



Cross and Spire

Newsletter of the First Baptist Church

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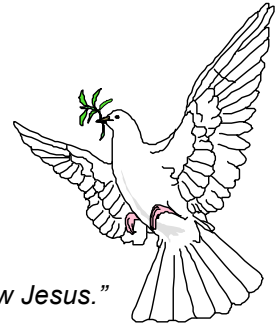
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"Not a perfect church, not a perfect people, just a simple desire to follow Jesus."



The Toilet Bowl of Temptation: The Parable of the Wood Rat

Laurie Edwards

It was a cold winter day, very cold. Dale and I drove up to our camp to check on it, put a fire in the woodstove, read a book (me), and take a nap (Dale). We checked out the bathroom, expecting to see the usual pool of pink antifreeze in the bottom of the toilet bowl that we had poured in last fall. Instead, there appeared to be something dark in there. We turned on the light to get a better look, and behold! There was a large dark rodent staring up at us! Actually it was a rather blank stare, because the rodent was quite dead. Quite dead, and quite frozen. As I said, it was a very cold day, and had been so for a number of weeks.

My first thought was "What are we going to do with it?" Flushing was obviously out of the question. We found some old yellow rubber gloves and, armed with a shovel from the woodstove in one hand and a toilet brush in the other, we managed to fish the creature out of its slushy pink resting place, drop it into an old bucket, and lug it up into the woods for a final farewell.

Only after it was disposed of did we begin to consider other questions. Like, how did it get there? Were there others like it? And just what exactly was it anyhow? It was larger than a mouse, cuter than a rat (if the word cute could be used in this situation!). Dale decided it was a wood rat – sounded good to me!

How did it get there? We didn't think there was a hole big enough, but obviously we were wrong. Come nicer weather, we'll have to go searching around the foundation, floors

and walls to hopefully prevent future such intruders.

Perhaps the biggest question was "Why the toilet?" And how did it manage to drown in there? I have grown to suspect that our friend the Wood Rat succumbed to that nemesis that is as old as the Garden of Eden – TEMPTATION! No doubt hungry and thirsty thanks to the ravages of a New Hampshire winter, he must have found his way into our camp searching for sustenance. Antifreeze of many varieties has a sweet taste (don't ask how I know this!). I suspect in his search he came across our toilet, and saw what looked like a great sweet pink slushy. As he perched on the edge of the toilet bowl stretching down toward that yummy delight, he lost his footing on the smooth ceramic surface and slid right into what he thought was a yummy drink. Drowned, poisoned, or both, we'll never be sure – but there he met his end.

What tempts you, and where does that temptation lead you? Sometimes we sit on the edge of the toilet bowl of temptation, and somehow convince ourselves that we can lean just a little bit closer for a little, bitty taste, and before we know it we've lost our footing and slid right into that big, sweet, pink slushy of sin, and too late we realize that it's really not so sweet after all.

There are ways to avoid temptation – stay away from the toilet bowls for starters! There are situations we need to learn to avoid. But sometimes temptation comes unsought for – what then? The best advice I know is DON'T TRY TO GO IT ALONE! Look for help. Ask God to help you, seek support from other Christians who understand. And remember you have a source of strength that Satan is no match for: **Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world. 1John 4:4.**

FIRST BAPTIST VARIETY SHOW!!!

Coming Saturday, March 20 at 7:00 PM!!

Can you tell a joke, sing a song, play an instrument, dance, do magic tricks, perform in a skit, do something unique or unusual??? Share your gifts at the **FBC Variety Show!** Come for the show, come for dessert, come for the fun! Sign up your act/talent on the sanctuary bulletin board. Questions, contact Dale or Laurie Edwards.

CHRISTIANITY & THE ARTS@GOVE HILL

Gove Hill Conference Center is hosting a conference on "Christianity and the Arts" on April 30-May 2, 2010. Workshop leaders include Paul Rogers, photographer; Reed Prescott, painter; and Jason Harrod, singer/songwriter. Participants may bring work along to be critiqued as well as materials for creating more over the weekend. Options include full time with lodging and meals, coming for the days with lunch, or just coming for Saturday afternoon. Jason Harrod will perform a concert within the workshop on Saturday night. Brochures are available in the church literature racks or from Gove Hill or their website www.govehillretreat.org.

LOOKING AHEAD FOR GOVE HILL:

Gove Hill Workday coming May 8th!

8:00 am to 3:00 pm. Mark your calendar!

Christian Writers Conference July 16-18.

Workshop leaders will include Matthew Dickerson of Middlebury College, Diane Glancy of Macalester College and John "Jack" Leax of Houghton College. Brochures available as listed above.

NEWS FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING

We were blessed with a peaceful and productive Annual Meeting on January 31st. Copies of the 2009 Annual Report are still available near the church entryways. Please note the following changes to your Annual Report: 1) Rich Olson's name was inadvertently left off the list of Trustees in the Nominating Committee report. Rich's term expires in 2011. 2) It was voted to increase the Pastoral Emergency line item in the budget to \$3000.

HOPE YOU ENJOYED THE MEAL!

The youth group would like to thank everyone for supporting the Valentine's Day Dinner on February 14th. About 70 people turned out for

the meal. The teens worked hard and did a great job! About \$800 was raised to help defray expenses for our trip to Deep Freeze Feb. 26-28. Twenty young people and four leaders will be attending this exciting event.

WHITE CROSS GIRLS NIGHT OUT!

American Baptist's White Cross Women's Ministries is back at First Baptist and growing! Here is some more information:

History: White Cross grew out of the Red Cross work that was being done everywhere during World War I. In 1919, following the end of the war, two American Baptist women from Cleveland, Ohio organized the "White Cross Service League", channeling the war effort into support for Baptist missions. In 1922, the North American Baptist Conference got involved with the program. Since then, White Cross has provided much-needed supplies to missionaries and nationals in Africa. Besides helping out Africa, the Overland White Cross supports programs all over the United States. White Cross is an American Baptist Ministry.

What We Can Do: We'll be working together on items to support mission work and the Prayer Shawl ministry here at First Baptist. We'll also be collecting items for Friendship House of Peoria, Illinois, a ministry to children and families. See the yellow poster board at the back of the sanctuary for items needed.

Everyone is welcome to donate items – please sign up if you can help! Besides the projects we have been asked to do, there are so many things we can do right here for our church. I will get into those things at another time.

When and Where: All women and girls are invited to participate according to her own needs, interests, and gifts. We meet on Friday evenings from 6:00-8:00 PM. Check your Sunday bulletin for details!

I pray you will join those of us who are already part of this great ministry. For questions, contact Lorraine Bickford after church or call me at 603-632-5651 or email bickford48@gmail.com.

EASTER MEMORIALS

If you would like to purchase Easter lilies or tulips in memory of a loved one, please use the green slip in your Sunday bulletin!



Don't Forget . . .
Turn Your Clocks
AHEAD One Hour
Sunday, March 14th

CONCERT OF PRAYERS MARCH 20TH!

Don't miss our next Concert of Prayers on Saturday, March 20 from 8:30AM-12:30PM at the church. **Please join us as we pray for the needs of one another, our church, our community and beyond.**

RETREAT IS RESCHEDULED!!!!

The new dates are March 26-27th!!! Join us for a 24-hour time away for reflection and fellowship with others from First Baptist. Our theme is "Agape World: Reflections on 1 John" and we'll be meeting at beautiful Gove Hill Retreat in Thetford Ctr., VT. Please note that no registrations will be assumed – even if you had registered for the initial retreat, you will need to register again as refunds were sent out. Cost \$75 for sleepover, \$40 for sleep-at-home. See registration forms in your Sunday bulletin!

IN CELEBRATION OF EASTER – 96 HOURS OF PRAYER!

Prayer-ers needed to participate in our first ever 96-hour prayer event! Prayer will begin at 6:00 AM on Wednesday, March 31 and continue to 6:00 AM on Easter Sunday, April 4th. Sign up for 2-hour prayer slots on the large poster at the back of the sanctuary. You may pray in the prayer closet downstairs or in other areas of the church. Guidelines: 1) Please respect those in time slots before you, be punctual or a few minutes early (a no show means the person won't be able to leave until the next scheduled pray-er arrives). 2) Please call in advance if you are unable to attend (643-5793 or 646-0187). 3) Prayer partners are welcome (split 2-hour shifts or pray together for 2 hours). 4) Remember, confidentiality is a must. Prayer concerns/cards should be left in the prayer closet. Questions, contact Chris or Cathy Clark (603-643-5793).

IRON SHARPENS IRON APRIL 24TH!

Calling all men! To the Iron Sharpens Iron conference in Portsmouth, NH on Saturday,

April 24th. Featured speakers are Dan Seabin and Sean McDowell. There will be choices of 16 seminars including How To Stay Married for Life, Walking With God – Living Out Spiritual Disciplines, Overcoming Your Anger – From Pieces to Peace. Cost for early registration is \$48 (\$39 if we get 10 or more). Contact Tom Clifford for more info.(448-4174).

CELEBRATION OF BAPTISMS

We had a wonderful service of baptism on February 21st. Three people made a public profession of their faith through baptism: David Merritt, Daniel Merritt, and Duane Lawrence. If you are interested in being baptized or have questions regarding baptism, please speak to the pastor. Another baptismal service could be held on Palm Sunday, March 28 if any would like to be baptized.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP DINNER

After being snowed out in January & February, we hope to have our next Women's Fellowship Potluck on **Tuesday, March 9** at Marge Olson's, 30 Dorset Lane in Lebanon. All women are welcome to bring a dish to share and join in an evening of fellowship!

MEN'S BREAKFAST

All men are invited to come out to the next Men's Breakfast on Saturday, March 13 at 7:30 AM! Join us!

EASTER WEEK EVENTS	
Palm Sunday – March 28	10:00 AM Service of Baptism 6:00 PM Footwashing Service
96-Hour Prayer- Begins Wed., March 31@6AM	
Maundy Thursday – April 1	6:30 PM – Supper Service A meditative meal commemorating the Last Supper – sign up by March 28
Good Friday – April 2	3:00 PM Ecumenical Good Friday Walk 6:30 PM Good Friday Service
Easter Sunday – April 4	6:00 AM – Ecumenical Sunrise Service 8:00 & 10:00 AM – Easter Worship 9:00 AM – Easter Brunch