

THE VISITOR

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

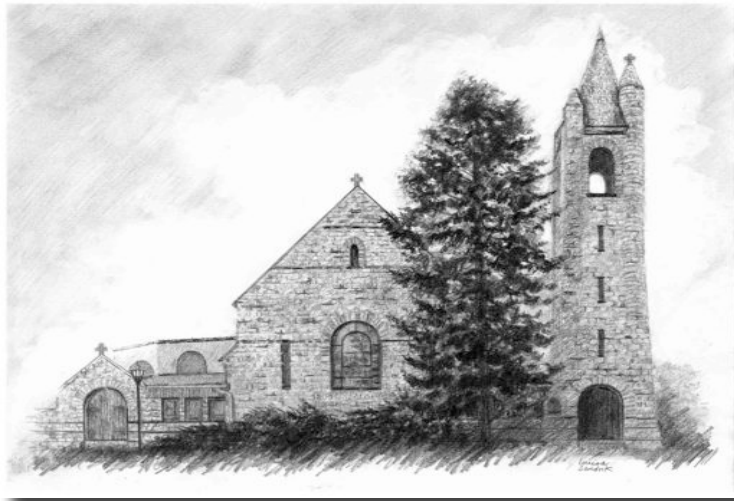
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Dear Sisters and Brothers,

As we embark upon the season of Lent in a few days, I'd like to share with you a helpful guide for the journey which I hope we can negotiate together on Sunday mornings before Easter. In his book *The World We Have: A Buddhist Approach to Peace and Ecology* Thich Nhat Hanh outlines five Mindfulness trainings. Briefly, Mindfulness can be understood as a calm awareness of one's body functions, feelings, content of consciousness, or consciousness itself.

Thich Nhat Hanh invites us to practice these trainings as a pathway to transformation and healing.

The First Mindfulness Training:

Aware of the suffering caused by the destruction of life, I vow to cultivate compassion and learn ways to protect the lives of people, animals, plants and minerals. I am determined not to kill, not to let others kill, and not to condone any act of killing in the world, in my thinking, and in my way of life.

FEBRUARY 2010

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The Second Mindfulness Training:

Aware of the suffering caused by exploitation, social injustice, stealing and oppression, I vow to cultivate loving kindness and learn ways to work for the well being of people, animals, plants and minerals. I vow to practice generosity by sharing my time, energy and material resources with those who are in real need. I am determined not to steal and not to possess anything that should belong to others. I will respect the property of others, but I will prevent others from profiting from human suffering or the suffering of other species on Earth.

The Third Mindfulness Training:

Aware of the suffering caused by sexual misconduct, I vow to cultivate responsibility and learn ways to protect the safety and integrity of individuals, couples, families and society. I am determined not to engage in sexual relations without love and a long-term commitment. To preserve the happiness of myself and others, I am determined to respect my commitments and the commitments of others. I will do everything in my power to protect children from sexual abuse and to prevent couples and families from being broken by sexual misconduct.

The Fourth Mindfulness Training:

Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful speech and the inability to listen to others, I vow to cultivate loving speech and deep listening in order to bring joy and happiness to others and relieve others of their suffering. Knowing that words can create happiness or suffering, I vow to learn to speak truthfully, with words that inspire self-confidence, joy and hope. I am determined not to spread news that I do not know to be certain and not to criticize or condemn things of which I am not sure. I will refrain from uttering words that can cause division or discord, or that can cause the family or community to break. I will make all efforts to reconcile and resolve all conflicts, however small.

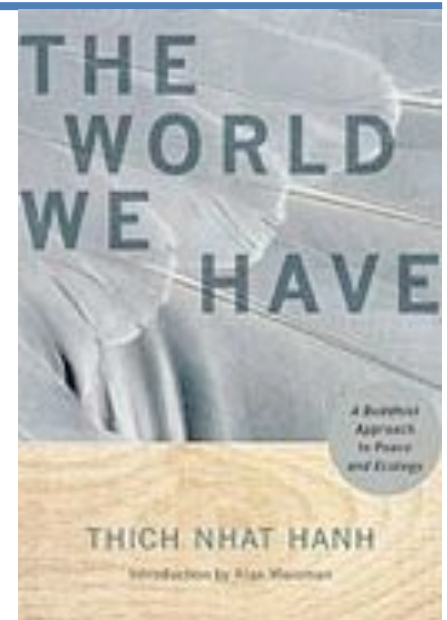
The Fifth Mindfulness Training:

Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful consumption, I vow to cultivate good health, both physical and mental, for myself, my family, and my society by practicing mindful eating, drinking and consuming. I vow to ingest only items that preserve peace, well-being and joy in my body, in my consciousness, and in the collective body and consciousness of my family and society. I am determined not to ingest foods or other items that contain toxins, such as certain TV programs, magazines, books, films and conversations. I am aware that to damage my body or my consciousness with these poisons is to betray my ancestors, my parents, my society and future generations. I will work to transform violence, fear, anger and confusion in myself and in society by practicing a diet for myself and for society. I understand that a proper diet is crucial for self-transformation and for the transformation of society.

With open hearts, minds and spirits I trust that this Lenten season will be a rewarding journey of mindful self-examination and liberation.

In peace and hope,

Rich



"I see that I am whole, protected, and nourished by this land and all of the living beings who have been here and made life easy and possible for me through all their efforts. I see Red Cloud, Harriet Tubman, Dorothy Day, Cesar Chavez, Martin Luther King, Jr., and all the others known and unknown who have struggled so that we could live better lives."



First Baptist Labyrinth

This is the tenth year that Kris Scott has organized and set up the Labyrinth in the First Baptist Church Sanctuary. The Labyrinth established for the New Year is patterned on the Labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral, France.

The event this year was well attended and appreciated by forty or more people, most of whom were from the community. Looking through the comments left by those who walked the Labyrinth it is obvious that it is something that brings much pleasure and something that many people come to expect and attend each New Year.

Of interest this year was the fact that the Great Grand Daughter of the

Rev. R. T. Jones, who had been Pastor of First Baptist Church from 1880 to 1915, walked the Labyrinth and commented on how pleased her Great Grand Father would have been to have the church Sanctuary used for such a rewarding experience.

The design of the Labyrinth set up for Lent is usually a very different design, based on a one made by a youth group in London, England. It

is an interactive Labyrinth with several stations.

It is hoped that members of First Baptist church and others will continue to enjoy both the Lenten Labyrinth and the New Year Labyrinth.

Thank you Kris and those who help for all the hard work that goes into the productions of the Labyrinths. *Submitted by Liz Wilkenson*

A note from Naomi Hollister:

Please save your box tops from qualifying soup cans, cereals, baking items, and paper products! They will be sent to Springbrook, our home in Oneonta, where they are redeemed for education materials used by their the residents.

Give your Christmas cards a second life by donating them to the Weirton Christian Center. Cards are used by the children there to support the purchase of educational items. Drop off your labels and cards in the church office or give directly to Naomi Hollister. Your help is appreciated!

Pay-a Bill Program Continues

"Please note, the Pay-a-Bill bulletin board is near the sanctuary door. If you would like to pay one of the church's bills, simply take the bill of your choice off the bulletin board and put it in the offering plate along with a check or cash equaling the amount of the bill, or mail the bill to the church along with a check of the same amount.

You'll be credited with the gift to the church, and we'll all be grateful for your contribution. Any questions?

Ask Rich Barron. Any complaints? Tell someone else!" Rich Barron

Women's Retreat

Save-the-Date

First Baptist's Annual Women's Retreat will be held from mid afternoon on Friday, May 7th to late afternoon Saturday, May 8th. We gather again this year at Light on the Hill Retreat Center in Spencer, NY.

If you are interested in helping to plan our retreat, choose a theme, and it's supporting sessions.... please be in touch with Barbara Fry, Debbie Allen or Lynette Rayle.

Registration information will be provided closer to the retreat.

The Faith in Books, Family Reading Partnership returns to FBC

As the new year gets underway, it is time to think about Faith in Books, Family Reading Partnership's collaboration with Area Congregations Together that collects gently used books for the Bright Red Bookshelf.

Bring your gently used books in to First Baptist and place them in the collection crates during the last week in February and the first week in March, or leave at the church office.

FBC has been a valued participant in the past and has brought numerous free books to families in our community via the many red bookshelves around town. Many thanks in advance for your partnership in making books a part of everyday family life for children in our community!

"A future filled with hope and promise begins with books at home."



THANK YOU

Dear First Baptist Family,

Words cannot express my gratitude and that of my family as we move through my recovery from spinal surgery.

Your thoughts, your prayers, cards and emails have been a sustaining force of love and light.

Special thanks to all of the folks who took up the mantle to work in the office during my absence;

Kris Scott, Jennifer Lawrence Birnbaum, Andrea Mooney, Liz Wilkenson, Rich Rose and others made it possible for me to unfold into my healing without worry.

As this journey continues, I extend my love and gratitude for your continued patience and prayerful support.

Peace,

Heather Swift

An update from the Romano-Schmitt family...

Dear FBC Family,

We want to let you know how we are and what we are doing. After agonizing and deeply spiritual discernment, we have decided to return to our Episcopal tradition and to attend an Episcopal church on a regular basis. In addition, we are both planning to attend The General Theological Seminary (Episcopalian), with Chris pursuing an M.Div. with ordination and Ande pursuing an M.A. in Spiritual Direction. Our hope is to lead a congregation together and with our children in the spirit of family worship.

We miss you and the beautiful spirit at FBC. But we are, indeed, confident that Providence will bring our paths together in some wonderful way in the future. We wish you the best – and we'll be seeing you!

Chris and Ande Romano Schmitt, and Zoe and Zach



Dear First Baptist Family,

Thanks so very much for your wonderful generosity this past Christmas.

Your cash gift to us was truly a great blessing!

Rich and Renee Rose



From Mary Cole at Enfield School:

Thank you to everyone who supported the Enfield Holiday Project for Kids this year. Below are some of the thank yous we received from families about the importance of the Holiday Project to their families.

- * I don't think there is enough thanks I can give you for all you have done for me and my family. We are so grateful to have you in times of need. It is you that makes the world a better place.*
- * Thank you very much for helping my family with Christmas gifts and food this holiday season. It is people like you that continue to show the true meaning of Christmas.*
- * We want to thank you for your help this holiday season. We live on a very fixed income and we are unable to afford stuff for the holiday season. You have made our holiday season fantastic. Thank you for caring about us.*

I would like to take this time to say thank you so much for helping our family during this trying time. My children are major believers in Santa Claus and without your help I'm afraid their hearts would have broken. We are very thankful and appreciate your time, effort and caring!

More Joy to Come...

Jon Billker and his wife Tina are expecting their first child -- a girl -- in March of this year. Jon is now assigned to the USS Enterprise -- based in Norfolk, VA, as a reactor operator and Moms Frances and Carol Dreyer-Billker are excited about becoming "Nana" and "Nonni." Frances and Carol continue to reside in Bonita Springs, FL.

Best regards,
Frances



Everyone Counts in Tompkins County! 2010 Census

Every 10 years through the U.S. Census, the United States counts everyone living in the United States, as directed by the Constitution. 2010 is a Census year, and you'll be mailed a Census questionnaire this spring sometime between mid-March and mid-April. By taking just 10 minutes to complete a simple, secure 10-question form, you provide the population information that affects federal and state dollars to support our community services, as well as our area's government representation. The Census counts you where you are living as of April 1.

Be sure to be counted. Watch for your Census form. Fill it out. Send it back. For more information, visit www.tompkins-co.org (Click on "2010 Census.")

Updating the FBC Library

Sarah Murray and Heather Swift would like to make our church library more useful to you! If there are books that you would like to see added to the library, please send an email to the church office. We'll be cataloging requests from the congregation and keeping a wish list posted on Amazon.com. However, we strongly encourage those who wish to donate to shop locally first (Autumn Leaves, or Buffalo Street Books) where a living wage is guaranteed.

Book donations will be accepted at the church office. If you wish to make a monetary contribution and dedicate a book in honor, or memory of a loved one, please contact us. sarai82070@aol.com
fbithaca@gmail.com

Lectionary Readings

Second Sunday in Lent ~ February 28

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18, Psalm 27
Philippians 3:17-4:1, Luke 13:31-35

Third Sunday in Lent ~ March 7, 2010

Isaiah 55:1-9, Psalm 63:1-8
1 Corinthians 10:1-13, Luke 13:1-9

Fifth Sunday in Lent ~ March 21, 2010

Isaiah 43:16-21, Psalm 126
Philippians 3:4b-14, John 12:1-8

Palm/Passion Sunday ~ March 28, 2010

Liturgy of the Palms; Luke 19:28-40, Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 *Liturgy of the Passion*; Isaiah 50:4-9a Psalm 31:9-16 Philippians 2:5-11 Luke 22:14-23:56 (or Luke 23:1-49)

Monday of Holy Week ~ March 29, 2010

Isaiah 42:1-9, Psalm 36:5-11
Hebrews 9:11-15, John 12:1-11

Tuesday of Holy Week ~ March 30, 2010

Isaiah 49:1-7, Psalm 71:1-14
1 Corinthians 1:18-31, John 12:20-36

Wednesday of Holy Week ~ March 31, 2010

Isaiah 50:4-9a, Psalm 70
Hebrews 12:1-3, John 13:21-32

Holy Thursday ~ April 1, 2010

Exodus 12:1-14, Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19
1 Corinthians 11:23-26, John 13:1-17, 31b-35

First Baptist Calendar

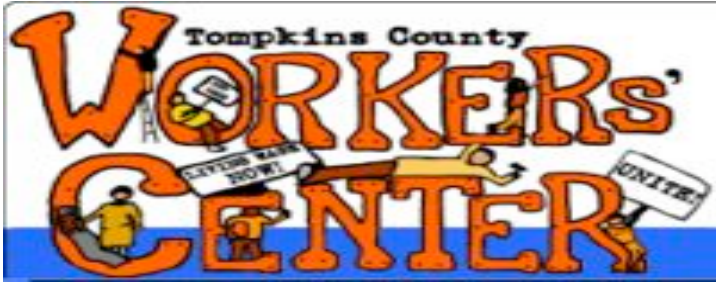
March 1	5:30pm 6:00pm 7:00pm	Building Committee PTSD Group Bible Study	March 16	5:30pm 7:00pm	Sufi Meditation Ithaca Gay Men's Chorus
March 2	5:30pm 7:00pm	Sufi Meditation Ithaca Gay Men's Chorus	March 17	5:30pm 5:30pm 7:00pm	Banner Committee Building Committee Women's Spirituality
March 3	5:30pm 5:30pm 7:00pm	Banner Committee Building Committee Women's Spirituality	March 18	7:00pm	Choir Rehearsal
March 4	7:00pm	Choir Rehearsal	March 19	8:15am	Meditation
March 5	8:15am	Meditation	March 21	10:00am	WORSHIP
March 6	10:00am	Choir Practice	March 22	11:30am 5:30pm	Church School Building Committee
March 7	10:00am 11:30am	WORSHIP Church School	March 23	6:00pm 7:00pm	PTSD Group Bible Study
March 8	5:30pm 6:00pm 7:00pm	Building Committee PTSD Group Bible Study	March 24	5:30pm 5:30pm 7:00pm	Sufi Meditation Ithaca Gay Men's Chorus Banner Committee
March 9	5:30pm 7:00pm	Sufi Meditation Ithaca Gay Men's Chorus	March 25	7:00pm	Building Committee
March 10	5:30pm 5:30pm 7:00pm	Banner Committee Building Committee Women's Spirituality	March 26	7:00pm	Women's Spirituality
March 11	7:00pm	Choir Rehearsal	March 27	8:15am	Choir Practice
March 12	8:15am	Meditation	March 28	10:00am 10:00am 11:30am	WORSHIP Church School
March 14	10:00am 11:30am	WORSHIP Church School	March 29	5:30pm 6:00pm 7:00pm	Building Committee PTSD Group Bible Study
March 15	5:30pm 6:00pm 7:00pm	Building Committee PTSD Group Bible Study	March 30	5:30pm 7:00pm	Sufi Meditation Ithaca Gay Men's Chorus
			March 31	5:30pm	Banner Committee



ASI's Christopher LaVallee
Racing the Planet to raise
funds for the Cancer
Resource Center of the
Finger Lakes

Christopher LaVallee recently moved to Ithaca from Brooklyn, NY, to train for the foot race at the suggestion of **ASI Renovations**, LaVallee and ASI co-owners Herbert Dwyer and Anthony Guarneri previously served together in the United States Marine Corps. The trio decided LaVallee's acceptance as a participant in RacingThePlanet presented an opportunity to raise awareness and funds for the Cancer Resource Center because of the impact cancer has had on all three families. The fathers of all three men are cancer survivors. LaVallee and Dwyer's fathers are both prostate cancer survivors. Guarneri's father recently underwent a successful surgery to remove pancreatic cancer, and is now recovering from it.

LaVallee is celebrating his acceptance to the April 25, 2010 to May 1, 2010 event with a \$20,000 fundraising campaign for the Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes. Competitors must carry all their own equipment and food, as they hike/race through hills, mountains, canyons, and gorges, swim rivers, scale rocky outcrops, etc. Christopher has been part of the construction team for ASI completing the renovations here at First Baptist and brings the same spirit to his work as he does to his running. To donate in support of the Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes, please visit: <http://rtpforcrcl.kintera.org>
All donations are tax-deductible.



On Saturday, March 6th, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Unitarian Church of Ithaca (corner of Buffalo and Aurora Sts), the Tompkins County Workers' Center and its Membership joins with the Religious Task Force for a Living Wage to kick off a 40 Hour Fast for Worker Justice, which will start at 8 p.m. that night following the dinner and short program. The theme of this year's Fast is From False Idols to Moral Vision.

New Roots Charter high school Seeks Community Input:

New Roots students work on community service-learning projects every Wednesday afternoon. They have a couple of groups of students that are looking for hands-on projects they can do – building planter boxes, bird houses, or a dog house; doing outdoor home maintenance or something else that a local group needs done.

Ideally, projects will be within easy travel distance of downtown, or completed at our school, but some more distant travel may be possible. Please contact Sarah Rubenstein-Gillis with your ideas:
srubensteingillis@newrootsschool.org

Photo Credits: Kris Scott, Heather Swift

THE VISITOR

First Baptist Church, Dewitt Park

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Return Service Requested

Recipient