

The Bellringer

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DECEMBER 2007
JANUARY/FEBRUARY

Advent Event Sunday November 25th

The Advent event was a great success. Several youth and adults worked on all kinds of starry crafts. We had a time of fellowship after lunch singing Christmas Carols while the craft tables were set-up. The soup from the Social Committee was warm and delicious as were the cookies we decorated. We filled boxes with snacks and warm wishes for our college students and decorated a tree in the conference room. The star banners for the sanctuary came out fabulous. Everyone who participated had a wonderful time. Thank you to all who helped.



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First Baptist Church of Mansfield

- *Established 1809 -*
- *A Word from the Pastor*

I finished raking my yard a couple of days ago. Most of the time I enjoy raking leaves.. It gets me outside in the fresh air, and gives me some exercise. It's good for me physically and mentally. It is my goal every year to have the leaves raked in my yard before Thanksgiving. This year I did not meet that goal. Once Thanksgiving comes it is difficult for me to get back out there and rake for some reason. Perhaps in my mind raking is a fall activity, and after Thanksgiving it is no longer fall but winter. Rather than enjoying the great outdoors, I feel like I'm behind in my chores and trying to catch up. This year there were several trees in the yard that just seemed to hold onto their leaves a little longer. Yelling at them did not help. They just weren't ready to give up. At times like that raking becomes frustrating to me because it is one of those jobs that never really seems to end. Even now, after I have raked the yard, and it is two weeks after Thanksgiving, there are leaves all over the lawn. I need an attitude adjustment, or a change in perspective.

Raking is not just one big never ending task, but a process. It can be a reminder that life is a process, and Christmas can be a process too.

The same thing that happens to me with raking leaves can happen to me with Christmas. I lose perspective. I see it only as this one big task to be completed. It becomes something that I work very hard to accomplish. There are presents to buy, and cookies to bake, and cards to send, places to go, events to attend, services to plan, and other things that we must accomplish so we can check them off of the list so that Christmas can happen.

Christmas is not an event, or just one holiday. It is a gift from God and our celebration of this gift of love, hope, peace and joy.

"And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks by night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people. Today in the town of Davie a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."

Luke 2 : 8 – 11

Christmas is not something to be accomplished, or a task to be completed. It is a gift to be received and celebrated

Maybe Christmas is what happens while we are getting ready for it to happen.

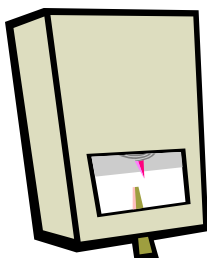
Christmas Blessings



Board of Trustees

Members of the Board recently held a Saturday morning property inspection. The purpose of the inspection is to take a tour of the whole church home and property to identify things that need to be maintained or repaired. . We address necessary maintenance concerns and keep an ongoing list of maintenance areas of concern and things to watch from year to year. We would ask that you report any maintenance concerns that you have to the Board.

A few reminders.....As we enter the heating season, please remember to turn down the heat in the Christian Education wing rooms when they are not in use. Please also be mindful of turning off lights when leaving a room in our church home.



The Church Work Day for the fall was held on Saturday, November 3rd. The crew was not large but was BIG on attacking all sorts of projects. The lights in the sanctuary were cleaned, a Sunday School room was painted, leaves



were blown and the yard cleaned up and the Sound people came in and set up speakers. Thanks to all who came out to help spruce up our church home.

Our next regular meeting will be on **Sunday, December 9**. The **2007 Annual Business Meeting** will be held after church on **Sunday, January 27th**. It is vital that we have good attendance at our business meetings and we encourage you all to mark your calendars and bring a sandwich for lunch. The social committee will be providing soup, beverages and dessert.

Lock up responsibilities are as follows:

December-Meradith McMunn
January-Laura Austin



Music Committee

Meet our Choir Director

Melissa Rood first came to us last year when we were looking for a new choir director on the recommendation by Tony Gibbs, a long-time friend of the church. Melissa is a high school music director at Coventry High School where Tony is the Band Director. She loves to sing and you may have recently seen her perform in the musical "Nunsense" at the Burton Leavitt Theatre in Willimantic. She has experience singing in church as a professional, but this is her first experience in directing an adult choir at a church. It has been a great experience for choir learning with Melissa. She challenges us and I think we challenge her, too! She is married to Bill and they have two children, Cosette and William.



We are always looking for new members to sing with us. If anyone is interested in singing with us, we gladly accept all skill levels. Don't worry if you cannot read music, we'll welcome you anyway! Rehearsals are generally on Thursdays at 7:30 in the choir room at the church. Please drop by and join us, even if you just want to sing for a short period of time (no need to commit to a whole year).

Pete Bradshaw

Music Committee Chair (and Choir Member!)



Christmas Caroling

Come and join the Youth Choir after morning worship and lunch on Sunday, December 16th to sing Christmas Carols to those who would like a cheerful visit. Pizza and beverage provided for lunch.

Thanks,
Grace

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLE LIGHT SERVICE



As usual, we will be having a special candle lighting service on Christmas Eve. It will begin at 7:00 p.m. and will be full of music, stories and the warmth that can only be found in church on Christmas Eve. Please be sure to make this part of your Christmas tradition. Oh come let us adore him—together!

Ladies Aid Society

The Ladies Aid recently held a meeting on Sunday, December 2. It was reported that we recently enjoyed another successful Butter Braid Fundraiser. A total of 152 braids were sold and a profit of \$646 was raised through sales and donations. Thanks to everyone for supporting us in this endeavor.

In kitchen news, the dishwasher was recently repaired and we learned that the stove is also in need of service. We voted to have the stove repaired in the near future. The technician who came to check out our appliances suggested that more regular use of them would be good for their long term health. It was decided at the recent meeting to have more frequent Fellowship Suppers or try and work with the Social Committee to have quarterly Pot Luck Luncheons after services. These functions would be nice fellowship events and allow us to use our equipment more regularly.

Each year we make a donation to the Church Women United Scholarship Fund. Church Women United is a national voluntary Christian,

faith based, ecumenical women's organization that was initiated by volunteers in the United States and Puerto Rico. The Willimantic Chapter of Church Women United provides scholarship funds for deserving men and women who participate in the Practical Nurse Education Program at the Windham Regional Technical School, and in the Windham Radiology Program of Windham Hospital. Their goal is to help students in need to become self-sustaining and productive. This year the Ladies Aid Society will make a \$300 donation to the scholarship fund in memory of Clare Wells. Clare worked as a nurse, helped the church in so many ways and was always a kind and giving person. We are proud to make this donation in her memory.

Our annual meeting will be on **Sunday, January 13th** after the service. All are welcome. As part of our business that day we will plan a calendar of events for 2008 and elect officers. Please come and be a part of this active and vital group.

Youth Mission Trip News!

The youth of our church have attended Servants Heart Mission Trip in West Virginia for the last four years. They drive to West Virginia each summer with adult leaders and spend a week tackling maintenance projects in the very needy area of Barbour County. The trip has been a very moving and meaningful experience to everyone involved.

As part of an effort to begin to raise funds for the trip in 2008, a Silpada Jewelry Open House was held as a fundraiser on Saturday, November 17. The evening was very enjoyable for all those attending and there was plenty of beautiful jewelry to look at and try on. Our hostess, Noreen Piscatelli, was very generous in donat-

ing her 30% commission to the fundraising efforts for the mission trip. We are happy to let you know that there were 21 orders placed and that \$612 was raised from the sales. What a great start for next year's trip. A big thanks to everyone who supported this fundraiser.

Please remember that we collect bottles and cans for recycling all through the year. There is a labeled, blue container in the coat area of the conference room for your contributions. Each month a different youth group family is assigned the task of redeeming the bottles and cans. Thanks again.

Emma Gardiner Missionary Society—ABW Ministries

ABW Ministries

A request for decorated Christmas stockings was received this year from the Weirton Christian Center in Weirton, West Virginia.

These were decorated at the workshops held in June at the conference and again at the retreat held at Camp Wightman in September! Folks from the West Hartford Baptist Church enjoyed completing this project! Don't they look quite festive?

Children from 4-15 years of age will be glad to receive one of these stockings filled with Christmas goodies! The display of these stockings were displayed in November at our church!



White Cross

Reaching out locally, across the country and out into the world, our White Cross request contributions help in many ways! Just recently donations were delivered to the South Providence Neighborhood Ministries! The Emma Gardiner Missionary Society could not have completed their quota with out your help! Many thanks from Emma and the Neighborhood Ministries! We are all partners in Mission! Matthew 25:40 "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." (NIV)

C.B.H. Chaplain Fund

Help Support the C.B.H. (Connecticut Baptist Home) Chaplain Fund

Please make sure to leave a **1/4 inch** border around the stamps when cutting. Continue to save your **canceled, Not Canceled, Commemorative, Christmas and Foreign stamps.**



The Stewardship Committee

The Stewardship Committee would like to thank everyone who whipped up a fabulous dessert to make Celebration Sunday a hit. All of the wonderful goodies give us an idea of what is in store for us—as this foretaste of heaven will be hugely overshadowed when the roll is called up yonder. If you have not returned your pledge card it can be placed in the offering or mailed directly to the Financial Secretary—John Riesen, 42 Farmstead Road, Storrs, CT 06268

Eagerly awaiting his arrival,
Ed Austin, Walter Palmer, Joy Erickson,
Bill Hocking, Pastor Ron Baker, and
Laura Austin, Chairperson

American Baptist Women's Ministries of Connecticut

Mid-Winter Celebration
Sunday, February 10, 2008
3:00 p.m.

Sjiloh Baptist Church
Hartford, CT

**SPECIAL GUEST
SPEAKER**
Rev. Linda Lea Snyder

Come take a Tour of the far
East with Linda the Explorer

Sunday School News

The Sunday School will be taking a Christmas break between Christmas and New Years. There will be no Sunday School December 30th. We will resume Sunday School on January 6, 2008.



Communications Committee

The Annual Church Business Reports are due to the Communications Committee by **Sunday, January 13, 2008**. Everyone likes to see the Annual Report one week before the meeting so we will need your reports at least two weeks ahead of time. Please give us ample time to put all the reports together and create a great looking Annual Report for 2007.

Reports can be emailed to the Communications Committee *anytime* at:

bellringer@fbcmansfieldct.com



Jefferson's Letter to the Danbury Baptists

The Final Letter, as Sent



To messrs. Nehemiah Dodge, Ephraim Robbins, & Stephen S. Nelson, a committee of the Danbury Baptist association in the state of Connecticut.

Gentlemen

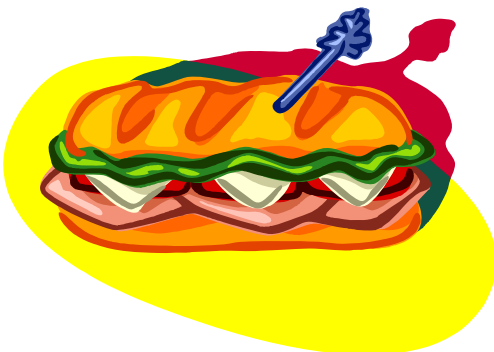
The affectionate sentiments of esteem and approbation which you are so good as to express towards me, on behalf of the Danbury Baptist association, give me the highest satisfaction. my duties dictate a faithful and zealous pursuit of the interests of my constituents, & in proportion as they are persuaded of my fidelity to those duties, the discharge of them becomes more and more pleasing.

Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, & not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should "make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," thus building a wall of separation between Church & State. Adhering to this expression of the supreme will of the nation in behalf of the rights of conscience, I shall see with sincere satisfaction the progress of those sentiments which tend to restore to man all his natural rights, convinced he has no natural right in opposition to his social duties.

I reciprocate your kind prayers for the protection & blessing of the common father and creator of man, and tender you for yourselves & your religious association, assurances of my high respect & esteem.

*Th Jefferson
Jan. 1. 1802.*

W.A.I.M Grinder Sale



**Look for sign up sheets in early
January
to order your grinder for the
Annual Church Business Meeting
on Sunday, January 27, 2008**

Church Family News

Shirley Corcoran's grandson, Private Dan W. Parker, Jr. is stationed in Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Please contact the church office for the address.

Alyssa Geissler recently completed her senior volleyball season at Woodstock Academy. The season ended with a loss to Darien who went on to win the class L state championship. Alyssa was honored as one of five players in the ECC large league to be named first team and she received one of her team's coach's awards for the season.

Congratulations Alyssa!

Thomas Erickson will be participating in the Student Career Experience Program at the Air Force Research Laboratory, Propulsion Directorate: Physics, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio for the next 7 months. Thomas is a physics major in his junior year at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York.

Denise Keane attended Billy Keane's graduation from the Diver's Institute of Technology in Seattle, WA on November 15th. Billy has earned both National and International Certifi-

cation and is hoping to use his skills around the world. Currently his is in Lafayette, Louisiana interviewing with the major Dive Companies in the U.S.

After visiting Billy for a few days, Denise then spent Thanksgiving week with Amanda (Keane) and Joe Pawelski in their new home in Fort Collins, Colorado. Amanda is a full time graduate student, working on a Master's Degree in Teaching English as a Second Language to Adults. **Please contact the church office for her address.**

Dorothy Lackman has been moved to the Mansfield Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation. Please keep her in your prayers as she continues to recover. Cards and notes can be sent to:

Dorothy Lackman
Mansfield Center for Nursing & Rehabilitation
100 Warren Circle
Storrs, CT 06268



Scrap Booking!! Scrap Booking!! Scrap Booking!!

Have you missed scraping at church? I know that I have.

Do you have a ton of pictures that stare at you saying - please scrap me? I know that I have.

Do you have a special project (or two or three) that you need time to complete? I know that I have.

Then let's do something about that. I would like to start the scrap booking up again. So if you are interested please let me know and then I will coordinate a time. We can do a Saturday morning through afternoon or Sunday after church.



You don't have to be a scrapper to join us - if you want to learn a new craft come and see what the fuss is all about. There are many of us that would be willing to guide you through your first project. It's a great time to get together and chat and work on your pictures. So bring your pictures, paper cutters and all those gadgets and get some work done.

If you are interested please contact Jen Bradshaw at 860-896-1751 or pbradshaw01@snet.net. Thanks Everyone!

Happy Scraping!

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

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 7—Sara Flower
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



December 2007

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1 Decorate
2 Newsletter Dead-line Dec/Jan/Feb	3	4 EGMS	5	6 Adult Choir Rehearsal	7	8 Choir Dress Rehearsal
9 Trustees Meeting S.S. Memory Verses Celebration Special Christmas Music & Coffee Hour	10	11	12	13	14	15
16 Caroling in afternoon Youth Choir—Lunch & Christmas Party	17	18	19	20 Adult Choir Rehearsal	21	22
23	24 Christmas Eve 7:00 pm	25 Christmas	26	27	28	29
30	31			Deacon: Frances Nichols Trustee: Meradith McMunn		

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Jan. 3—Allison Erickson
 Jan. 3—Ann Salina
 Jan. 8—Andrew Gardiner, Sr.
 Jan. 13—Charles Anderson
 Jan. 15—Frank Wells
 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. 29—Kristen Beaulieu
 Jan. 29—Mark Gagne
 Jan. 30—Billy Keane, Jr.



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Feb. 2—Raouf Mama
 Feb. 6—David Nilson
 Feb. 7—Rich Barry
 Feb. 7—Beverly Hamel
 Feb. 7—Lindsey Kloss
 Feb. 9—Morgan Baker
 Feb. 10—Chelsea Flower
 Feb. 12—Richard Davis
 Feb. 15—Robert Erickson
 Feb. 16—Terry Yanaway
 Feb. 21—Carol Riesen Bigl
 Feb. 23—Thomas Erickson
 Feb. 23—Daniel Parker, Jr.
 Feb. 25—Henry Bigl
 Feb. 27—Gemila Mama

January 2008

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13Annual Business Report Deadline Ladies Aid Mtg	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27Annual Business Meeting WAIM Grinder Sale	28	29	30	31	Deacon: Pete Bradshaw Trustee: Laura Austin	

February 2008

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	Deacon: Trustee:				1	2
3	4	5 EGMS	6	7	8	9
10ABW Mid Winter Celebration	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24Church Planning Mtg	25	26	27	28	29Church Family Fun Night	



Dates to Remember

Dec. 1	Decorate	Jan. 13	Annual Business Report Dead line
Dec. 2	Newsletter Deadline		
Dec. 4	EGMS Meeting	Jan. 13	Ladies Aid Meeting
Dec. 6	Adult Choir Rehearsal	Jan. 27	Annual Business Meeting
Dec. 8	Choir Dress Rehearsal	Jan. 27	WAIM Grinder Sale
Dec. 9	Trustees Meeting	Feb. 5	EGMS Meeting
Dec. 9	S.S. Memory Verses Celebration- Special Christmas Music & Coffee Hour	Feb. 10	ABW Mid Winter Celebration
		Feb. 24	Church Planning Meeting
		Feb. 29	Church Family Fun Night
Dec. 16	Caroling with Youth Choir		
Dec. 20	Adult Choir Rehearsal		
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve Service at 7 pm		
Dec. 25	Christmas		



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.

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



An American Baptist Church