

From the Pastor:

Years ago we were in a discussion group with a man who was fond of quoting the wisdom, "Your actions are speaking so loudly that I can't hear what you're saying." He was referring to people whose behavior announced their message more clearly than did their statements.

He would return regularly to one or two phrases of that sort. Everyone knows that people repeat themselves. Older people develop favorite expressions, and sometimes lose track of how often they've used them. Our friend would smile and contribute his rule-of-thumb about the difference messages people send, or respond with another of his customary observations.

In retrospect that habit itself was something which spoke so loudly that we should have gotten the message. Eventually his reliance on routines began to be seen as a symptom of his losing ground engaging the world around him. He later was diagnosed with dementia. Until then, not only was he shielded from the fact of his decline by the familiar, but so were we. The healthy habit of offering the benefit of the doubt meant that we read his repetitions as personality traits rather than as warning signs, and at some point our resistance to seeing a friend as faltering made us choose not to see things for what they were.

Permitting things to speak for themselves is important and difficult. In religion, especially our variety of religion, it is not trusted as much as it should be. Teachers of Biblical interpretation distinguish between reading into the text, which is wrong-- it's imposing the burden of what we hope to find on the words-- and reading to get the text's own message out. Either way, however, there is an assumption that something needs to be added to the reading of the psalm, or the hearing of the parable. The preacher has to preach, exhibiting, for others' benefit, additional meanings or illuminating perspectives along with what has communicated itself.

There are times when this can't be helped, and there are times when this is important. Scriptures are susceptible to different readings, and the lessons taken from them open to varying emphases. Some trusted soul must profess her or his best take on the meaning, to make the Word of God more transparent to the listener or reader. Theology matters, more than most people believe, and it is achieved through dialogue with

scripture and the lights of one's understanding.

There are times, however, when the things of God best speak for themselves. This holy season in which we now live is one in which too much doctrinal explanation or thoughtful unpacking of meanings can interfere more than it helps. What can anyone say to make Easter more marvelous? What can anyone add to make Good Friday more poignant? Who really hopes to have the crucifixion and resurrection made more comprehensible?

Many people in the church like the Maundy Thursday service better than most others, and it may be because it speaks for itself. One of the gospel accounts of Jesus' journey to crucifixion is read, set off by prayer, singing, and sharing communion. The invitation to The Lord's Table comes concurrent with reading about The Last Supper. Even the prayer of confession, which usually puts words in people's mouths, is done entirely privately and silently, with the Assurance-- taken from scripture--the element read together.

First Baptist is hosting the Community Good Friday service this year, and that means that it is up to me to design the liturgy and Ruth to plan the music. I am leaning in the direction of making another service speak for itself, by reading from the New Testament about the significance of Christ's transforming us and the world. That will alternate with prayers, songs, and as much silence as seems manageable for the chatty traditions which will show up to attend to Golgotha. Perhaps the reflection resulting will be the way souls may come to mirror Christ which have managed to be still and know, by attending to the story itself, God.

Peace, Mac

BOARD OF DEACONS

The monthly meeting of the Board of Deacons was held at 7:00 p.m. on March 9, 2011, at First Baptist Church, with Moderator Sally Nyquist presiding. Also present were Pastor Mac Scott; Treasurer - Mike Wilson; Financial Secretary - Judy Mickanis; Recording Secretary - Lucie Rivoire Knauer; Property - Bob Murcek; Finance - Jim Elmore; Discipleship - Jack Pyper; Christian Education - Cathy Platusich; Fellowship - Joyce Wilson; Missions - Jan Rolecki; Church School - Lori Wilson; Worship - Kathy Morris.

The Moderator opened with a meditation on a passage from Matthew 5, and a brief prayer.

Board members reflected on the concepts of "salt of the earth," and "light of the world," as discussed in the selected scripture.

Minutes of the February meeting were approved as published. The Financial Secretary reported that subscriptions received to date for the current year total \$14,564.77, and plate offerings amount to \$541.70.

PASTOR'S REPORT: Following up on items discussed last month, Mac noted that five people partook of the March 6 communion offered prior to worship, possibly in response to enhanced publicity. He also informed the Board that he has received training as a mediator for congregations within our ABCoPAD region.

Due to illnesses within the Pastor's family, he has limited his visitations to members for the present. Mac reported that church secretary, Mary Ellen Beaver, is at RiverWoods to recuperate from knee replacement surgery. In her absence, the Women's Bible Study group helped to fold the bulletins.

Lenten activities include the Lewisburg Ministerium's Soup and Scripture series on Wednesdays. Mac has devised this year's curriculum, which seeks to show the New Testament's references to Old Testament incidents or themes. The community Good Friday service will be held at First Baptist this year; Music Director Ruth Blankenship will select the music. Anne Murcek has offered to host a dinner at the church some time during Lent.

The church has accepted an invitation from First English Baptist of Bloomsburg to participate in a music fest and social gathering on May 22. First Baptist of Williamsport has also been included in the event.

Mac also reported on efforts to assist a member find housing suited to his limited income and other restrictions. Various leads are being pursued on his behalf.

The Board agreed to take up the Pastor's challenge whereby each committee will initiate a project or activity not included in its routine duties. It is hoped that additional members of the congregation will be involved.

COURSE ON ISLAM - Sally noted that 39 participants have enrolled for the classes, set to begin March 10. Approximately one third are members of First Baptist. Several participants may have difficulty with the stairs to the Founders' Room; members of our church have agreed to be available to assist. Sally expressed thanks to Todd Stanford for arranging extra newspaper publicity promoting the course.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

- Information about greeting visitors was shared with the Board at large, so that the process may

continue smoothly in the event that members of the Discipleship Committee are unavailable on a given Sunday. Newcomers are to be provided with an information packet and a contact card to fill out. With the development of new discipleship materials in recent years, revisions to the traditional pew cards are in order. These formerly served to gather visitor information as well as offering a means of contacting the Pastor for a visit or prayer concerns.

- The revised constitution has been proofread and is ready for printing.

- Renovations to the first floor kitchenette are approaching completion. The Fellowship Committee will plan a special coffee hour for March 27 to celebrate the upgrade.

CHURCH GROWTH:

Sally announced that an ad hoc committee will be formed to learn about church growth and vitality and to make some recommendations to the Board of Deacons about specific actions to further that end. The Treasurer affirmed that funding could be found for purchasing books on the subject. It is expected that the committee would be given the remainder of the calendar year in which to pursue this project.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

PROPERTY - Bob noted that the kitchenette renovation is almost complete. Next on the agenda is replacement of the back exterior doors.

MISSIONS - Jan relayed the committee's discussion of the possible impact of elevator and/or air conditioning on the work of their committee. They agreed that an elevator would benefit the Food and Clothing program housed in the church basement, and that it might also enhance attendance at any church programs held in the Founders' Room. Air conditioning wasn't seen to have a specific impact other than providing a more comfortable environment.

Jan reminded the Board that the committee is collecting school kits and cleanup kits to be sent to Church World Service. Donations will be accepted through May. Information was included in this month's newsletter and is posted on the bulletin board near the Friendship Room.

First Baptist members have been invited by Beaver Memorial to participate in a missions trip in July. Jan will seek additional information.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION - Several Bible study sessions are planned to be held at Ridgecrest, most likely in May. Cathy reminded the Board of the ongoing card writing project, which helps the church reach out to the homebound, members in nursing homes, as well as convalescents. She also mentioned an upcoming session to be offered locally to train volunteers to sit with the dying. The committee is also considering a book club as a future project.

FELLOWSHIP - The Board expressed

appreciation to Joyce for managing to move the Valentine's Tea from the Friendship Room to the Library on a moment's notice. Due to heating problems, the worship service was held in the Friendship Room that morning. On March 27, Joyce will coordinate a special coffee hour to celebrate the completion of the kitchenette project. WORSHIP - Kathy thanked the Board for discussing several Worship Committee concerns at last month's meeting. The Board reaffirmed the need to ensure that all members and friends are receiving the church bulletin either by mail or electronically, as it seems that some people are being missed. Also, following several months' trial period with the new system, members should be given the opportunity to change their mode of receipt if desired.

TREASURER - Mike noted that expenditures have been relatively high in January and February. He will keep the Board apprised of the situation.

FINANCE - Jim shared the committee's goals for the current year. Looking ahead to the 2012 budget process, the committee hopes to limit withdrawal from the endowment to 5% for the second year in a row. In like manner, it is hoped that Missions can be allotted 20% of Subscription and Plate offerings. In leaner years, a balanced budget was achieved by withdrawing up to 6% from the endowment and by reducing Missions funding to as little as 17% of offerings.

The Finance Committee will continue to confer with the Property Committee regarding major projects and long-term expenditures. Various budgeting strategies will be considered to ensure funding as needed. The committee is also in the process of revising the policy for use of the church for weddings.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lucie Rivoire Knauer, Secretary

Quarterly Congregational Meeting

The Quarterly Congregational Meeting will be held Sunday, April 10 following Worship. The main matter of business will be financial.

Choir Night

Choir Night is **Wednesday, April 6**, at 7:15 p.m.

Worship Committee

The Worship Committee will meet Thursday, **April 7**, at 6:45 p.m. in the Friendship Room.

Property Committee

The Property Committee will meet **Monday, April 11**, at 7:00 p.m.

Board of Deacons' Meeting

The Board of Deacons will meet **Wednesday, April 13**, at 7:00 p.m.

Mission Opportunity

Church World Service (CWS) is requesting help --there is an urgent need for School Kits and Emergency Clean-up Buckets. If you would like to donate whole kits or individual items that go into the kits or buckets please check the Missions bulletin board in the hallway outside the Fellowship Room beginning in March and continuing through April and May. The Missions Committee will have lists posted and will be collecting donated kits and items (location to be announced and posted on the board).

CWS School Kits give children in impoverished schools, refugee camps, or other difficult settings some of the basic tools for learning. If you would like to sew cloth bags for the school kits the instructions will be posted on the board, or can be found online at www.churchworldservice.org.

If you would like to help with cash donations please specify for CWS Kits. Checks may be made to First Baptist Church and market for CWS Kits. Even the smallest donations will help and be greatly appreciated.

Mission Service Project Opportunity

First Baptist Church, in conjunction with Beaver Memorial, is offering adults and children an opportunity to participate in a week-long service project in Kentucky this July. The missions committee will help offset the costs of anyone who would like to attend. See Todd Stanford for more information.

Japan Aid

Persons wishing to donate through the church to relieve the suffering of the Japanese may make checks payable to the church and note "Japan" on the check.

Lenten Suppers

There is a sign-up on the bulletin board to join one or both of the Lenten Suppers of soup and bread which are being held Thursdays April 14 and 21. We will have fellowship, guided conversation and prayer.

Easter Lilies

Place orders early, as the florist would like a preliminary count April 11, 2011; last day to order will be April 18, 2011 at 9:00 a.m. Cost of each plant is \$13.00. Sign up on the back bulletin board or call the office. They may be given in Honor or in Memory.

Soup & Scripture

March 9 to April 20, 2011 11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. at Christ's Lutheran Church
Theme: Something Old and Something New
Sponsored by the Lewisburg Ministerium and the Lewisburg Council of Churches. A light lunch of soup, sandwich and dessert will be served

for which a donation is invited.

4/6 Judi Dunkelberger--John 3:11-15,
Numbers 21:5-9 (Jesus as bronze serpent "lifted
up") 4/13 Peter Harer-- Genesis 2:15-17,
Romans 5:10-21 (First Adam, Second Adam)
4/20 Rebecca Foote--John 6 & 13:31, Exodus
13:16-36 – Jesus and Moses (Lawgiver)

Palm Sunday

April 17



Graduates Dinner

The Graduates Dinner will be Wednesday,
April 20, at 6:00 p.m. Claire Rapp and Evan
Wilson will be graduating.

Maundy Thursday, April 21

The Passion According to Luke, Maundy
Thursday Communion and Tenebrae Service,
8:00 p.m. Choir meets at 7 p.m.

Good Friday April 22

The Lewisburg Ministerium and Council of
Churches will hold their ecumenical Good Friday
service noon to 1:00 p.m., April 22 at The First
Baptist Church of Lewisburg.

Easter Sunrise April 24

The 29th Annual **Outdoor Easter Sunrise
Service** 6:05 a.m., Bucknell Golf Course near
Stein Lane and Jonathan Road. Additional
information and directions, call Bruce Jackson 524-
0888.



Blood Drive

April Blood Drive will be: Thursday, April 7th
10-4:00 pm at Bucknell, Larison Hall. Friday, April
15th 10-4:00 pm at Evangelical Hospital.
Wednesday, April 20th 12-6:00 pm at Silver
Moon, Lewisburg. Call 534-0400 for an
appointment or information.

For Your Prayer

Rev. Gordon Kurtz is recovering from a fall.
Marge Pangburn's nephew Jack Cooper is
in failing health. Please keep him in your prayers.

Martin Wilson and Tamara Gerasimova are
recovering from fractures. Ben Austin, Ken
Bollinger, Dick and Peg Budd, Russ Mayberry,
and Betty Siler are also at home.

Bill Bobb is at Riverview Manor. Chet &
Margaret Jump are at RidgeCrest. Kitty Bowe,
Beverly Fisher and Evelyn Reed are at
RiverWoods. Harriet Littell is at Elmcroft. Gloria
Miller is at Rolling Hills Manor.

Prayer Chain

If you have a prayer request or are
interested in being notified when prayer requests
are submitted, please contact Jan Rolecki at 523-
6074 or Kathryn Morris at kmorris1@dejazzd.com.



Thank You

Thank you for prayers, cards and visits. I am
progressing slowly, but steady. Mary Ellen



Music in May

Next month you will have the opportunity to
attend two student recitals, and an afternoon of
Church Music and Fellowship.

Sunday, **May 1**, at 2:00 p.m. Lloyd Wolf
and Ruth Blankenship's students will have their
piano recital here at First Baptist.

Sunday, **May 15**, at 2:00 p.m. Marcus
Smolensky's string students will have their recital
also here at First Baptist.

The recitals are free and open to the public.
This would be a good chance to see the talent of
young people in our community.

Sunday **May 22**, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.
our Heartland Fellowship will hold a Music Festival
at First English Baptist Church in Bloomsburg. The
three churches will present 2 to 5 musical numbers,
which will last approximately one hour, followed by
refreshments and fellowship together.

Gus Parajon Has Died

The Rev. Dr. Gustavo Parajon, medical
doctor and former pastor of the First Baptist Church
of Managua, Nicaragua, died of a heart attack on
March 13. A leader in Protestant church and
medical circles in Nicaragua, Gus had ties to several
members of First Baptist through the years through
his connection with International Ministries. He went
to college and medical school in Ohio, where he
became acquainted with the family of the late Mel
Woodward, former member of FBC.

In the 1990's this church took part in a
project to collect medical supplies which were
traveling to Nicaragua in a bus secured for the use
of CEPAD (The Nicaraguan Council of Evangelical
Churches) which was founded by Dr. Parajon. He
also began PROVADENIC, the Nicaragua
Vaccination and Community Development
Program. Dr. Parajon received multiple national
and international awards for his work on behalf of his
fellow Nicaraguans.

Steve and Marion Jacobsen visited with the
Parajons in the fall of 2006. They stated in
response to news of his death that "His work with
the people of Nicaragua was one of the finest
examples of International Ministries' efforts to serve
the poor and needy, in this particular case in the
second poorest country in the Western
Hemisphere."