

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 2010



We will celebrate Adele's 30th Anniversary as our Organist and Choir Director on Sunday, February 7 during morning worship.

### More news inside:

- \* Report from the Annual Meeting
- \* Mission team ready to go
- \* Haiti relief efforts net \$1676
- \* Missional Church Plans for February Giveaway
- \* Super bowl Party Planned
- \* Disciples Gospel Night to raise money for mission trips Feb 7

**Sunday School 9:15 a.m.**  
**Morning worship 10:30 a.m.**  
**Wednesday Night Prayer  
& Praise 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](http://www.firstbaptistlife.blogspot.com)



**Worship**  
**10:30 -**  
**11:45 am**

Join Us As We Worship This Winter

February 7, 2010

**Communion Sunday**

Celebration of Faithfulness

Adele's 30th Anniversary

Responsive Reading - Psalm 138

Scripture: I Corinthians 15:1-11

Sermon: "What's at the Center of Your Faith?"

February 14, 2010

Responsive Reading - 99

Scripture: Luke 9:28-36

Sermon: "Who Do You Love?"

February 21, 2010

Responsive Reading - Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16

Scripture: Ro,mans 10:8-13

Sermon: "God is Looking for Believing Hearts"

February 28, 2010

Guest Preacher - Rev. Willis McCaw

Responsive Reading - Psalm 27

Scripture: Philippians 3:17-41

Sermon: "Spiritual Exiles"

## Ministry Helpers in February

As Ushers & Greeters

Feb. 7 - G Strouse, K Barber, Z. Earle, M Kane

Feb. 14 - F Royce, C Brockway, N & G Schuster

Feb. 21 - H Calkins, L McFalls, B & P Adams

Feb. 28 - G Strouse, K Barber, Z. Earle, M Kane

As Worship Assistants

Feb. 14 - Lori Lord

Feb. 21 - Pete Adams

Feb. 28 - Fred Green

As Counters

Feb. 7 - Bob Walker & Bob Sullivan

Feb. 14 - Nancy Allen & Gwyn Green

Feb. 21 -Mary Brockway & Ray Deptulski

Feb. 28 - Dick Strouse & Mark Rogers

As Nursery Attendants

Feb. 7 - Fran Rogers & Kelly Bolin

Feb. 14 - Sandra Lucien & Jesly Souvenance

Feb. 21 - Wendy Henry & Heather Adams

Feb. 28 - Bonnie Ambruso & Chelsey Calkins

## Celebrations in February

February 7 - We celebrate Adele's 30 years of service as Organist and Choir Director

February 14- We celebrate our new and continuing church officers. A special recognition for two long serving members

February 21 - We commission our Mission Mexico team



## The Annual Community Lenten Series Will Begin on February 17

In the Spring on 2000 Rev. Sidat Balgobin of Park Congregational Church invited some of his colleagues to consider something new for Lent. He invited us to join him on a Lenten journey. He proposed that each of us host a mid week service of worship open to the community that reflected on a theme appropriate for the Lenten season. The host pastor would preach and provide the music and framework of the service and the other clergy would attend and take part in some way. Thus the Annual community Lenten Series was born.

The participants that first year included Rev. Sidat Balgobin and the members of Park Church, Rev. Bruce Elsensohn and the members of Central Baptist Church, Rev. Elizabeth Schraeder and the members of Lee Memorial UM Church, Rev. Jim Eaton and the members of United Congregational Church, Rev. Bill Frost and the members of First Church, Norwichtown and us.

Over the last decade some of the faces in leadership have changed but the great spirit and participation has remained. It has been a time to reflect on the cross and to get to know our neighbors. It has been an opportunity to experience the ways God is worshipped in our sister churches.

This year we will do it again. We will suspend our normal Wednesday night services and join our sister churches on the Lenten Journey. The theme this year is "Food for the Journey." We begin on Wednesday, February 17 at 7:00 p.m. at First Congregational Church in Norwichtown. The service lasts about 40 -45 minutes with a time for fellowship and refreshments afterward.



### Food for the Journey

February 17 - First Congregational Church, Norwichtown

February 24 - Lee Memorial United Methodist Church

March 3 - First Baptist Church

March 10 - Central Baptist Church

March 17 - United Congregational Church

March 24 - Park Congregational Church

Frank Roderick is contemplating surgery in the coming weeks. Think of him in your prayers... Donna Weimer will be having knee surgery this month. Think of her... We lift up Jean Roscoe in our prayers as she continues her rehabilitation at Orchard Grove... Daryl Mattos is in serious condition at Backus after having two surgeries... Monique Dufour continues treatment in her battle with cancer. Lift up Nicky in your prayers... Helen Walker had surgery and is now waiting on test results. Think of her in prayer... We lift up Robert Ellal in prayer as he battles Lou Gehrig's disease... We pray for Michael, the foster son of Mark and Pam Kane. He has been back in the hospital again. We pray for healing... We continue to lift up Sandra and Joslaire Lucien, Pierre Noel, and the Souvenance families as they watch and wait for news of family in Haiti... We lift up Anastasia, Steve Ohlund's daughter in her battle with cancer. We pray for healing and strength... The Pastor's grandmother, Barbara Hayes was in the hospital last month and is now rehabbing in a convalescent home. Think of her... Oliver Bray's mom had a fall and landed in the hospital but she is home now and doing much better...



We think of our other expectant parents this month. They include Kate & Chris Canada and Ashley & Danny Moriarty and Jaime & Ingrid Todd, Dan & Cheryl Dutrumble, Emily Dutra & Joe Cush...

In our continuing prayers we lift up James and Shirley Murray, Doris Regets, Michelle Lord, Jim Roellig, Nancy Oat, Lois Lopez and Ken Taylor.

**The 210th Annual Meeting**

Thank you to all who braved the crazy weather to attend this year's Annual Meeting. The report booklets will be available next Sunday for you to enjoy. At the meeting we approved the reports, approved the changes to the by-laws, passed a budget for current expenses and mission expenses, elected a slate of officers and talked about the major church projects that we are looking at in the coming years.

**Annual Business Meeting**



It was decided to move forward with plans to reconfigure the heating system and to put the kitchen on the back burner. None-the-less, we will look for outside funding opportunities and resources to outfit the kitchen as they come along. We may even rethink the possibility of having our own people renovate the space. It was suggested that we look to our two sister churches for help in these projects. The Moderator will look into putting together a committee to discuss these issues with the leadership of the two churches.



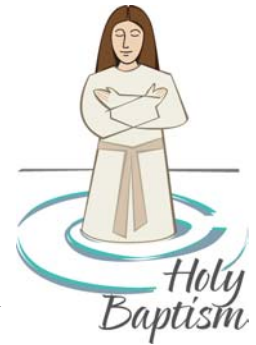
**Installation Service at Central Baptist**

Rev. Nancy Morrow will be installed as the pastor of Central Baptist Church on Sunday, February 14, 2010 at 3:00 p.m. It would be a very nice gesture if we were well represented at the service. Please consider making the effort to attend this special service in the life of our sister congregation.

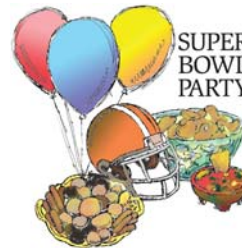
[www.fbcnorwich.org](http://www.fbcnorwich.org)



Has God been talking to you? Have you felt his touch in your life? Maybe he is inviting you to take the next step in your walk of Christian faith. You might want to consider being baptized and/or officially joining the church family. We'd love to welcome you into membership this Spring. We have a few people who have already mentioned being baptized.



There are three ways to join the church; a) believer's baptism b) transfer of church letter c) or a profession of faith. Talk to the Pastor if you are interested in learning more and taking the next step. You will be glad you did.



**Join us for a Super Bowl Party**

Come be part of the fun as friends from church get together for fellowship on Super Bowl Sunday. We will meet at Nancy Allen's home. Bring a snack to share and let's root on the Saints or the Colts. For those who don't really enjoy the game, come and work on the crossword puzzle or just come to catch up with friends old and new. The fun begins at 6:00 p.m. on February 7.

There is a Dinner-Dance fund raiser scheduled for Steve Ohlund's daughter in her battle against cancer. It is Saturday, February 13 at 6:00 p.m. at St. Andrews Roman Catholic Church in Colchester. For tickets go to [www.soundmastersct.com](http://www.soundmastersct.com) Her name is Annastacia. We are trying to get a group to go.

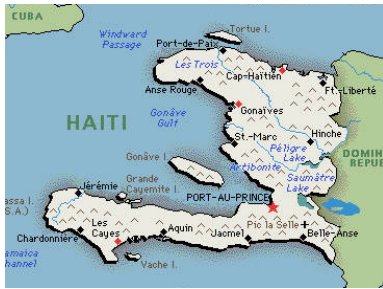


**Join us this Sunday at church! We always have fun when God's family gets together at His house. It won't be the same without you!**



## American Baptists Respond to Disaster in Haiti

We will be collecting donations for the Haitian relief effort each week through Valentine's Day. Make your check payable to First Baptist and put Haiti in the memo line. We collected \$537 last week for a three week total of \$1676. This money goes directly to help those in need. Check out Kristy Engle's blog at <http://kristynurse.blogspot.com> to get an idea how it is used. Here is a sample.



**Kristy's Blog:** We left late on Monday (January 25) for the second week of medical clinics in the tent cities of Port au Prince. We had a team of 15 with us from the University of Massachusetts and others from Connecticut, Maine and California. In addition, a group of Dominican physicians and volunteers joined the team to help us organize the clinics.

As we loaded our 50-passenger bus at the hospital, we had to wait about 45 minutes before departing for the border. Just outside of Santo Domingo, an engine alarm sounded on the bus and we pulled over only to discover that the fan belt had shredded, and we had to wait for yet another bus to be driven to us from La Romana so that we could continue our trip. This time we had to wait three hours!

Two hours more and we finally arrived where we were staying in Haiti. We went ahead and loaded up some trucks with our medical supplies and headed out to our first clinic. After seeing over 200 patients the first day in a tent city with more than 2000 people (which had doubled in size since our visit the previous week!) we returned to the dorm. It was a sight for sore eyes and tired bodies! The cooks from the mission in La Romana were with us to make sure we were fed.

The second day, I worked with an ER doc from UMass to triage patients in the tent city of Da Da Dou in Del Mas 3. She and I saw several cases of pneumonia in kids as well as a lot of malnutrition. This tent city had also doubled in size and was home to several thousand people. When we walked into the hospital, I saw a familiar face - a surgeon I worked with in Limbe, Haiti but hadn't seen in over 12 years! Dr. Mike Sheehan helped to make sure that our patients were well and had the medicines they needed, and then helped to set up future care that we might need at their hospital. We returned to the hospital the next day with the medicines and also brought wheelchairs with us that were very welcome.

The next day we saw over 200 patients again and on the final day we saw 300. Overall, we saw almost 1000 patients in four days. It was an amazing and tiring week for all. We return to Haiti again tonight (February 1) with another large group of 50+ people. We will continue to run medical clinics and do food distribution.

## The Disciples Quartet

Old time Gospel & new Gaither vocal band music



February 7, 2010  
3:00 pm  
Central Baptist Church



A benefit for FBC/CBC Mission trips 2010

Reception will follow.

For more information call 860-889-8313

## Mission Mexico Team will be commissioned Feb 21



Our Mission team will head off to Mexicali on Tuesday, February 23 and return on Tuesday, March 2. They will arrive at the Dios con Nosotros Seminary that evening and meet with the people from a local church they will be working with. On Wednesday work will begin on a project at the church and Wednesday night they will assist with Vacation Bible School.

This will be our fourth mission trip to Mexico to work side by side with our ABCUSA Missionaries Rick and Mercy Barnes as they seek to build up and encourage the churches in the Baja region of Mexico.

Participants in this year's trip include Carol Calkins, Michelle Chaffee, Erica Corbett, Amanda Duntz, Mark Hopkins, Mark Kane, Lisa Lapointe, Cal Lord, Doreen & Roger Mainville, Mark & Matt Salomon, Randy Sargent, Andy & Melanie Scheuermann and Jake Shanks. Join us in worship on February 21 as we commission them and send them off on their trip to share our love and the love of God with the folks in Mexico.

The mission trips have provided a great opportunity for individuals in the churches and in the community to experience the grace of God first hand. Prior to this year's trip, we have had 43 different people serve as short term missionaries out of the 62 people we've sent. The list includes many familiar names. This year we are sending a team of sixteen.

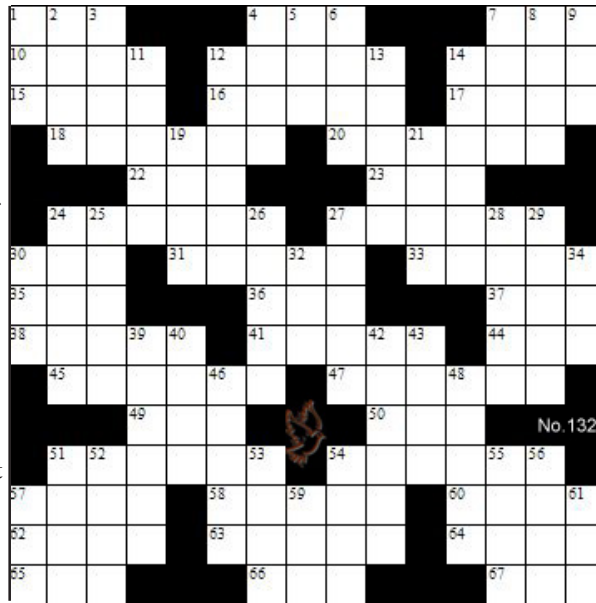
Order by the second week of the month and pick it up on the last Saturday of the month right at Christ Church. If you would like more information contact our church office at 860-889-0369.



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.

ACROSS

- 1 wherewith the \_\_\_ number of them is to be redeemed (Num 3:48) KJV  
 4 How \_\_\_ is the candle of the wicked put out! (Job 21:17) KJV  
 7 Give everyone what you \_\_\_ him (Rom 13:7)  
 10 Then he gave a \_\_\_ of bread, a cake of dates and a cake (2 Sam 6:19)  
 12 Men will go there with bow and \_\_\_ (Isa 7:24)  
 14 Watch and \_\_\_ so that you will not fall into temptation. (Mark 14:38)  
 15 If the ax is \_\_\_ and its edge unsharpened (Eccl 10:10)  
 16 Then the \_\_\_ town went out to meet Jesus (Matt 8:34)  
 17 I am sending you out \_\_\_ sheep among wolves (Matt 10:16)  
 18 Set on the great pot, and \_\_\_ pottage for the sons (2 Kings 4:38) KJV  
 20 and didst \_\_\_ thyself even unto hell. (Isa 57:9) KJV  
 22 As Jesus walked beside the \_\_\_ of Galilee (Mark 1:16)  
 23 the fear of the LORD is the \_\_\_ to this treasure (Isa 33:6)  
 24 In your majesty ride forth victoriously in \_\_\_ of truth (Ps 45:4)  
 27 words of the king with one \_\_\_ prophets declare good to the (2 Chron 18:12)KJV  
 30 Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the \_\_\_ of the living God." (Matt 16:16)  
 31 go and learn what this \_\_\_ : I desire mercy, not sacrifice (Matt 9:13)  
 33 With your help I can advance against a \_\_\_ (2 Sam 22:30)  
 35 and experienced in the \_\_\_ of engraving (2 Chron 2:7)  
 36 nephew of Abraham (Gen 12:5)  
 37 Iron is taken from the earth, and copper is smelted from \_\_\_ (Job 28:2)  
 38 by his knowledge the \_\_\_ were divided (Prov 3:20)  
 41 those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all \_\_\_ (Rev 21:8)  
 44 Joshua son of \_\_\_, who had been Moses' aide since youth (Num 11:28)  
 45 I am against those who prophesy false \_\_\_ (Jer 23:32)  
 47 the firstborn son of Jacob (Gen 35:23)  
 49 I stand in \_\_\_ of your deeds, O LORD (Hab 3:2)  
 50 Blessed \_\_\_ the pure in heart, for they will see God (Matt 5:8)  
 51 the law is spiritual: but I am \_\_\_, sold under sin (Rom 7:14) KJV  
 54 the LORD Almighty will be a glorious crown, a beautiful \_\_\_ (Isa 28:5)



- 9 The \_\_\_ cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" (1 Cor 12:21)  
 11 Laban said to him, "You are my own \_\_\_ and blood." (Gen 29:14)  
 12 lion of the nations, and thou art as \_\_\_ in the seas (1,5) (Ezek 32:2) KJV  
 13 At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three \_\_\_ (Dan 10:2)  
 14 seek out a man, who is a cunning \_\_\_ on an harp (1 Sam 16:16) KJV  
 19 here comes a man in a chariot with a \_\_\_ of horses (Isa 21:9)  
 21 Do your \_\_\_ to present yourself to God as one approved (2 Tim 2:15)  
 24 Jehoiada the priest took a chest and \_\_\_ a hole in its lid (2 Kings 12:9)  
 25 "When you \_\_\_ a house, first say, Peace to this house (Luke 10:5)  
 26 A wicked messenger \_\_\_ into trouble (Prov 13:17)  
 27 I saw \_\_\_ that had fallen from the sky to the earth (1,4)(Rev 9:1)

- 57 nor suffer their locks to grow long; they shall only \_\_\_ their heads (Ezek 44:20) KJV  
 58 Bring the whole \_\_\_ into the storehouse, that there may be food (Mal 3:10)  
 60 If a ruler listens to \_\_\_, all his officials become wicked (Prov 29:12)  
 62 30th book of the Old Testament  
 63 But \_\_\_ foolish controversies and genealogies (Titus 3:9)  
 64 "Rejoice in that day and \_\_\_ for joy (Luke 6:23)  
 65 Peter climbed aboard and dragged the \_\_\_ ashore (John 21:11)  
 66 If anyone is hungry, he should \_\_\_ at home (1 Cor 11:34)  
 67 By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on \_\_\_ land (Heb 11:29)

DOWN

- 1 no one pours new wine into \_\_\_ wineskins (Mark 2:22)  
 2 Let us make a treaty with you that you will \_\_\_ no harm (2,2)(Gen 26:28-29)  
 3 at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's \_\_\_ (Gen 14:17) KJV  
 4 Do not rebuke a mocker \_\_\_ will hate you (2,2) (Prov 9:8)  
 5 Man is a mere phantom as he goes to and \_\_\_ (Ps 39:6)  
 6 "Who \_\_\_ you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree (Gen 3:11)  
 7 exalt himself over everything that is called God \_\_\_ worshiped(2,2) (2 Thess 2:4)  
 8 Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to \_\_\_ him up (John 11:11)

- 28 The wicked man flees though \_\_\_ pursues (2,3) (Prov 28:1)  
 29 sandy beach, where they decided \_\_\_ the ship aground (2,3) (Acts 27:39)  
 30 unhappy (Matt 19:22)  
 32 He answered, " \_\_\_, \_\_\_ will not go (2,1) (Num 10:30)  
 34 much to write you, but I do not want to do so with \_\_\_ and ink. (3 John 13-14)  
 39 The twelve gates were twelve \_\_\_ (Rev 21:21)  
 40 They were stoned, they were \_\_\_ asunder, were tempted Heb 11:37 KJV  
 42 Brought up or raised (Lam 2:22)  
 43 Be \_\_\_ of this: The wicked will not go unpunished (Prov 11:21)  
 46 I have told them to meet \_\_\_ certain place (2,2,1) (1 Sam 21:2)  
 48 who put everything under him, so that God may \_\_\_ in all (2,3) (1 Cor 15:28)  
 51 For the Lord himself will \_\_\_ down from heaven (1 Thess 4:16)  
 52 There was also \_\_\_ for the tribe of Manasseh (1,3) (Josh 17:1) KJV  
 53 Jesus replied. "Do this and you will \_\_\_." (Luke 10:28)  
 54 I have made a man every \_\_\_ whole on the sabbath day (John 7:23) KJV  
 55 So Delilah took new ropes and \_\_\_ him with them (Judg 16:12)  
 56 LORD, \_\_\_ my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy (Ps 143:1)  
 57 cooking utensil (2 Sam 13:9)  
 59 Like cold water \_\_\_ weary soul is good news (2,1) (Prov 25:25)  
 61 Let us send men ahead to \_\_\_ out the land for us (Deut 1:22)

# Talk to God Together

## Why praying with your spouse can boost your marriage and your faith

My friend Jennifer was an experienced pray-er when she got married, so she figured she and her new husband, Wayne, would have wonderful prayer times together. But to Jennifer's surprise, praying with Wayne felt forced and stilted. While Jennifer poured out her heart to God in private, when she prayed with Wayne, she edited her thoughts and feelings. Wayne, on the other hand, had only said a few prayers aloud in a formal church setting before attempting to pray with his wife. Knowing her skill in prayer, Wayne felt he couldn't measure up to Jennifer's expectations. Soon they prayed together less and less.

Their small-group Bible study proved to be the turning point in their disintegrating prayer life. There, an older couple, John and Margaret, became unintentional prayer mentors to Jennifer and Wayne. John and Margaret prayed aloud, with hearts wide open to God. Over the weeks, as group members prayed for each other, Jennifer and Wayne gradually felt more comfortable praying aloud as a couple.

My husband, Holmes, and I had our share of frustrations in our early attempts to pray together, too. I was a spontaneous pray-er, wanting to lift a problem to God on the spot. But Holmes liked to mull over the situation, praying later when there were no distractions. He tended to "think" his prayers, while I tended to be long-winded.

Like many men, Holmes had a private prayer life, so being willing to talk out loud to God with me felt risky at first. But as I limited my words, pausing between prayer sentences to make room for silence or for his prayers, Holmes opened up more. And my willingness to wait to pray about something (like after the kids were in bed) instead of demanding instant prayer time took more pressure off Holmes.

As we made our first halting efforts to pray together, we began seeing specific answers to our prayers about Holmes' job, our son's asthma, and our finances. These encouraged us to keep connecting with God and with each other. Over the years,



we became more comfortable praying in the car while driving, praying for our children while taking a walk, or praying on the phone if one of us was out of town. And when our kids headed into the rough waters of adolescence, we had lots of extra opportunities to be on our knees together!

### The Benefits of Couple Prayer

Why make an effort to pray together when there seem to be so many obstacles? Because praying as a couple holds a storehouse of blessings for your marriage; in fact, it's key to lifelong happiness together. Studies show that simply attending church or being a Christian doesn't divorce-proof your marriage. But couples who regularly pray together report enjoying the most satisfying marriages of all—and the divorce rate plummets.

In our marriage, praying together brought the heart-to-heart connection for which I'd always longed. After only a few years of marriage, Holmes and I had become emotionally disconnected. But Ecclesiastes 4:12 says, "A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." With every prayer my husband and I uttered together, Christ became the third strand of a braided cord that brought more spiritual and physical connection into our marriage. You don't have to pray as a couple every morning at 6 A.M. to experience the benefits. Karen and Doug, one couple we

know, found a weekly prayer time together makes a huge difference in their lives. Every Sunday night after they put their kids to bed, they spend one hour praying for their children, their unsaved family members, Doug's outreach to international students at the university where he works, and specific burdens. "Prayer binds our two hearts together and makes them one," they say. "Before, we'd get disconnected from each other in our different pursuits," adds Karen, who home schools their children while Doug does campus ministry. "But prayer unites our hearts into a common purpose, and we gain a deeper appreciation for what each of us does daily."

Through these weekly talks with God, Karen and Doug also have seen him bring about positive changes in their daughter's behavior. And Karen's father, who resisted the gospel for years, recently decided to become a Christ-follower. These glimpses of God's grace keep them persevering for many other family members; they've seen what an eternal difference prayer makes.

Many situations can strain your marriage and pull you apart: a serious illness; the loss of a child; financial calamities; job loss; caring for a child with special needs. No matter what difficulties you face, prayer keeps your hearts close to each other and to God.

### Busting Through Those Barriers



Someone once said, "It is the heart that prays; it is to the heart's voice God listens; and it is the heart that he answers." Maybe that's precisely why we sometimes avoid prayer with our spouse—it's just so heart-to-heart. Whether your barrier is hectic schedules, awkwardness, or having different prayer styles, here are some ways to overcome the barriers and experience the blessings:

Pick some common ground. At the beginning of our couple prayer adventure, Holmes and I felt most comfortable praying for our children. (That's because praying for others together isn't as intimate as praying for your spouse's personal needs.) When our son Justin had an asthma attack, or our other son, Chris, was recovering from a broken collarbone, our shared concern for their well-being brought us naturally into prayer.

Praying together for your kids is a logical starting point. Once a day, after they're asleep, go into their rooms and pray for them. You can pray for their health, their spiritual growth, your dreams for them, their struggles and joys, and their relationship with each other, you, and the Lord. Pray together for other people also—for family or friends who are sick or in need of God's help, or for a couple you know who struggles in their marriage. The main thing is to start and to commit to keep going, even if it's awkward.

Try silent moments. If one or both of you feel self-conscious about praying aloud, sit knee-to-knee and express your most pressing concerns or needs to your spouse, and allow him to do the same. Then hold hands and pray silently for each other's burdens. Just those few moments of silent prayer for your partner will help you experience a deeper connection with God and each other.

Pray with gratitude instead of judgment. Avoid using prayer as a way to express the things you want God to "fix" about your spouse. If you make him feel guilty when you pray together, he'll avoid it next time. Instead, thank God not only for your blessings, but also for specific things about your spouse. "There is nothing that makes us love a man so much as praying for him," said writer William Law.

**Appreciate differences.**

When our friends Jeff and Maria

prayed, their attempts ended in frustration and even resentment. Jeff criticized Maria's prayers ("That's not in the Bible! You can't pray that!"), and she, in turn, corrected his grammar. She prayed out of a heart of mercy; he analyzed each prayer, making sure it lined up with Scripture, and asked



God for justice and correction for others. She wanted to pray with the lights off; he preferred the lights on. They were more like prayer adversaries than prayer partners. But when they took a marriage course at their church and realized they each brought different gifts to prayer, their prayer life took off.

Jeff began to see Maria's role in prayer as the "radar" and his as the "air force." He

realized his wife's concern over a problem was like a blip on the radar screen alerting them that special prayer effort was needed. As they looked to God and harmonized together in prayer, they saw him move in dynamic ways not only in the lives of their teens, but also in their relationship.

"God has given each of you some special abilities; be sure to use them to help each other, passing on to others God's many kinds of blessings" (1 Peter 4:10, TLB). Sit down with your spouse and talk about your different prayer styles and gifts. Maybe one of you likes to use a prayer list, while the other wants to feel led by the Spirit. One feels closer to God outdoors and the other in the quiet of the bedroom. Discussing your differences and thanking God for them is a first step toward blending them in prayer.

Focus your prayers. Another couple we know, Mary and Ron, always have found it a struggle to pray together. But they're convinced God wants them to so they'll notice his grace in their lives more often. So they've devised a way to help them pray on the other person's behalf. At the beginning of the year, Mary and Ron write down three subjects they want the other to pray for—a personal struggle or weakness,

a desired attitude change, and a decision to be made or a health issue. These needs shape their petitions for each other. From time to time they talk about how God is working, and update their three-point list. (They also have a three-point list for each of their three kids.) Pray until something happens. What if, despite your best efforts, your husband's disinterested in praying with you? Let me encourage you to keep praying for him. Know that when you feel alone in the prayer closet, the God of the universe is listening. You're not alone!

In fact, the spiritual reality is that when you pray, you join Jesus in his full-time endeavor. He's seated at the right hand of the Father making intercession for you (Hebrews 7:25), and he makes a terrific prayer partner. He doesn't want you to give up praying for the reluctant spouse. Christ assures us that the One who sees what we do in secret will reward us openly (Matthew 6:6) if we PUSH (pray until something happens). If you're a solo praver, get a friend to join you in praying for your husbands together.

Find time. Whether you pray each morning like some couples, have a prayer date once a week like Karen and Doug, or pray with a yearly focus like Ron and Mary, the important thing is to start somewhere. Together pray a blessing over your children before they leave for school or prayer-walk together in your neighborhood some evening. Each couple is different, so talk about the time and place you both can agree on so prayer becomes part of your life together.

Every time you pray as a couple, you let God into your lives and into the particular situations you talk to him about. In those moments together, God wraps his arms around you, bridges the gap between you and your spouse, and releases the grace you need to pray together. Who knows what might come from experiencing God's presence in prayer?

by Cheri Fuller

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# Why I Chose to Stay

*Dr. Tom & Patty Bell and Crystal Poulin McBean, friends of our congregation, have gone to Haiti to help in recent days. But many Americans who were there during the quake chose to leave and come home. Here is the story of one brave young woman whose faith told her to stay.*



## Photos of the suffering in Haiti bring tears.

For Curt & Michelle Friesen of Okotoks, Alberta Canada the images are personal. Their daughter Jessica, 18, flew to Haiti to volunteer at an orphanage the day before an earthquake rocked the impoverished nation.

First things first, Jessica is safe. Miraculously, she was able to phone her parents on January 12th about 40 minutes after the quake hit. They heard from her before they saw the news. Once the call was over they turned on CNN and were shocked by what they saw. Internet connections are still working at the orphanage and the Friesens have been able to talk to their daughter.

In an article for the Calgary Sun, Jessica described her experience of the quake saying: "We were up [on] the balcony, and it felt like we were going to be flung off — it was really scary. I was in the middle of the floor and I couldn't grab onto anything — I felt so unsteady and it felt like the house was going to collapse, because it was moving back and forth, back and forth."

When the shaking stopped every dish in the kitchen was broken but the orphanage remained standing. Jessica could see the dust on the hills as houses collapsed all around them. The adults were silent, the children, terrified. The orphanage — God's Littlest Angels — is walled and secure for the time being, but there is some concern over safety as desperation moves people out of the capital in search of food and water.

Jessica wrote of her experience on her blog:

So much weighs on my heart right now. I have spent two days witnessing a grief that is not my own, yet a grief so horrific and heartbreaking that you cannot help but cry along. The stories I have heard and the pictures I have seen are just devastating. They say blood runs down the streets of Port Au Prince into the gutters.

For me, it's just beyond heart-wrenching to think that this happened to an already impoverished nation. I remember my ride here, taking in the streets and how little people lived on, and in less than a minute that little became nothing. Everything they had lies flattened and crumbled, even dead beneath the rubble. I can't wrap my head or my heart around it.

## Who would choose to stay?

It was a big decision to go to Haiti, but the greater challenge now is Jessica's decision to stay. Several times over the past few days she has been offered a way out and each time she has chosen to remain in Haiti.

When I spoke to Jessica's mom, Michele, I asked her why her daughter decided to stay in Haiti when she had the chance to be evacuated. She told me that Jessica said simply "they need so much help right now" and that she never really considered walking away. One night they were told that there were seven seats available on a flight out. Six volunteers packed their bags.

In a post on her blog on Wednesday Jessica wrote, "I understand their choice to return home, I will not pretend I haven't wished I was at home a million times throughout this week. But when they woke us up late last night and gave us the chance to leave on a plane in the morning, I had such peace about staying."

It would be easy to sit here in my nice, warm house and chide those who decided to go, but that would be unbelievably

unfair. Until I have walked the ruined streets, seen it and smelled it and wept for it, I really cannot judge. Fear and exhaustion are perfectly normal responses to a crisis like this. I hope that each of these volunteers gets the help they will need to process their experiences.

## What comes next for Haiti?

What comes next is a complicated question. For Jessica and thousands of others like her in Haiti right now the answer seems to be to fix what's right in front of you, to hold on to what is within reach. Aid is reaching Haiti but because so much of the infrastructure has been destroyed the pace is slower than all those involved would like.

God can use your experiences. Take the 'Built by Brokenness' lesson

Several countries have established humanitarian parole, allowing children who's adoptions have been completed to leave the country right away. Close to a hundred children from God's Littlest Angels are on their home to their forever families. The orphanage expects an influx of new children needing care in the day ahead.

Originally Jessica was supposed to help the kids with developmental care. These days, she spends most of her time just holding the children, hugging and comforting them as best she can. Water is scarce so bathing is limited. Jessica told her mom that even though she's stinky and greasy she has children running into her arms at all times. Just the other day 15 children swarmed her all at once, almost knocking her over with their love. Talking to her mom, Jessica wondered "what if I run out of love?" It seems there's little danger of that happening.

Please pray for Jessica and the staff of God's Littlest Angels.

- Written by Claire Colvin

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# Because We Care Day

February 20, 2010

10:00 am - Noon

We will be distributing toothbrushes, tooth paste, shapoo, conditioner, bar soap, laundry detergent, hats, mittens, coats and "no sew" blankets to our neighbors. Come join us and meet our neighbors.

Our goal is to have 75 of each to give away. Donations gladly accepted.



The material for the "no sew" blankets is available now. Sign up to make one by seeing Cynthia Strouse.



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**239 West Main Street**  
**Norwich, CT 06360**  
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Sunday Morning Worship 10:30 a.m.  
Sunday School at 9:15 a.m.  
Mid week worship -  
Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.

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