

First Things

A Newsletter of the First Baptist Church of Trenton

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A word from the Senior Pastor

“....Go and make disciples....” Matthew 28:19-20

The mission of the First Baptist Church of Trenton is to be and to make disciples of Christ in authentic community for the good of the world. Discipleship at its core is about spreading the gospel, (the good news), following God’s Word and demonstrating Christ’s love, mercy and justice in the world. “Act justly. Love mercy. Walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:8) Jesus invites us to follow him, to be his disciples so that God can work in us and through us. Jesus told us how to be his disciples. He said “I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.” (Matthew 25:35-36)

In this new year may the First Baptist Church of Trenton be a congregation embraced and captivated by God’s will for each person individually as well as part of this church and part of our community. As we continue working on our vision and mission may we continue to place more emphasis on visionary leadership and relationship experiences with God, with one another, and with the community we serve. Remember I Corinthians 2:9, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him.”

Vision is a movement of God that is memorable, and not a statement of humankind that is memorized. (Bullard, Jr. George W. *Pursuing the Full Kingdom Potential of Your Congregation*, Chalice Press, St. Louis, Missouri, 2005) Vision is not something you catch. It is something by which you are caught. Vision is not something written about, but experienced.

We are on a spiritual journey individually and together as a congregation. This is about movement. It is about being pulled by God, not about being pushed into anything. This is about movement toward our full potential.

Can you see God moving in us and through us?

By Elizabeth B. Congdon

JANUARY SERMONS

Sermons

| | | | |
|------|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1/1 | Nehemiah 2:11-18 | “A Wall Under Reconstruction” | The Rev. C. Nadir Powell |
| 1/8 | Psalm 29, Mark 1:4-11, Genesis 1:1-5 | “Loved and Empowered” | Pastor Liz |
| 1/15 | Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18, I Samuel 3: 1-10, John 1:43-51 | “Who Me? Called?” | Pastor Liz |
| 1/22 | Psalm 62:5-12, Mark 1:14-20 | | Evan Bever |
| 1/29 | | | Jesse Nietzer |

Request a sermon text or sermon topic and Pastor Liz will do her best to include it in the new year.

Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the congregation is scheduled for January 29, 2012 immediately following worship. It will begin with a potluck lunch and continue with information and planning for the new year. Plan to be part of this important meeting when we will talk about our *Spiritual Strategic Journey*, and strategic planning. Snow date is February 5th. In preparation for the meeting, the Ways and Means Committee will meet on January 8th at 12:30 and Annual Reports will be needed by January 9th. This is a wonderful opportunity to work and pray and plan together.

First Baptist Family and supporters

Greetings First Baptist Family and supporters,

I like to take this time to thank you for supporting our outreach ministry. Had it not been for your support, our goals would have not been met. Since becoming FBCT Associate Pastor, it's truly been a blessing watching God bless us! He has blessed us to have an Evening of Celebrating the Arts where both our youth and youth from community came out and shared their talents. We also developed a poetry ministry where both FBCT youth and youth throughout the community are able to come out Wednesday evenings. In addition we had a concert where Urban Promise Choir of Camden blessed us with heartfelt and spirit filled songs of gospel. It was a joyous time. Furthermore, our youth partnered with CARE Trenton to help beautify South Trenton by cleaning sections of Beatty St. Recently, our youth and CARE Trenton cleaned the plot at the top of Centre St off of S Broad St which closed off our year. To God be the glory! Again, I say thank you because had it not been for your help in promoting our outreach ministry, the success we had wouldn't had happened. I'm looking forward to 2012 because I'm sure the Lord has bigger and better things in store for us.

Yours in Christ,
Rev. C. Nadir Powell
FBCT Associate Pastor

True Identity by the Rev. C. Nadir Powell

Many walk around with a question in mind
Asking, Who am I
Trying to find the real me
Often beyond what their eyes can see

For we're like the explorer who searches all over traveling far distances
As we seek to find what gives true meaning to our existence
Trying to find an answer that seems to be hidden from us
Yet to know, it is a must

With our hammer and pick we chip at a buried necessity that empowers our lives
Only to find broken pieces of nothingness
For the artifacts of our past experiences gives us false readings
Something we wish we could believe in

For I realize that we're too busy looking out when we should be looking within
Because that what we search for is a part of us when life begins
For it goes with us day to day
It's always been a part of our DNA

For who we are is found in the image of the One who created us
I'm talking about God Almighty our Deity from heaven above
The One who breathed His likeness into both you and me
The One who gave us our true identity

MILESTONES

By Mildred Caperella

By the time you read this it will be the year of 2012. Was the year a good one or what? Take time to thank our Pastor Liz and Rev. Powell for the wonderful ceremonies they have given us. Prayers for our departed and service personnel for our officers and committees, for our Burma friends, who have given us joy with their voices and dance. The Bell Ringers that came faithfully, as we watched the directors sons grow up from babies to little gentlemen. Our own choir singing with the bell ringers. Next year our choir will sing with the bell ringers. "Away In a Manger" ? Jeanne our organ player and director of the choir. Amen.

Thanks to Rev. Powell's wife for directing the children choir. We should have more singing !

"I used to dread getting older because I thought I would not be able to do all the things I wanted to do, but now I am older, I find that I don't want to do them" by Lady Nancy Astor.

January Horoscope: January was named after the Roman God Janus- Flower: Carnations and Snow Drop.

Birthstone: Garnet. January 1-19 are those who want to get to the top of their chosen field, where they reap the benefits of success. January 20-31 shower the world with their thoughts and new ideas.

If you can hold someones hand, hug them or even touch them on the shoulder... you are blessed because you can offer a healing touch.

Have a healthy 2012! Happy New Year! Have a Merry Christmas, count your blessings, and remember... God Loves you !!

MANY BLESSINGS TO OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS
DRIVE SAFELY AND SAY A PRAYER BEFORE STARTING OUT
HAVE A BLESSED DAY!



10 Beautiful Thoughts to Live By:



~1~ Prayer is not a "spare wheel"
that you pull out when in trouble;
it is a "steering wheel"
that directs us in the right path
throughout life.



~2~ Do you know why a car's windshield is so large
& the rear view mirror is so small?
Because our past is not
as important as our future.
So, look ahead and move on.



~3~ Friendship is like a book.
It takes few seconds to burn,
but it takes years to write.



~4~ All things in life are temporary.
If going well enjoy it,
they will not last forever.
If going wrong don't worry,
they can't last long either.



~5~ Old friends are like Gold!
New friends are Diamonds!
If you get a Diamond,
don't forget the Gold!
Because to hold a Diamond,
you always need a base of Gold!



~6~ Often when we lose hope and think this is the end,
GOD smiles from above and says,
"Relax, sweetheart, it's just a bend,
not the end!"



~7~ When GOD solves your problems,
you have faith in HIS abilities;
when GOD doesn't solve your problems
HE has faith in your abilities.



~8~ A blind person asked St. Anthony:
"Can there be anything worse
than losing eye sight?"
He replied:
"Yes, losing your vision."



~9~ When you pray for others,
GOD listens to you and blesses them;
and sometimes,
when you are safe and happy,
remember that someone has prayed for you.



~10~ Worry does not take away
tomorrow's troubles;
it takes away today's PEACE.

Save the Dates

Ways and Means Committee meeting 1/8/12
Annual Reports due 1/9/12
Annual Meeting 1/29/12 with snow date 2/5/12

Karen New Year

All are invited to the Karen New Year Celebration being held at the ABC Mission Center in Valley Forge, PA on Saturday, January 7th from 11:00 – 4:00. Let Mary Mild know if you can join us and if you are willing to provide a ride for someone who needs one.

Pray for Kim Brown, reaching needy children with the love of Jesus in Thailand



Kim Brown

Kim's work includes overseeing five Christ-like ministries for tribal people who are coping with the problems caused by AIDS, disabilities, and migration from their traditional villages to urban slums through the ministry of Integrated Ministries for Ethnic Minorities Foundation (IMEMF)

Kim writes: I am back in Chiang Mai, home after 3 months in the U.S. visiting churches and friends in Ohio, Pennsylvania and Florida. I returned to Chiang Mai in the midst of a flood! My own home was flooded and I had to go from the airport to the House of Love (HOL) because the roads in town were closed. (thankfully, my housekeeper was able to move most items up before the water came in). But it turns out that our HOL property also was flooded – not by the river, but because water was released from the dam into the canal that flows along the back of our property – and the water came in. Our rice fields were decimated, and we will need to restock our fish ponds. But we are so thankful that no water came into the home – which happened at the old place in 2005.

I value your prayer for us each month – and I like having new items to bring. But I would like to ask a special prayer request from now until the new year. Most of the residents at the House of Love are no longer children. They are teenagers and young adults. Traditional Thai culture would treat all of the residents as though they were children; but the young people are living in a changing and, therefore, a confusing culture. They need skills that will allow them to make wise choices for their future as they transition from childhood, through their teen years, into adulthood. They will need the support of adults and of a program at the House of Love that will allow them to grow spiritually, to practice their independence, to learn from their mistakes, and to grow in their self-esteem. **Would you pray for me and the others at HOL as we work out how to train these young people to be Christians in this Thai world?**

Praise and Prayer Points:

- ⤴ I thank God for the 26 years I have been friends and colleagues with Khun Amnuayporn. We started off as nurses together in the Baptist Maesariang Hospital, and we are finishing as co-directors for the IMEMF. It is time now for Amnuayporn to retire, and we will be having a worship service and special meal together to mark the event. Please pray as we go through this transition.
- ⤴ You are probably aware that the **House of Blessing (HOB)** families live life on the edge of poverty, and to experience flooding like we have had in Chiang Mai is devastating. Please be in prayer for these families and their communities.
- ⤴ The students at the **CDPD** will be enjoying their October school break this month as well. Please continue to be in prayer that the building will be completed on time.
- ⤴ Thank you for praying for new jobs for the **Health Project (HPTP)** staff who finished their terms with IMEMF. I am happy to report one is now a full-time pastor, another one is working for Compassion, International, and the third one is working with the district government.

Current News and Prayer from NightLight Bangkok

December 14, 2011 Journal by [Annie Dieselberg](#)

Dear Friends,

Thank you for all your prayers for NightLight through this difficult season. Now that December is here, we celebrate what we have come through and what is to come. We are grateful for the advent of Christ which allows us to have Jesus in us, the hope of glory. With this hope in us, we enter this season with joy knowing that God has so much more in store for us.



Bangkok residents endure flooding conditions

Praises

- The floods have receded to a great degree and inner Bangkok was spared the water damage.
- NightLight participated in flood relief and has sold t-shirts to raise money so we can continue to reach out and restore. A man who joined our efforts accepted Christ last week.
- Three people have been able to stay in our center after floods filled their homes.
- “N” and her infant were able to stay in our center to escape domestic abuse.
- Sunday there was a city wide church gathering to pray for Thailand at a significant government site. We believe there has been a shift in the spiritual climate for Thailand.
- Jewelry sales have increased some in this Christmas season and we are thankful that many are giving gifts that help to transform the lives of those who have made them.
- We are so grateful for Emily who has served with NightLight for the past 5 years. She is leaving Thailand this month to return to the UK and to do fulltime study of a language needed in assisting a certain group of victims of human trafficking.

Prayer Requests

- Pray for the victims of the flood. Many still have 1 meter of water in their homes and many more have lost work. The cleanup and restoration will take a long time. Pray for NightLight’s involvement in relief and restoration.
- Pray for Emily as she leaves NightLight and transitions to a new life. We will miss her terribly.
- Pray for continued increase in jewelry sales and donations. This is the first year we are not able to offer bonuses or Christmas gifts to the women and staff. We will be doing a Christmas outreach in the community instead of investing in parties and gifts. Pray the women will not be offended but will see the value of giving over receiving.
- This month we will have Christmas activities for the women and children in the red light area. An IRIS team will be coming to assist in these events. Pray these will be great opportunities to share the love of Christ and that we will have access to the women and children. There has been opposition from bar management in the past.
- Thank you so much for your support in prayer. This has been such a difficult season and we know your prayers have made such a difference. Please do continue to pray as we transition into a new year. I am excited to see new beginnings and wait in eager anticipation to see what God will do. There is still a lot to do this month however, so we covet your prayers.

Blessings!

Annie Dieselberg

www.nightlightinternational.com

Deacons Note

By Mary Mild

In this season of Advent, I want to share two pieces of Good News.

First, this month we have welcomed 11 new members to our congregation. They are not strangers but friends we have come to know. They are already active members in our congregation working with us in many ways. Evan Bever is our Princeton Seminary Student. He and his wife has sung in our choir, led Sunday school, led in worship and the children's sermon and many other ways have become a welcome addition to our church life.

Reverend Nadir and Mrs. Kharmia Powell are also with us in many ways. Mrs. Powell works with our children in Second Hour. We have seen the children's new skills and abilities in our congregation. Reverend Powell works in the community outreach in addition to leading us in worship and song. It is a joy to have them with us.

Lu Dee Kei and Gee Kei are very active in the Karen community upstairs and now we look forward to having them worship with us as well. They are leaders among our friends in the Karen congregation. They have come to know us in the ESL classes on Mondays. Two of their children are also joining the church. They are Klosay and Mu Thu Kei. They have attended ESL on Saturdays and Mu Thu is a member of the Youth Choir.

Eh Eh Win and Tok Win are also active members of the Karen congregation and they also attend our ESL classes on Mondays. We look forward to having them worship with us also.

Keeva and Lauren Kase have worshiped with us for the past two years. Rev. Keeva has preached in our congregation and Lauren has led the children's moments. Together they have worked on preparing and implementing a survey for the community and have been part of our planning for the future.

If you have not come to know these folk yet, I hope you will make an effort to introduce yourselves to each of them in the coming weeks. Sit with them in church. Join them during fellowship. We are blessed to have new members in our midst.

Second, I want to tell you a little more about White Cross. Last month I told you we had received 14 packages. As of today, we have received 50 contributions from other congregations from Maine to California. Our closets are full of things to help us in our ministry--plastic cutlery, plastic bags, toys, children's books, paper, pencils, crayons, bibles, clothing and the list goes on. We have also received almost \$2000 to help us buy supplies, bibles, and send children to camp. Along with the contributions have come prayers and support from the wider American Baptist community. These resources and prayers will be a major help to us in the year to come. Be sure to say a prayer of thanksgiving for this very rich blessing.



Building Community in South Trenton

By Lauren Kase

What can our church do to keep current members connected to our church community and to attract new members?

As part of its spiritual strategic journey, First Baptist is taking a close look at how well we serve our congregation and how we might do more to serve our community. Part of this exploration involves a community survey, which Pastor Liz Congdon, Evan Bever, Jesse Nietzer, and Lauren and Keeva Kase conducted in the neighborhood surrounding the church on December 10, 2011.

Splitting up into two teams, the group gave out more than 150 surveys, talking to neighbors and learning more about the community along the way. Pastor Liz, who walked Centre Street and others near the church, was surprised by the young families that we have as our neighbors. Keeva and Lauren, who walked Lamberton Street where they live, were surprised by the diversity in cultural affiliation and age. Many young families have moved into the new K. Hovnanian townhomes and many older, first generation European immigrants live in the existing homes on Lamberton.

Surveys are still being returned, but in the ones we have, neighbors noted concerns about safety, cleanliness, and activities for children in the neighborhood. About half mentioned a desire to be more involved in the community, although many were already involved in a church.

These neighborhood concerns are not surprising, and First Baptist is already helping to address these concerns in a variety of ways: by cleaning up the neighborhood with CARE Trenton; providing programs for youth on Saturdays; bringing people off the streets for warm meals at the soup kitchen, support and involvement in the South Trenton Area Residents' Society (STARS), etc. Our next step will be finding ways to invite other community members to participate in these and new initiatives in such a way that they feel connected to the church and to the community in South Trenton.

We will keep you posted as the surveys continue to come in and invite you to distribute some of the surveys to your own neighbors. This information is one piece of larger picture that the strategic spiritual journey team is collecting to help develop a plan to present to the church at the annual meeting on January 29th. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email Lauren (laurencmoore@yahoo.com) or Keeva Kase (keevakase@yahoo.com).



January 2012

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesda | Thursda | Friday | Saturday |
|---------------------------------------|---|-----------------|-------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| 1 | 2 4:00 STSK | 3 4:00 STSK | 4 4:00 STSK | 5 6:30 Choir | 6 | 7 Karen New Year Celebration |
| 8 Ways and Means Committee meeting | 9 10-12 ESL 4:00 STSK Annual Reports due | 10 4:00 STSK | 11 4:00 STSK | 12 6:30 Choir | 13 | 14 9-12 ESL & Tutoring 2:00 Baptism class |
| 15 | 16 10-12 ESL 4:00 STSK | 17 4:00 STSK | 18 4:00 STSK 7:00 STARS | 19 6:30 Choir | 20 NEWSLETTER INFO DUE | 21 9-12 ESL & Tutoring 2:00 Baptism class |
| 22 Deacons | 23 10-12 ESL 4:00 STSK | 24 4:00 STSK | 25 4:00 STSK | 26 6:30 Choir | 27 | 28 9-12 ESL & Tutoring 2:00 Baptism class |
| 29 Annual Meeting | 30 4:00 STSK | 31 4:00 STSK | | | | Sunday Schedule 9:00 Burma Karen Karenni Worship 10:00 Sunday School for all ages 11:00 Worship 12:15 Fellowship |