

W I N T E R 2 0 1 1

the
Visitor

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



First Baptist Church

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Welcome to the New Visitor!

Hello FBC Family! I hope that you enjoy the 2011 format of the Visitor!

Please do be sure to send along news, articles, interviews, photos, etc. that you wish to share with the congregation. This is YOUR newsletter and it should reflect the diverse lives and many layers of our worship family.

All submissions should be sent to fbithaca@gmail.com. The next deadline is March 21st. ENJOY!

Save the Date!

Faith in Books March 5-6th

FBC will be once again collecting books for the Faith in Books program.

Parable of Talents

April 2nd

Time to "Get Your Act Together"!

Women's Retreat

May 20th - 22nd

Annual retreat at Light on the Hill.

A Message From Pastor Rich...

Dear Sisters and Brothers,
 Martin Luther King Jr., Jerry Falwell, Marian Wright Edelman, John D. Rockefeller, Al Gore, David Ruffin, Howard Thurman, Al Green, Nikki Giovanni, Walter Rauschenbusch, Chuck Berry, Pat Robertson, Al Sharpton, Jesse Helms, Mahalia Jackson, Jimmy Carter, Mike Huckabee, Donna Summer, John Edwards, Dianna Ross, Strom Thurman, Queen Latifah, Sam Cooke, Buddy Holly, Bill Haley, Hank Williams Sr., Shirley Chisholm, Harry Emerson Fosdick, Walter Rauschenbusch, John Bunyon, Clarence Thomas, John Milton, Cornell West, Johnny Cash, Brittany Spears, John Grisham, Louis Armstrong

They *all* identify as Baptists. How's that for diversity?

As I have once again begun leading a class for perspective new members recently, I was once more reminded of our vast diversity as a congregation. Of the 11 participants in the class not one identified as a Baptist. So prepare for our diversity to be further enhanced! This reality leaves me believing that it is the active practice of Baptist principles which draws folks to our church. Most participants in the class have stated that they experienced a warm, unique and gracious welcome when they first arrived - with a couple stating that they have never been greeted so warmly in any church! Certainly this practice is not unique to American Baptists, or any Baptists, yet we seem convinced that every individual, Baptist or not, is entitled to Soul Freedom. A gift from God who trusts and loves us enough to want us to make up our own minds regarding issues of biblical interpretation, faith and practice, Soul Freedom is both grace and expectation that the stranger who just walked in the door brings with her or him inherent value and has something wonderful to contribute to us as a faith community. We as a congregation do a wonderful job of extending this confidence to all who enter.

As our congregation continues to grow and our diversity increase, may our hearts and faith keep pace as we seek to continually afford God's grace and love to all.

Peace,
 Rich



A note from Kathe Padilla the Executive Director of the Chishawasha Children's Home in Lusaka, Zamabia...

I wanted to let everyone know the really good report I received from Colin Glassco (our major funding source) yesterday. Evidently ADRA Canada (the 7th Day Adventist Relief Agency that works all over the world), were in Lusaka yesterday and decided to make an unannounced visit to Chishawasha. These folks have visited relief agencies and orphanages all over Africa. They called Mr. Glassco to tell him they have never seen such a good orphanage before in all their travels. The grounds, houses and school were all clean, and the children were clean, happy and obviously well educated. They called him from Zambia just to tell him how impressed they were by the campus and our program at Chishawasha, so we all have a tight to be proud of the work we are doing.

At some point, I am sure all of us get discouraged and wonder if all our work is worth the effort. I just wanted to tell everyone that yes, all of our efforts really are worth it and we are making a significant difference in the lives of these children and we are doing a good job.

I wanted to send this on to each of you because we would not have the successful program we have without each of your efforts for these past years.

Thank you very much for all of your past help and for your continuing help for the children of Chishawasha. *Kathe*



Thanks from Springbrook

Dear First Baptist Church of Ithaca,
Thank you so much for *Making the difference* for Springbrook.
By collecting Campbell's soup labels and boxtops for education you are truly contributing to the School at Springbrook's programs in a tremendous way!

The time you take to do this is helping us make a difference in so many lives touched by developmental disabilities. We are able to purchase school supplies, books, computers and other equipment with these labels.

Thank you for your support of our mission.

Gratefully,
Patricia E. Kennedy
Chief Executive Officer



FBC News

Ushers Needed

Thanks to all the folks who have offered to usher "as needed." It would be very helpful to the Hospitality Team (Shella) if you would consider choosing one Sunday of the month as your Sunday. If you cannot be in Church on "your" Sunday, you could call someone else to take your place. If you do not wish to commit to that, please consider approaching me as you come in on Sunday, to offer your skills and service that day. Additionally, those of you who have spouses/partners who are arriving early to warm up for choir could assist us as well. Please consider these ideas, or contact Shella at 319-5024 or shellachace@gmail.com you're your best times or other ideas.

I will be gone for the month of April, so early offers would be helpful.

Thanks to all who have helped.

~ Submitted by Shella Chase

4th Annual FBC Talent Show (with Chili!)

Saturday, April 2nd, 5:30pm in the community room.

Tickets are \$5 in advance,
or \$7 at the door.

(Additional "Parable of Talents"
Donations are Welcome).

5:30pm Chili is served-

Show starts at 6pm.

Poetry? A song? A stand up act? A skit?

A popular talent, or perhaps, a lesser known one?

All are welcome.

Watch for the sign up sheet in the FBC foyer. Bring a friend.

For more information, contact Janet Cotraccia at 277.1075, or jacotracc@twcnyc.rr.com



FBC to Participate in Annual Faith in Books Drive, March 5th-6th

Greetings from the deepest days of winter, the traditional time for Family Reading Partnership and Area Congregations Together to team up for **Faith in Books**.

This annual collection within congregations of gently used children's books helps stock the now almost **30 Bright Red Bookshelves** in our community.

We thank you very much for your support and participation which year after year, since 1998, has contributed a significant number of books which go to area families **for free**.

With so much discussion about educational reforms, it remains a fact that the best path to success in school and to a lifelong **love of reading begins at home** in the earliest years while enjoying books together as a family.

Please bring your books to church March 5th and 6th and place in the collection bins.



Update From Alexei Waters:

"I am exceptionally grateful that members of FBC have reminded me that even when our bodies fail us the spirit of love can create wonderful opportunities for contentment. I can say this without hesitation because so many of you here today and many who are elsewhere have lifted my spirits by sending me cards, speaking to me on the phone, visiting me in the hospital and nursing home and expressing your empathy for me as I try to recover from the near-catastrophic accident of six weeks ago.

I am incredibly fortunate that my participation in the life of FBC has not only rekindled my faith but has brought me into direct contact with a community of believers in the grandeur of God's grace, social justice and the unqualified acceptance of our need for one another.

For the remainder of my life I will never forget the goodness that was poignantly expressed to me on Christmas Eve 2010 when over twenty people came to my room in the Intensive Care Unit and sang some of the most glorious Christmas carols to me as I lay in bed in great agony while wearing a medieval-looking cervical-spine brace that while protecting my spine was unable to reduce the intensity of my pain. Although I was not fully conscious I remember the sense of wonderment that gripped my whole being as these sonorous voices, almost angelic, gave me a glimpse of the Kingdom of God while tears streamed from my eyes. [this is all he can remember from that evening ... and Heather wiping the tears from his eyes].

It's rare to experience pleasure in pain with such striking force while simultaneously trying to recover from a nearly fatal accident. All I can say is that being part of the FBC family made real to me the phrase from the Gospel of John: indeed, at that moment, the Word became Flesh."

Alexei Waters

Enfield Giving Tree Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who supported the Enfield Holiday Project this year. Because of everyone's generosity we were able to "help" 101 children from 48 families. Below are excerpts from families thanking everyone for the help:

From our family to yours with great appreciation for your generosity and for making our holiday season enjoyable.

Thank you so much! I am a Cornell dining worker. I get laid off for 5 weeks this time of year, so I really appreciate the help!

To all those who cared enough to make Christmas a great day for all the families out there struggling like we are. Your willingness to open your hearts and wallets to help children you have no responsibilities for or emotional ties to has made this a great Christmas for my family and for so many others like me. I can't thank you enough.

Warmest wishes to all who helped make the Enfield food and gift project for Christmas possible this year! May you each have a merrier Christmas knowing that you've helped many people to provide for their families. There will be brighter, sleepy but brighter, smiles on the faces of many this Christmas morning due to your generosity! Merry Christmas from a grateful family!

Thank you for your help during this time of year. We couldn't have this Christmas with out your help.

Thank you so very much for helping to make this Christmas just that much better! My son and I want to wish you the happiest of holidays!

Thank you for bringing extra joy to my children's lives. I hope your Christmas kindness is returned to you.

As you can see from the comments above this program with your support is very important to our Enfield families. Thank you for helping this happen! Peace and prosperity to you and your families this coming year.

Sonja Schreiber and Mary Cole

An Interview With Gladys Diemond

One cold, wintry night I sat and visited with Gladys Diemond at her home on Aurora Street where she has lived for the last fifty-nine years. Her earliest memories of the First Baptist are Sunday School class attendance. At twelve years old, she was baptized and began her tenure as a member with this church in DeWitt Park. During her high school years, she remembers working in the infant nursery, tending to the babies of the Cornell graduate students. At that time, the baby room was next to the kitchen where tables and chairs are currently stored. Every Sunday before church, Naomi Hollister's father would come and tell her a joke. She remembers him as the nicest man.

Gladys' mother and Uncle Walter would take her and her brothers to church every Sunday. She can still see Myra Fincher and her parents sitting in the pew in front of her. She isn't quite sure why Uncle Walter was so insistent about going to church since he slept through most of it. She also recalls that as a youngster, she didn't find the sermons terribly interesting but she can tell you how many red tiles, how many white tiles and how many blue tiles are in each of the stained glass windows. She also has a memory of some excitement one Sunday morning when someone stole all the fur coats from the coat hallway during the service. She doesn't think they ever figured out who did it.

As a teenager, she was part of a group of girls that attended a weekend retreat at Keuka College. It is the first time she remembers getting to wear a formal dress. She and Naomi Hollister both have pictures from that weekend.

Since she has lived in Ithaca all her life, and in the same neighborhood for most of it, she has vivid recollections of her dad's store, the Market Basket. She and her brothers would take the large bags of potatoes and make up smaller bags for which they were paid one penny per bag. She can also tell you that her mother made \$66.60 a month during the depression. It is so hard to imagine spending only \$5.00 a week on groceries to feed four people.

Gladys met her husband George in 1938 when she was in high school. George was out on a date with Gladys' best friend. The two of them came over to Gladys' house and after that, George started dating Gladys. She doesn't think her friend minded since her friend always had lots of boyfriends. George was drafted during World War II and sent to England as an aircraft mechanic. She found this rather interesting since her husband wasn't mechanically inclined and couldn't fix the front door if it was broken.

After George returned from the war, they were married at First Baptist Church in 1946. Dr. Boutwell presided at the service. She was so happy that he was willing to return to Ithaca for the ceremony since he had retired and lived on Long Island. Dr. Boutwell was her favorite pastor and such a wonderful minister.

George worked in Ithaca at a number of retail stores: Williams Shoe Store, JC Penneys, and then Agway. When Agway moved its headquarters to Syracuse, George stayed with the company and commuted to Ithaca on the weekends until his retirement.

(continued...)

Interview With Gladys Diemond

Gladys and George had two children, George, Jr. and Sharon. George, Jr. currently lives in Florida, but stays in touch regularly by phone. Sharon lives in Lansing and works for Tompkins Trust Co Insurance. Gladys worked at Cornell University in the Animal Husbandry department until her first child was born. While her children were still young, she did day care. In 1970 she was hired at Ithaca College and worked as a secretary to the Dean of Students and the Dean of Women. She loved working at Ithaca College and spent 13 years there until 1983 when she retired. After her retirement Gladys volunteered her time at First Baptist as the church financial secretary from 1994 through 2006. She worked closely with Janet Brown and Curt Ufford keeping the church financial records.

Gladys has two great grandchildren who live in Ithaca and go to Fall Creek School. She still walks down to Fall Creek School after school to pick them up and watches them until her grandson picks them up. Her third great grandchild lives in Syracuse.

Besides being a very active great grandparent, Gladys is a regular volunteer at the Service League and at the Gift Shop of the Senior Center. It concerns her that the number of volunteers at the Service League is dwindling and it is only open from 11 am to 3 pm. She also does the books for the Senior Center's Gift Shop.

Gladys' husband, George, died on Christmas Eve in 1993. She and her daughter make the Christmas Eve service at First Baptist a priority. She laughs when she tells me that after their Christmas Eve dinner, she and Sharon leave the clean up to the rest of the family while the two of them head off to church.

Recently Gladys has not attended First Baptist as regularly as she would like. She hopes to start coming again and we look forward to her return.

~ Submitted by Marlene Sack

You Hold The Key!

We're always happy to loan out church keys for special events. However, a number of keys have not been returned. In the New Year we'll be assessing the use of keys and the need to make duplicates. If you have church keys currently that you are not using, please return them to the office in an envelope noting what the key is for (i.e. music room, south door, etc.)

Thank you so much in advance for taking the time to help us with this project! Please check to see if you have keys to the church and drop them back off at the office!



Board of Trustees Annual Report 2010

This has been a productive year for the Board of Trustees. During 2008 an “accessibility” group met and evaluated various solutions to making First Baptist accessible to those with disabilities. A permanent ramp and accessible unisex lavatory were recommended and approved at a 2009 congregational meeting. This project also included additional work to be done during this construction period including two new windows in the office area, new flooring in the Community Room and hallways, and new heating radiation to add more heat to the Community Room. This work was completed this year and a dedication of the ramp to Bob Rodgers and Nell Mondy was held in May.

Other improvements were made which included:

1. Nursery was painted and new windows installed; three were paid for by anonymous donors. \$5000 has been set aside for additional improvements to the nursery. IACC closed and a decision was made to not actively recruit another daycare until the nursery is designed to best meet the needs of church members.
2. Four new windows were installed upstairs.
3. Additional insulation was blown into the area above the sanctuary by a volunteer work crew.
4. A damaged stained glass window in the sanctuary was removed for repair; when finished it will be restored to “new condition” and will have a ventilated cover. Estimates will be obtained on having similar work done to the other sanctuary windows.
5. A solar energy evaluated was completed.

The “usual” work of keeping an old building together also kept the Trustees busy. The traditional spring and fall work days, where many people helped polish, scrub, change storm windows, were held.

A future repair priority is major work on the tower. An inner wall is collapsing and the floor holding the bells is rotting away. The entire area needs to be rebuilt. A rough estimate was obtained from a Rochester company of 20,000 - \$30,000. More investigation of this specialized work needs to be done before this project is begins.

Other future work includes identifying priorities for other possible Memorial Fund expenditures. Some suggestions have already been made and the congregation will be asked to provide input.

*Submitted by Judy Kennison, Chair
First Baptist Board of Trustees*

Members: Rich Baron, David Caughey, Tim Dean, Steve Farrell, Bill Fry, Steve Hilsdorf, and Marlene Sack

* The work listed above could not have been completed without the assistance and support of many additional church members.

The Unity Tour: Melding Musical Cultures
Neshama Carlbach in concert with Reverend Roger Hambrick
& the Green Pastures Baptist Church Choir
Wednesday, March 2, 2011 at 7p.m. in the State Theatre
Tickets available in the First Baptist Church office for \$18

A message from Rabbi Scott Glass...

Over the past several days I've been at meetings where people have asked me to tell them more about the March 2nd concert. It made me realize that providing some of the back story might help people understand why this concert is so special.

The music of Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach is spiritually uplifting and speaks to people's souls in a unique way. This was just what happened at a rally for unity in the Bronx after the February, 1999 shooting of Amadou Diallo. Rabbi Avi Weiss was invited to deliver a prayer at that gathering and he began his prayer by singing a Carlebach melody. The melody touched the soul of Reverend Roger Hambrick who introduced himself to Rabbi Weiss after the rally and asked him about the melody. Rabbi Weiss and Reverend Hambrick met, Rabbi Weiss shared the song, Brother and Friends, and a few other melodies with Reverend Hambrick who decided to incorporate some of them into the repertoire of his Baptist choir. Subsequently, Rabbi Weiss invited Reverend Hambrick and the Green Pastures Baptist Church Choir to sing at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebration at the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale. The choir has sung there every year for the last eleven years as part of the congregation's tribute to Dr. King.

I first heard the Green Pastures Baptist Church Choir at H.I.R. in 2007. Two years later I was back to hear them again but this time they were singing together with Neshama Carlebach, a famous artist in her own right both because of her efforts to keep the music of her father alive but also because of her own talents. The synergy of Neshama and the choir singing together, the spiritual uplift, was amazing. After that performance, Reverend Hambrick and Neshama decided they should cut an album together. The collaboration resulted in a rearrangement of nine melodies by Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach and an original piece written especially for this album, as Neshama has said, "ten pieces of hope." The album, "Higher and Higher," is soulful, joyful, hopeful, incredibly moving. The styles range from gospel to African to rock. The album reflects a true melding of cultures and an update of Carlebach's classic "soul music." When the group performed to open the Rabbinical Assembly convention last May, they brought the house down. It was amazing but a short time later, something even more touching would happen.

The death of our friend, James Miles, brought together the very diverse worlds of which he was a part—the Jewish world, the academic world, his friends and family from here and from far away. James' funeral was difficult for all of us but probably most difficult for his out-of-town family, very religious people, who couldn't quite fathom a funeral service officiated at by a rabbi and a young, white minister. They were visibly uncomfortable, almost angry, until the music. At the urging of the hospital chaplain, Tim Dean, who was officiating, we decided to find a piece of music that reflected James' life. I suggested the first cut from "Higher and Higher," a setting of Psalm 121. As the music began, the whole atmosphere changed. People were drawn together, we were lifted up by the music; it was a transformative moment. It was at that moment that I appreciated the power of this music and began to think about the possibility of bringing Neshama, Reverend Hambrick and the choir to Ithaca.

This past January 17, I heard the group again, this time at Symphony Space in Manhattan at a very moving Martin Luther King, Jr. Day event. It confirmed what I'd suspected—that each time this group performs together, they get better.



Lectionary Reflection Group

Starting in the month of **March** and continuing **each Sunday**, you are invited to gather from **9:00 to 9:45 AM** to reflect on the lectionary passage on which the sermon is based. The format for this gathering will be very simple. We will begin promptly at 9. Following a brief prayer, the lectionary passage will be read aloud. After 5 minutes of silent meditation, the passage will be read again. Participants will then be invited to share the ways in which this passage moves them, where it touches their lives and longing, what parts of the passage they feel drawn to, what causes discomfort or confusion, and what questions arise. A facilitator will encourage anyone who wishes to share and will monitor time so that everyone who wants to has an opportunity to speak. We will end with a brief prayer promptly at 9:45.

The purpose of this gathering is not to discuss, study, teach, or come to conclusions, but rather to **listen** - to ourselves, to each other, and to the Divine Spirit within each of us - and to **share** what spontaneously comes into our hearts as we hear a passage of scripture. It is also a time of preparation for the 10 AM worship service. It is hoped that worship will be more meaningful having spent this time together. It is also hoped that people will find ways of carrying the insights, awareness, concerns, or questions that emerge from this gathering into the world so that healing will take place and peace will be strengthened.

We will gather in the room on the right at the bottom of the stairs that descend to the lower level. Feel free to contact me, Debbie Allen, if you have questions about this group. My email is dallen03@twcny.rr.com.

Loaves & Fishes Seeks Volunteers

Loaves & Fishes would like to invite all interested individuals to enjoy and participate in a meal at our dining room. We are more than just a "soup kitchen" or "a place to get a free meal". We offer a safe environment and a gathering place to meet friends and new acquaintances, learn how to find help in our community to fill a particular need, get information about events in and around our area, share talents and relax away from the outside world for a short time.

Besides a meal to feed the body, we have an advocacy program aimed to help our guests navigate through the everyday struggles that occurred, all in total confidentiality.

We are starting a new season and are looking to add to our volunteers already participating.

Would you like to join us and volunteer? If so or if you have any questions regarding Loaves and Fishes please contact us.

Reverend Christina Culver, Executive Director

Ron Poley, Advocacy Coordinator

We are located at: St. John's Church
210 N. Cayuga St.

Serving meals: Ithaca, NY
MWF noon,
TTh 6pm

website: www.loaves.org

email: info@loaves.org



Lectionary Readings



Annual America For Christ Offering in March

The America for Christ Offering, one of the four annual offerings taken by American Baptist Churches across the denomination, will be received by our church during the month of March. This offering is critical for the work we American Baptists do here in the United States. A portion of what is given comes back to the American Baptist Churches of New York State for the ministries that TABCOM provides to us, like, for example, our area ministers' work with search committees when a church is looking for a new pastor. Some of the money also supports our Christian centers, one of which is located in a poor section of Rochester and doing important work to provide food, clothing, and educational opportunities to those living in its neighborhood. Please consider your gift to the America for Christ Offering. Special envelopes for your use will be in the bulletin on the first Sunday of March.

~Submitted by Rich Barron

February 27, 2011

Eighth Sunday after the Epiphany
Isaiah 49:8-16a Psalm 131
I Corinthians 4:1-5 Matthew 6:24-34

Sunday, March 6, 2011

Transfiguration Sunday/Last Sunday after Epiphany
Exodus 24:12-18 Psalm 99,
2 Peter 1:16-21 Matthew 17:1-9

Wednesday, March 9, 2011

Ash Wednesday, Lent
Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 Psalm 51:1-17
2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10 Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Sunday, March 13, 2011

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

Sunday, March 20, 2011

Lent
Second Sunday in Lent
Genesis 12:1-4a Psalm 121
Romans 4:1-5, 13-17 John 3:1-17

Sunday, March 27, 2011

Lent
Third Sunday in Lent
Exodus 17:1-7 Psalm 95
Romans 5:1-11 John 4:5-42

Sunday, April 3, 2011

Lent
Fourth Sunday in Lent
1 Samuel 16:1-13 Psalm 23
Ephesians 5:8-14 John 9:1-41

Sunday, April 10, 2011

Lent
Fifth Sunday in Lent
Ezekiel 37:1-14 Psalm 130
Romans 8:6-11 John 11:1-45

Buddhist Prayer for Peace



May I become at all times, both now and forever.
A protector for those without protection.
A guide for those who have lost their way.
A ship for those with oceans to cross.
A bridge for those with rivers to cross.
A sanctuary for those in danger.
A lamp for those without light.
A place of refuge for those who lack shelter.
And a servant to all in need.

First Baptist Church of Ithaca

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[Recipient]

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

Address Line 3

Address Line 4