



Tower Topics

The monthly Newsletter of First Baptist Church of Mansfield, PA

June 2011 - Vol. XXXVIII #6

Rev. Steven C Case

<http://www.firstbaptistchurchmansfield.com>

I pondered for quite a while what to write for this Tower Topic Article and decided to write about Baptists and Religious Liberty. I have, like many of you, heard many media announcements or accounts about “Baptists” without even attempting to separate or perhaps even understand us from others. Having said that I need to reiterate this; in no way are we associated with the Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, Kansas. That church was founded by Fred Phelps and consists mostly of his family. They have identified themselves as belonging to the American Baptist Association which, again is not related to us. In fact, there are over 300 Baptist organizations within the United States alone and anyone can call themselves “Baptists;” hence the problem of identification. We Baptists are a unique group of people. Some remember our heritage regarding the separation of church and state, or the “wall of separation” talked about by colonial Baptist Roger Williams, Thomas Jefferson and the U.S. Supreme Court. Others simply deny the existence of such an idea or concept. As the Rev. J. Brent Walker, Executive Director of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty states: “While the phrase ‘separation of church and state’ technically is not in the First Amendment of the Constitution and although there is no evidence that either Thomas Jefferson or James Madison used the word “separation” until the 19th century, the principles those words represent are there. Who would deny that Federalism, the separation of powers and the right to a fair trial are constitutional principles? But those phrases do not appear in the Constitution either. And how anyone could read Jefferson’s Bill Establishing Religious Freedom in Virginia and Madison’s ‘Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments’ without concluding that they unequivocally supported the concept? The separation of church and state serves both religion clauses in the First Amendment: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...” It serves to protect not only the non-establishment, but also to ensure the free exercise thereof or the non-exercise thereof.

On Sunday, June 5th we will celebrate “Religious Liberty Sunday.” Let us give thanks to those who gave their lives and yes, their freedom enabling us to be free to worship or not. And while we are at it let us ponder how we take that freedom for granted.

**Shalom,
Pastor Steve**

Celebrations and Honors

High School Graduates *Mansfield High School*

Jamie Hill
Melissa Wiles

College Graduation *Indiana University of PA* Lindsey Cummings

First Baptist is honored to have in our midst a budding young musician.

Rob Garrison arranged the song “The Boulevard of Broken Dreams” for the Mansfield High School Chorus of over 90 students. Not only did he arrange the piece but he conducted it at that concert held at the high school on May 17th. Rob also sang a solo in the song “Somebody to Love”. Rob is the son of David and Frances Garrison.

Congratulations Rob, we are all so proud of you!

Rob Cooper was recently honored by the Geisinger Health System in recognition of his dedication to his profession on behalf of the Wyoming Valley and the surrounding communities doing EMS work in 2011. Rob received an award as Emergency Medical Services Provider of the Year. Rob is the son-in-law of Susan Wilber and husband to Lori Wilber Cooper. His family and friends are thrilled that he has received such a distinguished award from Geisinger Medical Center.

“A Time for Alleluia”

Our musical collaboration with Cochranville United Methodist Church

Part 1

The cantata “A Time for Alleluia” was sung at the church on May 1st with the help of some of the members of the Cochranville United Methodist Church choir. Our Choir Director, Ashley McCormick directed the cantata here in Mansfield. A fellowship meal of celebration was held following the service and Ashley received several gifts from the church as a thank you for her 2 years of service with us as organist and choir director.

A copy of the cantata is on DVD in the church office and can be borrowed.

Part 2

On May 14th several of our church choir traveled to Cochranville to join our voices in song with the Cochranville United Methodist Church choir to sing the cantata at their church. Following the service a dinner was held to honor us as guests. We hope to receive a copy of the DVD from their church soon.

This was a never before done collaboration of two churches of two different denominations with about 200 miles distance between the two churches. Both parts of the presentation of this cantata were done in “Praise and Thanksgiving to Jesus Christ” whom we both serve.

One Local Church Experiences True Indian Culture

By: Danielle Van Gheem

Bright purple, vibrant orange, royal blue, and a vast array of colors accented with golden designs drape from the shoulders of church ladies wondering how exactly this cloth is to cover them. A flower is added to their hair as they experience part of the Indian culture when they proceed to the service in their saris. “India has layer upon layer; each place is different, but all have family as the base of everything,” says Prema Junius.

Known as the birthplace to many of the world’s religions; specifically Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, India holds a colorful culture many Americans don’t get the chance to experience. However, members of First Baptist Church of Mansfield received an authentic look into the culture of India through the eyes of Prema Junius.

“I felt so special in the sari. It really makes you experience a different culture,” says Diane Case wife of the pastor, who was also dressed in a traditional turban.

Junius is a professor of mathematics at Mansfield University, but lived in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu until coming to America to receive her doctorate in 1997. She is one of the few Christians from India that only account for two percent of the population. Growing up in such a religious minority held her to higher standards, “It was expected more of Christians, but most of my friends are Hindu and we all get along peacefully,” she says. After the service, Junius and her niece and nephew, Adi and Yuki Sagar, prepared an entire Indian feast to show one very important staple in Indian culture, food.

Going along with Indian tradition guests were welcomed with sprinkles of sweet rose water and sandal wood paste to rub on their neck. Living with an American diet where spices are not common, Junius made sure her dishes weren’t overly spicy. Case says, “I was expecting it to be hot, but it was mild so I was able to really try everything.”

Junius explained that generosity was a trait everyone possessed within her family in India. “All of my family was always giving, so much until it almost pinched you,” she says. Her family frequently opened their doors to help those less fortunate. “I remember many nights that my mother would wake me to move from my bed because someone else needed it.”

With a smile on her face, Junius recalls her father’s generosity. “He saw this very poor man when bicycling and then stripped himself of his own clothes and gave them to him. He then had to hide in the bushes in his underwear until dark so he could bicycle home unseen.” The generosity of India and the kindness of her family is what she hopes to impersonate. Junius continues to live up to the generosity of her parents, “I hope I can be as giving as them...I just try my best.” The devotion of time and effort into this event and her dedication as a professor lead many members to feel she has achieved that. Case says, “Prema is such a caring person I do believe she would literally give you the shirt off her back to help anyone that is in need.”

Our Dear FBC Family and Friends:

Learning to share is tough for children, whose early understanding can be summed up as “It’s mine!” We begin by taking turns with things in limited supply like crayons or skateboards, experience the immediate satisfaction of playing with someone else, and start to understand that sharing strengthens friendships. Teenagers experience the fun of shared jokes and the healing comfort of sharing broken hearts. As adults, we seek organizations that share our vision and perhaps a special someone to share the rest of our lives with. We come to know that sharing is bedrock to being fully human, and it brings incredible joy.

Beginning on Sunday, June 5th we’re invited to help people in aching need through the One Great Hour of Sharing offering. By sharing our resources, combined with offerings from thousands of congregations in eight denominations across the United States we:

build homes, schools, medical clinics, and clean water and sewage facilities in villages devastated by earthquakes, floods, and poverty

bring safety, shelter, and food to refugees after often violent circumstances have made their hometowns uninhabitable

nurture stronger future and self sufficiency through health care, education, job training, and tools for livelihoods.

We are blessed that God is able to provide when and where help is needed, through us. In what may seem an amazing twist, we ourselves benefit from the sharing. One Great Hour of Sharing donors say:

* Giving just feeds my soul. This is what life is all about-not just collecting things but helping people.

* Giving lifts me out of my own troubles. It helps me appreciate what I have.

* As I meet the needs of others, I am reminded how god takes care of me.

* One Great Hour of Sharing lets me put my hands on problems that need attention throughout the world.

Sharing because we have felt God’s love aligns our lives with God’s own life and work in our world. By sharing we are renewed and transformed. “Those who abide in live abide in God, and God abides in them.” (I John 4:16) Sharing our love for God through One Great Hour of Sharing, we offer ourselves to others as they need us, imitating Christ’s offering of life for us. In turn, we receive him more deeply into our own hearts, bringing indescribable joy.

Giving changes so many things—for the receiver and for the giver. Please prayerfully consider your gift to the One Great Hour of Sharing. Our goal this year is \$750.00. Remember, it is all about sharing—sharing resources, changing lives.

Prayerfully asking your support:

FBC Board of Mission

A Note from the Church Treasurer

Total gifts for operational expenses - 4,988.04
1,247.01 Weekly average

April expenses excluding mission outreach - 9,671.28
Weekly average - 2,417.82

To meet the 2011 budget for operational expenses,
Weekly gifts would need to average 2,373.27

A Note from Sue

Please contact Sue and let her know if you are
available to Usher and or be Fellowship Host in
June, July or August.

You do not need to usher the entire month.
Thank You!

Announcements

Please mark your calendar

Sunday June 19th will be the beginning of Summer Hours
Worship will begin at 10:00

Pastor Steve & Diane will be away following worship on June 19th through June 30 at the American Baptist Biennial meeting in Puerto Rico. The Pastor and Diane will return home on July 1, 2011. June 26th has been designated as Laity Sunday by the Board of Deacons and Lee Hoar will give the Sermon.

**Welcome to Hingrid Kujawinskich
our interim organist and choir director.
She will be with us until the end of June.**

Prayer List

The family of Lou Sine, Richard Smith (Mary Webster's son-in-law),
Joe Bielski, Bill & Joan Berresford, Rev. Charles Mercer,
Sherry & Butch Miller (Ruth's Powlison's sister & brother-in-law,
shut-ins, those in our Armed Forces, and many unspoken requests.

Shut-Ins

Iris Berguson, Evelyn Henninger, Omer & Betty Sumner

June 2011 - Tentative Preaching Schedule



Seventh Sunday of Easter

June 5th * Acts 1:1-11, Ephesians 1:15-23, Luke 24:33-53
"Raised to New Heights"

Pentecost Sunday

June 12th * Acts 2:1-11, I Corinthians 12:3-13, John 7:37-39
"When the Spirit Comes"

First Sunday after Pentecost

June 19th * Psalm 8: II Corinthians 13:11-13, Matthew 28: 16-20
"The Intimate Power of God"

Second Sunday after Pentecost

June 26th Laity Sunday
Lee Hoar speaking

* **Sermon Text**

Fellowship List for June 2011

Please check the list below for your name.
If you are unable to serve on your scheduled week, **please find a replacement for that date.**
Thank you for your help!

June 5

Main Street Greeter: Bob Smith
Sherwood Street Greeter: Ben Nevin
Ushers: Dorothy Smith and Fran Garrison
Hosts: Ben & Sarah Nevin

June 12

Main Street Greeter: Harry Hagar
Sherwood Street Greeter: Jim Cummings
Ushers: Dorothy Smith and Fran Garrison
Hosts: Gary & Carol Mortimer

June 19

Main Street Greeter: Gary Mortimer
Sherwood Street Greeter: Carol Mortimer
Ushers: Dorothy Smith and Fran Garrison
Hosts: Church Anniversary Celebration

June 26

Main Street Greeter: Ben B. Nevin
Sherwood Street Greeter: Anne Nevin
Ushers: Dorothy Smith and Fran Garrison
Hosts: David & Frances Garrison

July 3

Main Street Greeter: Robbie Garrison
Sherwood Street Greeter: Grace Miller
Ushers: Mike Hill & Gary Mortimer
Hosts: Judy Bott & Sue Wilber

June Birthdays & Anniversaries

June 2nd - Carol Mortimer & Gary Cleveland
June 5th - Audrey Baynes
June 11th - Bob Smith
June 12th - Lee Hoar
June 14th - Diane Case
June 16th - Cliff & Marilyn Wiles (A)
June 17th - Miriam Cummings
June 23rd - Marcia Hill

Please visit our website to see our calendar!

<http://www.firstbaptistchurchmansfield.com/calendar.htm>

*First Baptist Church of Mansfield, PA
North Main & Sherwood Streets*

*Sunday Morning Worship is at 11:00
Holy Communion is observed the first Sunday of the month*