



Cross and Spire

Newsletter of the First Baptist Church

P.O. Box 331, 13 School St., Lebanon, NH 03766

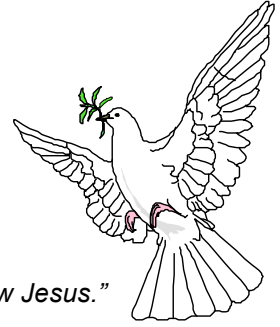
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February 2009 Volume 26, No. 2

"Not a perfect church, not a perfect people, just a simple desire to follow Jesus."



Pastor's Report 2008

When I write my annual pastor's report I sift my memory banks concerning all the ministry we have done together this previous year. It is a joy to compile the list of things done: home groups, another trip to New Orleans, VBS, Community Dinners and the Food Pantry, Youth Group trips, Sunday School, the Community Care Team, a Concert of Prayer, church Bazaar, Fall Festival, the Christmas pageant, coffee hour, our times of worship, building repairs, Women's Fellowship Dinner's, Men's Breakfasts, weddings, funerals, and much more. I guess in many ways it is always easier to cite the tangible things, count numbers, list accomplishments, celebrate goals met, perversely take some pride in what we have achieved. It is a joy to help build the kingdom of God.

But I find myself dwelling more on what is under the surface of what we do. Maybe it is that I am a bit older than I once was. A lot happens in a 22-year pastorate. (Not long ago I met a couple visiting from the west coast, who I had married my first year. I honestly didn't remember doing their wedding.) But I do believe spending years with Christ changes our hearts. Some questions become less important, others more important, and some new questions arrive. The question that weighs on my heart more than in the past is, "What is God asking of me?" Sitting up front on Sundays looking over the assembled community of First Baptist, I ask "What does God ask of us?"

Through the glass darkly, I see answers, profound answers, from God. "Will you be with me?" "Will you serve me?" "Will you love me?" How deep does our relationship with Jesus Christ

go? Listing what we have done is something to celebrate, but it is more humbling to open our hearts to the Holy Spirit. I think God desires our community to be a place of prayer and worship, and servanthood and caring. I believe this is the basis of all else we do, whether evangelism or fellowship or service. Jesus is more concerned about our hearts than our hands. Lately I have been learning more about prayer and discernment, what does God ask of me in both big and little? How does He stretch my faith, my love, my humility? Will His holiness overwhelm me and His love enthrall me? What is the God of the universe doing in my, your, and our souls? And in a world of incredible challenge and opportunity, where is my spot in laboring with Christ?

This last year one of the books I read was, *Realizing Your Church's Full Kingdom Potential* by George Bullard. George via another circle has become a casual friend. But one of his key points is that churches that give themselves away for the sake of Christ blossom in communion with God. I believe that many times the communion with God precedes our desire to give ourselves away. First give yourself to Christ, and our grips on everything else become surprisingly loose. It is no longer my time, but God's time; no longer my stuff, but God's stuff; no longer my life but His life - His Spirit living in me, giving true, eternal life.

What is the reason for a "church?" Only Jesus Christ alone. What is the reason for me being a "pastor?" Jesus Christ alone. And why do we do what we do, and gaze upon what we have done? Jesus Christ alone. May God's Spirit wash deeply through our souls this coming year.

God Bless,
Dale



**Please Come to Our
Cabin Fever
Open
House!
Saturday
February 7
4:00-8:00 PM
At the Parsonage
16 Kimball St.
*The Edwards'***

FOUR BAPTISMS!

We had a beautiful service of baptism on Sunday, January 18th. We were happy to witness the baptisms of Grace Lindsay, Bridgette Barragan, Michael Barragan, and Allison Hiltunen. If you are interested in being baptized or have questions concerning baptism, please speak to the pastor.

DAY OF SERVICE FOOD DRIVE

We'd like to thank Karen & Andy Hill and all those who participated in the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service Food Drive on January 19! An amazing amount of food (several pick-up truckloads!) was collected and distributed to LISTEN, Upper Valley Senior Center, and First Baptist Church's food pantries. Thank you!!!

MT. LEBANON SCHOOL FOOD DRIVE

We're thankful to the students and staff of Mt. Lebanon School for the food drive held the Friday before the Christmas break! Many boxes of food were collected for our Raven Box Food Pantry, helping to stock our shelves for the holidays! Thanks also to the Moretti family, the LHS Golf Team and others who transported the food to First Baptist!

30-HOUR FAMINE COMING!!!

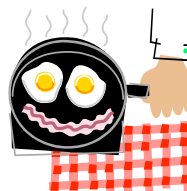
Our Junior & Senior High Youth Groups will be starving themselves for 30 hours Feb. 27-28 to help raise money for World Vision's hunger relief mission. We need YOUR support to make the Famine a success! We'll be looking for sponsors to donate money to this important cause. Don't wait for us to come to you - approach a teen and offer to sponsor them in the 30-Hour Famine!

LENT BEGINS FEBRUARY 25TH!

Lent is a time of preparation for Easter - a good time to focus on renewing our life in Christ through Bible study and prayer. We will be making Lenten devotional materials for all ages available to the congregation. For adults we will have "Christ Our Hope" - a new collection of reflections from the writings of Henri Nouwen. For teens, 'tweens, & college-agers we'll have "Lighten Up, Lent!" to lead up to the bright dawn of Easter. For children, there will be "Jesus in Jerusalem" - a sticker journey through Lent. Please help yourself! Easter is April 12!

VALENTINE'S DANCE BENEFIT CARENET

A Valentine's Dance featuring Gerry Grimo and the East Bay Jazz Ensemble will be held at the White River Jct. American Legion on Friday, February 13 from 7:30-11:30 PM. Advance tickets are required. The cost is \$25/person and includes dance instruction and fine hor d'oeuvres. Proceeds will benefit CareNet Pregnancy Center. For tickets, call 603-298-6123.



**MEN'S BREAKFAST
Saturday, Feb. 14
7:30 AM
All Men Welcome!**

CONCERT OF PRAYERS REPORT

About 16 people joined together from 8:30-12:30 for our Concert of Prayers on Jan. 24. Be on the lookout for future opportunities to join with one another in prayer!
"For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." Matt 18:20.

*Women's Fellowship
Dinner & Purpose-
Driven Life Study
Tuesday, February 17
6:00 PM
At Marge Olson's
30 Dorset Lane, Lebanon
Sign-up & Directions on*



“FIREPROOF” COMING TO CLAREMONT!

The movie “Fireproof” starring Kirk Cameron will be shown on Saturday, February 14 at 6:30 pm at the Stevens High School Auditorium in Claremont. The showing is FREE! “Fireproof” is an inspirational and motivational movie about the rescue of a marriage on the brink of divorce. The film’s intent is to help couples improve the health and strength of their marriages. Stevens High School is located at 175 Broad St., Claremont. This event is sponsored by the First Baptist Church of Claremont (603-542-2344).

FOCUS ON MARRIAGE EVENT

First Baptist Church of Claremont is hosting the Focus on Marriage Simulcast Conference, “Seeing Your Marriage Through the Eyes of God” on Saturday, Feb. 28 from 9:00-4:30. Speakers include Beth Moore, Gary Smalley, John Trent, Gary Thomas, & music by Jeremy Camp. All are welcome. Pre-registration is required by going to the website <http://ccn.tv/focusonmarriage/> and ordering tickets. Prices begin at \$60, but go up as the event gets closer. FBC Claremont is located at 56 Main St. For more info. call 603-542-2344.



**Fundraising
Breakfast!
Sunday, March 8
After Church
To Help Send the
Youth Group to
Deep Freeze!**

BASKETBALL HALL OF FAME ROADTRIP

**For all men and boys of First Baptist!
Saturday, February 21. We will be leaving
First Baptist Lebanon at 7:30 AM. Cost:
Adult - \$16.99, Youth - \$11.99. Group of
15 or more: Adult - \$14.99, Youth -
\$10.99. A sign-up sheet is located on the
sanctuary bulletin board. For more
information, contact Tom Clifford (448-
4174) or Jim Newcomb (448-2782).**

WEDNESDAY NOON BIBLE STUDY

The Wednesday noontime Bible study has resumed! Please join us as we continue our

study of Spiritual Disciplines! We meet from 12:00-1:00 in the church office. Join us!

COMMUNITY DINNERS NEWS

We continue to hold our free community dinners each Wednesday at 5:30 PM. Be on the lookout for volunteer opportunities re: cooking, serving, set-up and clean-up!

AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING

Perhaps you have noticed the offering envelope included in this newsletter. February is the month we receive the America for Christ Offering. The America for Christ Offering supports Christ-centered ministries across the United States and Puerto Rico through the American Baptist Churches USA. Our giving directly impacts local activities, projects and ministries such as: Evangelism and Church Planting, Camps & Leadership Development Conferences, Community Development & Refugee Resettlement, Scholarships for education and Volunteers in Mission. Please prayerfully consider a gift to the America for Christ Offering!

COMING MARCH 15: SPECIAL CONCERT!

We are excited to announce that the Lancaster Bible College Chorale and Chamber Singers will be here in concert on Sunday, March 15 at 6:30 PM! Please mark your calendar and invite family and friends to this evening of worship through music and testimony!

NOTES OF THANKS

*Dear Friends at First Baptist,
Thank you so very much for your prayers and support. Thank you also for the beautiful plants that you gave to Art and myself. You are so thoughtful. With love in Christ,*

Marilyn Garrow

*Dear Friends in Christ,
Ellie and I really appreciate the poinsettia plant the church gave us at Christmas time. Thank you as representatives of the congregation, and as caring individuals. We trust that God will bless you with those special spiritual gifts needed in your service as deacons.*

Yours in Christ, Ellie & Philip Anderson

SERMON SERIES: The Intentional Christian
February 8: “An Intentional Follower”
February 15: “Intentional Communion”
February 22: “An Intentional Future”