



The GoodNews Letter

First Baptist Church, Littleton
“Journeying to God’s Sacred Beat”
December - January 2011

Boy to the World!

By Caroline Poser

It’s the thought that counts

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ~2 Corinthians 9:7 NIV

“Oh, Hon, it’s beautiful!” I said as I opened up the carefully wrapped package. I had just come to understand where my oldest son had gone the day before on his solo bike ride. I’d thought it unusual when he’d headed toward Main Street instead of the rail trail. I realized he’d gone to a gift shop several blocks away. “Did they wrap it for you?”

“Yeah,” he said with a lopsided grin. “The lady offered to...”

“Did she help you pick it out, too?”

“No, I did that all by myself. There was another one I liked, but I thought this one was better for you.”

“This one’s perfect; I love it!” I slipped the unique silver and amber-colored crystal ring on my finger and admired my hand, glad I’d done my nails recently.

“And he spent *all* his money on it – yeah, he spent...” his brothers piped up.

“La la la la la,” I sang with my hands over my ears. When their mouths weren’t moving anymore, I took my hands away. “I don’t want to know anything about

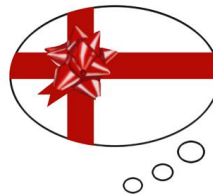
that. We don’t talk about the cost of a gift, because the value could be much different.”

But I couldn’t ignore what I had heard. “Did you?” I turned to my oldest.

“Well, not *all* of it...”

My son had started the “Chore Apprentice Program” this year.

“What’s *that!*?” or “Good luck with *that!*” were comments I had received from friends. Really all the “program” entails is my son comes home from school rather than go to Extended Day and learns how to do things around the house, like dishes, laundry, vacuuming, simple cooking, or a trip to the store around the corner. Not only does he earn money for performing his jobs, but also he learns skills that he will need when he leaves the nest, because contrary to earlier beliefs, his wife is not going to do “all that stuff.” And even if his wife did do some of “that stuff,” he’s going to need to know how not to turn his laundry pink, not to eat on paper plates for every meal, and not to breed dust bunnies in between the time that he leaves home and gets married.



**IT’S THE THOUGHT
THAT COUNTS**

“But what about your sweatshirt?”

A couple of weeks prior we’d been in a sporting

continued on next page.....

goods store and he'd spied a had-to-have, brand-name sweatshirt. "I really want to get that, Mom. Can you lend me the money? I've already got almost half."

"Are you sure you want to spend that much money on a sweatshirt? You can buy this one over here for the money you do have."

"Well, that one's not abc brand."

"So? You think because it's abc brand it's worth double?"

"Well, to me it is. Can you lend me the money?"

"No, Hon, that's too much of a risk for me."

"C'mon Mom, if I don't pay you back, you don't have to pay me my allowance."

"Nope. How would I ensure you did any chores if I didn't pay you?"

"But Mah-ahm. What if they sell out?"

"Look, if I were a bank, I wouldn't be comfortable with that kind of lending risk, not even with a really high interest rate."

My son scowled and glowered at me all the way out of the store and for a good amount of time during the car ride, too. We did not discuss it further.

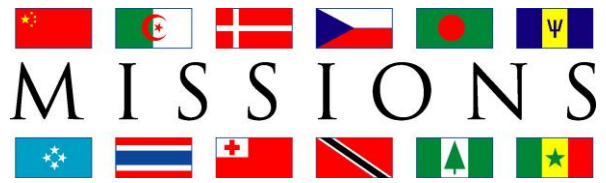
"I can start saving up again."

"It'll take a while..."

"That's okay, Mom."

Even though the ring really is beautiful, it's my son's thoughtfulness and sacrifice that I value the most. I was tempted to buy him the sweatshirt – it's not like we aren't in that particular sporting goods store every other week or so anyway. But neither did I want to devalue my son's gift to me nor the purchase he was going to make for himself, so I didn't.

Thanks to the Chore Apprentice Program, it wasn't long before he acquired his sweatshirt – and he knows how to wash it, too.



Mission Board is looking for your ideas!

Given the recent generous contribution to the church from the estate of Frank Couper, an additional \$5000, 10% of the gift, has been added to the Mission Budget. The Mission Board is seeking input from the congregation on how these funds could best be utilized in ministry. The ideas should be faith based and have involvement by members of our congregation.

Some suggestions:

- Support, in part, the youth for their mission trip to Honduras
- Support a project of the Reed's in La Paz, Mexico.
- Provide \$1000 to cover part of the projected short fall in mission giving in this year's budget (thus not having to cut specific project funds for the second half of the year)
- Support a project at Grotonwood or Oceanwood.
- Other suggestions you might have.

Before mid January please share your ideas with a Mission Board Member: Donna Horvath, Joanne Dates, Phil Furbeck, Kim Guerra, Bob Stetson or Carol Huebner.



Thanks to Brent Smith (See Luke 2:1-16)

12-25-2003

I DIDN'T THINK THEY MADE MOVIES BACK THEN

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the Pastor's Page

The Waiting Room

I am sitting and waiting in the service department of a large car dealership while work is being done on my Volkswagen. It is a typical waiting room and I hope and pray that I won't have to wait too long. I wonder if they will find something else that needs fixed on my old car. I expect that they will and so I wait expectantly. There is a small snack area with bags of chips, pretzels and breakfast bars, and a Keurig coffee machine which requires either two tokens or fifty cents to brew the coffee. The receptionist gives me tokens for the free cup which doesn't work the first time. I wait for the coffee to brew – but it does not. I never



give up when coffee is involved and so I ask for two more tokens and the coffee brews. I settle down to wait in the waiting room. I read, I write and I talk to the person across from me. I take a look around the waiting room which is in the back of the building. The area is a little dark and it looks worn or maybe seasoned would be

a better word. One section has some comfy chairs and no television, while another larger room, with less comfy chairs, has a television on the wall that is airing a daytime talk/news show. A few people sit in the TV room, far apart from each other, with their eyes glued to the television set. We all seem to be occupying ourselves differently but we are all waiting: waiting for our cars to be fixed, waiting for them to be safe, waiting for good news, waiting for expensive news, waiting to get on our way.

I realize that we are in the VW waiting area and I wonder what the BMW waiting room is like on the opposite side of the building. I expect that it is much nicer than this one. I get up and wander through the complex weaving in and out between all the cars in the showrooms: Mazdas, Buicks, Jettas, Passats, BMWs -

and more BMWs. A couple of salesmen say hello and ask me if I need any help. I decline but thank them anyway and I find my way into the BMW waiting room. It definitely is much nicer. It seems new, bigger and brighter as it is surrounded by very large, clear windows that let the sunshine stream in. The waiting area is arranged a bit differently. The large flat screen HD TV on the wall is probably a 72 or 80 inches! A few people are working away on their laptops, all the while keeping an eye on the screen. I note that the BMW coffee area was laid out differently, but they also had a Keurig coffee machine which needed two tokens or fifty cents to brew a cup of coffee. They also had a basket with small bags of chips, pretzels and breakfast bars, however they also had a basket of fresh fruit available and we did not. I would say there were approximately ten people scattered around the waiting room and while each was occupying themselves differently, they were still waiting: waiting for their cars to be fixed, waiting for them to be safe, waiting for good news, waiting for expensive news, waiting to get on their way. I wander back to my own waiting room pondering the business of waiting.

We are always waiting for something it seems and Advent, a season of waiting and anticipation, has just begun. As we await and anticipate the coming of Jesus, I wonder about the possibility of designing an interior waiting room with the same care that goes into the exterior spaces that we occupy during the season. It is possible to design a sacred space and a simple place within our heart and our soul, a place to be quiet, to be still where we can journey along with Mary and Joseph to the stable. It is possible to empty ourselves of our "to do" lists and just allow ourselves "to be" in one of God's stables where love resides and hope is born! We can decorate our interior self with hope, peace, joy and love. Immanuel - God is with us and within us. The Advent journey is an invitation to wait expectantly and begin our interior decorating.

"Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not be weary, they will walk and not faint." ~ Isaiah 40:31

December Happenings

December 3 – Town of Littleton Holiday Bazaar. Many thanks to JoAnne Dates for organizing the table. Please stop by to leave some baked goods – or to buy some!

December 3 – Five Choir Concert at 7PM at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. This beautiful concert is becoming a wonderful Town of Littleton tradition and is an inspiring way to get into the Christmas season.

Sunday, December 4 – 4:30-6:30pm. Our annual Christmas Open House following the Town Tree Lighting: Christmas cookie decorating, hot chocolate, Village Train Display, Teddy Bear Christmas Tree.

Sunday, December 11 – 10AM Children's Christmas program. The Candle of Joy.

- Special Meeting of the Church. The church will be asked to vote on the membership of Austin and JoAnne Dates on the recommendation of the Diaconate Board and consider two motions from the Merge Team.

December 15 Christmas party for all adult church musicians at the home of Lynn and Joe Vesey.



December 18 – Fourth Sunday in Advent.

9AM Sunday School

10AM Baby Dedication, Special Music and the Advent Candle of Love

Saturday, December 24

7:00PM Teddy Bear Christmas Service for excited children. Bring your favorite Teddy Bear or stuffed animal for special music, carols, story and the lighting of Candles. Music by Jon & Allie Ardrey, Ronnie Horvath.

11:00PM Traditional service of candles, carols, scripture and story that will take us into the wee hours of Christmas morning. Music by Steve & Cindy Hudson, the FBC Choir and Diana Kirk.

Sunday, December 25 10am Worship AT the Congregational Church with Rev. Dr. Vern Swett.

Happy New Year!

Sunday, January 1, 2012 10am Worship HERE with our friends from the Congregational Church. Pastor Debbie preaching and the celebration of communion. Music led by Cindy and Steve Hudson.

Epiphany Sunday, January 8

Women's Ministry party & luncheon

All women are invited to bring a dish to share for our annual Christmas-Epiphany party. Those who want to participate in the Secret Pal exchange



throughout the year will be able to sign up for the year ahead – and the past year Secret Pals will be revealed to each other. Bring a final gift for your current secret pal! We will also enjoy the usually hilarious Swap gift exchange – bring an inexpensive swap gift to share. See you there!



Coming in January

Sundays at 12:00 Noon beginning January 15
Bring a sandwich or lunch and join us for in-depth
conversation on religion and science.
Sign up on the Kiosk

Can you be a Christian and take science seriously?

At a time when influential voices are demanding that we either abandon the practice of religion or reject the findings of science, this essential and inspirational course offers a positive alternative: a way to live in today's world as scientifically informed believers.

Must we reject belief in God to accept the findings of science?

Join a group of world experts as they consider how religion and science might coexist and even complement one another in the 21st Century.

The Nine Lessons:

1. Introduction
2. Friends or Foes? The Story of a Complex Relationship
3. Truth in Science and Theology
4. God and Nature
5. Creation and Evolution
6. What Does It Mean to Be Human?
7. The God of Hope and the End of the World
8. Genetic Science and the Frontiers of Ethics
9. Concluding Bible Study on Creation Care

First Baptist Weekend Family Retreat

February 3 – 5 at Pilgrim Pines Retreat Center
in Swanzey, NH. Sign up ASAP.

<http://pilgrim-pines.org/>

We will be enjoying the beautiful Pilgrim Pines Camp in Swanzey, NH for a week end of fun and fellowship. Pilgrim Pines is about an hour away in lower N.H. Arrive any time after work/school on Friday, February 3. Supper is on your own. Settle in and enjoy games and fellowship and snacks. There is a lake for skating and hill for sliding. The cost is \$126.00 per person, which includes our lodging and meals. All we bring for food is our snack foods. Children, 4 to 12 are half price and children under 4 are free. Please look for the sign-up sheet on the kiosk in Fellowship Hall.

RMMO Connects Generations

Throughout January our congregation will collect The Annual Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO). As noted in our ABCUSA offering materials, this offering is a tangible way through which American Baptist congregations honor the denomination's retired ministers and missionaries and their widowed spouses. The offering provides emergency and other financial assistance to over 3,000 recipients with 20 or more years of ABC service prior to retirement.

Through RMMO, from generation to generation, we remember in love those who have given to us. We are blessed to have retired ministers as friends in our congregation, friends who continue to minister among us. Our church's goal this year is \$600.

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

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