

# First Things

A Newsletter of the First Baptist Church of Trenton

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April 2010

## A word from Pastor Liz

### What Do We Believe?

The 1.5 million members and 5,800 congregations of American Baptist Churches (ABC) USA share with more than 43 million Baptists around the world a common tradition begun in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. That tradition has emphasized the Lordship and atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, believers' baptism, the competency of all believers to be in direct relationship with God and to interpret Scripture, the importance of the local church, the assurance of freedom in worship and opinion and the need to be Christ's witnesses within society. This information is from the ABCUSA (*10 Facts You Should Know About American Baptists*) and is representative of the tradition and practice of American Baptists

American Baptists believe that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior, and that the Bible is the divinely inspired word of God that serves as the final written authority for living out the Christian faith.

For American Baptists the local church is the fundamental unit of mission in denominational life. Baptist roots date back four centuries to a people seeking the opportunity to worship God as individual members of freely organized and freely functioning local churches. Baptists always have maintained the need for autonomous congregations, responsible for articulating their own doctrine, style of worship and mission.

American Baptists partake of two ordinances: believers' baptism and The Lord's Supper. Baptism, an act of full immersion following Christ's example, undertaken by those spiritually mature enough to understand its profound, symbolic significance: resurrection to new life in Christ. Through The Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion, the bread and cup that symbolize the broken body and shed blood offered by Christ recall God's great love for us – just as they did for the disciples on the eve of Christ's crucifixion.

American Baptists believe that the committed individual Christian can and should approach God directly, and that individual gifts of ministry should be shared.

**American Baptists:**

- take seriously the call to evangelism and mission;
- support religious freedom and respect the expressions of faith of others;
- acknowledge that God’s family extends beyond our local churches, and that God calls us to cooperative ministries;
- have been called to be Christ’s witnesses for justice and wholeness with a broken society;
- celebrate the racial, cultural and theological diversity witnessed within its membership;
- and
- heed the biblical call to renewal and the need for a vital witness.

We at the First Baptist Church of Trenton are one of the 278 American Baptist Churches in NJ, (ABCNJ) 340 clergy and over 74,000 American Baptists in NJ who are called to be Christ’s witnesses, celebrate our diversity and heed the biblical call. We take seriously the ABCNJ vision for healthy churches being Christ centered, mission focused and pastoral (loving) in spirit.

<b><u>April Sermons</u></b>		
<b>Sunday, April 4</b>	<b>Luke 24:1-12</b>	<b>“He Has Risen”</b>
<b>Sunday, April 11</b>	<b>Samuel 25:14-35,</b>	<b>“Abigail: Peacemaker”</b>
<b>Sunday, April 18</b>	<b>John 21:1-14</b>	<b>“He Went Fishing?”</b>
<b>Sunday, April 25</b>	<b>Psalm 23, John 10:11-14</b>	<b>“Jesus the Good Shepherd”</b>

**TRUSTEES CORNER**

Spring is here and hopefully the end of a winter that dumped more snow than we have seen in many a year. It is worthy of note that the winter snows have brought much expense to the church in the way of costly snow removal. It is the responsibility of the trustees to assure that the walkways and sidewalks surrounding the church property are clear of snow and ice. In fact, city ordinance requires that it be removed within 24 hours of the last snowflake hitting the ground. So, the board contracts with a snow removal company to take care of the church property from the parking lot gate to Bridge Street, then down Bridge to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street then back up 2<sup>nd</sup> Street to the end of the fence at the back of the cemetery. This year’s total cost for that snow removal is \$5,000 and counting. The reason I make a point of this is so that the membership of the church has a better handle on the expenses that an organization such as ours incurs when it owns property the size of ours. We are truly blessed with a beautiful property and building but the cost of ownership does not come cheaply.

In light of these expenses it is incumbent upon each of us to examine our pledge status and giving to the church to ensure the longevity of the mission on the corner of Bridge and Center.

**TRUSTEES (Additional)**

As a body of Christ, you have elected the board of trustees to maintain and supervise the physical well being of the church and grounds. Although some in our family remain loyal with their pledges, far too many do not even participate. Seldom do our offering plates overflow and what does that say about the mandate you gave us and even more important, what does it say about our trust in the LORD when HE says **"test me and see what I will do for you."** So in order for you to understand our current situation let's look at the financial numbers to-date.

Personnel: Includes Pastor, Sexton, Organist, Secretary, & social Security.	<b>\$13,738.43</b>
Programs: Includes Leadership training and teaching materials	<b>300.00</b>
Building and grounds: Includes Snow removal and maintenance repairs, electric, gas, water, sewer, insurance and organ maintenance	<b>22,255.33</b>
Supplies: Includes church and office, sexton	<b>958.96</b>
Miscellaneous: Includes Bookkeeper	<b>602.25</b>
<b>Grand total to-date</b>	<b>\$37,854.97</b>

Total offerings: January	<b>\$ 4746.00</b>
February	<b>2407.00</b>
March 24th (in time for newsletter)	<b>1197.00</b>
<b>Total to-date:</b>	<b>\$ 8350.00</b>

That adds up to minus **\$29,504.97**.

What can EACH of us do?

Do **YOU** have any suggestions?

**NOW** is the time for action!!!!

**Let your trustees know**

**Serving This Month**

**Deacons:**  
**Eileen Kelty, Mary Mild**  
**Philip Wilson, Lyn Wood**

**Trustee:**  
**Abigail Amutah**

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The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LILEAP) and NJ SHARES programs can help with your energy bill. To find out which of these programs will best meet your needs, call 1-800-510-3102, Monday thru Saturday, or visit [www.pseg.com/help](http://www.pseg.com/help) to learn more and where to apply.

# # # # #

Classes have continued as planned since the September start of the Sunday School year. On Sunday March 14 Pastor Liz Congdon presented slides and shared experiences during her 2000 mission trip to Haiti with Roy Medley and a delegation of American Baptists. During the church hour a special offering was received for Haiti earthquake relief.

Summer Camp Lebanon information has been received and is available in the church office. Our limited resources and yet a desire to see as many children have the 'Lebanon Experience' as possible has placed the Board in a position of financial need this year. Any children wishing to attend camp will need to be sure applications are in very early so that the Board may determine appropriate distribution of its limited funds in the way of scholarships for camp. We regret that the simple paying for camp expenses out of hand can no longer be the way funds are expended.

Please keep the mission of the Christian Education Board in your prayers this year as we strive to provide space, teachers and resources to the members of Old First.

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We are invited to a Clergy/Religious Leaders Breakfast to hear a Call for a Justice Revival on Wednesday, April 21, 2010 from 8:30 - 10:00 am at the Shiloh Baptist Church, Trenton. The keynote speaker is the Rev. Dr. DeForest B (Buster) Soaries, Jr, Pastor, First Baptist Church, Lincoln Gardens, Somerset. Clergy and religious leaders are called to join in a call for a Justice Revival - **REVIVE! 2010** to take place June 11-13, 2010 at the Trinity Cathedral in Trenton, NJ. **REVIVE 2010** will bring together 1,000 Christians across denominational, theological, class, and racial/ethnic divides to renew a faith in Christ that inspires and equips us to proclaim his justice. **REVIVE! 2010** will be a weekend of Christian proclamation that brings together nationally known speakers, inspiring preachers, and useful workshops to equip participants in the work of evangelism and justice. Speakers June 11-13 include Cornel West, Bart Campolo, Shane Claiborne and Brenda Salter McNeil . Please let Pastor Liz know if you are interested in attending the April 21st breakfast.

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# **MILESTONES**

From Mildred Caperella

Beware the "Ides of March." It came in like a lamb. Hello Spring!

March 20<sup>th</sup>: Miriam Dean's birthday, Charlie and I took a drive to the Estates to see Miriam. She sends her love to all. The Estates had a Spring Fling in their Auxiliary Room, all the clothing, (men and women's), was half price

March 28<sup>th</sup>: Palm Sunday

April 2<sup>nd</sup>: Good Friday

April 4<sup>th</sup>: Easter Sunday

Are we having the Annual BYF Spaghetti Dinner in May? May I make a suggestion to the Deacons? We should have it from 5:00 to 6:30 pm. Not many showed up last time. We only had about 10 fellow members. If we have it as a luncheon after church service I'm sure members and friends will stay for a good cause. It was always \$1 a ticket. The BYF changed it to a "Love Offering will be collected." Doesn't that sound "yummy?" "You betcha," as someone would say.

Ben Franklin said, "Love thy neighbor but don't cut the hedge down."

Pastor Liz, thank you for showing us your slides about Haiti. They were well received. I'm waiting to see the pastor who can do better than you. I don't think so.

The Bible is the only book whose author is present when the Bible is read.

The first week of March is when the geese lay their eggs. This is the fourth week of March. I see all the mates around the apartment swimming pool. They must have surrogates sitting on their eggs. They always stay in pairs and stay together when parted.

Life is short. Eat cookies. No matter how small the place is in which you live there's always room for prayer.

Dear members and friends of FBC, have a healthy and happy Easter. Be kind to the Easter Bunny. He will bring you an egg--All Fathers, with your name on it.

Drive safely for Easter.

Have a blessed day!