

The Ambassador

News
and Views
From the Hill



April 2011

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



The Choir Says Farewell to a Great Friend!



More news inside:

- * A Word from our Interim Pastor...
- * Holy Week Services
- * Upcoming Events
- * Because We Care Events and Updates
- * Camp Wightman Schedule

Join us for
worship every
Sunday morning
at 10:30 a.m.



Check out the First Baptist
Church web page at
www.fbcnorwich.org

We are looking for help
with the Monthly Church
Newsletter.
See Sandy Stone.



Worship
10:30 -
11:45 am

Join Us As We Worship This Spring

Upcoming Sundays in APRIL

Pastor Bill's Sermon Series
The "I Am" sayings of Jesus.

April 3, 2011

Communion Sunday

Scripture: John 6:35

Sermon: "I Am the Bread of Life"

April 10, 2011

Scripture: John 10

Sermon: "I Am the Good Shepherd"

April 17, 2011

Palm Sunday

Scripture: John 12 & 14

Sermon: I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life"

April 24, 2011

Easter

Scripture: John 11

Scripture: "I Am the Resurrection"

Ministry Helpers in April

As Ushers & Greeters

Apr. 3 - G. Strouse, K. Barber, K. Beavan, M. Kane

Apr. 10 - F. Royce, C. Brockway, N. & G. Schuster

Apr. 17 - H. Calkins, L. McFalls, B. & P. Adams

Apr. 24 - G. Strouse, K. Barber, K. Beavan, M. Kane

As Worship Assistants

Apr. 10 - Pete Adams Apr. 17 - Lee McFalls

Apr. 24 - Nancy Allen

As Counters

Apr. 3 - Bob Walker & Bob Sullivan

Apr. 10 - Nancy Allen & Amy Rezendes

Apr. 17 - Mary Brockway & Ray Deptulski

Apr. 24 - Dick Strouse & Mark Rogers

As Nursery Attendants

Apr. 3 - Bonnie Ambruso & Fran Rogers

Apr. 10 - Rachele Weimer & Kelly Bolin

Apr. 17 - Sandra Lucien & Jesly Souvenance

Apr. 24 - Hired Help

Midweek Lenten Services
Continue into April



We have suspended our normal Wednesday night services and have joined our sister churches on the Lenten Journey. The theme this year is "Six Living Words". The service lasts about 40 -45 minutes with a time for fellowship and refreshments afterward. The remaining services are noted below.

Six Living Words

April 6 - Park Congregational Church

April 13 - First Baptist Church

We will be looking for help with the reception following worship when we are here at our church on April 13th. Can you bake cookies, cupcakes, desserts and pastries? Please let us know if you can help.

Order Your Easter Flowers

We are going to have a beautiful display of flowers for Easter morning and you can help make it a "memorable" occasion. If you would like to remember a loved one or recognize a special person, then please fill out the order form below..



I would like to order the following flowers;

___ Lilies at \$9.25 each for a total of _____

___ Tulips at \$6.75 each for a total of _____

___ Hyacinths at \$6.75 each for a total of _____

___ Daffodils at \$6.75 each for a total of _____

Please type the following name(s) in the Easter Sunday Bulletin as follows:

In Memory Of _____

In Honor of (someone living) _____

Given by _____

(Examples: Mr & Mrs John Smith / John & May Smith)

Please make your check out to First Baptist Church and put Easter flowers in memo line. Reservations due by 04/03/11.

A Word from the Pastor

April, 2011



Greetings to all my new friends and church family,

It's great to be with you at Norwich First Baptist. I have found everyone to be very warm and welcoming of me as your new interim pastor, and I am so grateful. Thanks to everyone!

- Sandy is patiently working with me to bring me up to speed on all that needs to be done. Thanks Sandy!
- Adele is doing a great job on the organ and with the choir. We have had good conversations about the music of the church. So, thank you Adele!
- Mark Kane has met me at the office, given me a tour of the city, and made sure I know the "ins and outs" of church life at FBC. Thank you Mark!

And that's just mentioning a few of you have extended yourself graciously to me to help me get adjusted to our new life together as Interim Pastor and people of God. Thanks!

This is, of course Lent with Easter coming quickly upon us. It is a very busy time of the year. There are special services being planned, like Ecumenical Wednesday night Lenten services, our own Maundy Thursday, and Inter-church Good Friday service, just to mention a few.

Easter is my favorite holiday of the year. I love the coming of Spring, the warming of the weather, the earth coming alive with color and new life! And I love the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus - a wonderful reminder of what awaits those who trust in Him. I love reminding people of the power of the cross where Jesus died in an amazing act of divine love, that we may be saved, and our sins forgiven.

Easter, and the events surrounding it, is at the very heart of the Christian message. It is through the Cross and our Lord's resurrection that we have new life in Christ. I love reminding people of precious hope of eternal life.

This is a message the world desperately needs. It is a unique time in which people are open to coming to church, even if that is not their usual practice. So, I encourage you to take advantage of the season. Invite your friends, family, and all those within your circle of influence to join you as you worship the Lord this Easter season.

I look forward with much enthusiasm to working together for the sake of the Gospel and the advancement of Christ's Kingdom.

Pastor Bill

A Thank you note from the Lord family

My dear friends,

Lori, the girls and I want to thank you all for your gifts and cards, thoughts and prayers, hugs and kisses. You outdid yourselves with the farewell reception, the special touches during our last service together and the many kind words that we received in the days leading up to our last Sunday. We leave taking that love with us as we begin the new adventure God has called us to in Westerly.

We also want you to know that you will be in our prayers as your search begins for the next pastor. I know that you are in good hands with Pastor Bill during the interim. He has a heart for the Lord and a spirit of enthusiasm that is contagious. He is also a man of prayer and that will be a blessing to you as you follow God's lead in the search process. Listen to him. Learn from him. Follow him.

Finally we want to thank you for the twenty six years of faithfulness that you showed as we partnered to share the love of God with our community. We touched lives and made a difference in the things we did. To God be the glory.

Be blessed.

Yours forever,
Cal, Lori, Rebecca, Sarah and Rachel

Our Farewell to Lori

On Wednesday, March 2nd, the ladies of the First Baptist Choir gathered together to honor Lori Lord with a farewell dinner at Modestos Restaurant. Floating among the aromas of our wonderful meals, were lots of love, tons of laughter and of course, a sprinkling of tears. A terrific time was had by all.

Gifts were given as we recalled Lori's last 25 years with us as head "Altoid".

How blessed were we to have had this wonderful vocal, keyboard and flute playing talent in our choir. How blessed were we to have her wit and technical prowess no matter what the key or harmony; How blessed were we? One need not answer.

Lori, you are loved and you are missed.

May our hearts be forever tethered by the songs and fellowship we shared together.



Please think of the following people in your prayers.

- June Deptulski
- Penny Sargent
- Ray Deptulski
- Michelle Lord
- Frank Roderick
- Roger Lambert
- Bob Duntz
- Jennifer LaFlamme
- Doris Adams

Our Shut-ins:

- Doris Regets
- Jean Roscoe
- June Coleman
- Lorraine Bober

In the Military Service:

- Nicholas Muyres
- Brian Grillo
- Daniel Moriarty
- Tim Rogers
- Aaron Rogers

If you know someone who should be added to the list please call the church office (860-889-0369)

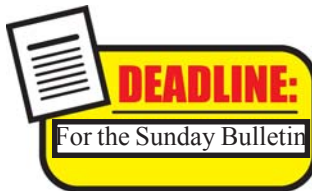
Refrigerator needed

We are looking for a new refrigerator for our kitchen at church. The one we have now is not long for this world.



If you have one that is in good shape or would like to make a donation for a new one, please call the church office. (860-889-0369) Thank you.

***Please Note:** If you need to contact Pastor Bill Huegel for any reason, he can be reached by calling him at (203) 715-1936 or by email billhuegel66@gmail.com



If you have any scheduled meetings, or know of any upcoming events, or any other items that should be listed in the Sunday Bulletin, be sure to get the information to the church office by Wednesday, and we will be sure to have it listed in the upcoming Sunday bulletin.

Do you have news you would like to see in our newsletter?



We are always looking for new and exciting articles, announcements, upcoming events to share with our church family, so if there is something you would like to share, please get the information to us by the 20th of the month and we will be sure to include it in our monthly newsletter.

Will You Walk With Us?



**Join the CROP Hunger Walk
May 1st at 1:00 p.m.
at
Lee Memorial Methodist Church**

If you are interested in walking, please see George Strouse and he will provide you with the needed information. If you can't walk with us, please consider sponsoring someone who can.



We have a new church email address. Please be sure to make a note of the change, so you are able to contact the church accordingly. The new address is fbcnorwich@gmail.com

We are also currently having problems with our website but that should be up and running again soon. Our web page is www.fbcnorwich.org Sorry for any inconvenience this may have caused.

Getting to know each other over dinner

Pastor Bill is anxious to get to know people in the church. One of the ways this can be done is for families of the church to invite him over to dinner on Wednesday evenings. He will need to leave in time for the Wednesday evening prayer service. If you are available for this ministry to our interim pastor, just call or email the church office and let Sandy know.



Softball Season is Right around the corner

It is not too early to sign up for FBC Softball. Talk to Ken Kreger, Chip Chaffee or Fred Stone if you want to play. You can also contact the church office at (860) 889-0369. We begin in late April/early May and continue through the first week of August.



Palm Sunday Communion Breakfast

The Men's Communion Breakfast will be held at Central Baptist Church on Palm Sunday, April 17th. The service begins at 7:00 a.m. Tickets for the breakfast are available for \$5.00 each. Oliver Bray will have them.



Parking at Church

The parking spots along the rear of our building are reserved for visitors and/or those with special needs.



There are plenty of parking spaces behind Firestone and at Midas Muffler for those who are able to walk. You can also park up at the Oak Tree Plaza if the other spots are full.

Maundy Thursday

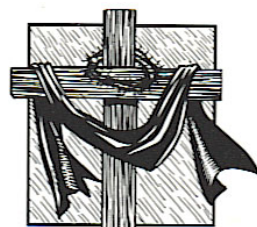


On Thursday, April 21, we will gather around the Lord's table with Jesus relive the events in the upper room on that night long ago.

Come and worship with us at 7:00 p.m. as we share the Lord's Supper and reflect on his passion. There will be special music and dramatic readings.

Way of the Cross Procession

On Friday, April 22 we will join with Bishop Michael Cote and other Christian leaders from across the region in a public witness to our common faith in Christ. We will gather at Chelsea Parade at 6:00 p.m. and march down Broadway carrying the cross, singing hymns and reading and reflecting on Jesus' walk to Calvary All are welcome to join in this powerful testimony to the unity we have in Christ. In the event of rain, we will meet at Central Baptist Church to sing and pray.



**GOOD
FRIDAY
SERVICE**

Join us for our
Easter Celebration
on Sunday, April 24 at 10:30 a.m.



Invite your friends and family to come with you.

Parking is also available next door at Firestone Tire, across the street at Midas Muffler and Oak Tree Plaza.

Going Into the Hospital?



Pastor Bill will be in town a few days a week but he is always available in an emergency. He also plans to visit the sick. So if you would like a visit, or if you are going into the hospital, please call the church so that the Deacons and Interim Minister can visit and pray with you. The number is 860-889-0369



Our Sunday School meets each week at 9:15 a.m. Bring your kids!

IRON SHARPENS IRON

**Iron Sharpens Iron
Christian Men's Conference
on Saturday, May 14th
In Worcester, MA**

For details and advanced
Registration see Curt Brockway, or
call the church office at
860-889-0369



Join the Choir

WE NEED YOU!

Rehearsals every Tuesday night
from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

**WE ARE PREPARING OUR
MUSIC FOR LENT & EASTER!**



THE NEWSLETTER NEEDS YOU

Talk to Sandy Stone to see
How You Can Help.
We are looking for
photographers, reporters and
people with new ideas.



**Music for the Season:
'First Lady of the Organ'
Diane Bish
at Yale's Battell Chapel
April 9 at 7:00 p.m.**

Highly acclaimed and award-winning
organist, Diane Bish will perform
favorites and original hymn
arrangements at Yale University's
Battell Chapel, along with a choir
composed of local vocalists, including
members of the Heritage Chorale.

Tickets are \$35, \$20 and \$5 for students.
For tickets or more information, call the
Lyman Center box office at (203) 392-
6154 or visit tickets.southernct.edu

ABCCONN's 187th Annual Gathering Saturday, April 30, 2011

Iglesia Unida el Calvario, New Haven

8:30 am to 3:30 pm

"Witnessing in the Way of Jesus"



"But you will receive power when the Holy
Spirit comes on you; and you will be my
witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea
and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
Acts 1:8



**Mark Your Calendar and
Spread the Word!**

Camp Wightman Workday

**Saturday, May 14th
9:00 am - 3:00 pm**

Join others who love Camp in
helping get the property ready for
the summer season.

RSVP to the Camp Office at
860-376-2179 ext 10 or to
campwightman@gmail.com
with the number of people coming
so the staff can plan for lunch.
See You There!

ACROSS

1. we must ___ these men to speak no longer to anyone (Acts 4:17)
5. since the days of Esar-haddon king of ___ (Ezra 4:2) KJV
9. "Don't call me Naomi," she told them. "Call me ___ (Ruth 1:20)
13. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such ___ (1,7) (Acts 8:22)
14. whosoever shall exalt himself shall be ___ (Matt 23:12) KJV
15. he did the things that were commanded him? I ___ not (Luke 17:9)KJV
16. a King who will ___ wisely and do what is just (Jer 23:5)
17. They ___ from the Book of the Law of God (Neh 8:8)
18. The camel, though it chews the ___, does not have a split hoof (Lev 11:4)
19. Like a lion I will devour them; a wild animal will ___ them (Hos 13:8)
20. I may tell all my bones: they look and ___ upon me (Ps 22:17)
21. laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it even ___ (1 Kings 12:11)
23. Hoshea the son of ___ made a conspiracy against Pekah (2 King 15:30)
25. Above all ___, guard your heart (Prov 4:23)
26. This gate is to ___ shut. It must not be opened (Ezek 44:2)
29. the lizard, and the ___, and the mole (Lev 11:30) (KJV)
32. Heal the sick, ___ the dead, cleanse those who have (Matt 10:7-8)
34. because of you the heavens have withheld their ___ (Hag 1:10)
36. wisdom has built her house; she has ___ out its seven pillars (Prov 9:1) KJV
38. Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog? A ___ ? (1 Sam 24:14)
39. eighth letter of Greek alphabet
40. he saw at the water's edge two ___ (Luke 5:2)
43. She saw the basket among the ___ and sent her slave girl (Ex 2:5)
44. The woman was a Greek, born in ___ Phoenicia (Mark 7:26)
46. whose rider is called Faithful and ___ (Rev 19:11)
49. Absalom had appointed Amasa over the ___ in place of Joab (2 Sam 17:25)
50. if the plague be greenish or ___ in the garment, or in the skin (Lev 13:49) KJV
54. But ___ foolish controversies and genealogies (Titus 3:9)
57. What I mean, brothers, is that the ___ is short (1 Cor 7:29)



58. Blessed are ___ merciful: for they shall obtain mercy (Matt 5:7)
59. a net by the wayside; they have set ___ for me (Ps 140:5) KJV
60. ___, O Lord! Why do you sleep? Rouse yourself! (Ps 44:23)
61. "I am the ___," Samuel replied (1 Sam 9:19)
62. ___ instruction, and in the end you will be wise (Prov 19:20)
63. wherewith the odd number of them is to be ___ (Num 3:48) KJV
64. I was given a ___ like a measuring rod (Rev 11:1)
65. and the hold of ___ fowl spirit (Rev 18:2) (KJV)
66. the poison of ___ is under their lips (Rom 3:13) KJV

DOWN

1. ___ and pray, that ye enter not into temptation (Matt 26:41) KJV
2. May the LORD be ___ and faithful witness (1,4) (Jer 42:5)
3. a servant girl named ___ came (Acts 12:13)
4. ___ I know in part; then I shall know fully (1 Cor 13:12)
5. life in Christ Jesus, which ___ with what I teach everywhere (1 Cor 4:17)
6. as a lamb before the ___ is silent (Acts 8:32)
7. but grievous words ___ up anger (Prov 15:1)
8. But the ship struck a sandbar and ___ aground (Acts 27:41)

9. Jesus loved ___ and her sister and Lazarus (John 11:5)
10. looked like ___ of glass, clear as crystal (1,3) (Rev 4:6)
11. the God of Israel will be your ___ guard (Isa 52:12)
12. the lot fell to Matthias; so he was ___ to the eleven apostles (Acts 1:26)
19. From morning ___ evening he explained and (Acts 28:23)
20. to another faith by the ___ Spirit (1 Cor 12:9)
22. Surely there is a ___ for the silver (Job 28:1)
23. sons of Gad: Zephon, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, ___ (Gen 46:16)
24. No one gathered ___ than ten homers (Num 11:32)
27. keep away from every brother who is ___ and does not (2 Thess 3:6)
28. Share with God's people who are in ___ (Rom 12:13)
29. "Stop wailing," Jesus said. ___ is not dead but asleep (Luke 8:52)
30. fishermen's gear (Mark 1:18)
31. he took ___ the Sodomites out of the land (1 Kings 15:12) KJV
33. A man finds joy in giving an ___ reply (Prov 15:23)
35. he ___ clothed with a vesture dipped in blood (Rev 19:13) KJV
37. they are ___ on the surface of the water (Job 24:18)
38. The cow will ___ with the bear (Isa 11:7)
40. a ___ of the air shall carry the voice (Eccles 10:20)
41. Don't let anyone deceive you in ___ way (II Th 2:3)
42. Not given to wine, no ___, not greedy (1 Tim 3:3) KJV
43. ill-bred, uncivil (1 Cor 13:5)
45. we know that since Christ was ___ from the dead, he cannot die (Rom 6:9-10)
47. no ___ for your sore, no healing for you (Jer 30:13)
48. Sarah's Egyptian handmaid (Gen 25:12)
51. units, parts
52. I am sending you out like ___ among wolves (Matt 10:16)
53. He took all the flocks and ___ (1 Sam 30:20)
55. as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for ___ (1 Peter 2:16) NKJV
56. The death he died, he died to sin ___ for all (Rom 6:10)
57. the devil threw him down, and ___ him (Luke 9:42) KJV
60. I ___ no pleasant bread (Daniel 10:3)
61. As Jesus walked beside the ___ of Galilee (Mark 1:16)



Camp Wightman 2011 Summer Schedule

Week /Dates - Times	Camp	Grade Completed	Cost
1. June 26 - July 2	Counselor in Training	9-10	\$ 375.00
	Orienteering	7-8	\$410.00
	Are U Ready???	5-6	\$390.00
	Adults with Special Challenges 1		\$480.00
June 26 - July 29	Family Camp 1		\$ 110A / 80C
June 30 - July 1	Make New Friends		\$45A / 35C
2. July 3 - July 9	Mountain Bike	9-12	\$455.00
	Acts II	7-12	\$410.00
	Music, Music, Music	7-12	\$410.00
	Music, Music, Music	3-6	\$390.00
	Tool Time	6-8	\$400.00
	Beginner Scrapbooking	6-8	\$400.00
July 9 10:00am	Music and Acts II - Live on Stage		Free
July 9 11:30am	Second Annual Bar-B-Q		Call for Tickets
July 9 Noon - 4:00pm	Camp Wightman Open House		Free
3. July 10 - July 16	Senior High Event	9-13	\$455.00
	Aim High	7-8	\$410.00
July 10 - July 13	Check It Out! 1	3-4	\$230.00
July 14 - July 16	Rocks, Paper, Scissors - FUN!!! 1	K-2	\$200.00
4. July 17 - July 23	Ultimate Outdoor Adventure	6-8	\$440.00
	Cooking 101	5-6	\$390.00
	Wild Women in the Woods		\$300.00
July 17 - July 20	Rocks, Paper, Scissors - FUN!!! 2	1-2	\$230.00
July 20 - July 23	Check It Out! 2	3-4	\$230.00
5. July 24 - July 30	Waterworld! Senior High	9-12	\$455.00
	Waterworld! Junior High	7-8	\$440.00
	Waterworld! Junior	5-6	\$440.00
July 30 8:30am	Canoe Camp Check-in		
6. July 31 - August 6	Round-up!	5-6	\$ 390.00
	Jubileo	3-8	\$390.00
	Creation Station 1	3-4	\$390.00
	Adults with Special Challenges 2		\$480.00
	Canoe	9-Adult	\$520.00
<i>Please note that Canoe Camp starts on Saturday, July 30th</i>			
7. August 7 - August 13	Fellowship Builders	9-College	\$ 375.00
	Super-Duper	7-8	\$410.00
	Junior Explorers	5-6	\$390.00
	Creation Station 2	3-4	\$390.00
8. August 14 - August 17	Grandparents with Grandchildren		\$ 110A / 80C
	Family Camp 2		\$ 110A / 80C



INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES

A Note from International Missionaries David and Leslie Turley

David and Leslie Turley serve on the island of Okinawa, Japan. David works with the Okinawa Baptist Convention, teaching Bible classes, doing pulpit supply, and working in leadership development. Leslie is an administrator at Okinawa Christian School International (OCSI), and also assists with convention activities.



For me, it all started on Friday afternoon, March 11, after our annual student-led conferences at Okinawa Christian School International. A member of our church and a fellow worker at OCSI said that all the public schools had been released early due to the danger of a tsunami. He said that the first reports were of a strength of 7 on the Japanese Shindo scale. We all said that it couldn't be; that it must be the magnitude 7. A 7 on the Japanese scale is unheard of and is the top indicator for an earthquake. It turned out he was right...an earthquake with a 7 on the Japanese scale and a 9.0M struck the northern part of Japan on Friday causing an unbelievable tsunami and devastation in its wake.

Okinawa is about 900 miles from the area struck, but we were under a tsunami alert for about 24 hours and folks living in low-lying areas here were evacuated. As the news reports started to trickle and then pour in, we saw the footage that left us broken-hearted and crying. We were like many of you-glued to our TVs as we tried to take in the scope of the disaster, and then seeing image after image the wall of water over 10 meters in height, destroying everything in its path. After that came the images of those affected; of the crying children, the mothers and the elderly with faces reflecting total disbelief that this could be happening. It was heart-wrenching.

David and I lived in Yokohama for 13 years and we have many friends there so I was on the phone and emailing many of them to check to see if they were okay. Thankfully, our friends in that area were only scared but fine, but as to our churches and acquaintances in Sendai, there has been little word. At last count, over 310,000 people are staying in shelters and there is now the possibility of over 10,000 deaths. As we look at the devastation, it is not hard to see why.

Our American Baptist missionaries are beginning to work on helping with relief. John Armagost, missionary in Osaka, will be going to the area on Tuesday to evaluate the damage and to try to connect with Baptist churches and pastors there. Roberta Stephens has already begun to use her house as a safe-haven and we imagine that in coming weeks and months, may be used more for that purpose. Here is a portion of a letter written by John Armagost to International Ministries on Saturday, 3/12:

Dear Friends,

"It is Saturday evening and we had a full day, but we wanted to update you just a little. Again we are all safe, as are all other ABC-International Ministries missionaries here in Japan.

"The leadership of the Japan Baptist Union (JBU), our sister denomination here in Japan, has spent the day trying to make contact with all the pastors of the churches in the areas devastated by this earthquake and the following tsunamis. We have not heard from 6 pastors (Hachinohe, Kuji, Tagajo, Shichigahama, Matsushima, and Kashimadai churches). Other pastors and their families have been evacuated, and some have reported damage to their church buildings.

"We know these wonderful folks personally, yet I know that your hearts go out to them just the same as ours. Steps are being taken by the leadership of the JBU to find ways to reach out to those in need. The several Baptist denominations of Japan are working together to provide help and support. American Baptist Churches have already released \$20,000 from the One Great Hour of Sharing fund for relieve support."

Pray for the leaders of the Japan Baptist Union as they find ways to reach out to those in need.

Pray for the pastors and families not yet heard from.

Pray for those responsible for bringing relief to the suffering people of Japan.

You may ask how you can help and first and foremost, we ask that you pray. Pray that as the physical and emotional needs of so many are being taken care of the Word of God will go out as well to give the Japanese a source of hope for their future. I also ask that as you feel led, you give to charities that will also give out the hope of the Gospel along with physical help. We know that our American Baptist International ministries is already receiving funds to send to the churches in Japan for relief work. David and I have donated and we feel confident the funds will be used in the way I have mentioned. Here is the link: <http://www.internationalministries.org/items/221>

As a way to help people stay informed, I have also been trying to post information and photos on our Facebook page.

Thank you for your prayers. As I think about all of us working together to help, I am reminded of the simple praise song that goes, "They will know we are Christians by our love, by our love, they will know we are Christians by our love".

Blessings,

David and Leslie

The Culture We Embrace

One morning I asked God for a year-long challenge. He told me to give up sweets. And I learned some important and eye-opening things!

by Jennifer Petitt

He looked like Frankenstein's mini-me. Chad Lee was a pale, square-faced boy with inky black hair. He also had a small mouth out of which he spat the word, fat. I don't remember clearly how he said it, whether it was "you're so fat" or "isn't she fat?" but I remember the word, and I remember his saying it while looking at me. I was eight years old. We were in the same third grade class, and there wasn't a day during the school year that I didn't either hear his critique of my size or live in fear of hearing it. It was a struggle of a year.



In fifth grade I still wore Husky jeans and cried looking at my rounder self in the mirror. My mom decided to fix me by taking me to Weight Watchers. I was five feet tall and

weighed 121 pounds. My leader wanted me to lose 20 pounds. I secretly wanted to lose 30 so I could eat cake. Looking at that time and the person I was then, I wish I'd learned to be a good eater. Instead, I learned to be a good dieter. I became a very good dieter.

Unfortunately, as most people know, good dieters become exceptional re-gainers, and the truly talented go on to be yo-yo dieters. So it was with me. I embraced diets as my salvation. They were my key to bodily perfection. Success wore a size 8;

failure shopped for plus-sizes, and I had wardrobes for both. I tried a lot of weight loss plans over a whole lot of time and failed all of them. For 30 years I tried desperately to be a skinny cake eater ... until two years ago.

Give up what?

One morning, I asked God for a challenge. I wanted to do something for a year, and I wanted to write about my experience along the way just for fun and to see if I could do it. Brainstorming, I came up with a couple of forgettable plans when into my head popped the most ridiculously insane thought in the history of thoughts: give up desserts for a year.

I love desserts. I don't have a sweet tooth; I have a whole mouthful of them. I'm an equal-opportunity dessert-eater. I tried giving up sweets five years earlier and crashed and burned before January was through.

I don't do repeats, I told myself. But the thought stayed. Like a seed in my brain, it planted itself and immediately took root. I don't want to, I said. The thought began to sprout. No ... I whined. It was too late. God had me where he wanted me.

When I began my New Year's resolution, I told myself that it was first to see if I could do it and second to be healthier—both noble goals. But really, inside, what I wanted was to lose 30 pounds (so the next year I could eat cake). Things seemed to go well at first. It wasn't as difficult physically as I expected it to be, and while the social aspects of dessert-eating were a

tougher adjustment, I had the self-satisfaction of knowing that I was being transformed into the thinner person I always longed to be. By March, though, I still looked the same and my clothes weren't any looser. I was mad, and struggling with what it all meant—expectations and disappointments, success and failure, wanting and denial—they were all wrapped up in something as simple as eating. I couldn't help but wonder how it happened that nothing happened? I couldn't help but question the point of continuing on. The answer was I had a profound desire to see the resolution to the end and felt a push to move forward that came from something greater than me. So I kept going.

My 40th birthday was the halfway point of the year. I checked in with my doctor the day before, praying for news I knew I wouldn't get.

"Within two pounds," I asked the nurse, "did I gain, lose, or stay the same?"

The answer was "the same," and because the clothes I wore that day were lighter than what I wore in the early days of winter six months before, I knew I'd not lost any weight at all for an entire half of a sweets-free year.

Yes, I cried a little. But as it turned out, I didn't need a lot to keep me going, and about two weeks later, I got



my second wind. My cholesterol, which has always been high despite my weight, dropped 47 points. Assured that my efforts weren't in vain and that I was making my insides happy, I was ready to claw my way to the end of December. And that little push was all I needed. I could only conclude that I was more than the size of my jeans and doing the right thing trumped looking (what I considered to be) the right way.

But just when I was ready to resign myself to being healthy but heavy, something happened.

The sweet truth of discovery

There are two truths about God that were made very clear to me: (1) He works according to his time; and (2) he has a terrific sense of humor.

In September I started shrinking. It continued through October, November, and December with the same result—the loss of about one size each month. I didn't change what I ate or how I exercised. Since my new eating habits had been firmly set after nine months, all I did was what I'd been doing all along. And the weight came off. It was mystifying, and it was marvelous. I finished the year in wonder and amazement and 20 pounds lighter. It had been a long, strange trip full of twists and turns. As with many of God's plans, even though I didn't get there directly, I ended up right where I was supposed to be.

God is good. That doesn't necessarily mean that he's always nice the way we want him to be. And it doesn't mean that things will be easy.



He is, however, always good. And I realized that when we follow him, even if the path gets messy, he takes us someplace new. Last spring, I got far enough down that path for him to turn me around and show me where I came from. What I saw were the Christians around me—learning his Word and living it as well as they could. I saw them reject our culture of self, wealth, and relationships in order to live as humanly possible according to the perfect model given to us by Christ—except when they ate.

We embrace the diet culture in order to look like people we otherwise choose not to emulate. Romans 12:2 tells us, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world" but does not add, "unless it's to look like a runway model." On the other hand, sometimes we consume bad food, often in quantities far beyond what we should. We've decided that "if it feels good, do it" is wrong, but "if it tastes good, go for seconds" is okay. Paul asked the Corinthians, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?" (1 Corinthians 6:19). If we decide to be vigilant to protect ourselves and our children from immorality, wouldn't that naturally include what we eat and feed our families?

Looking back down the path, I got it. For the first time in 30 years, I understood. It's not about the scale, looking good on the beach, or my right to eat as many desserts from the all-you-can-eat buffet as I can keep down. It's about the physical manifestation of my relationship with God. I realized that the desire to achieve a certain look and the lust for food are both idols that keep my focus away from God and the person he designed me to be. He picked a body for me, and I'm to honor him by caring for it.

I'd like to say, that year taught me to completely reject the dieting culture, to refuse to accept body image standards, and to choose great numbers on a lab report over great numbers on a scale, but I'm not there yet. I like where I am in terms of size and self-control but don't know that I've reached the point of cultural freedom as far as food and self-image are concerned. This year, I continue to exercise and be wary of sweets out of sheer terror of backsliding to my heavier self. I check my weight once a month and still get anxious approaching the scale. Even still, I don't think I've reached the point where I know exactly what I'm supposed to look like. Many years of too much abuse still hide what I'm meant to be. But now I see the traps that distracted me for so long, and by focusing on God and the path he's leading me on, I'm starting to get a glimpse of what he planned for me from the beginning.

"This article first appeared on Kyria.com. Used by permission of Christianity Today International, Carol Stream, IL 60188."



I am my own unique self - special, creative and wonderful

Quarterly Meeting of First Baptist Church

Sunday, April 17, 2011
following worship

At the meeting we will:

- *Welcome Pastor Bill our new interim pastor
- *Discuss next steps in our Pastoral Change
- *Here Reports from Church committees
- *Talk about future plans for the church building.
- *Celebrate what God is doing!



Return Service Requested

Dated Material

The First Baptist Church
239 West Main Street
Norwich, CT 06360
Vol.1, No. 1

Postage Paid
Non-Profit Org.
Norwich, CT
Permit #26

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

This is the April 2011 Issue

Volume 1 Number 1 2011

First Baptist Church of Norwich

239 West Main Street, Norwich, CT 06360

Phone: 860-889-0369

web address: www.fbcnorwich.org

e-mail: fbcnorwich@yahoo.com

Sunday Morning Worship 10:30 a.m.

Sunday School at 9:15 a.m.

Mid week worship -

Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.

Rev. William A. Huegel, Interim Pastor

Adele DiBiagio,

Organist & Choir Director

Sandy Stone, Administrative Assistant

Harry & Doris Calkins, Carol Calkins, Sharon

Fishkin and Bob Walker are the Production Assis-

tants.