



Cross and Spire

Newsletter of the First Baptist Church

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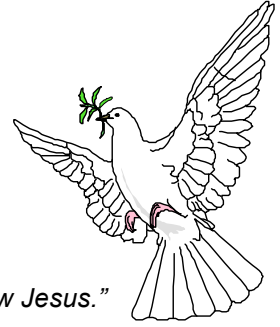
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"Not a perfect church, not a perfect people, just a simple desire to follow Jesus."



Who Was My Neighbor?

Laurie Edwards

I'd like to tell about our former neighbor, Frannie. Frannie was an elderly woman who used to live right next door to the parsonage. Frannie is long since passed away and left no family, so I feel as though I can speak of her rather freely. You see, Frannie was what one might call eccentric, eccentric being the polite word for strange. Here are some facts about Frannie: 1) Frannie loved animals and owned a lot of them. 2) Frannie's animals were never properly housetrained. 3) Frannie never cleaned, which her house and body bore witness to. 4) Everything that came out of Frannie's house (Frannie included) smelled like her house. 5) Frannie loved children, the pastor's children in particular. 6) Frannie liked to make gifts of M&M's and candy to children she loved. 7) We made a point of never eating anything that came out of Frannie's house.

As I said, Frannie was our neighbor.

As Frannie got to know us better, she began to come to church. It was not pleasant sitting next to Frannie in church (see #3 above). Imagine my relief when other people at First Baptist began taking it on themselves to sit next to Frannie. I'd come upstairs from Sunday School, round the corner into the sanctuary, and breathe a sigh of relief that someone else was seated beside Frannie in the pew. A narrow escape from having to treat my neighbor like a neighbor.

Wow, did I just say that? Because, no two ways about it, Frannie was my neighbor. I mean, by anybody's definition, the person who lives in the house right next to yours with barely ten feet between your driveway and hers is most certainly your neighbor. Of course, when the young lawyer in the book of

Luke, attempting to justify himself, asks Jesus "Who is my neighbor?", Jesus turns the whole question on its head. He tells the story of the Good Samaritan and ends by asking "Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" In other words, rather than asking "Who is my neighbor?" we should be asking "How do I act like a neighbor to this person?"

Don't get me wrong. Sometimes I treated Frannie like a neighbor (I think!). When she collapsed on our front steps, we called an ambulance. When she injured her head and came to me for help changing the bandage, I obliged her. When she brought a bag of M&M's to our door for the children, I politely thanked her and put them aside until I could throw them away at a more opportune time. When I walked into church and saw her sitting alone, I would sit somewhat nearby . . .

But it was other folks at First Baptist who went out of their way to sit beside her on Sunday mornings and even offer her an occasional hug. And it was other folks at First Baptist who bravely accepted and ate her proffered homemade whoopee pies at a church potluck. It was other folks who were truly neighbors to Frannie.

In a recent issue of *Leadership* magazine, an article refers to a scene from the movie *Entertaining Angels*, in which the Christian social activist Dorothy Day falls down at a statue of Jesus and asks, "Why did you have to wear such a revolting disguise, covered in vomit, smelling of urine, dressed in rags, anyway?"

Jesus, in His story of the sheep and the goats, says "In as much as you did it to the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me." We probably don't need to ask "Who is the least of these?" But we may need to ask, "How can I be their neighbor?"

BABY BOTTLE BENEFIT COMING!

CareNet's Annual Baby Bottle Benefit fundraiser will be held from Mother's Day (May 10) to Father's Day (June 21). Baby bottles will be available to save up loose change in during that time to support the ministry of CareNet Pregnancy Care Center. Pick up bottles on Mother's Day, return on Father's Day. Save your change – save lives!

LETTER CARRIERS FOOD DRIVE

The National Association of Letter Carriers will hold their annual Food Drive on Saturday, May 9th. Please be sure to leave your donations of non-perishable food items by your mailbox for your mail carrier to pick up or in the box provided at the post office! Donations directly benefit our own Raven Box Food Pantry! Thank you Letter Carriers!

NOTES OF THANKS

Dear First Baptist,
Thank you so much for allowing us to use the church for my grandma's party. I am thankful you are in her life. Thanks for celebrating with us!
Joanne Walton

Dear "Anonymous",
Thank you for the very kind gift and note you left on Laurie's desk last month. We greatly appreciate it!
Dale & Laurie Edwards

YOUTH GROUP NEWS:

Clothing Giveaway

The youth groups will be holding a Spring/Summer Clothing Giveaway on Saturday, May 16th from 8:30AM-12:00PM. Donations of warm weather clothing needed. All are welcome to come and help themselves!

30-Hour Famine

We had 12 teens and 3 leaders participate in the 30-Hour Famine at the end of February, and raised over \$400 for World Vision. Thank you to all who sponsored and/or prayed for our teens!

GOVE HILL WORKDAY

Gove Hill's spring Workday is scheduled for Saturday, May 23rd. Breakfast is served at 8:00 AM, with work beginning at 9:00 AM. Lunch is also provided. People are also welcome to come Friday night if they desire to stay overnight at no charge (no meals are provided Friday). There are always jobs for all

skill levels. Please call Bill Clark (802-785-4000) for more information or list of jobs, and tools you might want to bring.

CONTEMPLATING GOOD FRIDAY AND BLOOD SACRIFICES – Richard Moon

I've found that one of the most somber things about Holy Week, since I chose to accept Jesus as my Savior, is contemplating the sacrifice Jesus made for us. At first it leaves me feeling blessed that this supreme sacrifice was made for me as well as others. All I have to do is accept it. Secondly, it leaves me feeling somewhat inadequate. I can't help but wonder what sacrifice am I capable of making for others. Trust me, I'm not thinking in terms of anything heroic here. I'm thinking in everyday terms. This Good Friday I got an answer to that question. Good Friday matched up with the day I donate blood. It occurred to me that I was making a blood sacrifice for others. Every two months, health and schedule permitting, I donate about ten percent of my life's blood to the Red Cross. It's painless for the most part. The thing that hurts the most, for me, is having my finger pricked. Giving blood is no more difficult than having it drawn for a lab test. So, why am I writing this? There's a real need. The Red Cross is chronically short of blood for transfusions. With current practices, blood is given only as a last resort. It is truly the gift of life. Sure, there are other ways of giving blood: playing rugby, hockey and football. If you're capable of getting out of the house, you're probably capable of donating blood. I'd encourage all who read this to consider making the gift of life. You must be 17 or older, weigh over 110 pounds, and be in good physical health. It is safe. There is no way to contract any blood borne diseases in donating.

EVENING CONCERT OF PRAYERS

The Board of Deacons warmly invites you to our church's first "Evening Concert of Prayers" on Thursday, May 14th between 6:30 PM and 8:30 PM. Join us as we draw near to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! We hope and pray that you can join us. Be sure to mark your calendars with the date. Prayer request inserts are available in our Sunday worship bulletin, or the church office may be called with any prayer requests (603-448-5618).

GRADUATING SENIORS?

If you have a child graduating from high school this June, please inform the church office. It is a tradition at First Baptist to give a Bible to graduating seniors. Thank you!

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

Hopefully you have noticed the offering envelope included in this month's newsletter. During the month of May we will be accepting the One Great Hour of Sharing offering. Money collected through this offering is used in the name of Christ for disaster relief in both the US and around the world; it is also used for development projects and refugee ministries. Aid is sent when hurricanes, earthquakes, cyclones and tsunamis strike; refugees receive help as they rebuild their lives; people receive education, health care, tools, seeds and resources to improve their communities. Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." May you find your treasure, and your heart, by sharing resources and changing lives with a generous gift to One Great of Sharing!

ABC/VNH ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the American Baptist Churches of Vermont & New Hampshire will be held June 5-6 at Kimball Union Academy in Meriden, NH. This year's keynote speaker is Liliana DaValle, Executive Minister of ABC Rhode Island. Liliana is a native of Argentina. She has served as a pastor and has a passion for multi-cultural ministry. The convention will include the following workshops: "The Holy Spirit: Where is the Power Coming From"; "Voices of Prison Ministry: Inside-Out"; "Listening to God"; "From Members to Ministers: The Priesthood of Believers"; and "How to Be a Prudent Christian Investor with the Lord's Funds". Although each church is allowed a limited number of voting delegates, there is no limit to the number who may attend from any church. For more information, contact the church office.

CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE!

First Baptist will pay ½ the cost for any children who wish to attend Christian camp for a week this summer. Summer camp brochures from Camp Sentinel in Tuftonboro, NH are available on the literature racks near

the church entryways. If you register a child for camp, please be sure to notify the church office (448-5618 or office@lebfirstbaptist.com) to ensure that scholarship money is sent.

EASTER BLESSINGS!

Over 300 people attended our Easter worship services! There were 80 at the 8:00 service and 225 at the 10:00. Thank you to all who worked on the events of Easter week – Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, the Easter Breakfast, Egg Hunt, etc.!

LOOKING AHEAD TO JUNE:

Children's Day – Sunday, June 14th

Celebrate the end of our Sunday School year with a special worship service & lunch!

Vacation Bible School – June 22-26

We're looking ahead to another exciting week of VBS! We're looking for volunteers – if you can help out, contact Tammi Dubuque (448-8868 or crdtld@yahoo.com).

FOOD PANTRY CONCERNS

Our Raven Box Food Pantry continues to see record usage by families struggling to make ends meet. In addition to food donations, we are in need of cash donations to purchase gift certificates to local stores for purchase of fresh food items (meat, milk, etc.). Checks may be put in with the regular Sunday offering with a note for "Raven Box". Thank you!

WOMEN'S DINNER NOTES

Our last Women's Fellowship Dinner of the year will be held on Tuesday, May 19 at 6:00 PM at Marge Olson's. The dinner will be POTLUCK, with hot dogs & hamburgers provided. All women are invited to join in an evening of fellowship and study of *The Purpose-Driven Life*. Sign-up and directions on sanctuary bulletin board.



*Women's Fellowship
Potluck Dinner &
Purpose-Driven Life
Study
Tuesday, May 19 @ 6:00*

**MEN'S BREAKFAST
SAT., MAY 9
7:30 AM
ALL MEN WELCOME**

