

The Visitor

First Baptist Church, DeWitt Park, Ithaca, NY 14850

607-273-5800

fbdewitt@verizon.net

www.firstbaptistithaca.org

December, 2007



A note from Rev. Richard Rose...

Dears Sisters and Brothers,

In this Advent season of preparation, expectation and hope, it's certainly difficult to take the appropriate time to enjoy it, give it its proper attention and realize its significance. For many of us, much of our time this Advent will be consumed with preparations for Christmas and the New Year. For others, this is a difficult time as it reminds us of lost loved ones, and for some it only serves to exacerbate one's loneliness.

The season of Advent is a time for both expectation *and* participation. Traditionally, Christians view Advent as a time to anticipate the coming of Jesus both as an infant at Christmas and in the form of a king. This second event referred to as the Parousia or the "the second coming of Christ" is anticipated by millions of Christians and Muslims the world over. For many Christians, the anticipation of the Parousia is such a vital part of their faith that it can ultimately prevent them from living each day as agents of peace and justice and toward an active participation in realizing the *kindom* of God (recognizing that we are all members of God's great family) on earth.

Our expectation may not be for the Parousia exclusively, or perhaps at all, but we can expect the coming of Jesus in every person we encounter each day, especially those who are hurting and lonely, and in ourselves as we seek to live out the faith we hold.

So let us live into the hopeful expectation of the season by envisioning a manifestation of justice, righteousness, and peace to emerge this Advent. Let's live in contradiction to the rampant consumerism and consumption which we witness and may God, who is alive in us, motivate us to great acts of compassion, mercy and love.

Renee, Owen and I wish you all a peaceful Christmas and a blessed New Year.

Peace,
Rich



Monday, December 24th join us for our family friendly
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 7:00 p.m.
Nursery care is available.



Walk A Path of Prayer into the New Year

The circular labyrinth, modeled on the one set into the floor of the Chartes Cathedral in France (1194-1220), will once more be available to all who wish to walk a prayerful meditation into the New Year. This labyrinth, in the Sanctuary at First Baptist, will be open December 29th-31st from 7:00-9:00pm and during the day January 2nd and 3rd.

*I do not at all understand the mystery of grace -
only that it meets us where we are but does not leave us where it found us.*
Author Anne Lamott

New Board of Education Schedule

Adult Education

December 2	11:30-12:30	Pete Meyers from the Tompkins County Worker's Center
December 9	11:30-12:30	NO ADULT ED -Board Meetings & Brunch
December 16	11:30-12:30	NO ADULT ED -Caroling and Children's Activities
December 23	11:30-12:30	NO ADULT ED -Christmas Breakfast
December 30	11:30-12:30	NO ADULT ED -Community Service

Youth At First Baptist

Cameron, Ashlee and Sara, accompanied by Tony Cotraccia and Tim Dean, attended the New York American Baptist Youth Convention in Syracuse November 9th -11th. It was wonderful to once more have our congregation and our perspective represented at this event. Their time together and with other youth and leadership from around the state provided some spiritually thought provoking experiences and discussion.

Our youth are also taking part in an interdenominational First Friday Youth Film Festival/ Discussion. Sara and Ashlee attended November 2nd at the First Presbyterian Church. Around fifteen youth engaged in a lively discussion after viewing "A Leap of Faith." December 7th, this series will be hosted by the Congregational Church. Dinner and discussion will accompany the viewing of the film *Philadelphia*. On January 4th it will be at St. Paul's Methodist Church. On February 1st, First Baptist will provide the refreshments, film and discussion leadership. All youth are invited to join in.

Church School News

Zeke, Greta, Sophia, Abraham and Sally did a great job representing our congregation in the Combined Children's Choir at the Interfaith Music Celebration November 4th. Jennifer Birnbaum helped direct the selections with Diane Beckwith from First Congregational. Lou Carlucci and Janet Cotraccia helped with rehearsals and accompanied the children the day of the performance. All who attended enjoyed the music and the light supper that followed.

Upcoming church school events include a return trip to Nancy Given's menagerie for a redux of First Baptist's Christmas Pageant on December 9th from 1:00-2:30 p.m.. All children and their families are encouraged to come and enjoy both the retelling of the story and the warming refreshments. Janet Cotraccia is again organizing this outing and the presentation during worship on December 23rd.

On December 15th, there is a "Parents Nite-Out" planned from 5:00-8:00 pm. Only the children and youth are invited to come in for dinner, games, and Advent activities in the Community Room. An email requesting an R.S.V.P. will be sent out in the preceding week. Plan to participate in this nite!

On Sunday December 16th, the Church School will be headed to Alterra directly after worship to do some caroling with the residents. All youth and adults who would like to add their voices and presence to this joyful event, please come on along. We will meet at the south door and carpool. Guitars, flutes, violins and other instruments welcome.

*****Church School Appeal*****

Helping at the Children's Table in the Sanctuary is a great way to be introduced to some of the younger and newer members of our congregational family. Likewise, it is valuable for our children to get to know you. Please contact Lou Carlucci or Kris Scott if you are willing to take turns facilitating an activity at the table.

If you have ideas or materials that are appropriate for the table or the quiet bags, please pass them on to them as well. Thanks!

"But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people...'"

It's time for our Children's Christmas pageant once again! All of our Sunday School children and their families are invited to Nancy Given's farm on Sunday, December 9th from 1:00-2:30 p.m. to put on pageant costumes and get their pictures taken. All of the costumes will be provided. There is something for everyone (even some cute sheep costumes). We had a lot of fun with this last year with great attendance. We are planning for another joy filled occasion this year. We will have hot chocolate and goodies and a warm place to get respite from the chilly outdoors. Please dress warmly and plan to see a variety of animals. The slide show pageant will be seen at the December 23rd worship service. You won't want to miss this one! Contact Janet Cotraccia with questions. Kris and Janet will be providing written driving directions in the weeks to come.



"...to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior"

Lectionary Readings for December

December 2

Isaiah 2:1-5 ~ Psalm 122 ~ Romans 13:11-14 ~ Matthew 24:36-44

December 9

Isaiah 11:1-10 ~ Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19 ~ Romans 15:4-13 ~ Matthew 3:1-12

December 16

Isaiah 35:1-10 ~ Psalm 146:5-10 or Luke 1:47-55 ~ James 5:7-10 ~ Matthew 11:2-11

December 23

Isaiah 7:10-16 ~ Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 ~ Romans 1:1-7 ~ Matthew 1:18-25

December 24 & 25, 2007~Nativity of the Lord ~ Proper I

Isaiah 9:2-7 ~ Psalm 96 ~ Titus 2:11-14 ~ Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)

December 24 & 25, 2007~Nativity of the Lord ~ Proper II

Isaiah 62:6-12 ~ Psalm 97 ~ Titus 3:4-7 ~ Luke 2:(1-7), 8-20

December 24 & 25, 2007~Nativity of the Lord ~ Proper III

Isaiah 52:7-10 ~ Psalm 98 ~ Hebrews 1:1-4, (5-12) ~ John 1:1-14

December 30, 2007 ~ First Sunday after Christmas Day

Isaiah 63:7-9 ~ Psalm 148 ~ Hebrews 2:10-18 ~ Matthew 2:13-23

Alternative Gifts Fair to be Held December 1st

Weary of dealing with more "stuff" at Christmas? The Alternatives Gift Fair will be at the Presbyterian Church December 1st from 10am-4pm. You can purchase gift cards for many, many charities with prices ranging from \$10 up. This year, the Unitarian Church has included the Zambian Children's Fund at its table. For more information see: www.ithacaaltgiffair.org

Zambian Children's Fund News

Educational CDs and DVDs are being sought for the Chishawasha Orphanage and School. Recently, the school received the gift of a large television/DVD player. This was the hope of the teachers who have been looking for ways to expand the horizons of the students, most of whom have never been further than the home village or parts of Lusaka. Educational DVDs are needed for the school. They would love to have History Channel, National Geographic, or PBS programs.

Also, the computers (many from Ithaca!) are up and running and we are sending five more laptops in the next 2 months. We are looking to send educational CDs for use in the computers. Encyclopedias, typing programs, references, math, reading and writing and just about any other topics are welcomed. They must be compatible with Windows XP (NOT Vista) operating systems.

If you have any DVDs or CDs or would like to contribute to buying them, please contact Sue Eymann, Tony Lister or Louise Mudrak

TRANSGENDER FILM FESTIVAL

At First Baptist Church

Followed by a Transgender Remembrance

Candlelight Vigil in DeWitt Park

DECEMBER 1st ~ 2:00-6:00 p.m.

Showing the films:

A Girl Like Me: The Gwen Araujo Story and documentary *Changing Sexes-Male to Female*

During the intermission, we will share in discussion and refreshments.

All are welcome!

For more information about *A Girl Like Me* visit:

<http://www.mylifetime.com/on-tv/moview/girl-me-gwen-araujo>

Do you have a current address, phone number or email address for the individuals listed below? The church has been trying to locate them in order to stay in touch. If you can help, please call the church office at 273-5800 or email fbdewitt@verizon.net. Thank you for your help!

We need addresses for:

The Miller-Evans family formerly of St. Petersburg, FL

Martha Garrison

Paul Monska



**Deadline for the January Visitor is December 15.
Please have your items in to guarantee they will appear.**

December 2007 Calendar

The following weekly events are not listed in the calendar. If new to these gatherings, please call to confirm dates & times. For New Creation Singers rehearsals (David 273-7864)~ Morning Meditation (Wednesday at 8:15 a.m. (Tony 277-1158)~Bible Study at 7:00 p.m. ~Choir Rehearsals, Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. and Sundays at 9:30 a.m. (Jennifer 277-7664).

Saturday	Dec 1	1:00-3:00	YOFFFI Practice
		2:00-6:00	Transgender Film Festival (in Community Room)
		10:00-4:00	Alternative Gift Fair at the Presbyterian Church
Sunday	Dec 2	10:00	WORSHIP- Communion
Giving Tree Deadline		11:15	Coffee/Fellowship
		11:30	Church Classes-Adult Ed welcomes Pete Myers
		2:00	Sacred Harp Singers
Monday	Dec 3	5:30	Cabinet meeting
		7:00	Bible Study at Longview
Tuesday	Dec 4	12:00	Great Women's Luncheon at Longview
		5:30	12 Step Meeting
		7:00	Area Congregations Together
Thursday	Dec 6	6:00	Cornell Gender Alliance
Friday	Dec 7	7:30	Pathways Interfaith Counseling Breakfast
Sunday	Dec 9	10:00	WORSHIP
		11:15	Men's Pancake Breakfast
			Church School 'Round the Table- No Adult Ed
			Board Meetings
		1:00	Children at Given's Farm
Monday	Dec 10	7:00	Bible Study at Longview
Tuesday	Dec 11	5:30	12 Step Meeting
Wednesday	Dec 12	7:00	Southern Tier Gender Alliance
Thursday	Dec 13	6:00	Cornell Gender Alliance
Saturday	Dec 15	5:00-8:00	Parent's Nite-Out
Sunday	Dec 16	10:00	WORSHIP
		11:15	Coffee and Conversation
		11:30	Caroling at Alterra-Youth and Adults invited
Monday	Dec 17	7:00	Bible Study at Longview
Tuesday	Dec 18	5:30	12 Step Meeting
Thursday	Dec 20	6:00	Cornell Gender Alliance
Sunday	Dec 23	8:30	Christmas Breakfast- See RSVP in this newsletter
		10:00	WORSHIP
		11:30	Church School Event- No Adult Ed
Monday	Dec 24	7:00	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service- Nursery care available.
Tuesday	Dec 25		Merry Christmas! (Church office closed Dec. 25-Jan.1)
Thursday	Dec 27	6:00	Cornell Gender Alliance
Saturday	Dec 29	7:00	Labyrinth (until 9:00 p.m.)
Sunday	Dec 30	10:00	WORSHIP- Community Room Service- No Church School
		11:15	Coffee/Fellowship
		2:00	Sacred Harp Singers
		7:00	Labyrinth (until 9:00 p.m.)
Monday	Dec 31		Labyrinth during the day
Tuesday	Jan 1		New Year's Day
Wednesday	Jan 2		Labyrinth during the day
Thursday	Jan 3		Labyrinth during the day
		6:00	Cornell Gender Alliance
Sunday	Jan 6	10:00	WORSHIP-Communion
		11:15	Coffee and Conversation
		11:30	Church Classes

Bible Study will continue to meet at Longview December 3rd, 10th, and 17th. Join us as we consider the three concluding chapters of Marcus Borg's book *The Heart of Christianity*. There is no Bible Study on December 24th or 31st.



The Giving Tree

We will be partnering with Enfield School again this year! The Giving Tree went up on November 18th with 40 tags of needed items for children. These wrapped gifts must be returned by Sunday, December 2nd. We will also be collecting personal care items--unwrapped--such as toothpaste & brushes, soap, shampoo etc. Any questions, contact Sue Hemsath or Tina Hilsdorf.

Men's Pancake Breakfast~ December 9th after worship!

On behalf of the Men's Pancake Breakfast, I would like to invite men and boys of the church and community to participate in our annual Men's pancake breakfast. Please sign up for cooking, setup, serving or cleanup or all of the above. The breakfast is scheduled for 11:30 a.m. right after worship. For more information, please contact Victor Younger.



Great Women's Lunch will be December 4th at noon at Longview. For more information please contact Liz Wilkinson.

The Trustees will be preparing next year's budget soon. If you have not done so, please return your Declaration of Intention materials as soon as possible.

All are Welcome to Dish-to-Share Dinner! - The Dinner Discussion group didn't get underway this fall. We have a tentative date of January 18th at 6:00 p.m. for a meal. Whether you have been to this gathering before or not, please let me know if you are interested in attending! *Linda Caughey.*

ITHACA CROPWALK 2007!!

Thanks to everyone who walked, sponsored, and prayed for the October 14, 2007 Ithaca CROPWALK. Together we raised \$1798.00 to fight hunger locally and globally! *Danny Scott- FBC liaison to ACT.*



Save Your Christmas Cards!

Please remember to save your *used religious Christmas* cards, as we send them to the Weirton Christian Center. They are used by the children there to support the purchase of educational items for the center. Please bring your used cards to Naomi Hollister or leave them in the church office. Thank you.

The Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO)

makes it possible for American Baptists to send over 3,000 Thank You checks to retired ministers, missionaries and their widowed spouses. An envelope for this offering is attached to this newsletter for your convenience.



Christmas Breakfast RSVP

Christmas Breakfast will be Sunday, December 23rd. All are invited to share their favorite traditional food at our Christmas dish-to-share breakfast. If you know you are coming, sign-ups help with table set-up and food selections help with planning. If possible, please return the following RSVP to the church.

I/We will bring (circle one):

Breads Fruit Bagels Quiche/hot dish

Name (s) _____ # of people attending _____

Advent and Christmas Decorating

The church sanctuary is decorated for the holiday season with your generous contributions of Poinsettias. If you would like to contribute in this way please fill out the form below and send to First Baptist Church, PO Box 254 DeWitt Park, Ithaca, NY 14851. Your Poinsettias provide a beautiful setting for all during our Advent and Christmas services. Thank you for sharing in this way.

I/We would like to contribute \$ _____ for Poinsettias/decorations.

Memory" or "In Honor" **Please circle one:** Given "In

OF _____
(please print name clearly)

Given By: _____

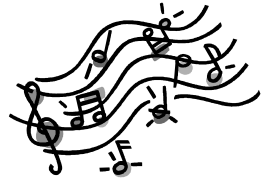
DECORATING THE CHURCH: The flower committee could *really* use some help decorating the church for Advent. On Friday afternoon, November 30, from 3:30 - 5:30 we need the help of people strong enough to carry tree and ornament boxes up to the sanctuary. People with less strength can help put the trees together. On Saturday morning, December 1, from 9 - 12, we will decorate the church--and also drink hot chocolate and eat cookies and doughnuts!

I can help carry up boxes and/or put together trees on Friday afternoon, Nov. 30: _____

I can help decorate on Saturday morning, Dec. 1: _____

New Creation Singers present Concert in Rome (New York ...)

If the members of the New Creation Singers looked a bit bleary-eyed in the worship service on Sunday morning, November 4, it was because they had just returned late Saturday evening from Rome, NY, where they had presented a concert at the First Baptist Church. The 1 ½ hour concert, at the invitation of First Baptist Rome's Pastor Cedric Broughton and Minister of Music Peter Walther, featured our musicians, Katherine Rosenberg, Marlene Sack, Kris Scott, and Liz Wilkinson, as well as yours truly, and was an opportunity for us to convey our understanding of, and inspiration by, God's all-inclusive love through our unique blend of contemporary/folk/bluegrass music. We had a wonderful time, enjoyed meeting members of our sister church in Rome, NY, and hope that our concert illustrated some of the power of contemporary music in worship. (In addition, the free-will offering collected at the event was enough to allow us to contribute almost \$60 toward FBC Ithaca's Parable of Talents line item, after our expenses for gasoline and Thruway tolls were deducted.) *Dave Caughey*



MESSAGE FROM INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REID TRULSON

Slavery has returned. Although every nation has banned it, slavery has returned in new forms of massive proportions. Meeting in Washington, D.C. on June 26, 2007, the Board of International Ministries unanimously passed a resolution that reaffirmed its historic stand against slavery and renewed its struggle to end human trafficking. The "International Ministries Resolution Against Slavery" declares that slavery is "contrary to Christ's mission and an assault on humanity." It urges the appointment of additional missionaries to disciple-making ministries that reach out to those who are vulnerable to, or victims of, human trafficking. Because so many victims are trafficked into sex slavery, the resolution calls for ministries of prevention, rescue, and aftercare for people in prostitution and who have been trafficked for sexual exploitation.

The Board commended American Baptist Women's Ministries and urged support of its initiative called "Break the Chains: Slavery in the 21st Century." It identified poverty as a major factor making children vulnerable to human trafficking and advocated support of American Baptist National Ministries' "Children in Poverty" initiative.

International Ministries knows that the struggle to end slavery will most likely extend beyond this generation. Nevertheless, we strongly believe that this work is at the core of Christ's mission "to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners" (Isaiah 61:1-2, Luke 4:18). We want people to have freedom in Christ. We believe Christ's freedom is for the whole person, both spiritual and physical. Slavery has returned. Join us in Christ's work to bring slavery to an end.

*To learn more about American Baptist Churches International Ministries' global ministry to confront human trafficking, go to their website and scroll to the features at the bottom and click on "human trafficking."
www.internationalministries.org*

Building Use Requests

If you wish to use space at First Baptist Church for any event, whether personal, church related, or organizational, please contact the church office with a minimum of two weeks prior notice to guarantee your event or group can be scheduled on the calendar. As many events go on at FBC, and many groups use the space, much coordination goes in to making the space available to those who need it. We wish to make the building available for use in a way that is convenient for all involved so ample notice is appreciated in order to coordinate cleaning, church needs, and events already on the calendar. If you have need to use space at First Baptist, please contact Beth McGee in the church office by emailing fbdewitt@verizon.net or call **273-5800**. Thank you for helping us to make using the space at First Baptist a pleasant experience.

***Our Family Friendly Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will be
Monday, December 24th at 7:00p.m.
Nursery care will be available.***