

Dialogue

First Baptist Church of Lewisburg
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Lewisburg, PA 17837
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free to think, bound to serve
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From the Pastor:

“After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.” Luke 2: 46-47

“When John’s messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John. “What did you go out in the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who put on fine clothing and live in luxury are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.” Luke 7: 24-26

All who heard Jesus at twelve years old were amazed at his understanding and his answers. May we infer from what we know about the setting--that he was sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, that his understanding was revealed by his listening, and that it also was revealed by the questions he put to the teachers’ answers? Though the story is offered as evidence of Jesus’ precocious identification with leadership and insight regarding his religion, he is not presented as a teacher, except as the kind of teacher who instructs by listening attentively and questioning carefully.

Posing questions in order to suggest answers doesn’t begin with Jesus of Nazareth. Good teachers always include this strategy in their engagement with those they’d instruct, and Jesus’ opponents among his fellow rabbis use the same method. We recognize their questioning of Jesus toward the end of the gospels as efforts to discredit him, but from their perspective that still is questioning in order to reveal the truth.

Jesus publicly addresses the identity of John the Baptist by asking who people expected him to be, and offering a couple of wrong possibilities. What he’s doing is trying to get them to think. He wants his hearers to consider what they have, in fact, thought about John--not just the notion of his identity they’ve picked up from rumor and the assertions of the outspoken and opinionated. Jesus knows it’s a world in which most of us, most

of the time, live with received ideas, and negotiate our way with ready-made explanations and judgments we’ve absorbed from our environment.

When Jesus tells us that in order to inherit the kingdom of God we have to become like little children, we usually think of the openhearted and trusting-- and, sometimes, the conveniently compliant--nature of the very young. That may well be what the gospel intends, but anyone with experience of young children knows they also are persistent askers of questions. They don’t only seek knowledge, they *pry*. They ask past the first answer, and the second, and before long they’re asking questions to which nobody knows the answer. “Because I said so!” is not just offered for the sake of efficiency. People respond that way because it is painful to recognize how little really is understood, and even apprehended, of life. Living by faith, which is a virtue in religion, is seen as a risk in the practical world, in which people rely on accurately assessing what’s so. Finding that much of the world rests on assumptions and counts on conventions disturbs the anxious mind, and threatens order.

Most of us, as we grow, gradually accept a “good enough” grasp of things. We exhaust our powers of perception, and we recognize our limitations. We find solace and support in the structures we inhabit, the social customs, the cultural expectations, and rules from points of courtesy to traffic regulations. What is false in the world, and in ourselves, we regret, but we prefer the stability of the way things are to the disruptions of new possibilities. We don’t know how to trust what hasn’t yet arrived.

Jesus, however, does trust an alternative to everyday reality. He believes in and lives in a world verging on this one, and wants others to see it and trust it, too, that they lose their fear of moving beyond the compromises and guesses of common life. Questioning is always a means of dismantling, of undoing the established to see what it really looks like, and part of what Jesus intends by being so inquisitive is to invite us to rely on that Kingdom of God which he assures us really is present, instead of this flawed perception and these approximations by which we muddle through.

This all seems airy and abstract, but Jesus' insistence on examining things yields facts. He knows that living for God's kingdom requires accepting death, and he does that and he teaches that. He knows that two wrongs don't make a right. He understands that forgiveness is essential to all relationships, that it is healing, and that withholding it is worse than not seeking it. He wants to know whose picture is on the coin being used for taxation, and what our responsibilities are to the state, and what our responsibilities are to God.

Jesus is smart. He is frustrated with his contemporaries, chaffing them for knowing how to predict the weather without being intelligent about reading their own times. He knows that pride leads to a fall, that greed invites a reckoning, and that fear fosters unnecessary suffering. He thinks they should understand all this, because it is part of their tradition, part of the heritage of God's revelation they share.

There are many explanations for Jesus' crucifixion. One I hadn't considered until I got on this train of thought is the exasperation and impatience people come to feel when faced with steady and stubborn seekers of truth, whose questioning robs the complacent of their
Peace.
Mac

BOARD OF DEACONS

The monthly meeting of the Board of Deacons was held at 7:00 p.m. on September 14, 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; Church School - Lori Wilson; Watchcare - Diane Meixell.

The Moderator opened with a passage from the book Turn Around Strategies for the Small Church, by Ron Crandall. The Deacons were asked to consider whether our church tends to orient itself to the past, or whether it adopts a forward-looking vision. A brief prayer followed.

Minutes of the August meeting were approved as published. The Financial Secretary reported that offerings to date total \$60,085.77 in subscriptions and \$2,003.48 from the plate. Judy added thanks to Lisa Scott for taking over the job of covering the parking meters in front of the church on Sunday morning.

PASTOR'S REPORT:

Commenting on the recent flooding's impact on members of the church family, Mac noted that the church hosted not only the wedding of Daniel

Loreman and Amber Seligman as planned on Saturday, September 10, but also the reception. When the couple learned a few days beforehand that their expected venue was under water, they asked for use of the Founders' Room. Despite the weather's interference, there was a good spirit among the guests, and all were grateful for the use of the church basement. The setting was enhanced by the newly waxed floors, which had been prepared for the church's Rally Day luncheon on September 11.

While no other members have approached the church for assistance, several Deacons mentioned noticing members of First Baptist helping others in the community with flood cleanup.

Concerning the effect of the heavy rains on the church building itself, Mac reported that Food Program volunteers spent a lot of time controlling water seepage in the church basement, with their efforts indirectly benefitting First Baptist. The self-help groups moved upstairs to accommodate the basement floor waxing project.

Pastor's Class began September 11, with Hobie Beauseigneur, Kara Libby, and Samuel Scott attending. Mac also led the first of the Sunday evening discussion sessions for the new season. Responding to interest in a book club discussion, Mac said that he plans to offer a session on the current best-seller, Heaven Is For Real.

Mac reported that he had met with the Pastoral Relations Committee, consisting of Lori Wilson, Kathy Morris, and Jack Pyper. The committee encouraged the Pastor to pursue continuing education opportunities and to find ways to spend more time with church members on an individual basis. In turn, Mac asked the committee to encourage people in the church to approach him directly with any concerns about his performance as a pastor. The Pastor and the committee also discussed ways of instituting new approaches within the church setting.

Mac shared concerns about members of the congregation with health problems or otherwise in need of prayer or assistance.

BUDGET PREPARATION - Committee chairs were reminded to submit any requests for 2012 to the Finance Committee, who will begin drafting next year's budget at their coming meetings. A proposed budget will be presented to the Deacons at their November meeting.

CROP WALK - The annual event is set for Sunday, October 2, starting at 2:00 pm from New Hope Lutheran Brethren Church on 14th Street. Participants may choose from the 10-kilometer route or a 1-mile version. Alternatively, some will complete a lap at the nursing home. In addition to recruiting walkers to represent First Baptist, the Deacons suggested that names of walkers be

made known, so that sponsors could connect with them to make contributions.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

The Moderator welcomed Diane Meixell to the Board. She will serve as chair of the Watchcare Committee, completing the unexpired term of Jen Wagner, who stepped down due to family responsibilities.

WORSHIP - The committee provided minutes of their August meeting, which covered several areas:

- Pew cards: wording has been revised, and procedures developed to replenish supplies.

- Christmas season: A new edition of the Christmas memory booklet is planned, with a request forthcoming for new entries from members of the church family. Plans will be solidified for seasonal decoration of the church in early December. With Christmas falling on a Sunday, a modified worship format is being considered for that morning.

- Special music is planned for the All Saints' Day service on November 6, when the choir will present portions of Schubert's Mass in G.

FELLOWSHIP - Joyce sent a report stating that, Sunday, September 11, with the help of Lisa Scott and the Sunday School, the church hosted a Rally Day luncheon in the Founder's Room. The luncheon was well attended with close to 50 people. Everyone seemed to enjoy the food and fellowship that was offered.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION - Cathy reported that the Sunday morning adult class plans for the coming semester are to follow a DVD discussion series on the New Testament. She also confirmed that there is interest in a book club program such as that proposed by the Pastor. Since many members enjoy books in general, perhaps book recommendations could be shared by publishing a reading list on the church's website.

CHURCH SCHOOL - Adding to the Fellowship report on Rally Day, Lori noted that Anna Barrick, Karen Roessler, Robyn Tillman and Kara VanBuskirk should be thanked for providing foods and drinks for the luncheon. Seventeen children attended Sunday School for the first day! Thanks to all the children who came, their parents for bringing them and to Lisa Scott, Karen Roessler and Mark Bettner for teaching! An event at Ard's is planned for October 9th.

MISSIONS - The Missions Committee will be sending \$250 in emergency relief funds to the Sun Area American Red Cross in Lewisburg for aid to flood victims. Another \$250 will be sent to Baptist World Aid for Somalia. If anyone is interested in working on the Habitat for Humanity project with the First Baptist Church of Williamsport in October, there will be a signup sheet on the bulletin board.

PROPERTY - Bob reported that the redesign of

the Third Street steps will be deferred until spring. He and Cathy shared with the Deacons the proposed drawing for the project. The new back doors are now in place and in working order, and the stained glass restoration is expected to be finished this week. Mac suggested that the church might wish to organize some sort of rededication to mark the refurbishment of the rear window.

DISCIPLESHIP - Jack reported that the committee has been discussing ways to publicize the church in local media, both through paid advertising and news releases about special events. They are also exploring ways to involve members in interest groups for interaction outside the worship service. Sally noted that small groups have been shown to be essential to the vitality of churches. Further, in an attempt to reach out to former members, it was suggested to plan an event such as a Homecoming Sunday or choir reunion.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Lucie Rivoire Knauer



Sunday, September 18, there was a Special Coffee Hour celebrating Mac's 25 years of service to First Baptist Church of Lewisburg.



SUBSCRIPTION DRIVE

Letters for the Annual Subscription Drive will be mailed October 1, 2011. If you do not receive a letter please contact a member of the Finance Committee or call the office. It is through our stewardship commitment that we have the opportunity to return the many gifts—financial, time, and talent—that God has given us. And, it is through stewardship that we are able to maintain and sustain our fellowship as a church community. As we are all aware, we are a relatively small congregation, with this large inspirational worship facility, and with a large commitment to serve others. And as you know, too, it is difficult for our numbers to fully provide the annual financial resources necessary to fulfill our operations and our commitments.

We ask your help by filling out and returning your pledge card by October 30. .



October 2

The Lewisburg District CROP Hunger Walk is Sunday, October 2. The walk will begin at New Hope Lutheran Brethren Church, 205 S. 14th St., Lewisburg. Registration will begin at 1:30 p.m. and the walk start at 2:00 p.m.

There will also be a very short walk at RiverWoods in Lewisburg for the residents and their families, and folks who want something shorter than the traditional 5k & 10k.

Sign up sheets for Walking and Sponsoring are on both the front and back bulletin boards, or call the office (524-7438) and we will sign you up.

Please help First Baptist make a faithful contribution to this community effort.



Center is an important ministry of the Nagaland Baptist Church Council Women's Department, which is supported by your gifts to the World Mission Offering.

Gorma, a former drug trafficker and prostitute, learned of God's love at the Miqlat Center. Today, she is a strong worker for the Lord. She is leading her sisters out of misery through the life-changing vocation opportunities and spiritual support offered by the Miqlat Center. *"I didn't know of any other way, until I met the Lord."*

Envelopes for your offering are enclosed and will be in the bulletin October 2 and 9.

ATTENTION
all Women

Women's Bible Study

The Women's Bible Study meets every Tuesday at 10 a.m. in the Library. They are studying David. All women are welcome to join them.



Men's Breakfast Club

The first breakfast for the men of the congregation will take place on Thursday, Oct. 27, 7:30AM, at Ard's country produce and restaurant on Rt. 45. To avoid misunderstanding, each attendee is responsible for his own check. Come if you can, leave when you must. I hope to see many of you there! Richard Ellis.



Upcoming Meetings

CHOIR NIGHT

Wednesday, October 5, at 7:15 p.m.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, October 9, 2011 will be the congregational meeting following worship. The main item of business will be financial.

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Monday, October 10, at 7:00 p.m.

BOARD OF DEACONS

Wednesday, October 12 at 7:00 p.m., in the Church Library.



Heal the sick who are there and tell them, "The Kingdom of God is near you."

Luke 9:6

Celebrate World Communion Sunday with the World Mission Offering, October 2.



Making ends meet is a daily struggle for mothers like Gorma living in poverty in the state of Nagaland in North East India. In this dusty place by the tracks, women sell their bodies to buy rice for the day or to pay tuition for a week. Often prostitution is forced on them by their husbands to feed their drug or alcohol addiction.

Today, many women who were once without options are finding a new way to live, thanks to the ministry of the Miqlat Center. The

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Thursday, October 13 at 6:45 p.m.

DISCIPLESHIP COMMITTEE

Thursday, October 27, at 7 p.m., in the Church Library.

NEWS FROM THE CHILDREN & YOUTH



Ard's Lunch & Maze Outing

Please join us on Sunday, October 9th at 12:30 at Ard's for lunch and maze activities. This year we will have access to the large maze, Maze Mountain (a 95 foot tube slide), web maze, tile maze, rope maze, corn cannon, fun barn, and the Lost Goat Mining Company (a fossil and gem mining adventure). The cost for adults is \$5.00.

There is no charge for kids. Please let Lisa (lscott@dejazzd.com or 523-6979) know whether or not to expect you by October 4th. I need to let Ard's know how many will be in our group by October 5th. I hope you will be able to join us!



Youth Choir is Activated

All kids in grades 5 through 12 are invited to sing with Mrs. Blankenship in the Founder's Room at 11:30 a.m. beginning September 25th. If you have any questions, please see Ruth.



Birth Announcement

Peyton Avon Malequi Davenport, was born Friday, August 26. Congratulations to LeBaron, Nicola, and big brother Matheu. It was nice to see Peyton, Nicola and Matheu in church on Sunday, September 25.



Habitat Work Day Oct. 8

FBC Williamsport has invited us to join them at a HfH work day Saturday, Oct. 8, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 45 Penn Street in Montgomery. Further information is posted on the Missions Bulletin Board. Everyone is welcome.



Christmas Reminiscences

For Advent this year we will be reprinting and expanding the pamphlet of Christmas memories and reflections which first was published about fifteen years ago. Keeping the existing pieces will remind longer-term members of old friends, and new contributions will help the existing congregation get better acquainted with each other as well as serve as the basis for church-related reflection in preparing for the Christmas holiday.

Persons are encouraged to submit Christmas memories special to them, with any thoughts they might wish to share about the meaning of the holiday. Nikki Loyd, who organized and assembled the original booklets, has offered to put the newer ones together for us. If possible, these may be sent in the form of email to loyd@moravian.edu, or written copies may be given to the church office.

For Your Prayer

Former pastor The Rev. Dr. Gordon Kurtz has been hospitalized with heart trouble. Gordon and Melisse's address is:

Goderich Pl., 30 Balvina Dr. Apt. 136
Goderich, ON N7A 4L CANADA

Herman Howard is in the intensive care unit at Geisinger, and Steve Rotolo is in the special care unit. Ben Austin, Peg Budd, Tamara Gerasimova, Russ Mayberry and Keith Shemory are at home. Bill Bobb is at Riverview Manor. Chet and Margaret Jump are at RidgeCrest. Kitty Bowe, Richard Budd and Beverly Fisher are at RiverWoods. Cookie Goodall and Harriet Littell are at Elmcroft. Gloria Miller is at Rockwell Center.

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

Flood Emergency Help

Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency and FEMA have left flyers at the church office for people who have sustained losses or damage from "Tropical Storm Lee". You have until November 2nd to see if you may be eligible for disaster aid. Call: 1-800-621-FEMA (3362); or TTY: 1-800-462-7585/7111; or VRS 1-800-621-3362, or on the web: www.disasterassistance.gov.