



Cross & Spire

Newsletter of First Baptist Church

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"Not a perfect church, not a perfect people, just a simple desire to follow Jesus."

A Word from Pastor Rick

Summer is here! Finally! Of course this means attendance at church will be down and a lot of church ministry will be put on hold. When I was a new pastor in New England I did not understand it. I had an excuse though. I had just spent 9 years in San Diego. In San Diego you could always tell the transplants from "back east," because after they greeted you they would say, "Beautiful day!" Of course it was a beautiful day, it's always a beautiful day in San Diego. If it rains for three minutes they talk about for weeks there. Then I went through a winter, and mud season and a typically gloomy rainy Spring. When summer hit, I wanted to be outside. Since I was "from away" I didn't know how urgent the matter was, so summer zipped by and I hardly got out at all. As Linus (from Peanuts) said, "Summers fly. Winters walk."

So this isn't a complaint or a guilt trip. I just want you to take advantage of the summer as a disciple of Christ. So I have two words of counsel. First, take time to worship when you are gone. I don't mean find a church although that is always a good option. Just get up early enough to have a quiet hour outside with your Bible and then walk and pray. If you have kids this is easy to do unless they are infants or toddlers. In that case, I know you are in survival mode so you'll have to find the time to read and pray in snatches. If your kids are older and are Christians just take a moment to read the Scripture and pray. If they are teens or older get them to share, they may surprise you. We always do this. We did it with teens and now we do it with our adult kids and it is rich.

Listen to Christian music when you are driving. This can turn a long drudgery into a time of renewal that will immeasurably enrich your life. If you need to drive through Massachusetts it may keep you from a case of road rage -- especially if you have to drive on 128.

When you are hiking or strolling in nature, just stop for a moment and be quiet. The beauty and grandeur will lift your eyes to the artist and, if you are like me, you'll remember that moment of gratitude and worship for years. I still remember those moments on the boat with my boys, when I stopped for just a minute from hunting down monster Smallies to look at the sunset.

Jesus taught us (John 4) that true worship does not depend on place. It is a matter of a soul, spirit encounter with the Living God focused on God's truth. Jesus called it, "worship in spirit and truth." Paul told us we were temples of the living God, Jesus said where two or more are gathered in his name he was there. The point is, that we take our church with us, so take time to worship.

The other word of counsel I have is, hang out with non-believers. This was an intentional strategy of Jesus. Just read Luke 5:27-32 or Luke 15 and you will see that meals with sinners became ministry. Jesus' reply to the legalists who criticized him teaches us that this was a deliberate strategy. Invite a neighbor over for the barbecue, or the boat ride, or any of a number of summer activities. I have a friend who told me he was the token Christian in a group of friends who like a certain kind of music and who meet at a good many of the concerts. This is what I am talking about. My friend got into a conversation about the problem of evil and suffering with one of his friends and he will be able to continue it at the next concert. I am convinced if we are intentional about just engaging non-Christians as friends, witness will follow. Everybody is out of hibernation now, so it presents an opportunity that requires us to have the fun we would any way. All we need to do is expand the circle to friends who don't go to Church.

So have a great summer, just remember that we are in this world for a purpose; and Summer provides unique opportunities to draw near to Christ and witness.

Your partner in the great work,

Rick

SUMMER BREAK

Adult Sunday School, Youth Group, Women 2 Women, and Men's Breakfast are all on break for the summer months. We will resume our time together in September.

PRAYER MEETING

Please join us on Wednesday, July 19 & Wednesday, August 16 at 7:00PM for a time of prayer. Everyone is welcome.

CE BOARD UPDATE

The Christian Education Committee has had much activity this past Spring.

Camp Scholarships were awarded to 7 students attending Camp Berea. We pray the children are blessed by a wonderful camp experience. Thank you to Rachel for helping with the process.

Both the Children's Church and Nursery schedules are done through the Summer. If you are interested in helping out with these ministries please contact Deb Girdwood for Nursery or Carol Rataj for Children's Church.

Deb and Steve Girdwood have given their dedication and love to the Youth Group for quite a few years. Their guidance watched 12 seniors graduate this past June. The final activity was a sleepover at the Cole Farm. Deb purchased Bibles for each graduate along with a copy of My Utmost for His Highest, by Oswald Chambers. She included scriptures that were tailored for each student. Thank you Deb and Steve for your continued commitment to serving the youth of our church family and community. Please consider joining them this Fall to help our young folks learn the necessity of following Jesus.

The Adult Discipleship Committee thought it was time to ask you, the church family, what Bible topics you would like to learn more about. Tina Meagher put together a paper version found in the Sunday bulletin. Karisa Dubuque and Brenda Howard put together an online survey for folks to choose what Biblical interests they might hold.

Please take a few minutes, it is very quick, to fill out the survey and send it in by July 9. Then, be on the lookout for a Sunday School or Bible study on one or more of those ideas.

Carol will be volunteering to help out with the Vacation Bible School at Valley Bible Church in White River Junction, VT. It runs from July 24 to 28, from 9:00 to 12:00 noon. The ages are 3 ½ to 5th grade. The title this year is Galactic Starvevor, check it out on Youtube.

The CE has done much brainstorming about what we dream to have in our new building.

Most important are classrooms with walls and doors. In addition to Children's Church and Nursery, we hope to have a Preschool class with its own space. Also, a dedicated place for the Youth Group to be able to have their studies and

activities. As with the other Boards, we will wait to see what financial picture the Building Committee paints and what the Lord provides.

Finally, Praise the Lord for a highly successful Church Family BBQ!!

Thank you to the Deacons and Pastor Rick for an uplifting service, and to the Music Team for inspiring songs. Together you, along with the beautiful weather, presented a wonderful time of worship and praise to the Lord. Thank you to everyone who brought such yummy salads and fruits and cookies, and to our BBQ chefs who made everything taste delicious! Thank you to the servers and the setup and takedown folks too!

Especially, a big thank you to Chris and Cathy Clark and the Missions Committee for the organization, preparation, and vision to make this event happen. We truly worked together as a family and did:

"Taste and See that the Lord is Good." Psalm 34:8

Grace and many blessings to you this Summer.

"I thank my God in all my remembrances of you."

Phil 1:3

Carol Rataj

Bridges Out of Poverty Workshop

"Now I understand the people I'm serving."

When: Monday, July 17th from 9:00AM – 4:00PM

Where: DHMC, Auditorium G, 1 Medical Center Dr., Lebanon, NH

To Register: Contact Jennifer at
jfontaine@uppervalleyhaven.org

When: Monday, August 7th from 9:00AM – 3:30PM

Where: DHMC, Auditorium G, 1 Medical Center Dr., Lebanon, NH

To Register: Contact Jennifer at
jfontaine@uppervalleyhaven.org

Materials are provided for free. Lunch is on your own.

About Bridges:

Bridges training contains case studies, detailed analysis, helpful charts and exercises, and specific solutions you and your organization can implement right now to:

- Redesign programs to better serve people in poverty
- Build skill sets for management to help guide employees
- Upgrade training for front-line staff including receptionist and others
- Improve treatment outcomes in healthcare and behavioral healthcare
- Increase the likelihood of moving from welfare to work

This work has been part of the mindset of the Upper Valley Haven for several years, and it has been important to other social service organizations, churches, schools, and employers in the Upper Valley as well. It has enabled us to work more thoughtfully, respectfully and ultimately successfully with all members of the community.