

The Ambassador

News

and Views

From the Hill

A Newsletter From
The First Baptist Church of Norwich
239 West Main Street,
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November 2005

“Portraits Of Jesus” Sermon Series Brings Christ to Life

Dr. Cal Lord paused for a moment and then pointed to the “Good Shepherd” window and said, “I want you to picture yourself as that sheep cradled in Jesus’ arm. Whenever you come into this sanctuary after a bad week, look up and say to yourself, “The Lord is MY shepherd. He cares for ME.”

Each week Dr. Lord has been taking various images of Jesus from the Scriptures and helping us to connect them with every day life. In recent weeks we have seen Jesus as the Word of God, the Ultimate Teacher, the Great Physician, and the Bread of Life.

This past Sunday we saw Jesus as the Light of the World and ourselves as pumpkins. Using a timely Halloween reference sent as an e-mail from June Pendleton, the Pastor said we are a lot like pumpkins. You see God lifts us up, takes us in and washes all the dirt of us. He then opens us up, touches us deep inside and scoops out all the yucky stuff - including the seeds of doubt, hate, greed, etc. Then he carves out a new smiling face and puts his light inside of us to shine for all the world to see.



The Good Shepherd Window at church is a weekly reminder of God’s love and care for us.

In this series of sermons, Jesus has taken on a three dimensional character and come alive. The series continues through November 20. Upcoming portraits include “Jesus is the Vine Which Connects Us,” “Jesus is Your Savior” and “Jesus, The Master Fisherman.”

The sermons are available on audio cassette tape and accessible on line at our web site, www.fbcnorwich.org. Click the link for Archived Sermons.



Sharon and Maddie Fishkin and Bethany Stone sing during Opening.

Sunday School Classes Serve As Parent’s Helper

Most of us will readily admit that we do not know the Bible as well as we would like. Yet, we all believe that it’s promises are something we can stand on. As we pass on the precious truths of our faith, the Sunday School can be a parent’s best friend. Each week the kids

gather to learn the Bible stories and talk about God. In the weekly classes the kids get a basic understanding that will bless them as they grow and mature. If your kids don’t attend yet, why not bring them this week. Classes run from 9:15 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. every Sunday.

The Church At Worship



Dr. Cal Lord concludes a sermon series on the "Portraits of Jesus." If you missed any of the previous sermons in the series, check them out at our web site under archived sermons at www.fbcnorwich.org

November 6, 2005

Communion Sunday

Scripture: John 15:1-11

Sermon: "Jesus Is The Vine Which Conects Us"

November 13, 2005

Scripture: John 21:1-19

Sermon: "Jesus Is Your Savior"

November 20, 2005

Thanksgiving Sunday

Scripture: Matthew 4:18-22

Sermon: "Jesus, the Master Fisherman"

Dr. Cal Lord will begin a new series for the Advent and Christmas Season entitled, "A Season of Wonder: Opening the Door to Christmas and Beyond."

November 27, 2005

First Week of Advent

Sermon: **Opening Your Heart's Door To God's Plan**

Upcoming Children's Moment will Feature Three New Personalities...

This winter three members of our church family will become part of a rotation to offer the Children's Moment in worship. Muriel Roderick, Joanne Clubine and Kay Lautzenheiser will join the Pastor in this ministry to our children on Sunday mornings.



Choir Festival Features The Sacred Music of Norwich Churches



Our choir will be one of a dozen groups to perform at this year's Festival of Choirs at United Congregational Church on Sunday, November 13 at 7:00 p.m. The highlight of the evening will be the Combined Anthem at the end of the performance where about one hundred voices will sing God's praise.

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Hosts Community Interfaith Thanksgiving Service

Thanksgiving may be a little different this year. The Community Interfaith Service will service will be held in the Greek Orthodox Church for the first time in anyone's memory. On Thursday, November 17 the faith community is invited to share in this special service at 7:00 p.m. as we come together to give thanks to God and count our many blessings. A free will offering will be taken to help the clergy fuel bank.



THANKSGIVING

"Thank You!" Reception Planned for November 20th



A "thank you" reception is being planned following worship on Thanksgiving Sunday, November 20th as we mark the end of our annual Stewardship Campaign and thank those who "answered the call" and made a commitment to Christ and his church for the coming year.

Anyone who makes a pledge, offers to get involved in one of our ministries, volunteers to take on a job at church or who serves on a Board or committee is invited to attend.

DECORATE the Church

Join us on Friday,
November 25 as we
decorate the church
for the Christmas
Season. We'll gather
from 2:00 -4:00 p.m.

and hang the greens, put up the trees and erect the candles. There will be carols playing, treats to share and fun for all. Please call Sue Vanase if you plan on coming at 887-5514 so she can plan accordingly.

How Great Our Joy! A Christmas Musical

Invite your friends and join us on Sunday, December 18 as our Choir performs a special musical presentation during morning worship. This choral



celebration picks up the theme of joy that flows through the Scriptures. Even in the Old Testament in the midst of Israel's despair there was the promise of eternal joy. Psalm 30 says, "Weeping may endure for a night but joy comes in the morning!" That new day came with the birth of the Savior, Christ the Lord.

The music presents the Christian message in a fresh and powerful blending of familiar carols and new tunes. It provides the perfect opportunity for us to invite others to hear the story in a new and different way. Mark your calendars and get here early to reserve your seat.

Celebrate Jesus' Birthday with our Children

The Annual Christmas Party and Pageant will begin with a potluck dinner on Sunday, December 18 at 5:00 p.m. Come and celebrate with the kids as they come together to perform the annual Pageant following dinner. You will see shepherd, angels, wise men and a few others as they come to pay homage to Mary, Joseph and Jesus.



Afterwards we will have a visit from Santa Claus and end with a birthday cake for Jesus as dessert. Please let Sandy Stone (886-7077,) know if you are coming with children who are not regulars at Sunday School so we make sure Santa has a little gift for them.

All of the children are invited to bring in mittens, gloves, scarves or hats to share with the families at the TVCCA Homeless Shelter. A mitten tree will be set up on the landing in the back entry way as well, for those who want to participate who cannot make the party.



One Service on Christmas eve

Join us on Christmas Eve for our Family candlelight service at 7:00 p.m. It will feature carols and scriptures and a few surprises to delight the heart and

prepare you for your own Christmas celebration at home.

Because we are having service on Christmas Day, there will not be a late service this year. Plan to join us as we gather at 10:30 a.m. to celebrate with song and word. Bring your favorite gift along and be prepared to share what you like best about Christmas with the rest of us.

Youth Will Lead Worship on January 8

Our Annual Youth Recognition Sunday will be on January 8 this year and Sarah Lord will be our guest preacher. Sarah is not only the Pastor's daughter, she is the reigning Miss Teen Connecticut and President of her senior class at Norwich Free Academy.



Many of our teens and college students will be participating and we will have a special video presentation that will highlight our ministry to youth over the last fifteen years.

Bible Challenge Continues

Have you been reading through the Gospels with us this fall? It is still not too late to jump on Board. If you started in September you should be just beginning the Book of Mark this week. If you haven't started yet, why not jump in and begin reading Mark with the rest of us? It will feed your soul.



Looking To The Future

Christmas Program Plans Are Coming Together

Mary Brockway is working on the script for this year's Christmas Pageant. All of the children will have some part to play.



Every other year we offer a variation of the Christmas story that is more contemporary and gets the kids involved in a new way. We will have Mary and Joseph and the usual cast of characters, but we will also have some new voices.

Mary is looking for a few people who can sew and give some tender loving care to our costumes. If you would like to help out, speak to her or Superintendent, Sandy Stone in the next week. We will be getting together during the Sunday School hour on November 13th to see what we have.

Preliminary plans call for us to practice the play for the three weeks preceding the Pageant. We hope all of our kids will try to be present as we run through the program and assign parts to everyone.

Sunday School Verse of the Month

The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble for those who trust in Him.

Nahum 1:7



Seeing God in everything makes life one long thanksgiving and gives a rest of heart.

- Hannah Whithall-Smith

Youth Groups Heat Up As Fall Settles In



Brianne Jones shows a friend how to do it.

The Primary and Junior Youth Groups have been busy this fall. They tackled a ropes course at Camp Wightman, navigated a corn maze and painted some pumpkins for our shut-ins. They also managed to eat some pizza, play some games and enjoy some ice cream.

The Senior High Youth Group has had a harder time finding time to get everyone together but they did manage a trip to the Red Cross sponsored Trail of Terror in Wallingford. It was as scary as advertised and lots of fun for the ten participants.

Watch your mail box or check out our web site to find upcoming events and pictures of past events. The address is fbcnorwich.org. Click on Our ministries and then youth.

Transforming Power

Did you know that Camp Wightman welcomes 630 campers and hosts 100 retreats each year? All those people have to gather, meet and eat. Sitting in the dining hall one day, a dream was born to add enough space to accommodate the groups and provide increased flexibility for meeting and dining.

Lives are transformed at Camp Wightman, and our facilities help us touch lives in positive ways. The addition to the Raff Dining Hall will offer more options for summer campers, church groups and other organizations. It will also provide a beautiful "sacred space" with a view of the lake as a backdrop for worshipful assemblies and services.

If you would like to get involved, make a pledge or one time contribution, ask the Pastor, or visit www.campwightman.org

The Campaign for ABCCONN and Camp Wightman



The new building is really started to take shape.

Special Prayers For Those in Need



We think of Barbara Bray who had surgery last month. While she was recuperating, Oliver was also in to have cataract surgery. Both are doing well... We think of Al Damien as he faces liver cancer. We pray he will be given the strength to enjoy each day... Bette Royce had surgery and all the preliminary reports have been positive. We give thanks for that... We lift up Michelle Lord, the Pastor's mother, who continues her treatments... We think of Myra Christensen as she recovers from surgery... We remember Lori Lord and Bob Duntz's mom, Beverly Duntz in prayer as she continues her chemo treatments... We lift up Doris Royce, Edith Robinson, Doris Regets, Steve and Jean Roscoe in our continuing prayers...

We also want to lift up our young people in the military over the holidays. We think of Heather Stone, Daryl Alves, Chad Lord, Steve and Tim Rogers.



Lift up our college students in your prayers as well as they get ready for final exams at the end of the semester. They include Lindsey Adams, Adam Barber, Amy Brockway, Bethany and Amanda Brown, Terry Dunn, Emily Dutra, Kristina Howe, Cassie and Mark Kane, Rebecca Lord, April and Casey Rezendes, Carl Soderberg, Jaclyn and Jon Vanase, Allison Walberg and Tara Wolinski.

We will be putting together some college care packages for the kids on Sunday, November 27. We are looking for home made cookies, microwave popcorn, fudge and all kinds of goodies that we can put in a shoe box and send with our love!

Join Us As We Recognize Our Veterans on November 13th



We will recognize our veterans during morning worship on Sunday, November 13. We invite all who have served in the military to wear some vestige of their service (if they can still fit in it...) or to simply come and let us applaud your service to our country.

Join Us As We Travel To See The Messiah in Massachusetts

Former member Harry Eisan will be singing in a performance of Handel's Messiah on Saturday, December 3 at 7:00 p.m. Anyone interested in going along for fellowship and fun should speak to Curt Brockway (822-9772.)



The Pastor Renews His Role as the Announcer in Taffeta Christmas



Tickets are available for a delightful musical presentation of "A Taffeta Christmas" on November 10-12 and 17 -19 at Holy Trinity Greek Church on Washington Street. The play spoofs the girl group singers of the 40's and 50's. The music is great and the show is fun. Call 886-5881.

Members in the news...

Congratulations to Dick Strouse who will be elected as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the W.W. Backus hospital this month. Curt Brockway has just finished his term as Chairman of the Board of Trustees at the Pierce Memorial Baptist Home. Matthew Isenburg, fresh of his rave reviews for his historical presentation of "Norwich: Then and Now" at Three Rivers Community College was elected into a very prestigious historical society in Boston. Mark Ambruso is getting kudos for his job as the head coach of the NFA Football team. Cami Ferguson was captured in a photo in the Norwich Bulletin showing her engaged on the NFA Soccer team. Timothy and Karin Rezendes were married last month and Brianne Jones was their flower girl.

Check us out on the web at www.fbcnorwich.org You will find everything from our newsletters in full color, a bulletin board of upcoming events, photos of many activities and the Pastor's epistles and recent sermons. There are also several interesting links. So check it out next time you are on the net.



A Light in the Darkness

by Annie & Jeff Dieselberg

The Dieselbergs have a ministry that reaches to the Red Light District and attempts to introduce the girls to Christ so they might leave that life style for a safer and healthier one. Here is their latest monthly report.



Tonight oppression and perversion were so strong you could almost touch it. One of our volunteers said, "I usually enjoy being in the bars with the women but tonight I couldn't wait to get out." I told her, "That's because tonight you were a spectator of evil. You weren't able to visit with a girl one on one so you had time to observe all the evil taking place. When you are talking with the girls and involved in ministry the evil fades into the background."

We hadn't sat in this bar before and we only knew one woman. The other girls seemed to be less responsive to us than usual. I was able to visit with our friend so I didn't feel it as intensely.

This bar was exploiting young girls 17-19. While we were there they performed a spirit ritual that was disturbing and perverse. Some of the young girls actually looked possessed.

As we were leaving the bar we noticed 8 baby bottles on the spirit shrine. The young women in this bar go with 10 – 30 customers a month. As a result there are a lot of abortions. The bottles were offerings to the spirits of those aborted fetuses.

It is the encounter with the women one on one that makes being at the bars worthwhile. The more we share the light of Christ the more the darkness scatters away. This night was difficult but as a result the woman we visited came to see us at NightLight and brought her daughter. The daughter will begin working with us on Monday. It didn't feel to us like much happened that night but God's light pierced that darkness. In reality we do so little. We pray and we visit and we speak words of encouragement. It doesn't feel like much in comparison to the evil we confront. God is able to do anything, anywhere to share His love. All he asks of us is to put on the armor Christ and stand against the darkness, positioned to allow His light to shine through us. It is His light that will guide them into the truth that will set them free.

Then on another night we went to visit "K" who left NightLight and went back to her show bar. Last week she was so thrilled to see us. This week she was feeling a mixture of emotions. She was grateful to see us but her conscious was getting to her and she was beginning to feel the shame of what she had returned to. As she held our hands and soaked in the love and grace of the team she leaned

over toward me and said, "Annie, I've never had so many people care about me and miss me like this – I'll have to come back to NightLight." We left family pictures with her and hugged her on our way out. She held the picture in her hand and whispered, "Thank you."

It is sad and hard when the women return to the bars to work. I have come to understand over the years that the journey to healing and wholeness for these women is long and filled with disappointment and sorrow. Some women will return several times before they can accept God's grace enough to leave for good. I am confident "K" will return to us eventually. She has experienced God's love. We will continue to visit her and remind her of God's grace and unconditional love.

There is another young woman in this bar "L". I began to know her well after she discovered she was HIV positive. My family took her two children in one night so they would not be left alone in a strange place when their mother went to work. "L" doesn't know how long she has been HIV positive. She was tested regularly over the 6 years she has worked in prostitution but she was never told the results. "K" is the one who introduced me to "L". She called me and asked help for her friend who, she said was worse off than "K" was herself. "K" insisted on taking me to visit "L" after she was evicted from her home in the middle of the night. I was happy to see "L" again. I tried to talk her into leaving the bar. She has given up prostituting but continues the shows which are degrading and unsanitary. "L" really wants another lifestyle but she is now afraid that her time is short and she wants to make as much money as possible to leave for her children when she dies. As usual she soaked up the love and encouragement and lit up at the possibility of something better. But, she is still in bondage and this other way of life is somehow still out of reach; it remains in her dreams for now. We can't force "L" to leave but we continue to share God's vision with her. It keeps the hope alive and for now we thank God for that much.

Will You Answer the Call?

One of the zany characters on Saturday Night Live used to begin a monologue with the famous words, "Can we talk?" Then she would go on to address subjects that were would often go back and forth between the embarrassing and the mundane.

Well, can we talk? Can we be frank about a subject that is very mundane and often embarrassing when we bring it up at Church? Let's talk about what happens at Church and how we factor into it.



The Sunday School is a great help in teaching your kids about God.

It begins with a call. You may have not realized it but God has called you to be a part of our ministry at First Baptist Church. You may think that all you are doing is going to a worship service on Sunday morning or dropping your kids off at Sunday School or Youth Group, but God sees it a bit differently. He has been working in your life for a while now. He has blessed you. He has given you gifts and talents that you are using every day.

In Matthew 4 we find Jesus walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee. He sees some fisherman tending to their nets and the text says, *he called them to come and follow him.* He knew their gifts and talents and how they could be used and he said, *"I will make you fishers of men!"* The rest of the story is history.

The truth is that God has a job for you to do right here in our ministry. You calling may be in serving as a mentor to our teens in youth ministry or singing in the choir. God may be asking you to fold newsletters or repair walls and paint them. Your calling could be to lead a fundraising project or coach a basketball team. The beauty of our ministry is that God sees a need and then he calls someone to fill it.



Heidi Adams and Oliver Bray have walked for world hunger with CROP.

It begins with an "inkling" that you should step up and do something. I encourage you to listen to that and answer

the call.

The call doesn't end with our talents. It also calls on our financial gifts. God calls us to support the ministries with our tithes and offerings. The way that God provides for the life changing ministries is by calling you and me to share some of what He has given us. That means your gifts made it possible for the ministry that saw three young ladies baptized at Camp Wightman a little over a year ago. Your gifts opened the door made it possible to share the Gospel at an Easter Sunrise service in downtown, on Wednesday nights in our sanctuary and every week during the year. Who knows how many lives have been changed because we open the doors and invite friends and neighbors in? Certainly some of us know the difference this Church or others have made in our lives.



Jackie Vanase's baptism.

These life changing moments, the special relationships happen because you answer God's call and give freely.

The truth is that we can only do what we have money to pay for. There is a cost to having a full time pastor, and gifted and dependable organist. There is a cost to having an historic building to meet in each week. There is a cost to buying educational materials and running programs that members of our church family can enjoy.

We hope you will understand that God is calling you to be a part of something special here and that you will answer the call by getting involved and making it a point to make a regular gift to the ministry.

We would like every member of our church family to take a pledge card and prayerfully consider what God is calling you to do. There will be a section that asks you about your willingness to share your talent. There will also be a section that talks about financial gifts. Please take the time to reflect on what God has given you and how you will answer his call. Thank you.



Adele using her gifts.

A Different Type of Tree Trimming



The tree starts to come down. Timberrrrr.

When a large branch broke free from the tree at the back of our parking lot, the Trustees began looking for someone to take down the tree. After a bit of frustration finding someone, Ray Deptulski heard of our need and he contacted a friend of his in the business. Tripp's Tree service came in and did the job at a great price. They also trimmed up a few of the other trees on the property while they were here.

One way we can all be good stewards is by sharing our knowledge and contacts when a job needs to be done at church. If you have had someone do some work for you, let us know so we can add you as a contact and put them on our list.



The tree is down and ready for trimming.

A man grows in grace as he grows in gratitude.
- Leonard Griffith

25 Thanksgiving Baskets Are Being Collected

Here's what we need:

- 25 turkeys
- 25 cans of green beans
- 25 cans of corn
- 25 cans of cranberry sauce
- 25 jars of peanut butter
- 25 jars of jelly
- 25 boxes of stuffing mix
- 25 - 64 oz. jars of juice
- 50 cans of tuna
- 25 loaves of bread
- 15 gal. milk
- 10 half gal. of milk
- 25 lbs. of margarine
- 25 jars of jelly
- 25 doz. eggs
- 25 jars of gravy
- 25 boxes of cereal
- 50 cans of soup
- 25 boxes of pasta
- 50 boxes of macaroni & cheese



Your generosity will make someone's week a very thankful one. All donations should be at church by Sunday, November 20th if possible. A sign up sheet is on the bulletin board in the chapel.



We are looking for some individuals who can paint the front steps, overhangs and ramp at church. We'll provide the paint if you give the gift of labor.

We are also looking for volunteers to install and tape the sheetrock in the pastor's office. Tell us what you need to do the job.

A Visionary Committee Is Formed



A committee has been formed to meet with our sisters and brothers at Central Baptist Church. Over the coming months they will discuss our mutual ministry in Norwich.

They will explore what we can do together and seek ways we can pool our resources and combine our efforts to build a stronger Baptist presence in the city.

Members of the committee include Curt Brockway, Bob Booth, Oliver Bray, Pam Kane and the Pastor.

Our Gifts In Action

Budget Committee Comes Up With

	Budget 04	Budget 05	Proposed 06
INCOME			
Pledges	93,354	96352	107,000.00
Miscellaneous Collections	21,000	21000	21,000.00
Church School	1,000	1000	1,000.00
Trust Fund Income	20,800	21000	20,000.00
Fund Raisers	4,000	4000	3,000.00
Youth Activities	2,000	2000	2,000.00
Special gifts	0		1,500.00
Access 2000 Debt Reduction Inc		2500	2,500.00
Uncollectibles	-2,875	-317	(533.00)
Total Income	139,279	147535	157,467
EXPENSES			
Personnel			
Pastor's Package	52,365	53,450	55,588.00
1. Cash Salary *	24,365	25450	55588
2. Housing Allowance *	17,000	17000	
3. Utilities allowance *	5,000	5000	
Benefits & Reimbursables			
M & M Pension	8,378	8650	8894
Health Insurance	10,000	10850	12800
4 Flex spending *	2,500	2500	
Continuing Ed	1,200	1700	1700
5 Pastor S S Offset *	3,500	3500	
Convention Expense	100	1000	200
Subtotal Pastor's Sal & Ben	72,043	75,650	79,182.00
Other Employees			
6 Organist^	9,500	9800	10200
7 Reg. Custodian^	5,304	5000	5130
8 Extra Custodial Work^	250	0	0
9 Clerical Assistant^	5,616	5950	6500
Pulpit Supply/sabatical		800	0
Pulpit Supply	500	400	625
FICA for Staff	1,231	1,625	1670
Workers Comp Insurance	810	1000	1000
Subtotal Other Employees	23,211	24,575	25,125
Subtotal Personnel	95,254	100,225	
Buildings & Grounds			
Church Building			
Heating Fuel	6,240	8500	15,000.00
Utilities	5,000	5000	5000
Telephone	1,400	1000	1000
Refuse Collection	600	250	250
Maintenance & Repairs	1,000	1000	1000
Snow Removal	800	900	1500
Cleaning Supplies	500	500	500
Insurance	2,300	2500	2500
Subtotal Church Bldgs and Grounds	17,840	19,650	26,750.00

The budget for 2006 calls for an increase of almost \$10,000 this year. Most of that increase is due to the rising cost of heating oil (\$6,500) and salaries (\$3,250). The committee has tried to hold the line on everything else.

In a perfect world we would love to increase the amount of money we put aside for major repairs at church. There are a number of projects on the back burner because we simply haven't been able to fund that line item over the last few years.

We would also like to invest more money in our youth programs and outreach ministries.

As good stewards, we try to come up with a balanced budget every year, matching the amount of money pledge by members and friends with expenses. Our budget also includes about \$20,000 a year that is available to us from our trust and memorial funds. The simple truth is that the more we all give, the more we can do.

The budget committee would like to invite all of our members and friends to consider increasing your pledge for 2006 if you have made a pledge in the past.

Challenging Budget for 2006

If you are new to the Church or if you have not made a pledge before, we hope you will consider jumping on board this year.

Think of it this way:

* A gift of five dollars a week would almost pay for the Annual Christmas Party for the Sunday School.

* A gift of 10 dollars a week would pay for a year of cleaning supplies .

* A gift of 15 dollars a week would pay for gas, maintenance and repairs on the church van.

* A gift of 20 dollars a week would pay for tuning the organ, pianos and providing new music for the choir.

* A gift of 25 dollars a week would allow us to paint, repair, and fix all the little areas around the church that need a little TLC.

* A gift of 50 dollars a week would pay for the Sunday School curriculum, supplies and special programming needs.

Every gift given allows us to do more. In 2003 our pledges exceeded what we initially asked for and we were able to bring Kay Lautzenheiser back to work with our kids. So pray about it and see how you will answer the call.

If you can't give much financially, then consider where you can volunteer your talents to help us serve one another and the community.

Trustee Repair Fund			
Major Projects	2,000	500	1000
Tables & Chairs	0		0
Access 2000 Debt Reduction	2500	2500	
Ministry, Worship & Education			
Worship			
Music Committee	1250	1000	1000
Flower Committee	0	0	0
Gertrude Rose	30	30	30
Peterson Memorial	125	125	125
Nursery Fund	200	100	100
Rico Flower Fund	30	30	30
Worship Subtotal	1635	1285	1285
Ministry			
Pastor's Auto	3,000	3000	3500
Office Budget			
Postage	1,400	1500	1500
Copy Machine	0		
Office Machine Maint.	2,000	2000	2000
Paper & Supplies	1,750	1750	2000
Computer Upgrades	500	300	300
Subtotal Office Budget	5,650	5,550	5,800
Stewardship			
Envelopes	300	325	325
Campaign Lit.	300	300	300
Van Expenses			
Insurance	1,200	1000	1000
Maint. & Reg.	1,000	900	750
Miscellaneous			
Softball	0	0	0
Advertising	450	1350	1350
Contingency Fund	550	550	550
Pastor's Discretionary	1,000	1000	1000
Subtotal Ministry	13,450.00	13,975.00	14,575.00
Christian Education			
Sunday School			
Curriculum	1,500	1500	1500
Supplies & Misc	400	400	300
Rally Day	100	100	100
Christmas Party	300	200	300
Children's Day	300	400	300
Education Program	200	100	100
Education Consultant	2,500	5200	5200
Youth Ministry			
Basketball	1,300	1000	1000
Youth Group & Activities	500	500	500
Youth Group Fundraisers	0	0	
Youth Trip	2,000	250	250
Subtotal Christian Ed	9,100	9650	9,550
Total Expenses	139,279.00	145,285	157,467.00

Funding Our Ministry

California Churches Threaten to Leave ABC

You may have read about it in the newspaper or on the web. The ABC Churches of the Pacific Southwest have voted to leave the American Baptist Churches, USA over the issue of homosexuality. Earlier this year they called on Dr. A Roy Medley and our representatives to the General Board to come up with a definitive statement on homosexuality and to take action on it by suspending relations with 50 Welcoming & Affirming congregations across the nation.

Laying claim to our historic principle of congregational autonomy, Dr. Medley and the Board put that responsibility back on each congregation to

determine how God would have them deal with it in the context of their ministry.

Furthermore, he lifted up the primary role of our denomination as a partner in mission and discipleship.

He reiterates this in a letter sent to the churches last month. We have included it for your prayerful consideration. You can catch more on the continuing dialogue and other aspects of our wider mission as a denominational family by going to the web site at www.abc-usa.org.



AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA

Rev. A. Roy Medley
General Secretary

October 3, 2005

Dear Colleagues in Christ:

Grace, mercy and peace through our Lord Jesus Christ.

As I write this letter regarding the state of affairs in our American Baptist family, I am drawn to the classic story of Jesus, the disciples and the storm in Matthew 8:24-27:

A windstorm arose on the sea, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but He was asleep. And they went and woke Him up, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" And He said to them, "Why are you afraid, you of little faith?" Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm. They were amazed, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"

This passage comes to mind because in our denominational family our boat is in a storm. *Master, the tempest is raging.* What does it mean to look into the face of Jesus in the midst of the storm and discover how He leads us? By God's grace, we find the answer in our identity. We are people who are centered in Christ with prayer, purpose & passion.

The leadership of ABCUSA is unified as never before in mission. We are committed with passion and purpose to encourage and enable radical discipleship-rooted in radical love, expressed in radical servanthood, and nurtured in missional communities of faith. To quote Brian McLaren in his book, *A Generous Orthodoxy*, we are *...to be and make disciples of Jesus Christ in authentic community for the good of the world.* I pledge to you to continue pursuing this reality with every ounce of energy that God gives me.

Your American Baptist leaders are focused. The General Board embraced a new Mission Statement in June 2005, the results of a nationwide, intensive, grassroots *Seek It!* process. We have five clear ministry priorities: Church Planting, Health Missional Congregations, Radical Discipleship, Leadership and Youth. We are uniting around the social problems of children in poverty in America and the global evil of human trafficking - the 21st century form of slavery. As staff, we will concentrate on these ministries with laser-like focus. In the power of the Holy Spirit, we will relentlessly and tenaciously focus on life-changing, church-growing, world-impacting initiatives in these areas.

I know the deep division and am aware of the many opinions expressed by a number of voices. Because of this I need to speak clearly about our positions around the issue of homosexuality. Here are five affirmations from our General Board for which I am spokesperson and to which I am accountable:

1. Our Family Life Policy Statement (1984) says, "We affirm that God intends marriage to be a monogamous, life-long, one flesh union of a man and a woman."
2. General Board resolution (1992) says, "We affirm that the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching."

3. A General Board resolution (1993) calls for continuing dialogue on human sexuality.

4. As Baptists we affirm the long-held insistence on local church autonomy and priesthood of believers. The denomination submits to churches and individuals in matters of doctrinal determination. This foundation has been in place for 98 years. (Bylaws of Northern Baptist Convention, 1907)

5. The principle of voluntary association in mission calls us together to accomplish Kingdom tasks that are better done together than apart. It declares that we need each other if we are to accomplish God's purposes for us. (Autonomy and Interdependence Within the American Baptist Denomination: A Declaration, 1982)

As General Secretary, I abide by the policies and resolutions of the General Board, and encourage the National Boards and the Regions to honor those decisions. I will continue to be faithful in identifying the positions the General Board has taken on issues of our day.

In these changing times, we can expect to go through changes in the denomination. For that reason I have sought and received the input of American Baptists in gatherings such as *Seek It!*, the Biennial, prayer meetings in the regions and the Mission and Ministry Consultations. With God's direction, here is how I intend to lead us forward.

1. We are fully committed to the freedom, autonomy and primacy of the local church. It is the fundamental and essential unit of God's mission in the world.

2. American Baptists are not going to stop being Baptists. We will move forward with our current vision, mission, policies and resolutions. We recognize that we will always have dissenters among us. We will engage in ongoing dialogue on the issues on which we disagree, but we will be clear about our policies. We will encourage local churches and regions to go on record with their dissent and passionately forge ahead with our mission and ministry.

3. There is nothing sacred about our organizational structure. We will not engage in a "feeding frenzy" over power or resources. We will continue to adapt as required by missional priorities.

4. I believe that as General Secretary I am the "keeper" of the covenants. My role is to serve as the "head of communion" for our American Baptist family in the ecumenical community. I am not a presiding bishop; I am the denominational pastor. My task is to lift up the mission and vision of the family and to oversee each partner's participation in moving the mission toward the vision.

We yearn for radical discipleship-rooted in radical love, expressed in radical servanthood, and nurtured in missional communities of faith for God's radically needy world. That is God's vision for ABCUSA, affirmed by the General Board, and that is where, with God's guidance, I pledge to lead the denomination.

Jesus brought His disciples through the storm. If we center in Christ, we will also weather the storm, and by His grace bring honor and glory to His name. If you resonate with this vision of mission, please recommit yourself to the ministry that God has given to American Baptists. I doubt that, being Baptists, we will ever attain "a dead calm" as reported on the Sea of Galilee, but by faith I envision a sea in which the waves and the wind work for us-not against us.

I pray that the faithfulness of a radical God and the love of a radical Savior will lead us through our disagreements and enable us to radically love the world around us. I also pray for you and your ministry. It is not an easy time, but I believe there is truth in saying, *Fear not the winds of adversity. A kite rises only against the wind, never with it.*

May the power of the Holy Spirit be with you as you seek to be centered in Christ with prayer, purpose and passion in service to the Living God.

In Christ's love,
A. Roy Medley



Coach James Brown Is Calling All Basketball Players & Coaches To Action

We are getting ready to begin another season in the Norwich Church Basketball League and coach James Brown has stepping in to lead the program. Here is looking for men and women to work with him as coaches. If you love kids and enjoy the game of basketball, this is a great opportunity to serve the Lord.

James hopes to have three teams in the league for children in grades five through eight. They will begin practicing on Monday, November 7. Right now practices are set up at Bishop School on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday nights, Nov 7- 9 at 6:00 p.m.

If you are interested in playing or coaching, please give James a call at 625-6982 or stop in at practice.



The season starts in early December and we hope to have some time early in the season for getting to know one another, practicing skills and sharing the Gospel.

If you are interested in sharing your Christian story or leading a short devotional, speak to James or the Pastor. We will be happy to schedule a time for you to talk with the

kids. Over the years they have appreciated the interest that the adults have shown them and the stories of faith that they have heard. Who knows, you may just influence someone to accept Christ into their lives by telling your story.

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Sunday School Classes 9:15 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship 10:30 a.m.

Mid Week Worship & Prayer Service
Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m.

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