



“All Things in Common” One-Year Update (Part One)

By B.J. Hutto, Senior Pastor

Friends,

Right at a year ago now, HAB went through a weeks-long, deep dive into our church’s finances. It was an opportunity for members of the Budget & Finance Committee to spend time with congregants in their Sunday Bible Study classes and learn about the historical arc of HAB’s budget, its recent history, and its (then-)current situation. As the B&F Committee—ably led by Jack Mitchell—put this curriculum together, there was concern that it would fail, that people wouldn’t be interested in having these conversations. In fact, the opposite happened. In most classes, discussion was so robust and healthy that they barely had time to get through the material. At the end of the study, we came together in the fellowship hall and discussed how we should move forward. Again, the discussion was robust. And after it was all said and done, five items were elevated as priorities by the congregation. Thus, now that a year has gone by, I’ll be using my *Herald* articles this month and next in order to let you all know how those areas are faring.

1st - “We need to educate our congregants regarding the meaning of stewardship, since many of our people come from traditions that did not discuss this.” Hopefully, this is an area where progress is apparent. Alongside the “All Things in Common” conversation itself, HAB now has a Stewardship Team that is actively working to increase congregants’ thoughtfulness about generosity and their understanding of the church’s financial needs. We have a continually-updated bar chart on the back of our orders of worship each Sunday. In the 11:00 worship service we have changed the offertory time from a prayer to a litany, hoping that the participatory nature of the call and response will help people better understand their participation in that time of giving. We have begun sharing quarterly statements with households to help them keep track of their giving to HAB, and we have instituted a pledge campaign simply as a spiritual discipline for congregants, giving church members the opportunity to prayerfully set goals for themselves throughout the year and be honest about what those goals are. Each of these initiatives is a chance for all of us to be better informed about our church’s life and needs and to be better equipped to respond to that life gratefully and generously—and as the Stewardship Team continues to work together (our next meeting is in two weeks), more opportunities will be forthcoming.

2nd - “We must provide quality children’s programming, which will require some investment, including the employment of a children’s minister.” This is another area where I can report good progress. Last summer, Chelsea Weise stepped in as HAB’s Director of Children and Community Life, and—while she continues her work as principal of Little Friends Preschool—she is ably and lovingly caring for HAB’s children. I have seen her work both as a colleague and as a parent (our son, Elijah, is in her program), and I know the quality of the lessons she is teaching the kids on Wednesday nights and, perhaps more importantly, that her lessons are sticking with them when they go home. And I know this because, even days later, Elijah can tell me what their lesson was about. Chelsea relates well to both kids and parents. She’s weaving storytelling, activities, crafts, and prayer together to not just teach their minds, but to genuinely form their young hearts. Truly, if you know of a preschool or elementary-aged child, then you should make sure that they’re under Chelsea’s care!

That’s it for this month (Laraine says I’m out of space!), so keep an eye out, next month, for updates on the final three priorities that y’all highlighted in our conversations last spring. Personally, I’m grateful for the congregation’s energy around our “All Things in Common” series, and I’m also grateful for the energy and interest that y’all continue to have, not just around these issues but, more importantly, around the life, witness, and wellbeing of our church!

Kind regards,
B.J.

B.J. Hutto, Ph.D., Senior Pastor

Thomas M. Shapard, D.P.M., Associate Pastor for Music & Worship • Britt Hester, M.Div., Associate Pastor for Youth
Chelsea Weise, B.C.E., Director of Children & Community Life • Laraine Humbert, B.M.E., Pastoral Assistant
Darrell Mitchell, M.B.A., Financial Manager • H. Kendell Smith, Dip.C.M., Minister of Music Emeritus



*By Chelsea Weise, Director of
Children & Community Life*



March ended with pizza-making, Easter Eggstravaganza, pirates, and a lot of smiles. Thank you to our amazing youth for helping make Eggstravaganza a fun event. Thank you to our volunteers for taking your precious time and helping to make it memorable for our neighbors and families. We have a gift at HAB. We are in a great location to reach those near us. It is my prayer that these neighbors learn the welcoming and gracious group of people we have at our church. It is truly a place like no other. Please continue to pray for our children. They are learning and growing so fast. Pray for our neighbors to feel welcomed. Pray for all our leaders and volunteers as we live out our life and strive to be examples to the future.



Little Friends is in full enrollment mode for the 2024-2025 school year. We are excited that we already have a full class for our VPK (Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten). Our amazing teachers are a testament to the incredible school we have become. Students have been fully engaged in weekly chapel, held in the HAB sanctuary, as well as fun and stimulating science experiments every Thursday.

We would love to have volunteers come read, play music, or just use their talents for our students. They love having guests, and they light up when something new presents itself.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers for our precious preschool at Little Friends.

*Wednesday Night
Kids*

April—Hey, Foodie!

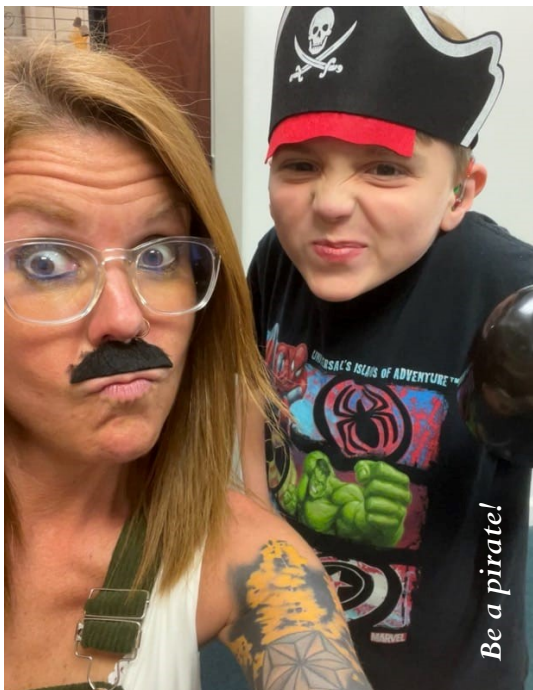
6:15-7:00 in the STEAM Lab

April 3: Pajamas & Pancakes—Genesis 40

April 10: Foodie Night—John 6:1-14

April 17: Yoga

April 24: Cheers!—John 2:1-11



Fun time making pizza!





News of the Church Family

Sympathy to...

...the family of Sybil Cuthbertson, who died February 25, 2024. Sybil was the wife of C. L. (Charlie) Cuthbertson, the mother of Chuck Cuthbertson, and the grandmother of Charlie and Julia Cuthbertson. The funeral was March 1 at Hardage-Giddens Oaklawn Chapel.

... the family and friends of Anne Moseley, who died Tuesday, February 27, 2024. There was a graveside service on February 22. A memorial service will take place in June.

... Lesa, Timothy, & Caitlin Walsh in the death of Dr. Aubrey Terry on February 18, 2024. Dr. Terry was the father of Lesa and the grandfather of Caitlin. The funeral was February 22 in Russellville, Alabama.

Thank You...

Dear HAB Family, What a blessing to belong to a such a caring, loving church family! Thank you for all the phone calls, cards, delicious meals, prayers, and outpouring of love you have given me during my recovery from knee replacement surgery. This journey was made so much easier knowing that you care. Gratefully, Pam Fordham

Dear HAB Family, We want to thank our HAB family for all the beautiful cards, personal notes, phone calls, and delicious birthday cake for Bill's 90th birthday. He was so surprised and so appreciative of your love and for making his day so special. He loved hearing from each of you. We also want to thank you for your continued prayers for Bill's brother, James and his wife Janice. James is better, but has a long way to go before he can return home. Many thanks, love, and prayers,



*Biblical
Womanhood*

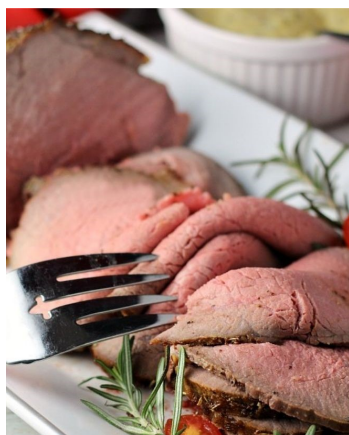
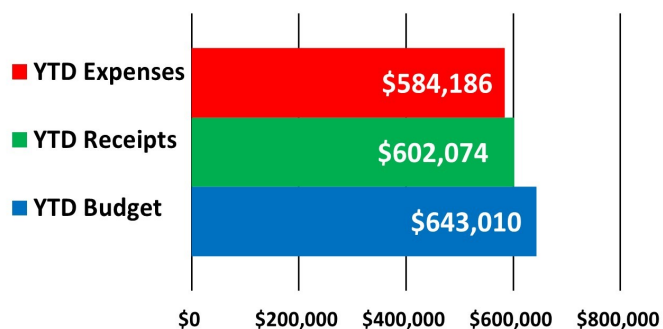
JUDGES 4-5

Wednesdays beginning April 3 6:15 p.m. in the chapel

Even as Jesus tells us not to judge, in Old Testament times there was a whole class of people called "Judges" who led Israel after the Exodus. Some of them you know—Samson, Deborah, etc.—but there are many more that you should: prophets, priests, assassins, warriors, men and women alike (see the attached image), each of whom was called by God to lead. **Starting on April 3, join us on Wednesday nights** in the chapel for a Bible study, led by B.J., looking at the book of Judges and learning how, if God can use these people, he ought to be able to use us, too!

Budget Year-to-Date at 3/22/2024

Fiscal year September 2023 - August 2024



**MAKE YOUR
RESERVATIONS
NOW FOR OUR
WEDNESDAY
EVENING MEAL**
at 5:30

RSVP to Laraine at
laraine@habchurch.com
or 904-396-7745, ext. 103,
each week by Monday.

Mission: Possible

By Debbie Crumb, Mission & Witness
Committee Chair



HAB's Next Step ministry is excited to announce a closer partnership with UCOM (United Community Outreach Ministry)! The Next Step ministry has resumed placing a notice on every bag lunch offering an opportunity for "a next step"—a chance to meet with a volunteer for some time to talk or have a prayer, or an even deeper opportunity to sit down and discuss more complicated challenges that a person might be facing.

Bag lunch recipients whose needs are greater than HAB can meet will be referred directly to UCOM, who stands ready to offer them assistance with issues such as food stamps, housing, access to health care, veteran's benefits, employment, legal/court matters, or obtaining government documents. This way, our church's ministry is able to do more than we otherwise could by ourselves, and UCOM is better informed about people's needs in our area.

The Next Step ministry will continue to offer meals and other, less complex assistance, but through this partnership UCOM and HAB hope to show what loving, generous collaboration can accomplish in our world!





JOIN US!

VOLLEYBALL FUN DRAISER

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24
6:00 IN THE GYM

Remember last year's "Baskets with Baptists"?
This promises to be just as much fun.
Mark your calendars for
Wednesday, April 24, in the gym!
Watch your emails for more details!



River City Ringers Handbell Concert Wednesday, May 1 6:30-7:00 p.m.

**"Something Old, Something New,
Something Borrowed, Something Blue"**

**Eclectic Sounds for Handbells
from hymns to calypso
to soft rock to blues**

**Lester McCullough,
Conductor**





From the Church Mouse

Dear Friends at HAB,

This is your friendly Church Mouse with news for April! Spring has sprung, and I believe everyone has decided that they will take a break from letting this Church Mouse know of the proud moments they or their families have had. The news I did get is great news—there has just been little in my mailbox!

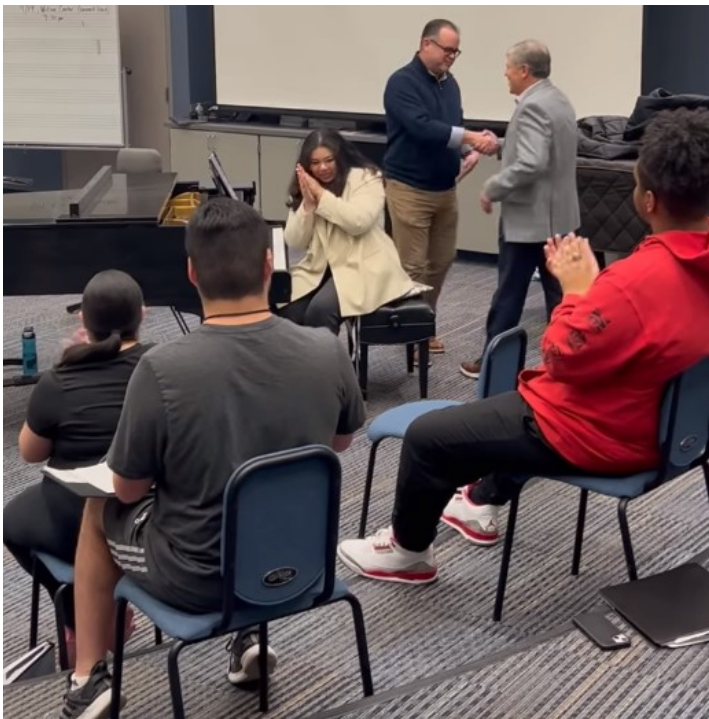
We've just learned that **Charlotte Haines** will be the new Senior Interior Designer for Navy Facilities at **NAS Jacksonville**. Congratulations, Charlotte!

Susan Price just returned from a trip to Iceland. She said it was really cold and windy, but no snow. She was able to view the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights), a goal of most everyone who

goes. She spent a couple of nights in Reykjavik, Iceland's capital city. Her trip happened to be between eruptions of the most recent volcano, near Grindavik. Since she has been home, however, the volcano has erupted again, rather violently. "Great trip," Susie said. She especially enjoyed swimming in The Blue Lagoon, one of the highlights of her trip.

We have some good news about our very own Associate Pastor for Music and Worship, **Dr. Tommy Shapard**, who is also Director of Choral and Vocal Activities at Florida State College at Jacksonville. FSCJ President Avendano, Dr. Wall (Provost), Dr. Hess (Associate Provost), and Dean Torres surprised Tommy and some of the **FSCJ** vocal/choral students with the news that Tommy has earned a continuing contract (tenure) at FSCJ.

John Roton has been taking several trips lately. But one of his best photos is of the newly refurbished **Friendship Fountain** here in our own fair city of Jacksonville. It has been several years since a renovation of the fountain was done, and it is magnificent now, with changing colors and fountain displays. Why not take a stroll to the Southbank Riverwalk by the Main Street Bridge (Alsop Bridge) to see it!



Well, folks, that's about all I can report at this time. I know some of you must have some good news to share. Just send an email to churchmouse@habchurch.com and I will tell our church family all about it! Bye-bye for now!





Anna and Kevin Valent with daughters Riley, Sawyer and Mary Parker.

BY JENNIFER JENSEN

LOCAL FOLKS



Sawyer, Mary Parker, Riley, Anna and Kevin Valent at a Florida Gator football game.



Kevin and Anna Valent

Helping her community and being of service is at Anna Valent's core. She knew from a young age that being involved in something bigger than herself was what she was meant to do – and she does just that. Not only professionally as the incoming executive director of Dreams Come True, but through her volunteer work as well.

"I always knew I wanted to be in a service role," Valent said. "At the end of the day, what drives me is knowing that what I'm doing is impacting something else."

Valent grew up in Georgia, most recently in St. Simon's Island. She left after graduating high school to attend the University of Florida (UF) and swim at the collegiate level; she was a world-ranked distance freestyle swimmer and the 2002-2003 co-captain of the swim team.

After graduating from UF with a degree in psychology and public relations, she was offered a position at the Make a Wish Foundation in Jacksonville.

"They wouldn't let me back in Georgia," Valent joked.

She didn't know anyone when she first moved to Jacksonville, so she found a place downtown at 11 East Forsyth. She was one of the first residents, which consisted mostly of young people and recent graduates.

"I felt like that would be a good way to meet people," Valent said. She ended up not only making friends, but also meeting her future husband, Kevin, who had been in Jacksonville since age 12.



Anna Valent with members of the Dreams Come True Horizon Board on a visit to Give Kids the World.

"I always thought I would go back to Georgia and that Jacksonville was just a stop along the way," she said. "And then I met him. His marriage proposal was, 'If you're ready to call Jacksonville your home, I'd love for you to be my wife.'"

They've now been together for 20 years, married for 18, and have three daughters: Riley, 15, Sawyer, 12, and Mary Parker, 8.

"I joked that I wasn't going to date the first guy I met in Jacksonville, I'm going to marry him instead," she said. "He loved it, and he understood the value of Jacksonville. I had the opportunity to see it, too, and I'm so glad he was adamant about staying here."

After working at Make a Wish for a few years, Valent followed up with positions at the JAX Chamber of Commerce and Athletics for CARE before transitioning to her current position at Dreams Come True, a nonprofit organization that grants the dreams of children with life-threatening illnesses.

"Our whole mission is to bring hope and joy," she said. "And so that's literally what we get to think about every day is, how can we make this more fun? How can we bring more joy? How can we take it up a notch. That's such a fun spot to be in. What will make them smile today?"

Being a swimmer, one of her favorite dreams was when a little boy got the chance to not only meet Olympic Gold Medalist swimmer Michael Phelps, but also swims laps with him. Another was of a little girl who had cancer whose dream was to get her mom blessed by the Pope. They traveled to the Vatican, where both were blessed.

"She survived and is now an oncologist herself," Valent said.

Outside of work, Valent is also heavily involved in her community. She is the membership chair for the San Marco Preservation Society, chair of Little Friends Preschool at Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church, on the PTA at Hendricks Avenue Elementary School, and on the board of the National Charity League, which is a mother/daughter charity organization.

"The preservation society really focuses on the San Marco area and making sure that we are growing in a responsible way and protecting our historic features," she said. "And making sure that people have the resources they need to grow and really make this area thrive. I love San Marco."

Valent and her family have lived in the area for nine years. Prior to that, they lived near the Jewish Community Alliance in San Jose.

"We just love the walkability. We love the restaurants. I love the way things are growing. I feel like it's getting even more active, and I love that. And I love raising our kids here," she said.

Some of her family's favorite spots around town are The Bearded Pig, Grape and Grain, and Posting House. Her daughters also like going to Firehouse Subs and The Loop, or "anywhere in San Marco."

In her spare time, she also enjoys playing tennis. Around 2017, after she joined San Jose Country Club, she started playing along with a group of other women who were beginners.

"We got super competitive about it, and had a lot of fun, and really focused on learning how to play," Valent said. "And I created a bunch of really amazing friendships out of that."

<<< Check out this cool article about ANNA VALENT that was in the March edition of the *San Marco Resident!* Read online at bit.ly/3IG7y6K, page 27.



Our ballfields were also featured on the cover! >>>

Senior Adult Luncheon, February 25, 2024

A good time was
had by all!



Dancers



Great food



*Lee Turner,
the honoree*



Servers+



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a place of grace

VISIT habchurch.com

for more information.

As we travel throughout the year, let's remember that the work of HAB will continue. Please take advantage of online giving to continue supporting our ministries. Or, **before you go, set up a recurring gift** so that you won't have to remember! It's easy!

Go to bit.ly/HABGiving or scan this QR code—



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