

First Things

A Newsletter of the First Baptist Church of Trenton

December, 2009

A word from Pastor Liz

Dear First Baptist Church of Trenton,

May Christ be in our Christmas. May it show in all we do and how we are with everyone. May Christmas 2009 bring blessings in abundance to you and your loved ones. May you know that you are loved. May you know Christ's joy and peace now and in the New Year. May the following bless you.

With love from Pastor Liz

May Christ Be in Our Christmas

The source is unknown, but someone wrote this Christmas version of I Corinthians 13:

If I decorate my house perfectly with plaid bows,
Strands of twinkling lights and shiny balls,
But do not show love to my family,
I'm just another decorator.
If I slave away in the kitchen,
Baking dozens of Christmas cookies,
Preparing gourmet meals
And arranging a beautifully adorned table at mealtime,
But do not show love to my family,
I'm just another cook.
If I work at the soup kitchen,
Carol in the nursing home
And give all that I have to charity,
But do not show love to my family,
It profits me nothing.
If I trim the pine with shimmering angels
And crocheted snowflakes,
Attend a myriad of holiday parties
And sing in the choir's cantata,
But do not focus on Christ,
I have missed the point,

Somewhere I read about gifts that we can give throughout the year:

1. The gift of *listening*...But you must really listen. No interrupting, no daydreaming, no planning your response. Just listening.
2. The gift of *affection*....Be generous with appropriate hugs, kisses, pats on the shoulder and handholds. Let these small actions demonstrate the love you have for family and friends.
3. The gift of *laughter*....Clip cartoons. Share articles and funny stories with your pastor. Your gift will say, "I love to laugh with you."
4. The gift of a *written note*....It can be a simple "thanks for the help" note or a full sonnet. A brief, handwritten note may be remembered for a lifetime, and may even change a life.
5. The gift of a compliment....A simple and sincere, "You look great in red," "Well done," or "That was a wonderful meal" can make someone's day.
6. The gift of a favor...Everyday, go out of your way to do something kind. Simple acts of kindness can change a life, yours as well as the other persons.
7. The gift of solitude....There are times when we want nothing better than to be left alone. Be sensitive to those times and give the gift of solitude to others.
8. The gift of a cheerful disposition....The easiest way to feel good is to extend a kind word to someone, really it's not that hard to say "hello" or "thank you." Count your blessings. Be happy. Tell your face.
9. The gift of prayer....Do pray for your pastor and for one another.
10. Special gift suggestions from Oren Arnold.

To your enemy, forgiveness.

To an opponent, tolerance.

To a friend, your heart.

To a customer, service.

To all, charity.

To every child, a good example.

To yourself, respect.

Join us and be part of the "Hanging of the Greens" on Sunday, December 6th at 3:00 pm.

Bring a covered dish to share.

Come at 3pm to help decorate the church.

Bring either paper plates and disposable plastic silverware or your own dishes and silverware.

Bring a gift to give to the Christ child that will go to needy families.

Plan to stay for the Bell Choir Concert at 7pm.

Invite a friend to come to the concert, and to the dinner, or perhaps to the entire event.

Join me at the Shiloh Baptist Church's free concert "One Church, One Community, One Christmas" being held at the War Memorial at 5:00pm on Saturday, December 19th. (A free offering will be taken.)

Please join us:

on Sunday, December 20th after church starting at 2:00pm when we go to **Water's Edge for caroling.**

on the **steps of the State House** at 2:00 pm Monday, December 21st for a service of remembrance for the homeless who died this past year. Service being sponsored by the Mercer Alliance.

on Christmas Eve at 7:00 pm for a special worship service.

on Sunday, December 27th when April Armstrong will be leading worship and preaching while I am in Texas with family.

The Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO)

The Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO) is used by the American Baptist Churches (ABC), USA to provide thank you checks to over 3,000 retired American Baptist ministers and missionaries or their widowed spouses, based on 15 or more years of ABC service. The RMMO is also used for emergency and other financial assistance based on need. Be generous. Remember our retired pastors and missionaries with love. Give with gratitude. Your gift does make a difference.

December Sermons

December 6 th	Matthew 1:1-16 <i>Learning from Jesus' Mother and Grandmothers</i>
December 13 th :	Matthew 1:18-25 <i>Joseph</i>
December 20th	Luke 1:46-55 <i>Why Mary?</i>
December 24 th	Christmas Eve at 7:00 pm Luke 2:1-20, Matthew 2:1-12 <i>God's Perfect Timing: Reliving the First Christmas</i>
December 27 th	April Armstrong will lead worship and be preaching.

From the Trustees:

It has been noted that the newly elected chairman of the trustees has been doing an excellent and dedicated job of chairmanship-----**KUDOS** to you, Thomas Johnson, and to Clarence Landsparger, for conveying his many years of experience to the new chair.

The trustees continue to support various organization's use of **FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH** facilities, some of which pertain to the **TASK**, Strengthening Families, the use of out baptismal, voting space, wedding reception, funeral luncheons, and as a gathering place for neighborhood action meetings

We have had three work days this year and it is noted that worker support was rather poor. I choose **NOT** to mention the usual three to five persons that are always there. I will not do so until I see **YOU** there.

The year is rapidly coming to a close and many of you have envelopes that have not been filled and turned in. Won't you please **do so now?**

Thanks to all who had any part in my Birthday Party on November 15th. The gifts, food, words of cheer made it a high spot of my 70 Years at First Baptist. Thanks also for the prayers of concern that have been offered pertaining to my eyesight.

God bless all of you
Clarence Landsparger

Serving This Month

Deacons:

Mary Mild and Jon Uy
Phillip Wilson and Minnie Wilson

Trustee:

Lyn Wood

From the Deacons

This past Sunday the Deacons met with three prospective members. They are Destiny Wea, Ijezien Nwokoma and Joanne Collins. It will be our pleasure to recommend them to the congregation for membership. Destiny has also requested baptism. What a joy that is!

As you have noticed, we have been honored in the past few weeks with regular visits from refugees from Burma. They are Karin Baptists and have been worshipping for the past few years in their own homes here in the Trenton area. The American Baptists are supporting the settlement of many Karen Baptists around the country. Here in New Jersey we have a group in Cranford/Elizabeth Baptist Church in North Jersey, one in a Korean Baptist Church in Camden, and now this group is seeking to worship in our church here in Trenton.

A few weeks ago in the surveys that you completed for the search process, almost all of you said that our church needs to grow—that we need more members. We said that we needed more young people. The Bible says, ask and ye shall receive. Who would have thought that God could answer our prayers so quickly. And I expect that the Karen Baptists also feel that their prayers are being answered.

In the next few weeks, please get to know one family from the Karen Baptist fellowship. Invite them to your Sunday school class. Invite them to your Bible Study. Invite them to Hanging of the Greens. Listen to their stories. Tell them about our church. Make them feel welcome. And thank God for his many blessings.

From the Board of Christian Education

First Baptist Sunday School classes are meeting regularly and have had some Burmese students visit the primary and secondary classes. The adult class continues its study of the book titled 'Lord, Teach me to Pray'. The members are being challenged to recognize the role of prayer in their lives and how without faith in God prayer is without meaning. Join them for some hearty discussions each Sunday at 9:45 am. The Women's class discussed relationships with others and having different levels of conversation. Sometimes you can overcome your fears with some friendships and share a deeper level of communication as you would in prayer with God. Last Sunday the secondary class had 7 visitors. All the children were from the Karen fellowship. They are studying God's creation of the earth, so the children made booklets about the six days of creation and the day God rested. The primary class had three visitors from the Karen fellowship. They heard the story of Moses and the Israelites. They talked about how God provides us with the things we need like food, water and shelter. Liz Congdon continues to meet with a Baptism class.

Junior Church's theme is from the book by Kay Arthur "Who is Jesus and why does He matter?" They talked about the second chapter of John where Jesus cleanses the temple from the money changers. The class made their own individual temples as they learned this story of Jesus. Please talk to the children about what they are learning and encourage them to use these new techniques to study the Bible for themselves.

Be sure to save December 6th for the Hanging of the Greens festivities and the Pluckemin Bell Choir concert. A trip to Water's Edge Nursing Home to sing Christmas Carols the week before Christmas is planned. We hope there will be enough interest for this event to take place.

From the Search Committee

The Search Committee has been busy. We have completed our Church Profile that we will share with candidates. If you want to see a copy you can find it in either of the adult Sunday school classrooms. We also have almost completed updating our church website. If you have a computer please check it out: <http://www.firstbaptisttrenton.org/>.

We have done a search of the ABPS database requesting Ministerial Profiles from our region using the criteria that you identified during our survey. We have received our first batch of Profiles that match our search criteria. We are in the process of sending letters to those identified in the search, to determine which of those candidates have an interest in learning more about our wonderful congregation.

We know that even though the minister's search criteria match our request, that does not mean that the persons identified are ready and willing to move to our city. So the work continues. Please remember the committee and our process in prayer. Thank you.

Milestones by Mildred Caperella

Guess what? Winter is coming to pay us a visit December 21st. Isn't that cool? November was an exciting month got FBC. We turned our clocks back 1 hour. It sure got darker quick. And FBC celebrated its 204th Anniversary. The potluck luncheon was so good and tasty. How was your Thanksgiving? Turkey tastes the best on Thanksgiving and without the dressing and cranberry sauce – forget it.

Charlie had a nice surprise for his November 5th birthday. Richard Petro gave Charlie a lovely cake which was a block wide and long. It was longer than some of the blocks in Trenton. Charlie says 'Thank you, Richard.'

We all were so happy to see Kelly Johnson and she brought her beautiful voice with her. We were looking for Tara, Adam and Erik. FBC is still on the same corner for 204 years. I remember when the four of you sang together. I wish those happy times were back.

The countdown to Christmas is here. Pastor Liz is planning for a Christmas Eve service. Let us fill the church pews this Christmas Eve. It is a lovely service with candlelight. If we all promise to be good little girls and boys, Santa may leave some hot chocolate and cookies after the service. We have to have just one (or two) for the road.

Thank you, Pastor Liz, for your wonderful sermons. All the members appreciate your sermons.

On November 14th (Sat.) Florence Ehrmann, Charlie Sears and I went to visit Miriam Dean. She feels fine. But still needs prayers. Pastor Liz was there to see her previously.

On December 12th (Sat.) Riverview Estates is having a family Christmas celebration from 2-4pm... Everyone is invited, so put on your best bib and tucker, hop into your cars and, start the motor. See ya there. It is free.

I feel like my body has gotten totally out of shape, so I received my doctor's permission to join a fitness club and strict exercising. I decided to take aerobics for seniors, I bent, twisted, gyrated, jumped up and down and perspired for an hour. By the time I got my leotards on, the class was over.

2009 is coming to a close. Happy New year 2010! Let's pray the transportation dept. makes the roads a lot smoother for 2010. Put a lot of merry in your Christmas this year.

Drive with a feeling you want to get there safely. Drink beer? Don't drive.

MERRY CHRISTMAS. MEMBERS AND FRIENDS.

Have a blessed day!