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

A note from Rev. Richard Rose...

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

As Valentine's Day occurs this month, and many of you will be purchasing chocolate (or at least thinking about it), I thought it would be important to take a few minutes to talk about where chocolate comes from and how it gets to the store. I was horrified to learn of the conditions under which much of the world's chocolate is produced. As difficult as it is to read the following report, I believe you'll want to know the details regarding the production of much of the world's chocolate supply, which comes from Ivory Coast in Africa.

According to The Trade & Environment Database at American University, "There is a surprising association between chocolate and child labor in the Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast). Young boys whose ages range from 12 to 16 have been sold into slave labor and are forced to work on cocoa farms in order to harvest the beans, from which chocolate is made, under inhumane conditions and extreme abuse. This West African country is the leading exporter of cocoa beans to the world market. Thus, the existence of slave labor is relevant to the entire international economic community. Through trade relations, many actors are inevitably implicated in this problem, whether it is the Ivorian government, the farmers, the American or European chocolate manufacturers, or consumers who unknowingly buy chocolate.

Slave traders are trafficking boys from their home countries and are selling them to cocoa farmers in Cote d'Ivoire. Most of the boys come from neighboring Mali, where agents hang around bus stations looking for children that are alone or are begging for food. They lure the kids to travel to Cote d'Ivoire with them, and then the traffickers sell the children to farmers in need of cheap labor."

It certainly goes without saying that this is a horrifying revelation. But there are at least a couple of things we can do to make a difference. First, resolve to only purchase and eat Fair Trade Certified chocolate. Many retailers in Ithaca sell Fair Trade chocolate, including Ithaca's own Art Bar.

For a comprehensive list of local retailers visit:

<http://ithacafinechocolates.stores.yahoo.net/ithaca.html>

Second, visit: <http://www.stophetraffik.org/chocolatecampaign/>

to learn more about human trafficking, how it relates to chocolate, and what you can do to speak out against it.

Peace,
Rich



*"Snowflakes are one of nature's most fragile things,
but just look what they can do when they stick together."*
V. M. Kelly



Thank you to everyone who has donated 2008 calendars! They are made available to clients at the mental Health Clinic who otherwise wouldn't have access to on.
~Alice Damp

New Board of Education Schedule

Adult education meets most Sundays following services in the library from 11:30-12:30

Adult Education

February 3	11:30-12:30	Rich Barron provide a presentation on his mission trip to Honduras.
February 10	11:30-12:30	NO ADULT ED -Board Meetings & Brunch
February 17	11:30-12:30	Viewing and discussion of Michael Moore's film, Sicko, about health care in America.*
February 24	11:30-12:30	Viewing and discussion of Michael Moore's film, Sicko, about health care in America.*

*The viewing of the film Sicko is in preparation for an evening in March, which we will share with the Presbyterian Church, where the CEO of Cayuga Medical Center and the president of the County Medical Society will be discussing the facts of the film.

Church School News

New Series in the New Year: Family Dinner/Discussion/Play:

This monthly get together is meant to be a casual, relaxed opportunity for our children and families to share a meal, provide input on church school, and enjoy each other's company. Dinner will be provided.

These events will take place on the Wednesday after the 3rd Sunday of each month from 5:30-6:45. Please mark these dates on your calendar and plan to attend:

January 23rd

February 20th

March 19th

April 23rd

May 21st

Thank you to the Board of Education!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Kris Scott and the Board of Education for the "Parent's Night Out" that occurred on December 15, 2007. Kris Scott, Lou Carlucci, Jan Butler and Sarah Zipfel provided food, entertainment and nurturing care for several FBC children in the community room while parents were given some time to do other things. Indeed, many of us went out to dinner and got to know one another better. Better than shopping, it was a lovely way to spend some relaxed time with new and old friends during the Christmas season. It is a wonderful feeling to have our needs as families be recognized and supported. Thank you!

~ FBC parents

THANK

Bible Study will continue to meet at Longview Monday evenings February 4th, 11th, and 25th. Join us as we continue to view the DVDs of Marcus Borg's October presentations in Ithaca on *The Heart of Christianity* as well other topics. There is no Bible Study on February 18th.

All are Welcome to a Dish-to-Share Dinner! – The Dinner Discussion group will meet February 22nd 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.*

WISDOM FROM THE DESERT ABOUT CARING FOR THE EARTH

Saturday February 9th – 9:30 AM-4:00 PM

The One World Room, Anabel Taylor Hall at Cornell University

Brown bag lunch, beverages provided. Free will offering.

Care of the earth is directly related to the care of our souls. Stewardship of the earth's environment reflects the inner environment of our personal lives and institutions. This seminar explores how the ancient and modern Christian monastic communities of the Egyptian desert integrate stewardship of one's soul with caring for the earth. This seminar will look at this tradition and give participants an opportunity to discern ways we may respond to the challenges of global warming and sharing the earth's resources. The seminar leader is David Keller, author of *Oasis of Wisdom, an Introduction to the Worlds of the Desert Fathers and Mothers*. He has traveled Egyptian deserts with Bedouins, visiting and staying at modern Coptic and Greek monasteries. He is an Episcopal priest.

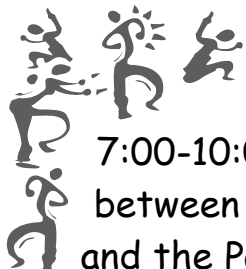
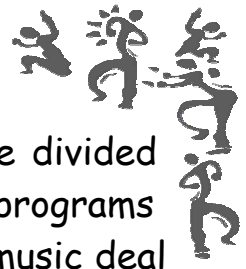
February 2008 Calendar

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).

Friday	Feb	1	7:30	Pathways Interfaith Counseling Breakfast Meeting
Saturday	Feb	2	12-3pm	YFOFFI Practice
Sunday	Feb	3	10:00	WORSHIP –Communion
			11:15	Coffee & Conversation
			11:30	Church Classes
			2:00	Sacred Harp Singers
			4:30-6:30	PIC Meeting in Library
Monday	Feb	4	7:00	Bible Study at Longview
			7:00	New Creation Singers Rehearsal
Tuesday	Feb	5	5:30	12 Step Meeting
			7:00	Area Congregations Together
Friday	Feb	8	7:00-10:00	YFOFFI SOCK HOP!
Sunday	Feb	10	10:00	WORSHIP
			11:30	Brunch & Board Meetings-No Adult Ed
				Church School ‘Round the Table
Monday	Feb	11	7:00	Bible Study at Longview
Tuesday	Feb	12	5:30	12 Step Meeting
Sunday	Feb	17	10:00	WORSHIP
			11:15	Coffee & Conversation
			11:30	Church Classes
			2:00	Sacred Harp Singers
Monday	Feb	18	7:00	NO BIBLE STUDY
			7:00	New Creation Singers Rehearsal
Tuesday	Feb	19	5:30	12 Step meeting
Wednesday	Feb	20	5:00	Church School Dinner
Sunday	Feb	24	10:00	WORSHIP
			11:15	Coffee & Conversation
			11:30	Church Classes
			2:00	Sacred Harp Singers
Monday	Feb	25	7:00	Bible Study at Longview
Tuesday	Feb	26	5:30	12 Step Meeting
Sunday	Mar	3	10:00	WORSHIP-Communion
			11:15	Coffee and Conversation
			11:30	Church Classes
			3:00-4:00	Music’s Recreation Concert

We received the sad news that Sister Amelia Phillips passed away on Sunday, Jan. 20th, 2008. Sister Phillips was the eldest member of the St. John's #5 Faith Church in the 7th Ward of New Orleans, and several First Baptist Church members had participated in rebuilding her home during work trips in 2007. May we continue to keep her family and the St. Johns community in our thoughts and prayers as they cope with the loss of this dearly cherished elder. ~ Linda Nicholson

SOCK HOP 3!!!


 YFOFFI will be playing our 3rd annual benefit sock hop on Friday, February 8, 2008 from 7:00-10:00 p.m. in the FBC sanctuary. All proceeds will be divided between GIAC (Greater Ithaca Activities Center) youth programs and the Parable of Talents. At \$5.00 a head, still the best music deal in town!
 

Visit the First Baptist Church Website to keep up-to-date on all that's happening at First Baptist Church. You can find us on the Web at:

www.firstbaptistithaca.org

Christmas Pageant 2007

Thank you all for making this year's pageant so splendid! We had wonderful participation and support from so many of you. The children really enjoyed getting dressed up and the families really rolled with the plan changes. A special thanks to Nancy Given who offered her farm for pictures. Unfortunately the weather was against it but we look forward to a future visit! Here is a cast list and list of other helpers. CD's that include the pageant as well as additional pictures are available. ~Janet Cotraccia

Mary	Megan Cook	Shepherds	Will Chimento
Joseph	Abraham Phelan		Lily Cook
Mary's Angel	Ella Dean		Sophia Cotraccia
Joseph's Angel	Sally Phelan		Ezekiel Lawrence
Emperor	Sophia Cotraccia		Austin Lamb
Inn Keepers	Cristian Pia-Miller		Cristian Pia-Miller
	Kasieum Pia-Miller		Kasieum Pia-Miller
	Austin Lamb		Sarah Zipfel
Sheep	Greta Cotraccia	The Wise Men	Simone Smith
	Andrew Putnam		Cristian Pia-Miller
	Owen Rose		Kasieum Pia-Miller
	Anna Li Williams Zipfel	King Herod	Ezekiel Lawrence
	Jane Putnam		
	Sarah Zipfel	Scribe	Will Chimento
Newborn Baby Jesus	Thomas Trigueros Ufford		
Older Baby Jesus	Lola Lee	Narrators	Ashlee Martinez
Angels	Sofia Triqueros Ufford		Cameron Younger
	Jane Putnam		Sarah Zipfel
	Greta Cotraccia	Guitar Accompaniment	David Caughey
	Ava Lee		
		Photo Editor	Bill Abeles
		Photographers	Bill Staffeld
			Janet Cotraccia

Kitchen Cupboard Needs



Canned or packaged dinners	Cereal
Canned fruits and vegetables	Beverages
Packaged desserts/snacks	(fruit juices, tea bags, coffee packets)
Baking supplies	Powdered milk
Egg noodles	Baby food-small jars
Packaged rice	Baby cereal
Canned meat or fish	Diapers (also store coupons)
Pasta with sauce	Bath soap
Soups-canned or dried	Toilet paper
Crackers	Tooth brushes/tooth paste
Peanut butter	Shampoo
Jelly	

Lectinary Readings for February

February 3

Exodus 24:12-18; Psalm 2 or Psalm 99; II Peter 1:16-21; Matthew 17:1-9

February 6- Ash Wednesday

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17; or Isaiah 58:1-12; Psalm 51:1-17; 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

February 10

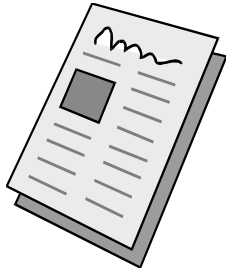
Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7; Psalm 32; Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11

February 17

Genesis 12:1-4a; Psalm 121; Romans 4:1-5, 13-17; John 3:1-17 or Matthew 17:1-9

February 24

Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95; Romans 5:1-11; John 4:5-42



Deadline for the March Visitor is February 15. Please have your items in to guarantee they will appear.

Do you have a current address, phone number or email address for *Jon & Teresa Billker*? 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



FROM THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY:

Anyone who would like to have their cash donations to the church officially recognized should put the money in a pew envelope and include name and address. This way a record will be kept and a report can be sent at the end of the year for income tax filing. Once your name is recorded, it is no longer necessary to include the address.

Presented here is the conclusion of the reflections of Maimouna Harouna and Bill Phelan about Mariam Keita's treatment for breast cancer in Ithaca and her family's sojourn here. The article in its entirety is available in hard copy at the church or can be read on First Baptist church's website <http://www.firstbaptistithaca.org/>

God's Miracle for Mariam

by Maimouna Harouna and William Phelan

WILLIAM'S REFLECTIONS continued...

TREATMENT TIME IN ITHACA

The family spent nine months in Ithaca. One of their biggest initial fears was that they might do something that would displease their hosts Susan Eymann and Tony Lister. Andre said that this soon was no longer a concern as, "We saw in Tony and Sue, people who accepted us. They showed us the hearts of a mother and a father. We are all touched by their love." Tony says that "Andre and Mariam are both such wonderful people and we received so much more than we gave sharing our home with them. It was such a joy to have Jokebed with us all that time."

Mariam and Andre said that throughout their treatment, though services were being given to them pro-bono, they were always treated with respect and caring love.

COMMUNITY

"During the fight against the cancer, during the chemotherapy and radiation treatments, we never felt alone due to all the people—medical staff, Mariam's Care, Sue & Tony, the people from the Churches, the visits, the electronic messages and the phone calls—embracing us." Andre Thera

One of the amazing things was how God worked to bring together the "larger support team" needed for Andre, Mariam and Jokebed's care during the long nine months of their stay.

A small group of committed people to help in all of the aspects of taking care of Mariam, Andre, and Jokebed was needed once they were in the US. A French-speaking counselor then at the Ithaca Breast Cancer Alliance, Debbie Allen, volunteered to co-chair the group that would be formed. She had worked with many people in similar situations and to help us get ready, suggested a book called "Share-the-Care". The concept is that everyone is busy but that if one or two people coordinate a group, then taking care of the person who is ill becomes easier because no one person ends up with too much of the care-giving work. We held the first meeting, and the 'share-the-care group' for Mariam chose the name "Mariam's Care".

The Ithaca community has an amazing number of organizations and people who were asked (and accepted) to help: Cayuga Medical Center in collaboration with Roswell Park Cancer Institute (based in Buffalo but with staff at Cayuga Medical Center) and their associated doctors and technicians, the Ithaca Breast Cancer Alliance; a pediatrician who cared for Jokebed; First Baptist Church as the coordinating center; Unitarian Church-based not-for-profit *Babies First* for initial baby formula and other supplies such as baby carriage and a car seat, and members of several area churches for transportation, baby-sitting, teaching, comforting, cooking, talking, financially, writing thank-you notes to donors, etc.

Mariam's Care

As Mariam's Care formed and became known, word spread from person to person, from church to church, and miraculously, a core group of around 50 people, who would support Mariam during her most difficult times during the treatment, came together as her care-giving group (16 of whom spoke French, 5 nurses and 2 woman medical doctors). A friend of a friend, a woman from Mali who spoke Bambara, the most widely spoken language in Mali made contact. Then came the Francophones, who, knowing one another, grew the group to include a French woman translator, a French medical doctor, a doctoral student from Ivory Coast, a

Haitian woman doctor, people from many area churches, a woman who had worked in a publicity firm for a famous Malian musician and her husband who would be among the first doctors to assess Mariam's cancer, another, a young woman from Gabon, and a woman from Francophone Canada! A close family friend and mentor Jean Beckley, a retired missionary who had served in Mali, fortunately lived only two hours from Ithaca. Her husband had run the school and been a teacher for Andre Thera during his training to become a pastor. Mama Beckley came during the first week of their stay and oriented them to the kitchen and household appliances and shopping in American stores. (see Jean Beckley's reflections about Andre and Mariam at <http://www.firstbaptistithaca.org/>).

The Roswell Park Cancer Institute had instituted CarePages, which gave Andre and Mariam a way to communicate interactively with loved ones and supporters across the globe. On this website they were able to track Mariam's progress with weekly or bi-weekly updates and to provide photos of the patient and family for all who had access to see. Friends, church members and family in Mali and around the globe wrote messages on the blog part of the CarePages and they, in turn, were able to respond.

All aspects of caring for Mariam and her family came from the amazing community around us. Church members from several area churches volunteered time to take care of Jokebed while Mariam completed treatments or had medical appointments at the hospital. Others came to tutor Mariam and Andre in English or take them shopping. Mariam learned to quilt, knit, and improved her sewing over the many months of treatment and convalescence, all with the help of Mariam's Care volunteers.

LIVING TOGETHER

"I really applaud them," said Sue, "for their adaptation to our culture." "This experience has "opened our horizons to Africa in a very personal way," said Sue. Tony added "You see your life more clearly when you get to live and talk personally with people from another culture." Sue added that "As for having them here in our home, I never once felt like a host or having to take care of them or the baby."

Sue noted that living together was easy, "They both were very helpful. Once Mariam started feeling better, she would prepare dinner. Then they would insist on cleaning up the dishes while Tony and I played with watched Jokebed. That was pure luxury and joy!" Sue recalls that the first the first two months was quite an experience. Various members of Mariam's Care, many whom she didn't know, streamed in and out of the house. "It was Grand Central. One day I came home from work and met someone in the driveway who asked "Who is Sue?" "I just had to let go and not worry what how the house looked on any given day."

Tony noted that he observed how hard it was for Andre to be away from his church, school, and family--simply by the exuberance, animation and absolute pleasure he took in talking in his own languages to family or good friends visiting by phone or in person. It was also frustrating for him to receive bad or troubling news from home. One joy of the time in Ithaca was that Andre had the time to fully experience fatherhood with Jokebed like he wouldn't have been able to as he tended to his congregation in Mali.

FAITH

When the treatment had been completed, Mariam and Andre talked their ordeal ordeal in Mali through the time of treatment in the United States.

Pastor Andre described the situation they lived through in Mali as a nightmare. "I spent a lot of time in fasting and prayer in order to stay optimistic in this environment of despair." He continued, "Family members couldn't visit Mariam without crying. The family had just watched a sister on my side of the family die of the same disease--breast cancer. On the positive side, our whole circle of friends within and outside Mali encircled us with love and helped us during the difficult times. I am a Pastor, one engaged to serve others. To find myself on the receiving end of all this attention by others, was new and strange for me."

Mariam said that the birth of their daughter and the presence of her husband at her side throughout her illness and difficult treatment motivated her to fight the disease and that God has and will continue to work in her life. "In looking at Jokebed each day, I was able to forget the pain in my breast, the pain of the chemotherapy, and the disappointment of losing my breasts."

A NEW BEGINNING

Today, despite having left Bamako with stage 4 breast cancer not knowing if she would see her homeland Mali again, Mariam has been successfully treated—a breast cancer survivor. And we are all praying that five years will pass and that she will be considered cured.

Mariam said then that her dreams were to return to Mali, to "visit her village and to serve God's ministry to humankind. "God is generous beyond the hopes of His people" she and Andre echoed (thinking of the words of Philippians 4:19). Then Mariam concluded, "Today, we are going back home with hope."

To help support Mariam Keita and Andre Thera personally in their work in Mali, West Africa you may send a check payable to: FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH and mailed to FBC Ithaca, P.O. Box 254, Ithaca, NY 1485. If you would like to further designate your support, please note on the check memo line: Mariam & Andre Support Fund or one of their projects: Neighborhood Youth Center, or EBCB Village Ministry.

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION SURVEY**

The Board of Christian Education invites you, the church community, to give us your ideas about what you would like to experience and learn more about during the adult education hour (11:30 to 12:30 on Sunday morning). Please provide your input and ideas and return this survey to the church by putting it in the offering plate or sending it to the office.

The following topics are general. Please indicate your interest by using a 3 for *enthusiastic*, a 2 for *maybe*, or a 1 for *would not attend*. Also please offer any specific suggestions for topics, particular books, videos, discussion leaders or speakers from the community in the space provided. Your input is greatly appreciated.

1. Theology

- a. Bible Study _____
- b. Sermon discussion _____
- c. Other suggestions _____

2. Spirituality

- a. Spiritual practices (prayer, meditation, yoga, etc.) _____
- b. Spiritual traditions, both Christian and non-Christian _____
- c. Other suggestions _____

3. Social Justice/Political Issues

- a. Economic issues _____
- b. Healthcare _____
- c. Education _____
- d. Environmental issues _____
- e. Separation of church and state _____
- f. War and peace _____
- e. Other suggestions _____

4. Individual and interpersonal life

- a. Relationships _____
- b. Family issues _____
- c. Sexuality/Gender _____
- d. Life transitions (illness, work, divorce, etc.) _____
- e. Other suggestions _____

5. Additional suggestions and comments: