

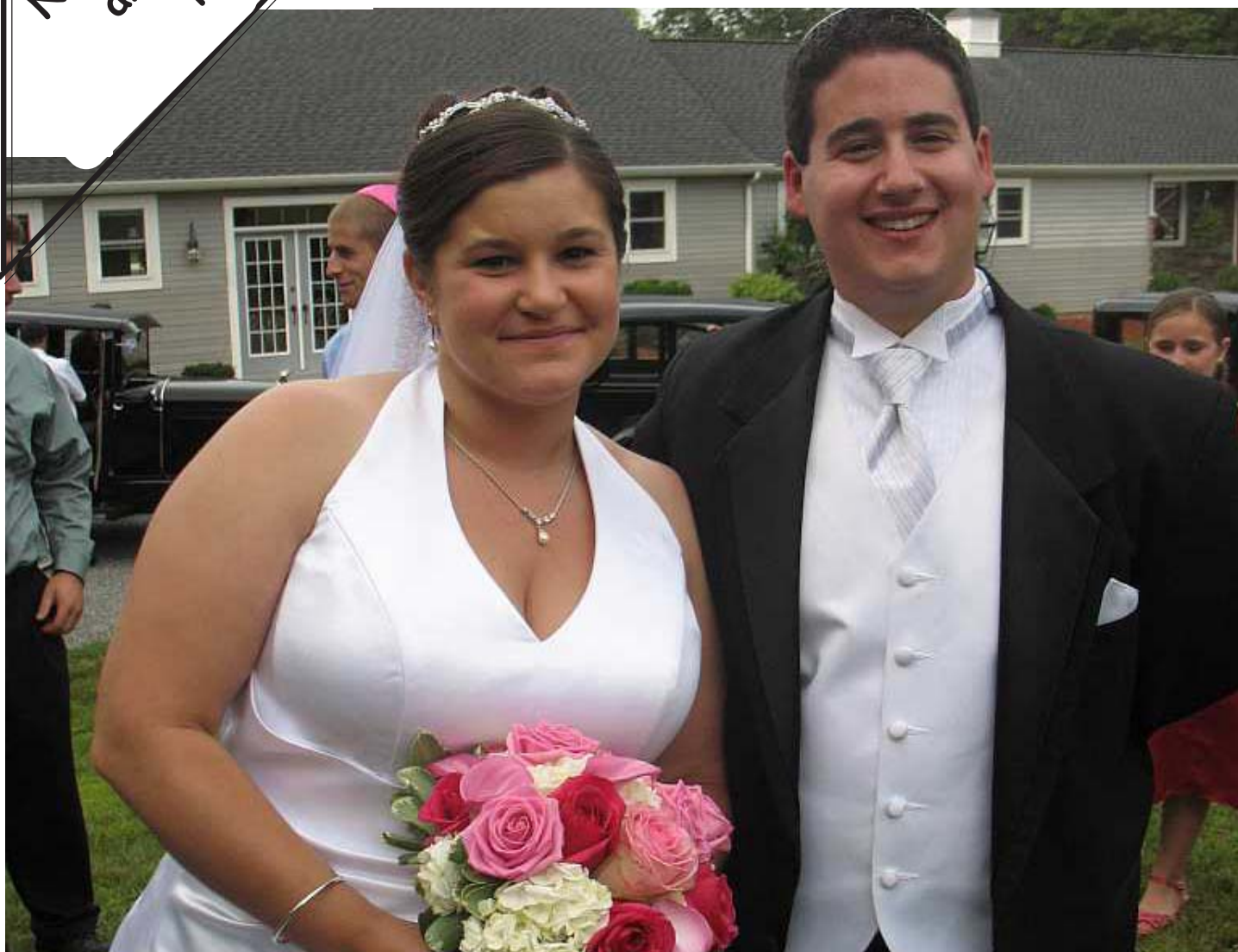
News  
and Views  
From the Hill

# The Ambassador

A Newsletter From  
The First Baptist Church of Norwich  
239 West Main Street, Norwich, CT 06360  
Phone: 860-889-0369



## August 2009



*Allison & Jason Beit were among the four couples married in July. Her dad, Don Walberg, walked her down the aisle on July 11th.*

### **More news inside:**

- \* Ministry to those who are out of work in a bad economy
- \* Weddings and more weddings...
- \* Newest Hall of Fame Members
- \* Commissioning of Appalachian Mission Team
- \* Update on Mandisa, a real American Idol

## **Worship with us each week in August at 9:30 a.m.**

To get an ongoing and fun report of happenings at FBC check out  
First Baptist Life at [www.firstbaptistlife.blogspot.com](http://www.firstbaptistlife.blogspot.com)



**Worship**  
**9:30 -**  
**10:45 am**

**Join Us As We Worship This Summer**  
**Each week we will focus on a different**  
**hero from the Old Testasment**

August 2, 2009

**Communion Sunda**

Responsive Reading - Psalm 51:1-12  
 Scripture: Exodus 16:1-15  
 Sermon: Focus on Moses

August 9, 2009

Responsive Reading - Psalm 130  
 Scripture: I Kings 19: 1-15  
 Sermon: Focus on Elijah

August 16, 2009

Responsive Reading - Psalm 111  
 Scripture: I Kings 2:1 -3:14  
 Sermon: Focus on Solomon

August 23, 2009

Responsive Reading - Psalm 84  
 Scripture: Joshua 24:1-18  
 Sermon: Focus on Joshua

August 30, 2009

**Sports Recognition Sunday**  
 Responsive Reading - Psalm 15  
 Scripture: Deuteronomy 4:1-9  
 Sermon: Focus on God



**Sports Recognition Sunday**  
**August 30, 2009**  
**Come praise God and give thanks!**



**Ministry Helpers in August**

As Ushers & Greeters  
 August 2 - G Strouse, K Barber, R Sargent, M Kane  
 August 9 - F Royce, C Brockway, N & G Schuster  
 August 16 - H Calkins, L McFalls, B & P Adams  
 August 23 - G Strouse, K Barber, R Sargent, M Kane  
 August 30 - F Royce, C Brockway, N & G Schuster

As Worship Assistants  
 August 9 - Gwyn Green  
 August 16 - Rosie Main  
 August 23 - Fred Green  
 August 30 - Lori Lord

**Here We Are Lord. Send Us!**

On Sunday, July 19 we commissioned our short term missionaries in preparation for their trip to southern West Virginia along the Appalachian Trail.

In the service we distributed mission care packages and gathered around the team to pray for them. The sermon called us to remember that we are all

invited to offer ourselves to God as He works out his purposes in the world. Our text was from 2 Samuel and we looked in on David and how God reminded him that he was going to be part of something much bigger than he could imagine.

With that thought, we gave our team our blessing. They will be leaving next Sunday morning at 5:30 a.m. and traveling down in two vehicles. Mapquest says the trip will take just over twelve hours. Our team will be working with a group called Mustard Seeds and Mountains. Our team members will be working with local families doing small home repairs and yard work. We start next Monday morning and continue through Thursday. Each day we will be at the worksite and each night we'll return back to the lodge for dinner and devotions. One night we will be going to a Bluegrass festival in town for fun.

Our team consists of Rachel Bober, Carol Calkins, Taylor Chaffee, Erica Corbett, June Deptulski, Connie Hayward and me from First Baptist and Michelle Madsen Bibeau, Ellie Eccleston, Roger and Doreen Mainville from Central Baptist. It looks like Clayton Lord Sr. and Chris Lord Jr., may also be joining us for a day. They are planning on driving in from Kentucky to meet up with us.

We hope to send back a few photos and reports while we are down there but that depends on the availability of wireless. We've been told that service may be hard to come by. None-the-less, we will have plenty of pictures when we come back. We will be returning on Friday, July 31st.



**Join Us on July 26th as Our Praise Team Leads Worship.**

**The message will be given through songs and stories.**

**The fun begins at 9:30 a.m.**



**Nursery Volunteers Needed**

Wendy Henry will be putting together a new schedule for nursery care providers this Fall. Please speak to her if you would like to be added to the list. This is an important ministry that allows our parents to enjoy worship.



## People News

We lift up Doris Regets in our prayers. She has been in the Backus Hospital after a bad fall... We lift up Matt Murray in our continuing prayers... Will Calderon had a scare and landed in the emergency room after suffering chest pains. He is on medication now for high blood pressure and has been told to watch his diet. Think of him in your prayers... June Coleman has a slight fracture in her back bone. The doctors are watching it... Jennifer LaFlamme had a couple of infected lymph nodes removed. She was a brave young lady. We pray for a speedy recovery... We continue to lift Steve Ohlund up in prayer... We had a scare at Allison Walberg's wedding. Paul Calderon (Mark Damien's step son) was stung by a bee and had to be rushed to the emergency room. Thankfully he has fully recovered from it and was even seen at the reception a little later... We lift up Bob Duntz, Jean Roscoe, Ken Taylor and Michelle Lord in our continuing prayers...



We lift up Tina and Curtis Royce in our prayers as they anticipate the arrival of their first child later this year. They recently learned it was going to be a boy!

### News From the Pews:

Amanda Duntz got a job with Habitat for Humanity and is very excited. Her life goal is to work with a non-profit agency... Michael Damien was home visiting his dad and the family for 10 days. He is currently attending Southern Oregon University... Sarah Lord, a senior at UCONN, is in South Africa taking a course called "Vets in the Wild." Cami Ferguson will be the 2009 recipient of the \$400 First Baptist College Scholarship. She is attending the University of Connecticut and majoring in Human Development and Family Relations. It will be awarded on a Sunday in August... Lisa Lapointe recently ran in a 5 K race and did very well in her age category... Fred & Gwyn Green recently traveled to Washington D.C. with Fred's dad. They are now home and expecting a visit from Stacia, Nick and Allanah... Yolanda Charles just got back from a wonderful visit with family in Mississippi. She also went to visit her mom's grave for the first time since her death... Ben Strouse spent a week in North Carolina with friends... Pete and Betsey Adams made their annual trek up to Maine over the fourth of July week-end... Roy Bourque recently retired from his job at Norwich Public Utilities. Now he can spend more time on his hobbies of writing, photography and stage lighting design... Luis Pabon and his dancers from Style Extraordinaire returned from the DanceAmerica National Championships in New York City with lots of trophies and awards. Rachel Lord was among the group and she finished 15th among 70 contestants for dancer of the year and she was the youngest in her category...



Zelda and Bruce Fellows are planning a renewal of vows ceremony at the church on September 19th... We are also excited about three more weddings in the church family in the coming weeks. George Rezendes and Mary Ann McComiskey, Stacia Green and Nick Grange and Jonathan Vanase and Katherine Kirchner will all exchange their vows later this year...

*Did we miss you? Call the church office and share your news next month.*

*For surely  
I KNOW THE  
plans  
I have for  
YOU,  
says the  
Lord...  
TO GIVE YOU A  
future  
WITH  
Hope.*  
Jeremiah 29:11, NRSV

## Missional Church Notes...



We gave away popcorn, lemonade, ice tea and cake to the crowd who gathered in and around the church to watch the fireworks on the fourth of July. Jennifer, Jared and Joshua LaFlamme gave out pinwheels to the kids. It was a great event and the dozen or so volunteers proved to be great hosts.

The evening was a complete success in our continuing efforts to make our presence known in the neighborhood. At our meeting last week we began looking ahead to future events.

We decided that we would do winter survival kits again in some fashion next January. We will concentrate on personal hygiene items and the kind of things you can't buy with food stamps. We will have a full list in the September newsletter. We may do the no sew blankets again if we can find a sponsor or two. We liked the way so many people got involved and made some blankets. It costs \$400 to make the fifty blankets.

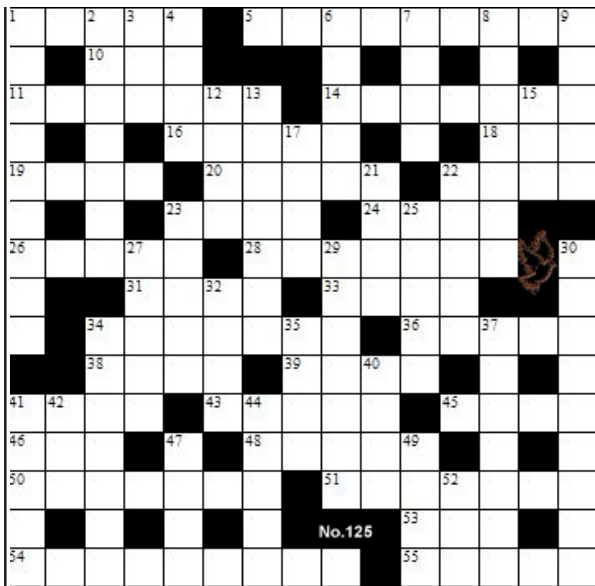
We also decided that we would start collecting gently used winter coats and sweaters to give away to folks living across the street in the Mopsis Street area. Our plan is to start collecting them now and distribute them in mid to late October.

## Feeding The Hungry



Talk to Cynthia Strouse if you would like to help feed the hungry on the third Sunday of the month. We are currently looking for one or two volunteers who would be willing to cook a meal for about sixty people later this year. If you would like to help in the dining room as a server, speak to Amanda

Duntz. Not sure if its for you? Come help out in August and see for yourselves how rewarding it is.



ACROSS

- 1 \_\_\_ me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth (Ps 86:11)
- 5 but the rich man \_\_\_ from taking one of his own sheep (2 Sam 12:4)
- 10 the thumb of his right hand and on the big \_\_\_ of his right foot (Lev 8:23)
- 11 wine is a mocker and beer a \_\_\_ (Prov. 20:1)
- 14 whose name in Hebrew is \_\_\_, and in Greek, Apollyon (Rev 9:11)
- 16 Trust in the LORD and do good; \_\_\_ in the land and enjoy safe pasture (Ps 37:3)
- 18 What is the meaning of these seven \_\_\_ lambs you have set apart (Gen 21:29)
- 19 Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other \_\_\_ (Luke 17:17)
- 20 son of Seth (Gen.4:26)
- 22 a time to tear and a time to \_\_\_, a time to be silent and a time to speak (Eccl 3:7)
- 23 The merchant \_\_\_ dishonest scales; he loves to defraud (Hos 12:7)
- 24 Two men \_\_\_ money to a certain moneylender (Luke 7:41)
- 26 brother of Moses (Ex 4:14)
- 28 Wisdom is better than \_\_\_ of war, but one sinner destroys much (Eccl 9:18)
- 31 We hear that some among you are \_\_\_. They are not busy (2 Thess 3:11)
- 33 Roman Emperor
- 34 Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet and \_\_\_ earnestly with him (Mark 5:22-23)
- 36 the ships of the sea and their sailors came alongside to \_\_\_ for your wares (Ezek 27:9)
- 38 A large \_\_\_ of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside (Mark 5:11-12)
- 39 rule them with an iron scepter; he will \_\_\_

- them to pieces like pottery (Rev 2:27)
- 41 They will be a garland to grace your \_\_\_ and a chain to adorn your neck (Prov 1:9)
- 43 you soar like the \_\_\_ and make your nest among the stars (Obad 4)
- 45 son of Jacob (Gen 35:23)
- 46 And all that handle the \_\_\_, the mariners (Ezek 27:29) KJV
- 48 Fear and trembling have \_\_\_ me; horror has overwhelmed me (Ps 55:5)
- 50 Jesus grew in wisdom and \_\_\_, and in favor with God and men (Luke 2:52)
- 51 tith of mint .....

- have \_\_\_ the weightier matters of the law (Matt 23:23) KJV
- 53 the gazelle, the \_\_\_ deer, the wild goat, the ibex (Deut 14:5)
- 54 academic, intellectual
- 55 is like a landowner who went out \_\_\_ in the morning to hire men (Matt 20:1)

DOWN

- 1 through fear of death were all their lifetime subject \_\_\_\_\_ (2,7) (Heb 2:15) KJV
- 2 Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with \_\_\_\_\_ named Simon (1,6) (Acts 9:43)
- 3 In that day, a man will keep alive a young \_\_\_ and two goats (Isa 7:21)
- 4 My steps have \_\_\_ to your paths; my feet have not slipped (Ps 17:5)
- 6 forty kine, and ten bulls, twenty she asses, and ten \_\_\_ (Gen 32:15) KJV
- 7 the Son of Man will come \_\_\_\_\_ hour when you do not expect him (2,2) (Matt 24:44)
- 8 a man claims to have faith but has \_\_\_\_\_ Can such faith save him?(2,5) (James 2:14)
- 9 And Saul \_\_\_ with Samuel that day (1 Sam 9:24)
- 12 twenty male goats, two hundred \_\_\_ and twenty rams (Gen 32:14)
- 13 we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being \_\_\_ day by day (2 Cor 4:16)
- 15 the sluggard is wiser in his \_\_\_ eyes than seven men (Prov 26:16)

- 17 Watch out that you do not \_\_\_ what you have worked for (2 John 8)
- 21 Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my \_\_\_ comes from him (Ps 62:5)
- 22 Do not fret because of evil \_\_\_\_\_ be envious of the wicked (3,2) (Prov 24:19)
- 23 Neither do people light a lamp and put it \_\_\_ a bowl (Matt 5:15)
- 25 two very small copper coins, \_\_\_ only a fraction of a penny (Mark 12:42)
- 27 one loaf of bread, and one cake of \_\_\_ bread (Ex 29:23) KJV
- 29 who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets \_\_\_\_\_ drove us out (3,4) (1 Thess 2:15)
- 30 As \_\_\_\_\_ wandering, as the swallow by flying (3,4,2) (Prov 26:2) KJV
- 32 whereas my father did \_\_\_ you with a heavy yoke, I will add to (1 Kings 12:11) KJV
- 34 two full years had passed, \_\_\_ had a dream: He was standing by the Nile (Gen 41:1-2)
- 35 if the ax is dull and its \_\_\_ unsharpened, more strength is needed (Eccl 10:10)
- 37 By faith Abel offered God \_\_\_\_\_ sacrifice than Cain did (1,6) (Heb 11:4)
- 40 Your beginnings will \_\_\_ humble, so prosperous will your future be (Job 8:7)
- 41 Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his heavenly \_\_\_ (Ps 148:2)
- 42 but even the dogs \_\_\_ the crumbs that fall from their masters' table (Matt 15:27)
- 44 but had feet like those of \_\_\_\_\_ and a mouth like that of a lion (1,4) (Rev 13:2)
- 47 They exchanged their Glory for an image of a \_\_\_, which eats grass (Ps 106:20)
- 49 And as for you, brothers, never \_\_\_ of doing what is right (2 Thess 3:13)
- 52 Philip went down \_\_\_\_\_ city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ (2,1) (Acts 8:5)

"HONEY, I WANT YOU TO MEET BOB- BOB IS MY PARTNER AT THE OFFICE, MY BROTHER IN THE LORD, AND MY FACEBOOK FRIEND."



# “I Lost My Job”

My husband's announcement forced me to face a truth about God.

By Nancy B. Kennedy

“Something happened at work today,” my husband said. *Too quietly*, I thought.

It was late evening, that delicious moment of release when you've gotten the kids to bed and put out all the fires you're likely to encounter for the day. Only on this day, our fires were just sparking.

Fear gripping my heart, I sat on the couch and waited for him to continue. Twenty years into his career, my husband, John, enjoyed a management position at a large medical university. An outgoing and personable man, he was well known in the field of government purchasing.

But the previous year at his job had been tumultuous. The university had been indicted for Medicaid fraud and put under the oversight of a federal monitor. The papers ran stories of corporate corruption at the highest level. The governor brought in a new president.

That day, the day my husband came home so somber, the university had announced it was looking to cut costs.

“They're eliminating jobs in a certain salary range,” John said. “Mine.”

So began my husband's-and by extension, our family's-sudden and unexpected plunge in to joblessness.

## From Bad to Worse

Sadly, most of our friends have been laid off at one time or another. Many have had to move away to find work. In our circles, we were the most stable family we knew. My husband grew up in the area and had just two employers. I'd moved here in 1981. We'd been married for 20 years and had lived in our house for 15.

Yet in that instant, as my husband's shocking words died away, my life of carefully constructed security vanished. My first thought, totally irrational but wholly likely to come at that moment: *We're going to end up living under a bridge somewhere.*

John's salary was, in essence, the only one in our household. As a writer, my income was sporadic and covered only the niceties of our life. On top of that, we lived in a pricey area where ordinary houses go for half a million and the cars on the road aren't domestic.

When the ax fell, we were stunned that John got just four weeks' severance pay. Unemployment, we quickly discovered, paid a fraction of his previous income. How were we going to live?

For days after John cleaned out his office, I was overcome by waves of uncontrollable sobbing. It was an agonizing time for us, our fears for the future compounded by the exhausting effort of shielding our young son from the crest of our emotions. In my state of despair, I found it difficult to read the Bible or even to pray.

As John began his job hunt over the following weeks, we suffered new shocks almost daily. Our washer broke, an air conditioner died, our car needed major repairs. Our property was reassessed, and our real estate taxes skyrocketed. Family weddings, graduations, and birthdays piled one on top of the other. Once cause for celebration, these events became drains on the family finances.

One day I hit an emotional low. A friend suggested I could find steady work to tide us over. *She's right, I thought, I could do some public relations work. Maybe freelance for the local paper.*

“I hear they're hiring at Wegman's,” she blurted out. *Is that really what I need to do? A grocery store?* I was stunned.

As the weeks passed and I struggled unsuccessfully to find work through my network of contacts, I began to consider it.

Eventually, however, we realized we did have resources. For years, we'd put a small part of John's salary into a deferred compensations account, which we could

tap. And because our house was once a duplex, we figured we could rent out half again. We began to envision our viability.

## Blessed Discomfort

Even so, I was angry. Angry that we were being forced to step back. Angry that plans we'd made for our future would be demolished. Angry about this crisis we didn't deserve.

I resented the fact that our family was paying for the university's wrongdoing. John had played absolutely no part in it; his conduct at work was, and always has been, blameless. I know of no one who applies biblical principles to his job as naturally as my husband does.

While I thought John's guiltlessness would be apparent to potential employers, it wasn't. The university's name on his resume was a glaring scarlet letter. Interviewers invariably questioned him about his involvement in the scandal. Although he could answer readily and truthfully, he always returned home depressed, weighed down with the injustice of his situation.

In fact, John had just about everything going against him. He was laid off in the summer, when hiring decisions are rarely made. He was in mid-career, competing with a ever-younger workforce. And as a white male, he was far from a hot commodity in a field that values diversity.

Ironically, it was the hopelessness of our situation that triggered a turning point for me. One Sunday our pastor prayed for those in the congregation who need jobs, and I fled the sanctuary in tears. I hated being counted among that group, one of the needy ones.

Yet at an almost subconscious level, a verse of Scripture touched my heart. I imagine just about every Christian has at some time said with certainty that “with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26). I'd said it myself, though I wasn't sure I believed it any more.

But one day, after yet another interview came to nothing, I became convinced that if John, with all these strikes against him, ever did get a job, it would unquestionably be God's working. For me, this awareness transformed our situation from a financial crisis into a spiritual awakening.

A few months earlier, God brought into our lives a book by Paul David Tripp, *Lost in the Middle*, in which he examines midlife and the crises it can engender. The book's message is this: God doesn't care one bit whether we're successful, comfortable, stable, or happy. All the things I thought I was. All the things I clung so tightly to. The truth of this sliced like a laser through my heart.

*Why:* I'd been asking in frustration. *Why us, God?* Because God is jealous for our hearts. He doesn't want us to live with the delusion that anything else—jobs, houses, savings—can bring the security that can be found only in him. God wouldn't allow me to live with that delusion any longer.

**Changed by Grace**

By God's grace, after six months of unemployment John was offered a job. Today, he's again working in a government purchasing job that's about as stable as any job can be these days.

Though those bleak six months felt endless, during that time my husband and I learned more about God than we had our entire lives. Our hearts remain heavy with the suspicion that we will never feel as safe in the world as we once did. Yet our faith has grown in ways it never could have if all our days were secure and our future know.

From our unfamiliar position of total dependence on God, we've read the Scriptures more humbly. We've prayed more urgently and have learned to ask for confidence in God's provision, and for endurance and peace.

We credit much of our newfound knowledge to the love of God's people. We were upheld by encouraging notes and earnest prayers. We were astonished by the willingness of friends, family and our church to support us emotionally and financially. Now when someone we love loses a job, we know far better how to help.

While John was unemployed, our route to church was altered by a construction project. We detoured onto a winding road that runs alongside a brook. To cross the brook and get back to the main road, we drove over an old iron bridge and up a steep hill through grassy farmland. One day not long ago, taking this route, I was startled into laughter by the thought that I was passing safely over the bridge, and not living under it!

In that moment, I finally drew a bead on the all-too-familiar concept of grace. We don't deserve the grace we've been shown. It's been freely given and gratefully accepted, yet I know now that everything we have comes as a gift from the hand of God.

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**Wedding Bells Are Ringing at FBC This Summer**



Al & Wendy Dart Married 7/9



Melody & Carl Soderberg married 7/9



Ashley and Daniel Moriarty married 7/18



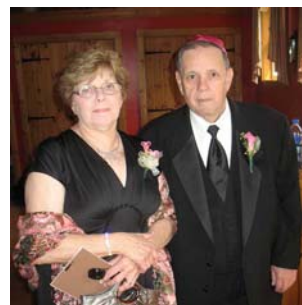
Oliver & Barbara Bray Renewed vows 6/27



Pam & Bill Maynard- Bride's parents



Rod and Debra Allen married 6/13



Sue & Al Damien - grandparents



Matt & Elizabeth Isenburg grooms' parents



Maryann and George - Wedding 8/15



Geri and Don - Father of the bride



Elsie and Ashley

# MANDISA

The American Idol Alum shares openly about losing 80 pounds (so far!), forgiving Simon, facing the demons of her childhood-and watching God transform each situation into ministry.

By Camerin Courtney



If it weren't for her signature mega-watt smile, you might not recognize Mandisa Lynn Hundley these days. The *American Idol* alum has lost 80 pounds since last August, an impressive milestone in her journey

toward dropping 100. Mandisa admits that seriously cutting back on her food faves has been hard, but she says the emotional and spiritual aspects of this process have been the most difficult. "I don't just have a weight problem," she explains, "I have a food addiction." The 32-year old singer talks openly about the fact that childhood trauma prompted her to bulk up in the first place, and that ditching the weight has meant facing those demons. And while she admits it's difficult sharing this vulnerable part of her story on stages across the nation, she says she does so in order to help others with similar struggles.

In her audition for *American Idol*'s fifth season, judge Simon Cowell asked, "Do we have a bigger stage this year?" Mandisa didn't hear the weight-related comment until it aired a couple months later.

Though she felt humiliated, Mandisa stunned the nation-and a visibly moved Simon-by graciously forgiving the snarky judge, citing as her motivation the forgiveness Jesus has extended to her. During the ensuing 2006 season, she wowed the judges and fans for weeks with her powerhouse vocals and upbeat personality.

Her eventual elimination from the competition (she finished ninth) didn't slow her down. Her debut album, *True Beauty*, was nominated for a Grammy and two Dove Awards in 2007. That years she also wrote a

book, *IdolEyes: My New Perspective on Faith, Fat, and Fame*. Last year she released a Christmas album, *It's Christmas*. In the past year alone, she's appeared on *Live with Regis & Kelly*, *Today*, *CBS Early Show*, *Fox & Friends*, and *Extra*. She's also been a regular on the Women of Faith conference tour this year. Here is our Q & A with her.

**You look great, Mandisa! What finally prompted you to lose the weight?** At Mount Rushmore last year, I got out of breath walking up the incline for the best view. I didn't think I was going to make it. Knowing I was that out of shape was a wake-up call. I was shocked at how heavy I looked in the photos from that trip.

**Are you following a certain diet?** I'm eating healthier and working out five times a week, often with the help of a personal trainer. But I've learned that if you want to keep the weight off for the rest of your life, you have to continue the work you're doing now.

**Any foods still really tempt you?** Well, a perfect meal would be McDonald's French fries, a Wendy's Classic Double with Cheese and no onion, and a large Dairy Queen Heath Blizzard. I think that's about the tastiest meal in the world.

I do let myself have dessert or fast food once or twice a month so I don't go crazy and binge.

**I've heard you mention the roots of your overeating were from some childhood issues. What were those?** My parents divorced when I was two, and my father moved out of the area when I was ten. I felt like he'd abandoned me. That's when I started putting on weight. My dad's in my life now, but it was tough at

that young age.

I was also molested as a child, and then raped when I was 16. I started padding myself with fat because I'd picked up the message that my body being desired wasn't a good thing. I'm talking to a counselor now about all these issues.

**Those are brave things to acknowledge.** Thanks, But you know, I had more than 100 pounds to lose. When you're at that point, there's something else going on than just being overweight. Some people turn to alcohol or drugs to cope with tough things. My coping mechanism was food.

**A food addiction.** Right. Battling this addiction has been the most difficult part of my weight-loss journey. I'm learning to replace the negative messages I picked up about my body with the truth of God's Word and what he says about me: that he loves me unconditionally and that I'm fearfully and wonderfully made.

**That sounds easy. But it isn't, really, is it?** Well, this isn't an overnight process. I've been dealing with this addiction for 20 years, so I'm not going to retrain my mind overnight. But thankfully God's Word is powerful. I've memorized a lot of Scripture, and I've written many more verses on note cards.

I used to travel with Beth Moore on her praise team. She'd put Scripture prayers on note cards, and now that's what I do. They're with me all the time.

**Which verses are especially meaningful?** 1 Corinthians 10:13 has become a lifeline for me: "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." I quote that daily.

It's difficult when our culture tells us to have it our way and we can super-size it and if it feels good it must be good. I have to retrain my mind not to believe those things. Only the power of God's Word can do that.

**You've previously been a champion of beauty in all shapes and sizes. Has that message changed at all now that you're losing weight?** It's bothered me in the past when people have come up to me

after a concert and said, “Big girl power!” or “Yeah, you can be fat!” that was never my message. It wasn’t about looking a certain way then, and it’s not about looking a certain way now. I’m not losing weight because I want to look like a model. I’m losing it because I’ve been bound by this addiction for so long. This is a matter of being set free.

So to my girls who are in this same struggle with their weight, I say don’t lose weight to look a certain way. Lose it because you want to be set free.

**What has your weight-loss taught you about the nature of true beauty?** That it really is an internal thing. I think God was deliberate in leading me to make my first album and book about true beauty. He had to teach me not to depend on my outward appearance for beauty, and that’s a tough lesson when you’re in the music industry and when you’re on *American Idol*.

It would be easy for me to get caught up in pride now that people are telling me how great I look. But if my appearance didn’t define me then, it doesn’t define me now. God wants us to be balanced.

I’m convinced we all have an intangible beauty on the inside that shines out. I love the passage in Exodus 34 when Moses came down from the mountain after spending time with God. His face was so radiant he had to put a veil over it. I know that as we spend time with the Lord, a radiance shines out from us too. I know that’s where my beauty comes from. ]

**You’ve had to deal with issues of forgiveness. Has that been a difficult process for you?** It’s a challenge. But I’ve learned forgiveness is often more for our benefit than that of the person we’re forgiving. The people who abused me as a child aren’t thinking about it, whereas I was bitter and angry and bound. I didn’t want them to have that kind of power over me anymore. So I had to forgive them.

But then forgiveness seems to be a running theme in my life.

**Are you talking about Simon Cowell? How difficult was it to forgive him?** It was tough because it was my worst nightmare come true. My fear wasn’t not making it on *American Idol*, it was that Simon would make negative comments about my weight. And while it was horrible to watch his

comments on national television with a roomful of family and friends, they wound up being key in my forgiveness process. They gathered around me and started praying for me, and for Simon, and for my ability to forgive him. If they hadn’t been there, I probably would have binged on a gallon of ice cream.

**In the conversation where you forgave Simon, did anything happen off camera that you wish others had seen?** The producers didn’t edit one word of what I said to Simon. I know they were hoping I’d scream and cuss him out, so I think they were all shocked when I told Simon I forgave him. That’s the only thing viewers couldn’t see: how stunned everyone was. The producers and camera crew, Randy and Paula, everyone’s jaws dropped. Honestly, I didn’t expect them to air our conversation. So when they did, I knew it was the Lord.

**After all you’d been through with that show, it must have been terrible to be voted off!** It was difficult because of the way it happened. The second to last week I was on the show, I sang “Shackles,” a gospel song about being set free. Before I sang, I said, “This song goes out to everybody who wants to be free. Your addiction, lifestyle, and situation may be big, but God is bigger.” I included the word *lifestyle* in that list because for a food addict, it’s not about a diet, it’s about a lifestyle change. But *lifestyle* has also become a buzzword for the homosexual community. So after I said those words and sang that song, there was a campaign to kick me off *American Idol*. In the week after I was cut, countless radio stations, magazines, and newspapers—everyone from Jay Leno to Regis and Kelly—asked me about my stance on homosexuality.

**You said you blamed God for your loss?** I remember yelling at him, “I was standing up for you, and I was on that stage trying to proclaim how good you are. How could you let this happen to me?” I dealt with my anger by eating: pizza, fast food, entire pies, Krispy Kreme donuts. I ate just about everything imaginable, and I was



miserable. I was in the biggest pit of my life, and I shut everybody out.

**How did God respond?** After trying my best to shut him out, I eventually felt him tell me that he loves me. It was his unconditional love that got to me.

**What do you wish you’d done differently in that situation?** I wish I’d sought God and turned to his Word and not shut out everybody who loves me. I eventually learned the power of praising God when you don’t feel like it. I think that’s the most important time to worship the Lord because when you magnify him, your problems look smaller by comparison. If I’d done that, I don’t think I would have gotten into that pit.

**Redemption seems to be another theme in your life.** Yes! And my understanding of redemption is that it’s not just when he defuses bad stuff, but when he actually uses it. After being abused and having been at a very unhealthy weight, I’m amazed and grateful he’s now using that as a platform for me to help others who are going through similar situations. I believe I’m walking out that passage in 2 Corinthians that says the comfort we receive from the Lord is there for us to use to comfort others. Through my songs and my stories, I pray God is going to set some people free, even as he’s setting me free.

**Favorite hymn:** “Amazing Grace”

**Favorite TV show:** Ummm, hello? *American Idol!*

**Song I wish I’d gotten the chance to sing on American Idol:** “Who Wants To Live Forever” by Queen

**Person I’d most like to meet:** Oprah

**What I’m listening to right now:** *Wamen of Faith Worship Team: A Grand New Day*

**Best dish I cook:** I know it sounds funny, but I make a mean salad!

**Before I die, I want to:** Meet my husband

**When I was a kid, I wanted to be this when I grew up:** Whitney Houston

**Favorite thing about God:** That he never gives up on me, leaving me the way I am (*Phillipians 1:6*)

# Sports Ministry Hall of Fame Will Induct Two New Members on August 30th



Chip Chaffee has rewritten the record books in his four seasons with the FBC Softball team. He has averaged 10.5 homers and 51 RBI a season. He hit 15 homers and knocked in 69 RBI in 2004 and shattered the previous highs of 13 homers and 44 RBI set by Bill Ericson in the days when we played on the Mohegan Park field with the short left field fence. His life time average is .680 and on base percentage of .730 are both .30 points higher than the next man on the list, Mark Ferguson.

This year Chip helped coach the team and was the leader on the field. He pitched in every

game and his defense alone won a few of the closer matches. His selection to the FBC Sports Ministry Hall of Fame was a no brainer. The only question is why it didn't happen sooner?

Cameron Barnhill was a stand out player from the first days with the team in 2004. By the second season he was a star on the Championship Team that went undefeated for coach Julio Sanchez in the C Division. They went on to take two more championships during his tenure.

Cameron was always among the team leaders in scoring and he played great defense and was our number one shot blocker.

The best thing about having Cameron on the team was his infectious smile. He pumped up his teammates with his ear to ear grin. Ask JJ Jones, Bethany Stone, Jaquan Morton or any of his teammates over the four years he played and they will all tell you he was a great teammate as well as a great player.



**The First Baptist Church**  
**239 West Main Street**  
**Norwich, CT 06360**  
**Vol. 25, No. 2**

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"The Ambassador" is the official newsletter of First Baptist Church, Norwich, Connecticut. It is published & sent monthly to members, friends, and community leaders.

This is the August 2009 Issue  
 Volume 25 Number 2, 2009  
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Summer Sunday Morning Worship 9:30 a.m.  
 Fall Schedule includes: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m.  
 Worship at 10:30 a.m.

Rev. Dr. Clayton A. Lord, Jr., Pastor  
 Adele DiBiagio,  
 Organist & Choir Director  
 Sandy Stone, Administrative Assistant  
 Harry & Doris Calkins, Carol Calkins, Sharon Fishkin and Bob Walker are the Production Assistants.