

# THE SPIRE

DEC. 2011

## FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

**A**dvent draws our attention to the wonderful gift of God's own presence in the birth of Jesus the Baby in the manger at Bethlehem and the almost unbelievable idea that our Creator wants a personal intimate relationship with us. It is sometimes difficult to comprehend that people the world over, have chosen to focus attention and energy on the buying of gifts and the commercial benefits of the seasonal celebration to the neglect of responding to the visitation of God in Christ. What is more, I find that I am hardly any different. We seem to prefer our presents to God's presence.

Last December, Deirdre and I welcomed our first grandchild, Eliana Grace Howell into our family. Many of you already know the joy and hopes that have awakened within us this year. Also last December, a church friend gave me as a Christmas present, a book by one of my favorite authors. As I have read it – more than once this year - it has challenged my heart once again to keep my relationship to God in Jesus as my *first* priority and all other fond hopes and dreams in their proper place. Let me share from **SHATTERED DREAMS GOD'S UNEXPECTED PATHWAY TO JOY** by LARRY CRABB.

And then in my vision I see myself pausing, unsure whether I want to even think the words of the deeper prayer stirring within me.

Of course I want both my granddaughter and grandson to enjoy lives filled with blessings—good relationships, good health, good churches, good incomes. It's just so hard to see all those blessings as second things.

I wonder if I will find the courage to keep my glass raised high and to say:

“May this beautiful young woman, still my treasured little granddaughter, discover that place in her heart where she desires You above

everything else. May she discover that place in her heart that only love flowing from Yours can fill.

“*Please*, Lord, shield her from every useless trial, protect her from pointless pain, but—grant me the courage to mean this—allow whatever dreams to shatter that will release her heart to meet Yours, that will empower her to rest in Your ecstatic love, no matter how empty and desperate she may feel.

Reveal the beauty of Your life to her and through her, whatever it takes. But Lord, I beg you—be very gentle.”

I wonder. Have I found the place in *my* heart that wants something more for my granddaughter than a satisfying marriage, good-looking and well-behaved children, and sufficient resources for an occasional family trip to Disney World? Do I even believe there is something better?

We so easily pray for ourselves and the people we love that we will all be drawn closer to God. I wonder if we know what we're asking. Are we asking to enjoy His blessings with little interest in enjoying His Person? Not many of us envy Joni Eareckson Tada's special opportunity to know Christ well.

When someone shares his story of shattered dreams, our stomachs tighten with fear lest we should meet a similar fate. We dedicate our strongest efforts to helping that person feel better because we're terrified of ever experiencing deep pain that cannot be relieved.

Why? Why do we undervalue intimacy with Christ? Why does the prospect of becoming like Him and close to Him have less appeal than other good things?

People who spend their lives in the slums, people who have never seen lakes and trees and flowers, suffer from undeveloped imaginations. They wish for nothing better than that their children live in a tenement with uncracked windows and running water and fewer rats. For a hobo, it's really living to ride in a railroad car that doesn't smell.

But God's children are neither slum dwellers nor hobos. We've been empowered to dream bigger dreams than mere earthlings can imagine. In God's eyes, big houses, happy families, and comfortable bank accounts are in themselves nothing more than rat-free hovels and disinfected cattle cars.

The finest things this world can offer have no compelling appeal to a reborn spirit. They are as nothing compared to the joy of living in His Presence.

That's how God sees things. It takes some doing for us to see things the same way. It takes shattered dreams.

From Shattered Dreams by Larry Crabb

I recommend the book. It is a good reminder of God's great desire for us, and His determination to redeem us and keep us for Himself alone.

In the Spirit of Christmas,

*Pastor Tom*



## Pulpit Committee News

**A**fter screening 14 pastor profiles, we are in the midst of preliminary interviews with two candidates. Three candidates were asked to respond to written questions and to submit sample sermons, but one of the candidates declined to continue the process with us. When we receive this information we will review the materials and make a decision to continue or decline. The next step would be to conduct a phone interview. Each decision is made prayerfully and by being receptive to God's direction.

Since there are only two prospects at this stage, we have asked Rev. Smith to run our information through the database to find another batch of pastor profiles for us to review.

I have shared with Rev. Smith some of the themes that have come up in our committee discussions while we reviewed this first group of profiles to help him refine the search. This is a typical position for search committees. The more the committee discusses particular candidate profiles, the clearer the picture becomes for whom God has in mind for us.

We continue to meet each Wednesday evening when we have materials to review. Please continue to keep the search committee in your thoughts and prayers as we work on your behalf.

Debra Sawyer



## Deacons

**T**he Deacons would like to thank the congregation for once again generously supporting the Deacon's fund each month. The good will that the Church continuously shows during these hard economic times is a true blessing. This fund continues to allow the Deacons to assist those in need.

The Deacons have been hard at work updating the membership list and plan to have it completed soon. This has been a large undertaking, trying to contact most members of the Church especially those who are considered inactive or have changed their phone numbers to unlisted or to a cell number. It is important that if you or someone you know has changed their address, phone number or e-mail that the church be notified, preferably one of the Deacons so we can update the list.

At each month's meeting members concerns as well as ways we can assist with the worship service are discussed. This month it was the welcoming of three people choosing to join the church and share in the right hand of fellowship.

Compass is temporarily on hold as organizational issues are worked out, anyone interested in helping this important outreach to get back on track, please contact Walter or Terri. It is the plan of the Deacons to train to do more outreach ministries with Rev Tom i.e.: visiting the sick, or attending funeral services and dealing with many other related issues.

## Important FYI

**A**s a result of the past snowstorm Church was canceled on October 30<sup>th</sup> "No Power" The Deacons have decided that in the future that the following procedure will be followed. The head Deacon and the Minister will be in touch with each other, then the Deacons will decide if Church needs to be canceled. General rule of thumb is NO POWER no Church. If someone is in doubt the Deacons are setting up with the Communication Committee to have the cancelation on WMUR and Plais-tow's Channel 17. During inclement weather it is at the discretion of the Church member as to whether or not they wish to attend. The congregations safety is our first concern and it is our hope that your decision to attend Church will be made with that in mind.

Respectfully submitted,

Jill Senter, Chair



## Property Committee

**P**roperty Committee meets on the 3rd Monday of each month.

November Meeting: Members discussed quotes for repairs as needed.

Thanks to all members of Property present for helping set up, support and breakdown for the Annual Christmas Fair, before, during, and after

the event. Special thanks go to Bill Hull's friend Stan for help setting up and breaking down at the fair. November 5<sup>th</sup> members met and cleaned up leaves from the back yard of the Parsonage.

Patrick Bixby fixed the leaking dishwasher in the kitchen.

Ongoing projects such as the painting of Warren Room and hallway to exit doorway; goal is to complete by Christmas. Cleaning out and organization of our barn is an ongoing project as well as the oversight and maintenance of the Vision House property.

Respectfully submitted by:

Christine Clarke-Swift, Property Chair.



## Communications

**T**he Communications committee is planning new pew cards to replace the Relationship cards we formerly used and the pew cards that are currently in use. These will be color coded and of different sizes and would include: Member information & suggestions, visitor card and prayer request card.

- ◆ We are planning a small Christmas ad listing our Christmas services to place in the Eagle Tribune and Carriage Towne News before Christmas.
- ◆ There was a suggestion to add a blank page in the Sunday bulletin for people to take notes on the sermon ... something many churches do.
- ◆ We are looking into being listed on Google Places.





## Sunday School

**R**eminder: There will be no Sunday School classes on December 25th. We are still looking for teachers in January. If anyone can help by being a substitute, please speak with Kristen Peirce.



## Mission News

**N**ovember 20 was the start of the Giving Tree for seniors. We are "gifting" at least 35 this year and we are requesting AA, AAA, and 9 volt batteries. Wrapping paper is also needed. This year we will be asking for hearing aid batteries (specific needs will be for individuals) to help our church family and community seniors.

We will begin our Montana mitten drive for hats, scarves, gloves/mittens, to mail this winter to Stevensville Elementary School.



## Rainbow Ad Hoc Committee

**T**he Rainbow Ad Hoc Committee had a very brief meeting on Monday, November 14, where we were updated on the activities at Rainbow Preschool.

Andrea noted that one student has withdrawn from the school and another one has reduced hours. However, for the most part the student population is stable.

Jean Baker has been helping out when need-

ed and Andrea finds this working extremely well.

The supply drive was a wonderful success for the school and Andrea wants to thank all who donated and for the very quick response to the drive.

Members of the committee are continuing to work on the various parts of the Business Plan and we will hold our next meeting on Monday, December 12 at 7:00 pm.



## Apple Pie Social

**T**hank you to everyone who either baked an apple pie, helped serve or came and enjoyed a slice of apple pie ala mode. We were able to turn in \$224.00 for one hour's work.

It takes a lot of people to make anything successful and a lot of people came to enjoy a social evening with old and new friends.

What are you going to do next was the question asked by many. If you have a suggestion, please see Ed Wright.



## Triangle Guild

**I**wish to thank the members of the Guild and all the volunteers that made the Village Christmas Fair such a success. With monies still coming in, we hope to meet our goal of \$2,800.00.

I would like to start by thanking our church musicians for their wonderful Christmas music. Those performing were Nancy McCormick, Elaine Melesky, Kristen Peirce and daughters Kelsey and Jessica, also Alan Carifio, Robert Killey, and the lady flautists/the Kokopeli group, under the

direction of our own Megan Hull.

For those who were not there you missed a wonderful luncheon provided by chef Diane Dawe and her able assistants Cindy Simard, Phyllis Carifio and Kathy Goodwin. Of course we cannot forget the ladies in charge of the dishwasher, Jill Senter, Gail Lafayette, and Julie McNamara.

I would also like to thank the Property Committee and other volunteers for setting up the framework and booths. I would like to recognize the young people, in the upstairs booths, that have helped us out for years: Ella Trumper, Kelsey Wheeler and her friend Ryleigh Gaudet. When our own dear Sandy Kamitian was unable to be there on Saturday due to illness, her daughter Julie stepped in to help, assisted by Jonathan Carifio.

It is this wonderful spirit of cooperation in any of our church activities that helps any one in charge achieve their goal.

The next Triangle Guild meeting is Wednesday, December 7, with a musical program by the Kokopeli group of flautists.

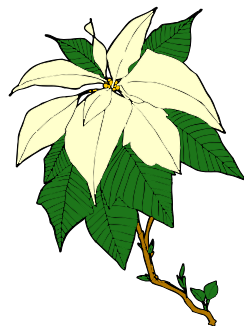
Thanks again,

President, Midge Wood



### Executive Council

**T**he Executive Council will meet on December 5 at 7:00 pm. Please, all chairmen keep in mind that you are responsible for attending the Executive Council meeting every 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of the month, or to send a representative.



## POINSETTIA ORDER FORM

December 2011

Donor Name

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Phone

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6 1/2" Poinsettia @ \$10.00 - Qty. ( )

Poinsettias are available in red, white, and burgundy. Each Poinsettia is branched, meaning they have multiple flowers per plant.

Please state preference for color(s),  
( ) Red, ( ) White, ( ) Burgundy

Poinsettias are given (in loving memory) or (in honor) of:

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Please make checks payable to the First Baptist Church, note on the check that it is for flowers, and mail or give it with this form completed to:

Anne Wiggin, 68 Sweet Hill Road, Plaistow, NH 03865 - **603-382-5498**.



### Deacons Pie Auction

**O**n November 13th the deacons held their second annual pie auction. It was a huge success. Thanks to the loving donations of many members and their creations of pies, and for those that bought and donated financially; we were able to raise \$326.00

A generous donation was also added to that total by the deacons. A check was graciously presented to the Holy Angel's Food Bank from Dick Jackman. (Thank you Dick)

It is always a blessing to be in the position to

serve God through serving others in need at Thanksgiving.



## Christmas Schedule:

**C**hristmas Eve Candlelight service is on Saturday, December 24th at 7:00pm

"Christmas Comfortable" service on Christmas Day (Sunday), December 25th at 10:00am. (This means to come to church as you are comfortably dressed on that day)



## Ladies Social Circle

**T**he November 9th meeting began with devotions and grace by Nancy J. The final preparations for the November 19th Village Fair were completed. Gail reported the Christmas box was sent to the Valley Christian Center in Phoenix, AZ. Hostesses were Nancy M and Gail.

Our next meeting, on December 14th, will be held at Mr. Mike's in Haverhill at noon. We will choose from the menu. The agenda will be selecting new officers for the coming year. Sandy K. will be the caller. Grace and Devotions will be by Nancy M and Hostesses will be Marcia and Gail.

All women are cordially invited to join.

Have a blessed Christmas.



## Elinor Grainger Hall ~ 89

**O**n November 18, 2011 Elinor (Burrill) Grainger Hall went to live with our Lord. She was a resident of Plaistow for many years and attended First Baptist Church.

Born in Haverhill December 19, 1921, daughter of the late Horace and Gladys (Comeau) Burrill and sister of the late Wesley and Richard Burrill, Elinor was educated in the Haverhill School system. A member of the Haverhill High School, Class of 1939, she attended McIntosh Business School. During World War II, she lived in Connecticut where she worked at Pratt & Whitney Corporation assembling airplane engines.

In 1948, she returned to Haverhill and was employed by Bell Telephone Co. Then in 1954 she established a successful home toy party business, "Joy Parties" as they were called, which she operated from her home in the Riverside section of Haverhill until 1958. From 1959 until 1978 she and her late first husband owned and operated a Hotel/Motel and Restaurant at Hampton Beach, Grainger's Surfside Chalet, (now known as LeBec Rouge). After selling the hotel, she became a licensed Real Estate Broker in the State of New Hampshire.

She was predeceased by two wonderful and caring husbands; Earle William Grainger to whom she was married from 1942 until his death in 1980 and Alvin C. Hall from 1990 until he died in 2009. Her survivors include a daughter, Joy and her husband John J. Merrill of Hampton, NH; a son, Rodney William Grainger and his wife Mary Beth of Port Charlotte, Florida and Alex Grainger and his wife April of New Jersey, Matt Baker and his wife of Ohio and Adam & Brett Grainger of Pennsylvania, also ten great-grand-children and several nieces and nephews.





## December Birthdays

- 2 Diane Hatfield
- 4 Jerry Kamitian
- 5 Steven Lewis
- 6 Barbara Zarba
- 8 Joseph Korowski  
Diane Dawe
- 10 Matthew Sadewicz  
George Prosper
- 11 David Russell
- 12 Abby Hawkins
- 13 Tyler Simmons
- 14 Matt Bartlett  
Nina Robie
- 16 Kristina Kiarsis  
Emily Gelinis
- 18 Kate Lewis
- 21 Holly Ames
- 22 Doug Perry
- 26 Marjorie Buswell  
Millicent Buswell
- 29 Cindy Simard  
Violet Kimball
- 30 Nicholas Lavigne



not have "Interim" pasted in front of the title. Thanks be to God! The networking and educational groups of All Things New have been working to serve the Region through a website, making personal contacts among churches, and preparing training events. The Kingdom of God seminar, "Hidden in Plain Sight" is still available to groups of any size. But the most exciting thing planned for the immediate future is a "Call to Prayer and Fasting" planned for the first day of Rev. Dale Edwards' ministry to the Region. The announcement is printed below. Let us connect, rejoice, and pray earnestly for our churches and the future!

Blessings,

Rev. Dr. Steve Jewett



## A Call to Prayer and Fasting for ABCVNH

**T**uesday, **January 17, 2012**, is the first day that the Rev. Dale Edwards will be serving as Region Minister for ABC/VNH. **All Things New** is calling the Region to a day of prayer and fasting on that day. You are encouraged to do that wherever you are; and, if you are able, to come to **Gove Hill** or **Camp Sentinel** to do it with others. Both centers will be open from 9:00 – 3:00 for guided prayer. Rev. John Cerrato will guide the process at Gove Hill Retreat Center. Rev. Robert Dix will guide the process at Camp Sentinel. A basic lunch of soup and bread will be provided at both venues for those who would like to participate but do not want to or cannot fast. Participants are encouraged to bring outdoor equipment if they wish to enjoy the solitude of the fields and woods. The fireplaces will be there to warm. Bring a freewill offering to cover costs for both facilities.

If you are planning to come to Gove Hill, please notify Bill or Bernice Clark at (802)-785-4000 or [govehill@abcvnh.org](mailto:govehill@abcvnh.org).

## December Anniversaries

- 2 Richard & Nancy Jackman



## All Things New Looks Forward to A New Day

**T**he ravages of Irene are being cleaned up and travel is easy throughout the region once again. Things are moving all over! We have a new structure and soon we will have a Region Minister who will

If you are planning to come to Camp Sentinel, please notify Kevin Van Brunt at (603)-539-4839 or [kevin@camp sentinel.org](mailto:kevin@camp sentinel.org).

This from one of our pastors, Abraham Gross: "I am reminded that if one is not able (due to medical conditions, etc.) to completely abstain from food, fasting from other things can be as beneficial and are common in ancient practice. This is the motivation behind vows of silence, refraining from meats, avoiding grape products or haircuts, among many other things in Biblical tradition. As Richard Foster says: 'More than any other discipline, fasting reveals the things that control us.' As we take away something we desire, we can turn that desire toward God, and be reminded that we are provided for only by the provisions of God. Since one of the purposes of the January 17<sup>th</sup> prayer event is to move as a Region into total dependence on the outpouring of God's Spirit, fasting (whether food or some other necessary need) is more than appropriate."



## **FBC Christmas Gift Ideas**

Printed copies of the First Baptist Church covenant are available for sale; these are reproductions of hand-lettered text with a design based on the stained glass window at the front of the church. We will be selling them after Church in December, or you may contact the Church office. The price of framed covenants is: 8" X 10" for \$10, 5" X 7" for \$7 and 4" X 6" for \$5. The covenant unframed is: 8" X 10" for \$5, 5" X 7" for \$3 and 4" X 6" for \$2.

First Baptist Church pewter Christmas ornaments, featuring an image of our church building are also available for sale. These are made from solid pewter by Hampshire Pewter of Wolfeboro, NH. These are priced at one for \$20, two for \$35, three for \$50 and four or more for \$15 each, and make great Christmas gifts. Please see Jerry Kamitian or

call him at 382-4294 for more information. All proceeds from the sale of these ornaments and Church covenants are given to the Deacons Fund.



## **Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering**

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 (RMMO) 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 First Baptist Church in Plaistow during the month of January.

"For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations."  
Psalm 100:5.

