December 13, 2009 pledge cards will be collected during the service. As you consider pledging, please also consider the amount that you would like to direct towards Missions. The Missions budget is largely funded through pledged giving.

Thank you for your partnership in the work of the First Baptist Church of Rockport.



Doug, Nancy and Diane at Work-day

## Lectionary Readings and Sermon Titles

(Sermon Focus Reading Indicated in Bold)

Date	Old Testament	New Testament	Sermon Title
29-Nov	<b>Jeremiah 33:14-16</b>	I Thessal. 3:9-13	Jesus in the Old Testament
6-Dec	Malachi 3:1-4	<b>Luke 1:68-79</b>	Advent Profiles: Zechariah
13-Dec	Zephaniah 3:14-20	<b>Luke 3:7-18</b>	Advent Profiles: John
20-Dec	Micah 5:2-5a	<b>Luke 1:46-56</b>	Advent Profiles: Mary
27-Dec	Isaiah 9:2-7	<b>Luke 2:8-21</b>	The Messiah is Born
3-Jan	Jeremiah 31:7-14	<b>John 1:10-18</b>	Glorifying God in 2010
10-Jan	Isaiah 43:1-7	<b>Acts 8:14-17</b>	Epiphany
17-Jan	Psalms 36:5-10	<b>I Corinth. 12:1-1</b>	Gifted for Purpose
24-Jan	Psalms 19	<b>I Corinth. 12:12-31</b>	Missional Community
31-Jan	<b>Psalms 71:1-6</b>	Luke 4:21:30	Refuge from the Storms

**Note: The Annual Business Meeting will be held following worship on January 31.**



**Boston Area Directions**

Take Rte. 93 North from Boston to Rte. 95 North. Follow Rte. 95 toward Gloucester. Route number changes to Rte. 128. Continue to end of Rte. 128 and turn left at traffic light at Eastern Ave. in Gloucester. Proceed on same street to Rockport. The Church is at the end of Broadway in Rockport on the right.



Frank and Sally

High Tidings Online is published by the First Baptist Church of Rockport, and is edited by Gail Zeman and friends. Email: [newsletter@firstbaptistrockport.org](mailto:newsletter@firstbaptistrockport.org)

**Calendar and Events**

For full church calendar, see CALENDAR tab on website.

Sundays: Sunday School (all classes)	9:15AM
Worship	10:30 AM
Fellowship	11:30 AM
Mondays: Choirs rehearse	7:00 PM
Alternate Tuesdays: Bible Study	7:30 PM
Wednesdays: Morning Prayer	6:30 AM
Bible Study	9:30 AM
Thursdays: High School Group	7:00 PM
Fridays: Middle School Group	6:30 PM
Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of each month	
Sunday, Nov.29 Thanksgiving Svc	10:30 AM
Decorate for Christmas	11:45 AM
Den Mar Nursing Home	3:30 PM
Tuesday, Dec. 1 RHS-RMS Concert	7:00 PM
Saturday, Dec.12 Christmas Caroling	3:00 PM
Friday, Dec. 18 Dessert at Parsonage	7:00 PM
Thursday, Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Svc.	7:00 PM
Thursday, Dec. 31 Rockport New Year's Eve!	

We are an American Baptist Church. Visitors are expected and welcomed.

Return Address:  
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c/o Zeman  
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Rockport, MA 01966