

Cross and Spire

Newsletter of the First Baptist Church

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

Under the Golden Arches

Laurie Edwards

A few weeks ago Dale and I were invited by friends to attend Boston’s Emmanuel Gospel Center’s annual fundraising banquet. Now, in nearly 27 years of being a pastor’s wife, I’ve attended enough fundraising dinners to find them predictable. Everyone dresses up in their Sunday best and travels to the local hotel’s fancy banquet room, where you over-stuff yourselves on baked stuffed chicken breast, green beans almandine, and a baked potato, then sit through a forty-five minute pitch about the said organization followed by the expected envelope and pledge card. It’s okay, but as I said, it’s predictable. I guess this is what I expected to find in Boston on April 9th. I couldn’t have been more wrong.

I should have been clued in that this was going to be different when our friends said to dress casually – I mean, who dresses casually for a fundraising banquet? And when, rather than heading to a fancy hotel, we found ourselves driving through one of the rougher neighborhoods in Boston looking for a Salvation Army Community Center, my expectations were not high. Where were they bringing us? We drove through Dorchester, parked the car (on-site parking in Boston! Who knew?!), and walked across a lovely paved patio with scripture quotes etched in the stonework. We passed through metal detectors into a beautiful, brand new building containing an aquatic center/water park, a huge gymnasium, fitness center, senior center, chapel/theater, and more. Everywhere there were Bible verses beautifully incorporated into the décor. It was just a wonderful place.

We walked into the gymnasium and there was a plaque on one wall, “Ray & Joan Kroc Memorial Community Center.” Kroc – that name sounded familiar. It should have; Ray Kroc was the founder of McDonald’s (yes, *that* McDonald’s). Upon her death, Joan Kroc left 1.5 billion dollars to the Salvation Army designated to build state-of-the-art community centers nationwidewhere “children and families would be exposed to different people, activities and arts that

would otherwise be beyond their reach.” It was the largest single gift ever given to any single charity at one time. And what a gift it was! The Community Centers are safe places in not-so-safe neighborhoods, oases for people of all ages. And unabashedly places where Christ is proclaimed and honored. I was truly moved just walking into the building. What a testimony to dedicate ones wealth to a cause like this!

But, the evening was not about the Kroc’s. It was about the Emmanuel Gospel Center. And before April 9th, I’m embarrassed to admit I had no real idea what that was or what they did. Perhaps their website puts it most succinctly: **“The Emmanuel Gospel Center is a faith-based, non-denominational, Christian organization that seeks to identify and nurture the systems that empower the effective ministry of urban churches in their communities.** We engage in applied research to help us understand the city as it constantly changes. And we offer consulting and programs designed to help churches grow stronger and serve people better.” (www.egc.org). They provide “resources for churches and ministries in Boston’s low-income, immigrant, and ethnic communities.”

The Emmanuel Gospel Center puts brains behind urban ministry. They put brains behind their fundraising evening as well. Rather than the usual stuffy, sit-down dinner, it was a casual atmosphere in which we could walk around, view exhibits explaining the various ministries sponsored by the EGC, meet new people, and visit stations positioned around the room with appetizers and international foods. Rather than being catered by a hotel, it was catered by the local chapter of Teen Challenge. In place of the 45-minute fundraising appeal, we were moved to the bleachers to join in a time of worship followed by a brief presentation of the work the organization is doing. There *were* envelopes of course – after all, it was a fundraising event. But even more it was a celebration of ministry and of what God is doing in the low-income, immigrant and ethnic communities of Boston.

I’m thankful to have had this opportunity to see evidence of God at work, and to see Christians doing good and doing it well! Praise God!

30-HOUR FAMINE COMING MAY 13-14!

Please pray for and help support/sponsor our youth group as we do the 30-Hour Famine this year. We hope to have a large group of kids fasting and having fun as we raise money to help fight world hunger. All donations will go to World Vision's hunger relief and prevention programs. We will be going without food from noontime on Friday, May 13 until 6:00 PM on Saturday, May 14. Thanks for your support!

SPECIAL SERVICE OF DRAMA & MUSIC!

Don't miss the special worship service on Sunday, May 1st at 10:00 AM featuring the drama, "Believing Thomas" about the disciple Thomas of doubting fame. The service will also feature extra music and worship. Bring the family – invite a friend!

FAMILY FUN NIGHT MAY 6TH!

Pizza, mystery games & more will be the theme of our next Family Fun Night coming Friday, May 6 from 6:00-8:00 PM. Everyone's invited to come and make their own pizza and enjoy a time of fun and fellowship. All ages welcome!

GOVE HILL WORKDAY MAY 7TH!

Gove Hill's spring workday will be Saturday, May 7th. Breakfast will be served at 8:00 with work starting after breakfast, and free lunch served to all workers. There are projects for all skill levels. If you plan to attend, please call Bill and Bernice (802-785-4000) so they know how many they'll be cooking for!

LETTER CARRIERS FOOD DRIVE MAY 14!

Leave your donations of non-perishable food items in a bag next to your mail box on Saturday, May 14 and your letter carrier will pick it up in the annual Letter Carriers Food Drive! First Baptist's Food Pantry receives a large donation of food from the Carriers each spring, helping us to keep food on the shelves for those in our community in need of assistance. So please be generous, and don't forget to thank your Letter Carrier for volunteering his/her time and energy to this worthwhile event!

BRING A KID FISHING!

A Fishing Derby will be held Saturday, May 21 from 10AM-3PM at Gove Hill Retreat in Thetford, VT. Cost is \$5 per person. Boys and girls are welcome! The day will include a cookout with hot dogs, hamburgers, etc. There will be a prize for every child, and a raffle every half-hour. What to bring? A child! A fishing pole! Bait (worms/flyes). No fishing license is required at it is a private pond. To register ahead, send your name, address, phone and number of those participating along with a check payable to AB Men of VT&NH to Daniel McFaul, 610 Country Land Drive, N. Haverhill, NH

03774. For directions to Gove Hill, go to www.govehillretreat.org.

POWERFUL TOOLS FOR CAREGIVERS CLASS

Do you help an older relative or friend? Perhaps you can benefit from this class to be held at the West Lebanon Congregational Church on Tuesdays May 3-June 14 from 1:00-3:30PM. For more information or to register, contact ServiceLink of Grafton County, 1-866-634-9412 or 603-448-1558, or email jconklin@gcscc.org. The class is free, but pre-registration is required.

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

More than 60 years ago, in response to the devastation of World War II, a national broadcast went out on a Saturday evening asking Americans to give generously the next morning in their churches. More than 75,000 churches responded the next day to the very first One Great Hour of Sharing Offering. Today, the OGHS serves people in over 80 countries around the world. The offering makes sure our denomination, together with 8 others and Church World Service, can respond to needs as soon as they happen with relief, rehabilitation and development. Please prayerfully consider your contribution to this important offering. A special offering envelope is included with this newsletter for your convenience. Thanks for your support!

WHITE CROSS UPDATE

Thank you to the ladies who helped with projects this year and a BIG welcome to all the new ladies who have joined us. Some of the ladies are working on projects through the summer, if anyone wants to do that, please feel free to call me or talk with me at church. Our kit projects went very well for this being our first year doing them. Our final totals were as follows. School Kits 19, Health Kits 32, Baby Kits 17. We will be doing these kits again starting in September. We also are going to be doing more sewing for our missionaries Ann & Bill Clemmer next year. They need roller bandages badly as these are used for more than just a bandage. Next year when we send the boxes I would like to send them 500 bandages. Have a good summer, I will be back in September to start our program again as I should have our packet of information in by then. God Bless, Lorraine Bickford

CLOTHING GIVEAWAY

I would like to thank everyone for all their help with the Clothing Giveaway. All the donations, help sorting, the day of the Giveaway and the support for this event. We are very fortunate to be able to offer this service to our community. Again, thank you to everyone who helped to make this possible and hopefully we will be able to continue to do so. Cheril Maynard

SABBATICAL UPDATE

The pastor's sabbatical is just about 6 weeks away! Thank you to everyone for your prayers and continued support as it draws nearer. Thank you for the leadership of the committee, and a special thanks to Ruth & Jim Newcomb for all their hard work and for the beautiful brochure which will be available May 1. Please continue to pray for Dale and Laurie as they prepare for the sabbatical as well as for our congregation during this time, that we all might grow in Christian love and unity and all be blessed through this experience. We will be seeing the Edwards off with a special service on Children's Day, June 12th. God Bless!

Tom Clifford

BABY BOTTLE BENEFIT COMING SOON!

The annual Baby Bottle Benefit begins on Mother's Day, May 8th. Take a baby bottle home with you, fill it with your loose change (or bills!) and return it to church on Father's Day, June 19th. Proceeds from this offering support the programs of the Pregnancy Center of the Upper Valley. The Center offers resources and information needed by those facing decisions around unexpected pregnancy and sexual activity. Be on the lookout for the basket full of baby bottles on May 8!

96-HOUR PRAYER EVENT

Thank you to everyone who participated in our second annual 96-Hour Prayer Event during the week before Easter. More than 25 people participated in the event, taking at least one, and often more, one-hour prayer slot during the four-day prayer vigil. Although a few slots were left open, coverage was good with a minimum number of gaps. We are reminded that prayer is the most important thing we can do as Christians, and these blocks of uninterrupted prayer time are a blessing to those who are praying as well as those who are prayed for. Be on the lookout for future such opportunities!

EASTER BLESSINGS

Close to 300 people joined us for worship on Easter Sunday morning here at First Baptist. About 60 attended the Maundy Thursday Supper Service – the largest group in recent memory. We also had a good turnout for the Good Friday *Passion Reflection* which was written and presented by Ed Griffin. The *Reflection* was a moving account of the events surrounding Jesus' death on the cross. Thank you to everyone who gave of their time and abilities throughout Easter Week!

MAY MEN'S BREAKFAST AT EBA'S!

Attention all men: The May Men's Breakfast will be held at EBA's restaurant in Hanover on Saturday, May 14 at 7:30 AM (while the youth group starves at the church for the 30-Hour Famine!). All men are welcome to attend. Questions, contact Rodney Jenness, 448-4864.

MAY WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP DINNER

The Women's Fellowship Potluck Dinner will be held on Tuesday, May 24 at 6:00 PM at Marge Olson's, 30 Dorset Lane, Lebanon. All women are invited to bring a dish to share and join in an evening of fellowship and a study of the *Purpose-Driven Life*. Directions and sign up sheet available on the sanctuary bulletin board.



Women's Fellowship
Potluck Dinner
Tuesday, May 24
6:00 PM
At Marge Olson's 30
Dorset Lane, Lebanon
All Women Welcome!

CHILDREN'S DAY IS COMING!

Mark your calendar! Children's Day will be Sunday, June 12! There will be a special worship service at 10:00 followed by a fellowship luncheon. Join us in celebrating God's blessings on our Children's ministries, as well as sending off the Edwards on their sabbatical journey!

YOUTH GROUP NEWS

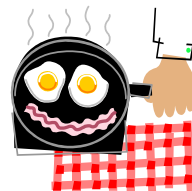
Youth group is an exciting place to be these days! With new young people showing up all the time, its hard keeping up with names! On Palm Sunday we headed off to LaSalette after church to walk through the Stations of the Cross and contemplate Christ's sacrifice for us. We also had a scavenger Easter egg hunt around the church. Upcoming events include the 30-Hour Famine scheduled for May 13-14. Folks in the congregation will be asked to donate food items for the kids to pick up for the Food Pantry, and we will also be helping the Letter Carriers unload their donated food on Saturday afternoon. In June we are planning an overnight at Gove Hill as an end of year event. Thank you for your prayerful support of the young people God is bringing our way!

COMING TO GOVE HILL:

Christian Writers Conference – July 15-17

Summer Songwriting Conference – July 22-24

For more info., go to www.govehillretreat.org.



MEN'S
BREAKFAST
AT EBA'S!!!
Saturday, May 14
7:30 AM