

# The Visitor

## December 2008

What does the Lord require of you?  
To do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with your God.  
Micah 6:8

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*A note from Rev. Richard Rose...*

*Dear Sisters and Brothers,*

The holiday season has begun on a tragic note in New York. On the day after Thanksgiving, Jdimytai Damour was trampled to death at a Wal-mart store on Long Island while he was attempting to bring order and peace to an out of control crowd of shoppers outside the store just prior to 4:00 AM.

Horrific events like this remind us of the lengths to which some of us will go to find satisfaction and happiness during the holiday season. Contrast this with the glorious Advent season which is upon us and the soon to follow season of Christmas, and we are all too aware of the great need for peace in our communities.

It is at these crossroads of heartbreak and hope that we must once again strain our ears, hearts and spirits and listen for the voices of the angels announcing the birth of Jesus with the proclamation, "Peace on earth!" I believe that this hope-filled and glorious proclamation is not merely fodder for Christmas movies and sentimental holiday greeting cards, but the poetry and narrative by which we can truly live.

With the season of Advent comes the beginning of the New Church Year, and it is a time that is filled with expectation: the expected birth of Jesus and the expected return or second coming of Jesus. The first expectation we are very familiar with, the second, maybe not so much.

According to biblical scholar Mitchell Reddish,

"The idea of the second coming of Jesus has been interpreted in various ways throughout the history of the church. Some believers look forward to an actual, visible return of Jesus to earth at some point in the future. Others have understood the concept more symbolically, expressing the idea of Christ's presence with believers throughout history."

However we understand, or don't understand, the biblical concept of the return of Jesus, we are invited, once again this year to remember that his initial arrival was announced as synonymous with peace by the gospel writer. In times like these, amidst the pre Christmas hustle and bustle, we can fulfill the call to live lives as agents of peace, bringing tidings of comfort and joy – to our homes, in stores, at work, school, church, and in every pathway of life. In the words of Jesus as he sought bring comfort to the afflicted, Peace be with you!

Renee, Owen and I wish each of you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Peace, Rich

**Monday evening Bible Study**– We wrap up our study of Revelation at Emily Young's home on the following December Monday nights; 8th, 15th, 22nd. After Rich returns from his paternity leave in early March 2009, we will begin considering the book *Christianity and the Social Crisis* by Walter Rauschenbusch. If you are interested in this study or have any questions, please see Rich.

### PLEASE READ!!

On Sunday, January 4th we will celebrate a special Epiphany service with members of the First Congregational Church at 309 Highland Rd., Ithaca. Join us for a joint worship service at FCC at 10am with our own Rev. Rich preaching, followed by an invitation for all to walk the labyrinth in our sanctuary afterwards. Music will be provided by a combined choir. Please join us! **There will be no Worship service at First Baptist on this day.**



Your resource for keeping in touch with what's happening at First Baptist!  
For a complete calendar of events and audio of weekly sermons,  
check out the First Baptist Church website!  
[www.firstbaptistithaca.org](http://www.firstbaptistithaca.org)



## Christian Education News

### Adult Education

**December 14- No Adult Education**  
Brunch and Board Meetings

**December 21**  
Rene Girard: Violence and the Sacred  
Families and Children

**December 28**  
Agape Service - No adult education

**January 4- No Adult Education**  
Joint Worship service at Congregational Church

**January 11- No Adult Education**  
Brunch and Board Meetings

**January 18- Alliance of Baptists**

This class will provide an opportunity to discuss what the Alliance of Baptists stands for and the advantages of First Baptist becoming a part of it. All are encouraged to attend in preparation for voting on membership in this organization at the Annual Meeting.

**January 25- No Adult Education**  
Congregational Annual Meeting

### Church School News

#### **Church School 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday Family Dinners**

All are invited to come and share a meal, hearty conversation and play between 5:30 and 7p.m. in our Community Room. Dates for this year will be:

**Dec. 17    Jan. 21    Feb. 18    March 18    April 15    May 20    June 17**

**Hope to see you there!**

Please remember to check upcoming Bulletins and Visitors for other Church School news and events!

### Parents Nite Out

**On Dec. 19<sup>th</sup>**, there is a **Parents Nite Out planned from 5-8pm**. Only the children and youth are invited to come in for dinner, games and Advent activities in the Community Rm. An email requesting an R.S.V.P. will be sent out in the preceding week. Plan to participate in this nite!

### Church School Requests

**Our Nursery will be in need of additional caregivers to assist Carol Fleming this year.** Please sign-up with Carol at the Nursery Area for any number of Sundays and get to know our youngest congregants. **For all who would like to volunteer to bring in a healthy snack for Church School, please contact Kris.**

**The deadline for the next newsletter is January 5<sup>th</sup>.**  
**Please have items prepared and to the office by this date**  
**in order for them to appear in the next edition of The Visitor.**

### Men's Pancake Breakfast-

#### December 14<sup>th</sup> 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 the above. The breakfast is scheduled for 11:15 a.m. right after worship. For more information, please contact Victor Younger.

*the better world shopping guide* makes a great Christmas gift and is available for sale at First Baptist Church for \$12.00.

The First Baptist Church cookbook,  
*Not By Bread Alone*,  
is also available for \$8.00.  
**Merry Christmas!**

## **First Baptist Chapel**

Plans are underway to transform the Historic Room into a quiet space that can be used for prayer and meditation. The creation of such a space, available to anyone whenever the church is open, is an expression of the importance of nurturing our relationship with God throughout the week. It comes from a belief in the value of stepping out of our busy lives, if only for a few moments, to offer up our cares and our joys and to hear God's response. Because of its location in the church, the Historic Room is particularly well-suited to a contemplative environment.

A committee formed to discuss lighting, floor covering, furniture, and painting of the walls includes Barbara Fry, Debbie Allen, Andrea Staffeld, Tony Lister, and Rich Rose. A number of creative ideas have been proposed such as new lighting connected to a dimmer switch that allows for different levels of brightness. The committee welcomes ideas from the congregation.

Making this room into a chapel will not exclude groups, such as adult education classes and boards, from using the room. Regular times when these groups are scheduled to meet will be posted so that those wanting to use the room for reflection will not be disturbed.

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### ***Handbells: A Brief History***

Compiled by SJ Hymes, St. Paul's Methodist Church

Handbells were invented in 17th century England when neighbors of bell towers tired of listening to long change-ringing rehearsals. Change ringing was performed by pulling ropes connected to individual bells in bell towers. A team of ringers would climb the bell tower to go through the mathematical changes of ringing the bells. In some cases, this might take several hours to perform a bell 'peal'. The bell towers for the most part are exposed to the weather, and the ringing room below the bells, where one pulls the ropes, does not usually have climate control. Thus, handbells permitted the rehearsals to take place in the spirited warmth of pubs. Handbells were first brought to the United States around 1840 and were popularized by P.T. Barnum as a circus attraction. After this, handbell teams went into the Vaudeville circuit.

In the 1940's people began ringing handbells in American churches. Handbells were first manufactured in the United States in the 1960's. Today there are over 10,000 handbell choirs in North America. The true story is much older, with hand bells existing for centuries in Thailand, China and other countries around the world. These, of course, were not English Handbells, for the shape, tuning, handle, and especially the clapper assembly were different.

Some of you may be wondering how 'heavy' the bells are. Well, our lowest bell weighs 8lbs 4 oz and has a diameter of almost 11 inches. The highest bell is only 2 inches in diameter and weighs a mere 7 ounces!!

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## Lectionary Readings

### **December 7- Second Sunday of Advent**

Isaiah 40:1-11 ~ Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

II Peter 3:8-15a ~ Mark 1:1-8

### **December 14- Third Sunday of Advent**

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 ~ Psalm 126 or Luke 1:47-55

I Thess. 5:16-24 ~ John 1:6-8, 19-28

### **December 21- Fourth Sunday of Advent**

II Sam. 7:1-11, 16 ~ Luke 1:47-55 or Ps. 89:1-4, 19-26

Romans 16:25-27 ~ Luke 1:26-38

### **Nativity of the Lord - Proper I**

### **Christmas Eve & Day December 24 & 25**

Isaiah 9:2-7 ~ Psalm 96

Titus 2:11-14 ~ Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)

### **Nativity of the Lord - Proper II**

### **Christmas Eve & Day ~ December 24 & 25**

Isaiah 62:6-12 ~ Psalm 97

Titus 3:4-7 ~ Luke 2:(1-7) 8-20

### **Nativity of the Lord - Proper III**

### **Christmas Eve & Day ~ December 24 & 25**

Isaiah 52:7-10 ~ Psalm 98

Heb. 1:1-4, (5-12) ~ John 1:1-14

### **First Sunday after Christmas Day**

### **December 28**

Isaiah 61:10-62:3 ~ Psalm 148

Galatians 4:4-7 ~ Luke 2:22-40

### **New Year's Day ~ January 1, 2009**

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13 ~ Psalm 8

Revelation 21:1-6a ~ Matthew 25:31-46

### **January 4 ~ Second Sunday after Christmas**

Jeremiah 31:7-14 or Sirach 24:1-12

Psalm 147:12-20 or Wis.of Sol.10:15-21

Ephesians 1:3-14 ~ John 1:(1-9), 10-18

## 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.

Given: "In Memory" or "In Honor"  
(please circle one)

OF \_\_\_\_\_

## Christmas Breakfast RSVP



The First Baptist Church Christmas Breakfast will be held on Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, at 8:30 a.m. 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

# of people attending \_\_\_\_\_ Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

### QUOTE

*"War is the most colossal and ruinous social sin that afflicts mankind: it is utterly and irremediably unchristian; in its total method and effect it means everything that Jesus did not mean and it means nothing that He did mean; it is a more blatant denial of every Christian doctrine about God and man than all the theoretical atheists on earth ever could devise."*

- Rev. Harry Emerson Fosdick from a sermon delivered in Geneva, Switzerland in 1925

### **Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering - American Baptist Churches USA**

The transition from active ministry to retirement can be both exciting and unsettling. Pastors of churches are expected to sever formal ties with the congregation they most recently served. This can result in moving away from important networks of friends and colleagues, leaving a person or couple feeling isolated and out of touch with the denomination. Your contribution to the RMMO says: "We remember you, we value your years of ABC service; we care about you." If you would like to contribute to this mission, please use the envelope provided in this newsletter and send it to First Baptist Church, DeWitt Park.

#### **A few words from some recipients of your Thank You Gifts...**

*"The Thank You gift brings me added assurance that in the midst of changing circumstances, I am a member of the family of God whose love is expressed by my brothers and sisters. Thank you to my American Baptist family."*

**Frances Porter, Augusta, Maine**

*"I am writing to express my gratitude to American Baptist congregations for sharing so graciously with those of us who have retired from active ministry. Their thoughtfulness and generosity in supporting the RMMO stand as a testimony to God's grace. For that I will always be grateful."*

**Don Loomer, Santa Paula, California**

*"Thank you for the generous Thank You check. Our denomination has always taken such good care of us, and always in an over-and-above way. The thoughtfulness of American Baptist congregations is appreciated."*

**Robert and Jane Allen, Ocala, Florida**

*"I recently received my Thank You check, and once again I extend my sincere thanks to the whole American Baptist family for remembering those of us who have served in years gone by. It is good to know that we are not forgotten by our brothers and sisters in the family of God."*

**Don Whiteman, Parkersburg, West Virginia**

## Winter 2008 Calendar

Wed	Dec 10	7:00pm	Contemplative Prayer
Thurs	Dec 11	7:00pm	Choir Rehearsal
Fri	Dec 12	8:15am	Meditation
Sat	Dec 13	10:00am	YOFFFI Practice
		12:00pm	Choir Rehearsal
		3:00pm	Parent CoOp 3-7pm
Sun	Dec 14	10:00am	WORSHIP
		11:15am	Men's Pancake Breakfast
		11:30am	Board Meetings
Tues	Dec 16	11:30am	Great Women's Lunch
Wed	Dec 17	5:30pm	Dinner-Church School
		7:00pm	Contemplative Prayer
Thurs	Dec 18	7:00pm	Choir Rehearsal
Fri	Dec 19	8:15am	Meditation
Sat	Dec 20	10:00am	YOFFFI Practice
		12:00pm	Choir Rehearsal
		3:00pm	Parent CoOp 3-7pm
Sun	Dec 21	8:30am	Christmas Breakfast
		9:15am	Choir Rehearsal
		10:00am	WORSHIP
		11:30am	Church School
		2:00pm	Sacred Harp Singers
		7:00pm	Christmas Eve Service
Wed	Dec 24		CHRISTMAS!
Thurs	Dec 25		
Fri	Dec 26	8:15am	Meditation
Sat	Dec 27	3:00pm	Parent CoOp 3-7pm
Sun	Dec 28	10:00am	WORSHIP
		11:30am	Church School
Mon	Dec 29	6-9pm	Labyrinth
Tues	Dec 30	6-9pm	Labyrinth
Wed	Dec 31	6-9pm	Labyrinth
		7:00pm	Contemplative Prayer
Fri	Jan 2	8:15am	Meditation
Sun	Jan 4		WORSHIP AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
		8:45am	Choir Rehearsal at Congregational Church
		10:00am	WORSHIP
		11:30am	11:30am-2pm Labyrinth
		11:30am	Church School
		2:00pm	Sacred Harp Singers
Mon	Jan 5	8:00am	Labyrinth
Tues	Jan 6	8:00am	Labyrinth
		7:00pm	ACT Meeting
Wed	Jan 7	8:00am	Labyrinth
		7:00pm	Contemplative Prayer
Thurs	Jan 8	8:00am	Labyrinth
		7:00pm	Choir Rehearsal
Fri	Jan 9	8:15am	Meditation
Sat	Jan 10	3:00pm	Parent CoOp 3-7pm
Sun	Jan 11	10:00am	WORSHIP
		11:30am	Brunch and Board Meetings

The Church office will be closed  
December 24<sup>th</sup> - January 2<sup>nd</sup>.

IACC Daycare will be closed  
December 24<sup>th</sup> - January 2<sup>nd</sup>.

***All are Welcome to a  
Dish-to-Share Dinner***

The Dinner Discussion group will meet  
January 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. for a meal in  
the Community room. Whether you  
have been to this gathering before or  
not, please let us know if you are  
interested in attending.

Contact Barbara Fry



**Rose Family Baby Shower**

During the pancake brunch on Sunday,  
December 14th we will shower the Rose family  
with love (and gifts). If you would like to  
contribute towards a group gift, please give  
your money to Liz Wilkinson who will use it to  
purchase a co-sleeper and/or Ergo baby carrier.

Used and handmade presents are also welcome,  
especially warm infant boy clothes.

For other ideas or more information, contact  
Jennifer Lawrence Birnbaum, Liz Wilkinson, or  
Janet Cotraccia

**Interested in singing for the Christmas season?**

The FBC choir welcomes new members at all times, including those that would like to join us for rehearsals for the Christmas Season. We'll have one or two Saturday intensives as well in preparation for singing on December 21st and 24th.

All are welcome to go caroling with folks from the Northern Light Learning Center home-schooling co-op. Music and/or word sheets will be provided for many popular Christmas and Hanukah songs. Please RSVP so that we will have enough.



**Rehearse:**

2:30-3:30 Monday, December 15th  
First Baptist Church - Dewitt Park

**"Perform":**

3:00-4:00 Wednesday, December 17th  
McGraw House (where Myra lives) - 221 S. Geneva St - between Clinton and Green

Want more information? Contact Jennifer Lawrence Birnbaum

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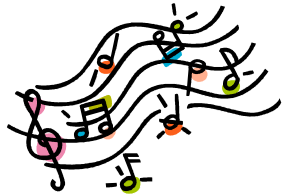
## Music at First Baptist

**Dec 14**

CSMA Recorder Ensemble

**Dec 21**

Choir Sunday - with Advent and Christmas selections



On January 10th and 11th the First Baptist Church choir will travel to the Buffalo area to participate in the First Annual Men 'N Christ anniversary celebration. You might remember that Men 'N Christ performed for us in October and invited us to join them this winter. In addition we will sing at the Church of the Nativity (where Mark Lawrence's brother Rev. Dr. Jonathan Lawrence attends) on Sunday morning. Pray for good weather so that we will be able to attend both special events.



Family-Friendly Christmas Eve Service, December 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.