

From the Pastor:

We squeezed together at the makeshift fence, hoping to find some heat in contact. It was very cold. The live Nativity had been set rather late. No doubt collecting the cast, including the burro, needed to take place after supper and from some distance.

The stage was the yard between church and parsonage, with outside lights and an outside speaker on the church building. The pastor would read the familiar scripture and pause, and then the living picture would compose itself, kids in burlap or bedsheets being prompted to move from behind the shrubbery to the manger.

The offstage reader would somehow be contacted, and the next bit of narration would cut into the frigid air. The reading was clear, rounded and deliberate. Some slight span would mark the prompter's persuasion that the cue was completed, and then the next players would emerge.

There were pauses. We shifted like tethered beasts, stomping to restore feeling, and waited either to hear more story or see someone walk across the frosted lawn. Dressing to be outdoors in late December and dressing to stand still outdoors began to seem like crucially different things.

The donkey had come with Mary and Joseph, a doll Jesus had appeared from behind a prop, the shepherds had arrived. The Magi mercifully made their way across the lawn, and players and onlookers alike prepared to get indoors. Some summing-up scriptures were intoned.

The conclusion never came off as planned. The public address went bad, squelching and sputtering. We were newly alert, wondering how the suddenly changed story would resolve. Hums and honks and awful buzzing and scratching sounds blared from the speaker, until a sudden clear signal conveyed the offstage pastor's exasperated "Damn!"

It was like those films which accompany the ending credits with bloopers. Sometimes those are the best part of the movie. If the film hasn't successfully engaged the audience as a fiction, the fact of fellow mortals muffing their lines or being betrayed by uncooperative props brings a smile. Whatever satisfactions might have been attained by our willing suspension of disbelief are followed

by the fellow-feeling of seeing the humor in failure. Mishap needs to be met, and it's usually between laughter and tears.

God with us is the point of the pageant. Parents come anxious about their child's turn on stage, hoping for the best. Some in the congregation are hoping for dignity, and others for some froward angel or hammy shepherd to break the spell and bring a laugh. For those gathered it is always "our pageant," the familiar setting and the recognizable actors briefly inhabiting the old roles. We are glad that this little girl has attained the part of Mary, and look forward to seeing what that little personality is going to do at the manger.

Whatever mix of wonder, awe, cluelessness and comedy comes, the Christmas story rings true. Mere mortals do their best to follow the dictates of deity. The shepherds are scared, they're curious, they seek confirmation. Mary and Joseph are inconvenienced, they're overwhelmed by necessity. The Magi think they know where they are going and they are wrong; they think they are bringing a blessing and they're causing trouble.

Jesus is born into a world in which things fail, plans are frustrated, and pride is embarrassed. There are tears of pain and laughter at absurdity. It is our world, and it is worth our inconveniencing ourselves to attend, again, to Christmas. Its exhilaration and its sighing alike speak to our lives, and God's part in it reminds us that underlying the tragedies and the farces of mortal living always is purpose, and providence, and

Peace. Mac

Board of Deacons

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

The Moderator opened with several passages from a book by Tony Campolo, entitled Can Mainline Denominations Make a Comeback? Thoughts were shared concerning the challenge of balancing efforts to address social concerns on a

broad scale while still ministering to the personal needs of the congregation. A brief prayer followed.

Minutes of the October meeting were approved as published. The Financial Secretary reported that offerings to date total \$78,221.05 in subscriptions and \$2,537.98 from the plate.

PASTOR'S REPORT: In addition to visiting and taking communion with those at home, Mac reported that he performed the dedication for the infant daughter of Jennifer Davis and Jeremy Krieger. Mac and Lisa also attended calling hours and the service for Kim Smith's mother, Mildred Lewis. Mac officiated at the memorial service held at First Baptist for Keith Shemory, father of Ginny Lopez. He extended thanks to Diane Meixell and those who provided a reception following the service.

Throughout the past month, Mac attended meetings of both the Pastoral Relations Committee and the committee on Church Growth and Vitality. He assisted with the church's Halloween party for the children and took part in the Men's Breakfast at Ard's restaurant. He also finished the banking and bookkeeping for this year's CROP Walk. Mac thanked the board for their hospitable inclinations regarding use of the facilities for an upcoming memorial service as well as the concert described below.

FINANCE COMMITTEE - Committee chair Jim Elmore presented the proposed 2012 budget, which will be submitted for congregational approval at the January business meeting. He explained that expenses continue to increase while revenues remain flat. In order to achieve a balanced budget, it was necessary to use the \$8,000 contingency fund carried over from 2011. The Finance Committee had hoped to build the fund each year to help pay for a major project in the future, but this was not possible.

Overall, committee budget requests were met for the coming year. Salaries reflect an increase of 3%. The allocation for Missions is set at 18% of subscriptions and plate; this amount is down from 20% in 2011 but in the usual range of 17%-19% achieved in recent years. Although capital funds designated for Property stand at only \$4,000, an additional \$9,000 is allowed for maintenance of the church and adjacent property.

The Deacons approved the budget proposal and thanked the committee for their hard work in its preparation.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

- **CONCERT:** First Baptist has agreed to host a musical program by the Laudate Mennonite Ensemble on Wednesday, November 30. Mac was initially contacted by their representative and is serving as liaison for the arrangements. With the support of the local Mennonite community, a large

attendance is possible. Mac requested that several members of First Baptist be available to direct visitors, assist with lighting, etc. A simple reception following the concert is planned.

- **VISITORS:** Diane was charged with drafting a job description to be provided to greeters, in recognition of the importance of this position. The Property Committee will follow through on the plan to improve signage throughout the building.

- **NOMINATING COMMITTEE:** The committee, consisting of Jan Rolecki, Diane Meixell, and Jack Pyper will set a meeting date to prepare for assembling a slate of nominees for election in January.

- **CHRISTMAS MEMORY BOOK:** Work is underway to issue an updated edition of the booklet of Christmas reminiscences originally prepared some years ago. Anyone interested in contributing is asked to do so by Thanksgiving.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

WORSHIP - The Committee discussed various items pertaining to the Christmas season: reprinting of the Christmas memories booklet; decoration of the sanctuary, which will be under Martha Barrick's direction; and questions about worship service on Christmas morning, which falls on a Sunday. In other business, the Committee considered opportunities for occasional cooperative worship with Beaver Memorial as well as the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Milton.

FELLOWSHIP - Joyce sent her appreciation for all who have helped with Sunday morning coffee hour.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION - Cathy reported that a Women's Night Out is planned for Tuesday, November 15, at Ard's restaurant. To date, fifteen have signed up for the event.

CHURCH SCHOOL - Lori sent a report that the Halloween party for the kids was well attended. Another project was to make a taco meal for Haven ministries. Attending were Anna Barrick with Hobie and Andy, Robyn, Emma and Abby Tillman, Lisa, Sam and James Scott, Lisa Craddock, Lori and Ryan Wilson. It was fun for all and an event that will be done again in the spring. Plans are underway to make Advent wreaths on Sunday, November 20th. Those wishing to join in should contact Lisa Scott soon so there are enough supplies.

MISSIONS - Jan reported that \$250 was donated for flood relief. The committee is considering a fund-raising event in the spring.

PROPERTY - Bob reported that bids are being received for the project involving the front steps and sidewalk. On a related topic, concerns were voiced over snow and ice removal in front of the church. Mac noted that the lack of sunshine on the Third Street sidewalk hampers natural melting, and that it is important for the walk and steps to be

cleared very thoroughly.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lucie Rivoire Knauer, Secretary

Notice about Founders Room

The Clothing Program will be using the Founders Room from Monday, December 12 thru their distribution on Friday, December 16.

Retired Ministers & Missionaries Offering

The Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering
RMMO *connects generations*



Since 1935, American Baptists have contributed to special offerings received in their churches for retired ABC ministers and missionaries or their widowed spouses. The Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering was established in 1977.

Through this annual offering, American Baptist congregations say thank you in a tangible way to the denomination's retired ministers and missionaries or their widowed spouses. The offering provides them with:

Emergency and other financial assistance, based on financial need; and "Thank You" checks, based on 15 or more years of ABC service.

The RMMO will be taken by most ABC congregations on Sunday, December 4, 2011.



All kids in grades 5 through 12, are welcome to Youth Choir practice every Sunday at 11:30 following worship.

Choir Night

Wednesday, December 7, at 7:15 p.m.

Women's Bible Study

The Women's Bible Study will adjourn Tuesday, Dec. 6; resumes Tuesday, Jan. 17.

Discussion Group

Sunday, December 11, at 7:00 p.m.

Property Committee

Monday, December 12, at 7:00 p.m.

Board of Deacons

Wednesday, December 14, at 7:00 p.m.

Lights of Love

The community is invited to attend the 24th Annual Lights of Love Ceremony which will be held on Sunday, December 4 at 4 pm in the Hospital Dining Services.



Poinsettia

Orders

Please sign up early for your poinsettia as the florist would like a tentative count by November 28. The last day to order is December 12, 2010. The price is \$12.00 for a 5-8 bloom plant. There is a sign up sheet on the Flower Chart on the back bulletin board, or you may call the church office. Remember to specify who they are in Honor or in Memory of.



Clothing

Program

We are collecting hooded sweatshirts & flannel pajama bottoms for boys & girls, sizes 6-8 to XL adult, toddler fleece sleepers sizes 3, 4 & 5. These need to be in by **December 11**. Wal Mart or Boscov gift cards, or cash will be accepted. See Sallie Pyper or Gayle Pepper. They will be using the Founders Room to set up from Monday, Dec. 12 thru the distribution on Friday, Dec. 16.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18th



Christmas Pageant

Sunday, December 18
The Christmas Pageant, Gifts for the Manger, Blanket Sunday and the Christmas Luncheon.

Gift for the Manger If you want to bring a gift to be gathered during the Christmas Pageant, bring gifts for children up to seventeen years old, unwrapped. Games are especially good for the older children. Haven Ministry has the parents wrap donated gifts for their children.

FBC takes part in **Church World Service's "Blanket Sunday"** annually by donating undesignated cash offerings on Christmas Pageant Sunday and any checks given that day which have "Blanket Sunday" written on them.

The **Christmas Luncheon** will follow the pageant, in the Founders Room. Everyone is welcome.



Christmas Eve

Saturday, December 24th at 7:30 p.m. there will be a Christmas Eve candlelight and communion service. The choir will meet at 6:30

Officers and Deacons - Annual reports

It will soon be time for your annual reports. You may want to start working on them early. A letter containing last year's report will be mailed around December 1st. They will be due in the office no later than **December 26th** so they can be compiled, sent to the printer and ready for distribution Sunday, January 8 before the Annual Congregational Business Meeting on January 15.

NEWS FROM THE

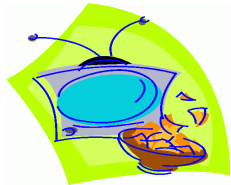


CHILDREN and YOUTH

Sunday, November 6 the children and youth served a meal at Haven Ministry. Their menu was tacos, mexican confetti rice, homemade apple sauce, brownies and lemon squares. The servers were Hobie and Andy Beauseigneur, Liza Craddock, James and Sam Scott, Emma and Abbey Tillman and Ryan Wilson. Adult helpers were Anna Barrick, Lisa Scott, Robyn Tillman, and Lori Wilson.

Christmas Pageant Rehearsal

Rehearsal will be immediately following Church Sundays December 4 and 11. A pizza luncheon will be held on the 11th.



Kid's Video Night will be held on Friday, December 9 at 6:30 pm.

Memorial

Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of Mildred L. Lewis who passed away Friday, October 28. Mildred was Kim Smith's Mother.

Our thoughts and prayers are also with the family and friends of Keith Shemory who passed away Saturday, October 29. Keith was Virginia Lopez's Father.

Our thoughts and prayers are also with the

family and friends of Catherine "Kitty" Bowe who passed away Saturday, November 19. The funeral was conducted by The Rev. MacKenzie Scott at FBC on Tuesday, November 22, 2012.

New Address

Russell Mayberry and Carolyn Patton's new address is 285 Bull Run Crossing, Lewisburg, PA 17837-6723.

Sabrina Rojo's new address is 22 Lower Mulberry Street, Apartment 7, Danville, Pa 17821.

Cookie Goodall's new address is 623 Matlack Avenue, Lewisburg, PA 17837-1016

Margaret Zeller's new address is 750 Stout Avenue, Wyoming, OH 45215-2734.

Gloria Miller's new address is 32 South Turbot, Box 225, Milton, PA 17847

For Your Prayer

Ben Austin, Lynda Blankenship Barrett, Peg Budd, Tamara Gerasimova, Herman Howard, Nicola Manning, Russ Mayberry, and Steve Rotolo are at home.

Bill Bobb at Riverview Manor. Chet & Margaret Jump at RidgeCrest. Kitty Bowe, Richard Budd and Beverly Fisher at RiverWoods. Cookie Goodall & Harriet Littell at Elmcroft. Gloria Miller at Rockwell.

The Rev. Gordon Kurtz

November 18 letter from Elizabeth Kurtz: "Mom is feeling quite depressed about dad's move to Queensway yesterday. It is about 45 minutes away. Winter has already begun - they had some snow squalls the last couple days - so there will be times when mom won't be able to visit. Dad's room, which he shares with three other guys, seemed dark to her and there is very little space for personal items. We can only hope and pray that dad's name comes up for Maitland Manor in Goderich sooner than later.

Mom asked me where she could buy a telephone since the rooms have jacks, so she will look into purchasing one today and calling a carrier to have it hooked up. The phone will be the other form of communication with dad, and we will let everyone know what the number is when it is available. The address there is: Queensway Retirement Home, 100 Queen Street, Hensall, ON Canada NOM 1X0 "

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.

Women's Luncheon Date Change

The Women's Luncheon has been changed to **Tuesday, January 10, 2012** at noon, at RiverWoods Ridgecrest Restaurant. There is a sign-up sheet on the back bulletin board or call the church office. All women are invited to attend. Your Love Gift Offering will be accepted there.

Flower Calendar for 2012

The Flower Calendar for 2012 is up on the back bulletin board. The cost for both arrangements is \$40.00 payable by a check made out to FBC with a note on it "Flowers". You can sign up or call the office and I will put your request on the calendar. Thank You to everyone who donates flowers thru the year.



Wesley Forest Ecumenical Winter Retreat

The 40th annual Ecumenical Winter Retreat will be held January 20-22, 2012 at Wesley Forest in western Union County. The theme will be: "The Perennial Philosophy: Universal Spiritual Principles and A Creed for Everyone." Our leader will be Vince Lisi. Vince is a spiritual teacher who lives in Youngstown, Ohio.

A brochure giving full details about Vince and the weekend are available at the office. Save the dates now and plan to enjoy this stimulating and enjoyable weekend with friends.



Supplemental Food Bank Help

The Lewisburg Area Council of Churches sponsors the Supplemental Food Bank which operates from the basement of First Baptist Church on the first and third Friday of every month. Volunteers gather at 9 am Friday morning to pack bags of food which are distributed to more than 160 families in our area whose household income is at or less than 150% of the federal poverty level.

Ten of our families are made up of elderly and/or handicapped individuals who are not able to get to the church to pick up their food. We are looking for people who will be willing to go to FBC at 10:30 am on those 2 Friday mornings every month, pick up the food packages, and deliver them to the homes of our shut-ins.

Please contact Sallie Pyper at 524-0470 or Gayle Pepper at 523-0182 if you would be interested in helping with food deliveries.

Thank you!

Meals on Wheels Needs Volunteers

Volunteers are needed to deliver hot noontime meals to people in the Lewisburg area. That meal may be the only meal a disabled person has that day. Volunteers may decide to deliver meals on a regular biweekly schedule, or as a substitute on call as needed.

Meals are picked up at the Riverwoods Nursing Center at 11 a.m. and delivered along a route that takes approximately 75 minutes.

Learn more about your community while helping others. Call Stacy at 524-2271, extension 1934 for details on how to participate.



Thanksgiving and Christmas Gifts

The Council of Churches extends heartfelt thanks to all the groups who collect food staple items for the Supplemental Food Bank on a regular basis. There always is a need for canned fruit, meat, vegetables, sugar, flour, and cereal.

If you are interested in contributing Thanksgiving or Christmas gifts to the Food Bank, gift cards to local grocery stores which enable us to purchase turkeys are an enormous help.

We thank you for caring!

Susquehanna Valley Chorale

Susquehanna Valley Chorale and Orchestra will present John Rutter's *Magnificat* and *O Holy Night* carol arrangements Sat., Dec. 10, 7:30 PM, and Sun., Dec. 11, 3 PM at Zion Lutheran Church, Sunbury. Tickets are available at the door, on-line at svcmusic.org, or by calling 570-547-0455.



Church Snow Blower For Sale

It is an Ariens ST420 that runs fine. It is over 10 years old, but was rarely used, since it was mainly a backup unit in case the regular contractor's equipment failed. Our guess is that it has been run for less than a full season. The ST420 has a 20" opening, with a 2 stage snow blower powered by a quick starting 4 HP engine. It has 4 speeds forward and 1 reverse for ease of handling.

The Church would like \$250. The 1st check that is received in the Church Office will be awarded the unit. In case two, or more, are received in the same mail delivery, one will be chosen randomly. The unit can be inspected by contacting Alan Barrick through the church office.