

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



December 2008



We gathered to decorate the Church for the holiday season on Saturday, November 29. Adults and children worked hand in hand.

More news inside:

- * Check out the upcoming Christmas services
- * The Budget Committee report
- * Come see The Preachers Wife
- * Our kids have a super night
- * Announcement of our Mission Mexico team for 2009
- * Wit, wisdom and wackiness

The Annual Christmas Party and Pageant will be held on Sunday, December 14 at 6:00 p.m.

To get an ongoing and fun report of happenings at FBC check out First Baptist Life at www.firstbaptistlife.blogspot.com

The Church At Worship



Worship
10:30 -
11:45 am

**Join Us As We Worship In
December**

**Advent Begins With
A Sermon Series Entitled,
"IT'S TIME FOR CHRISTMAS!"**

November 30, 2008

The First Sunday of Advent

Scripture: Matthew 6:25-34



Sermon: "It's Time To Let Go of
Worry and Embrace God"

December 7, 2008

The Second Sunday of Advent

Scripture: Luke 10:38-42

Sermon: "It's Time to Capture the Moment"

December 14, 2008

The Third Sunday of Advent

Scripture: Luke 2:8-17

Sermon: "It's Time to Share the Good News"

December 21, 2008

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25

Sermon: "The Purpose of Christmas"

December 28, 2008

Guest Preacher: Rev. Norman Bardsley

Nursery Care This Fall

We want to thank those who have volunteered to take a turn in the church nursery over the past summer. Here is the nursery list for this month:



December 7 - Jeannine Pestey, Bonnie Ambruso & Bethany Stone

December 14 - Kelly Bolin & Chelsey Calkins

December 21 - Hired Help

December 28 - Laura Kreger, Fran Rogers & Heather Adams

If you sense God is calling you to this special ministry, speak to the Pastor or Laura Kreger.

Using Our Talents to Glorify God

During the month of November we heard from three of our members who have been using their gifts to serve God. The Pastor interviewed Amanda Duntz, Patricia Ohlund and Mark Kane during our worship services. He asked them about their gifts and how and why they are using them.



Patricia Ohlund talked about "this big voice" inside of her that wanted to come out. It scared her at first. Then she began to understand that it was meant to glorify God. Amanda Duntz spoke about her awareness of the poor and less fortunate around her and how she got involved in the Windham Area Interfaith Ministry Program and now our Interfaith Luncheons and Missional Church program.



Mark Kane spoke about his involvement in our most recent trip to Mexico and how he felt called to do something. That something involved a short term mission trip. He said he came away more blessed than he could have ever imagined.

Our focus during the month was on our gifts and how we would use them in the coming year. On Sunday, November 23 we asked everyone to step out in faith and to come forward to place a representation of their gift on the communion table.



Everyone was given a leaf before the service and the Pastor noted how the leaves were brown and didn't look like much. Yet to God they represented that buried talent that he could take and use in a beautiful way. Pledge cards and weekly offering were also laid on the table as a sign and promise of the way we will use our resources to serve God through the church and in the community.

The Pastor's message was introduced by a short video that suggested we were all pilgrims and called to help our neighbors. The Scriptural text for the day was from Matthew 6 and it reinforced that point. The Pastor suggested that to love our neighbors, to reach out to them was our calling and that we were doing that in a number of ways. He encouraged us to be looking for ways to serve God in everything we do.

Christmas is proof

Christmas is a time to be happy! ... A time for celebrating and sharing. For God stoops down to be one of us, born as a poor baby so that we can be rich. He does not leave us to get along as best we can. He joins us where we are. God is committed to us. Christmas is proof that God cares. That is why we celebrate and show our care in turn to those who need it.

—F. Hebart



The Church At Worship

The Ambruso Family Celebrates God's Gift



On Sunday, November 9th Mark and Bonnie Ambruso brought their daughter, Trinity Kathleen, to church and asked God's blessing on her in a service of Family Dedication. Her big brother, William, also came forward. At the same time they acknowledge Trinity as a gift from God and promised that they would do all they could to introduce her to Jesus so she could embrace him in the same way that they have done in their lives.

A number of family and friends were present for the service. In recent years Pastor Lord has taken the child down the aisle and introduced him or her to the congregation. Then he asked us if we would embrace her as a child of God and pledge our support to her parents as they accept the

We asked God to bless Bonnie, Mark, Trinity and William and to watch over their family.

responsibilities of Christian parenting. a resounding "yes" was heard from those who were present.

The Performance of Handel's Messiah Was Magical at Noank Baptist



Nancy Allen and I were among those who packed the pews at the Noank Baptist Church for a November 30th performance of Handel's Messiah. Three of our choir members, Rosie Main, Susie Rothholz and Cynthia Strouse were part of the eighty member community chorus that sang. The concert was directed by Linda Lozis and it featured four very strong soloists, a small orchestra and the chorus which included members from various churches and choral groups in the region.

It was the first time Susie Rothholz had sung Handel's masterpiece and she said it was fun trying to keep up with the notes that seemed to roll right along in the music. Her kids, Mike and Brittany, were on hand. They enjoyed watching their mother do her thing.

All three ladies said they would do it again if the opportunity arose in the future.

Choir Festival 2008



Adele and our choir performed at the Annual Choir Festival It was a fun evening.

Rev Norman Bardsley will be our Guest Preacher on Sunday, Dec 28



Coming in January: The Weekly Bible Memory Verse...

"CALL PRESIDENT BUSH. SINCE HE'S ABOUT TO BE UNEMPLOYED, CAN HE SPEAK AT OUR MEN'S BREAKFAST NEXT SUNDAY?"



Coming to FBC In December



Join us on Sunday, December 21 at 10:30 a.m. for our Traditional Christmas Celebration Worship Service. We will sing the familiar carols and revisit that day when Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

Come hear the story again and join us as we praise God for his amazing gift.

We will have special music and the Pastor's sermon will be titled, "The Purpose of Christmas."



The new pictorial directories of our members and friends are available at church.

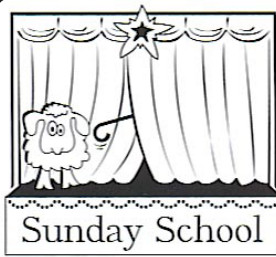
Friendship Sunday December 14

Think about your friends. Take this opportunity to invite them to worship with you at this special time of the year when everyone is more apt to be thinking about God. We will sing familiar carols and hear an upbeat message of hope and joy.

Look for the opportunity and then reach out and do it.



Bring a Friend to Church.



Sunday School Christmas Program

Come to the Annual Christmas Party & Pageant at Church

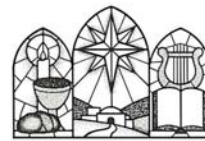
Join us for the fun. Dessert & Coffee...The Pageant...Santa Claus... All on one special day, Sunday, December 14 at 6:00 p.m. This year we are looking for the kids to bring in bottles of shampoo, bars of soap, socks, hats, mittens or gloves to give to Santa to help our local community.

Please let Sandy Stone (886-7077), know if you are coming with children who are not regulars at Sunday School so we can make sure Santa has a little gift for them.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

We will have two wonderful services filled with music, to choose from on Christmas Eve this year.

The service at 7:00 p.m. is geared more toward the family and will feature some special music and a short message by the



Christmas Eve Service

pastor, entitled "Let's Make Room!"

The late night service will be shorter and feature more carols, and this service begins at 11:30 p.m. and ends just 12:10 a.m. as we break into Christmas morning.

Movie Night

Join us for fun and fellowship!

Bring a snack to share.

Saturday,
December 6
at 7:00 p.m.



at the home of
Pastor Cal & Lori Lord
11 Lincoln Avenue,

"The Preacher's Wife"



starring Denzel
Washington and Whitney
Houston



New Purpose Driven Life Study

Did you miss the Purpose Driven Bible Study last time around? We are running it again for the next few weeks on Monday nights beginning on November 17 at 7:00 p.m. . We will explore the question "What on earth am I here for?" using the Scriptures and Rick Warren's book, The Purpose Driven Life. Come join us for a great study. Books are available in the church office.

Ministry Opportunities at FBC

Painting in Nursery Is Ongoing Project



If you are good with a hammer or know how to fix things, we have a job for you to do. If you can hang curtains or use a paint brush, our Property Committee has just the project to get you going.

Right now the gang is working to brighten up our church nursery area. They had their first painting party a few weeks ago and are making plans to do it again. After the painting is done, they want to install some shelving and

then put in a suspended ceiling and add some new lights. If you want to help, speak to Mark Rogers, Pete Adams or Nancy Allen.

Our Property Committee generally meets on the second Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m. They walk through the church and look for projects that need to be done and make plans to do them. If you see something you would like to do, or if you are willing to tackle one of the projects on their list, speak to Ray Deptulski, Mark Rogers or one of the Committee members. They will be happy to have your help.



When Did We See You Hungry?

Our Sunday School kids not only learned about generosity, they lived it last month. The boys and girls in our K -2 class collected a large box of cans and then donated them to our food pantry to help those in need. They set a good example for the rest of us.

Last month we were blessed with food donations from Wildwood Christian School, Laura Kreger's Boy Scout Troop and Peggy Sise's 4 H Club Pony Group.

If you want to donate nonperishable food to the pantry, you can bring them in any time. Bring them to the kitchen. We can use pasta, canned pastas, tuna, fruit juices, cereals, beef stew, canned vegetables & fruit & more...

Coffee Hour Hosts Needed

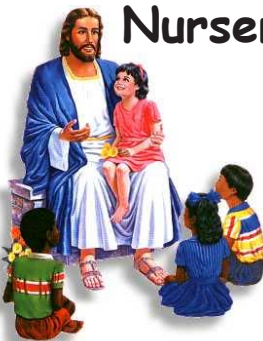
The Deacons are trying something new beginning this month. We are looking for folks to host a weekly coffee hour. All you need to do is come in a little early to set up. We have everything you need, including the directions. If you are interested contact Fran Rogers or Mark Kane. There is a sign up sheet in the upstairs kitchenette.



Responsibilities include:

Setting up before church, serving and clean up afterwards. Hosts are required to prepare coffee, tea, punch and put out the donut holes.

Nursery Volunteers Needed



We are looking for volunteers to help in the church nursery. This is a great ministry that serves our parents and families. Laura Kreger puts together a list of volunteers. Ideally, we would call on two people each week to go down with the children after the Children's Moment. You do not need to be a parent with children using the nursery. Grandparents, folks who love children and teens are also welcome to volunteer. If you are interested contact Laura Kreger or the church office.

Unearthing Your Treasure



Growing our Ministries at First Baptist Church

There is still time to make your pledge for 2009. Pledge cards are available at the back of the sanctuary. You can fill it out and put it in the offering plate or mail it to the church. These pledges will be used to help us make a good faith budget for ministry next year.

Looking Back at November

And the stockings were hung by the chimney with care...

It wasn't exactly the night before Christmas, but about fifteen people gathered to hang the wreaths and decorate the church for the season of Advent. They brought down all the decorations from the Tower and lugged the artificial tree up from the basement. Doris Adams was there to unwrap the nativity sets which are placed in several locations to remind us of the reason for this holy season.



Cindy Costa, and her daughter get in the spirit as they hang the greens.

Choir Festival bring people together who like to sing...



Nancy Hopkins, Patricia Ohlund, Sarah Teft and Oliver Bray.

And those who like to listen.



Rosie Rakowitz, Amy Rezendes and Judy Dupont.



Priscilla Rogers and Nancy Allen check out the wreaths and decide where they should go.

Some enchanted evening...

On November 1 we went to see "The Enchanted Cottage at the Spirit of Broadway Theater. It featured our own Shawn Rucker. The group had a great time and then finished the evening by having a photo taken on the set. The night featured Sue Vanase and two friends, Doris Adams, Dick & Cynthia Strouse, Rosie Main, Susie Rothholz, Gary & Nancy Schuster, Connie Hayward and Pam Martin, Phil & Maureen Postler, Nancy Allen, George Rezendes and the Pastor.



Our Ministry To Youth

A Night of Fun, Faith and Friendship



Our kids traveled up to Springfield, Massachusetts for the annual all nighter known as the Super Bowl. The evening began with a hockey game at the Civic Center hosted by the Springfield Falcons. After the game the kids listened to a youth speaker and attended an on ice rally that featured a zamboni full of prizes.



The gang left the arena and to go rollerskating and were greeted by boxes and boxes of Pizza Hut pizza. Even the pastor put on a pair of skates and rolled around the rink a few times. Joshua LaFlamme put on a pair of roller blades and he took advantage of all the games played on the floor and had a great time.

At 3:00 a.m. the kids were on the roll and they moved to the Chicopee Bowling Alley where they spent the next two hours. Taylor Chaffee was all smiles even at the advanced hour of the evening. Youth Advisor Fred Green wasn't too tired to roll five strikes in a row. He had the high game of the morning. Rachel Lord had a 94 to pace the kids.



The group rolled into town just after 6:00 a.m. and called it a night... or rather a morning.

Do Unto Others...



On November 23 our kids and a few helpers gathered at church to put together twenty five Thanksgiving baskets for the community.

A little later the families began showing up at the church to pick up their packages. The kids carried the bags to their cars and wished them well.

Zelda Earle, Steve Contois, Sandy Stone and Fred Green helped the kids. Chelsey Calkins and Bethany Stone also got help from Maddy Fishkin and her friend Bella.



Sunday School
meets at 9:15 a.m.
each week

Help us fill the mitten tree. Bring in hats, gloves, mittens for the tree and shampoo and bar soap for underneath the tree.



We will be adding them to our winter survival kits for those in need in our neighborhood.

People, Places & Possibilities



We lift up Randy Sargent following his knee surgery. He is hobbling along and getting stronger every day... We think of Doris Adams as she rebounds from a bad case of vertigo... We think of Bob Booth who is battling pneumonia... We continue to lift up Sebastian Lucien as he recovers from lead poisoning... We remember Edith Robinson as she continues to recover from her broken hip... Continue to think of Nikki and Shane Stroud and their boys, Chase and Daniel. The boys are home and doing well... We think of Bethany Stone who has been having knee problems and is undergoing therapy... We pray for Ralph "Buddy" Bowser in our prayers. He has been in Backus as they try to find out what is going on... We remember Chris Widstrom on a recent loss in his family... We think of Pam Maynard in our prayers as she went through some tests recently... We lift up Susie Rothholz's dad, Elmer Dennis, in our prayers... We think of James Murray in our ongoing prayers... We think of Sue Vanase who was down for a bit too...



We lift up Daniel and Chase

We keep Timothy & Karin Rezendes, Kristen Deptulski and Mike Rothholz as they look forward to becoming a parents in the coming months... We keep Mark and Fran Rogers in prayer as they await the arrival of little Julia this Fall...

We continue to think of Jean Roscoe, Ken Taylor, Doris Regets, Jimmy Marino, and Michelle Lord in our prayers...

Ministry Helpers in December

In the Church Nursery:

December 7 - Jeannine Pestey, Bonnie Ambruso & Beth Stone
December 14 - Kelly Bolin & Chelsey Calkins
December 21 - Hired Help
December 28 - Laura Kreger, Fran Rogers & Heather Adams

As Ushers & Greeters

December 7 - Harry Calkins, Lee McFalls, Betsey & Pete Adams
December 14 - George Strouse, Karen Barber, Randy Sargent & Mark Kane
December 21 - Frank Royce, Curt Brockway, Gary & Nancy Schuster
December 28 - Harry Calkins, Lee McFalls, Betsey & Pete Adams

As Worship Assistants

December 7 - Deacons
December 14 - Nancy Allen
December 21 - Bob Walker
December 28 - Gwyn Green

As Counters

December 7 - June Deptulski & George Strouse
December 14 - Frank Royce & Bob Walker
December 21 - Nancy Allen & Gwyn Green
December 28 - Karen Barber & Mary Brockway

People News

Andrew Seder and his fiance, Rebecca, are planning a December wedding. Congrats! Sarah Lord will be returning home from a semester abroad in Sydney, Australia on December 7th. The whole family will be at JFK to greet her... It was nice to see Daryl Alves and his son in church recently. Daryl is home from Iraq and will be getting out of the Marine Corps shortly... Mark Ambruso began his new position as Assistant Principal at Bacon Academy last month...

Scott and Jessica Royce are settled into their new home in Ammon, Idaho. That's not the big news though. Scott just became a grandfather when his daughter, Sarah, delivered a baby boy, Jerry. Of course that makes Bruce & Alys Royce (pictured to the right)



great grandparents. They don't seem to be upset by that notion. Congrats! Oliver Bray was back in Maine over the holidays for a visit with his mom. While he was there he stopped in to see Edith Robinson and she sends her love... Chip & Michelle Chaffee and the girls went out to Ohio to visit family over the holiday. By the way, Michelle, Lisa Lapointe, Erica Corbett and Cal Lord are among those who will be helping out at the Extreme Home Makeover this month. They are also all going on the Mission trip in February... Yolanda Charles is working at Krispy Kreme Donuts at the Mohegan Sun. She works the late shift so stop in and see her if you are there... Kenny Diehl opened up his own business this fall. We wish him well...

Did we miss you? Drop us a note and let us know what is happening in your neck of the woods.

FBC Hoops 2008 is Underway



The FBC Basketball team played St. Joseph's School and came away with their first victory of the season in a lopsided win. The kids showed good passing skills and teamwork as they launched what looks to be a very bright season.

Come watch them play if you get a chance.



Check us out on the web at www.fbcnorwich.org. You will find our monthly newsletter and lots more. You can keep up with what is at happening at church at www.firstbaptistlife.blogspot.com.

Go to www.pastorcal.blogspot.com and you will find Pastor Lord's musings and suggested links to devotional sites.

Wit, Wisdom & Wackiness...

Christmas Acrostic



C is for the Child born that night to be our light. (John 8:12)

H is for holy is His name. (Rev.4:8)

R is for rejoice with gladness & joy. (Luke 1:14)

I is for Immanuel, God with us. (Is.7:14,) John 1:14)

S is for the star that led the Wise men to Him. (Matt.2:2)

T is for the truth & grace that was sent our way. (John 1:14)

M is for Mary laying Him in swaddling clothes in the manger. (Luke 2:7)

A is for angels singing songs of joy. (Luke 2:14)

S is for salvation.

Christmas in the air!

It's Christmas in the air!
Snowflakes in December
Children site with Santa's toys
Their gloves wiping crystalline ice,
Off shiny plastic
Our breath thick like fog
Mingles in oneness
As we stand back to
Look upon the completion
Of our Christmas trees
Giggling from heady wine
And feelings shared
It's Christmas in the air!



The Mike Cord

It was Christmas eve. The preacher was wired for sound with a lapel mike, and as he preached, he moved briskly about the platform, jerking the mike cord as he went. He moved to one side, getting wound up in the cord and nearly tripping before jerking it again.

After several circles and jerks, a little girl in the third pew leaned toward her mother and whispered, "If he gets loose, will he hurt us?"



Merry Christmas!
No Sunday School
on December 28th.

The Christmas Present

by Billy M. Smallwood

I heard a knock on my door one Christmas Eve, As I looked out my window a man I could see, he was cold and seemed so lonely and upon a bended knee he asked can you spare anything for me to eat...

I opened up the door and as I helped him in, he looked up at me with such a peaceful grin, As he drank down some coffee and had a bite to eat, I put more wood on the fire so he could warm his feet...

Over there by the fireplace he warmed his tired hands, I wonder where did he come from, this quiet white haired man, but I wasn't at all afraid of his peaceful ways you see, this man dressed in poor, almost as poor as me...

As he left he turned and thanked me for all I had done, but he forgot to take his gloves, so out the door I run, He was gone in the blizzard and I couldn't hardly see, so I took his ole glove's back to the house with me...

Just a little after midnight I awoke in the dark, there wasn't a bit of fire just glowing cinders in the dark, and where I'd placed his gloves by my little christmas tree, there laid a brand new pair, and a Christmas Card for me... and it read...

You gave me shelter and food to keep me warm, you even tried to bring me my gloves in the storm, so here's you a new pair,... the finest ever seen... as an angel of the Lord

I'll be sure to tell the King....Merry Christmas.....



Honey, our lawyer wishes us,
but in no way guarantees,
a Merry Christmas.

Using our Gifts in Ministry

LOCAL INCOME

	Budget 08	Budget 09
Pledges	103,100.00	125,515.00
Miscellaneous Collections	30,000.00	32,500.00
Church School	600.00	600.00
Trust Fund Income	20,000.00	20,000.00
Fund Raisers	2,000.00	500.00
Youth Activities	-	-
Special gifts	21,560.00	
Uncollectibles	(1,660.00)	
Total Income	175,600.00	179,115.00

EXPENSES

Personnel

	Budget 08	Budget 09
Pastor's Package	60,000.00	62,500.00
1. Cash Salary *	27,100.00	29,600.00
2. Housing Allowance *	18,500.00	18,500.00
3. Utilities allowance *	7,600.00	7,600.00
Benefits & Reimbursables		
M & M Pension	9,600.00	10,000.00
Health Insurance	16,100.00	16,100.00
4 Flex spending *	2,500.00	2,500.00
Continuing Ed	1,700.00	1,700.00
5 Pastor S S Offset *	4,300.00	4,300.00
Convention Expense	300.00	1,000.00
Subtotal Pastor's Sal & Ben	87,700.00	91,300.00

Other Employees

6 Organist^	11,200.00	11,700.00
7 Reg. Custodian^ & Services	8,200.00	8,200.00
8 Extra Custodial Work^		
9 Clerical Assistant^	6,500.00	7,000.00
Pulpit Supply/sabatical		
Pulpit Supply	750.00	750.00
FICA for Staff	2,000.00	2,100.00
Workers Comp Insurance	1,200.00	1,300.00
Subtotal Other Employees	29,850.00	31,050.00
Subtotal Personnel	117,550.00	122,350.00

Buildings & Grounds

Church Building

Heating Fuel	12,000.00	12,000.00
Utilities	5,500.00	6,000.00
Telephone	1,100.00	1,000.00
Refuse Collection	250.00	230.00
Maintenance & Repairs	2,000.00	2,000.00
Snow Removal	1,200.00	1,200.00
Cleaning Supplies	750.00	900.00
Insurance	3,200.00	3,400.00
Subtotal Bldgs & Grounds	26,000.00	26,730.00

A Church Budget is not about dollars and cents. It is about ministry. The money only opens the door for God to make things happen. A good budget reflects well on the work of God...



Youth Basketball Outreach...



Vacation Bible School...



Community Worship Services...



Short term mission work...

Using our Gifts in Ministry



Christian Education...



Sports ministry outreach...



Ministry to Youth...

The Budget Committee has prepared this preliminary budget for your consideration. Once the pledges come in they will go back and revise it accordingly and then present it at the Annual Meeting. You can make ministry happen by prayerfully submitted your pledge and adding it to the ministry totals to help us meet our goal.

Pledge cards are available at the church. Pick one up or give the office a call and one will be sent to you.

If you have any comments or questions on this budget, you can address them to George Strouse, Budget Committee Chairman.

Trustee Repair Fund

Major Projects	2,500.00	2,500.00
Tables & Chairs	300.00	150.00
Access 2000 Debt Reduction	6,250.00	-
Subtotal Trustee Repair Fund	9,050.00	2,650.00

Ministry, Worship & Education

Worship

Music Committee	2,000.00	2,000.00
Flower Committee	100.00	100.00
Gertrude Rose	30.00	30.00
Peterson Memorial	125.00	125.00
Nursery Fund	100.00	100.00
Rico Flower Fund	30.00	30.00
Worship Subtotal	2,385.00	2,385.00

Ministry

Pastor's Auto	3,500.00	4,000.00
Office Budget		
Postage	1,200.00	1,200.00
Subscriptions	200.00	200.00
Office Machine Maint.	1,500.00	1,500.00
Paper & Supplies	2,000.00	1,800.00
Computer Upgrades	500.00	500.00
Subtotal Office Budget	5,400.00	5,200.00

Stewardship

Envelopes	325.00	350.00
Campaign Lit.	200.00	250.00
Van Expenses		
Insurance	1,000.00	1,000.00
Maint. & Reg.	1,000.00	1,000.00

Miscellaneous

Softball	300.00	300.00
Advertising	1,350.00	1,400.00
Contingency Fund	850.00	850.00
Pastor's Discretionary	1,000.00	1,000.00
Subtotal Ministry	14,925.00	15,350.00

Christian Education

Sunday School		
Curriculum	1,500.00	1,500.00
Supplies & Misc	200.00	200.00
Rally Day	100.00	100.00
Christmas Party	300.00	300.00
Children's Day	200.00	200.00
Education Program	100.00	100.00
Education Consultant	5,000.00	5,000.00
Youth Ministry		
Basketball	2,000.00	1,500.00
Youth Group & Activities	750.00	750.00
Youth Trip	500.00	
Subtotal Christian Ed	10,650.00	9,650.00

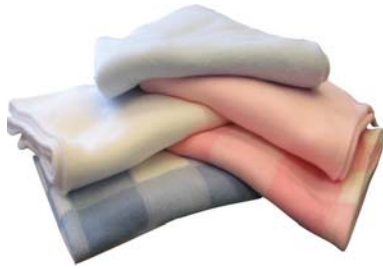
Total Expenses

180,560.00	179,115.00
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Engaged in Mission

Who Is My Neighbor?

We will be answering that question with concrete action on Saturday, January 24, 2009. That's the date when we will be reaching out into our neighborhood with a gift of love. As part of our "missional church" project, we are putting together a winter survival kit which will include the "no sew" blankets so many of you have put together, an informational packet on energy saving from Norwich Public Utilities, laundry detergent, socks, mittens, gloves, hats, toothpaste, tooth brushes, shampoo, soup mix and other goodies.



We are going to provide 50 of these kits. Each of them will cost about \$22. The bulk of the money has come from a grant we received from National Ministries of ABCUSA.

We hope to work with the Martin Luther King Center and make them the distribution point. We will provide a hot lunch to those who visit us. Flyers will be going out to the neighborhood in Mid January.

We are still looking for help with a few things. First, we want to put together a selection of grocers coupons for the people. You can help by bringing in the coupons from your Sunday newspapers over the next several weeks. Put them in a box at the back of the sanctuary. Second, we are looking for any leftover plasticware, paper plates and napkins you may have from the holiday season. Bring them in and we will use them for the luncheon at the King Center.



Amanda Duntz invited her mom, Kathy, and members of the her family to help with the blankets. They had a lot of fun.

Our Sunday School is also helping. They will be bringing in hats, mittens, shampoo and bar soap for Santa. You are welcome to join the fun and bring in some of these items too. Place them on or beneath the mitten tree in the back entrance and we gratefully pass them along.

peak to Curt Brockway, Amanda Duntz, Judy Dupont, Sue Ferguson, Phil Postler, Jodi Vara or Cynthia Strouse for more info.

A Missional Church is a congregation that sees its ministry extending beyond the walls of the building and impacting the community around it with the love of God. It is made up of people who see their every day activities as an extension of their faith. Over the next year I hope to lift up some of our members whose faith is seen in the places they serve God.

A Community Servant



Dick Strouse isn't vocal when it comes to his faith, but it has influenced his commitments. Over the last twenty five years he has served on our Board of Trustees. Yet that is not the full extent of his work in the kingdom. He has also volunteered on many committees and boards of community organizations. Most recently he completed a three year term as President of the Backus Hospital Board of Trustees. When asked why he chose to serve, he simply said that he believed in the work that the hospital was doing to care for the community. His work became his ministry and all of us are better off because of it.



Members of Central Baptist Church hosted the Interfaith Luncheon for the hungry in November. The lunch is held at St. Marks' Lutheran Church. If you would like to get involved speak to Cynthia Strouse or Amanda Duntz.



Would you like to become a mission partner with Rick and Mercy Barnes in Mexico? We are looking for 12 families who will give a gift of \$50 to directly support the ministry in Northern Mexico. Your gift will help Mercy and Rick continue the great work they are doing. Speak to the Pastor if you want to accept the challenge and take a month in the coming year.

Our Ministry To The Family

Merry & Meaningful

12 ways to make the most of your holidays.

by Jeanne Winters

As you enter this year's festive season, consider incorporating new traditions and time for personal reflection into your celebration. Here are 12 fresh ideas just in time for the holidays:

1. Thinking of Thankfulness:

Find a beautiful blank journal, or create one with handmade papers. Then write the year's blessings in it. This can be a private exercise or a family tradition. If you choose to make it a family activity, have each member write briefly and allow time to read past entries. Or, you may prefer a year-end journal to be completed after the holidays. Either way, it's sure to become a treasured keepsake.

2. Joy to Your World:

Share the Christmas message with everyone who visits your home. Cut gold or silver shimmer fabric into squares. Place several wrapped candies and a copy of a holiday verse such as Isaiah 9:6, Luke 2:11, or Matthew 1:21 inside. Then tie the squares up with sparkly ribbon. Keep a basket of these favors by your front door to bestow on your package-delivery person or children selling door-to-door.

3. Guiding Lights:

I never tire of seeing fine homes gleaming with colorful Christmas lights. The usual line of cars tells me I'm not the only one who enjoys the splendor! This year when you tour a glittery neighborhood, choose one decorated house and one undecorated house, say a prayer for the people who live there, and continue to pray for them every day thereafter until Christmas.

4. Do Unto Others:

Bring a little Christmas cheer to a "twin family" in need by providing them with a few presents. A twin family is one with the same makeup as yours (single; married with no children; single mother with two children; etc.). Call your church or local social services department for contacts and shopping guidance.

5. A Tisket, a Tasket ...:

Instead of exchanging gifts with your girlfriends or coworkers, arrange a party to package gift baskets for a local women's shelter or a pregnancy care center. First contact the director about specific needs and quantities. Then create a list of items and ask friends to sign up for what they'll provide. When you gather, gift-wrap cardboard boxes or dress up inexpensive wicker baskets, then fill them with your donations. Relax over tea and holiday treats before making your delivery.

6. The Gift of You:

Often the presents we shop so intently for are quickly forgotten. For a more memorable gift, why not try doing something? Think about what you might do for your spouse, friend, or parent that would have a longer-lasting, more positive impact on your relationship. Would your spouse appreciate a date night? Do your parents long for more quality time with you? Don't be afraid to ask—it doesn't have to be a surprise.

7. Gothic Gingerbread:

Try your hand at a gingerbread church. You can work alone or with friends or family members. Pour some apple cider, start the Christmas music, and get to work. Choose a different country each year and create its most famous cathedral or simplest country church in miniature. Travel books can provide ideas. Then, pray for that nation throughout the month of December.

8. Happy Birthday, Jesus:

Offer Jesus a symbolic gift in honor of his birthday. Give him an area of your life you desire to change—an emotion, an activity, or a relationship—and physically wrap a box to represent it. Do this individually or as a family. Create a family present to display every year by painting an unfinished wooden box and tying it with a silk ribbon.

9. Serve the Servants:

December is an extra busy month for church staffers who work extended hours due to holiday programs and an influx of visitors. Deliver a hot meal to one or more of these families to help lighten their load.

10. Simple Pleasures:

Set aside an annual night to relish simple, old-fashioned joys. Pop some corn and snuggle with a book of sentimental short stories of Christmases past. If you have kids, plan a night of games and pizzas. Saunter through the snow-covered woods, leaving a trail of snow angels behind. Or, if you live in a warmer climate, grab a blanket, head outside, and search for the star in the East. Whatever you do, take reprieve from worries and reflect on Christ's humble birth.

11. Guest of Honor:

Set a place of honor for Jesus at your Christmas dinner table as a reminder of his presence.

12. Forgiveness Eve:

The end of a year is a wonderful opportunity to engage in earnest reflection. Take time to forgive anyone who's wronged you during the year and for whom you still harbor resentment or bitterness. Begin the new year with a refreshed heart!

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A Powerful Witness

Once Upon a Foggy Christmas

By Chad Darnell

It was a dark and stormy night. No, really. That is how this story goes.

In 1972 I was a college student spending my first Christmas away from home. To be gone from all the traditions of my family and childhood was a novelty. It was one I was determined to survive with good cheer.

But as the days grew closer to Christmas and I saw the other students around me slowly begin to depart to celebrate the holidays at their homes I grew melancholy.

Lights and decorations and all the elements of a cheery season surrounded me. Mom had sent me several holiday survival packages, one including my well-worn Christmas stocking that I had to hang from a file cabinet. I even had non-stop Christmas music to put me in the mood. But it wasn't Christmas and I knew it.

My plans were simple. I would work my part time job in a newspaper printing plant. I would study and get ahead at school. And I would keep my expenses down, the whole point in missing Christmas in the first place.

Two days before Christmas I just snapped. It had been raining quite a bit but in a moment of sentimental despair I decided to don my heavy coat and hitchhike home for Christmas. Home was only 746 miles away. I had no idea how long it would take to get there and I had no plan in place to help me to return when I needed to be back at work two days after Christmas.

I got no more than 40 miles into my journey. After walking for a while in a light drizzle a man in a faded pickup stopped and asked me where I was headed. When I told him, he gave me a skeptical glance. "Do you know there is a storm expected tonight?" he asked me.

"Yep," I said. In reality, that was a detail that had escaped my attention.

We didn't talk for the first thirty minutes. But as the old truck chugged up an incline and began to sputter the man asked me what I knew about cars.

"Not much," I said. This time I told the truth.

He expressed his regret as the old truck ground to a halt. As we sat there on the side of the road he made no move to get out to see what had happened to the truck. He just sighed.

Judging from his appearance, the man was likely in his mid-70s. His faded denim jacket, heavy work pants and thick hands gave the impression that he was a no-nonsense fellow who knew plenty of hard work in his time. I found it somewhat unbelievable that he did not know what was wrong with the vehicle. But it was more than clear that the old truck was more like a trusted old friend who didn't require a lot of maintenance-- until, of course, that dark and stormy night.

As we sat there on the side of the mountain road, the temperature dropped and fog settled in around us. He kept his lights on for a while but soon turned them off to save the battery. We never got out to check under the hood. It just didn't seem important to him.

"Are you going home for Christmas?" he asked me. So I told him my story. With a tiny twinkle in his eye, he asked me if I really thought it was worth it to go home for just a day or two.

I felt at first as if my father was interrogating me. That look he gave me impressed upon me the foolishness of my actions. I felt like a real child in this man's presence. He seemed sensible and businesslike. To strike out on foot to cover more than 700 miles in

less than two days seemed in retrospect to be a very immature thing to do.

But he didn't chastise me. He didn't even express an opinion. He just asked me what made Christmas so worth it.

I didn't need to think much about my reply. I had been feeling it for weeks. As the late summer turned into fall I was anticipating Christmas as much as I ever

did at home. In a way, I was excited for it. I wanted to prove to my self that I was independent. I felt grown up to be facing Christmas alone.

Right after Halloween I began to put in place those items that would give me the familiar feel that I love so much about the holidays. I drove one of my roommates absolutely insane by listening to tapes of Christmas music by Dean Martin and Bing Crosby. Everything my mother had sent me went up on the walls. I was having a great Christmas -- all by myself.

But what I tried to explain to him was the void I felt in spite of the decorations, the music and the lights. Christmas was no time to be alone. He took it all in and sighed. He stared off ahead into the foggy dark. But he didn't say a word.

"Yes," I said. "It is definitely worth it to me to be home for Christmas."

He looked over at me long and hard. I wished I could tell what he was thinking. Did he think I was just a kid? I was sure I looked very foolish to this man. I decided to change the subject and I asked him about his plans for Christmas.

"Oh," he mumbled. "I don't have no plans." And that pretty much ended the conversation about Christmas between us.

Some time later a highway patrol car pulled up behind us. The trooper inquired of our trouble, looked under the hood and offered us a ride back to town. Some nine hours had passed since I began and I was no further on my Christmas quest.

The man shook my hand as we parted and wished me well on my Christmas journey. I wished him a Merry Christmas. And then I went home to think about what to do next.

I didn't have to think long. Once again, I put on my coat and started walking -- this time in absolute darkness, in the dead of night. I had nothing better to do this Christmas. Going home was my best and only option.

I got picked up by a cheerful man who sang Jingle Bells for about 60 miles before finally dropping me off as he went on his



A Powerful Witness

way. Though tired, it felt good to finally make some progress. I ate a package of doughnuts and a carton of milk where he dropped me off but soon I set out on foot yet again. I headed up the road, my back to oncoming traffic, my thumb poking out every time I heard a car whiz by.

Soon I heard the squeak of brakes and the low rumble of a vehicle as it stopped beside me. It was the same faded truck --- driven by the same man. "Get in," was all he said to me.

Upon inquiring about how the truck got running again he explained that the tow truck driver replaced a couple of spark plug wires that had rotted. He said the truck had always been reliable but was just getting a little old. Judging from the cold air coming up from the rusted floorboard that much was evident.

He told me that he was impressed with my determination. And that since he had nothing better to do, he would take me all the way home for Christmas. I was stunned. I thanked him and told him it was not necessary to go so far out of his way just for me.

It was then that he told me his story.

In the 1930s this man had a family – a wife and three children. Like so many others they suffered for want of employment and he left the family to pursue any kind of employment he could find. He sent money home every chance he could. But because he worked at so many jobs he failed to write much with the money he sent. Weeks turned into months, months turned into years. He just had to keep working so that the family could stay afloat and so that he could have a future. But in that time they failed to share much of their lives with each other.

When he finally returned home a few

years later he found that his wife had obtained a divorce and married another man. His children did not recognize him.

Trying to put his life together he returned to work and it became his life. He worked as a lineman for the power company. At all hours of the day or night, he would drive in his old truck in rural areas looking for troubles with the power lines and responding to emergencies.

He confessed to me that Christmas was his most difficult time of the year. Only an occasional storm would interrupt his thoughts of happier times as a young married man and as a child. With his parents dead and his wife and kids a distant memory, Christmas was a dreaded season filled with bitter thoughts and lonely moments. He only want it over with – every Christmas.

As I heard his story I became very sad. This was my first Christmas alone. Who knows how many it had been for him. It was difficult to talk to this man. By this point, we had spent several hours together before he shared with me his history. He was volunteering information slowly but I did not feel it my place to ask many questions. He seemed sad but very private. I wanted to respect his space.

But I couldn't resist asking just one thing.

"Why are you taking me home?" I asked.

He stared ahead, foot on the gas, his right arm resting on the gear shift. He was in thought. I feared for a second he didn't hear me. He seemed to take a long time to respond.

"There are two reasons to take you home for Christmas, young man." he said. "First, when you feel the need to be home for Christmas you should never ignore it.

And second, as I said before, I ain't got no plans."

Once that was said he seemed to brighten. In a way, it was like a cloud lifted or that something heavy he was carrying was finally put down. He asked me about what I could expect about Christmas at home. And from that we had a wonderful conversation about Christmas traditions and memories. He even shared with me a story of hunting ducks with his father on Christmas morning. His smile at the memory warmed me and gave me hope for him.

By the time the miles were spent, and we had pulled up into the driveway of the house, there was the good, familiar feel of Christmas in the air and between us. My mother rushed from house as she saw me getting out of the old truck, her hands to her face in surprise, tears right on the surface.



The man did not get out of his truck. In fact, he started to back out of the driveway before I had a chance to shut the door. I rushed over to his window and thrust my hand through it.

"Thank you," I said to him. "And a Merry Christmas to you."

"The same to you and yours," he said, with that twinkle in his eye. And with that he backed out of the drive and drove down the street.

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Kitchen Project Put On Hold Until Summer of 2009



At last month's meeting of the Board of Trustees we spent some time talking about the Kitchen project and the Capital Campaign. The final cost of our new kitchen is going to be about \$100,000.

Curt Brockway is putting together a team to raise the money. Preliminary plans call for us to look for gifts to be paid

between three and five years. With the uncertainty of the economic markets, we decided to adjust our timeline for the project.

We hope to begin our financial campaign in the Spring and look to do the construction in the summer or early Fall of 2009.

Mission Mexico 2009 Ready to Answer God's Call

Last Sunday afternoon we met to finalize our plans for the 2009 mission trip to Mexicali, Mexico to work with our missionaries, Rick and Mercy Barnes, and the churches of the Baja region. The dates for the trip are February 24 - March 3.



Returning team members include; Nancy Allen, June Deptulski, Amanda Duntz, Mark Kane, Lisa Lapointe, George Rezendes, Pastor Michelle Madsen Bibeau and myself.

Newcomers include Michelle Chaffee, Erica Corbett, Amanda Duntz's friend, Amber Manning. Sarah Rodriguez from Buenas Nuevas and two of her friends, Rob and Julie Wagner are also signed up. The Wagners own a construction business locally and bring some additional expertise to the mission. June Deptulski's sister-in-law Patty Bober and her daughter, Sarah will be joining us as well. Central Baptist is sending Mark Salomon, Sue Fage and Ann Keckes.

That is a total of twenty who are committed to going. We have another two who just need to get approval before committing 100%.

The total cost of the trip will run close to \$14,900 and we will be looking for donations. As part of our fundraising efforts we will also be planning and hosting a few fundraising efforts. So stay tuned. The adventure is about to begin as we share God's love in Mexico.



If you would like to donate to the cause you can do so by mailing a check to the church and marking it "mission Mexico" in the memo line. Any donation, large or small, will help. This is one more way that our churches are making a difference in the world and you can be a part of it with your gifts.

Expenses

Contribution	\$1,500 - \$2,000 toward the mission project
Lodging	\$17.50 per day for shelter and food at the seminary (\$105.50 per person per week)
Airfare	\$300 per person
Car rental	\$600 per vehicle. (4 total)
Hotel in SD	\$700 6 rooms - one night
Gas	\$500
Miscellaneous	\$400

Total cost of trip \$14,900.00

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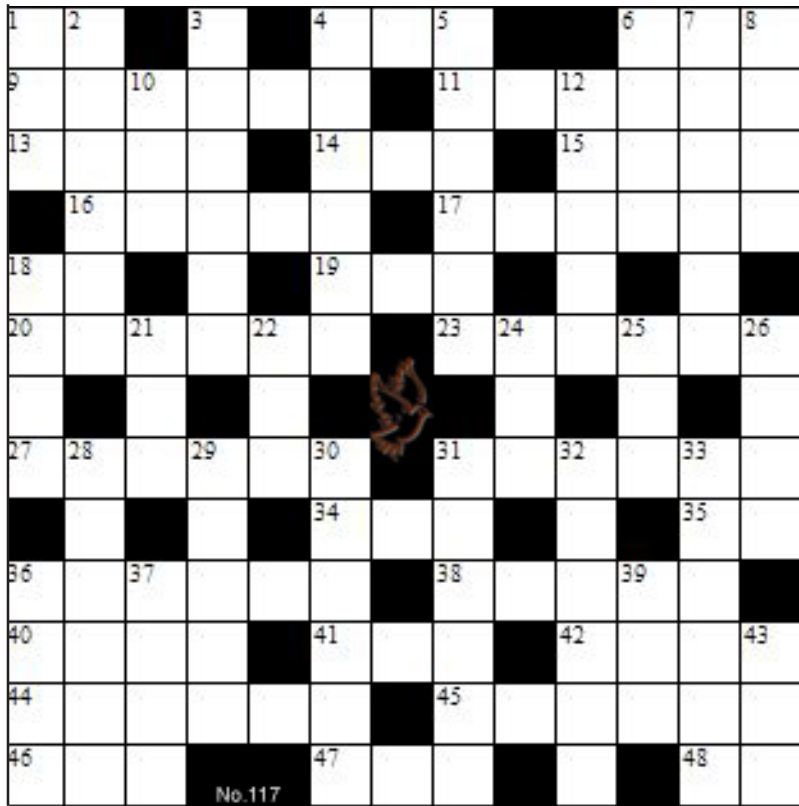
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 First Baptist Church of Norwich
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Summer Sunday Morning Worship 9:30 a.m.
 Fall Schedule includes: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m.
 Worship at 10:30 a.m.

Rev. Dr. Clayton A. Lord, Jr., Pastor
 Adele DiBiagio,
 Organist & Choir Director
 Sandy Stone, Administrative Assistant
 Fred Green Sr., Youth Activities Co-ordinator
 Harry & Doris Calkins, Carol Calkins, and Bob Walker are the Production Assistants.

Wit, Wisdom & Wackiness



No. 117

ACROSS

- 1 ____, my lord, what shall we do?" the servant asked (2 Kings 6:15)
 4 Go to the ____, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise (Prov 6:6)
 6 ____ to them! They have taken the way of Cain (Jude 11)
 9 like a lion among the beasts of the ____ (Mic 5:8)
 11 Greetings, you who are ____ favored! The Lord is with you (Luke 1:28)
 13 on your way in safety, and your ____ will not stumble (Prov 3:23)
 14 part of 13 across
 15 sons and thirty grandsons, who ____ on seventy donkeys (Judg 12:14)
 16 Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, ____ be with you (Luke 24:36)
 17 the building fitly ____ together groweth unto an holy temple (Eph 2:21) KJV
 18 She said ____ herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed." (Matt 9:21)
 19 Whoever flatters his neighbor is spreading a ____ for his feet (Prov 29:5)
 20 O LORD my God, I called to you for help and you ____ me (Ps 30:2)

- 23 at his waist was a belt with a dagger in its ____ (2 Sam 20:8)
 27 to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, ____, Philadelphia (Rev 1:11)
 31 of lions and lionesses, of ____ and darting snakes (Isa 30:6)
 34 and a quarter of a ____ of seed pods for five shekels (2 Kings 6:25)
 35 Yes, it is ____ you say, Jesus replied (Matt 27:11)
 36 occupation
 38 He is able to open the scroll and its ____ seals (Rev 5:5)
 40 second son of Adam (Gen 4:1-2)
 41 The ____ who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man (Matt 13:37)
 42 and my couch will ____ my complaint (Job 7:13)
 44 Smite the ____ of the door, that the posts may shake (Amos 9:1) KJV
 45 But small is the gate and ____ the road that leads to life (Matt 7:14)
 46 He is demon-possessed and raving ____ . Why listen to him? (John 10:19-20)
 47 But Jacob replied, "I will not ____ you go unless you bless me." (Gen 32:26)
 48 Come, follow ____ Jesus said, and I will make you fishers of men (Matt 4:18-20)

DOWN

- 1 Therefore each of you must put ____ falsehood and speak truthfully (Eph 4:25)
 2 the stork, any kind of heron, the ____ and the bat (Lev 11:19)
 3 Paul greeted them and reported in ____ what God had done (Acts 21:19)
 4 Esther summoned Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs assigned to ____ her (Est 4:5)
 5 their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their ____ (Rev 9:21)
 6 "May your God, ____ you serve continually, rescue you!" (Dan 6:16)
 7 David was the youngest. The three ____ followed Saul (1 Sam 17:14)
 8 for one official is ____ by a higher one, and over them both are (Eccl 5:8)
 10 the gazelle, the ____ deer, the wild goat, the ibex (Deut 14:5)
 12 the ____ harvest will fail, and the harvest of fruit (Isa 32:10)
 18 the wisdom of ____ world is foolishness in God's sight (1 Cor 3:19)
 21 Look at the birds of the ____ ; they do not sow or reap (Matt 6:26)
 22 The sons of Benjamin: Gera, Naaman, ____, Rosh (Gen 46:21)
 24 After the Lord Jesus ____ spoken to them, he was taken up into (Mark 16:19)
 25 Abimelech took an ____ in his hand, and cut down a bough (Judg 9:48) KJV
 26 Egypt will ____ like a fleeing serpent (Jer 46:22)
 28 ____ and all the princes of Kedar were your customers (Ezek 27:21)
 29 I have not ____ in a house from the day I brought Israel (1 Chron 17:5)
 30 You are worthy to take the ____ and to open its seals (Rev 5:9)
 31 though I am ____ from you in body, I am present with you (Col 2:5)
 32 there shall be earthquakes in ____ places (Mark 13:8) KJV
 33 Do not accept a ____ for the life of a murderer (Num 35:31)
 36 Be careful, keep ____ and don't be afraid (Isa 7:4)
 37 ____ your heart and not your garments (Joel 2:13)
 39 And he touched the man's ____ and healed him (Luke 22:51)
 43 bring two male lambs and one ____ lamb a year old (Lev 14:10)