



The Bellringer

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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2010

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First Baptist Church of Mansfield

• - *Established 1809* -

A Word from the Pastor

Well, it's Advent. So what does that mean?

The dictionary definition of advent is "The coming, or arrival, especially of something awaited or momentous." The word comes from the Latin word Advenire. "Ad" means "to", "venire" means "to come". Literally it means "to come to."

In the church calendar it is the time period including the four Sundays before Christmas. It is when we not only wait for the Christ child to come to us again, but it is also a time to prepare ourselves for his arrival on Christmas day. We decorate the church and our homes. We light the Advent candles as part of our worship. We sing the familiar Christmas hymns and songs once again. We read the Christmas passages in Luke and Matthew.

But, what does it mean to you?

I think it means an opportunity to be a little more intentional about caring for our spirits for these few weeks.

It means being aware of God in and around us and in and in the people we meet at church, home, work, and even shopping. I think it means maybe turning off the radio in the car and praying. Or praying for the people we hear about in the news

stories on the radio, TV and newspapers. Maybe after you wake up in the morning you could lie in bed for a minute before you get up, and pray "Make me a blessing to someone today". Or let your car warm up for a minute and give thanks to God for one or two blessings. I think it means being more intentional about reading our Bibles. Go online, or to a bookstore and find a devotional that looks interesting, or challenging, or comforting and use it in the morning with a cup of coffee, or at night instead of watching the news.

As you are shopping either in the store or online, say a prayer for the person you are shopping for. Then pray for them again as you wrap their present(s).

Have you ever written out a prayer? Maybe that is something you would like to try for Advent.

Do you have a favorite Christmas Carol? Try writing a new verse for it. Make it modern, make it personal, then make it into a prayer.

For those of us living in this northern hemisphere of the globe, Advent comes at the time of year when the daylight hours are the shortest. It is a dark time of the year. It is a

First Baptist Church of Mansfield

Established 1809

A Word from the Pastor (continued)

reminder that it was for the darkness of our sins that Jesus had to come. It is for the forgiveness of our sins that Jesus comes to us again. It is into this darkness that Jesus brings us the light of the forgiveness and love of God. It is in this love and forgiveness that we are to live. This means not only receiving it for ourselves, but also giving it to others.

The third verse of "O Little Town of Bethlehem" written by Phillip Brooks is as follows;

"How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given.

So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven.

No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin.

Where meek souls will receive Him still, the dear Christ enters in."

And He will enter in when we invite him. I know it.

"Come Lord Jesus!"

Paster Ben



Advent Prayer

Lord Jesus,

Master of both the Light and the darkness, send your holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas.

We who have so much to do seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day.

We who are anxious over many things look forward to your coming among us.

We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of your kingdom.

We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence.

We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light.

To you we say, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

From the Works of Henri J. M. Nouwen



She was right after all

Small children were putting on a Christmas program. The entertainment proceeded without a hitch until near the end of the event. Each child held a large card with a letter printed on it. The letters were turned away from the audience. One by one each child turned the card he or she was holding to reveal a letter. First was the child with the "C," then the one with the "H," and so on down the line. When it was time for a little girl to hold up the "M," it was upside down. The "M" appeared to be a "W."

Quiet giggles rippled through the audience. Nevertheless, the kids continued one by one to reveal the rest of the cards. When the last card was shown, the cards were meant to spell out:

CHRISTMASLOVE

Instead, they spelled:

CHRISTWASLOVE

What first seemed to be a mistake wasn't one after all.



Mission Letter—NOVEMBER 2010

Is There Only One Jesus?

When I worked in Cameroon this summer, there were many patients and families who expressed genuine interest in Jesus Christ and many who embraced Him as believers. But, not infrequently, they would return home and continue in their animistic beliefs, even seeking witch doctors for further healthcare. In Africa, there is no division between doctor and pastor as there is in this country. The witch doctor is the pillar of the animistic religion which centers around a worship of family ancestors in order to placate their evil tendencies. Of course, I also heard other stories of those who chose to believe in Christ and rejected the animistic culture at home, sometimes subjecting themselves to horrific beatings and even death.

Now that I have returned home, the same phenomenon seems all too familiar here in the USA. It may seem easy and even natural as an individual to believe (or respect as equally true) multiple different faiths, while choosing to focus on mostly one. For one, it generally allows you to avoid the discomfort of ridicule or other persecution. It also provides the luxury of feeling open-minded, accepting and loving all people—not just those who believe the same thing you do.

The problem is that this approach also does not require one to commit to anything. When you think about it, once you decide that any faith is potentially true, then you have placed yourself, instead of God, in the driver seat as the ultimate judge of what is important or true. One may commit, for example, to the idea of love, which certainly sounds very Christian. But, as soon as we learn that Jesus requires something that sounds objectionable or too difficult for us to accept, then it is all too easy to dismiss. Why? Because we are already of a mindset that all religions are at least potentially true and there are other religions that do not require it.

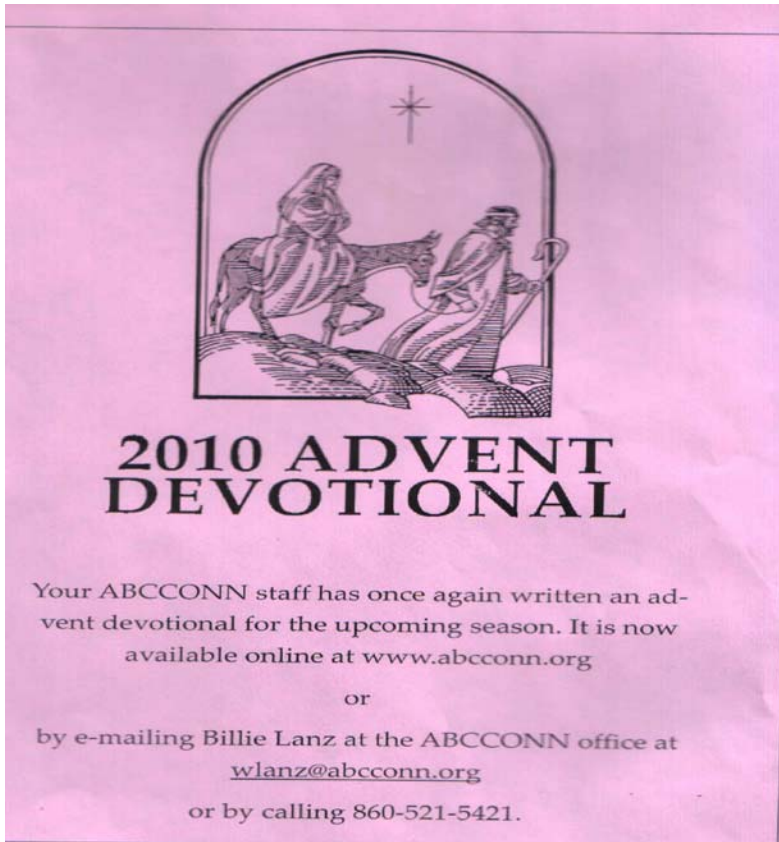
Come to think of it, when we ourselves determine what faith or specific belief is true and what is false, then where is faith at all?

God gives us plenty of reason (requiring our minds) to choose to believe in Him, but does He not expect us to then make a leap and be totally committed?

Or, one may decide that such a requirement by Jesus is only one possible interpretation of scripture, that there may be other ways to look at it. That used to work frequently for me. Who can ever be expert enough to know what is true in scripture? Unfortunately that leads to an inclination to all but ignore God's Word. Why study it if it is all open to interpretation? But when one realizes that our entire faith emanates from revelation, it becomes rather important to determine what exactly is in there. Would God, who looks with special concern to the poor and downtrodden, have given us revelation of such central importance only to tell us that only experts could know what is true? For me, there was only one solution to this quandary and that was to read the bible myself, and re-read it and re-read it. I don't profess now to be an expert (and I often rely on others for understanding of fine theological points), but God certainly gets his central messages across. It seems hard for me to understand anyone who argues with some of these central points being in scripture: God is not distant, He is among us, we screwed up pretty bad and still do, what we think on our own is true and right (such as what love is all about) is usually very different from what God does, God out of His love wants to redeem us, He committed so severely to this redemption that He Himself chose to die on a cross so that He could give all his blessings back to us, the only way back to God is through repentant faith in Jesus as He is revealed in God's Word, and He requires a decision to make only this Jesus the sole priority in our lives.

Respectfully, Doug Whittemore

FBCM—Advent Event & 2010 ABCCONN Advent Devotional Event



college students. A great time was had by all. Thank you to all who led a craft, or made lunch, or cleaned up, or did



anything else that helped to make this event possible.



Advent Event was held on Sunday, November 28th.

There were opportunities to make mini wreaths, egg carton manger scene animals, yarn angels, and Christmas card art. We also assembled about 40 care packages for service men and women and

Roof Fundraising Committee Letter/Pledges



November 2010

Dear Members and Friends of the First Baptist Church of Mansfield,

An article in *The Connecticut Baptist* in January of 1951 reports on a Service of Rededication that was held in our church in October of 1950. The service was held in recognition of three years of effort on the part of members and friends to complete many maintenance, repair and decorating projects in our church. The projects were funded by a memorial gift in memory of Judge Storrs, The Christian Endeavor Society, The Mansfield Community Club, The Ladies Aid Society and the Women's Missionary Society. There was even a scrap drive conducted by Willis Goodale for the benefit of the fund. One of the projects completed during that time was a new wood shingled roof.

That wood shingled roof has served our church very well for sixty years and now it is time to replace it with a new roof. Our church is located in a Historic District and we must replace the existing roof with wooden shingles. The Board of Trustees has contracted with Glenn Pianka of Olde New England Salvage Co. to replace the wooden shingles on the sanctuary roof. The project was started this fall, with the replacement of the back side of the roof in progress. The work on the front side of the church will be completed in the spring.

Initial funding for the project is coming from the Beebe Maintenance fund. The principal of this fund is available to the church for use on maintenance projects with the understanding that the principal must be repaid. With that in mind, the Board of Trustees put together a Roof Fundraising Committee that has been charged with directing the fund raising effort. We anticipate that we will need to raise \$46,000.00 to repay the fund.

The committee, comprised of Nancy Flynn-chair, Patty Geissler-Secretary, Ed Austin and Tricia Baker, had an organizational meeting in October. The group developed a time line for advertising our mission and brainstormed fundraising ideas. Fundraising efforts will start with the church members and friends but we will also be asking for support from The Mansfield Historical Society, The Historic District and the greater Mansfield community. The committee would be happy to hear from anyone who may have fundraising ideas or would like to assist with fundraising efforts. We will keep you updated on our progress.

Two fundraising efforts are already planned. The first step in our fundraising is the insertion of a line item for the Church Roof Fund on your pledge card. Please prayerfully consider how you can individually support this pro-

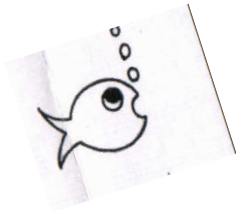
ject with your pledge. Secondly, we will be hosting a Take Note concert on April 3, 2011 at 3:00 p.m. at our church. The group's newsletter shares the following: "*Take Note!* was founded in February 2003, inspired by Artistic Director Linda Tracy's desire to lead and be part of an a cappella group of select, talented, local singers who enjoy eclectic, challenging music. The mission of the group naturally evolved as members of Take Note! recognized that benefit performances could support local community organizations, while at the same supporting the group's need to make beautiful music. The group became a non-profit organization in July 2004." Mark your calendars for this exciting fundraising event and be ready to invite your friends and neighbors for a sweet sounding concert that will help raise the roof!

As of the beginning of December (one week after pledge Sunday) **19 pledges** have been turned in.

The totals pledged are:
General = \$52,518
Mission = \$6,230
Roof repair = \$6,794
Rick & Mercy Barnes= \$1,074

If you have not yet turned in your pledge, please do so as soon as possible.

“Oh, Jonah!” - A Fun Musical For Young Singers



“Oh, Jonah!”

“Oh, Jonah!”, a fun musical for young singers, was presented

at Morning Worship on Sunday, November 7th to a wonderful congregation of families, members and friends.

“Oh, Jonah!” was a “whale” of a good time for both performers and audiences as the story of the prophet Jonah was brought to life with music, XXX, and merrymaking. “Oh, Jonah!” is more than a story about a whale swallowing a human. It’s a story about us. It’s a tale involving responsibility, repentance, listening for the word of God in our lives, accepting people who are different from us, and believing

that there is mercy and compassion for all who turn toward God—serious thoughts, but told with a sense of humor and frolicking fun.

Many hours of preparation and re-

hearsal time were put into this musical. Thank you to all who have made this production a great success!

Grace Riesen



Cast of Characters

JONAH – Morgan Baker

CAPTAIN – Henry Bigl

KING NINEVEH – Olivia Baker

ANGEL #1 (SASSY, STRONG AND BOLD) – Emily Bigl

ANGEL #2 (SASSY, STRONG AND BOLD) – Ashley Hooper

ANGEL #3 (MILDLY ANNOYING) – Maggie Watson

ANGEL #4 (SWEET AND EARNEST) – Ashley Ault

ANGEL #5 (SWEET AND EARNEST) – Olivia Baker

ANGEL #6 (JIVING AND COOL) – Sierra Yanaway



“Oh, Jonah!” - A Fun Musical For Young Singers

SAILORS – Laura Austin, Joy Erickson, Amanda Figueroa, Rebecca Figueroa, Samantha Figueroa, Susan Figueroa, Melissa Rood, William Rood, Karen Watson & Lyrica Yanaway

VOICE OF THE WHALE – Guy Myette

NINEVITES – Ashley Ault, Laura Austin, Olivia Baker, Emily Bigl, Henry Bigl, Joy Erickson, Amanda Figueroa, Rebecca Figueroa, Samantha Figueroa, Susan Figueroa, Ashley Hooper, Guy Myette, Melissa Rood, William Rood, Maggie Watson, Karen Watson, Lyrica Yanaway & Sierra Yanaway

SCENE SETTER – Tricia Baker

Director: Grace Riesen

Instrumentalists: Allyson Austin, Piano; Bibi Mama, Flute; Guy Myette, Trumpet

Choreographers: Melissa Rood and Grace Riesen

Signing: Tricia Baker



Costumes: Susan Figueroa, Karen Hocking and Grace Riesen

Costuming Helper: Judy Bigl

Props: John Riesen and Nils Setterberg

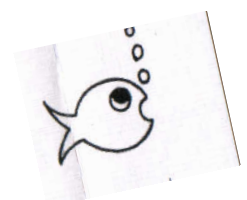
Recording/Video: John Riesen and Peter Bradshaw

Photographer: Carol Bigl

Publicity: Lena Barry

Stage Crew: Rev. Ronald Baker and Dana Yanaway

Program: Lisa Licata



Footsteps In Africa/Dottie & Randy Gilliam/Ministry 4 Youth

Ministry 4 Youth

This year really flew by! I can't believe that the last time I wrote I believe it was on the camping trip. Well summer days are behind us now and winter is moving in. Christmas is soon to be here and then the New Year.

We have had many fun nights together, the youth group has been meeting on Friday evenings. We have enjoyed playing games and worshipping God together. We are currently taking a short break for the month of December and most of January. We will restart **January 28** at our usual time, 6:30

p.m. We will be at the First Baptist Church of Mansfield, of course unless there is a snow storm.

There will be one last event during this time on **December 18th** but I am currently still working on details.

As we are gearing up for the holiday I encourage everyone to keep in mind that Jesus is the Reason for the season, as the saying goes. During my few months at school I did a paper on Traditional Christmas and was surprised at what I found out. Did you know that Christmas was not celebrated in America for 81 years?

When America was first being "born" the Americans were so desperate to break away from England. England's Christmas' were carnival like and chaotic. In 1809 Washington Irving had a series of short stories out and the picture of Christmas was one of laying aside social class and everything else and just coming together and having a peaceful, wonderful time enjoying one another.

May you as well remember not feel stressed in this holiday season but find the love and peace of our Lord Jesus.

In His Presence,

FOOTSTEPS IN AFRICA

Pancake Breakfast!

Chocolate Chip! Banana! Plain!

Saturday January 8th

8:30 AM-10AM

\$6 for a breakfast that will not only fill you up with delicious food, but also help raise funds

to send Laura and Ally Austin on a mission trip to South Africa and the Democratic Republic of the Congo!

Hope to see you there!



GIt is with a mixture of joy and sorrow that we say goodbye to Randy and Dottie Rose Gilliam as they move to Florida. They have been members of our church since 1956. Words can not express our gratitude to them for all they have shared with us. Thank you Randy and Dottie Rose. Thank you God for blessing us with them. May God bless them in the next chapter of their lives.

ABWM-EGMS/Church Women United/COVENANT SOUP KITCHEN

EMMA GARDINER MISSIONARY SOCIETY

(American Baptist Women's Ministries)

Emma Gardiner Missionary Society would like to thank everyone who donated financially or gave lovingly the many request items taken to South Providence recently. Each year the Emma Gardiner Missionary Society is responsible for filling quotas which help to support Mission groups close to us. This year these White Cross donations were given to the Iglesia Bautista Hispana El Calvario located in Calvery Baptist Church South Providence! These folks are very grateful and we are too! A quote from this group "May the Lord continue showering White Cross with many blessings."

ABWM-EGMS Programs for 2010-2011

Tuesday, December 7 at 2pm our group will meet at the home of Grace Riesen. Grace will present a program about the origins and meaning of Christmas symbols. All church members are invited to attend and can bring along a Christmas symbol such as a star, bell, candle, etc.

Tuesday, February 8 at 2pm our group will meet at the Church. Ginny Shehardson will present a program: "The Theme is Hope". All are invited to attend.

Tuesday, March 8 at 2pm our group will meet at the Church. Frances Nichols will present a program: "Being Called by God". All are invited to attend.

Tuesday, April 3 at 2pm our group will meet at the Church. Ellie Trainor will present a program: "Women...Destined for God's Purpose". All are invited to attend.

WAIM and COVENANT SOUP KITCHEN

Contributions to Covenant Soup Kitchen have continued to be generous. The following items have been contributed and delivered

September: 28 boxes of cereal

Church Women United—2010-2011 Gatherings and Celebrations

Human Rights Celebration

Sunday, January 23, 2011
(snow date: SATURDAY, January 29)

First Baptist Church of Mansfield, Host Church
945 Storrs Road (Rte. 195), Storrs, CT

4:00 p.m. Service followed by Reception

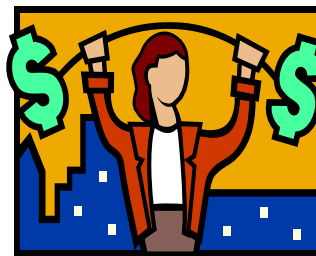
"Living Our Legacy, Driving the Movement"



The Human Rights Celebration is an annual event that unites women and men of ALL faiths in a common worship experience held to honor individuals who have worked for the cause of Human Rights. An emphasis will be on the history of Church Women United as it celebrates its 70th birthday and as we honor those who have worked for the cause of Human Rights throughout the history of CWU. Two local individuals will be honored. Joan Doiron and our very own Edward Austin! This is an open invitation to one and all to attend, mark your calendars!

Reminder about fund raising activities.

As we enter this very active time of year when many fund raising activities occur, please reminder that all fund raising activities should be cleared with the Trustees.



Thank you. The Trustees

October: 40lbs of pasta; a small jar of roasted peppers; a small box bread sticks; 1 garlic bulb; 1 box green tea; 2lbs of coffee; 2lbs of raisins; one 19oz tropical punch mix; one 28oz can of ice tea mix and 1 can of evaporated milk

Ladies Aid Society/Opportunity for Volunteer/Nov. Calendar

Thanks so much to those of you who sold and purchased Butter Braids. We sold 117 braids and 16 classic breaks. The cinnamon Butter Braid was the most popular this year. The profit from the sale totaled \$550.62. That is a very good amount that will be put toward our goal of purchasing new conference room chairs and a chair rack.

In other fundraising news, back by popular demand there is a Rada Knife sale in progress. Jill Stedman-Myette or Patty Geissler can provide you with catalogs and assist you with your orders. If you wish to order on-line please see the following announcement:


Please help support the Ladies Aid Society of the First Baptist Church

of Mansfield. Through a unique and simple internet ordering system you may order quality Rada Cutlery kitchen knives, utensils, gift sets and other merchandise direct from the manufacturer at very low prices. This means that not only will you get a great deal on amazing products but you will also be helping the Ladies Aid meet our fundraising goal at the same time.

To take advantage of this opportunity and to help our group, click on this link: www.HelpOurFundraiser.com using our group's information:

Internet Ordering#: 502851
 Password: fbcm (must be lower case)

Your order will be delivered to your address in 15 working days or less. Please know that your purchase also supports American workers and their families. Rada Cutlery has been proudly manufactured in America's heartland since 1948.



Volunteer Opportunity: Prescott Spencer has retired from mowing the Church lawn. Please prayerfully consider if this is something you might do, or work in partnership with someone else. To volunteer or get more information contact John Riesen (860 429-7569) John.Riesen@charter.net Thank you.

November 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 EGMS @ 2pm	3	4 Adult Choir 7:30 pm	5 Youth Group 6:30-9pm	6 CWU World Community Day
7 End Daylight Savings Fall Back	8	9	10 Ladies Aid Butter Braid Sale Begins	11 Veteran's Day; Adult Choir 7:30 pm	12 Soup Kitchen 4pm Youth Group 6:30-9pm	13 Camp Wightman Work Day 8-4
14	15	16	17	18 No Adult Choir	19 Youth Group 6:30-9pm	20
21	22	23	24	25 Thanksgiving	26 Youth Group 6:30-9pm	27
28 Advent Event	29	30				

Happy Birthday!

- Nov. 2—Peg Barlow
- Nov. 8—Brian Nilson
- Nov. 9—Ashley Hooper
- Nov. 10—Andrew Noznick
- Nov. 10—Kyle Whitehead
- Nov. 11—Hazel Rubins
- Nov. 12—Kyra Whitehead
- Nov. 13—Clare Flynn
- Nov. 15—Dottie Rose Gilliam
- Nov. 15—Allyson Austin
- Nov. 18—Prescott Spencer
- Nov. 20—Matthew Hocking
- Nov. 20—Sarah Hocking
- Nov. 26—Becky Austin

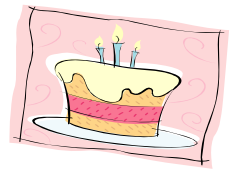


December 2010

Happy Birthday!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7 <i>EGMS 2pm</i>	8	9	10 <i>Soup Kitchen 4pm</i>	11
12 <i>R.M.M.O. Offering</i> <i>Final Orders for Rada Cutlery</i>	13	14	15	16	17	18
19 <i>Lessons and Carols 10:45</i> <i>Christmas Caroling after Church</i>	20	21	22	23 <i>Christmas Caroling (Snow Date)</i>	24 <i>7pm Christmas Eve Service</i>	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

- Dec. 2—Will Bigl
- Dec. 2—Chris Salina
- Dec. 5—Jack Gilman
- Dec. 5—Oliver Gilman
- Dec. 5—Laurie Whitehead
- Dec. 6—Betty Geissler
- Dec. 8—Judy Bigl
- Dec. 8—Janice Kopec
- Dec. 12—Jack Fulton
- Dec. 14—Linda Smith
- Dec. 15—Jeff Bigl
- Dec. 16—Hannah Gilman
- Dec. 18—Jodi Donato
- Dec. 20—Rose Nilson
- Dec. 21—Ava Lee Baker
- Dec. 26—Kenyon Davis



Annual Reports Due January 9,

January 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 <i>Annual Reports Due</i>	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28 <i>Youth Group 6:30-9</i>	29
30 <i>Annual Business Meeting</i>	31					

Happy Birthday!



- Jan. 3—Allison Erickson
- Jan. 3—Ann Salina
- Jan. 8—Andrew Gardiner Sr.
- Jan. 13—Charles Anderson
- Jan. 15—Frank Wells
- Jan. 15—Annette Knowlton
- Jan. 18—Florence Palmer
- Jan. 19—Doug Whittemore
- Jan. 20—Nancy Flynn
- Jan. 22—Lillian Brookes
- Jan. 25—Angel Figueroa
- Jan. 26—Robin Whittemore
- Jan. 30—Billy Keane, Jr.



Dates to Remember

Dec. 12—R.M.M.O. Offering

Dec. 12—Final Orders for Rada Cutlery

Dec. 19—Lessons and Carols 10:45 a.m.

Dec. 19—Christmas Caroling after Church

Dec. 19—Pick up Rada Orders at Church

Dec. 23—Christmas Caroling (SNOW DATE)

Dec. 24—Christmas Eve Service at 7:00 p.m.

Jan. 9—Annual Reports are Due

January 28—"Ministry 4 Youth" Youth Group will meet from 6:30—9p.m.

January 30th—Annual Business Meeting.

**** "Ministry 4 Youth" youth group meeting every Friday evening from 6:30-9pm unless posted**

****Adult Choir meets every Thursday evening at 7:30 p.m. unless posted.**



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF MANSFIELD

945 Storrs Road, Storrs, CT 06268

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

www.fbcmansfieldct.com

Worship Service – 10:45 a.m.

Church School—9:30 a.m.

Youth Choir Rehearsal, Sun. 9:00 a.m.

Adult Choir Rehearsal, Thur. 7:30 p.m.

"Ministry 4 Youth" Youth Group, Fri. 6:30-9:00pm



An American Baptist Church