



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



February 2009



Because We Care! FBC Takes To The Neighborhood With Gifts.

Oliver Bray and Phil Postler unload our Winter Survival Kits at the Martin Luther King Center on Saturday. We gave away fifty kits and several other goodies as we reached out in love to our Neighbors on the West Side..

More news inside:

- * Photos from our Fundraisers at Papa Ginos and Friendlys
- * Missional Church project becomes reality at MLK Center
- * Mission Team to be comissioned on February 22nd
- * Basketball team goes to 6 - 0
- * Wit, wisdom and wackiness

Lenten Series will begin on Ash
Wednesday, February 25 at Lee
Memorial United Methodist at 7:00 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 February

February 1, 2009

Communion Sunday

Responsive Reading - Psalm 111

Scripture: Mark 1:21-28

Sermon: "Wonderful Words of Power & Grace"

February 8, 2009

Responsive Reading - Psalm 147:1-11

Scripture: I Corinthians 9:16-23

Sermon: "A Tool Shed for God"

February 15, 2009

Responsive Reading - Psalm 30

Scripture: Mark 1:40-45

Sermon: "God Loves Me!"

February 22, 2009

Commissioning Service for our Short Term Missionaries to Mexico

Responsive Reading - Psalm 50:1-6

Scripture: Mark 9:2-9

Sermon: "Surviving the Roller Coaster of Life"

March 1, 2009

Pastor will be away

Service will be led by the Praise Team and feature special music and testimonies.

We will have our Communion Service for March on the second Sunday, March 8th.

Love has nothing to do with what you are expecting to get, it's what you are expected to give - which is everything.

-Vittorio Alfieri

Every week we make an audio tape of the worship service. If you would like a copy, speak to Fred Green or Steve Contois.



Most of the Pastor's sermons are on-line at our church web site. You can look them up by going to www.fbcnorwich.org



Journey to Jerusalem

"When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem." Luke 9:51

Norwich Area Ecumenical Lenten Worship Services 2009

Wednesdays at 7 p.m.

February 25 Lee Memorial United Methodist Church
March 4 Park Congregational Church
March 11 First Congregational Church, Norwichtown
March 18 First Baptist Church
March 25 United Congregational Church
April 1 Central Baptist Church

Refreshments and fellowship following.



Ministry Opportunities at FBC

Join Us! A Jewelry Sale in Time For Valentine's Day



Pick up a gift for that special someone and help our Mission Team at the same time. Lyn and Trina Edwards will display their fine line of jewelry for us from 11:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, February 8 at church. You'll get deeply discounted prices and also know that a percentage of the profits will go to our mission team. Invite your friends to see the assortment and then make someone happy with your purchase of a great Valentine's gift for that special person in your life.



ABCCONN's Annual Spring Fling

March 7, 2009

First Baptist Church,
Stratford

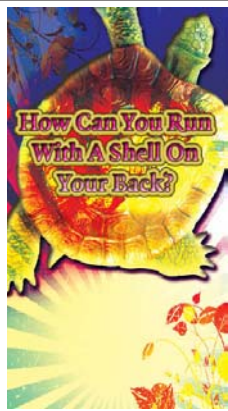
8:45 am—2:45 pm

A Day of
Inspiration and
Learning
"Walking with
Jesus: Finding God
in the Unexpected"



First Baptist Church of
Stratford
1301 Stratford Avenue,
Stratford, 06615

Youth To Visit Spirit of Broadway Theater on Sunday



We have secured some tickets for the Sunday, February 8 matinee performance of How Can You Run With A Shell on Your Back. Check in with the church office to see if we have any extra ones if you are interested in going with us. This is a great play that everyone will enjoy.

The show begins at 2:00 p.m. and features our own Shawn Rucker and a very talented cast of characters.

Coffee Hour Hosts Needed

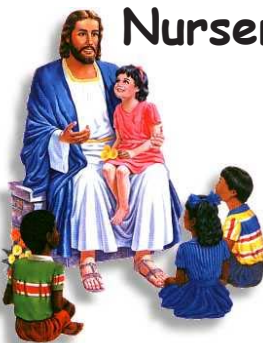
The Deacons are trying something new beginning this month. We are looking for folks to host a weekly coffee hour. All you need to do is come in a little early to set up. We have everything you need, including the directions. If you are interested contact Fran Rogers or Mark Kane. There is a sign up sheet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

Luncheon Servers and Cooks Needed

On the third Sunday of every month we cook a meal for between forty and eighty people at St. Mark's Lutheran Church.

It is a great ministry and the people are so appreciative.

Several folks have been helping out since we began in February of 2006. There is always room for others to help.

The kitchen crew is responsible for purchasing the food (We have an account) and cooking it on the day of the meal. Talk to Cynthia Strouse for more details on that.

The host and servers need to set up the room, serve the meal and clean up afterwards. Talk to Amanda Duntz get more info on that.

Not sure? Come help out next month and see for yourselves.

Looking Back at January

Lunch at Papa Ginos



The Fitchett family came out to celebrate Christian's first birthday.



Luis Pabon, Stan Boyes and Lori Lord chat after lunch.



Bob Duntz plays the waiter for friends.



Three generations of the Strouse family.

Dinner at Friendlys



Sarah & Patty Bober welcomed everyone.



June and Ray Deptulski brought friends.



Judy Vickers and Janet LaFlamme get the award for the largest group of the evening.



Ginger and Bob Sullivan enjoy date night.

Saturday at the MLK Center



Amanda, Cynthia and Sue went door to door with flyers announcing the date.



The kids were excited about the toys.



Sue, Oliver and Cynthia discuss strategy.



We gave away fifty survival kits.

Looking Back at January

Open Mic Was Great Fun!

The mood was light but the music was inspiring as several folks got together for an Open Mic at church last month. Our Praise team led the way with several new numbers.

Cheryl Dutrumble and her dad, Paul Johnson, shared a few songs. They even invited Anna up to sing on one of them. Bruce Shanks and Cliff Vanase also added solo pieces to the evening.

The best part of the night was when they all came together to sing "I'll Fly Away." It was a moving sight and sound experience. Watch for the announcement of our next one in a couple of months. You will be blessed if you come out and enjoy the fun.



Steelers Had Home Field Advantage at Our Super Bowl Party



The television was surrounded by a terrible towel, Steeler bobble heads and DVD's of past Super bowl history. You could say that this offered the Pittsburgh Steelers a home field advantage at our annual party. When the Pastor went around waving the terrible towel it was so funny it was almost too much to take.

Sixteen of us gathered to watch the game, work on a puzzle and chat around all kinds of goodies on the night of the big game. The game proved exciting right down to the end and it was fun for all.

Junior/Senior High Class Stocks Shelves & Makes Baskets



A couple of weeks ago the kitchen was overflowing with canned goods and assorted non-perishables. So Cynthia Strouse asked the kids in our Junior/Senior High Sunday School class to pitch in and help put things where they go.

We were in the midst of putting together our winter survival kits so the kids packed up 50 bundles of canned vegetables to go in them. Then they restocked the shelves of our food pantry.

We have been blessed this year by the generosity of the Wildwood Christian Academy. They have been shopping each month and bringing in all kinds of goodies for us to share. Our membership has also been very good about bringing in supplies on a regular basis. It seems the more the pantry is used, the more food comes in. That sounds like God's economy!

So thank you kids for the help and thank you for your generous support! It makes a difference to a lot of people.



"Stewardship is not humanity's way of raising money, but rather God's way of raising people into the likeness of his Son."

Doug Carter

People, Places & Possibilities

People News

George Rezendes enjoyed a visit with his first grandchild last month. Pictured to the right are three generations of the Rezendes family: George, Timothy and Benjamin... Chris Vaillancourt has finished all his requirements for his Eagle Scout Award and will be able to have his court of honor later this Spring. Congratulations on this great achievement!

Timothy Cuss had his photo in the Norwich Bulletin and was star for a day last month... Daryl Alves

and Heather Stone both finished their tours of duty in the military in the last few weeks. We applaud them for their service to our country... Luis Pabon and Stan Boyes were among those in the crowd at the Miss America Pageant last



month... Connie Jensen celebrated her birthday last month on a cruise with her sister, Nancy... Our basketball coach Len Miller was quoted in an article in the Norwich Bulletin about life in Greenville... Congratulations to Elizabeth Isenburg's son, Carl Soderberg,

who got engaged recently. A July wedding is planned... Congratulations to Quincy Zhou. He passed his citizenship test and took the oath last month...

Ministry Helpers in February

In the Church Nursery:

February 1 - Kelly Bolin & Chelsey Calkins
February 8 - Sandra Lucien, Jesly & Leslie Souvenance
February 15 - Laura Kreger, Fran Rogers & Heather Adams
February 22 - Kristen Deptulski & Rachel Lord

As Ushers & Greeters

February 1 - F. Royce, C. Brockway, N. & G. Schuster
February 8 - H. Calkins, L. McFalls, B. & P. Adams
February 15 - G. Strouse, K. Barber, R. Sargent & M. Kane
February 22 - F. Royce, C. Brockway, N. & G. Schuster

As Worship Assistants

February 8 - Nancy Allen
February 15 - Bob Walker
February 22 - Gwyn Green

As Counters

February 1 - Mark Kane & Mary Brockway
February 8 - Mark Kane & Oliver Bray
February 15 - June Deptulski & George Strouse
February 22 - Frank Royce & Bob Walker



We lift up Bob Booth in our prayers as he spent a few days at Backus. We also lift up Susie Rothholz's dad, Elmer Dennis who also spent a few days in the hospital for treatment. We continue to lift up Sebastian Lucien. He is responding well to treatment as he recovers from lead poisoning... Marge Booth had a bad fall and was in the emergency room. Fortunately nothing was broken and she went home...

We lift up Jane Seder in prayer. She fell and broke her femur bone and had to have emergency surgery. She has been doing rehab at Bridebrook... We think of James and Shirley Murray in our ongoing prayers. Both have had some health concerns.. Zelda Fellows had an allergic reaction to some medication and spent a few days in the hospital... Our thoughts and prayers are with Ron Watson and Donna Weimer who both lost sisters last month...

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

In Loving Memory Edith Robinson "A Woman of Faith" 1916 -2009



Our own Bob Booth was recognized with a proclamation from the City Council yesterday for his longstanding service to our community. A small group of his friends gathered as City Councilman Pete Desaulniers, former Councilman and current State Representative, Chris Coutu and former Mayor Art Lathrop made the presentation. With Marge and Stephanie by his side, Art Lathrop read the proclamation citing Bob's service to his country in the Army, his years of teaching at Norwich Technical School, his service on the City Council, the Board of Education and on various committees and Board within the city, his service to his church and ministry in the prisons and his faithfulness in all things. Chris Coutu presented the plaque to Bob and all of his friends gathered around him. Even the Administrator of Haven Health and several employees looked on and wished him well. Congratulations Bob and Marge!



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

Focus on Our Ministry

Change in Meeting Format Set The Stage For A Very Productive Annual Meeting at FBC

On Thursday evening we met for the 209th Annual Meeting of the First Baptist Church. Reports were presented on the activities of the past year. A motion was made to accept the reports with a few minor changes and place them on file for all to see. It was passed and now the booklet is available at church for all members and friends to peruse.

We then enjoyed a slideshow of sights and scenes from the last year.

We followed that with a few items of business. The report of the By-laws committee was tabled until the Spring Quarterly meeting. Prior to that meeting a list of the proposed changes will be on display for all the members to see. Most of the changes being proposed are aimed at clarification or spelling and grammatical mistakes in the previous documents.

The Church budget for 2009 was presented by Bob Sullivan and me. George Rezendes and Curt Brockway noted that the \$103,000 in pledges reflected a net

increase of six new families making a pledge this year. A major gift of \$9,500 was also noted. After some discussion about how the donations from our ethnic churches are recorded, a church budget of \$167,953 was approved.

Our mission budget was presented by Nancy Allen. She noted that the only real changes were in two new "in and out" items. These areas will be funded only to the level that they receive gifts. We added a category for targeted giving for Rick and Mercy Barnes, our special interest missionaries in Mexico. We are hoping families will adopt them for a month and give \$50 toward their salary for a total of \$600. We also added a \$1,000 line item for the mission trip to Mexico. All donations made to that will go in that line item. The total mission budget of \$12,133 was passed.

Oliver Bray offered the report of the nominating committee and a slate of officer, boards and committees was put

forward for us to discuss. It was noted that we had not listed a treasurer. I told the group that we had a candidate that we were talking to but he had not accepted yet. It was decided that when the nominating secured a candidate for treasurer and determined who the representative from the Stewardship Committee would be to the Board of Trustees that we would hold a special, very brief, meeting, during worship and elect them to office. We thanked Bob Sullivan, our retiring treasurer, and all those who were stepping down from office this year, for their service to the church.

Moderator Curt Brockway then turned the meeting over to me and we spent some time looking at our ministry and celebrating what we do well and making suggestions for what we could do to improve or enhance what we are doing.

At 8:35 we closed the meeting by remembering our members who passed away in 2008 with a moment of silence.

Here are a few of the responses. For a complete listing go online to our First Baptist Life blog.

In worship we celebrated the following:

- * We involve others in leading worship through the use of worship assistants. We could use even more volunteers.
- * We enjoy the music (solos, choir, praise team) in worship. The various types of music (contemporary, classical, sacred, country, gospel) touch everyone.
- * We like the fact that children are included in worship.
- * We like having Muriel talk to the kids. Someone commented that she needs a microphone so everyone can hear her.
- * We like the prayer time.
- * We like the invitation for prayer that was offered last week. Occasional invitations and altar calls are good additions to the service.
- * We like the Pastoral leadership, preaching and spirit of worship that is being offered.
- * We like the way Adele sets the tone and mood of worship through her leadership

Then we asked the question: What can we do to improve our worship time?

- * Using the name tags would help us get to know one another a little better.
- * Make sure every visitor welcomed.
- * We want to do more to recognize special events in peoples lives.
- * We liked the patriotic music last week.
- * We'd like to see even more special music in the service. More solos and duets. More anthems. We love the music at FBC.
- * We would like to have better instructions in the bulletin for newcomers.
- * We'd also like the music as well as the words in the bulletin for the Praise songs .

In Mission and Outreach. We asked: What Do You Like That We Are Doing?

- * We talked about the efforts surrounding our Missional Church emphasis.
- * We celebrated our participation in the Interfaith luncheons.
- * We applauded our efforts of supporting local mission interest like Madonna Place.
- * We lifted up our participation in interfaith and ecumenical events like CROP walk.
- * We have my weekly column to our community.

- * We highlighted our long history of outreach through the sports ministries.

Then we asked, "Is there more we can be doing as part of our outreach ministry?"

- * It was suggested that we reach out to those people who are absent from worship.
- * It was suggested that we have a lay led team of people who visit the sick.
- * We also added home bound communion to the list of things to offer.
- * A community vegetable garden was suggested as a way to reach out into the neighborhood..

The Final area we looked at was Children and Education. We asked What is good and what could we do in the future?

- * We have a lot of little ones in Sunday School
- * We have a large adult class.
- * We offer quality child care during worship.
- * We recognize our youth in special Sundays and with a scholarship.
- * Increase the involvement of the youth in worship.
- * We could start a youth choir.

Wit, Wisdom & Wackiness...

Kurtis The Stock Boy and Brenda The Checkout Girl

In a supermarket, Kurtis the stock boy, was busily working when a new voice came over the loud speaker asking for a carry out at register 4. Kurtis was almost finished, and wanted to get some fresh air, and decided to answer the call. As he approached the check-out stand a distant smile caught his eye, the new check-out girl was beautiful. She was an older woman (maybe 26, and he was only 22) and he fell in love.



Let's skip ahead to "KURTIS" and "BRENDA"'s first date, where she explains that she can't go, because she has two kids and the baby sitter canceled.

To which Kurtis simply said, "Well, let's take the kids with us." She tried to explain that taking the children was not an option, but again not taking no for an answer, he pressed. Finally Brenda, brought him inside to meet her children. She had an older daughter Jessie, who was just as cute as a bug, Kurtis thought, then Brenda brought out her son, Zachary in a wheelchair. He was blind and severely disabled.

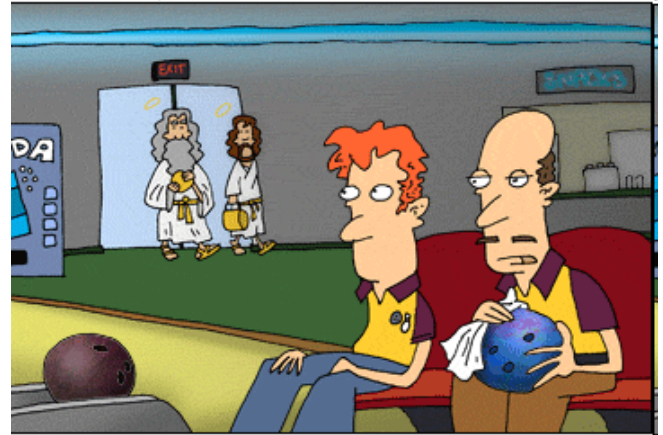
Kurtis asked Brenda, "I still don't understand why the kids can't come with us?" Brenda was amazed. Most men would run away from a woman with two kids, especially if one had disabilities - just like her first husband and father of her children had done. Kurtis was not ordinary - - - he had a different mindset.

When her son needed anything Kurtis would take care of him. When he needed to use the restroom, he picked him up out of his wheelchair, took him and brought him back. The kids loved Kurtis. At the end of the evening, Brenda knew this was the man she was going to marry and spend the rest of her life with.

Those two crazy kids got married and had five more babies of their own. Have you figured out ... the rest of ... the story?

So what happened to Kurtis the stock boy and Brenda the check-out girl? Well, Mr. & Mrs. Kurt Warner now live in Arizona, where he is currently employed as the quarterback of the National Football League Arizona Cardinals and has his Cardinals in the Super Bowl. He is a two time MVP and a one time winner of a previous Super Bowl. So now when you ewatch the game, you'll know this QB doesn't just have a super arm, he is a super man.

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Thanks to Jason Baker

01-26-2009

GREAT, THERE WENT OUR CHANCES FOR WINNING THE FATHER & SON BOWL-OFF

A preacher said to a farmer, "Do you belong to the Christian family?"

"No," he said, "I think they live two farms down."

"No, I mean are you lost?" asked the Pastor

"No, I've been here thirty years," said the farmer.

"I mean, are you ready for Judgment Day?"

"When is it?" the farmer asked.

"Could be today or tomorrow," said the pastor.

"Well, when you find out for sure when it is, you let me know. My wife will probably want to go both days!"

A pastor places his order at the pet store. "I need at least 50 mice, 2,000 ants and as many of those little silverfish you can get."

The clerk replies, "We can probably do that, but it might take some time. Mind if I ask why you are placing such an unusual order?"

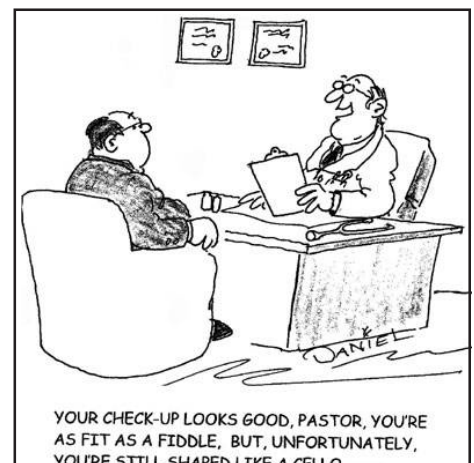
The pastor replies, "I've accepted a call to another church and the church council told me to leave the parsonage the way I found it."



Thanks to Richard German (See Jonah 1-4)

09-19-2008

T JUST SAYS "DON'T"



YOUR CHECK-UP LOOKS GOOD, PASTOR, YOU'RE AS FIT AS A FIDDLE, BUT, UNFORTUNATELY, YOU'RE STILL SHAPED LIKE A CELLO

Wit, Wisdom & Wackiness...

During the last Sunday service that the visiting pastor was to spend at the church he served for some months, his hat was passed around for a goodwill offering.

When it returned to the pastor, it was empty. The pastor didn't flinch. He raised the hat to Heaven and said, "I thank You, Lord, that I got my hat back from this congregation."

Being a new pastor to an aging congregation, I told them I would be serving them prune juice in Holy Communion.

When asked why I would dare entertain such a thought, I said, "If the Holy Spirit won't move you the prune juice will!"

My pastor friend put sanitary hot air hand dryers in the rest rooms at his church and after two weeks, took them out. I asked him why and he confessed that they worked fine, but when he went in there he saw a sign that read, "For a sample of this week's sermon, push the button."

Everything I need to know, I learned from Noah's Ark...

One: Don't miss the boat.

Two: Remember that we are all in the same boat!

Three: Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.

Four: Stay fit. When you're 60 years old, someone may ask you to do something really big.

Five: Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done.

Six: Build your future on high ground.

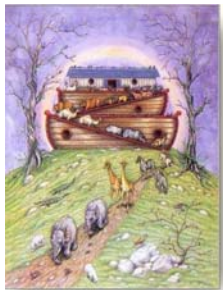
Seven: For safety's sake, travel in pairs.

Eight: Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs.

Nine: When you're stressed, float awhile.

Ten: Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs; the Titanic by professionals.

Eleven: No matter the storm, when you are with God.



Yankees Sign Iraqi Hurler Shoe-throwing Right-hander Impresses Scouts



In their latest bid to beef up their pitching rotation for the 2009 season, the New York Yankees signed Iraqi journalist Muntadar al-Zeidi to a three-year deal worth \$32 million today.

The right-handed al-Zeidi, 28, impressed the Yankee scouts with his performance in Baghdad last winter when he threw both of his shoes at former President George W. Bush.

While neither of the shoes hit their target, both throws "had great velocity and good movement," said Yankee owner Hank Steinbrenner.

"The first shoe was high and outside but the second one was right down the middle," Mr. Steinbrenner said.

The Yankee boss said that he was also impressed with Mr. al-Zeidi's fighting spirit when Secret Service agents tackled him.

"That could come in handy when we have a series with Boston," he said.

Pitchers and catchers report in two weeks. Thought this might help you brave the cold of February. This was submitted by Dave Royce

Little Zachary was doing very badly in math. His parents had tried everything.. tutors, mentors, flash cards, special learning centers. In short, they tried everything they could think of to help his math. Finally, in a last ditch effort, they took Zachary down and enrolled him in the local Catholic school. After the first day little Zachary came home with a very Serious look on his face. He didn't even kiss his mother Hello.

Instead, he went straight to his room and started studying. Books and papers were spread Out all over the room and little Zachary was hard at work. His mother was amazed. She called him down to dinner.

To her shock, the minute he was done, he marched back To his room without a word, and in no time, he was back Hitting the books as hard as before. This went on for sometime, day after day, while the mother tried to understand what made all the difference. Finally, little Zachary brought home his report card. He quietly laid it on the table, went up to his room and hit the books. With great trepidation, His Mom looked at it and to her great surprise, little Zachary got an 'A' in math. She could no longer hold her curiosity.



She went to his room and said, 'Son, what was it? Was it the nuns?' Little Zachary looked at her and Shook his head, no 'Well, then,' she replied, Was it the books, the discipline, the structure, the Uniforms? 'WHAT WAS IT ALREADY?'

Little Zachary looked at her and said, 'Well, on the first day of school when I saw that guy nailed to the plus sign, I knew they weren't fooling around.'

Submitted by Lori Blanchard

The best vitamin for making friends.... B1.



What We Believe

Our congregation is affiliated with the American Baptist Churches USA. Several years ago leaders from across the denomination got together to discern the ties that bind us together in faith. Over the next few months I will include some of these tenets of Baptist faith in our newsletter. You will notice that we hold many of them in common with all our Christian brothers and sisters. Here is the first one:

We Are Guided by God's Word

Foremost among beliefs firmly held by American Baptists is the acknowledgment that Jesus Christ is our Redeemer and our Lord, and that through belief in Him we are assured of eternal fellowship with a loving God. For us, the foundation of our Christian belief--and the greatest event in all history--is the drama of the first Easter week: the death of Christ, in which He took upon Himself all the sins of the world, and the Resurrection, which offers glorious proof of His teaching and His triumph over sin and death.

Holy Scripture always has been for us the most authoritative guide to knowing and serving the triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer). As the divinely-inspired word of God, the Bible for us reveals our faith and its mandated practice.

Our affirmation of the priesthood of all believers arises from a conviction that all who truly seek God are competent to approach God directly. We cherish the freedom Christ has granted us as individual believers and distinctive congregations. The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the church in Galatia and in other writings, emphasizes that freedom. Because of that, we have tended to avoid

embracing prepared creeds or other statements that might compromise our obligation to interpret Scripture as individuals within the community of faith under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Cherishing our own God-given gift of freedom has motivated us to support religious freedom for all to seek God's will. Although this has allowed for distinctive opinions within our congregations both on aspects of our faith and their application within society, most of us would admit that



dialog is a healthy means of spiritual growth. As it encourages its members to seek continually the mind of Christ in all matters, American Baptist Churches USA respects the variety of theological understandings that its members, and other Christians, have embraced.

American Baptists partake of two ordinances exemplifying obedience to our Lord's commands: believers' baptism and the Lord's Supper. We insist that baptism be administered only to those who have the maturity to understand its profound significance: resurrection to new life in Christ. And we follow the biblical example set by Christ when we fully immerse in water, a beautiful symbolic statement of that new life. The Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion, commemorates the sacrifice of our Lord. The bread and cup that symbolize the broken body and shed blood offered by Christ remind us today of God's great love for us--just as they did for the disciples 2,000 years ago on the eve of the crucifixion

We have taken to heart the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19--the call to evangelism: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of

the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you" (NRSV). Since 1814, American Baptist churches and the mission societies they created have been committed to mission: to see the glory of God revealed in all the earth; to see Jesus Christ proclaimed as Savior and Lord to all people and nations; to see churches started and growing; to see the renewal of God's creation; and to see God's justice and peace reign in all the world.

We take seriously all that Christ did during His brief but momentous years of teaching and nurturing disciples and followers. We accept the ministries Christ modeled as our ministries. In sincere imitation of our Savior's work, we have attempted to be holistic. Understanding God's word as revealed in Scripture is of great importance to us, and our churches have emphasized learning and teaching as vital responsibilities. And because Christ ministered to the physical needs of persons and acted as an advocate for those who had been mistreated, we hold that seeking justice is an important component of ministry. We accept the wisdom of the New Testament writer James, who maintained that those who truly have faith in Christ necessarily live out that faith expressing compassion for others for whom He died.

We celebrate the special gifts of all believers, testifying that God can use each of us in the overall outreach of ministry. Paul states that "apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers" all work for "building up the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11, 12). The affirmation of lay leaders as integral to church vitality and the ordination of women, practiced in our denomination for more than a century, underscore the belief that many have been called by God to serve.

Our Ministry To The Family

Intimacy was my last priority

No Intimacy until everything was in order. Boy, was I wrong!

by Jan Fallon

When I was first married, I strived for sterility. I wanted a clean house with washed laundry-and as much ordered chaos as possible in a family busy with three boys. This sterility seeped into my relationship with my husband. My motto was, "We can cuddle-if the kids are asleep, the house is clean, and we're both freshly showered and in bed in a tidy room, with the lights down low and candles lit. Oh, and did you get your hair cut recently?" The problem was that the chance was slim to none that all these conditions existed at the same time!

Even if we were able to accomplish everything on my "must do before intimacy list, we were much more likely to drop wearily on the couch instead of passionately into each other's arms.

Something had to give. I couldn't keep up with all my requirements and have the energy for intimacy. I needed to simplify.

Then a thought occurred to me: *What would Chuck think if I suddenly let go and pursued intimacy when things weren't perfect, when the dishes were left on the table?*

This wasn't going to be easy. I needed a role model. I chose Eve.

I know, Eve ate the apple. But before that unfortunate moment, she stood in the garden, God's choice for Adam's partner. More than any other creature, she was pleasing to him in every way. I wondered what she had that I didn't. Then realized it was the other way around.

Eve didn't have a house to keep squeaky clean. Or a shopping list or one too many tasks to perform. She lived with Adam in beauty among the animals, with pungent odors and earthy surroundings that offered trees for shelter and a bed of grass for comfort. There they found the beauty they needed in each other, setting the stage for them to enjoy God's gift of intimacy.

Was it possible I could expect less and get more? Less housework, more physical



touch? Less tasking, more romance? What woman in her right mind would choose otherwise? But as an exhausted mother with young children, I wasn't in my right mind, so I needed to practice.

I started small. My initial thought, *What if I let the dishes go until morning we could get to bed earlier?* was quickly followed by, *But having a clean kitchen always makes me feel so much better.*

Finally, my "right mind" kicked in. *Really? A clean kitchen would make me feel better than if I spent the next hour with my husband, connecting in a God-given way designed to draw us together?* Sorry, Jan, no kitchen can ever be clean enough to surpass that!

Then I took it a step further. I placed toys strategically on the floor, directly in my normal walking path. I left them there, walking over or around them until having a messy floor didn't bother me-or at least not as much. This really confused Chuck when he reached down to help clean and heard me say, "Oh no, honey. Leave the toys on the floor."

The best part came when I read in Song of Songs, about the Lover and the Beloved stealing away to a beautiful garden. The Lover describes his Beloved as precious myrrh, and she portrays him as a delightful spice. Not once does he say, "Your kitchen

sparkles like the stars of heaven and is scented with the aroma of a thousand pines." It was all about the beauty and desire they found in each other.

Reading that book made me realize that I rarely expressed my attraction for Chuck's body. One day, quoting Song of Songs 5:15, I blurted: "Your legs are like pillars of marble, baby!" He was shocked and a little red from blushing.

To this day I often tell Chuck how attractive he is, specifically admiring the bright color of his

eyes, the strength of his legs, or the handsome turn of his smile. Now, when I start a sentence with "Honey," he gives me his full attention. There's a much better chance that a compliment will follow-instead of just one more "honey-do" for the list.

We've been married 23 years, and I've continued pursuing moments in the garden. Sometimes it's a simple, "I'm naked under these clothes," which is always true, but feels intriguing when said out loud. Other times it's something special on his pillow (even if the bed is unmade) or clothing that's slightly more feminine than what I usually wear.

It's important that I take him as he is, without requirements. No shower, cologne, flowers, or candles. Just him and his "out of Africa" manliness. His brute, and earthy being-just as God created him: "radiant and ruddy, outstanding among ten thousand" (Song of Songs 5:10).

There will always be pressures that sap my energy and time limits. But I've learned to embrace what is earthy and put housework on hold for a while.

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Engaged in Mission

Because We Care!



We had a great day as we got out of the church and met our neighbors Saturday, January 24th. At about 9:00 a.m. Cynthia Strouse, Phil Postler, Curt Brockway, Judy Dupont, Amanda Duntz, Sue Ferguson, Pete Ingoglia, Nancy Allen and June Deptulski gathered and carried all our stuff up to the Martin Luther King Center. We had lots of gifts to share with the people from the neighborhood to show them in a concrete terms that we care about them. We distributed 50 Winter Survival Kits featuring the "no sew" blankets, laundry detergent, bar soap, shampoo, socks, vegetables for a soup mix and a few other goodies. The folks were greeted with smiles, hot chocolate and cupcakes. We also had toys for the kids and hats, mittens and extra socks.

Our motto was "Because We Care" and it was printed on the bags that held the kits. We weren't there to promote church attendance or to proselytize. We simply wanted to make ourselves a little more visible to the people who live in the houses behind the church and across the street.

The truth is that many of these people drive by the church every day but they have no idea what goes on inside the walls. This year we are committed to becoming a growing presence in our own neighborhood. This was the first step and it went well.

Not only did we accomplish our goals but we also helped the Martin Luther King Center sign up a bunch of kids for their Saturday morning programs. It was a win-win for our whole community. If you couldn't help out this time, stay tuned for our next event.



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

Bob Walker responded to a request for a classroom volunteer nine years ago and he has been helping in the Montville schools ever since. It began when his oldest grandson entered first grade, Bob stepped up to offer his time. He liked it so much that he continues going in the classroom twice a week today. He currently works with two fifth grade classes. He tutors the kids in math in one room and goes in with math games, puzzles and brain teasers to the other. Ask Bob why he does it and he'll tell you that it is a great way to use his gifts to help others. There's no better feeling than when you know you have helped someone else.



"I shall pass through this world but once. Any good thing therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer it or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."

Henry Drummond

Engaged in Mission



God's Love Will Guide Us

Our mission team met last week for its last formal meeting before we leave for Mexico on February 24, 2009. Seventeen of our twenty members were there. We did a gift inventory and went over the schedule for the departure date and gave a quick run down of the week's activities. I'll be contacting Rick and Mercy Barnes this week to see if we can get an idea of where we will be working this year.

We still need quite a bit of money and I'll be soliciting sponsors outside the church over the next couple of weeks. We will continue to look for donations from both of the churches as well. We are all getting excited about the trip. Thank you for your prayers and financial support.

185th Annual Gathering of ABCCONN

Saturday, April 25, 2009

Grace Baptist Church, Waterbury

Walking in the Steps of Jesus

Preacher & Bible Study Leader:

Dr. Reid Trulson, Executive Director

Board of International Ministries



“And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’”

Matthew 25:40 (NRSV)

Madonna Place Offers a Safe Haven in the Family Support Center

The goal of the Drop In Center is to provide the families with the knowledge, education and confidence needed to successfully parent. Helping them to build a strong support system and cope with life's daily struggles, are also emphasized. Staff is available to act as a sounding board, to offer advice and guidance and to direct parents to other appropriate resources.

The Drop-In Center provides parents with respite. It is a place where they can come with their children to socialize with other parents, talk with staff, receive information and referrals, use the client telephone, or browse in our donations room where there is an abundance of adult and children's clothing, toys, books, baby equipment and household goods.

While parents are engaged in support center activities, their children can enjoy the playroom. A staff person, with a background in early childhood education is on hand to provide developmentally appropriate activities, which stimulate the learning and creative potential of the children.



The child care staff person will also assist parents with appropriate behavior management techniques when needed.

Classes are offered at various times during the day in an effort to meet the scheduling needs of the clients. Most classes are typically part of a six-week series. Curriculum materials are utilized which cover such areas as child development, parenting styles, behavior management, communication, health, safety and nutrition. Craft and exercise classes are also provided periodically.

Madonna Place receives grants to purchase new baby equipment, formula and diapers that are distributed on an emergency basis for those clients experiencing economic crisis.

In recent years we have supported Madonna Place with a small gift through our Mission budget. It is a community ministry that does good work. Our mission committee has decided to highlight some of these community ministries we support in our monthly newsletter. so you will know where your mission dollars are going and also so you can consider supporting them on your own as well.



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.

A Powerful Witness

The Mystery of Miracles

For the overwhelming majority of Americans 50-plus, extraordinary feats by the hand of God are not just a matter of faith...they're a matter of fact

By Bill Newcott

Harry Rubenstein is cradling the small, red, leather-bound book in his hands as if it were a baby bird. He lets it fall open, and the back room at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History is suddenly filled with the wafting aroma of old yellowed pages.

What he holds is Thomas Jefferson's 1820 Bible. The author of the Declaration of Independence had used a razor to meticulously excise favored passages from a pair of King James bibles and pasted them onto blank, bound pages. Left behind: every miracle, every hint of the divinity of Jesus. So Jefferson's New Testament has no loaves and fishes, no walking on water, no water into wine, no Resurrection. Jefferson dismissed such passages as superstition. What he wanted was something more straight forward, as reflected in the title he gave the work: *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*.

"This project was purely of the Enlightenment: rewrite the Bible," says Rubenstein, head of the museum's division of politics and reform.

To this day, there are those who stand aghast at Jefferson's chutzpah, and that raises a fair question: Does faith exist without miracles? Are there miracles at all, and if not, just how do we explain those events that inevitably become defined as such?

In an *AARP The Magazine* survey, we asked 1,300 people 45 and over what they thought about miracles, and the results were striking: fully 80 percent said they believe in them, 41 percent said they happen every day-and 37 percent said they have actually



witnessed one.

Why do skeptical, modern Americans still believe in them?

Dennis Finch, 63, of Kuna, Idaho, says it's simple: he himself experienced one. "A few years ago I was in the hospital, in a coma," he recalls. "I stopped breathing several times, and the doctors told all my relatives they'd better get to the hospital to say their

goodbyes. But people were praying for me. I remember, in my coma, seeing my brother David and my brother-in-law Roy—who had both passed on—and I was really upset because they wouldn't talk to me.

"Well, it turned out they wouldn't talk to me because it wasn't my time. I lived. The doctors still don't know what was wrong with me, and they also don't know why I survived. One doctor calls me his miracle child."

Among poll respondents we spoke with in depth, Finch's miracle story is the most typical: a hopeless illness, a desperate prayer, an inexplicable recover. But those who report such cases as miracles feel there is an extra ingredient present—a "spiritual something"—and their conviction is as certain as the fact that they are alive today.

Consider the survey results: of those who believe in miracles, 84 percent say they happen because of God. About three quarters further identify Jesus and the Holy Spirit as sources of miracles, while lesser numbers attribute them

to angels (47 percent), saints (32 percent), deceased relatives or others who have passed on (19 percent), and other spirits (18 percent).

So what's going on? Wouldn't the Creator of the universe have better things to tend to than pulling off the occasional miracle? It depends, of course, on whom you ask.

To a scientist, events that many would consider miracles are not only explainable, they're inevitable—because in a universe of nearly infinite possibilities, outrageously unexpected things have to happen at least occasionally.

"The Law of Large Numbers show that an event with a low probability of occurrence in a small number of trials has a high probability of occurrence in a large number of trials," says *Scientific American* columnist Michael Shermer, author of *Why People Believe Weird Things*. "Events with a million-to-one odds happen 295 times a day in America."

Although that may explain why such extraordinary things "miracles" happen, it is the province of believers to try to put these events into the context of their belief systems. "I think that through miracles we step back and we start reevaluating our place in the universe," says Patsy Clairmont, a Christian speaker and author of *All Cracked Up*:

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Thanks to Richard Germain

12-26-2008

I'll be right back after this quick word with your sponsor

A Powerful Witness

Experiencing God in the Broken Places (Thomas Nelson, 2006). “We see something miraculous and ask ourselves, ‘What is this? I can’t explain it. Is there truly something more than me?’”

Father Jonathan Morris, a Fox News commentator and the author of *The Promise: God’s Purpose and Plan for When Life Hurts* (HarperOne, 2008), agrees that for believers, miracles reveal as much about the nature of God as they do about the beneficiary. “When people say, ‘This is a miracle,’ they’re not saying ‘God broke the laws of nature to give me this blessing,’” Morris notes. “They’re saying, ‘God cares about me so much that he allowed this to happen.’”

“It’s okay to pray for a miracle as long as you’re also working to deal with your problem, rather than leaving it all up to God,” says Rabbi Harold Kushner, bestselling author of *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* (Schocken). “A miracle is something unusual that happens when it need not have happened, and by happening, sustains people’s faith in God and the world.”

Although 29 percent of our poll respondents say they’ve witnessed divine healings, the types of miracles people experience can embrace everything from medical healing to a miraculously timed call from a loved one to economic deliverance.

Judging from the responses to our poll, that Judeo-Christian concept of miracles—a personal God reaching into space and time to work remarkable acts—overwhelmingly dominates the spiritual landscape.

At the Basilica of Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal there are small knots of the faithful, inching along a well-worn path, each group encircling and encouraging a believer crawling or walking on his or her knees, thanking the Virgin for a favor or asking one. Here in the blazing Portuguese sun the believers are working their way toward an open-air chapel where, in a glass case, stand the Virgin’s statue. In her crown dangles a lump of lead—what’s left of a bullet that tore through Pope John Paul II in 1981 assassination attempt. Although he stopped short of calling it a miracle, John Paul credited his survival to Our Lady of Fatima.



Europe is dotted with sacred sites like Fatima. Still, in our poll 38 percent say they would travel to such a place if they had the chance. And 6 percent have actually made the trip, among them Cary Canli, 54, of Troy, New York.

“I was a nonbeliever until I went to Lourdes,” says Canli. “But I saw frail and fragile people walk out of there fine.”

The whole idea of traveling long distances or enduring physical discomfort to earn a miracle raises a fair question: What are the criteria for receiving one?

Nearly 67 percent say prayer is important. Only 9 percent say those who receive miracles have done nothing to deserve them. A respondent from Pennsylvania, who told us he has survived five head-on car collisions—one of them while driving a stolen car—and walked away from them all. “I wondered, ‘How could I have survived this?’” he says. “It’s a miracle.”

Presumably, miracles should be pretty evenly distributed demographically—but there seem to be people in certain social strata who are either not getting their share or are simply missing out on the miracles around them.

The more money you make, the less likely you are to believe in miracles; 78 percent of those making \$75,000 or more believe; 86 percent of those making \$25,000 or less do.

That doesn’t surprise the Reverend Forrest Church, whose Unitarian Church of All Souls in New York City is in the heart of one of the wealthiest, most educated areas in the United States. The rich and the highly schooled “are the masters of the universe,” he says, laughing. “They don’t need anybody.”

Adds Kushner: “People who need miracles believe in them more, and people who are doing fine without them are more

skeptical.”

There’s also no ignoring the sizable 18 percent of people who simply reject the whole notion of miracles. I caught up with one of the country’s most celebrated skeptics, Penn Jillette, at his Las Vegas, Nevada, office. Half of the legendary magic team Penn and Teller, he has made a second career debunking reports of supernatural phenomena.

“Once you say something is a miracle, what you’re saying is ‘I understand every physical and mathematical property in the world, and this is outside of it,’” he says.

If believers like to say “Miracles happen every day,” they must also account for the corollary statement, “Miracles *don’t* happen every day,” says Christian speaker Clairmont.

“My brother was on life support,” she recalls. “He was 38 and had 6 children. I knew those children needed their dad. So we wanted a miracle. We did not get one.”

Yet only in a universe where miracles are possible, she says, can the absence of a miracle become a life-affirming event. “When you don’t get a miracle—cas when you do—it is a startling moment of deciding again where you stand in the universe,” Clairmont says “You have to say, ‘Lord, what does this mean about the two of us?’”

Thomas Jefferson probably wouldn’t understand. The reason most of us keep looking for miracles, even in the face of skepticism, is most likely floating somewhere in the neat rectangular gaps of his cut-and-paste Bible.

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Dr. Jeremiah Lowney Shares Message Sharing Ways How We Can Come Together As Christians To Serve The Lord

On Friday, January 23 members of the Christian community came together in a service of prayer for unity. Dr. Jeremiah Lowney gave the message and he spoke about the sin of indifference. He really gave us some food for thought as he quoted from the story of the Good Samaritan and Matthew 25.

Dr. Lowney shared the story of how his ministry to a little village in Haiti has grown through the cooperation of other like-minded Christians over the last twenty eight years. He says, "It's not about me. It is all about letting God use us."

Several members of the clergy participated including Bishop Michael Cote from the Diocese of Norwich, Father Peter D'alesandre, from Grace Episcopal, Rev. Ho Soon Han from Lee Memorial United Methodist, Rev. Michelle Madsen- Bibeau from Central Baptist



Church, Rev. James Rowe from St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church and Rev. David Stickney, the host pastor at the United Church of Christ.

Mr. Tim Smith of St. Mary's and Mrs. Millie Divine of Sts Peter and Paul also participated in the service.

It is always impressive when a group of representatives from the various Christian churches come together. On this night we came together with a single purpose... to pray for our common faith and to give thanks to the Lord. We each did it in our

own way but we also did it together. That is the witness that we should present to the world every day and it is the witness that our Lord prayed for in the Garden of Gethsemane. I could tell that all who were present were glad to be a part of it that evening.

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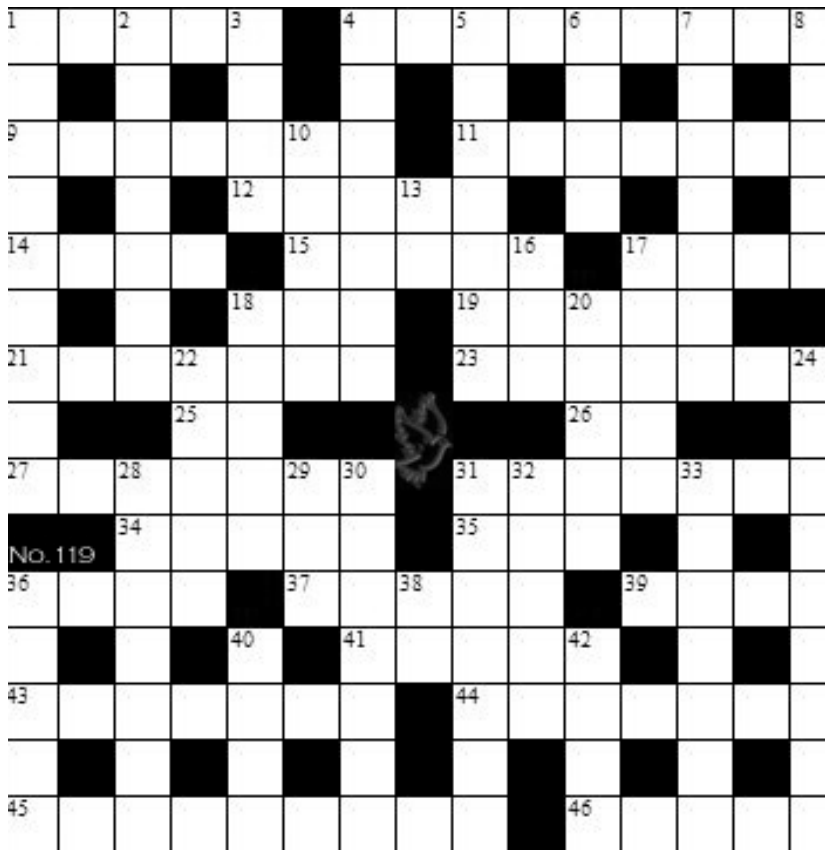
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239 West Main Street, Norwich, CT 06360
Phone: 860-889-0369
web address: www.fbcnorwich.org
e-mail: fbcnorwich@sbcglobal.net

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



ACROSS

- 1 his ___ lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime (Ps 30:5)
 4 The LORD is a refuge for the ___, a stronghold in times of trouble (Ps 9:9)
 9 "You will not surely die," the ___ said to the woman (Gen 3:4-5)
 11 Paul, called to be an ___ of Christ Jesus by the will of God (1 Cor 1:1)
 12 He who is coming will come and will not ___ (Heb 10:37)
 14 Like ___ water to a weary soul is good news from a distant land (Prov 25:25)
 15 a land with wheat and barley, ___ and fig trees, pomegranates (Deut 8:8)
 17 His ___ swept a third of the stars out of the sky (Rev 12:4)
 18 They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by ___ (Mark 7:7)
 19 He will put the sheep on his ___ and the goats on his left (Matt 25:33)
 21 For I feared thee, because thou art an ___ man (Luke 19:21) KJV
 23 They will throw their silver into the ___, and their gold (Ezek 7:19)

- 25 Sarah's maidservant, ___gar the Egyptian (partial word)(Gen 25:12)
 26 We have here only five loaves ___ bread and two fish (Matt 14:17)
 27 my days are ___, the graves are ready for me (Job 17:1)KJV
 31 Give me here on a ___ the head of John the Baptist (Matt 14:8)
 34 eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ___ it (1 Peter 3:11) KJV
 35 Peter, however, got up and ___ to the tomb (Luke 24:12)
 36 appeared to him, standing at the right ___ of the altar of incense (Luke 1:11)
 37 Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to ___ their god (Judg 16:23)
 39 Hide your face from my sins and ___ out all my iniquity (Ps 51:9)
 41 See, your king ___ to you, gentle and riding on a donkey (Matt 21:5)
 43 because I am broken with their ___ heart (Ezek 6:9) KJV
 44 The wings of the ___ flap joyfully (Job 39:13)

- 45 do the work of an evangelist, ___ all the duties of your ministry (2 Tim 4:5)
 46 All day long the battle ___, and the king was propped up (1 Kings 22:35)

DOWN

- 1 Do not be proud, but be willing to ___ with people of low position (Rom 12:16)
 2 thou shalt make for them ___, and bonnets (Ex 28:40)KJV
 3 strike Israel, so that it will be like a ___ swaying in the water (1 Kings 14:15)
 4 carpenter measures with a line and makes an ___ with a marker (Isa 44:13)
 5 Your ___ and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial (Acts 10:4)
 6 So Esau (that is, ___) settled in the hill country of Seir (Gen 36:8)
 7 I will ___ the soul of the priests with fatness (Jer 31:14)KJV
 8 Trust in the LORD and do good; ___ in the land (Ps 37:3)
 10 Moses replied, "I will ___ appear before you again." (Ex 10:29)
 13 I have set you ___ example that you should do as I have done (John 13:15-16)
 16 he said to them, " ___ here while I go over there and pray (Matt 26:36)
 17 if he has nothing, he must be sold to pay for his ___ (Ex 22:3)
 18 go and learn what this ___ : I desire mercy, not sacrifice (Matt 9:13)
 20 we ___, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling (2 Cor 5:1-2)
 22 Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of ___ own eye (Luke 6:42) KJV
 24 he founded the world by his wisdom and ___ out the heavens (Jer 10:12)
 28 that I be not further ___ unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest (Acts 24:4) KJV
 29 The camel, though it chews the ___, does not have a split hoof (Lev 11:4)
 30 A student is not above his ___, nor a servant above his master (Matt 10:24)
 31 wise man's heart guides his mouth, and his lips ___ instruction (Prov 16:23)
 32 Go out to the roads and country ___ and make them come in (Luke 14:23)
 33 servants of the Most High God, who are ___ you the way to be saved (Acts 16:17)
 36 They were stoned; they were ___ in two; they were put to death (Heb 11:37)
 38 I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never ___ hungry (John 6:35)
 40 You will be made ___ in every way so that you can be generous (2 Cor 9:11)