

TOWER TOPICS

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF

First Baptist Church

NIAGARA FALLS, NEW YORK

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

554 Main Street

Corner of Main and Fourth

Niagara Falls, New York 14301

May 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>☺ Have you seen the progress made downstairs on the Ladies' Rest Room? It will be a fine area when completed. Have you given thought to underwriting a portion of the work as outlined in last month's Tower?</p> <p>☺ Our contractors for the exterior Main Street side of the church estimate that work will begin in mid-June. Ajax-Smith is known for their historical preservation work and will use that expertise on our 112 year old building.</p>		<p>1</p>  <p>May Day</p>	<p>2</p> <p>12:15 Inasmuch Luncheon</p> <p>7:00 Bible Study</p>			<p>5</p> 
<p>6 FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER</p> <p>11:00 Divine Worship with Communion 1:00 Visitation (Mary Saul's family) 2:00 Memorial Service for Mary Saul 5:00 L.I.F.E.</p>	7	8	<p>9</p> <p>7:00 PM Trustees/Diaconate Meeting</p>	10	11	12
<p>13 SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER</p> <p>11:00 Divine Worship</p> 	14	15	<p>16</p> <p>2:00 ABW</p> <p>7:00 Bible Study</p>	17	<p>18</p> <p><i>Reports for Annual Meeting due in the Church office.</i></p>	<p>19</p>  <p>Armed Forces Day</p>
<p>20 ASCENSION SUNDAY</p> <p>11:00 Divine Worship Third Sunday Food Collection 12:15 Sunday lunch</p>	<p>21</p>  <p>Victoria Day (Canada)</p>	22	23	24	25	26
<p>27 PENTECOST</p> <p>11:00 Divine Worship 12:15 ANNUAL MEETING</p>	<p>28</p>  <p>Memorial Day (observed)</p>	29	30	31	<p>☺ THE ANNUAL MEETING of First Baptist Church is after service on May 27. This is an important opportunity for all members of the church to exercise one of our fundamental Baptist rights and privileges: that of self-determination.</p>	



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SCHEDULES FOR THE MONTH

Wednesday	5/02	12:15 Inasmuch Luncheon 7:00 Bible Study
Sunday	5/06	11:00 Worship Service 2:00 Mary Saul Memorial 5:00 L.I.F.E Program
Wednesday	5/09	7:00 Trustee/Diaconate Mtg
Sunday	5/13	11:00 Worship Service
Wednesday	5/16	2:00 ABW 7:00 Bible Study
Sunday	5/20	11:00 Worship Service 12:15 2 nd Sunday Luncheon
Sunday	5/27	10:00 Breakfast for Everyone 11:00 Worship Service 12:00 Annual Meeting

May Birthdays

12 Toby Ordiway	23 Hazel Baxter
13 Mary Metke	24 Evelyn Keller
15 Janet Kundl	29 Betty Einstein
18 Cindy Ward Duke	30 Tyler Ordiway
19 Jon Baxter	

Please continue to pray for: Carole Buchalski; Marge and Ron Blakely; Mark Clark; Paul Einstein; Paul Ordiway ;Margaret Payne; Hal Faba; Dawn Schutz; Mike Gunther, Tara Clifton; Judy Einstein; Jack Mercer; Gladys Lewis; Bertha and Harold Bissell; our Church Family; our Country and all those who serve our Country.

The Church's Annual meeting is scheduled for 5/27 directly after church. We need your yearly report as soon as possible to be able to get full report in order.

L.I.F.E. “FLOWER POWER” May 6, 2011

5:00 P.M.

Potluck

Bring a dish to pass

Sign up in the Friendship Room

Lively Interesting Fellowship for Everyone

Haiti Relief Revisited

On January 10, 2010 a massive 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck the Port-au-Prince area at around 4:53pm; 5:53pm in La Romana, Dominican Republic, where I was living. It was the beginning of a journey that would bring together Haitians, Dominicans, Americans and folks from all over the world. It would forever change our lives and show all of us the counteracting magnitude of compassion and generosity that yet exists in our world today.

Within hours of the earthquake I began receiving communications about the destruction and offers from around the world to come and help. From the beginning, churches, volunteers, friends and family expected that I and the Good Samaritan Hospital in La Romana would be involved in the relief efforts. Our hospital began getting calls and visits from local physicians and national health agencies asking us to spearhead a relief trip to Haiti as soon as possible. The area hospitals would make donations of supplies and personnel if we would lead. What a HUGE responsibility we would carry but one that many believed we could do because of our history of serving the Haitian poor in the surrounding sugarcane villages of La Romana. We were versed in coordinating teams, working in difficult conditions, making do with what we had and doing all of it with caring and loving hearts.

It was a perfect combination to help a very devastating crisis.

International Ministries and the American Baptist Churches were the first to offer their support, both financially and with help in coordinating volunteers. We could not have made the many, many trips without the generosity of so many faithful donors and prayer warriors. I am forever thankful for the concern of so many for supplying for our needs.

Five days after the earthquake we made our first trip...a caravan of two 45 passenger buses, ten supply trucks and many individual vehicles with senators, diplomats and representatives from Dominican news stations. We drove through the night, starting the trip at 11pm and arriving to a very chaotic border crossing in Barahona around 7am. There was no control at the border and thousands of people were crossing back and forth...mostly relief workers and supply trucks. Much of what we saw was disorganized and without direction; reacting to a need but with little thought of anything beyond today. Moises Sifren, hospital administrator of the Good Samaritan Hospital, chose to work with a long-term, organized plan and because of his intuitiveness, the cooperative work of International Ministries and the Good Samaritan Hospital continued longer than most agencies.

Signs were everywhere along the road leading to Port-au-Prince, asking for help in several languages. There were still a few bodies along the side of the road, rolled up in carpets or cardboard boxes, waiting to be removed. Some signs told of the number of people injured or needing help...others told of the loss of life and were memorials to their loved ones. The closer we got to Port-au-Prince, the more destruction we saw. It started with cracks in the walls and then one or two crumbled buildings until we came to a place where whole blocks were nothing more than rubble. Despite our efforts to take a little time for organization when we arrived, patients began seeking help within minutes of seeing our vehicles enter the church compound, where we would sleep on hard pews for a few hours each night. Some were carried by people or on pieces of plywood or in chairs. Some hobbled in, still with open wounds and fractures that had never been treated. Many had their hands out begging for any scrap of food or water we could offer.

Our first day was a blur of activity, everyone working hard to meet the needs before us with ingenuity and a level of patience that I found amazing. We transported several patients back to our hospital in La Romana that day because no local hospitals would take any further patients. The next day we worked at a makeshift camp on a soccer field where a small group of Haitian medical students and one of their professors were trying to care for the many patients that arrived on a daily basis. I began to realize the level of tragedy in their lives when after a particularly large aftershock the Haitian medical student that I was working with asked me if I was ok because we had a lot of work still to do. No time to react to the aftershock anymore. That day we helped deliver a baby because the woman was alone and had lost her whole family. We became her family and no one wanted to leave her alone in her blanket tent that night, but we had no other choice.

The first week following the earthquake we helped hundreds, if not thousands of Haitians with medical care, prayers, kindness and food. We returned to La Romana exhausted and spent but also planning for the next trip just two days later. We had a long list of volunteers to organize and many emails to answer during those first few days. In all, we made trips Haiti every Monday night for more than four months; returning on Saturday and preparing for another trip. We could see upwards of 4-500 people a day with the medical staff and supplies that were bought and donated by monies received through International Ministries as well as the volunteers that came on the trips.

Over the next four months we built relationships with churches and organizations in Haiti that we continue to work with to this day. We saved lives through skilled medical personnel and desperately needed medications. We donated hundreds of wheelchairs, crutches and walkers. We filled hungry stomachs with food and hungry hearts and souls with God's love. We did it together...you and me...every step of the way. You were there as I wrapped wounds and listened to stories of heartache. You stood by my side as I had to tell people we ran out of food or tents or water. And as I held the hands of those hurting, you cried with me for their loss and their suffering, sharing the call to care for one of the least of these. You were there then and you can be there now as ministry continues in Haiti.

Kristy Engle

The above article by Kristy Engel tells of the heartbreak that is still occurring in Haiti. Our gifts to International Ministries of the American Baptist Church plus dedicated income from some of our investments go to support Kristy and her work. You can go on the church's website and click on Kristy Engel's link to learn even more about her important work. It is through our donations and prayers that she can carry on her mission.

From the Moderator...

Mission emphasis for May will be our Capital Campaign for the Building Fund. Work will start on the front exterior wall of the church which will include the tower. It is the most costly of the walls to repair due to deterioration of the mortar and bricks. Roman bricks are a kind of brick no longer made and acquiring them is key to the accurate restoration we are undertaking. If you have made a pledge or a contribution to the effort, thank you as it is ongoing over the next two years. We are seeking other grant opportunities for this effort to combine with our pledges.

The Second Sunday of May is Mother's Day and as we celebrate that event, we put off to the third Sunday our fund raising luncheon. While you're down in the basement, check out the painting progress in the rest rooms. Both are getting a big face lift with wall repair and painting, new vanities, faucets and paper holders. Did you know that the size of paper holder tubes has changed? Yes, they're now smaller and require new holders. It's always something when you have an older building.

Our Annual Meeting for voting on officers, by-law changes, and a resolution to continue Kathleen Ordiway's tenure as lay pastor will be voted. A majority for this meeting is a majority of those members at the meeting. If you wish to vote, and for whatever reason, cannot be present, call the office and have a ballot sent to you. By-law updates will be available for you in hard copy, e-mail copy, or during a discussion after the third Sunday luncheon in the

Friendship Room. Our congregation is much smaller than in the late 1990's when they were last updated and changes in committee structure and numbers on committees have changed to reflect those issues.

The Knit it Forward project is ongoing to provide knitted squares to be made into lap blankets for Roswell patients. Crochet and knit patterns are simple and available on the table in the Friendship Room by the basket. Clean up those yarn baskets and either start knitting or donate your unwanted yarn to the project and give comfort to cancer patients.

We have received a "thank you" from the America for Christ mission contribution. Your donations are at work in areas affected by disaster events in the US and Central and South America. Look for an article by Christi Engel, our missionary in Haiti in this issue.

Some thoughts from Wes

Years ago, a Charles Brown observed that the first secret of caring: is to be there! Whether it is the pastor of a church or the church itself, when we know that there is a need, we need to be "be there!"

We need to remind ourselves that "being there" means living out the Christian faith. Without a doubt, being there can be a real challenge, especially when there are people who are challenging us every step of the way. Social issues on which moral judgments must be given, as of the times demands which far exceed our ability to be caring. We must be aware of the many conflicting social issues which confront us as a society as well as a faith community. Indeed, consider the perplexities which challenge everyone's personal faith.

But, Easter has come and now we are preparing for Pentecost. During this Easter season, we need to recall the hope we have as a faith community. It is a tremendous accomplishment to believe in the power of the Almighty, in everyday life. It is a kind of power which stands off against the powers of the world, and in the eyes of many it is considered foolishness. But, it is a power that could humble itself in a manger and pour out its life on a cross. And, I for one am ready to bank my life that this is a power which ultimately triumphs

