

The Bellringer

945 Storrs Road, Storrs, Connecticut 06268 • 860-429-6043 • www.fbcmansfieldct.com
Rev. Ron Baker: pastor@fbcmansfieldct.com • Secretary: office@fbcmansfieldct.com



Volume 25, Issue 4

December 2011

FBCM Raise the Roof Campaign

It has been one year since the Raise the Roof Committee was formed and we began brainstorming fundraising ideas to raise \$50,000 dollars to replace the wooden shingles on the sanctuary roof. The past year has been spent writing and mailing over 200 letters of appeal to area businesses, community members, past and present church members and friends. These letters of appeal have brought in \$7,000 dollars. We have held four fundraising events through 2011, a benefit concert in April featuring *Take Note!*, a Spaghetti Supper in May with the Youth Mission Trip group, a Strawberry Supper and Silent Auction in June, and the Church Lady Cookie sale at the Festival on the Green in September. These fundraising efforts brought in over \$5,000 dollars. The church maintenance fund established by Mick Beebe has collected over \$13,000 dollars in interest that will go toward the roof. The generosity of church members and friends who have pledged and donated to the roof fund through the year has raised more than \$17,000 dollars. All these figures combined account for \$42,000.00 dollars raised to replace the sanctuary roof. What a tremendous accomplishment for our small

congregation in just one year! The actual cost of the roof was contracted for \$48,200 dollars leaving just \$6,200 dollars remaining to be raised, and that figure is declining daily as donations continue to come in.



We are planning a couple events in 2012, a potluck lunch on Sunday, February 12th with entertainment that will keep you informed about roof raising donations. In the spring when the ground is thawed we will be doing a fundraising project that involves some pink flamingos. More details to come.

Give yourselves a pat on the back, we have done very well fundraising in just one year's time. The remaining funds will soon be in the bank!

Your Raise the Roof committee,
Nancy Flynn, Patty Geissler,
Tricia Baker, and Ed Austin

Inside this issue:

A Word From the Pastor	2
Advent Event	9
Annual Meeting	3
Calendars	14
Christmas Services	11
Church Family News	12
Covenant Soup Kitchen	8
Deacons	5
Doug Whittemore	6
Family News	12
Gold Rush Sunday	12
Ladies Aid	10
Music Notes	8
Nominating	7
Pierce Home	6
Raise the Roof	4
Trustees	3
Video Projector	4
Walk for Warmth	7
White Cross	12
Youth Mission Group	9

First Baptist Church of Mansfield
- Established 1809 -
A Word from the Pastor

What's your favorite Bible verse or passage? That's a question that I like to think about from time to time. It's interesting to think about because as I change, I find that sometimes so do my favorite passages. But that having been said, one that has been a favorite of mine for a long time now is Mark 10 : 13 – 16. In this passage people are bringing their young children to Jesus to have him touch them and bless them. But the disciples try to stop them somehow. The word used is rebuked. The disciples rebuked the people and the children. That is not a word we use much in everyday conversation, but it is a strong word. It communicates a strong negative reaction from the disciples. Mark tells us that Jesus responded indignantly. He said "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." And he goes on..." I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child, will not enter it." I love that response. Jesus welcoming and loving those children... all children, and telling us that we all have something we can learn from one another, including children.

One of the things I love about our church is that all children are welcome in our worship. We have a responsibility to teach them with our words, but especially by our actions, by our example. They learn by being in worship together with adults. They also learn by working and serving with adults too, at places like Covenant soup kitchen and church suppers. And as

Jesus reminds us, we have things we are to learn from them as well. I am excited about moving forward in ministry together and seeking God, and where God is leading all of us together.

Have you heard the saying that Christmas is for children ? I would agree with that if you add...children ages 1 to 101, and beyond. The message of God's love and redemption in Jesus is begun in Christmas, and that message is for everyone. The gift of Jesus I believe is at the root of all gift giving. There is something about Christmas that can bring out the child in all of us, regardless of our age. When it comes to receiving the gift of Christ, the gift of the kingdom of God, Jesus himself tells us that we must learn to do it as a child. May you get a glimpse of what it means to "receive the kingdom of God as a child", somewhere in all the Christmas celebration around us. Keep an eye out for it, and keep your heart open to it.

And may you feel Jesus put his hands on you and bless you like he did to those children we read about in Mark 10.

Merry Christmas

Paster Ken



Board of Trustees

This has been an eventful fall at the First Baptist Church of Mansfield. The painting of the exterior of the Sanctuary has been mostly completed by our S & S Team comprised of Nils Setterberg and Prescott Spencer. Glen Pianka returned in November to complete the shingling of the east side of the Sanctuary roof. The church building is clearly the shining star of Spring Hill.

In August, after heavy rains three of classrooms in the Christian Education wing had water in them. The roof drip edge was moved during shingling and the upper gutter backed up. All issues have been corrected and the necessary repairs made.

The Trustees have spent much time over the last quarter on finances. We missed two Sundays of giving due to weather issues, Hurricane Irene in August and Storm Alfred in October. Based on year to date income, ***we are projecting a deficit for 2011.***

There are two wooden wardrobes in the "Purple" storage room downstairs in the CE wing. The wardrobes are being used to store costumes used in church performances.

The Church continues to play an important role in the community, our facility is used on Monday evenings by the Cub Scouts, on Tuesday evenings the Boy Scouts meet, Adult Choir practice is held on

Thursday evenings and the Church Youth Group meets on Friday evenings. In addition the Connecticut State Employees Association (CSEA) has been holding their monthly meetings at the church on the seconded Wednesday of the month from 12:30 to 3:00 p.m. Be sure to check the Church Calendar in the hallway before you plan an event or meeting.

There are programmable thermostats in the Church office, Choir room, Conference room and the Sanctuary. The programs have inadvertently been changed several times causing rooms to be heated unnecessarily. If you think there is a problem with a programmed thermostat please report it to a trustee, **DO NOT** try and change it yourself. If you are in the building for an event or meeting simply follow the printed instructions on the thermostat one step at a time to increase the temperature temporarily, **DO NOT** reprogram the thermostat. If everyone follows the directions and gives the room a chance to heat up it will help us all save energy and money and stay comfortable through the winter months.

Members of the 2011 Board of Trustees are: John Riesen (chair), Nancy Flynn, Karen Hocking, Meradith McMunn, Nils Setterberg, and Prescott Spencer.

Please contact any one of these members if you see something in the building that needs attention.

The Trustee on lock up for the month of December is Meradith McMunn and Prescott Spencer will lock up in January.

Annual Business Meeting

The **ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING** will be held on **Sunday, January 29, 2012** after the worship service. Board and Committee Chairs please send your report to the church secretary **no later than Sunday, January 8, 2012**. Annual Reports for 2011 will be available on Sunday, January 22, 2012. Child care will be available for those with young children. Please let Nancy Flynn know if you will need child care so we can provide adequate coverage. Attendance at church business meetings has been declining, we need **YOUR** participation at the 2011 Annual Meeting. Caring members and

friends are what make our church special, we couldn't do it without you. If you are a member it is your responsibility to participate in the business meetings and be part of the decision making process. If you are not a member your opinion is valued and will be heard. Working together and listening to each other is how we improve our church, your attendance is very important to the growth of the First Baptist Church of Mansfield. Please make every effort to attend the Annual Business Meeting on **Sunday, January 29, 2012**.

Festival on the Green

What can you do with six pounds of butter, twelve pounds of sugar, two dozen eggs, and thirty pounds of flour? Why make 219 sugar cookies, of course!!

The Raise the Rood committee thought it would be an excellent idea to have a presence for our church at the Town of Mansfield's 8th Annual Festival on the Green this fall. And a presence we did have!! We had a booth at the Festival, held at E. O. Smith High School on Sunday, September 25th. Our booth featured



delicious Church Lady Cookies for sale and as folks munched their cookies, we shared our roof story with them.

The sugar cookies were cut in the shape of a church. They looked just like our church! And they were decorated in many colors. In order to have enough cookies to sell we made 4 batches of cookie dough on Friday night and 2 more on Saturday. We worked a total of 2 1/2 hours on Friday and 4 hours on Saturday making dough. We made 11 batches of decorator's frosting and four of us spent 6 hours decorating the cookies. We worked all day Sunday packing and selling the cookies. It was a deliciously long undertaking.



We had many folks stop by our booth. We acquainted them with where our church is located and our ongoing roof project. We explained why we were using wood shingles and how expensive the project is. Most of the cookies were sold that day and there were many generous donations. All together we were able to deposit \$458.50 into the Raise the Roof Fund.

Our participation in the Fair was a success and we think that we should make it a yearly event. Perhaps we can make a different kind of Church Lady Cookie next year and have many more people involved to represent FBCM!

Video Projector Committee

The Video Projector Committee has completed the details of designing the screen mounting and installation. We have ordered a  screen and hope to be installing it in January. We have also begun the selection of a projector, cabling system and devising a projector mounting system. We have hopes of having the video projection system fully installed by Easter.

Board of Deacons

We were very pleased to meet with Denise Keane and welcome her as a new member of the church. Denise has been very involved in our church activities for some time and we are very happy that she is once again a member of our flock.

Denise has been very active with WAIM beginning as a volunteer and then serving as Assistant Director. She spent five years in that position and was very involved in the Walk for Warmth, Fuel Bank, and the Adopt-a-Family program.

She then accepted the position of Shelter Facilitator for the Domestic Violence Shelter in Windham. During her time there she worked with Sen. Don Williams to help pass legislation in CT to allow victims of dating violence to obtain restraining orders. After completing her Masters in Social Work, she became Director of Next Step and then moved to the Perception House program. She is currently the Associate Director of Perception Programs. She is recognized as a leader in co-occurring treatment in CT and is often asked to give presentations and mentor other programs. Additionally she is an Adjunct Professor of Social Work at Eastern Connecticut State University.

Denise enjoys playing sports and hiking. She has successfully hiked into the Grand Canyon many times. She has two children Amanda (and husband Joe who reside in CO) and Bill. Denise is the very proud Grandma of Tennessee and she is expecting the arrival of Tennessee's sister Nikola in April of next year.

Congratulations and welcome Denise!



Were you able to match the Deacons???

Here are the answers to the trivia game in the last newsletter:

Deacon Matching Game

- ♦ "No playing music while I am riding around in the car, WEEI, Sports Talk Radio is my station of choice...where they never play a bad song" – **Patty Geissler**
- ♦ "I was voted "Most Athletic Student" in my high school graduating class" – **Lena Barry**
- ♦ "I prefer to have MY OWN bag of potato chips" – **Terry Yanaway**
- ♦ "I go skateboarding on a regular basis" – **Bob Erickson**
- ♦ "I don't have to live in town to be a "Townie" – "Townie" was my high school mascot" – **Jen Bradshaw**
- ♦ "As a child, I had pet pigs named Ketchup, Mustard, and Spot" – **Tricia Baker**
- ♦ "My partner and I have never lost a game of Trivial Pursuit" – **Judy Conland**

Deacon Retreat

On Saturday October 22, Rev. Judy Albee, Executive Minister of ABCCONN, came and spent the morning with the Board of Deacons. They spent some time in Bible Study and then looked at the changing role of the deacon in our modern era. They explored the need for deacons to nurture their own spirituality as well as that of the congregation. The meeting ended with a brainstorming session around the various areas of vision for ministry at FBCM. Please pray for your deacons. They are all busy people who make sacrifices of time and resources in order to serve the Kingdom of God through this church. We are regularly blessed by their quiet ministry and we are thankful for their willingness to serve.

A Mission Full of Troubles

It is with some relief that I finished my last medical mission to Mexico a few weeks ago. I have been busy working up in Maine at a large hospital in Lewiston on a job that extends through to the end of December. They were kind enough to allow me leave to attend this mission, leaving them short handed for a couple weeks. It is the first year that we have added a fall trip to the usual one in the spring. We had a full complement of volunteer doctors and nurses in the spring, and so it was difficult coming up with the necessary numbers for this trip. I was not sure whether it would work out until just a few weeks before we were set to leave, but it finally came together.

I rushed down from Maine to stay with my sister in the NYC area the night before I was to fly out of Newark airport, hoping to just barely escape a blizzard bearing down on the NY and CT areas. My ride was just leaving for the airport the next morning when I suddenly remembered that I had left my passport at home. I had to give up the ride, drive halfway home to meet Robin with my passport, drive back down into the teeth of the oncoming snow storm, find a new ride to the airport, wait for another flight the next day, miss that flight as I waited on a horrendous line to check in, and end up waiting another day before I caught my flight to Mexico. All the time I dreaded the potential chaos of a leaderless team waiting for me in Mexico, as if it hadn't all been difficult enough without this.

In the hours I had to wait, I pondered why does God allow this to happen—why does it all have to be so hard? And is God trustworthy? I think that I had answered these questions for myself previously but each new trial drives home the answers in a new way and builds new confidence in my faith. There doesn't seem to ever be any clear answer to the first question. Look at Job who never did find out why he endured his own trials, even after talking it out with God at the end.

But God proved to be abundantly trustworthy for Job, as well as for our mission. Not

only did He pull a team together just in time, but our full schedule of surgery was completed and no complications were encountered. It is difficult to translate how vulnerable a surgeon feels working in conditions like this, on foreign soil and without the support structures you rely on at home. When everything goes this well, you know it is a work of God, not of man. It amazes me every time it happens. Recently too, I was struck in reading Mark about how often he uses the word “amazed” when describing the effect Jesus had on his disciples.

The mission field becomes increasingly for me a place to exercise trust and faith, as much as it is a place to serve God. I used to think that serving the poor and doing my work was the principle means that I had of glorifying God, but now I am not too sure. Enduring a trial in patience, waiting and trusting on Him, may be even more so.

— Doug Whittemore

PierceCare: Pierce Baptist Home & Creamery Brook Retirement Community

At the Annual Meeting of the PierceCare Board of Trustees in October, two of our First Baptist family were elected officers and another elected as a new member of the Board. Bill McMunn is the new Chair of the Board of Trustees and John Riesen is the new Treasurer. Sandy Zerio Stevens was elected to the Board for a term beginning in January 2012.

Our Church has a long and proud history of supporting the Pierce Baptist Home in nearby Brooklyn, Connecticut, in our missions budget and with the active involvement of our members. Pierce is one of the premier nursing homes in Connecticut. It also offers excellent rehabilitation services, and its relatively new Creamery Brook retirement apartments are very highly regarded. A number of First Baptist members, relatives, and friends have lived at Pierce and/or Creamery Brook. If you would like to learn more about PierceCare services, please contact Bill, John, or Sandy.

Nominating Committee

Before my work on the Nominating Committee, I didn't realize how many people it takes to run our church. We have some wonderful programs at this church and I had no idea what it takes to put these programs together for our youth and our church family. Now I am a Member of the Board of Deacons and finding it very rewarding. I'm meeting different people of the church and feeling more comfortable approaching individuals in the church. I'm hopeful as I continue on Deacons to learn how to be a better shepherd to those people of my flock.

I am pleased to report that the nominating committee has been very busy. We are making some great progress in filling the various positions on the boards and committees. We have currently filled all of the positions on the Officer Board and the Board of Deacons. We still have a few positions open on the Board of Trustees and the Board of Christian Education. We are also looking for someone to be the del-

egate for the NE Association.

Our current focus is to work on fulfilling the various positions on all the committees. In order to have these wonderful programs continue, we need your help. If you have a talent you wish to share or have a passion you wish to indulge, please consider serving on one of the church committees. If you like to bake, perhaps you might consider the social committee. Maybe you have a passion to assist those less fortunate, possibly the missions committee is for you. If numbers are your thing, your calling might be for the financial examining committee.

Take a moment, listen to your heart and pray on this and see if you have a calling. Any one of the Nominating Committee Members can answer your questions on job descriptions. Please feel free to contact Jen Bradshaw (Chair), Patty Geissler or Bill Hocking. Thank you!

Walk for Warmth

I am so pleased to announce the final tally for this year's Walk for Warmth! With your help and support, we raised \$30,700 – amazing! In the midst of an economic crisis, the community has responded in a record-breaking way. I am so deeply grateful to you and to those in your faith community that supported the Walk and continue to help us serve our neighbors in need. Olivia Baker's donation of **over \$5000** is our largest single walker donation to date. Your church is to be commended for nurturing such a caring and faith-ful young person.

Best,
Victoria Nimirowski
Director, Windham Area Interfaith Ministry
860 456-7270 ext.11



The Windham Area Interfaith Ministry uplifts and unites our community by providing caring service and resources to meet our neighbors' needs with dignity and respect.

FBCM Soup Kitchen Mission

Valley Street in Willimantic is the place to be on Friday nights! Five or six folks from our church meet once a month, on a Friday night at 4 pm at St Paul's, to volunteer. The volunteers spend about two hours working in the kitchen preparing the evening meal. They enjoy working together and helping others.

The Covenant Soup Kitchen Program is based at Saint Paul's Episcopal Church. The objective of the Soup Kitchen is to offer a "light" breakfast and a hot, nutritious lunch, six days a week, at no charge to its guests. Their "Food Policy" tries to assure that a hot breakfast is available several mornings a week, especially during the cold weather. At lunch, a variety of foods are offered so guests may make appropriate choices according to individual dietary and health needs. When everyone has been served, guests may get "take out" containers of food to bring home. Bread and produce are also available most days for use at home. During the last fiscal year, the Soup Kitchen was open 297 days for lunch. A total of 23,385 meals were served, not counting seconds and "take outs" for a daily average of 92 individuals. The facility was open 299 days for breakfast, providing 14,057 meals, for a daily average of 51 people. In November of 2001 the Soup Kitchen began serving meals on Friday evenings....and this is where we have been trying to help.

Lena Barry invited two of her grandchildren to come with her to volunteer. Sean (13) and Anna (11) Barry have worked at the soup kitchen five or six evenings so far and they really have enjoyed the experience. Sean shares that they usually begin by chopping vegetables and then make vegetable and fruit salads. Then they make the hot meal items. He said that they just assign tasks and you go right to work. Most tasks were things that he knew how to do, but he did have to learn how to cut tomatoes. Sean thinks that what he does helps to make people happy. Anna loves to cook so the nights activity is right up her alley. She says that she often sees some of the



same faces and that they usually serve fifty or more people. Both kids have met other volunteers and look forward to going each month.

Our next Soup Kitchen volunteer opportunity is on December 16th. Future dates are February 17th, March 16th, April 27th and May 18th. We would be happy to have you join us. There is a signup sheet on the Conference Room bulletin board. You can also assist by making a dessert for us to bring for the evening meal. If you have questions you may contact Jill Steadman-Myette.

♪ Music Notes ♪

On **Sunday, December 18th**, special Christmas Music will be presented during the morning worship service. Let us celebrate the beautiful advent season together in song. Following the morning worship service we will go **Christmas caroling**. Please bring a sandwich for your lunch, and invite a friend to come caroling with us. We will end at the Riesen's for hot chocolate and seasonal goodies.



Table for Five ... Thousand!, a musical about the miracle of the Loaves and Fishes will be presented during the morning worship service on Sunday, January 15 (snow date is Sunday, January 22). Come and join us for this special occasion!

Mission Trip Youth Work Group

The Mission Trip Youth are working hard to earn money for their upcoming trip to West Virginia next summer. We are all passionate about the wonderful people of Appalachia we have met and ministered to in previous years and so although it is a more costly trip, we feel this is God's call. We are willing to do whatever it takes to make it possible. This Fall we have spent many Saturdays



doing (mostly) yard work. We charge \$25 per hour and a group of usually 4 or 5 strong teenagers and Pastor Ron show

up and do whatever needs to be done. Sometimes



we can work at 3 different homes in one Saturday!! Recently the Deacons sponsored several hours of work so we were able to "gift" a few people with a work crew! We work hard but have a really good time, too. We are thankful for Pastor Ron who gives up his day off to do this with us.

We want to say "P.R - you ROCK!" Also thanks go out to Dana Yanaway for his help too. There will be more work day opportunities, so if you are interested in hiring us, let Morgan Baker know 860-429-0673.

Advent Event

Our Annual Advent Event was held on the first Sunday in Advent, November 27th. We had a wonderful lunch with delicious homemade soups and BYO sandwiches. After lunch we had fun making pot-pourri jars, handmade Christmas cards, candles from crushed wax and decorate-your-own cupcakes for dessert! We also put together



care packages for the college students with Christmas cards signed by all and decorated the Christmas Tree in the sanctuary! The afternoon ended with stories and carols in the sanctuary.

Thank you to all who helped make lunch, plan and supervise activities, and clean up afterward!

Ladies Aid Society

A small group of Ladies got together for a meeting on September 22. Our meetings are always enjoyable and productive and we invite anyone and everyone to join us.

We had discussions about the church kitchen. The older of our two refrigerators, which was kept in the Nursery room, was disposed of this summer. There was discussion about replacing it as the nursery does use it and it is very helpful to have extra space for hosting suppers and other church functions. Our plan is to purchase a new appliance for the kitchen and move the current kitchen refrigerator to the nursery. We will be dedicating our current fundraisers to that goal.

We would like to label the drawers and cabinets in the kitchen to make it easier for folks to find things and put them away in their proper place. We currently have a binder on the counter near the telephone that shows the location of all kitchen items.

Speaking of kitchen items, have you recently borrowed any Ladies Aid pans, pitchers, roasters, tables or chairs? Please let us know if you would like to borrow any of the Ladies Aid equipment from the kitchen (that includes the equipment that we store in the basement). We would like to know who has these items, where they are going and when they will be returned. It will help us keep track of the equipment and enable us to make sure that an item is not being borrowed when it is needed for a church function. Thank you for your cooperation.

We concluded two successful fundraisers recently. The ButterBraid sale went well. We sold a total of 129 products. The Raspberry ButterBraid was the most popular! Our total profit for the event was \$584.32. Thanks for your support and enjoy your pastries.

The second fundraiser was a Thirty-One party hosted at the church. Thirty-One is a company owned and run by women of faith. They base their name and guiding principles on Proverbs 31. They offer an interesting product line of bags and organizers. Over twenty women

gathered for an afternoon of fun, food and fellowship. Many

made purchases to get a jump start on holiday shopping. The totals for the event are not in yet, but it seemed like a good event for all. Many who attended enjoyed the mint

candy refreshments so we thought that we would include the recipe from Nestle Toll House:



Magic Mint Chocolate Bark

Prep: 5 mins

Cooking: 2 mins

Cooling: 60 mins

Yields: 9 servings or 3/4 lb.

What a refreshing way to enjoy the decadent duo of mint and chocolate. Swirling dizzying designs adds some artistic flair, and fun, to this unforgettable treat.

Ingredients:

- 1 2/3 cups (10-oz. pkg.) NESTLÉ® TOLL HOUSE® Dark Chocolate & Mint Morsels
- 1/3 cup coarsely chopped oven roasted or toasted almonds

Directions:

PREHEAT oven to 325° F. Line small baking sheet with foil or parchment paper.

POUR morsels onto prepared baking sheet. Arrange morsels so they are touching each other in a single layer (roughly an 11 x 9-inch rectangle).

BAKE for 1 to 3 minutes or until morsels are shiny. Remove from oven to wire rack. With tip of butter knife or wooden pick, immediately swirl morsels to create a swirled pattern.

(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)

SPRINKLE with nuts. Hold baking sheet 3 inches above counter and drop to settle nuts into melted morsels. Refrigerate for 1 hour or until firm. Break into pieces. Store in airtight container in refrigerator.

VARIATION: Substitute broken pretzel pieces or another nut of choice for the almonds.

Our last fundraiser for the year is the Rada sale. We continue to take orders for the wonderful Rada products. There is a catalog on the Conference room bulletin board or you may on-line at www.HelpOurFundraiser.com using our group's information:

- Internet Ordering#: 502851
- Password: fbcm

Please contact Jill Steadman-Myette if you have Rada questions.

We thank you for all your support of our fundraising efforts in support of the church.

Last but not least...a Cook Book update. We have enough recipes and are still working on the publication. We had originally planned to have the book printed by a company but then decided that we could cut our costs by producing it ourselves. This decision requires the reformatting of all the submitted recipes and that takes time. It is coming.

Christmas Service



Since Christmas falls on Sunday, we have the additional opportunity to gather and rejoice together on **CHRISTMAS MORNING!** We have some special things planned including a simple **BREAKFAST** which will be served at **9:30**. If possible, we'd like to have you sign up in the conference room or email the church office if you plan to come. This is not mandatory but will help us plan. The breakfast will be followed by **Worship at 10:15**, which will be somewhat informal to accommodate the general exuberance of the day! The choir will sing, the Christmas story will be read, there will be a drama and gifts and of course SINGING!!

We also will be showing a Church-Family-Christmas-Powerpoint, which you won't want to miss!! For that purpose, we are asking people to email two or three candid Christmas snapshots of their family (past, recent or in-between) to the church office or to Pastor Ron. You can also drop off the actual pictures (you WILL get them back!). Help us make this Christmas a joyful and special event. We plan to be finished by 11:00 so that we can resume our regular Christmas morning activities. We do so hope to see many of you there - to **"Hear the bells on Christmas Day" !!!**

Christmas Eve Service

You won't want to miss the **CHRISTMAS EVE** service this year! We will be using the Conference room in order to **Worship In The Round**. Come see the manger (will it be empty or...?) and experience the familiar music in a fresh, new way. Pastor Ron will explore the "Mystery of God using ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things". Of course we will end with the beautiful and beloved candle lighting service which so powerfully fills us with the light of the love of God. Christmas Eve celebrations remind us

that God continues to pursue us with his love. This is a time to put aside thoughts of trees, presents, malls and even meals, in order to focus on God's pursuing love.



†White Cross†

Thank you, thank you, thank you to everyone who brought in items for our White Cross request. Each year the Emma Gardiner Missionary Society receives a White Cross request from the American Baptist Churches USA. This year much needed items such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, deodorant, washcloths, towels, Band-Aids, socks, underwear, baby sweaters, dish towels, pajamas, quilts, comforters, and yarn will be sent to the Baptist Children's Services in Royersford, Pennsylvania. A dedication of these White Cross items will take place at the morning worship service on Sunday December 4th.

Our share in meeting the 2011-2012 White Cross overseas request is \$100 which will be sent to South Africa to be used to help many who lack the health care so desperately needed in remote areas. This will provide basic necessities such as socks, shoes, hygiene kits and a warm breakfast.

Grace Riesen,
White Cross Chair



Gold Rush Sunday



You might say we "struck it rich" with our Sunday School Gold Rush campaign this fall. Participants earned gold nuggets for things like memorizing Bible verses and the order of the books of the Bible, and even sharing God's love. We then had a grand time spending these gold nuggets at the silent auction on Sunday, November 13th. It was a great way to stir up some excitement about Sunday School. Many thanks go out to the Board of Christian Ed members, Laura Austin, Pete Bradshaw, Sam Figueroa, Stacey Fulton, and Morgan Baker. As well as to many others who donated auction items and helped in other ways.



Church Family News

Wow, Betty Geissler's family tree just keeps growing and growing. Her grandson Jeffrey and his wife Heather are the proud parents of a beautiful baby girl, Evelyn Anna Ostrander. She arrived on November 10; at 7lbs. 12oz. and 20 inches. Evelyn is Betty's great granddaughter and the first granddaughter for Jean and Dick Ostrander. She will make her home with her parents in Houston, TX.

Frank Wells has headed south for the holidays. He enjoyed Thanksgiving with his daughter Barbara and family. We will miss him and hope that he stays warm! Notes can be sent to Frank in care of Barbara Zintski at 1486 Vine St., Holly Hill FL., 32117.



Anna and Jacob Riesen have been cast in the local children's theatre production of Alice Through the Looking Glass. Anna plays a supercilious Humpty Dumpty and Jacob plays the White Knight in the "human" chess game. Every time Jacob moves he has to take two steps in one direction then one in another, just as a knight would in a real game of chess! Grandpa John and Grandma Grace will be visiting Iowa during the run of the show, so we expect wild applause whenever Humpty Dumpty or the White Knight leave the stage!

Clare Flynn will be leaving for France on January 2nd to spend the rest of her sophomore year in Montpellier France taking French and History courses. You have probably guessed that Clare has declared double majors in History and French. Clare is one of five undergraduates from SUNY Geneseo chosen to study in France at the Université de Montpellier III - Paul Valéry. The program is geared towards advanced level French students who can enroll in university courses with native students. The University is one of the oldest in Europe, founded by Pope Nicholas IV in 1289 and has the oldest medical school in Europe. The city of Montpellier is located in the south of France a mere six miles from the Mediterranean Sea and is close to the Camargue, the Cévennes Mountains, the Pyrenees and Barcelona, Spain. Clare's sisters plan on visiting her in late spring to see some of the lovely French countryside.

One final bit of musical news: Nick, Tony, Anna and Jacob will join their parents Bill and George for the annual Chamber Potluck Singers Christmas caroling tour on December 23. Bill formed (and named) the Chamber Pots nearly eight years ago, and it has been entertaining at the public library, nursing homes and private residences ever since. The group began as eight adult friends but has grown as the children of members have joined and various new members have been invited to participate. The Chamber Pots performs arrangements from the Una Vocis Choral Ensemble repertoire, an auditioned choir with which many of the Pots sing. Over the past couple of years the group has grown rather unwieldy, prompting plans to split into two ensembles next year with the tentative names of Chamber Pots #1 and #2!

Church Family News

Bill Riesen recently performed in a vocal ensemble of physicians (The Pain Killers) from Mercy Medical Center-North Iowa. They sang to a sold-out audience in the community college auditorium (seats 1150) for an annual fundraising concert benefiting the local Christian radio station, KCMR.

Congratulations to Nick Riesen for earning a chair in the Iowa All-State Band; though primarily an alto sax player, Nicholas performed on the baritone sax for the All-State concert. A senior, Nicholas hopes to continue playing his saxophone next year at college. No, he hasn't decided which college as yet.

Anthony Riesen and his father Bill were recently featured in an article in their local paper. For the past 18 months they've been building a marimba in their basement. To read the Globe Gazette article, follow this link: http://globegazette.com/father-son-project-building-a-marimba/article_c9cc91ba-1a43-11e1-8748-001cc4c002e0.html#ixzz1fCvQquBN



Coming Events in December

December Happy Birthday!

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. 21—Ava Lee Baker



December 2011

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 Choir 7:30	2	3
4	5	6 EGMS 2pm Grace Riesen's Home	7	8 Choir 7:30	9	10
11	12	13 Christian Ed 7pm	14	15 Choir 7:30	16 Covenant Soup Kitchen 4pm	17 Adult Choir 11am Youth Choir 9:30 am
18 Christmas Music & Caroling	19	20	21	22 Choir 7:30 WAIM Mtg 5:30-9pm	23	24 Christmas Eve Service 7:00 pm
25 Christmas Breakfast 9:30 am Service 10:15	26	27	28	29 Choir 7:30	30	31

Coming Events in January and February of 2012

January

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—Bill Keane, Jr.



February

Happy Birthday!

Feb. 7 – Beverly Hamel
 Feb. 7 – Lindsey Kloss
 Feb. 7 – Richard Barry
 Feb. 9 – Morgan Baker
 Feb. 15 – Bob Erickson
 Feb. 16 – Terry Yanaway
 Feb. 21 – Carol Bigl
 Feb. 23 – Dan Parker
 Feb. 23 – Toms Erickson
 Feb. 25 – Henry Bigl
 Feb. 27 – Gemila Mama

January 2012

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 Annual Reports Due Trustee Meeting	9	10	11 CSEA 12:30-3:00	12	13	14
15 Musical "Table for Five...Thousand"	16	17	18	19	20	21
22 (snow date Musical)	23	24	25	26	27	28
29 Annual Business Mtg.	30	31				

February 2012

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7 EGMS 2 pm	8 CSEA 12:30-3:00	9	10	11
12 Raise the Roof Potluck	13	14	15	16	17 Covenant Soup Kitchen 4pm	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29			



Dates to Remember

December 6 EGMS 2pm Grace Riesen's Home

December 13 Christian Ed Meeting 7pm

December 16 Covenant Soup Kitchen 4pm

December 18 Christmas Music & Caroling

December 22 WAIM Meeting 5:30-9pm

December 24 Christmas Eve Service 7:00 pm

**December 25 Christmas Breakfast 9:30 am
Service 10:15**

January 8 Annual Reports Due

January 8 Trustee Meeting

**January 15 Musical "Table for Five...Thousand"
Snow Date 1/22**

January 29 Annual Business Meeting

February 7 EGMS 2 pm

February 12 Raise the Roof Potluck

February 17 Covenant Soup Kitchen 4pm

March 18 Spring Newsletter Deadline



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.

Youth Group, Fri. 6:30-9:00 p.m.



An American Baptist Church