

The Ambassador

News
and Views
From the Hill

February 2012



A Newsletter From
The First Baptist Church of Norwich
239 West Main Street, Norwich, CT 06360
fbcnorwich@gmail.com
860-889-0369
www.fbcnorwich.org



Be sure to Pack Well for Your Journey

During Lent, as we focus on Christ's journey to the cross, let's also examine the journey of our lives. The first task when leaving on any adventure is packing. What have you placed in your bag? Are you weighed down with temptations, self-doubt, money worries, relationship troubles? Have you overlooked any important items?

Maybe your bag feels too empty for the challenges ahead.

Remember to pack mercy, grace and forgiveness.

Thanks to Easter, we know that our journey in Christ continues, even when the road becomes difficult. So as you prepare for Lent, carry with you the hope made possible by Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf.

More news inside:

- * A Word from our Interim Pastor, Bill Huegel
- *Because We Care Events and Updates
- *Upcoming Events and much more

Join us for
worship every
Sunday morning
at 10:30 am
Sunday School
Begins at 9:15



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

If you have suggestions or tips please let us know at fbcnorwich@gmail.com



**First Baptist Church
Sunday Worship
Services
10:30 a.m.**

Join Us As We Worship This Winter

February 5, 2012

Communion Sunday

Scripture: Mark 4:1-12

Sermon: "Parables, Parables, Parables!"

February 12, 2012

Scripture: Mark 4:35-41

Sermon: "Power Over Storms"

February 19, 2012

Scripture: Mark 8:27-38

Sermon: "Peter's Confession and The Prediction of Death"

February 26, 2012

First Sunday of Lent

Guest Preacher - Rev. Sonia Gonzalez



Ushers & Greeters

Feb. 5 - H. Calkins, B. Adams, P. Adams, K. Mariano

Feb. 12 - G. Strouse, K. Barber, K. Beavan, M. Kane

Feb. 19 - F. Royce, C. Brockway, G. Schuster, Lee McFalls

Feb. 26 - H. Calkins, L. McFalls, B. Adams, P. Adams

Worship Assitants

Feb. 5 - Kaitlin Beavan Feb. 12 - Bob Walker

Feb. 19 - Pete Adams Feb. 26 - Lee McFalls

Counters

Feb. 5 - June Deptulski & George Strouse

Feb. 12 - Bob Walker & Bob Sullivan

Feb. 19 - Nancy Allen & Amy Rezendes

Feb. 26 - Mary Brockway & Ray Deptulski

Nursery Attendants

Feb. 5 - Rachelle Weimer & Chelsey Calkins

Feb. 12 - Fran Rogers & Mark A. Kane

Feb. 19 - Cassie Frechette & Kaitlin Beavan

Feb. 26 - Rachelle Weimer & Chelsey Calkins

Children's Moment Speakers

Feb. 5 - Bonnie Ambruso Feb. 12 - Pastor Bill

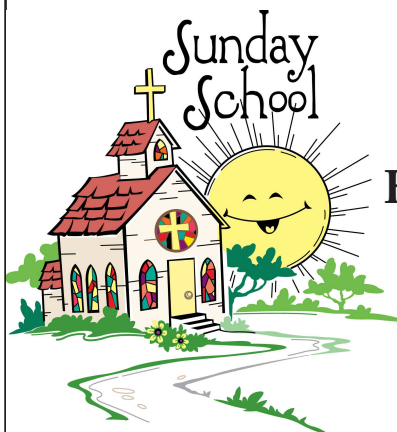
Feb. 19 - Fran Rogers Feb. 26 - Bonnie Ambruso

**Come and Welcome Our Guest Preacher
Rev. Sonia Gonzalez on February 26th**

Pastor Bill will be in Mexicali, Mexico on Sunday, February 26, with our Mission team. So we have invited Reverend Sonia Gonzalez to join us and lead us in our Sunday worship service.



Reverend Sonia Gonzalez is ABCCONN's Hispanic and Ethnic Coordinator, a position she has held since 2000. She provides assistance for new church starts, Hispanic leadership training and pastoral support for all our ethnic churches. Sonia is a graduate of Yale Divinity School and lives in South Windsor.



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

Here at First Baptist!

We have classes for all ages from Preschool to Adults. Come Join Our Sunday School Now!

February - A Month for Missions!

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” . John 3:16



February 14th is Valentines Day - a day in which people of this world celebrate romantic love. It’s also a great time to celebrate the love of Jesus for the world into which he came and for which He died. First Baptist Church celebrates missions by sending a team of 12 to Mexico to work with missionaries Rick and Mercy Barnes in Mexicali,



Mexico. We are excited about going. Please pray for us:

- Curt Brockway
- Aida Martinez Perez
- Bill Huegel
- Sara Rodriguez
- Debbie Huegel
- Randy Sargent
- Mark Kane
- Amanda Shanks
- Amber Manning
- Jake Shanks
- Michelle Monroe
- Julie Wagner



Pastors Pen - Bill Huegel

On Feb. 21, We will fly AA 1525 from Windsor Locks/Hartford at 6:00 A.M. Arrive Dallas/Fort Worth at 9:05 AM. Then we take depart from Dallas/Fort Worth on AA 1629 at 10:55 AM and Arrive in San Diego at 12:05 PM. On the return, Feb. 28th, we leave on AA 414 at 2:10 PM. Arrive in Dallas/ Fort Worth at 7:05 PM. We leave Dallas/ Fort Worth at 8:20 PM on flight # 1460 and arrive back in Hartford at 12:35 AM



We will be building bathrooms, leading in Vacation Bible School, and working at the Baptist Seminary.

These are pictures that were recently sent to me by our Missionary Partner, Mercy Barnes of the congregation that we will be working with



In His Service,
Pastor Bill



Please think of the following people in your prayers.

Don Walberg
 Judy Dupont
 Calvin Parr
 June Deptulski
 Michelle Lord
 Kathleen Reichel (Pastor Bill's mother-in-law)

Our Shut-ins:

Doris Regets
 Jean Roscoe
 June Coleman

In the Military Service:

Michelle Chaffee
 Nicholas Muyres
 Brian Grillo
 Daniel Moriarty
 Tim Rogers

If you know someone who should be added to the list please contact the church office. 860-889-0369, or fbcnorwich@gmail.com

***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

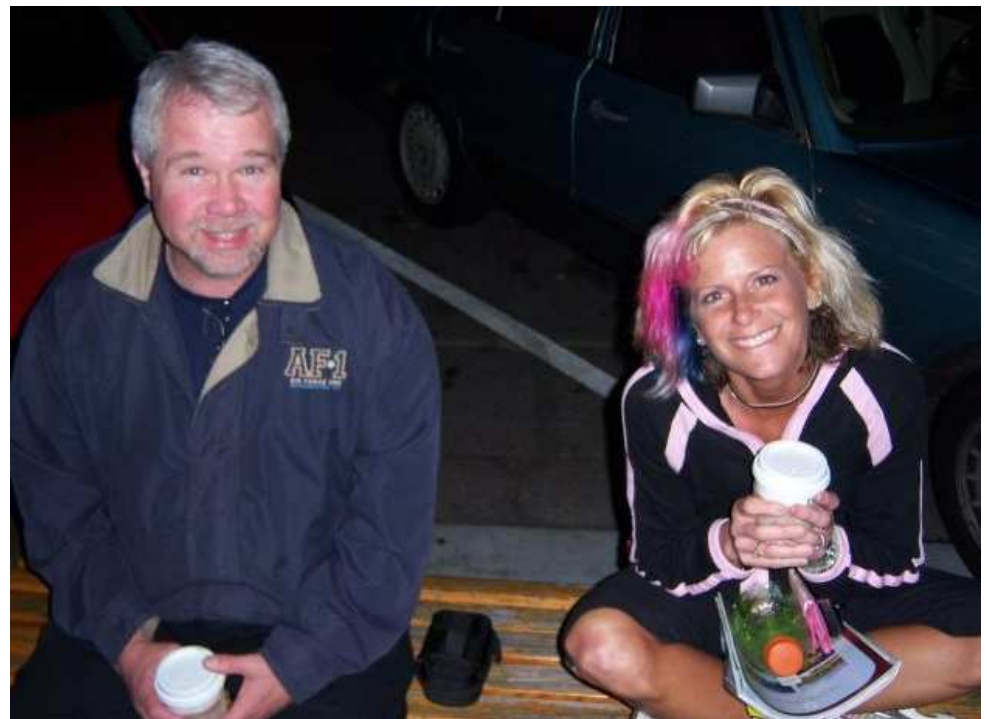


If you have any scheduled meetings, or know of any upcoming events, or any other items that should be listed in the Sunday Bulletin, be sure to get the information to the church office by Wednesday, and we will be sure to have it listed in the upcoming Sunday bulletin.

My Blessing

I always feel specially blessed during the last week of the year! It was six years ago, I was going throuw a divorce, my step kids were not talking to me because of their loyalty to their father. I felt as though I lost everything! Then I became very ill. Several trips to the hospital & doctor's office before they realized I was septic and possibly fatal. A very excellent surgeon told me she was gonna do surgery to try and save my life. I remember looking at my friend & telling her I was not afraid, that if God wanted me, he can take me, if not, I will be fine. I had total faith in God! I could of ended up with a colostomy bag, death, who knows? But woke up with nineteen staples in my abdomen, few tubes, but felt like I was reborn! Many people came to see me while I was in the hospital. Cal Lord came every day! I had started coming to his church shortly before my husband wanted a divorce. I am so glad I found Cal and his church before I had this road to walk. It was a much more bearable road to walk on with my new family, the First Baptist family and of coarse my family and co workers! I left the hospital eight days after surgery. Wanting to start my new life over! So the year 2012 I celebrate my sixth birthday. Sometimes I do have to be reminded how thankful I should be... As I assume, most of us tend to need reminding from time to time! Happy New Year

Submitted by Lisa Lapointe



*Please share with us how you have been blessed.
 E-mail the church at fbcnorwich@gmail.com*

Who's In The Pews?

Meet Peter Ingoglia

My name is Peter Ingoglia and am addicted to Facebook. I was born in New York in 1961 and moved to Connecticut about 25 years ago and this has become home. I met my wife Deborah Ingoglia teaching her Sunday School class: I was a college student teaching a high school class at the time. I know it sounds scandalous but it was quite innocent. I gave my heart to our Lord at a VBS service in New York prior. We have two children, Melissa

committee. I also had the privilege to help at the luncheons twice. I hope to get more involved in 2012 but a pending back surgery may dictate otherwise. We will have to pray, wait and obey as opportunities make themselves available. When I am not working at The Day newspaper I enjoy listening to music; country, rock and jazz are my favorite and my favorite Christian artists are Phil Keaggy, Randy Stonehill, The Choir, Danial Amos

and The Lost Dogs. I like to watch comedies and do enjoy baseball and football. One of my favorite quotes is no matter where you go there you are. It's not very deep or spiritual but it's true. But a much greater truth is found in one of my favorite scriptures "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. - John 3:16.



Peter Ingoglia with his two daughters Rebecca and Melissa

and Rebecca who are in the process of completing their education. We also have two dogs who think they are children, if only I could use them as dependents. I grew up in Assembly of God circles and have mostly worshiped in Baptist circles since relocating to CT. I guess I consider myself Babcostal. Anyways, I became associated with First Baptist during the bowling ministry; where else can you bowl so badly and still be accepted but within a Christian league. What stuck me about First Baptist is their non-judgmental environment; people are actually allowed to think and question and find what they believe in an environment that is embracing and friendly. This was refreshing to me coming from a congregation leaning on the legalistic side. I helped out in the church's mission efforts in distributing clothes to the needy and exchanging ideas on a

The Funny Spot

A married couple were arguing who is making the coffee, the wife said in the Bible that men should make the coffee and the husband replied saying no its not, show me and the wife said its HEBREWS

Q. Why do Christians Walk in a single file line?

A. Because the path is narrow

One particular four-year old prayed, "And forgive us our trash baskets as we forgive those who put trash in our baskets."



**Youth Group
Movie & Pizza Night
on
February 19th at
6:00 pm**

**Come and Join Us for a
Night of Fun!**

**If you have any
questions, please speak
to Pam Kane**



Parking spots closest to the door are reserved for visitors and/or those with special needs.

For those of you able to walk longer distances, you may find additional parking behind Firestone, at Midas Muffler and Oak Tree Plaza.

Wednesday Services

Wednesday night services have been a wonderful needed break in the week for many in the past months. Please come and take some time and slow down to share in prayer, song and message.



**Wed. 7pm
February 1st,
February 8th
and February 15th**

Regional Men's Breakfast

**Saturday, March 3rd
at 8:00 a.m.
at**

Leffingwell Baptist Church, Bozrah

**Following the breakfast
we will be kicking off our
"Care Giver Program"**

We will be splitting up into a couple teams to go out into the community to do some work for a couple hours.

****Bring you tools****

Prayer Requests

Please let us know of your prayer requests.

When you are in church you may write your prayer request on a piece of paper and fix it to the cross.

If you are unable to be in church please contact the church office to share your request



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**Deacon's Coffee
Hour After
Worship**

February 12th & 26th
Come and enjoy a cup
of coffee and some wonderful time of
fellowship with your Church family.



Young Adults Study

The Young adults of the
church will be meeting
Sunday, February 12th,
Sunday, February 19th,
Sunday March 4th,
and Sunday March 11th

to continue the discussion on the concepts
found "You Lost Me"; a book by David
Kinnaman on why so many youth and
young adults are
leaving the church.

**Come, eat and
share your thoughts
ideas.**

The group will meet
at Jeff Brockway's
house following
worship. For
directions contact the
church.



ABCCONN's Spring Fling

March 3, 2012

8:30 am-2:30pm

Theme: Proclaiming the Gospel

*Then Jesus said to them, "So wherever you
go in the world, tell everyone the Good
News."*

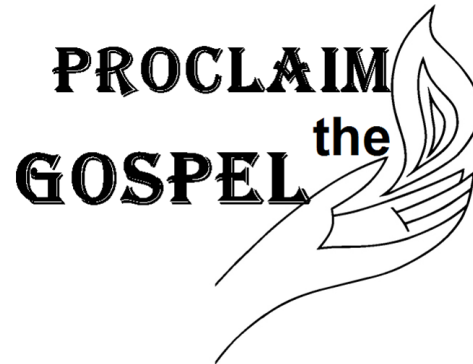
Mark 16:15 GOD'S WORD® Translation

Location: Union Baptist Church

1921 Main Street

Hartford, Connecticut

Watch for more information on the
ABCCONN website (www.abcconn.org).



is taking applications for homes

Families are selected on 3 basic criteria:

1. Need for decent affordable housing
2. Ability to pay a monthly no-interest mortgage payment
3. Willingness to invest 400 hours of labor into building your home

**Attend the information sessions for more
information and an application**

Fri., Feb. 3rd, 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

First Hispanic Baptist Church,
35 Redden Ave New London CT 06320

Sat., Feb 4th , 10:30 am- 12 noon

New London Public Library,
63 Huntington St New London CT 06320

(Free childcare at each session)

**Applications can only be obtained by attending*

February 2012

First Baptist Church of Norwich

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																			
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p>Jan 2012</p> <table style="font-size: small; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr> <tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td></tr> <tr><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td></tr> <tr><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td></tr> <tr><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p>Mar 2012</p> <table style="font-size: small; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td></tr> <tr><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td></tr> <tr><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td></tr> </table> </div> </div>		S	M	T	W	T	F	S	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31					S	M	T	W	T	F	S				1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	<p style="color: red; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">1</p> <p>Wednesday Night Service 7:00 PM</p> <p>Zackery Poore</p>	<p style="color: red; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">2</p> <p>Scot Rapoza Jesly Souvenance</p>	<p style="color: red; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">3</p> <p>Alisha Mattos Frank Roderick Fred Green Jr. Betty Watson Keith Corbett Andrew Higgins</p>	<p style="color: red; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">4</p>
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<p style="color: red; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">19</p> <p>Sunday School 9:15 AM</p> <p>Sunday Morning Worship 10:30 AM</p> <p>Interfaith Luncheon 2:00 PM at St. Mark's</p> <p>Young Adults Study 12:00 PM</p> <p>FBC Youth Group Pizza & Movie Night 6:00 PM</p> <p>Margaret McFalls</p>	<p style="color: red; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">20</p>	<p style="color: red; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">21</p> <p>Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM</p> <p>Mexico Mission Team Leaves</p>	<p style="color: red; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">22</p> <p>Lenten Service at Central Baptist Church 7:00 PM</p> <p>"Ash Wednesday"</p>	<p style="color: red; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">23</p> <p>Mary Royce</p>	<p style="color: red; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">24</p> <p>Mark A. Kane Kaitlin Beavan</p>	<p style="color: red; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">25</p> <p>Karen Brown Chelsey Calkins</p>																																																																																			
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Food Pantry

The pantry item of the month is always an item that is especially needed. Please consider picking up a few extra on your next shopping trip and dropping them off at the church.

Pantry Item of the Month
Canned Vegetables

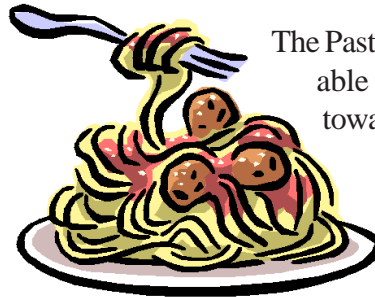
Mission Trip Commissioning

On Sunday February 19th the congregation will commission the short term missionaries who are going to Mexicali, Mexico to do God's work. Please come and join them for this.

The group will be traveling to Mexicali, Mexico on February 21st and will work for a week in a very impoverished community of Mexico, with mostly indigenous people. There they will help to build bathrooms for the church during the day and lead a vacation bible school at night for any of the youth and adults who would like to attend.

Pasta Dinner & Silent Auction

Thank you to everyone who supported the Pasta Dinner and Silent Auction in any way. Many of you came, bid on items, donated items, contribute money towards the trip and much more. The entire mission team thanks you enormously.



The Pasta Dinner and Silent Auction was able to raise nearly \$4000 to be put towards the trip. With this funding the group is very close to it's goal.

Thank you again!

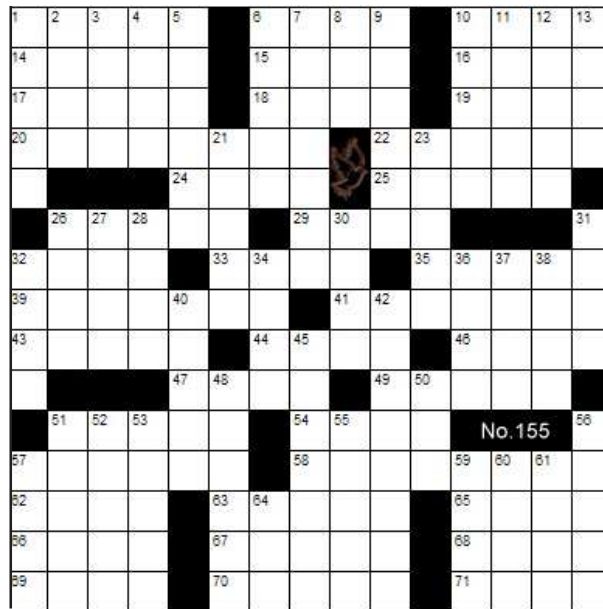
Mission Work Done by the Church

As the Pastoral Search Committee developed a profile which we felt represented our church, we compiled a list of mission opportunities which FBC provided and/or continues to provide to the congregation. As we worked on this list, we were amazed at the extent of our mission involvement both within Norwich and further afield. They are listed here. If there are any we have missed, please let us know! On Feb. 5th we will be lifting up these ministries. We are hoping that those who have been involved in them will be present at that service. Since many of the children in the Sunday School take part in our mission moments, we will be having this part of the service before the children's story.

On-Going	As Needed/Yearly	Special mission moments
Food Pantry	Meals for sick or shut ins	Mission Mexico (4 times)
Monthly luncheon for homeless and needy	Crop Walk for Hunger	Mission NYC (once)
Erica's Closet: Clothing collection and distribution	Yearly Sunday School gifts from the children to the community	Mission Appalachia (once)
Baby Gifts	Camp Wightman Scholarships	Youth Mission Trips
Deacons Fund	College Care Packages	Habitat for Humanity
	A host property for summer lunches for children from the Rec Department	Treats for those watching the fireworks on the fourth on our lawn
	Hosted the Girl Scouts	inexpensive tag sales for the neighborhood
	Music Ministries: choir festival; caroling;	Public Servant appreciation giveaways
	No Sew Blankets for those in hospitals, nursing homes or homebound	Neighborhood support kits in partnership with the MLK Center: food, no sew blankets, detergent, personal care products
	Interfaith Services: Thanksgiving; Easter Sunrise;	Hosted Life Improvement Classes
	Thanksgiving baskets	Medical Assistance Site
		Sports Ministries: Softball, bowling, youth basketball
		Music Ministries: open mic; community gatherings;

ACROSS

1. We have mortgaged our _____, vineyards, and houses (Neh 5:3)
6. He that tilleth his _____ shall be satisfied (Prov 12:11) KJV
10. Like _____ tooth or a lame foot (1,3) (Prov 25:19)
14. like a broken tooth, and _____ out of joint (1,4) (Prov 25:19)
15. looked like _____ of glass, clear as crystal (1,3) (Rev 4:6)
16. if the _____ has faded and has not spread (Lev 13:6)
17. took unto them certain lewd fellows of the _____ sort (Acts 17:5) KJV
18. I will _____ their mourning into joy (Jer 31:13)
19. the devil threw him down, and _____ him (Luke 9:42) KJV
20. down and fallen: but we _____, and stand (3,5) (Ps 20:8) KJV
22. In those days _____ Augustus issued a decree (Luke 2:1)
24. They crossed at the _____ to take the king's household over (2 Sam 19:18)
25. I looked at the earth, and it was formless and _____ (Jer 4:23)
26. and a cake made with oil, and a _____ (Exod 29:23)
29. Above all _____, guard your heart (Prov 4:23)
32. Awake, and _____ to my defense! Contend for me, my God (Ps 35:23)
33. Hiram king of _____ sent messengers to David (2 Sam 5:11)
35. a people for himself, and to make _____ for himself (1,4) (2 Sam 7:23)
39. wrath is a messenger of death, but a wise man will _____ it (Prov 16:14)
41. A jar of wine _____ was there (John 19:29)
43. Foxes have holes and birds of the air have _____ (Matt 8:20)
44. very dry (Luke 11:24)
46. because thou didst _____ on the LORD, he delivered them (2 Chr 16:8) KJV
47. rabbit (Deut 14:7) (KJV)
49. Cutting _____ the anchors, they left them in the sea (Acts 27:40)
51. Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' _____ (1 Tim 4:7)
54. Wilt thou not _____ us what thou meanest by these? (Ezek 37:18) KJV
57. You will _____ the mountains and crush them (Isa 41:15)
58. and setteth him on a _____ of the temple (Matt 4:5) KJV
62. I will make Jerusalem a _____ of ruins (Jer 9:11)
63. stood around _____ they had made to keep warm (1,4) (John 18:18)



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65. and came to a place called _____ Havens (Acts 7:8)
66. the Pharisees began to _____ him vehemently (Luke 11:53)
67. according to all the _____ of it (Num 9:3)
68. Even on the _____ you laid a very heavy yoke (Isa 47:6)
69. "I am the _____," Samuel replied (1 Sam 9:19)
70. the _____ is full, the fats overflow (Joel 3:13) KJV
71. captains over fifties, and captains over _____ (Deut 1:15)

DOWN

1. Jacob said unto _____, Give me my wife (Gen 29:21)
2. Bring my sons from _____ and my daughters (Isa 43:6)
3. the wringing of the _____ bringeth forth blood (Prov 30:33) KJV
4. being not a forgetful hearer, but a _____ of the work (James 1:25)
5. and out goes _____; quarrels and insults (Prov 22:10)
6. About ten days _____, the LORD struck Nabal (1 Sam 25:38)
7. to him who divided the Red Sea _____ (Ps 136:13)
8. Abner son of _____, the commander of Saul's army (2 Sam 2:8)
9. daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in _____ (Judges 21:21)
10. there is only _____ between me and death (1,4) (1 Sam 20:3)
11. In God we _____ all the day (Ps 44:8)
12. and they shall set themselves in _____ against her (Jer 50:9)

13. the roebuck, and the fallow _____, and the wild goat (Deut 14:5)
21. appointed priests from all _____ of people (1 Kings 12:31)
23. the sword, not of _____ man, shall devour him (1,4) (Isaiah 31:8)
26. and to _____ them with the towel (John 13:5)
27. the poison of _____ is under their lips (Rom 3:13) KJV
28. shake the dust off your _____ when you leave (Matt 10:14)
30. Reuben, Simeon, _____, and Judah, (Exodus 1:2)
31. do not reap to the _____ edges of your field (Lev 23:22)
32. At midnight the cry _____ out: Here's the bridegroom (Matt 25:6)
34. But in the first _____ of Cyrus the king of Babylon (Ezra 5:13)
36. Roman emperor (54-68 A.D.)
37. he has appeared once for all at the end of the _____ (Heb 9:26)
38. God made them _____ and female (Mark 10:6)
40. The altar will be split apart and the _____ on it will be poured (1 Kings 13:3)
42. and does not eat the bread of _____ (Prov 31:27)
45. Surely he will have no _____ from his craving (Job 20:20)
48. Like a club or a sword or _____ arrow (1,5) (Prov 25:18)
50. So God created man in his _____ image (Gen 1:27)
51. Neither is _____ any creature that is not manifest (Heb 4:13)
52. the avenger of blood might pursue him in _____ (1,4) (Deut 19:6)
53. the home of a man known as Simon the _____ (Matt 26:6)
55. like an archer who wounds at random is he who _____ a fool (Prov 26:10)
56. my brethren, and their flocks, and their _____ (Gen 47:1)
57. _____ you nullify the word of God by your tradition (Mark 7:13)
59. the woman had _____ calf in the house (1,3) (1 Sam 28:24) (KJV)
60. As a _____ is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit (Jer 5:27)
61. unto the high places, and see where thou hast not been _____ with (Jer 3:2) KJV
64. had furnished Solomon with cedar trees and _____ trees (1 King 9:11)

Blessed Are The Uncool

by Rachel Held Evans, <http://rachelheldevans.com/blessed-are-the-uncool>

People sometimes assume that because I'm a progressive 30-year-old who enjoys Mumford and Sons and has no children, I must want a super-hip church—you know, the kind that's called "Thrive" or "Be" and which boasts "an awesome worship experience," a fair-trade coffee bar, its own iPhone app, and a pastor who looks like a Jonas Brother.

While none of these features are inherently wrong, (and can of course be used by good people to do good things), these days I find myself longing for a church with a cool factor of about 0.

That's right.

I want a church that includes fussy kids, old liturgy, bad sound, weird congregants, and...brace yourself...painfully amateur "special music" now and then.

Why?

Well, for one thing, when the gospel story is accompanied by a fog machine and light show, I always get this creeped-out feeling like someone's trying to sell me something. It's as though we're all compensating for the fact that Christianity's not good enough to stand on its own so we're adding snacks.

But more importantly, I want to be part of an un-cool church because I want to be part of a community that shares the reputation of Jesus, and like it or not, Jesus' favorite people in the world were not cool. They were mostly sinners, misfits, outcasts, weirdos, poor people, sick people, and crazy people.

Cool congregations can get so wrapped up in the "performance" of church that they forget to actually be the church, a phenomenon painfully illustrated by the story of the child with cerebral palsy who was escorted from the Easter service at Elevation Church for being a "distraction."

Really?

It seems to me that this congregation was distracted long before this little boy showed up! In their self-proclaimed

quest for "an explosive, phenomenal movement of God—something you have to see to believe," they missed Jesus when he was right under their nose.

Was the paralytic man lowered from



the rooftop in the middle of a sermon a distraction?

Was the Canaanite woman who harassed Jesus and his disciples about healing her daughter a distraction?

Were the blind men from Jericho who annoyed the crowd with their relentless cries a distraction?

Jesus didn't think so. In fact, he seemed to think that they were the point.

Jesus taught us that when we throw a banquet or a party, our invitation list should include "the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind." So why do our church marketing teams target the young, the hip, the healthy, and the resourced?

In *Bossypants* (a book you should really go out and buy this very instant), Tina Fey describes working for the YMCA in Chicago soon after graduating from college. This particular YMCA included, "a great mix of high-end yuppie fitness facility, a wonderful community resource for families, and an old-school residence for disenfranchised men," so Fey shares a host of funny

stories about working the front desk. One such story involves one of the residents forgetting to take his meds, bumping into a young mom on her way to a workout session, and saying something wildly inappropriate (and

very funny—you should definitely go out and get this book). Fey writes, "The young mother was beside herself. That's the kind of trouble you get when diverse groups of people actually cross paths with one another. That's why many of the worst things in the world happen in and around Starbucks bathrooms."

Church can be a lot like the Y...or a Starbucks bathroom.

We have one place for the un-cool people (our ministries) and another place for the cool people (our church services).

When we actually bump into one another, things can get awkward, so we try to avoid it.

It's easy to pick on Elevation Church in this case, but the truth is we're all guilty of thinking we're too cool for the least of these. Our elitism shows up when we forbid others from contributing art and music because we deem it unworthy of glorifying God, or when we scoot our family an extra foot or two down the pew when the guy with Aspergers sits down. Having helped start a church, I remember hoping that our hip guests wouldn't be turned off by our less-than-hip guests. For a second I forgot that in church, of all places, those distinctions should disappear.

Some of us wear our brokenness on the inside, others on the outside.

But we're all broken.

We're all un-cool.

**We're all in
need of a Savior.**

So let's cut the crap, pull the plug, and have us some distracting church services... the kind where Jesus would fit right in.

**The First Baptist Church
239 West Main Street
Norwich, CT 06360**

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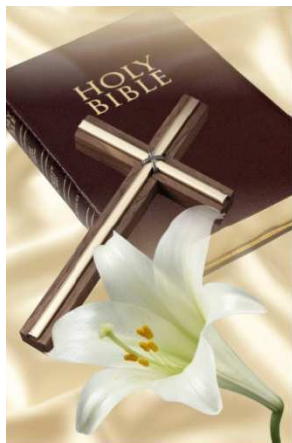
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Sunday Morning Worship 10:30 a.m.
Sunday School at 9:15 a.m.
Wednesday Worship at 7:00 p.m.

Rev. William A. Huegel - Interim Pastor
Adele DiBiagio - Organist & Choir Director
Sandy Stone - Administrative Assistant
Amanda Shanks, Harry & Doris Calkins,
Carol Calkins, Sharon Fishkin and Bob Walker -
Production Assistants.



Ecumenical Lenten Series 2012 "The Last Week"

Join us Wednesday evenings during Lent to explore the last week of Jesus' earthly ministry.

February 22 (Ash Wednesday) Sunday - The Triumphal Entry
Central Baptist Church Union Square

February 29 Monday - Jesus in the Temple
First Congregational Church East Town Street

March 7 Tuesday - Jesus Teaching
Lee Memorial United Methodist Church Washington Street
March 14 Wednesday - Anointing at Bethany
Park Congregational Church Broadway

March 21 Thursday - The Last Supper
United Congregational Church Broadway

March 28 Friday - The Crucifixion
First Baptist Church West Main Street

ALL SERVICES BEGIN AT 7:00 PM

FOLLOWED BY A TIME OF FELLOWSHIP AND REFRESHMENTS