

First Things

A Newsletter of the First Baptist Church of Trenton

JANUARY, 2010

From Pastor Liz

Rules from God for 2010

1. Wake Up!! Decide to have a good day. **"Today is the day the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad in it"** Psalms 118:24
2. Dress Up!! The best way to dress up is to put on a smile. A smile is an inexpensive way to improve your looks. **"The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at outward appearance; but the Lord looks at the heart."** Samuel 16:7
3. Shut Up!! Say nice things and learn to listen. God gave us two ears and one mouth, so He must have meant for us to do twice as much listening as talking. **"He who guards his lips guards his soul."** Proverbs 13:3
4. Stand Up!!. For what you believe in. Stand for something or you will fall for anything. We are to be standing on the promises and not just sitting on the premises. **"Let us not be weary in doing good; for at the proper time, we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good."** Galatians 6:9-10
5. Look Up!! To the Lord! **"I can do everything through Christ who strengthens me"** Philippians 4:13
5. Reach Up!!. For something higher. **"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not unto your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him, and He will direct your path."** Proverbs 3:5-6
7. Lift Up!! Your Prayers. **"Do not worry about anything; Instead PRAY ABOUT EVERY-THING. Philippians 4:6** Laugh often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath
. And if you have a friend who makes you laugh, spend lots and lots of time with him or her. Surround yourself with what you love: Whether it's family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever. Your home is your refuge.
(Adapted from something I read on the internet, author unknown.)

Exciting things are scheduled for January 2010

Does "Deadline: January 15 apply to you?"

Read on!

January Happenings at First Baptist Church of Trenton

- ❖ **The Rev. Rothangliani Chhangte**, American Baptist Churches, USA Liaison for Burmese Refugees will be the **speaker** at a 9:30 am breakfast and **preach** at the worship service at 11:00 on **Sunday, January 17, 2010**. All are encouraged to bring breakfast food to share and to learn more about the traditions of the Karen who are now worshipping with us.
- ❖ Membership sessions are being planned. **“Discovery”** sessions are scheduled during Sunday School hour so we can explore what is involved with becoming a member of the First Baptist Church of Trenton. Participation in these sessions does not commit a person to becoming a member. It is explorative and informational. First we will explore our faith, what we believe, our polity. Second, we will explore our spiritual gifts and then, we will meet with church leaders to explore the work of the church and specifically, how this church works. Sessions will be held on **Sunday, January 3, 10, 24 and 31**. Again, participation does not commit you to becoming a member. Please let Pastor Liz know if you might be interested. (609-954-1450 or Lizcongdon@comcast.net)
- ❖ **January will be our month for stewardship**. It will be good starting 2010 focused on committing our time, talent and treasure to God. “The earth belongs to the Lord. And so does everything in it. The world belongs to him. And so do all those who live in it.” (Psalm 24:1) We are returning to God what is God’s already. Each day in 2010 may you receive blessings in abundance and may your generosity bless you with joy. Make the commitment, the pledge, the promise and you will find joy in giving.
- ❖ **The mission focus in January will be the America for Christ (AFC) Offering** which supports home mission and ministry for equipping and networking Christ-centered leaders to transform persons, congregations, communities and cultures. The theme is: “With Willing Hands: Connect, Care, Celebrate.” Our support is used in addressing Children in Poverty initiatives and resettling refugees violently driven from their homelands to providing evangelism training, developing discipleship resources and leading ministry workshops and conferences. Our support means that we will continue to make a difference in our communities.
- ❖ **Our Annual Meeting will follow worship on Sunday, January 31**. (Snow date is 2/7/10.) Bring lunch food to share and be part of the decisions that are vital as we continue to grow as disciples of Jesus and as we serve our community. **Annual reports are due by 1/15/10**.

January Sermons

January 3 2010	Matthew 2:1-12 “What Gifts Will You Bring?”
January 10 2010	Acts 8:14-17 “Baptized: Loved and Empowered”
January 17 2010	The Reverend Rothangliani Chhangte, ABCUSA Liaison for Burmese Refugees will preach
January 24 2010	I Corinthians 12:1-11 “What Are Your Spiritual Gifts?”
January 31 2010	I Corinthians 12: 12-27 “Teamwork”

Serving This Month

Deacons: Azu Amutah and Linda Wea

Trustee: James Russo

From the Deacons

This past month the Deacons met with Ije Nwokoma regarding membership in our church. We were delighted to recommend him to the congregation for membership. He received the right hand of fellowship on the first Sunday of December.

We also purchased poinsettias for our members who are unable to attend worship for various reasons. In addition we visited a number of members at home and in nursing homes.

We are happy to welcome into our fellowship more than a dozen families originally from Karen, Burma. Many of these families spent time in refugee camps in Thailand and are happy to be resettled in our country here in America. We have enjoyed hearing their young people sing for us, and we have enjoyed having many new additions to our Sunday school classes.

Have you taken a moment to meet one of these families? I hope so. If not, do so soon. Many speak English very well. Others will be grateful for a hello and a smile.

From the Search Committee

One of the questions we wrestle with on the search committee is how to describe our congregation to ministerial candidates. Here is a paragraph we have included in our Profile to briefly describe our congregation. “We are a church with a rich history that is in a time of major transition with a small, diverse, urban congregation. We are looking for a pastor to lead us into the next chapter of our ministry and mission with a focus on growing our church both numerically and spiritually. The growth we desire is based on evangelism, outreach in the multicultural community around the church, and ministry to youth and children. We are open to new approaches on how to do things.”

Congregations that are 200 years old, often have a hard time with “new approaches to doing things.” We know that if this congregation is to grow, it is critically important that we be open to new ideas and new ways to do things. Some have suggested that we should have a more dynamic preacher. Others have said our music should be more lively. Currently we are experiencing change as we welcome our friends from Burma. But if we are to continue to grow, we will need to be open to even more change

Pray that you and all of us will embrace the new approaches to ministry that are surely in our future

The Board of Christian Education

There have been several activities the month of December

. Our Hanging of the Greens day was a wonderful time of work and fellowship. The shared meal was delicious as always thanks to so many dishes from each family. The program with the gifts given to children and families connected to DYFS (Division of Youth and Family Services) was wonderful. Thank You to Pastor Liz, Diane Uy and all the children that participated and read the Christmas story.

The Pluckemin Carillons sounded beautiful and they were so pleased to see so many people attend the concert. Lots of great questions were asked so we all learned a little more about the special bells they play. We even heard two new songs they had learned this year. Did you know the Carillons have been coming to our Hanging of the Greens since 193?

Pastor Liz shared the real meaning of the 12 days of Christmas song at one of our assembly times. I think every time we listen to that song this holiday we will have a new image for our thoughts. If you missed the assembly and would like a copy of the song I'm sure she will make one for you.

The Board of Education did not meet in December so the **next meeting will be January 3rd.. Save the date February 27th for a COAL Leadership Training Event.** Those that participated last year had a wonderful day.

Because we have been blessed with the presence of the Karen people from Burma, we would like to present some background about them. Following are a couple of downloads from Internet

websites (www.Karen.org) and (www.KarenKonnection.org) maintained by our missionaries from Burma which will give information about them



Welcome to Karen Konnection!

The purpose of this website is to help the newly-resettled Burmese Karen to connect with American Baptist-USA and Cooperative Baptist Fellowship churches throughout the U.S. We hope to help churches and church leaders hosting Karen congregations to connect with each other to share resources and ideas, and to help the Karen scattered across the country and around the world to re-connect. This effort is the new work of Duane and Marcia Binkley who are being jointly appointed by ABC-USA and CBF to oversee this Karen support initiative.

We hope you find this site useful. Let us know what we can do better. Use the link to the Karen Konnection blog under "Helping Karen refugees " on the left to tell us what you think.

The Story in a Nutshell

The Karen people are an ethnic group in Southeast Asia enduring an ethnic cleansing program in eastern Burma. The result is between 500,000 to 1 million Karen people living in hiding within Burma. In addition, a series of nine refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border house some 155,000 mostly Karen refugees. Thousands more live in refugee-like situations in Thailand and Burma, and millions of other Burmese from a variety of ethnic groups seek refuge and a way to make a living in surrounding countries.

No end to the difficulties is in sight for Karen refugees, so governments around the world are beginning to accept Karen people from the camps in Thailand for resettlement. Several thousand Karen from Tham Hin, the southern most camp in Thailand, were brought to the U.S. in 2006. In 2007, the goal is to begin Karen resettlement from the Mae La camp as well. Tens of thousands of Karen will likely be coming to the U.S. over the next few years.

The Karen were some of the earliest converts to Christianity in Southeast Asia, and one of the fastest-growing churches after American Baptist missionary efforts began with the arrival of Adoniram Judson in Burma in 1813. The excitement and interest of these early mission efforts were the reason Baptist churches in the U.S. formed societies to work together that led to the formation of our Baptist denominations that exist today. For nearly 200 years, the Karen have been graciously receiving our missionaries and their message, and they are proud of their links to Baptists in America. Now it is our turn to receive and help them become a part of our American communities.

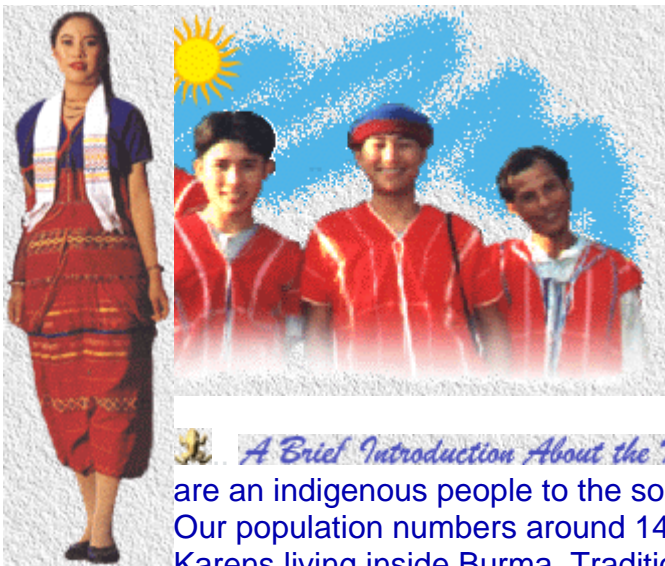
It is with sorrow we see the Karen forced from their homes in Burma, but it is with great joy that we welcome the Karen people to America.

(Last updated 16 December 2009)

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Karens Around the World Unite !



Welcome to the Karen Website!

This site is a Cultural Exchange and a Communication Center representing the Karen people. We invite you to explore and participate.

A Brief Introduction About the Karens - The Karens, pronounced (Ka-rans), are an indigenous people to the southeast Asian countries of Thailand and Burma. Our population numbers around 14 million in that region with the majority of the Karens living inside Burma. Traditionally, most Karens are farmers who farm the nutrient rich soils of southern Burma and eastern Thailand. The religion of the Karen majority is Animism and Buddhism although there is a sizable population of Christians among the Karens. Christians constitute roughly 30% of the Karen population. Karens, unlike other large ethnic groups, are made-up of smaller subgroups who, in some cases, speak in their own dialects. There are, however, two main groups of Karens: the Sgaws(S'waw) and the Pwos. To most people who are familiar with the Karens, Karens are known for their colorful traditional clothes and for their energetic and jubilant festival dances. Foremost, the Karens are known for their hospitality and friendliness which they readily extend to everyone. Please continue to explore this website to learn more about us, the Karens.