

The Bellringer



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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER
2006 & JANUARY 2007

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Emma Gardiner Missionary Society—White Cross



Each year the Emma Gardiner Society gets together to complete their quota of supplies requested by overseas missionaries! This year the ladies gathered to tear, sew, measure, count and roll the request for 25 roller bandages! These are made from cotton sheets you have donated!

Some ladies cut 4"x4" muslin squares and others cut squares of material (patchwork pieces) 5"x7"! It is always fun to be together to know some of what our fingers and hands do will benefit co-workers overseas.

The bandages and muslin squares go to New Windsor, MD and then on to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the colorful patchwork pieces are mailed to the Veterans Village Family Center in the Philippines.



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First Baptist Church of Mansfield
- Established 1809 -

A Word From the Pastor

Imagine two people sitting together at a Yankee -- Red Sox baseball game at Yankee stadium. One is a Red Sox fan and the other is a Yankee fan. Throughout the game the two are cheering at opposite times, until the stadium announcer says that in the next inning there will be a pizza promotion. If a Yankee hits a homerun in that inning, everyone in the stadium will get a free pizza. The Red Sox fan loves pizza so when a Yankee hits a home run he begins to cheer as loudly as the Yankee fan. There they are standing and cheering for the Yankees side by side. .

Does it matter that the two are cheering for the same home run but for very different reasons?

No, not really.

Imagine someone throwing a big Christmas party and inviting a lot of people. One person attends because she is a close friend of the hostess and enjoys her company. Another person attends because there is nothing else going on that day, and she wants to enjoy some free food. There they are standing side by side at the same punch bowl enjoying the cheese and crackers.

Does it matter that the two are attending the same party but for two very different reasons.

No, not really.

I was shopping at a store the other day when I walked down an aisle that was lined on both sides with Christmas candy. Any kind of candy you could possibly want was all wrapped in red and green.. There were several other people there with me. There we were standing side by side all getting ready to celebrate Christmas.

I wondered about the other folks there with me; why were they thinking about celebrating Christmas? Do they celebrate it because it's a tradition? Is it just a reason to throw a party and have some fun? Do they celebrate it because it helps boost our economy? Do they do it because it's a good reason to help needy people? Or is it in gratitude for God's gift of Jesus?

Does it really matter why we celebrate Christmas?

Yes, it really does.

The first point in Rick Warren's book "The Purpose Driven Life" is appropriate to keep in mind for this Christmas season;

"It's not about us." Christmas is not about us either.

It's about God, and God's gift in Jesus Christ.

It's about being thankful for this gift, and expressing that gratitude.

You know the scripture stories from Luke, Matthew and Isaiah. Keep them close and fresh in your hearts and minds. When you are waiting in shopping lines or traffic along with all these others who are trying to figure out how to celebrate Christmas, say a prayer for them.

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given...and he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6

May you have a grateful Christmas

Pastor Ron

Help power the Energy Fund at WAIM

2006 Walk For Warmth

When: Sunday, November 19th 2006

Where: Starting at First Congregational Church,
199 Valley St., Willimantic
for an easy 2 mile walk around the neighborhood.

You are also invited to attend the Interfaith Thanksgiving Service which begins at

1:30 p.m.,

Early registration starts at 1:00 for those attending the service and
the walk will start immediately following it.

We are very fortunate at WAIM to have the support of our community when it comes to helping our neighbors through difficult times. We would like to think things are getting better and that the need for help is decreasing, but in fact, the opposite is true. Higher oil prices, higher electricity costs, and higher unemployment levels will again affect how many children, elderly, individuals and families fare this winter.

If the first three months of this fiscal year are any indication, it's going to be rough. During this period, WAIM has already distributed \$15,951 in energy assistance. For an organization like ours, this is a **huge** amount. Consider that over the same period last fiscal year, we only distributed \$2,600; and \$43,588 through the whole year. At that rate, we're more than one-third through our projected funds, and it's not even cold yet!!

Walk-for-Warmth is the only fundraiser for our Energy Assistance Program. 100% of the Walk for Warmth proceeds plus funds donated directly by individuals and groups are the **ONLY** way that our Energy Fund is replenished each year.

The Walk money enables us to help people of limited means with heating and non-heating utility bills. Families that lose electric, gas or oil service are in danger of losing custody of their children and inability to pay utility bills is a leading cause of homelessness in our area. The fund does not duplicate the government program administered by the ACCESS Agency, rather it helps people whose income is slightly higher than government guidelines or who remain in need after-that program is finished. This fund prevents children, elderly, individuals and families from having to choose between food and hot water...simple as that!

How can you help?

Form a team and ask team members to start gathering pledges on copies of the enclosed registration form.

Walk as an individual, with your family, with your congregation or your colleagues. If they choose not to walk with you, get your friends, family and colleagues to pledge their support.

Make a donation to the WAIM Energy Fund, as an individual or as a group.

Whatever way you choose to support the energy fund, please fill out the contact form and return to
Evelyn Solla,

who will then forward walkers a registration/ pledge packet.

All pledge money must be collected in advance to turn in at the Walk.

Thank you from all of us and most especially from your neighbors who will benefit from your generosity. All checks should be made payable to the WAIM Energy Fund

LOAVES AND FISHES

The local Covenant Soup Kitchen needs our HELP! Some of their shelves are empty! During this month when we celebrate Thanksgiving wouldn't it be good to find our large container for soup kitchen donations full with many varieties of foods every week! The container is clearly marked and sits in the closet where the coats are hung in the conference room. Folks say they would be thankful for the following: canned meals such as beef stews and ravioli, chili or anything providing protein that stands alone as a meal, canned fruit, vegetables and all varieties of beans and pastas. (Please NO elbow macaroni.)

Please be generous. All donations are taken to the soup kitchen by volunteers from this church.



THINKING COOLER WEATHER????

This year the Emma Gardiner Missionary Society is asking for your help during this Christmas Holiday Season.

A basket will be placed in the conference room where you may place donations of hats, scarves, mittens, gloves for anyone ranging in age from 5 years to 18 years. (NO infants or toddlers sizes needed).

Our Local Social Service Agency will see that these gifts are used during the winter months. Please have your gift in by December 10th. Please do not wrap your donation!

White Cross Update

The Emma Gardiner Missionary Society will post a sign up sheet for your pleasure in the conference room. We will be filling the first of two requests for Theresa Cosme a Missionary in San Juan, Puerto Rico. If you have questions, please talk to Lena Barry.

Each year we also have a monetary request for an overseas purchase plan. We will be sending \$250.00 soon, which will be sent to Hiti where the Northern Christian Eye Center at Cape Haitian under Dr. Hollis Clark and Women's ministries under the leadership of Kihomi Nzunga will benefit from this donation.

The Flower Committee thanks all who provided flowers for are Sunday worship services this year. There are still a few Sundays open, if you would like to remember a special occasion or loved one.

CAMPBELL SOUP LABEL UPDATE!!

We have been notified as of December 2006 it will not be necessary to save the front label from Campbell products. All that is necessary will be the UPC Codes from the labels!

Please continue to save these and place in the box in the front entrance to the church. Since 1995 three vehicles have been purchased from Campbell labels for use at the Hopi Missions School in Arizona! Keep those codes coming!

Thank you!!

Ways of Giving to the Church

You can financially contribute to the Church in many ways. You should choose the way that works best for you.

Envelopes:

Many people like to have weekly envelopes. These are a good way to keep track of your pledge giving and also a convenient way to give cash.

Checks:

Many people like to simply put a check in the offering plate. As long as it has your name on it, we will be able to credit it to your giving total at the end of the year. Checks can be made payable to "First Baptist Church of Mansfield" or "FBC"

Cash:

Cash you put in the plate will go into the General Fund to pay church expenses. Since we have no way to identify who gave it, we cannot credit it to you and it will be difficult for you to claim on your tax return. However, you can just put it in an envelope (plain letter envelope or baggy) with your name on it and we will be able to credit it to you and send a year end statement for tax purposes.

On line:

If your bank has an on-line bill pay service, you can have them send a check to the church.

Have the checks made payable to: "First Baptist Church of Mansfield" and have them sent to:

First Baptist Church of Mansfield

C/o Financial Secretary

945 Storrs Road

Storrs, CT 06268-2618

If you have been getting envelopes and don't use or want them or if you have not been getting envelopes and wish to receive them for 2007 just let me know.

John Riesen

Financial Secretary

(860) 429-7569

Riesen_john_w@sbcglobal.net

Thank You Notes

A Thank you from Wendy Sawyer , daughter of Elizabeth Sawyer and granddaughter of Ethel Larkin. Wendy is a grad-student at Northeastern University.

Thank you to everyone who supported my recent fundraiser for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. With the LLS organization Team in Training, I ran my first full marathon (26.2 miles!) on October 1st at the Maine Marathon in Portland. Friends, family and community members helped me raise over \$2,000 to support LLS research and patients with blood-related cancers.

I wrote the names of everyone who donated on my race shirt, and crossed the finish line in just over 4 1/2 hours. Thanks to everyone who helped me get here.

Windy Sawyer

Thank you for your continued support toward the work we are doing in helping homeless families start over.

God Bless You!

Staff and Residents of Holy Family Home and Shelter

Dear Pastor Ron, Tricia, Susan and all of the wonderful families at FBC,

Thank you so much for 2 wonderful years of working with your children. I've never had such well-behaved children! But really, I appreciate all of the support and love that everyone has given me personally. I truly hope to come back and visit; and I hope all of the families keep in touch with me as well!

Thank you so much and God bless.

Love,

Kelly Trainor

Ktrainor1@hotmail.com

Dear Church,

Thanks so much for helping send me to camp and West Virginia. Both of these experiences helped me become closer to God. I had many fun times at camp including swimming, chapel, full camp capture the flag. At West Virginia, I enjoyed tearing down the porch and using a sledgehammer as well as getting drenched in the duck boats. I really feel that our group helped many people while we were there. I enjoyed my time in both places and hope I can do both of them again next year.

Sincerely,

Sarah Hocking

Thank You Notes Continued

To the First Baptist Church of Mansfield,

Thank you for the money for camp. I had tons of fun at camp.

Love,

Amanda Figueroa

To the First Baptist Church of Mansfield,

I had a great time at camp and I made lots of new friends.

Becca Figueroa

To the First Baptist Church of Mansfield,

I had an awesome time at C.I.T. camp! I really enjoyed having a cabin full of campers, too! It was lots of fun!

Samy Figueroa

To the First Baptist Church of Mansfield,

Thanks for sending me to camp. It was definitely the best year I've ever had there.

Thanks Again,

Jessy Figueroa

Dear Ladies Aid,

Thank you for your willingness to assist with VBS this year. As it turned out we did not need any extra food but we very much appreciate use of the paper cups from the kitchen. Permission was requested for a member of the Ladies Aid to be present during the week and it went much more smoothly because of it. Also special thanks to the Ladies who assisted with the snacks and cleaning the kitchen, we couldn't have done it without you.

With Grateful Heart,

Susan Figueroa

Dear Rev. Baker,

Thank you so much for letting me speak about the Gideon Ministry this past Sunday. It was great to see old friends again. Please thank them for the offering of \$187.00. That was great.

Ralph Some

♪ Youth Choir ♪

One of the facets of our music program here at First Baptist is the Youth Choir. The Choir meets on Sunday mornings at 9:00 AM for one half hour in the music room of the church and welcomes any young person from first grade and up.

The Youth Choir prepares anthems to sing for Sunday Morning Worship services and participates in other activities as well. Fun inter-generational musicals have been presented at the church for the enjoyment of both church and community, the most recent musical being *It's Cool in the Furnace*, the story of Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego and King Nebuchadnezzar. The Choir, joined by others from our congregation presents a yearly musical program at the Mansfield Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation. For part of the program, some of the residents join with us playing drums, bells and other instruments in a great sing-a-long of favorites including *God Bless America* and *Jingle Bells*. The residents are very appreciative and a good time is always had by all.



Other highlights of our Choir year include an annual "Church Family Fun Night" usually held in late winter or early spring and also occasional participation in the Hartford/Springfield Chapter of Choristers' Guild's *Festival of Singing Children*, a wonderful opportunity for choristers of several churches to join ranks together under the direction of a guest conductor, and sing anthems which they have been rehearsing in their own churches.

Social events are also a part of choir. "Glow bowling" at Lucky Strike Lanes, a pool party at the Hockings home and most recently a pizza lunch at church (see photo), followed by ice cream at Kathy John's restaurant have been some of our recent activities.



Thank you to Mrs. Karen Hocking who assists with Choir and to all the adults who help in many ways, making the Choir a success.

I believe Youth Choir is Christian Education put to music and an important part of our young people's church experience. The motto of the Choristers Guild is "Christian Character through Children's Choirs".

Grace Riesen
Youth Choir Director

Christian Education

Just a note about upcoming events—there are so many.

November 26th is advent event after worship. For lunch—bring a sandwich. The social committee will provide soup and drinks. Dessert will be cookies that they decorate. After we eat Joy will lead us in songs from Bethlehem Market place and carols. Then we will work on some Christmas crafts. Some will be used to decorate the church.

We will have Sunday School on December 24th but it will be canceled on December 31st.

We will soon be sending College Student care packages to all of our college students.

Bethlehem Village Music Dinner theater will be December 9th at 5:30 p.m. We are going to sell tickets ahead. \$10 adult, \$5 children under 12. 60 total tickets. We will serve fresh cut up vegetables, fruit, bread, macaroni and cheese, beef casserole (stew) and chicken and dumplings. Dessert is apple crisp, ice cream and whip cream. Dress rehearsal is December 3rd after church. We will have a work time Friday either late afternoon or early evening and then start the casseroles Saturday early afternoon. Set-up at 4:00 p.m.—all cast and helpers to arrive at 4:30 p.m.

A sign-up sheet will be up on Sunday and we will advertise in church in costume to get people to sign-up.

The Board of Christian Education

A Fresh Look

With a new coat of white paint, the church's storage shed on the north side of the property has taken on a bright new look! When you see Alice and Prescott Spencer, be sure to thank them for making this possible!



Church Sound System

The sound system for the Church broke and the repair shop was unable to fix it. We are currently using a small portable system which is only able to run the wireless mic. that Pastor Ron uses and a borrowed system to cover the lectern. Therefore, we are in the process of obtaining bids on a new system. We have started by thinking about what would be best to support our programs. We realize many compromises will probably need to be made in order to afford even a basic system. However, it seems prudent to make sure whatever is purchased now will be capable of expanding to a system which can fully serve our programs in the future.

A committee of Pastor Ron, Martha Davis, Bob Erickson, John Riesen, and Terry Yanaway has been formed to look into replacing the sound system. We would welcome anyone else that has an interest in this matter to join us. We are asking for quotes on a basic sound system designed so that projection capabilities and video recording can be added now or at a latter date.

Please feel free to talk to any of the committee members about any suggestions you have for a new system.

John Riesen

Riesen_john_w@sbcglobal.net

429-7569



YOU'RE INVITED
TO AN EVENING OF MUSIC, GOOD FOOD
GREAT FELLOWSHIP AND
THE GREATEST STORY EVERY TOLD

Join us at the
Bethlehem Village Musical Dinner Theater

Saturday December 9, 2006

5:30 PM

First Baptist Church of Mansfield

At the corner of route 195 and Spring Hill Road



Adults \$10, Children \$5

The funds we raise will be used for this years Vacation Bible School, our Youth Mission Trip
and Camp Wightman Scholarships

Advent Event



NOVEMBER 26TH

Following the Worship Service



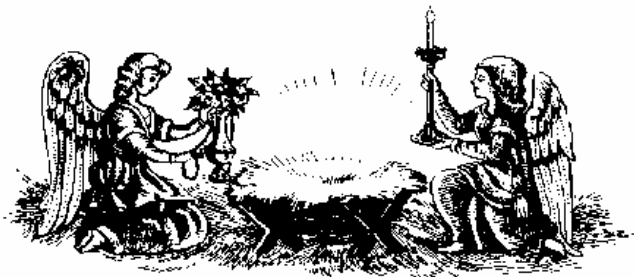
**SOUP DRINKS AND DESSERT
WILL BE PROVIDED**

**BRING A SANDWICH AND
THE MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS**

**WE WILL MAKE ANGELS TO HELP
DECORATE THE CHURCH**

**MAKE GIFTS AND TREASURES
FOR YOUR
FAMILIES' CHRISTMAS**

**ACTIVITIES FOR EVERYONE
MAKE THIS ADVENT
ONE TO REMEMBER**



NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Nov. 2 Peg Barlow
 Nov. 4 Peri Grenell
 Nov. 10 Kyle Whitehead
 Nov. 11 Hazel Rubins
 Nov. 12 Kyra Whitehead
 Nov. 13 Clare Flynn
 Nov. 14 John Geissler
 Nov. 15 Dottie Rose Gilliam
 Nov. 15 Allyson Viel
 Nov. 18 Prescott Spencer
 Nov. 20 Jordan Gardiner
 Nov. 20 Sarah Hocking
 Nov. 20 Matthew Hocking
 Nov. 25 Joelle Blankson

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Dec. 2 Chris Salina
 Dec. 5 Laurie Whitehead
 Dec. 6 Betty Geissler
 Dec. 7 Sara Flower
 Dec. 8 Janice Kopec
 Dec. 11 John Peavy
 Dec. 12 Jack Fulton
 Dec. 14 Linda Smith
 Dec. 15 Jeff Bigl
 Dec. 21 Ava Lee Setterberg
 Dec. 25 Jesus Christ

**JANUARY BIRTHDAYS**

Jan. 3 Allison Erickson
 Jan. 3 Ann Salina
 Jan. 8 Andrew Gardiner, Sr.
 Jan. 12 Becky Reno
 Jan. 13 Charles Anderson
 Jan. 15 Frank Wells
 Jan. 18 Florence Palmer
 Jan. 19 Doug Whittemore
 Jan. 20 Nancy Flynn
 Jan. 25 Angel Figueroa
 Jan. 26 Robin Whittemore
 Jan. 28 Joyce Taylor
 Jan. 30 Billy Keane, Jr.

NOVEMBER 2006 — EVENTS

- November 1st—Deacon's Meeting at 7:30 p.m.
- November 7th—Stewardship Meeting at 7:00 p.m.
- November 7th—Emma Gardiner Missionary Society
- November 12th—Trustee's Meeting at 12:30 p.m.
- November 12th—Christian Ed. Meeting at 12:30 p.m.
- November 18th—Fellowship Breakfast@ 8:30 a.m. & 9:00 a.m. discussion of proposed 2007 budget and 11:00 work day—inside & outside projects.
- November 19th—Walk for Warmth
- November 19th—Youth Choir will be singing at Mansfield Center for Nursing & Rehabilitation—1:15 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- November 23rd—THANKSGIVING
- November 26th—Advent Event after Worship Service
- November 29th—Deacon's Meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Deacon: Alice Spencer
 Trustee: John Riesen

DECEMBER 2006 — UPCOMING EVENTS

- December 1st—Delta Zeta Sorority 8:00 p.m.—11:00 p.m.
- December 2nd—Church Decorating Event
- December 2nd—UCONN Fraternal Organization 7:30 a.m.—11:00 a.m.
- December 3rd—First Week of Advent
- December 9th—Bethlehem Village Musical Dinner Theatre 5:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m.
- December 9th & December 10th—Boy Scout Lockdown
- December 10th—Second Week of Advent
- December 10th—Trustee's Meeting at 12:30 p.m.
- December 17th—Third Week of Advent
- December 24th—Fourth Week of Advent
- December 24th—There WILL be Sunday School
- December 24th—Christmas Eve Service is at 7:00 p.m.
- December 25th—Christmas Day
- December 31st—NO Sunday School

Deacon: Bob Gardiner
 Trustee: Terry Yanaway

JANUARY 2007 — UPCOMING EVENTS

- January 3rd —Deacon's Meeting at 7:30 p.m.
- January 15th—Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- January 28th—Church Annual Business Meeting

Deacon: David Stevens
 Trustee: Guy Myette



Dates to Remember

November 23rd—Thanksgiving
November 26th—Advent Event
November 29th—Deacon's Meeting
December 1st—Delta Zeta Sorority
December 2nd—UCONN Fraternal Org.
December 2nd—Church Decorating Event
December 3rd—First Week of Advent
December 9th—Bethlehem Village Musical
Dinner Theatre
December 9th & 10th—Boy Scout Lock
Down
December 10th—Second Week of Advent
December 10th—Trustee's Meeting

December 17th—Third Week of Advent
December 24th—Fourth Week of Advent
December 24th—There WILL be Sunday
School
December 24th—Christmas Eve Service is
at 7:00 p.m.
December 25th—Christmas Day
Jan. 3, 2007—Deacon's Meeting
Jan. 15, 2007—Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Jan. 28, 2007—Church Annual Business
Meeting.



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, Sun.—9:00 a.m.



An American Baptist Church