

Dialogue

First Baptist Church of Lewisburg
51 South Third Street
Lewisburg, PA 17837
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free to think, bound to serve

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From the Pastor:

"You sounded like a Marxist!" my colleague said with astonishment. He was referring to an illustration I'd used in a sermon, in which I reported how a particular group of professionals had lobbied the state legislature to take certain therapies away from trained, able, and relatively low-paid assistants and require, by law, that the professionals, making five times as much, do them instead. I hadn't intended to sound like a Marxist-- I was talking about how people are motivated by self-interest, and even legislators, who need funds for reelection coffers, may be guided by what's in it for them rather than the good of the public they serve. After all, the lower-cost assistants had been providing this therapy for years, and the reason the professionals needed to arrogate such work to themselves was that their ranks were growing quickly and they wanted to make sure they had plenty of work. The fact that the medical benefits of the therapies would henceforth be much more expensive didn't seem to worry either the professionals who promoted that change or the legislators who obliged them with new regulations.

I suppose, in a Marxist state, if such a thing existed, this sort of thing wouldn't happen, because those with money to court the favor of the powerful wouldn't be allowed to have the rules written to preserve their privilege at the public expense. Such presumably Marxist states as have existed, however, have fallen prey to the same tendency for people to consult their own interest first. The Soviet Union didn't benefit from some unseen hand of History changing the rules of human competition. Instead, people preserved power and privilege with the different means at their disposal.

No "ism" is going to solve the problem of persons deeming their own welfare more important than the well-being of the next person. Selfishness and self-aggrandizement are traits with which we are born, and all the civilizing influences in the world don't prevent us from succumbing to them. Unless we believe that we are required to love our neighbor equally with ourselves, we will have a hard time aiming at a society built on other principles than every man for himself.

Of course, my friend who worried about Marxist overtones in my example of special interests using influence to gain advantage might have been using the term loosely, as the mid-

twentieth rival to capitalism. Capitalism expects the seeking of selfish advantage, and is supposed to gain by it. Vying and striving are supposed to lower prices and improve services, when coupled with the self-interest of consumers.

That works best when it's a matter of manufacturers creating rival products or offering rival services. The health care professionals to which I earlier alluded didn't have a business which worked that way. They were part guild and part public trust, working in a field associated with altruism and real and helpful advances. They presumably, by establishing a monopoly on their specialty, assured higher standards for their membership, and reliable performance across the profession. However, it also meant that anyone with a doctor's orders to get certain kinds of help had to use them, at the going rate, period. This advantage was one to which they added by having the regulations revised.

Financial services was an industry in which it became very easy to make a lot of money. The more prosperous times became, the more the business was driven by making money instead of serving investors or protecting the public. It seems paradoxical that booms produce more criminality than more lackluster periods of business, but it's true. The old saying about power corrupting, and absolute power corrupting absolutely, applies.

The example I used first comes from the fields of medicine and politics, but it's not a medical problem or a political problem. It's a human problem. The failure of government, which obviously includes our failure to govern ourselves accountably and wisely, always leaves the door open to some group or other's grabbing for advantage at the cost of everyone else.

In small ways, perhaps, individuals intending to be just and to love others can do their best. Join debates as a moderating influence. Give people the benefit of the doubt. Govern your own life by believing in everyone's worth in the sight of God. Be grateful for what you have. Resist being ruled by pride or fear. Don't fear those who can manipulate circumstances to gain some advantage on you-- fear the voice inside you which welcomes the idea that you can turn things to your own advantage, at the expense of others.

Perhaps in that way your faith in what is right, even in the midst of a world of selfishness and cynicism, will bring

Peace, Mac

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The quarterly meeting of the congregation of FBC was held following worship on Sunday, October 11, 2009, with about 25 members in attendance. Presiding over the meeting, Moderator Joel Turrell invited the Pastor to open the session with a brief prayer. Those in attendance were provided with copies of the Treasurer's quarterly financial report. Minutes of the July 2009, congregational meeting were approved as published, following a motion by Judy Mickanis, seconded by Lori Wilson.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Treasurer Mike Wilson provided copies of the financial report to all present, and reviewed the most significant points. For the most part, church expenses through September come to 75% of the amount budgeted for the year. Those in excess represent categories which vary and are difficult to predict in advance; these may be reexamined for next year. Income from subscriptions stands at 72% of the year's projections. It is likely that the full amount will be met by year's end, however. Plate income is somewhat higher than expected. Mike also prepared a summary of the church's miscellaneous accounts, including special benevolence, and funds for projects such as website design and the proposed elevator. The balance remaining from the capital campaign stands at \$61,973.

PROPERTY: Alan Barrick began by reminding the congregation of various practices to help minimize the risk of spreading colds and flu. Dispensers of hand sanitizer have been placed at all entrances to the building. He also encouraged members to have a flu shot, to cover coughs and sneezes, and to stay at home if feeling indisposed.

In addition to repairing the steeple bell, the committee has focused on basic maintenance this year, in anticipation of a busy schedule in 2010. Plans include remodeling the kitchenette serving the Friendship Room, revamping the Third Street entrance, and repairing the organ's oboe pipes. Looking ahead to long-range needs, the committee is researching prices for storm windows to protect the stained glass, as well as studying the church's electrical service capacity.

The membership commended the committee for its thorough examination of the church's property concerns.

Commenting from the floor, Jan Rolecki noted that there is a possibility of matching grant funding for an elevator, if the church were to work with the county food distribution program. The committee will seek further information on the matter. The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted, Lucie Rivoire

BOARD OF DEACONS' MEETING

The monthly meeting of the Board of Deacons was held at 7:30 p.m. on October 21, 2009, at First Baptist Church, with Moderator Joel Turrell presiding. Also present were Pastor Mac Scott, Recording Secretary - Lucie Rivoire, and committee representatives as follows: Finance - Jack Pyper; Worship - Kathy Morris; Property - Bob Murcek; Watchcare - Anne Murcek; Discipleship - Curt Smith.

Opening devotions included singing of the hymn, "More Love to Thee," followed by reflections on the scriptural passage John 13:34-35. Curt noted that the Discipleship Committee hopes to incorporate the message into the work of the church: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." The committee strives to make First Baptist more welcoming to visitors and members.

The Pastor's ministry this month has included delivery of communion to shut-ins, keeping in touch with those facing medical problems or in need of prayer, as well as providing a listening ear where needed. Mac will prepare a report on the Fellowship Fund for review at next month's meeting.

CARING FOR OUR CONGREGATION: FELLOWSHIP - Joyce Wilson sent a report reminding the group that the next major project will be the Christmas Cookie coffee hour, to be coordinated by Sally Nyquist.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES - Lori Wilson reported by e-mail that 24 people attended the family outing to Ard's Farm Market. The older children will visit the haunted house in Elysburg on Friday, October 23. A Halloween party for the younger children is planned for Sun., October 25.

CHURCH NEWSLETTER: Both as a way to economize on postage and printing and to cope with delayed mail deliveries, the Board discussed the possibility of encouraging members to read the newsletter online. A paper version would still be available for those with no access to a computer. Joel pointed out that any savings would make funds available for other ministries. At next month's meeting, the Board will study financial projections and will discuss ways of implementing the proposed plan.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE: Given the low number in attendance at the meeting, it was agreed to use e-mail to reach the entire Board for input on appointments to the three-member committee. The matter should be finalized within the coming week, so that work can begin in time for the new year's elections.

FULFILLING OUR ROLE AS THE BODY OF CHRIST: MISSIONS - The Board was reminded of Missionary Kim Brown's visit on

Tuesday, October 27. The congregation is invited to meet with her over dinner.

WORSHIP - Kathy reported that the committee has drafted a description of their responsibilities, to inform potential members of ways to be of service. The committee's October 26 meeting will include budget preparation.

DISCIPLESHIP - Curt reported that visitor volume and retention remain on target, with numbers similar to last year's and showing an improvement over two years ago. Next week's bulletin will invite prospective members to join the church in November. The committee also has been studying ways that churches can reach out through the morning's greeters. Curt has researched website and printed information on the subject, gleaned insights that best apply to our own congregation. As the Watchcare Committee is charged with recruiting greeters, they will also review these materials.

In other matters, the committee has discussed with the Worship Committee two areas which could make worship services more meaningful and appealing to visitors and members alike.

- Congregational singing often seems weak, which may discourage timid singers from participating.

The choir and organist will be encouraged to seek ways of supporting the congregation.

- Since communion is observed only in alternate months, the church might consider ways of offering communion to those who desire it more frequently or who are absent from the service due to responsibilities in Sunday School. One solution might be to use the Tower Room off the narthex to serve small numbers in a "chapel" setting.

Discussion will continue on these matters.

FULFILLING OUR ROLE AS STEWARDS OF GIFTS: FINANCE - Jack reminded the group that committees are asked to submit budget requests for 2010 no later than November 1.

The Moderator noted that next month the Board will hear about proposed revisions to the church's audit procedures.

Closing with a prayer, the Deacons adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.
Respectfully submitted, Lucie Rivoire, Secretary



Daylight Savings Time Ends

Before going to bed Saturday, **October 31st** turn you clocks back 1 hour as Daylight Savings Ends. If you forget you will just be early for services on Sunday.

SUBSCRIPTION DRIVE

Have you filled out and returned your pledge card? Finance Com. needs them to plan

for 2010. 20 individuals or households pledged \$49,010 toward the 2010 budget to the support the work of First Baptist Church for next year.



2010 Budget Requests

All committee budget requests for 2010 are needed Nov. 1. Please submit these requests to Jack Pyper through the church office or via email: pyper@bucknell.edu.



Sunday, November 1st

The Worship music will be honoring the 200th birthday of Felix Mendelssohn.



Choir Rehearsal

There will be a special Mendelssohn Choir rehearsal **Sunday, Nov. 1** at 9:15 a.m. Choir night is **Wednesday, Nov. 4** at 7:15 p.m.



Picture – Which Thousand Words?

Dan Doyle's "Visual Literacy" final session is **Thurs., Nov. 5th** at 7pm.

Discussion Group

The Discussion Group will meet **Sunday, Nov. 8th and 22nd**, at 7:00 p.m. in the Library.



November 11th is Veterans Day.

Remembering all veterans who fought for our country to preserve our freedom.

Finance & Promotion Committee

The Finance and Promotion Committee will meet **Thurs. Nov. 12th** from 7-9 pm in the Library.

Board of Deacons' Meeting

The Board of Deacons will meet **Wed., November 18th**, at 7:30 p.m. in the Library.

Communion Service

On **Sunday, November 22nd**, Thanksgiving Communion will be served. During this service there will be an **opportunity to become members of First Baptist**. Anyone interested should see Mac so the necessary arrangements can be made.



First Sunday of Advent November 29

NEWS FROM THE



CHILDREN AND YOUTH

A Family Activity at Ard's was Oct. 11th.

There were hot dogs and mini maze park: children's corn maze, maze mountain, corn cannon, spider maze, fun barn, rope maze, and zip line. Those who enjoyed the fun were: Lexi Barrick; Anna Barrick; Hobie & Andy Beauseigneur; Liza and Christine Craddock; Virginia, Tito, Angela and Nathaniel Lopez and their cousin Josh; Christopher Loreman; Lisa, Mac, Sam, and James Scott; Robin Sullivan, Kyle, Cody, Cherakee, Chandler, Kaley and Rob Palmer; Todd and Veronica Stanford.



16 children attended a **Halloween Party** at the Church, Sunday, Oct. 25th from 1 to 3 p.m. It was a fun filled afternoon with costumes, refreshments and games.



On Friday, Oct. 23, 5 adults and youth from FBC bravely venture to the **Elysburg Haunted House**.

Help with Coffee Hour

People are needed to take care of Coffee Hour after worship. There is a sign-up sheet on the back bulletin board. Your help would be greatly appreciated. There are also sign-up sheets for Greeter, Reader, Nursery, and Flower Delivery. The flower charts is posted there along with things of interest and thank you notes. Check it out.

American Red Cross Blood Drive Playworld, 1000 Buffalo Rd., Lewisburg Wed., Nov. 11th -- 10 am - 4 pm

The Red Cross has joined with 2009 Feed-A-Friend Program. During Nov., donors may bring nonperishable food items to the blood drive to feed local families. Call 524-0400 for appointment.

Ecumenical Peace Vesper

The next monthly Ecumenical Peace Vesper Service will be **Sun., Nov. 15** at 7 PM at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 255 S.Derr Drive. There will be scripture, readings, meditations on Christ's peace in our personal, community and national lives.



Cookie Sunday



The Christmas Cookie Sunday is set for December 6. As in other years a small collection of the recipes for the shared cookies will be distributed the day of the special Coffee Hour. Persons planning to take part are invited to submit

recipes **as soon as possible, but no later than November 29th**. Email recipes can be sent to nyquist@bucknell.edu. Paper copies can be brought or sent to the church office.

Retired Minister & Missionaries Offering

On **Sunday, Dec. 6**, and through out the month, the RMMO be received. This annual ABCUSA offering provides: (1) Thank You check to over 3,000 retired AB ministers and missionaries or their windowed spouses, based on 15 or more years of ABC service, (2) emergency and other financial assistance based on need. Pray about your gift, it really does make a difference!



OFFICERS, DEACONS and COMMITTEE CHAIRS

It will soon be time for your annual reports. You may want to start working on them early. They will be due in the office **December 29th** so they can be compiled, sent to the printer and ready for the Annual Meeting, Sunday, January 10, 2010.

Ecumenical Winter Retreat

The 38th annual Ecumenical Winter Retreat will be held **January 22-24, 2010** at Wesley Forest in western Union County. The theme will be "In the Light of the Moment". Our leader will be Mary L. Wade, minister, poet, organization founder and world traveler. Mary is a powerful yet warm presence with a wealth of life experience. Your life will be enriched by sharing a weekend with her. A brochure giving further details of the weekend will be available early in November. Don't miss this one! Save the dates now and plan to enjoy this stimulating and enjoyable weekend with friends.

Invitations to Everyone

The Youth Group from **Zion Lutheran Church** in Turbotville invites you to another evening of *Country Gospel Music* **Sun., Nov. 1** at 6:30 pm. More information on bulletin board.

The **Rockwell Retirement Center** in Milton will be displaying "The Norman Rockwell" fall collection that has rarely been seen here before. Their will be tours, drawing and light refreshments. **Wed. Nov. 4** from 5-8 p.m.

Lutheran World Relief **Fair Trade Fair** on **Sat. Nov. 14** 10 am - 2 pm at **United in Christ Lutheran Church**, 1875 Churches Road. Beautiful and unique Fair Trade items handmade by disadvantaged artisans in developing areas. More information, please call the church: 568-2254



December Newsletter

Please have information for the December Newsletter in the office by **November 23rd** meb