



September 2008

The Beacon



Sharing your story with FBCN

What's Your Story? With that simple question, we kick off another program year at First Baptist Church in Newton!

Our theme this year is about breaking the silence between us, and coming into a deeper fellowship. Last year we focused on transformation in the passage from Romans 12:2, and that was certainly great for some of us. Some folks got in better shape, some became more diligent disciples, some even managed to grow closer to their church family.

But not everyone. For some people, the idea of transformation was a bridge too far, or felt like putting the cart before the horse. Making changes in our souls and selves can be daunting if we don't feel safe and comfortable enough to reach out to new vistas with the people around us. We need a better sense of the people in our pews, some very close by, who we know very little about.

A few weeks ago, I mentioned the preoccupation many people have with "the cult of the new." It happens in music and technology, and even in churches. The latest and greatest products and sounds are considered the best. Likewise, sadly, with people. We put all our eggs in the youth basket and expect them to be the church for



us, and then complain that we aren't center-stage in the life of the church anymore.

It shouldn't be that way. **We should value all our people**, whether they fit some ideal age profile or not.

We need a better sense of why some folks have stayed here for decades and what this church means to them, rather than just being excited about young families (mine included)! Keep your ears and eyes peeled as we address this in worship in the months to come.

What is your story? What is your sense of God, and how does your faith inform your choices and the way you live your life? How does the story of God intersect with the story of your life? By bringing testimony back into our services, we will make room for the voice of the people. Sharing stories will take some of your valuable time, outside worship as well as in it. I

hope you will find yourself taking advantage of our fellowship opportunities, inside the church and outside of it, and start sharing more about who you are. We grow richer gardens when we plant them full of the details of our lives.

Of course, the Bible itself is a deeply narrative work, and we fulfill the Biblical witness when we tell stories. Sitting in your pew each week and keeping it all to yourself is like hoarding treasure. Even sharing difficulties is important, and allowing others to minister to you is to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

What's your story? **You are an important part of this congregation, regardless of your age or demographic**, and the story of FBCN is the sum of the stories of us all. I hope you'll join me in this important time of sharing. I hope what we begin this year will sustain us for many years to come.

Charley Eastman

Come to the Fall Picnic on Sept. 14

Join us as we come together again this fall for our Church Picnic on September 14, 2008 after the church service. David Pazmino has volunteered once again to provide us with a delicious meal. Invite your friends to worship and to picnic. See you then!



Experiencing God's bounty: In Defense of Food

Recently, a friend in South Carolina recommended finding out more about Journalist Michael Pollan, after she read his book, *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, which came out a couple years ago.

Pollan writes about science and nutrition. He is not a scientist or nutritionist himself, but rather a journalist studying these worlds and reflecting them out to a wider readership. This particular book, *In Defense of Food*, is his latest, and it was published by Penguin Press in January of this year.

Pollan is a sharp writer, with an easy style that belies the weight of research he draws conclusions from. There are several pages of notes at the back, and footnotes throughout, detailing how he came to believe what he has. While his style is clear, this heavy reliance on the empirical science may be a little distracting. As a journalist, he wants you to know he is not drawing conclusions out of intuition.

The heart of the book is contained in this simple statement, printed on the cover: "Eat food, not too much, mostly plants." Is there anything really new here? Yes, and no. No in the healthy sense that this book mines deep wells of common sense, and it is not entirely new advice. What Pollan does is translate some of the old adages that you may know into scientifically supported insights. The idea that you should "shop the edges of the grocery store and stay out of the middle aisles" is not new information. You can see with your eyes that real meat, produce, grains and dairy live on the edge, and that the dark heart of supermarkets is the unhealthy processed food in the center. But Pollan gives you the reasons why: our government and food processing industry have conspired over decades to yield up Frankenstein products that Pollan refers to as "edible food-like substances." Without naming names, you know *exactly* the kind of stuff I'm talking about.

But this is not a book of conspiracy theory. The state of food today is in large part due to our reliance on cheap and overabundant calories. We spend much too little time preparing our food, and we never know where most of it comes from. We also allow the industry to get away with labeling products in ways that belie their true character: so what if something will give you plenty of Omega-3 fatty acids, if it still contains a dozen ingredients you can't pronounce, as well as high-fructose corn syrup?

One of the great recommendations Pollan makes is that "you should not eat anything your great-grandmother would not recognize as food." Just think of the things you had the opportunity to eat this week, and how many of them failed that test? Food that even bacteria don't deign to touch (and here Pollan

cites a particular familiar golden snack cake that he left on a shelf for a year that did not spoil) is "food" that we should avoid putting in our bodies as well.

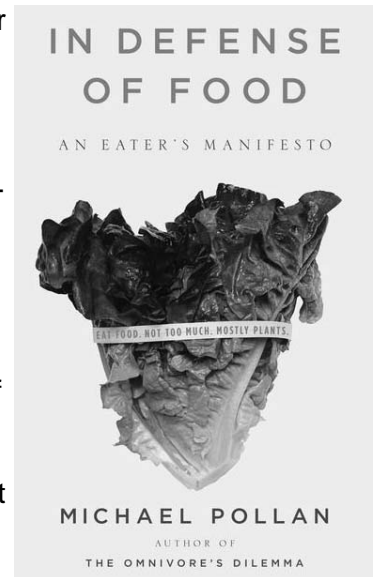
In the end, Pollan makes several recommendations, like joining a farm co-operative, choosing grass-fed beef and dairy products, and giving up fast food entirely. You may note that this would raise your time spent in food preparation, as well as raise your food cost. Pollan says that is as it should be; you are worth it!

In the U.S., we spend a fraction of our time and money on food when compared to other industrial nations, and we lead the world in Western diet diseases like diabetes and obesity. He recommends we come to understand the paradox in many European diets, where people eat many more fatty foods and wash them down with wine, but remain healthier and slimmer. In many of those places, "having seconds" is downright rude, and they know when to stop eating by how they feel over the course of their longer meals. If it takes the body about 20 minutes to start to feel the satiated effect of digestion, and most of our meals are over in 15 minutes, then we never feel full until it's too late. We let "food" producers define our portions, and stop eating when the container is empty. BIG mistake. The food industry wants you to eat more, not less.

By not spending time eating together, we are losing out on fellowship with other people, and that makes this pastor alarmed. Families that do not eat together are not connecting in important ways. The bible is full of shared meals, and we never hesitate to remind folks at Communion that Jesus met people and learned about them through table fellowship.

I believe Pollan's *In Defense of Food* makes strong arguments for why the Western diet is flawed, and hopefully he will make you consider his advice: "Eat food, not too much, mostly plants." Learn more at www.michaelpollan.com.

Charley Eastman



From the Minister of Christian Education

Is one hour worth it?

As I am writing this article, the Education Program is gearing up for the new year. There is going to be a small group study in October and November on the book of James, Youth Fellowship will kick off with a potluck dinner on Sept. 21, and Sunday school will begin on Sept. 7 with its Annual Kick Off.

I invite all of you to join in the community of the Sunday school program. If you have not come to a Sunday school class before, now is the time. You will be with some passionate teachers and wonderful students. It is an amazing time to come together in fellowship and discipleship with the added bonus of making us stronger individually and corporately.

I can tell you the importance of Sunday school until I am blue in the face, but it won't make a difference until you see for yourselves. Will you come? Some people will have stories to explain why they cannot come to Sunday school. On the other hand, many people will have stories to explain how Sunday school made a difference for them and for their families. Below is an article that I found in regards to how just one hour made a difference in her life. After you have read the article, consider how Sunday school can make a difference in your life. Then ask yourself the question, what will my story be this year? Take an hour to find out and see what a difference it can make in your life. I guarantee it will be worth it.

Blessings,

Linda

Sunday School helped me find my way

By Robin Williams

Special Contributor

Going to church for the first time after years of being away is a hard thing to do. The anxiety associated with walking in the door and meeting new people makes shy people like me shudder. However, I knew that my kids needed to be in church, so a few months after moving to Bossier City, La., I decided that we would visit a church nearby.

I was married at the time, but my husband did not wish to attend, so the kids and I got dressed and found ourselves walking into Asbury United Methodist



Church. I thought that Sunday school was a good place to start, but how would I figure out where to go? As we walked into the Sunday morning hustle and bustle, I was grateful that it was easy to find the children's Sunday school area.

After settling the children into their classrooms, I start wandering down the hall to find a place for myself. I must have looked like a lost puppy because a friendly lady stopped and asked if I was new. I said "yes" and she invited me to her Sunday school class. I was glad to have someone to walk into the class with me.

It just so happened that the Sunday school class was having a picnic after church at a local park. The class invited my kids and me to attend. I wasn't sure I wanted to go, but we went anyway. It was such fun. The kids played and we ate with our new friends. From that first Sunday we became active Asbury attendees.

It was another ten months before I joined the church. During those ten months, my marriage was crumbling and I quit my full time job to try to mend the situation. Asbury's pastor helped me get more involved in the church. In fact, he asked me to work as a part-time secretary in the office. This was just what I needed.

During the next two years, I went through a divorce and three moves. I thought that life would never be the same.

But this place called Asbury helped me find my way. I moved from part-time to full-time church secretary. My days are now spent in the church. When I'm not at church for work, my kids and I are at the church for a variety of functions. My kids' lives are centered around church activities. Sometimes I think about getting a "real" job, but my kids and I agree that there is no other "real" job worth having.

When I think about how my life has changed over the past seven years, I wonder how it would have turned out if I had not gone to Sunday school that morning. Sunday school not only teaches the Bible; it also provides a social outlet that brings people together. My life will never be the same, and for good reason!

Ms. Williams is a member of Asbury United Methodist Church, Bossier City, La. Article taken from: Sunday School for Life at Cokesbury.com.

Sunday School Kickoff set for Sept. 7

Join us on Sunday, Sept. 7 at 9:30 a.m. in the Chapel to officially kick off the new Sunday School year. Children and youth may register that morning as well.

Nursery

Molly Kennedy and Raquel Wells
Fogg Educational Building, 1st floor

Pre-K through 2nd grade

Jonathan Dwyer and April Rezendes
Fogg, 2nd floor

3rd through 5th grade

Ann Grantham and Julie Heffernan
Chapel loft (rear of chapel)

6th through 8th grade

Molly Edmonds, Melissa Heim, Dennis Odvarka
Junior High Room

9th through 12th grade

Charley Eastman, Dan Heffernan, Heather Mellquist
Senior High Room



Nurturing Our Faith (adult class)
Bob Pazmino and Jeff Edmonds
Everts' Room

Faith in the World (adult class)
Edith Swan and Edna Bargan
Chapel

Each student class will use the *Seasons of the Spirit* curriculum, which is based upon the church lectionary and specifically tailored to each age group.

Adult Sunday School information:

Nurturing Our Faith, the adult study group, will be based upon the weekly lectionary readings.

Faith in the World adult group will participate in a discussion about living out our faith with regard to a specific aspect of our world – the environment, homelessness, casinos in Massachusetts, political election, for example – and will be followed by a lively discussion session.

Adult Education Programs for September

Faith in the World

Meets 9:30 a.m. in the Chapel

September 7

Finishing up the "Saving Jesus" series with the last session, "Why Jesus is Worth Saving"

September 14

Presentation for the World Mission Offering and the American Baptist International Missionaries and what they are doing for the Kingdom of God

September 21 - 28

Series on Faith and American Politics, called, "Liberty and Justice for All." This will be a series that will take you to the election in November, helping congregations to talk about faith and politics, without judgment. This adult program is not a debate between Democrats and Republicans; nor is it between conservatives and liberals. This program is designed to spark discussion that will people to discern the values that shape and determine their faith and political beliefs.

Nurturing Our Faith Bible Study

Meets 9:30 a.m. in the Everts Room

September 7 – 28

Led by Jeff Edmonds and Bob Pazmiño, this bible study will use the *Seasons of the Spirit* Curriculum for Adults, which uses the lectionary-based scripture that corresponds with the liturgical year and our scripture readings for worship.

Save the date:

Hardy Series Concert on Oct. 3

The Church's next Hardy Series Concert is set for Friday evening, October 3rd, 7:30 p.m. and will feature "James Cooke, Lisa Crockett, Kathy O'Donnell and Friends" in a program of instrumental music. The evening promises to be very special, involving performing by our own members, and everyone is warmly invited to attend.

Another great Coffeehouse season is brewing

Are you ready for more great music? More wonderful food and fellowship?

Our coffeehouse season begins in October and runs through next spring. This year, we'll see the return of singer-songwriter Terry Kitchen, the upbeat gospel of Rock My Soul, and some new friends like Tripping Lily. The Coffeehouse will still be on Friday nights, usually the third Friday of the month, with shows planned for October, November, March, April and May. Having fewer shows lets us put more focus on each show, for publicity and volunteer participation.

This year, we'd like to open things up and get much more involvement from the congregation. So please come to our organizational meeting on Sunday, Sept. 21, right after church in the Sanctuary. We'll have a sign-up sheet so that folks can deter-



mine what they would like to do at each show, like taking tickets, running the concessions table, helping with the sound system or just welcoming folks and helping them get around. Maybe you'd like to drop off some baked goods. There are actually just a few things that need to happen at each show, and we need a wider pool to draw on so that everyone contributes a little and makes the load lighter for each! Also, if you'd like to do church tours during the intermission, there's no rule that says only the ministers are allowed to lead them.

I hope you'll take the opportunity to invest some of your time and talent in maintaining this exciting cultural connection between ourselves and the wider Newton community. See you after church on the 21st!

Charley Eastman

The Budget Committee begins its work

It's that time of year again, and the Budget Committee is convening to get to work on the 2009 budget. The committee will meet regularly through the months of September and October to develop the preliminary budget for presentation to the congregation at the Fall Business Meeting on Oct. 26.

The members of the Budget Committee are: Kathy Wade (Moderator), Ted Wade (Treasurer), Russ Deason (Registrar), Chuck Cossaboom (Chair, Trustees), Eunice Wilson (Chair, Deacons), Molly Edmonds (Chair, Education), and Larisa Pazmino (Chair, Outreach).

You are encouraged to speak with any of the members of the committee (or any other member of the Boards or Council) with your thoughts on what programs or initiatives you would like to see for next year. It will be challenging, with fuel and other costs expected to be much higher without a corresponding increase in income (pledges, rents, income from endowment, etc.) to offset those costs. Your prayers and support will be needed as the committee commences this important task.

Education and Fellowship Announcements

Youth Fellowship Kick Off Potluck Dinner



Sunday, Sept. 21
6 p.m. in Fellowship Hall
Youth, parents and families are invited to join the Youth Fellowship potluck dinner to kick off another great year of youth fellowship.

Adult Small Group Study—The Book of James

Thursday nights, Oct. 23—Nov. 20



Our Fall Adult Small Group Study will focus on the Book of James. Mark your calendars for Thursday nights starting Oct. 23 through Nov. 20. Stay tuned for more information.

Children's Fellowship needs your help!

Calling all Grown-Ups! We need your help in Children's Fellowship throughout the school year. As you may know, children in first grade and younger leave the service after children's time and head upstairs for fun and crafts. We need some caring adults – parents and non-parents are both welcome – to volunteer their time with the children— with the assistance of a very experienced youth volunteer. There is a sign-up sheet in the chapel. Please consider helping out! Contact Larisa Pazmino (larisapazmino@gmail.com) with questions.

September 2008



September Birthdays & Anniversaries:

Best wishes to FBCN members celebrating

Birthdays

- Susan Eastman – 5
- Alimen Insong – 6
- Lizzie Odvarka – 9
- Bernie Carpenter – 11
- Bill Buff – 19
- Greg Mobley – 21
- Dan Heffernan – 24
- Hailey Boettger – 26
- Julia Boettger - 26

Anniversaries

- Meara Jones & Dan Hershey – 1
- Sonja & Steve Loar – 3
- Jenny & John Weisz – 3
- Karen & Jim Schoonmaker – 7

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

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
	1 Labor Day Church Office Closed	2 6am BKC*	3 6am BKC*	4 6am BKC* 7pm Cub Scouts 7pm Teacher Trng 7:30pm Budget Committee	5 6am BKC*	6 6pm BKC*
7 Food Pantry Collection Sunday Worship Schedule - See Page 7 Sunday School Kick-Off 1230pm BKC*	8 6:15pm AMC	9 6am BKC* 7:30pm Board Meetings 7:30pm Budget Committee	10 6am BKC*	11 6am BKC*	12 6am BKC*	13 6pm BKC*
14 Sunday Worship Schedule—See Page 7 11:30am Church Picnic 1230pm BKC*	15 7pm Yoga starts for the season!	16 6am BKC* 9:30am Yoga 7pm Yoga 7:30pm Church Council 7:30pm HFH Newton Meeting	17 6am BKC* 7pm Yoga	18 6am BKC* 7:30pm Budget Committee	19 6am BKC*	20 6pm BKC*
21 Sunday Worship Schedule—See Page 7 1230pm BKC* 6pm Youth Fellowship Potluck Dinner	22 7pm Yoga	23 6am BKC* 9:30am Yoga 7pm Yoga 7:30pm Communications Committee	24 6am BKC* 7pm Yoga	25 6am BKC*	26 6am BKC*	27 6pm BKC*
28 Sunday Worship Schedule—See Page 7 1230pm BKC*	29 7pm Yoga	30 6am BKC* 9:30am Yoga 7pm Yoga	<p style="text-align: center;">Fall is a great time to start practicing yoga. Newcomers are encouraged to attend Tuesday nights from 7 to 8:30 p.m. FBCN members will receive a 10% discount. For more info, call Peggy McLoughlin at (617) 964-1722 or Peggy@yoganewton.com.</p>			

In the FBCN Family News

JOYS:

To Lizzie Odvarka who graduated from the Young Adult Writers Program Fellowship Program in Boston

To Julie-Ann Bauer (J-Bird) and Jacob Burkhardt, youth leaders, who were married on August 23.

To Bill and Mary Herzog, whose daughter Catherine and Raymond Vickery were married on August 23

To Tommy Mobley, Joseph Odvarka, and Emily Buff, who will all officially join the Youth Fellowship in September

SYMPATHY GOES TO:

Ann Grantham on the death of her father-in-law
Alice Valle on the death of her mother, Mabel Walker
Linda Moore on the death of her uncle, Tom Pruett

SPECIFIC PRAYERS:

Those students and teachers going back to school, college, or graduate studies

ON-GOING PRAYERS:

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

THANK YOU:

Dear First Baptist friends,
We thank you very much for your cards and well-wishes upon the birth of our son, AJ (Anselm John) Mitchell, in July. We also thank you for the cards and your prayers after Mindi's extended hospitalization due to complications after his birth. AJ is doing very well and Mindi is on the mend.
Blessings,
Rev. Mindi Welton-Mitchell and Rev. JC Mitchell

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 or 617-244-2997 x 12

Our Sunday Worship Schedule for September

First Baptist Church in Newton

- 8:30 a.m. Choir Rehearsal (*Starting Sept. 14*)
- 9:15 a.m. Junior Choir Rehearsal (*Starting Sept. 14*)
- 9:30 a.m. Sunday School
- 10:30 a.m. Worship
- 11:30 a.m. Fellowship

See the Calendar on Page 6 for additional events and activities

Join the World Mission Offering

*They were all amazed and glorified God, saying,
"We have never seen anything like this!"*
(Mark 2:12)

October is World Mission Offering month! You will have many opportunities to learn about our international missionaries and the amazing work they are doing with your support around the world. If you have ever wondered what you as one person can do to make a difference when the needs of so many people are so enormous, now is the time to find out! Our 2008 goal is \$2,500 and we're confident that you will make the critical difference in reaching that goal. If you have an idea about a fund-raising project, please contact Mary Jane or Stephen Ott at (617) 527-1812 and be amazed at the difference you can make!

Come sing with us!

"Singing is praying twice."
St. Augustine

Another exciting choir season begins on Sept. 14 with rehearsal at 8:30 a.m. Please join us!

Do you sing along with the car radio? Practice in the shower? Or simply chime in with the hymns during worship? If so, that's all the experience you need! Just bring your voice!

Our choir is a wonderful, fun group of people who have a great time learning and singing together. Feel free to contact me with your questions and comments at SPRedrow@aol.com, or at the church music office!

