

Cross and Spire

Newsletter of the First Baptist Church

11 School St., Lebanon, NH 03766

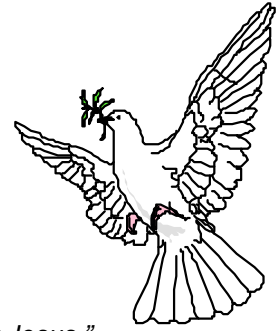
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"Not a perfect church, not a perfect people, just a simple desire to follow Jesus."



MORE REFLECTIONS ON CHAT

By Dale Edwards

I am still digesting the 50+ page CHAT (Church Health Assessment Tool) Survey which 63% of our church family responded to this spring and early summer. It is full of insights and observations and even a few surprises. While trying to understand our ministry better, there are things to celebrate in the present. We celebrated, so far, 16 baptisms this year. Youth group has started the year with 25 young people attending. The 20-Something's group, a new ministry, has about 15 people involved. Our Sunday School is off to a strong start, with room to grow. I find it interesting that our largest classes are the adult (20) and junior high (11) classes. Church attendance, with the conclusion of summer, has crept back to about 150 people. And we just finished a mission's week with guests John and Debbie Coats serving with Eastern Mennonite Missions in Cambodia, and Brendan Jorgensen serving with Intervarsity Christian Fellowship in New England. We have had our first deacon's prayer meeting of the year. Keep the requests coming! We have received more monetary gifts for the food pantry, and there is growing involvement in the community dinner program, Habitat for Humanity, and COVER. About 12 people have or will be moving away, which saddens me, yet already there are new faces appearing on Sunday morning. But as I look at the present, I am reminded that maturity is being able to see both the trees and the forest. So now back to CHAT, and a view of the forest.

There were some unsurprising results in the survey. For example 43% of our church

family lives within a 5 mile radius of the church building. I have noticed over the last few years more people walking in from the neighborhood. 83% live within a 10 mile radius. 24% have lived in the Lebanon area 10 years or less, and 32% have resided here 25 years or more. As I reported last month, 58% have attended First Baptist for less than 10 years. Now for a surprise: of the 63% who responded, the largest single grouping was women with college degrees. This would not be the popular image of a Baptist church. But I want to move on to two of the expressed desires from the survey.

Both the church's leadership and the congregation cited the desires for more teaching and practice in the areas of servant leadership and spiritual disciplines. TO THIS I GIVE AN ENTHUSIASITC "YES." As I have been giving prayer and thought to these two stated desires, I think I could be seeing a place for a deeper partnership between pastor and people, and leadership and congregation. I think God is giving us an incredible opportunity. The reason I say this is I believe growth in these areas can only come about in a context of community. Spiritual growth and the embracing of servanthood are both cognitive and intuitive, they are both taught and caught when people and leaders are together.

As I was saying last Sunday, the Holy Spirit is like the wind, we know what it does but we don't comprehend how the Holy Spirit works. I was musing over John Wesley's cell group model, and wondering if all our boards and committees could function like cell groups? Or the increasing of home groups, retreats, and prayer times within the church building are also part of the answer. Maybe it is all of these. Teaching can equip the

individual to pursue deeper prayer, study, journaling, fasting, etc. But there is no substitute for pursuing these things in the context of community. As many of you know, for two years I participated in a pastor's spiritual formation retreat program. It was one of the most life transforming times in my life. We had a covenant which stated in part that the purpose of our group was be "Vulnerable and available to the Holy Spirit and each other". It was sometimes hard work to slow down one's mind and soul. It was very difficult to get away from a "busy" life and be with God. It was humbling to share Christ in the context of a small committed group for a few seasons. Would the desire for more depth first be demonstrated by commitment? It is within prayer, the study of Scripture, and good and transparent conversation that so much spiritual growth takes place. I would be overjoyed to teach, talk, listen, and travel together in a fuller lifestyle of spiritual growth, and servanthood.

Let's pray for a time seeing where God will lead us, what doors He will open, what places and times He will give us, to pursue God's goodness. Let's pray and make plans together. WE CAN GROW AND SERVE IN WAYS WE NEVER IMAGINED. When I think of servanthood and the pursuit of holiness, I am reminded of Micah's words: "to do justice and love mercy and walk humbly with our God."

GOVE HILL FALL WORKDAY

Gove Hill Retreat's Fall Workday will be Saturday, October 23rd from 8:00AM to 3:00PM. Breakfast and lunch are provided. People are welcome to come for part or all of the day. There are jobs available for all skill levels! Friday night free lodging is also available. Contact Bill or Bernice Clark at 802-785-4000 or govehill@abcvnh.org.

FIRST BAPTIST PRAYER CHAIN

First Baptist Prayer Chain is alive and well! If you have an emergency prayer request, please call the church office (448-5618) or the parsonage (448-4061) and the prayer chain will be activated. If you can't reach the Edwards, please call the second person on the list, Lydia Hill at 603-523-7768.

NOTE OF THANKS

I wish to thank my church family for your cards, gifts, visits, good wishes and prayers for my recovery from surgery. Your many kindnesses were very uplifting and, praise God, I am well and healthy again.

Karl Meagher

FALL CLOTHING GIVEAWAY!

There will be a Free Clothing Giveaway on Saturday, October 16 from 8:30AM to 12:00 noon. We are in need of donations of clean, gently used seasonal clothing for children and adults of all sizes and ages! We are also in need of VOLUNTEERS to help sort clothing on Friday afternoon/evening. Donations may be left at the church at any time. Set up will be Friday, October 15th from 3:30-5:30PM. If you can help out in any way, please contact Cheril Maynard (603-632-5820) or call the church office. Thanks!

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KIDS AT YOUTH GROUP!

That's right – 25 young people came out for our first youth group meeting of the year! Who'd have thought Frisbee golf in

the park at dusk could be so much fun?! We're looking forward to a great year with the junior and senior high youth groups. Our big fall event will be a Sleepover & Mission Project in conjunction with Gove Hill's fall workday Oct. 22-23rd. We're also looking forward to a Valentine's Dinner and Deep Freeze at Camp Berea again this year. This year's leaders are Bernice Clark, John Wilson, Steve & Deb Girdwood, and Laurie Edwards. Please note there will be NO youth group meeting on October 10 due to the Columbus Day holiday.



Free Clothing Giveaway!
Saturday, Oct. 16
8:30am-12:00pm
Check It Out!

BAZAAR COMING NOVEMBER 6TH!

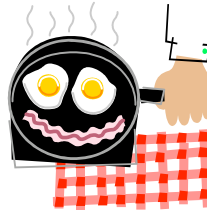
Our annual Christmas Bazaar is Saturday, November 6, and we need your time and/or donations to make it a success! All proceeds from the Bazaar are used to buy food for the church's Raven Box food pantry program. Here are some ideas for items you might like to donate: Craft items, jewelry, baked goods (pies, cookies, breads, etc.), and white elephant (yard sale type) items. If you can give of your time, we are in need of volunteers for set up on Thursday, Nov. 4 from 5:00-8:00, Friday between 8:00AM and 7:00 PM, Saturday for part or all of the bazaar or afterwards for clean-up. To sign up, see the red insert in your Sunday church bulletin. Please note that White Elephant items need to be left at the church by Thursday, Nov. 4 and clearly marked "for Bazaar". Other items may be left through Friday, Nov. 5. Baked goods may be left at the church or the parsonage Friday evening. If you have any questions, please contact Terry Bolduc (603-632-5168).

CARD OF THANKS

*First Baptist Church,
Thank you so much for your generous donation to our church. We are so blessed to have friends like you.*

*First Baptist Church
South Londonderry, VT*

Christmas Bazaar!
Saturday, Nov. 6
8:30am - 1:00pm
Shop, Work, Donate!
Benefits Food Pantry

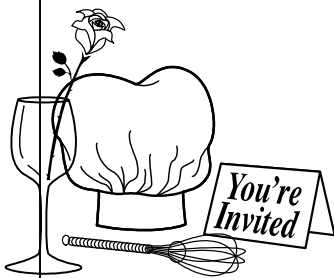


MEN'S BREAKFAST
Saturday, Oct. 9
7:30 AM
ALL MEN WELCOME!!

PRAYER, PRAISE & FELLOWSHIP!
Thursday, Oct. 21
6:30-8:00 PM
Come Pray & Praise
God Together!



Women's
Fellowship
Potluck & Study
Tuesday, Oct. 19
6:00 PM
At Marge Olson's
20 Dorset Lane



**White Cross
Workday
& Potluck**
Saturday, Oct. 23
11:00-2:00
Mission Work &
Fellowship!

WHITE CROSS WORKDAY & POTLUCK

We're planning a White Cross workday to work on projects for missions on Saturday, October 23rd. We'll meet from 11:00AM-2:00PM at the church, and share a potluck lunch together. So bring a dish to share and come join the fun. Children welcome!