



August 2008



# The Beacon

## Breaking down the barriers

To highlight the wonderful sermons that were presented by three of our youth on May 11, 2008 (Youth Sunday), we are including the sermons in The Beacon. This month's sermon, Breaking Down the Barriers from Kevin Boettger, is the last in the series.

Bernard Baruch, an early 20<sup>th</sup> century U.S. government advisor, once said, "No man should think himself a zero, and think he can do nothing about the state of the world."

After hearing that, you're probably thinking that such a statement is just common sense; everyone contributes to the state of the world, often without even knowing it. Well, that's a valid argument, but on a deeper level, it's just not that simple.

The Bible frequently sheds light on the importance of involuntary, unconditional goodness: the epitome of which is Jesus' suffering and dying on the cross so that all could be saved. From a comprehensive, analytical distance, one can easily perceive such a sacrifice as unbelievably righteous and humane; and the crucifixion, as it should be, is viewed as unique, in other words, such a sacrifice will never be duplicated. As an outcrop of this, many highly religious, pious individuals out there might think, "How can a weakling like me ever make a big enough, worthy enough difference in the world, especially considering the sacrifice that Jesus made for me." Well, the reality is that everyone is



for another.

On that note, then why is "lighting one's candle" or metaphorically making the paths of others a little more discernable or less treacherous, an often daunting task in today's society?

Jesus' washing of his disciples' feet following Passover celebration makes this mystery a

important: making just one person's life the slightest bit better is not any less honorable as a taxing self-sacrifice

little less obscure. In John, chapter 13, Jesus willfully interrupted his dinner, in an act that can be seen as self-degrading, to wash their feet while they bicker for supremacy over one another. Ultimately, their egos keep them from performing the task on their own; such an action would immediately confirm, in the eyes of their peers, that the individual is a low-life. In contrast, Jesus acts as though immune to that notion of humiliation or self-belittlement that can come from such an act: he holds no prejudices or significant favoritism towards any specific disciple. On the contrary, he

*(Continued on Page 2)*

*Save the Date:*

## Fall Picnic—Sept. 14, 2008

Before you know it, September will be here. One of the nice things we do to gather us all together again in the fall is our Church Picnic, which will take place on September 14, 2008 after the church service. David Pazmino has volunteered once again to provide us with a delicious meal. Put it on your calendar now. Invite your friends to worship and to picnic. See you then!



## Breaking down the barriers

*Continued from Page 1*

commits the rather grotesque deed as if it is second-nature. After washing their feet, Jesus captures the moral or lesson to be gained, saying in verses 13-16, "So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them".

In my opinion, that statement just about sums up the importance of unconditional generosity and hospitality right there, or metaphorically, making the lives of others lighter and more enjoyable. The reality is that today—despite donations to charities, community service, walks for hunger or Pan Mass Challenges to find a cure for cancer—factors like media or political bias, racial or sexual stereotypes, and that omnipresent, gripping influence of social and financial hierarchy all inhibit what Jesus taught at that Passover meeting: the importance of giving, involuntary generosity, and aid to others.

Uncle Tom's Cabin by Harriet Beecher Stowe, a polarizing novel both in the volatile period of the Civil War as well as today, communicates startling and deeply insightful commentary on the atrocities of slavery and racial oppression that is ever the more relevant in this modern era of materialism,

democratic impositions, distorted nationalism, economic panic, and of that common feeling of individual insignificance. Uncle Tom, a pious, meek, and dutifully faithful African American slave is faced with the punishment of the slave market when he is sold by the white owner he truly trusted, yet through it all goes on to light up the world of a young white girl through his hospitality and his ever-frequent heartfelt Methodist hymns. Moreover, before the whippings and starvation inflicted by an authoritarian slave owner takes his life, he consistently forgives and pities his oppressor, saying, "Mas'r, if you was sick, or in trouble, or dying, and I could save ye, I'd *give* ye my heart's blood; and, if taking every drop of blood in this poor old body would save your precious soul, I'd give 'em freely, as the Lord gave his for me." And Tom, through it all, maintains his faith in God and bestows upon everyone all the good that he can, even when pro-slavery Americans twisted religion to justify the institution.

Stephen Crane, a renowned American poet and author, emphasized the fact that the selfishness, greed, and power pursuits of humans are misguided and unnatural when one considers the beauty at the deepest levels of God's creation. Specifically, in his novel The Red Badge of Courage, he describes war as a strict, dehumanizing machine subordinate to the mutual, instinctive, involuntary interactions of nature and its animals.

The phrase "art imitates life" gets thrown around a lot. If anything can be gained by these two pieces of literature and the Passover supper, it's that everyone, regardless of anything, can make a difference in the world; it just takes a reconsideration of those prejudices and human motives that are inhibitors of that end. Amen.

*Kevin Boettger*

## Education Update

### Summer Series – Saving Jesus

Aug. 3 – Jesus' Program: The Kingdom of God

Aug. 10 – Jesus' Life: Model for Discipleship

Aug. 17 - Killing Jesus, Part 1 – Who Killed Jesus?

Aug. 24 - Killing Jesus, Part 2: The Atonement

Aug. 31 – The Resurrection of Christ

Sept. 7 – Why Jesus is Worth Saving

### Sunday School Teachers Needed

We still have a few teacher vacancies for the upcoming Sunday School year. If you would like to help the children, youth, or adults in this ministry, please contact Linda Moore or anyone on the Board of Education.

### SAVE THE DATE

Our regular Sunday School schedule begins Sunday, Sept. 7, 2008. See you then!

## Save the Date:

## Hardy Fall Concert — Oct. 3

Plans are well underway for the next Hardy Series Concert, Friday evening, October 3, to include James Cooke, Lisa Crockett, Kathy O'Donnell, and several "friends" in a program of instrumental music. Details to follow.



*From the Minister of Christian Education*

# The 'Final' List of Tools

We did it! We went through a year of tools that we picked up along the way that can help us to build on the church's foundation. Here is the compiled list. See if you recall your thoughts, reactions and challenges:

From August 2007 – July 2008

- 25 Ways to Build Up a Church (resource: Discipleship Resources, Upper Room)
- Renewing Your Mind (Transformation: Romans 12:2)
- Communication (reference: Coach Mike Krzyzewski)
- A Road Map
- Fellowship with one another
- "Action Speaks Louder than Words"
- "Trinity of Transformation" (Lenten Programming: scripture, practical, and theological)
- Prayer

- Chutes and Ladders
- "Gotta Have Heart" (reference: Randy Pausch and his book, *The Last Lecture*)
- The Bible
- You

I call it the "final" list, but by no means, is it the final one. I am sure you have thoughts on different tools that we should consider. First Baptist Church is a part of the Body of Christ, and each person within that body has a different gift to provide. That is why we remember each month at Communion that we are ALL welcomed to the table. Just as each disciple was different, each person in this church is different and we have different tools. We should be welcomed of whatever tool someone brings, because at least we are building the church together and strengthening the Body of Christ that we have been called to do.

What tool would you like to bring and build with? I challenge you to come up with your own list. What's important to you? I would love to hear about it.

Blessings and Peace,  
*Linda*

## In the FBCN Family News

### JOYS:

Kevin Boettger for recently performing in Spain and Portugal with the Senior Massachusetts Youth Wind Ensemble

Elizabeth Cooke for recently performing and studying in Germany and the Czech Republic

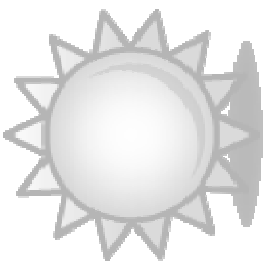
### SPECIFIC PRAYERS:

Tom Pruett, brain tumor (Linda's Uncle)

### ON-GOING PRAYERS:

Jewel Foster  
Clara Gallup  
Roger and Carolyn LaFreniere  
Betty and Joyce Morin  
Philip and Heather Palmer

**Do you have something to share??** If you have any joys, news, or specific prayers to share, please let Linda Moore know. [Lmoore@fbcnewton.org](mailto:Lmoore@fbcnewton.org) or 617-244-2997 x 12



# August 2008

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
<b>3</b> Food Pantry Collection <b>Sunday Worship</b> Schedule—See Page 5 1230pm BKC*	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> 6am BKC*	<b>6</b> 6am BKC*	<b>7</b> 6am BKC*	<b>8</b> 6am BKC*	<b>9</b> 6pm BKC*
<b>10</b> <b>Sunday Worship</b> Schedule—See Page 5 11:30 a.m. Fellowship Time— Edith & Gordon Swan 50th Anniversary 1230pm BKC*	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 6am BKC*	<b>13</b> 6am BKC*	<b>14</b> 6am BKC*	<b>15</b> 6am BKC*	<b>16</b> 6pm BKC*
<b>17</b> <b>Sunday Worship</b> Schedule—See Page 5 1230pm BKC*	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 6am BKC*	<b>20</b> 6am BKC*	<b>21</b> 6am BKC*	<b>22</b> 6am BKC*	<b>23</b> 6pm BKC*
<b>24</b> <b>Sunday Worship</b> Schedule—See Page 5 1230pm BKC*	<b>25</b> Meetinghouse Closed for the Week	<b>26</b> 6am BKC*	<b>27</b> 6am BKC*	<b>28</b> 6am BKC*	<b>29</b> 6am BKC*	<b>30</b> 6pm BKC*
<b>31</b> <b>Sunday Worship</b> Schedule—See Page 5 1230pm BKC*						

**August Birthdays**

**& Anniversaries:**  
 Best wishes to FBCN members celebrating birthdays in August:

**Birthdays**

- Stephen Ott - 1
- Alice Wolpert - 5
- Burton Bagby - 7
- Adrian Gusty - 9
- Henry Pollard - 11
- Susan Duncombe - 13
- Beverly Booth - 19
- Amy Feldman - 24
- Charlie Eastman Jr - 28 (Rev. Charley's dad)
- Lynne Levesque - 29
- Peg Mayer - 30

**Anniversaries**

- Bernie & Sandra Carpenter - 4
- Gordon & Edith Swan - 7
- James Cooke & Lisa Crockett - 22
- Denis & Ansaya Odvarka - 31

If there is a birthday or anniversary missing, please let Linda Moore know.

# Roll up your sleeves for Habitat for Humanity

On Oct. 25, First Baptist Newton will be working on the Habitat for Humanity project in Newton. We need eight volunteers to work on the project from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. No experience with construction is required, but you must be over the age of 16.

Habitat for Humanity makes it possible for families to own their own homes through volunteer labor and tax-deductible donations of money, land, and materials. Families are selected to own a Habitat home based on their level of need, willingness to work, acceptance of responsibilities and ability to repay a mortgage. Families who are moving into the homes participate in the building too, completing at least 300 hours of sweat equity and an additional 100 hours of homeowner education classes.

The first Habitat project in Newton began on September 19, 2007 with a groundbreaking ceremony at 76 Webster Park. The two-family home abuts Dolan Pond Conservation Area. Each unit will have three bedrooms, off-street parking, and a patio. Habitat for Humanity Greater Boston is an independent affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International, an ecumenical Christian organization *headquartered* in



Atlanta, Georgia and dedicated to ending poverty housing throughout the world as a matter of justice, mercy, compassion and humility.

This is a wonderful opportunity to share the love that God shares with us through helping to build a warm, safe home for two families. Please join us. A sign-up sheet will be on the table in the Transformation Station. First Baptist Newton has budgeted the \$750 required

for a group build day. If there are more than eight people interested and willing to work, we will need to raise an additional \$750 for a second build day. Even if the sign-up is full let us know if you're still willing and would like to be a "back-up" in case someone can't make it.

## T-shirts

We know there are a lot of creative people in our congregation, and First Baptist Newton needs a new T-shirt design. If you have a creative idea, please submit it by August 31. T-shirts are a great way to spread the word about First Baptist Newton, and make great gifts.

## Our Sunday Worship Schedule for August

*First Baptist Church in Newton*

9:30 a.m. Sunday School

10:30 a.m. Worship

11:30 a.m. Fellowship

*See the Calendar on Page 4 for additional events and activities*





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