



The GoodNewsletter

First Baptist Church, Littleton

“Journeying to God’s Sacred Beat”

December/January 2010 - 2011

Silent Night. Holy Night by Caroline Poser

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. ~Romans 15:13 NIV

I actually like Christmas Eve better than Christmas. For one thing, my three sons are usually compliant about going to bed because they want to make it as easy as possible for Santa. They know he won’t come if they’re awake.

What seals the deal for us is the “Reindeer Food” we get every year from a friend at church.

I read the “directions for use” out loud to my boys. “Prior to going to bed, sprinkle the reindeer food on the ground. Run back into the house, brush your teeth, say your prayers and jump into bed. Go right to sleep.”

It’s the one night a year I don’t have to argue with them about bedtime. *Grown up time, at last!*

All is calm.

Another thing is, there’s a certain feeling of contentment in knowing that I have done all there is to do – or at least all that can be done. The presents are wrapped and under the tree. The gifts and cards are sent out, and the ones that aren’t will become New Year’s greetings. The frenzy of the previous weeks – list making, purchasing, organizing, hiding, baking, planning, executing...everything – is done, whether it’s done as planned or not. The clock has run down.

All is bright.

To me, Christmas Eve is the high point prior to the denouement that the actual holiday is. I try not to think about the fact that the gift opening lasts merely minutes followed closely by the burrowing through wrapping paper, hunting hopefully for something that just might have been overlooked. Then comes the bouncing off the walls, arguing, grabbing, and demanding to know when our extended family is coming over with more presents.

Sleep in heavenly peace

The house is clean and quiet. Church was attended. The cookies and note for Santa are left on the table. I take a picture of the tree with the gifts under it, decorated on the top half only by this time, as is the tree in any household with young children who like to pull off anything within reach, sometimes leaving dirty socks or empty juice boxes instead.

I know that my admonition to wait until it’s light out before we get up fell on deaf ears, so I can’t stay up too late. If the clock on the wall next to the tree (which is always included in my picture) reads 10:30, I’m doing alright.

I bask in the tranquil moments as I share some of Santa’s cookies, and survey the slim tree snug in the corner of our smallish dining room. At last, all is well.

Sleep in heavenly peace.



From the Pastor's Desk

GO EASY

On Rally Day, a day of excitement, energy and activity, we lifted up the theme GO as a theme that would carry us through our church year.

GO

GO A Call to Action!

GO Make a Difference

GO Create

GO Serve

GO Sing

GO Laugh

GO Eat

GO Love!

Remember those? Those are all inspiring and motivate us to get busy and they are all good things to do. Recently a devotional came into my inbox and spoke very loudly to me. It begged me to notice it and put it in practice in my own life. The devotional reminded me to *Go Easy* and I believe that *Go Easy* is a gentle and important reminder for all of us during this season of adrenaline and rush. This is a message for our physical, emotional and spiritual health. *Go Easy*. Here is the complete devotional and I pray that each morning we all will awaken with this thought and prayer on our hearts.

Blessings,
Pastor Debbie

“Go Easy. You may have to push forward, but you don't have to push so hard. Go in gentleness, go in peace. Do not be in so much of a hurry. At no day, no hour, no time are you required to do more than you can do in peace. Frantic behaviors and urgency are not the foundation for our new way of life.

Do not be in too much of a hurry to begin. Begin, but do not force the beginning if it is not time. Beginnings

will arrive soon enough. Enjoy and relish middles, the heart of the matter.

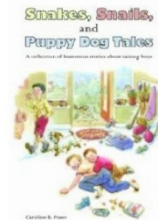
Do not be in too much of a hurry to finish. You may be almost done, but enjoy the final moments. Give yourself fully to those moments so that you may give and get all there is.

Let the pace flow naturally. Move forward. Start. Keep moving forward. Do it gently, though. Do it in peace. Cherish each moment.

Prayer

Today, God, help me focus on a peaceful pace rather than a harried one. I will keep moving forward gently, not frantically. Help me let go of my need to be anxious, upset, and harried. Help me replace it with a need to be at peace and in harmony.”

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Caroline is donating \$2 of the sale of each one of her new books to the church. It would make a great Christmas book - thank you Caroline!

*The mother of three sons, Caroline Poser lives with her family in Groton. She recently published Snakes, Snails, and Puppy Dog Tales, a collection of best-loved columns as well as previously unpublished stories. **Purchase a copy from the author and a \$2 donation will be given to First Baptist Church of Littleton** (\$9.95 plus tax and shipping, if applicable).*



Contact Caroline@CarolinePoser.com or http://www.amazon.com/Snakes-Snails-Puppy-Dog-Tales/dp/0972419721/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1291129641&sr=8-1



A Women's Retreat

January 28, 29 and 30th

The women of our congregation have been cordially invited to join the Congregational Church Women's Retreat. This is a wonderful opportunity for Women of the Spirit to gather together to be renewed. The Rev. Barbara Keast will lead the retreat, which will be held at St. Benedict Abby, in Harvard, MA. You have the option of coming either Friday evening, which is a relaxed and social time, and staying through the closing worship service on Sunday, or Saturday-only, which will be a day of discussions, study, prayer, laughter and inspiration.

If you come for the one-day, the cost will be \$55 – that will include lunch and dinner. The activities



will run from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. If you need a ride we will have car pools. If you would like to come for the weekend – you

can arrive any time after 6 p.m. on Friday and leave any time by 11 a.m. on Sunday. The cost will be \$125, which will include three meals on Saturday, and breakfast on Sunday and overnight accommodations.

The accommodations are small rooms with bedding and towels included, and shared bathrooms. The brothers at the Abby are very hospitable and the meals are excellent. If you have any questions, email/call Gretchen Webster at gretchen.Webster@verizon.net/978-486-9801 or Connie Turner, 978-486-8614; conniejturner@hotmail.com.

A deposit of \$25 is required at sign-up, and final payment is due by January 10th. You may send in small amounts, or one whole payment. Checks should be made out to Connie Turner, and mailed to 19 Porter Rd., Littleton.

Please sign up on the kiosk so we can begin to make plans for our FBC Women's participation.

December 5

Second Sunday in Advent

9am SS classes together

10am Worship Lighting the *Candle of Peace*

4:30-5pm Town Christmas Tree Lighting &

Santa's Arrival

5pm FBC Open House with Train Display & Cookies

December 12

Third Sunday in Advent

9am SS classes together

10am Worship with Children's Christmas Program

Lighting the *Candle of Joy*

December 19

Fourth Sunday in Advent

9am No Sunday School

10am Christmas Worship

Lighting the *Candle of Love*

Friday, December 24 Christmas Eve

The Candle of Christ

7pm Family Candlelight Christmas Eve service

11pm Service of Candles and Carols

Sunday, December 26

10am Worship only

Sunday, January 2, 2011

9am Sunday School

10am Worship

HELP US PUT A SMILE ON A CHILD'S FACE: LOAVES & FISHES "SHOP FOR YOUR KIDS" DAY

It's time to get ready for Loaves & Fishes annual "Shop for Your Kids" Day, which will take place on December 13 at the Devens Community Center at Rogers Field, Devens. Last year, 242 clients



“shopped” from a wide selection of new toys, books, jewelry and gift cards, all donated by generous residents of nearby towns. Thanks to the efforts of more than 100 volunteers working to prepare and run the event, 562 children received gifts

from their parents or guardians; many of these children would not have received anything without our help.

We are looking for donations of new, unwrapped gifts valued up to \$25, or gift cards in denominations of \$10 or \$20. Please visit our web site at www.loavesfishespantry.org for a list of the most desired toys, books, stocking stuffers and gift cards.

This year, police departments in all five towns (Ayer, Groton, Harvard, Littleton, and Shirley) are participating in our toy drive, and will have toy collection boxes starting in early November. Toys may also be dropped off at the Shirley Public Library, the Littleton Fire Department, The Cottage Restaurant in Ayer, Littleton High School, Littletowne Toy Store, and Donelan's Supermarkets in Groton and Littleton. (Our web site will also have an up-to-date list of donation box locations.) Toys may also be brought to the pantry (located at 234 Barnum Road, Devens) during any open pantry session (every Wednesday and Friday, 9:45 a.m.-noon, except November 24th, when the pantry will be closed), the first and third Saturdays of the month from 8:45 a.m. until noon; and the second Tuesday of each month from 6-8 p.m. Additional special donation days and times are listed on our web site. The last day for toy donations is Wednesday, December 8.

Please consider donating a toy yourself, or, even better, having a neighborhood or company toy drive to help bring a smile to the faces of these children. If you can help inventory toys, deliver them to the Community Center, set up or work at Shop for Your Kids day,

please e-mail Lfshop4yourkids@gmail.com or call Gail at 978-774-4627, x300. We need many hands to make this day a success!

KIDS GET A KICK OUT OF SHOPPING FOR THEIR PARENTS

First comes a hearty family breakfast at the Shriver Job Corps Center, then a visit with Santa, and then the children of Loaves & Fishes go shopping on the second Saturday in December, emerging at last from the Shriver gym “store” with custom-wrapped holiday gifts for their parents – free of charge – and excited anticipation in their eyes. For ten years, Shop for Your Parents day has been a highlight of the holidays, not only for the children and their parents, but for the dozens of dedicated volunteers who make it happen.

From the 15 to 20 youngsters who showed up the first year, the program has expanded to serve more than 300 “shoppers” and approximately 700 parents and children for breakfast. Still, it always seems to have enough enthusiastic volunteers to meet this growing need, from the folks at Shriver Job Corps to the many businesses, organizations and community groups that collect and donate gifts, to the skilled artisans who produce dozens of colorful hand-knit scarves and hats, to the cadre of shopping assistants helping youngsters choose just the right gift while their parents wait outside.

This year, as always, Shop for Your Parents Day co-founders Marie Allen and Joan Pena have already started gathering supplies, soliciting donations, and lining up sponsors. Assisted by Kathy Daly and Doreen Quintiliani, Marie and Joan won't rest until they have plenty of appealing presents, all new (except for gently-used jewelry that has been carefully cleaned), for the kids to choose from - no matter how many youngsters appear. “We'll make sure we have enough,” says Marie. “We always do.”

This tireless team is also collecting items to fill gift bags for Loaves & Fishes clients – many of them senior citizens – who live alone and have little or no family with whom to share the holidays. An estimated 70 gift bags will be distributed between Thanksgiving and Christmas, each with a value between \$40 and \$50.

Cash donations are always welcome, in addition to new gifts with a value between \$10 and \$15. Perennial favorites include gloves, perfume, tools, winter scarves and hats, watches, men's clothing, slippers and warm socks, sports-related items, and like-new jewelry. Gift bags, boxes, and wrapping paper are also needed. Donations for the gift bags for seniors are due by November 14, while the Shop for Your Parents deadline is December 1. The shopping day itself is scheduled for December 11. We would like to offer our sincere thanks to our host, Shriver Job Corps, our communication sponsor, Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce, and our Program Sponsor, Bristol Myers Squibb.

Checks should be made payable to Loaves & Fishes Food pantry with "Shop for Your Parents" or "Senior Gift Bags" in the memo area. Checks can be mailed to Loaves & Fishes SFYP, P.O. Box 215, Ayer, MA 01432. For gift donation, drop-off or pick-up information, please call Marie Allen at 978-772-7510 or Joan Pena at 978-772-4440.

GPS Process Recap

The first GPS meeting was held on November 7, 2010. As a result of the brainstorming the options were narrowed down to:

Option A: Rent Building on Sunday to Larger church, Shift Worship to Grotonwood, Partner or be Acquired by a Larger Church

Option B: Grow Congregation

Option C: Merge with Another Church

Option D: Convert Part of the Church to Retail/Commercial Use

Option E: Partner/Sell Building to Littleton Council on Aging, Worship at Grotonwood or Elsewhere

Option F: Reduce Staff Hours/Staff Sharing

We decided to move forward with Options A, B, and C and asked for volunteers for each team. Teams will research these options further and report back at the next GPS meeting on Sunday January 30. The following teams were formed and we closed in prayer.

Team A: Rent to a Larger Church, Partner with or be Acquired by a Larger Church

- Diane Kirk – team contact
- Willow DiLuzio
- David Mackersie
- Donna Horvath
- First meeting will be Sunday Nov 30 at 12:00 at church

Team B: Grow and Sustain Congregation

- Joe Vesey – team contact
- Harriet DiLuzio
- Dick Huebner
- Debbie Baranaskas
- Tom Alsup
- John Court
- First meeting will be Wednesday Nov 17 at the Huebner's house

Team C: Merge with another Church

- Ellie Stetson – team contact
- Carol Huebner
- Cheryl Lichtenberg
- Gretchen Webster
- Lyle Webster
- Linda Fisher
- Larry Fisher
- Marcia Carlson
- Anne Lee Ellis
- Cindy Wood
- First meeting will be Monday Nov 15

All three teams have since met and have begun their research. For full minutes of the meeting please email Willow DiLuzio at willow_diluzio@yahoo.com

The GPS Guiding Team is:

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