



Cross and Spire

Newsletter of the First Baptist Church

11 School St., Lebanon, NH 03766

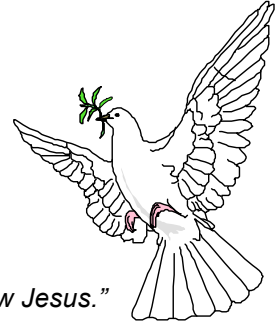
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"Not a perfect church, not a perfect people, just a simple desire to follow Jesus."



THE THIRTY HOURS

By Laurie Edwards

The students had started fasting right after their lunch at school that Friday, which for some was as early as 11:00 AM. Knowing their next real meal wouldn't be until 6:00 PM the next day, they trudged into the church at 4:00, lugging their sleeping bags, pillows, overnight bags and backpacks. "Boys in the nursery, girls in the Pellerin Room!" After some initial greetings and catching up with friends, we hauled out the cardboard, duct tape and tarps and everyone set to work constructing shelters in which they'd spend the night. Sure, we'd have the church roof over our heads, but at least it helped us to imagine that cardboard and tarps might be all that stood between some people and the unpredictable New England weather.

"Water, drink plenty of water," I constantly reminded them – we didn't want anyone to get dehydrated. Every few hours we offered the option of some juice or a piece of fruit to help ward off headaches and feeling faint. In a culture where most of us rarely go three waking hours without some sort of snack, our kids had volunteered to go thirty hours without food to raise money to help fight hunger around the world. Our goal was to raise \$3000 - the final total was closer to \$4000! Pretty amazing since in the past we'd never raised more than \$1000 through the Famine. But more amazing than the amount of money raised, or even than the wondrous shine on Jim's freshly shaven head at the end of the Famine, was seeing God at work in our midst.

Because, believe it or not, as The Thirty Hours wore on, I realized more and more that it wasn't really about the money. Although we'd initially set out to experience in a small

way what it feels like to go without food and at the same time raise money for World Vision, as time progressed The Thirty Hours began to take on more of the Biblical pattern of fasting as a means to better focus on God and prayer. We saw God weave together the individual events we leaders had planned – the movie "The Blind Side", devotionals, games, food pantry shopping, etc. – to draw us all closer to each other and to Him. A simple object lesson with toy sunglasses led to an amazing discussion of what it means to see others through the eyes of Christ. Kids who had to leave the famine for a few hours for school commitments were eager to get back, having successfully managed to resist the pizza or burgers or sweets being served at the events.

Sometime on Saturday afternoon, usually the most difficult and most stressful time of the Famine, I suddenly realized that I was actually having fun. When people would ordinarily be tired and hungry and irritable and losing patience with everyone around them, they instead were happy and relaxed and enjoying themselves. Kids napped as needed, and everyone participated in creating the giant collage to be hung in the church for Sunday morning. Before we knew it, 5:30 had arrived, the appointed time for "THE SHAVING," and by 6:15 we were gathered around the table, thanking God for the food and for those who had prepared it. And somewhere in there I realized that God is doing a new thing in the youth group here at First Baptist, and what a blessing it is to be able to be a part of it!

"Now to Him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen!"
Ephesians 3:20-21.

SPRING CLOTHING GIVEAWAY

Gather together that warm weather clothing you don't wear anymore and bring it in for our Spring Clothing Giveaway! The Free event is scheduled for Saturday, May 15th from 8:30 AM to noon. Donations of clean, gently used clothing may be brought to the church at any time. We're also looking for volunteers to help sort clothes on Friday from about 5:30-8:00 PM. If you can help out or have any questions, please contact Cheril Maynard at 603-632-5820 or cherilmaynard@yahoo.com.

EASTER SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

Palm Sunday Baptisms

We rejoice that we had 9 baptisms on Palm Sunday! The following people were baptized: Michaela Girdwood, Michelle Schmidt, Kirsten Kersey, Ian Girdwood, Sean McCleary, Barbara Ray, Tom McCleary, Juanita Paynter, and Rodney Decato. On that day we were also happy to welcome the following into church membership: Dale & Nancy Schmidt, Bill and Bernice Clark, and Barbara Ray.

96-Hour Prayer

We prepared for Easter with our first ever 96-Hour Prayer Vigil. We managed to fill all forty-eight 2-hour slots, so that someone was praying around the clock from 6:00 AM on Wednesday, March 31st through 6:00 AM on Easter Sunday. Prayer closets were set up in both the nursery and downstairs. Thank you to everyone who participated, and a special thanks to those who organized and made the event a reality.

Easter Services

About 280 people attended our Easter Sunday worship services! Other highlights of Easter week included our annual Maundy Thursday supper service, the Good Friday service, and good showings from First Baptist at both the ecumenical Easter Sunrise service and Good Friday Walk. Thanks to everyone who gave of their time and talents throughout the week!

NOTES OF THANKS

I am very appreciative of the anonymous donation that I received from the church family. It helped me to supply heat and other needed items for my home this past winter. It is with a glad heart that I thank the person or persons for the help that was so needed and came at the perfect time. Thank you so very much.

God bless, Juanita Paynter

*Dear Deacons of First Baptist,
I want to thank you for all the cards and basket of fruit while I was ill. Being able to feel connected to the church family was a big part of the healing process. Also, thank you so much for the beautiful Easter lily which will eventually go in the garden to be enjoyed for years to come. Such a blessed feeling to be back in church and with the church family I love so much.*

*In Christian Love, Jean Nolan
To My Church Family, Thank you so much for my Easter lily. It was so thoughtful of you.*

Love, Flo Roberts

*Dear Friends at First Baptist,
Thank you so very much for the beautiful tulips. They are one of my favorite flowers. God brings these through winter's harsh storms and restores them to such magnificent beauty. That should show us what God can do for us . . . if we will just allow Him to.*

With Love, Marilyn Garrow

*To My Church Family,
The lily you sent is absolutely beautiful. The aroma is heavenly. I thank God for such a caring family. May God bless each one of you!
Sincerely, Dot Jewett*

LETTER CARRIERS FOOD DRIVE MAY 8!

The National Association of Letter Carriers will hold their annual Food Drive on Saturday, May 8th. 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!

CHANGE IN PHONE NUMBER

Please note that Jim & Terri Waters phone number has been changed in recent months. Their new number is 603-632-1145.

CHILDREN'S DAY JUNE 13TH!

Please join us for our Children's Day program on Sunday, June 13th as we celebrate God's blessings through our Sunday School and honor those who serve in children's ministries here. Everyone is invited to stay after church for a delicious lunch and time for fun!

HIGH SEAS EXPEDITION VBS!

Dates and a theme have been set for this summer's Vacation Bible School. This year

we'll be having a "High Seas Expedition!" The dates are June 21-25. Be on the lookout for further details as they become available, as well as opportunities to volunteer!



CONCERT OF PRAYERS MAY 22ND
Our next Concert of Prayers will be Saturday, May 22 from 8:30AM to 12:30 PM. Everyone is invited to participate for all or part of the morning. We will be joining together in

prayer for each other, our church, our community, our nation and our world.

BABY BOTTLE BENEFIT COMING!!!

Help us support the ministry of the Pregnancy Center of the Upper Valley! Beginning on Mother's Day (May 9th) and ending on Father's Day (June 20th) we'll be participating in the Center's Baby Bottle Benefit. Take a Baby Bottle home and fill it with your loose change (or loose bills!) and return it to the church by Father's Day. The Center is a Christian ministry that provides support, resources and information to those facing decisions around unexpected pregnancies and sexual activity.



Free Clothing Giveaway!!
Saturday, May 15
8:30AM-12:00PM
Donations of clean, gently used clothes may be brought to the church!
If you can help set up on Friday evening, see Cheril Maynard!

Women's Fellowship Potluck Dinner & Purpose-Driven Life Study
6:00 PM Tuesday, May 18
At Marge Olson's, 30 Dorset Lane. Lebanon First Baptist

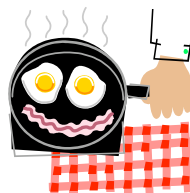


JESUS SAID, "FEED MY SHEEP"

With news and images of natural disasters and war-torn countries on our television screens and in our newspapers on a daily basis, we're reminded of Jesus' instructions to take care of those who are in need, to love others as He has loved us. The One Great Hour of Sharing offering (see the enclosed offering envelope) will be accepted through the month of May. Contributions to this offering provide emergency relief, refugee assistance, and funds for domestic and international development in 80 countries around the world and in the U.S. Donations ensure that disaster needs (such as those recently seen in Haiti) can be responded to as soon as they happen. Please prayerfully consider giving to this important offering!

YOUTH GROUP NEWS

Please note that there will be no youth group meetings on Mother's Day (May 9) and Memorial Day weekend (May 30) – all youth are encouraged to do something special for their mothers and enjoy their families on those days! Looking ahead to June, we are planning an end of year event at the Whale's Tale water park in Lincoln, NH on Saturday, June 12, so mark your calendars!



Men's Breakfast
Saturday, May 8
7:30 AM
At the Church
All Men Welcome!

SPRING RETREAT BLESSINGS

We had thirteen out for our spring Lenten retreat at Gove Hill March 26-27. It was a great time to consider what it means to live out "agape" love as we studied 1 John. Thanks to all who attended, and a special thanks to our hosts, Bill & Bernice Clark.

CHRISTIAN WRITERS CONFERENCE

Aspiring writers – don't miss this wonderful opportunity to grow in the craft of writing and in an understanding of writing from the context of Christian faith. The dates are July 16-18 at Gove Hill Retreat in Thetford, VT. For more information, brochures are available in the church literature racks!