

The Bellringer



945 Storrs Road, Storrs, Connecticut 06268
Rev. Ron Baker: pastor@fbcmansfieldct.com

860-429-6043 www.fbcmansfieldct.com
Secretary: office@fbcmansfieldct.com

March 2008

Volume 22, Issue 1



Dear Church Members,

It is with great pleasure that I announce the arrival of our new electric keyboard in the conference room! Due to the gracious donations in memory of Clara Wells, the Music Committee purchased a Kawai CA-51. After much consideration, shopping around, and intensive research, the Music Committee has settled on a lovely sounding keyboard that has the capabilities to play hymns on its own! Please feel



free to try the keyboard during coffee hour or sing along when we use it for our annual Family Fun Night, frequent youth choir practices and other gatherings for worship.

In Christ's Love,

Ally Austin and the Music Committee



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First Baptist Church of Mansfield
- *Established 1809* -

A Word From the Pastor

This time of year is full of symbols. I saw a flock of robins just yesterday. They weren't far from where I had seen sap buckets hanging on a few trees. We have several large mud puddles that appear in our driveway about this time each year. Of course these are all symbols of spring. I think Spring is the season we are the most glad to see arrive. It may not be our favorite season, but it is the one we most look forward to.

There are other symbols around this time of year; the symbols of Lent. There are forty days in Lent, which is the same number of days Jesus spent in the wilderness before the beginning of his ministry. Forty days is often used as a symbol of a period of transformation. Another symbol is the nails which held Jesus to the cross (John 20:25). However, it was our sin, and God's justice, love, and forgiveness that really held him there. It was a bag of thirty silver coins that Judas was paid for agreeing to betray Jesus in Matthew 26:15. At the last supper in Mark 14 Jesus shared a loaf of bread and cup of wine along with that meal with his closest followers. The bread and cup are powerful symbols of our faith everyday, not just during Lent. At that same meal Jesus used a towel and basin of water to symbolize our calling to follow him in service to others. On that same night a group of Roman soldiers and Temple guards entered the Garden of Gethsemane with lanterns, torches and swords to arrest him, (John 18). Shortly after that a rooster crowed. Jesus was bound with a rope when he was led away and soon after a crown of thorns was

placed on his head. In a couple of Sundays we will celebrate Palm Sunday and pass out palm branches. Of course our symbol of all symbols is the empty cross.

The reason I am thinking about symbols is because it will soon be our turn to paint the backside of the "Tent of Hope" that we, (along with several other faith communities) will be sending to a refugee camp in Darfur, Africa. We are not allowed to paint Christian or American symbols on this tent because of the culture of where it is being sent. We are to paint symbols of hope.

To me, the greatest symbols of hope are the symbols of our faith. These things have not always been symbols of our faith however. We must not forget that the cross was a symbol of execution before it was a symbol of or faith. The bread and cup were just food long before they were Christ's body and blood.

God transforms things in surprising ways. God works that same way with people too.

In these last few days of Lent I pray you will see God in a person or place that you have never seen God before. May you experience God in a new way.

Paster Ken

ABCCONN News

I received the following letter from Judy Allbee at ABCCONN. I think it would be a great opportunity for our church. If anyone is interested in being a part of this, please let me know as soon as possible.

Thanks,
Pastor Ron

You and the members of your congregation are invited to be part of a very special grant project we have secured here in CT. This grant is being offered only to churches in communities of 50,000 or less and whose average worship attendance is 150 or fewer. I am writing you today because we believe your church fits within those guidelines. Let me tell you more about his project because I am very excited about the possibilities and I hope you will be as well.

The specific subject for this grant is "The Missional Church" which looks very carefully at ways in which the 21st century church can be more missional-minded in its ministry focus; considering the neighborhood and community you are into be the mission field.

There will be four Saturday sessions over an 18-month period. Should you choose to participate, you and lay leaders from your church will commit to attend all four Saturday events and do some homework in between those learning sessions. Each session will be led by the Rev. Glynis LeBarre, Transformation Specialist with National Ministries, ABCUSA with support from Linda Lea Snyder and me.

As part of this project, your church will receive a \$1,000 grant to carry out a community outreach project of your design to help you apply

the Missional church principles you will be learning. Your church will be asked to support the project with matching resources such as time and energy.

These are the dates and the learning plans for each date:

Session 1: Saturday, April 12, 2008

Introduction to Missional Church

What does it mean?, How can we see our community with the eyes of a missionary?, Church Health survey,

Project planning assignments, Worship.

Session 2: Saturday, October 4, 2008

Missional Church training, Presentation of project plans, Worship.

Session 3: Saturday, May 2, 2009

Missional Church training, Reports of progress on community projects, Share lessons learned, Review plans for finishing projects, Worship.

Session 4: Saturday,

September 26, 2009

Missional Church training, Celebration Worship, Lessons learned, Church health survey repeated.

The registration cost for your church will be \$200 to cover our expenses. In addition, if your church is not currently giving to support the American Baptist ministry through United Mission, then you will need to include some financial support from your budget in order for your church to participate in this project.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees welcomed back John Riesen to the Board and gave a warm welcome to new member Bob Gardiner. Elected officers for the year are John Riesen – Chair, Nancy Flynn – Secretary and Meradith McMunn – Treasurer, the Board is rounded off with Laura Austin, Nil Setterbert and Guy Myette.

The date for the **Spring Work Day** is set for **Saturday, April 19, 2008**. We have identified quite a few projects that will require *many hands* to complete. A Project Manager has been assigned for each project. If you can help in any way please contact the Project Manager before April 19th and let them know how you will be able to help.

Project: Landscaping around Church
Project Manager: Nils Setterberg

Project: Store Historical Document
Project Manager: Meradith McMunn

Project: Repair Skirting around Church Building
Project Manager: Guy Myette

Project: Organize Office Supply Closet
Project Manager: Nancy Flynn

Project: Paint Narthex and Doors
Project Manager: Prescott Spencer

Project: Scrape and paint outside window sill
Project Manager: Laura Austin

Have you noticed the strings on the back wall of the church? The back wall of the church has been pulling away from the building for a number of years and concern has been voiced about what to do. The Trustees have contacted two Historical Restoration Contractors for advice, Glen Pianika and Stephen Marshal. Both men felt that this is not an immediate emergency. They both looked at the foundation and the structure and agreed that the wall should be monitored for movement for 1 year. The wires on the back wall are measured every 2–3 months and the amount of movement is recorded. The Trustees will continue to monitor

the situation and research the best method of repair.

Please mark your calendars for the following dates set for this year:

April 13 – Trustees Meeting
April 19 – Spring Work Day
April 27 – Spring Business Meeting

Trustees on Lock Up

March – Nils Setterberg
April – Nancy Flynn

Last, but certainly not least, we must give a hearty and sincere thank you to Terry Yanaway and Patty Geissler for their years of service to the Board of Trustees. Both Terry and Patty completed six years of service, Terry as chair for a number of years and Patty as a very active member who took on projects and responsibility willingly. We will miss both of them at our meetings.

PRAYER CHAIN

Anyone interested in joining the church-wide prayer chain and has not given their name and phone number, please do so as quickly as possible. You can put your name and phone number on a piece of paper and put it in the offering plate, place it in the secretary's box in the Christian Ed Hallway or send it by email to office@mansfieldct.com



An Interview with Doug Whittemore

Doug Whittemore recently returned from a three month work project serving as a urologist on the army base Fort Carson in Colorado Springs, Colorado. There are several other military bases in that area and all the service personnel come to Fort Carson for their medical needs. So it was a very busy three months for Doug.

Doug said the first month was the most challenging because there was so much to learn before he could even start seeing patients. He had to learn a new Electronic Record Keeping System and what to do in the event of bio-medical terrorism.

When I asked Doug what the best part of his experience, he did not hesitate with his answer. Doug said the best part, no question, was attending Woodman Valley Chapel, which was the church he became involved with. It quickly became the highlight of his week. He could not wait to go back to church every Sun-

day. The name Woodman Valley Chapel may sound quaint, but it is a very large church that meets at two different locations at the same time. There two locations join their worship together electronically on Sunday morning so that over 1,000 people worship together in a very powerful experience.

Doug did not have much free time in Colorado, but he was able to occasionally be involved in a Bible Study and also managed to go skiing a few times.

Doug and Robin will leave for a medical mission trip to Mexico on Saturday, March 8th. This trip is sponsored by the Christian Medial Association. This will be Robin's first time to go along with Doug on this mission. They will be there for one week.

When they return home, Doug, does not know where his next adventure will be. But he trusts that God will lead him wherever it is.

Bible Study Group

Bible Study has started, on Wednesday afternoons, a Bible Study for the season of Lent, but we plan on continuing it until the summer. The curriculum we are using is titled, "***Favorite Bible Passages***". It includes some well known Bible passages from the Old and New Testament.

We have already looked at the creation story in Genesis, as well as, God's promise to Abraham. Some of the other upcoming lessons will be on the 10 Commandments, the 23rd Psalm, the Prophet Amos, and New Testament passages like the Beatitudes, the beginning of Jesus' mission and the love chapter in 1 Corinthians 13.

If you have other favorite passages that are not included in this curriculum, we would be glad to take some time and study those as well.

Please come out and join us on ***Wednesday afternoons from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.*** in the church office.



Ladies Aid Society

The Ladies Aid held a successful organizational meeting at the home of the Bakers on January 12. The following new officers were elected; Patty Geissler-President, Jill Stedman-Myette-Vice President, Tricia Baker-Secretary, and Laura Austin-Treasurer.

Items of business included:

A vote to purchase Bethlehem Lights for the sanctuary windows to be used during the Christmas season.

Exploring the possibility of having a drawing of the church by Richard Davis framed.

The silver coffee pot has been repaired courtesy of David Wright Jewelers.

Repairs to the oven and dishwasher in the kitchen are complete.

Decisions to continue with our dessert sales and the Butter Braid Sale.

With the repairs of the stove and dishwasher we were encouraged to use them on a more regular basis to ensure proper functioning. We have set a calendar of yearly activities to do just that. In February, we organized a Stuffed Shell luncheon before the All Church Planning Meeting and held a cheese cake sale. The luncheon was delicious and well received and the cheesecake sale was sold out with a one hundred dollar profit! Our next scheduled events will be:

April 4th at 6:30 - Ladies Aid Meeting with a Pot-Luck Dinner

April 27th - Pot-Luck Lunch before the Church Meeting

May 3rd - Fellowship Supper

Have you shared your wonderful and tasty

recipes with Nancy Flynn and Jill Stedman-Myette? We hope to have a big collection of recipes and the stories behind them for the cookbook that we are publishing. The cookbook will be part of the church's **200th anniversary celebration** that is coming up in 2009. Please submit your recipes soon.



We invite one and all to our next meeting on **Friday, April 4th** at the church. We will start the evening off with a Pot-Luck Dinner and a business meeting will follow. We would love to see some new faces. The Ladies Aid sponsors many great activities to support the church and we have some new ideas on the drawing board. Come and join the fellowship and fun.



HOLY WEEK SERVICES

PALM SUNDAY SERVICE-
MARCH 16TH AT 10:45 A.M.

**MAUNDY THURSDAY
SERVICE**
MARCH 20TH AT 7:00 P.M.

EASTER *SUNRISE* SERVICE
MARCH 23RD AT 6:30 A.M.
WITH BREAKFAST FOLLOW-
ING HERE AT FBCM

EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE
MARCH 23RD AT 10:45 A.M.

PLEASE NOTE: THERE IS
NO SUNDAY SCHOOL OR
YOUTH CHOIR ON EASTER
SUNDAY.

♪ **Music Notes** ♪

Youth Choir Festival

The **25th Annual Festival of Singing Children** presented by the Hartford/Springfield Chapter of Choristers Guild will be held **Saturday, April 26**, at the United Congregational Church of Holyoke, MA. We are very fortunate to have Helen Kemp, internationally renowned teacher, clinician, and director as guest director of this festival.



Come and support our Youth Choir by your presence and enjoy a wonderful afternoon concert.

**American Baptist
Women's Ministries**



American Baptist Women's Ministries of Connecticut will be having it's **Northeast Association Annual Meeting**

on **Saturday April 12** at 10:00 AM at our church. This coincides with Mission Travelcade which will have Chris George, Executive Director of IRIS, Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services as the speaker. IRIS is located in New Haven, CT and has resettled over 4000 refugees in the past 25 years. Everyone is welcome and a light lunch will be served.

Board of Christian Ed

The Board of Christian Education held a brief meeting on Sunday, Feb. 24th, to elect officers.

Chairperson: Susan Figueroa
Secretary: Joy Erickson

Please remember – **Sunday School will not be held on Easter Sunday – March 23rd**

3rd Sunday is - Covenant Soup Kitchen Sunday

Each month we will be collecting a specific item for the Covenant Soup Kitchen. Donations should be brought for the item announced in the bulletin on the **3rd Sunday of each month**. This day will officially be the Food Pantry Sunday.

Food donations of any kind can still be brought in at any time and placed in the designated bin. However, our emphasis each month will be on a specific food item.



The Men's Third Thursday Lunch

The men's luncheon meets on the **Third Thursday of every month**. We meet at 12:00 p.m. at a different restaurant each month. The restaurant will be announced the Sunday before. If you have a favorite restaurant you would like us to try, please let Pastor Ron know.

All men are invited to join us! A good time is had by all!



This month, March, the specific food item is **CANNED SOUP**. Donations of **CANNED SOUP** Should be brought in on **Sunday, March 16th**.



How many cans do you think we can collect on March 16th?

Questions? See Morgan Baker, Food Pantry Coordinator.

Church Family News



Congratulations to the following couples who celebrated wedding anniversary's in February!

Dottie Rose and Randy Gilliam—55 years!
Ronald and Frances Nichols—53 years!
Angel and Susan Figueroa—18 years!

Victoria (Tossie) James Gifford, wife of Wallace Gifford passed away on Feb. 4th in Sebastian, FL. She is the youngest sister of Barbara McSweeny and Millie Larkins.

On **December 2, 2007**, **Frances and Ron Nichols** became the **great-grandparents** of Jude Lillian Johnson, weighing 6lbs 1oz, and 18 1/2" long.

The proud parents are Shanna Weidner Johnson (the granddaughter of Ron and Frances Nichols) and Zachary Johnson (Missoula Mt).

The proud grandparents are Debbie Weidner (daughter of Ron and Frances Nichols) and Joseph Weidner of Livingston, Mt. All are doing well.

On the Service front we acknowledge the following:

Stationed in Korea, Kendall Barry, son of Richard and Jan Barry. He has been promoted to Sargent!

It was good to see Daniel Parker in church with his grandmother, Shirley Corcoran, when he returns to base, he will be stationed at Fort Polk, Louisiana.

Clare Flynn and Jenette Kloss were inducted into the World Languages Honor Society at E.O. Smith High School on Wednesday, February 27th. Clare was inducted into Société Honoraire De Français (French) and Jenette was inducted into Delta Epsilon Phi (German). To meet the requirements of the World Language Honor Society you must be in the third year of study of the language and have a B+ average or higher for those 3 years and maintain a B average in your other subjects.

ADDRESS UPDATES:

Shirley Corcoran's grandson, Private Dan W. Parker, Jr. is stationed in Fort Leonard Wood, MO. His address is:

Private Parker, D.W., Jr.
Bravo Co., 577 1st Eng. Bn.
Class 12J, 3rd Plt.
1243 Iowa Avenue
Ft. Leonard Wood, MO 65473

Carol and Dick Burnham's address in Florida is:

Carol & Dick Burnham
1209 SW 161st P.L.
Ocala, FL 34473

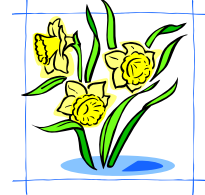
Their phone number is (352) 693-4625.

Mary Jo Chisler
220 Charter Road
Tolland, CT 06084

Her phone number is (860) 428-5174

A big "thank you" to all who have supported Daffodil Days this year! Altogether, we collected \$605.00 which helps the fight against cancer! Thanks again and I look forward to making the delivery of Daffodils to you soon.

- Lena Barry



Obituaries

Joseph A. Mohr, 73, of Stafford Springs, CT, passed away on Friday, (January 11, 2008) at Evergreen Health Care Center, Stafford Springs, CT. He was born in Stafford Springs, CT, son of the late Conrad P. and Miriam (Dimon) Mohr. Joe retired as a maintenance worker from the Warren Woolen Company. He was a member of the First Baptist Church of Mansfield, the Stafford Senior Center, and a member for over 50 years of the Staffordville Fire Department. He was also an avid NASCAR fan. Joe is survived by his sister, Lillian Brookes of Stafford Springs, CT; and a special friend, Laura Panciera and her family. He was predeceased by a brother, Conrad; and a sister, Helen. His funeral will be held on Tuesday, January 15, 2008 at 11 a.m. at Introvigne Funeral Home, Inc., 51 East Main St., Stafford Springs, CT. Burial will follow in Stafford Springs Cemetery, Stafford Springs, CT. Calling time will be held on Tuesday from 9:30-11 a.m. at the funeral home prior to the service. Memorial donations may be made to Flo's Friendship Kitchen, 8 Church St., Stafford Springs, CT 06076, or to Evergreen Health Care Center, 205 Chestnut Hill Rd., Stafford Springs, CT 06076.

Church Family Fun Night

Sponsored by the Youth Choir

Friday March 28, 2008

6:00 PM Potluck

7:00 PM Entertainment



Do you play an instrument, like to sing, tell a joke, or do any other form of entertainment? We need you!! Sign up **TODAY** (Christian Education Wing hallway), and come for a fun time **this Friday evening** with family and friends.



Our mission theme this year is "Eastern Europe". The United Nations considers Eastern Europe to consist of these ten countries: Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia and Ukraine. Come in the national dress from one of these countries if you like, and bring a main dish or salad to share. Beverage and dessert provided. Bring a friend. Let's have a fun time together.



Safety Committee

The Safety Committee is actively engaged in assessing and upgrading the safety of our church - both in terms of facilities and programs. This is a big task, as one can imagine, so it is going to be an ongoing process for quite some time! Currently, we are working on the parts of our facility and programs that affect children. (It seemed as good a place to start as any!) We will be recommending some changes; some will be noticeable but many will not be obvious.

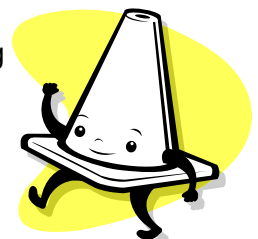
The committee is open to hearing comments and concerns from the church body regarding

safety issues. Feel free to speak to any member (Denise Keane, Laura Austin, Susan Figueroa, Jen Bradshaw and Tricia Baker) in person or by e-mail. We will be glad to hear from you.

We are already breaking new ground in some things we are addressing. Who knew "safety" could be so exciting?

Balancing on the cutting edge,

Tricia Baker, Chair
Safety Committee



March 2008

March Birthdays

March 6—Caitlyn Setterberg
 March 9—Jennifer Bradshaw
 March 12—Arthur Moore
 March 13—Alyssa Geissler
 March 13—Sierra Yanaway
 March 14—Denise Keane
 March 14—John Kloss
 March 16—Cliff Ward
 March 18—Lawrence Flynn
 March 22—Nikki Barry
 March 27—Colin Whitehead
 March 27—Kieran Yanaway
 March 28—Laura Flynn
 March 29—Stacey Fulton
 March 30—Philip Barry



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2 Newsletter Deadline	3	4 EGMS	5	6	7	8
Accounting						
9 Trustee Mtg.	10	11 DAR— Good Citi- zenship Awards Program	12	13	14	15
16 Palm Sunday	17	18	19	20 Maundy Thursday @ 7pm	21	22
23 Easter Easter Breakfast	24	25	26	27	28 Church Family Fun Night	29
30 April/May Newsletter	31					

**Deacon: Randy Gilliam-
Trustee: Nils Setterberg**

April 2008

April Birthdays

April 2—Susan Figueroa
 April 4—Bruce Bradshaw
 April 4—Ronald Nichols
 April 8—Nitheesha Nakka
 April 15—Brian Reas
 April 16—Michael Davis
 April 16—Virginia Shepardon
 April 17—Danta Salina
 April 25—Althea Ward
 April 30—Samantha Gardiner

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4 Ladies Aid Meeting	5
6	7	8 EGMS	9	10	11	12 ABWM of CT—NE Assoc. 10-2
13 Trustee Meeting	14	15	16	17	18	19 Spring Work Day
20	21	22	23	24	25 Annual Festival of Singing Chil-	26
27 Business Meeting	28	29	30			

**Deacon: Karen Watson
Trustee: Nancy Flynn**



Dates to Remember

- | | | | |
|----------|---|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| March 11 | DAR—Good Citizenship Awards Program | March 30 | April/May Newsletter Deadline |
| March 16 | Palm Sunday at 10:45 a.m. | April 4 | Ladies Aid Meeting |
| March 16 | CANNED SOUP Sunday | April 8 | EGMS |
| March 20 | Men's Third Thursday Luncheon | April 12 | ABWM of CT—NE Assoc. 10am-2pm |
| March 20 | Maundy Thursday Service 7:00 pm | April 13 | Trustees Meeting |
| March 23 | Easter Sunrise Service 6:30 am | April 19 | Spring Work Day |
| March 23 | Easter Breakfast | April 25-26 | Annual Festival of Singing Children |
| March 23 | Easter Sunday Worship 10:45 am | April 27 | Spring Business Meeting |
| March 28 | Church Family Fun Night 6:00 pm Potluck and 7:00 pm Entertainment | | |



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF MANSFIELD

945 Storrs Road, Storrs, CT 06268

Worship Service – 10:45 a.m.

Church School — 9:30 a.m.

Youth Choir Rehearsal, Sunday - 9:00 a.m.

Adult Choir Rehearsal, Thursday - 7:30 p.m.



An American Baptist Church