

# The Courier

a newsletter from your friends at  
First Baptist Church  
in Hamilton, Ohio



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*"Where everybody is somebody and Jesus Christ Is Lord"*

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*December, 2008*

## *"Luke, Mary, and Jesus"*

The Gospel of Luke begins by explaining how this associate of Paul compiled his narrative. Unlike Matthew and John, Luke was not one of the original 12 apostles. Nor was he, as far as we can tell, an eyewitness of anything he described. Citing the availability of eyewitnesses, Luke explained, "Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account . . ."

Who do you think this industrious researcher interviewed as he assembled his account? Did it include Mary, the mother of Jesus? Had you ever considered that Mary was Luke's source for the details in the first few chapters of Luke's gospel?

How would Luke have known the personal details of Mary's visit with Elizabeth, the mother of John the baptist? Of the unborn John "leaping in his mother's womb" as the two cousins traded marvelous news regarding the children which they were carrying? Of the sheer joy of each expectant mother, as they praised God together?

If you listen carefully, you can hear the voice of Mary as she tells Luke of this exciting visit. Then Luke allows us to see the familiar visits of the shepherds, and later, the wise men through Mary's eyes and heart. Only Luke tells us how Mary treasured up and pondered all the statements concerning this special son. Imagine Luke hanging on each of Mary's words as she told him the now famous Christmas story!

Then there was the trip to Jerusalem when Jesus was twelve. You clearly hear the voice of Mary as this beleaguered mom asked her son, "Why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

"Why were you searching for me?" the misplaced son answered. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"

They didn't understand this at the time, May had explained to Luke. Nonetheless she "treasured all these things in her heart."

The trip to Jerusalem has received less attention than the "Christmas narrative" which precedes it. Yet it is remarkable in its own right.

At age twelve Jesus could draw the distinction between Joseph his adoptive father, and God, whom we would

have to call his biological father.

How did he know this? I have a theory.

Every so often during the first twelve years of Jesus' life Mary would pull out the "scrapbook of her heart", and would tell her son of the events surrounding his birth. Little by little as the child matured, Mary explained what made him special. Then at around age twelve perhaps, when he could understand it, Mary shared the details of the miraculous conception.

The trip to Jerusalem where Jesus was inadvertently left behind was a defining moment. It was here that the precocious young Jesus claimed his identity as Son of God. For the next eighteen years, he worked in the family woodworking business, where Mary continued to be a big part of his life as his spiritual growth continued.

Bruce Marchiano is a Christian method actor whose depiction of Jesus has impacted lives throughout the world. In his book *In The Footsteps Of Jesus*, Bruce described the grown up Jesus this way:

The real Jesus was a man of such merriment, such gladness of heart, such freedom and openness, that He proved irresistible. He became known through Galilee for His genuine strength, the sparkle in His eyes, the spring in His gait, the heartiness in His laugh, the genuineness of His touch; His passion, playfulness, excitement, and vitality. His JOY! He made a dazzling display of love. He set hearts afire. He was an elated, triumphant young man with an incredible quality of life . . . so different from the solemn religious types He constantly encountered.

Jesus was among the first to be impacted by Mary's Christmas story! May your Merry Christmas continue throughout the New Year!

—Larry Eppley  
*Providence Road Newsletter*

*Hallelujah*\*



# American Baptist Women's Ministries

## Operation Christmas Child



In various parts of the world, 85 children will receive boxes filled with "love" due to the generosity of many at First Baptist. Our shoeboxes will carry the spirit of Christmas into

their homes, and we are thankful to be able to contribute in this small but meaningful way. Thanks to all who helped with this project.

–Nancy Whipple  
ABW President

## Missionary for the Month of December: **Jim & Debbie Kelsey**

Belgium

Jim and Debbie work with the Union of Baptists in Belgium to do new church development in the Ghent area, and to share the love of Christ with Ghent' sex workers. The Union is a group of 32 churches and preaching points where believers share and demonstrate the Good News of God's love through Jesus Christ. The typical Belgian attitude toward religious faith is one of total disinterest. Only 7.5% of the people living in this Roman Catholic monarchy have any association with a local congregation; many Belgians see no need for religious faith.

## Bible Book of the Month ..... Isaiah

*"They who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength . . . ."* Isaiah 40:31 (RSV)

A little more than 700 years before the birth of Christ, Isaiah arose as one of the greatest prophets. One day Isaiah had a vision in the temple in Jerusalem. He saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up. He heard the voice of the Lord asking who would be God's messenger. Isaiah answered, *"Here I am! Send me."* (Isaiah 6:8) Isaiah warned the people of their sins and proclaimed a promise of salvation from God if they turned once more to God.

**PRAY** for our denominational universities and seminaries as they prepare and train Christian leaders.

–Madge Walters

# AB Girls Of Faith Young Women Of Hope

The AB Girls met in November to do a variety of activities. They collected a Love Gift offering, filled a shoebox for Operation Christmas Child, and made a no-sew baby blanket to give as a Christmas gift.

The girls will meet on December 14, after the morning worship service.

After a quick stop for lunch, the girls will Christmas shop for a family in need. What a wonderful way to celebrate the holiday!

In His Service,  
Marilyn Bowling, Mindy Hazelwood,  
& Nancy Whipple



There will be **no** monthly work day at Matthew 25: Ministries during the month of December.

There will be a Christmas luncheon for all of the volunteers at Matthew 25 Tuesday, December 16th, at 11:30 a.m. We will leave the church at 10:30 a.m.

–Pastor Bill and Bert Brantingham

## What Would We Face This Christmas Morn If Jesus Christ Had Not Been Born?

In this world of violence and hatred and greed  
Where men lust for power and scorn those in need,  
What could we hope for and where could we go  
To find comfort and courage on this earth below  
If in Bethlehem's manger Christ had not been born  
Many centuries ago on that first Christmas morn.  
For life everlasting and eternal glory  
Were promised to man in the Christmas story!

–Helen Steiner Rice

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## *The Message Is In The Details*

*In the time of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah...Luke 1:5*

It's one of those little details that Luke drops into the text that often escapes our attention. It's understandable. In our hurry to get to the author's main point, we seldom take the time to probe such small details. But in doing so, we run the risk of missing the more complete message of the historical record.

Luke begins his Gospel narrative with an historical time stamp—"during the reign of Herod, king of Judah." That places Luke's history between 37 BC-4 BC. Herod was one of the greatest builders the nation of Israel had ever had. It was Herod's Temple that had garnered such praise among the people of God, and so impressed the disciples of our Lord on their visits to Jerusalem. Herod's title was "king of the Jews," but it was a title given to him by Rome. He was an Idumean, not a part of the Davidic family line, and as such, was never fully embraced by the people of the land. He was powerful, self-focused, and insecure, constantly worrying that he would lose his position on the throne. He murdered his sons and his wife in what he perceived was a lack of loyalty. And when the Magi came looking for the infant who was born "King of Jews," Herod went into his default mode, and murdered the children of Bethlehem. That was the political backdrop to the introduction of Luke's Gospel.

Luke continues his narrative: "...there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah. We quickly move along in the story line to get to Luke's point. But slow down for a moment. More details, please. Here is a priest, a member of the division of Abijah! There were 18,000-20,000 priests serving in the Temple in the days of Herod. A priest was one who worked in the temple, managing the details of the upkeep of the temple itself, teaching the people of God, and directing the worship services. Obviously, the number of priests available far exceeded the tasks required in the temple service. So, the priests were divided into twenty-four separate groups, of about a thousand each (see 1Chronicles 24:3-19).

Zachariah was a member of the Abijah division, selected to be on Temple duty on this particular week. Each morning, a priest was selected by lot to enter into the Holy Place of the temple to burn incense on that particular day. The twice-daily burning of the incense was to represent prayers of God's people before His throne. People gathering in the Temple area would pray during these solemn moments, as the smoke from the burning incense rose to the heavens. Because of the great number of priests, to be selected for

service in the Holy Place was a once-in-a-lifetime honor and responsibility. On this particular day, the lot fell to Zechariah. It was an awesome moment in his life.

As Zachariah was going about his prescribed duty, my guess is that he was not just going through the motions of burning the incense. Here was his opportunity to lay before the Lord the deepest longing of His own life. He and his wife Elizabeth had long been grieving that they had never been able to have children. They assumed that as old as they had become, the situation was impossible.

As he stands before the altar, burning the incense, watching the smoke ascend, and uttering his personal, impassioned prayer, he is suddenly confronted by an angel on the right side of the altar. Not a vision of an angel; or a dream; but Gabriel himself—the angel who stands in the presence of God, serving and worshipping the Sovereign of the universe. At the same moment, Zachariah was both startled and gripped with fear. Do you remember the angel's message?

*"Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name, John. He will be a joy and*

(From the Pastor's Heart, cont.)

*delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth. Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous--to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." (Luke 1:13-17)*

This miraculous child-to-come was to be the herald of the long-prayed-for Messiah, foretold by the prophet Isaiah:

**A  
voice  
of one calling:  
"In the desert prepare  
the way for the Lord;  
make straight in the wilderness  
a highway for our God.  
Every valley shall be raised up,  
every mountain and hill made low;  
the rough ground shall become level,  
the rugged places a plain.  
And the glory of the Lord will be revealed,  
and all mankind together will see it.  
For the mouth of the Lord has spoken."  
(Isaiah 40:3-5)**

The question Zachariah dared ask of Gabriel was sincere, logical, even expected; but it was based on doubt. After all, God Himself had spoken no words—not through an angel or prophet—since the closing words of Malachi's prophecy. Over four hundred years of silence from the throne of God. And now, suddenly, in Zachariah's very presence, stood a messenger from the throne breaking God's silence: "How can I be sure of this?" he cautiously probed. As both a judgment upon Zachariah, and a proof that what he said was going to come to pass, Gabriel told the priest:

*And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their proper time." (Luke 1:20)*

Silence. Nine months is a long time to remain quiet. Hand motions, pen to parchment, and facial expressions became his companion. But every unspoken thought, every frustrating moment, was a reminder that God had promised a miraculous thing for His people, and that He could be counted on to bring the promise into reality. When the promised child was

finally born, the word that broke through the silence was the child's name: "John. His name is John" (God is gracious).

What miraculous thing does God need to bring about in your life this Advent season? The details of Luke's narrative tell us that this great news has already been given. When Zachariah's adult-son was in the midst a great revival among the people of God, he saw the man about whom Christmas would one day be celebrated. Here was his assessment: "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

The message was in the details. It was a promise of forgiveness! May it be so that this message of joy and hope from this one promised by the angel, anticipated by Zachariah, spoken of by the ancient prophets, and proclaimed by God's Word would find a welcome home in each of our hearts during these days of celebration of our Lord's birth.

Serving Him with great joy in the details of His coming, Pastor

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## Budget Status Report

### The Month of October, 2008

Projected (Budgeted) Spending	\$59,896
Offerings	<u>45,268</u>
Over (Under) Budget	(\$14,628)

Actual (Budgeted) Spending	\$55,393
Offerings	<u>45,268</u>
Over (Under) Actual	(\$10,125)

### The Year Through October, 2008

Projected (Budgeted) Spending	\$608,859
Offerings	<u>509,055</u>
Over (Under) Budget	(\$99,804)

Actual (Budgeted) Spending	\$595,391
Offerings	<u>509,055</u>
Over (Under) Actual	(\$86,336)

-The Board Of Trustees





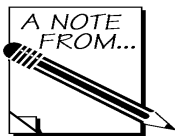
The Memorial Fund has provided money for several projects this past year. Approval is received from family members prior to designating funds to a project. Following are items purchased and the accounts from which the money was taken:

Gazebo  
In loving memory of  
*Eileen Campbell*

Six Flowering Trees  
In loving memory of  
*Pat Griesinger*

The gifts to the church from the Memorial Fund enrich the ministry of First Baptist Church and honor the memory of loved ones and friends. Should anyone wish to consider a lasting tribute as a memorial, please contact any member of the Memorial Committee.

—Lisa Dulli, Dolly Houser,  
Mary Law, Evelyn Mesler,  
Shirley Wade, & Madge Walters



## **Bernie Griesinger**

As the result of Ann Griesinger's death in June 1988, Ed Griesinger, her husband, had 5 aristocratic pear trees planted parallel to the north side of the lower parking lot as a memorial to his beloved wife.

Likewise, in October 1994, at the passing of Goldie Gift, Pat Griesinger's mother, Bernie and Pat decided to plant 3 additional aristocratic pear trees along the east side (playground area) of the lower lot as a memorial to Goldie.

In December 2007, Pat passed away after a 15 year battle with ovarian cancer. As a memorial to her, Bernie thought he would carry on the tradition of planting trees for her memorial. So, if you will notice in order to complete the memorial circle of trees around the perimeter of the parking lots, three (3) redbud trees with flagstone planters and one (1) dawn redwood tree were planted on the bank above the upper level lot (where cross is located). Also one (1) snow fountain weeping cherry was planted to replace a dead globe blue spruce at the south end of the upper lower lot.

To complete the circle, John DeVore of Devore

Landscape Service, recommended a sweetbay magnolia tree be planted to put a finishing touch in the level area at the south end of the sanctuary (next to rear door) resulting in a complete circle of trees surrounding the lots (for a total of six trees).

Bernie and his family thought what better way to have an everlasting memorial to Pat than through the planting of God's own creations.

The family would like to thank all who contributed to Ann's, Goldie's, and Pat's memorial funds to make this circle of trees possible.

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## **Ten Free Gifts For Christmas . . . Or any Time Of the Year (You don't even have to shop for them!)**

1. The gift of listening-why not give this valuable gift to someone who lives alone? And you must really listen. No interrupting, no daydreaming, no planning your response, just listen.
2. The gift of signs of affections-be generous with your hugs, kisses & gentle squeezes of the hand. Let these tiny actions demonstrate the love inside you.
3. The gift of a note-it can be as simple as "I love you or as creative as a sonnet. Put your notes where they will surprise your loved ones.
4. The gift of laughter-just cut out a cartoon, save a clever article. Your gift will say, "I love to laugh with you.."
5. The gift of a compliment-a simple "You look good in blue" or "I like your hair" or "Good supper, honey" can be of greatest value to those who may feel they are being taken for granted.
6. The gift of a favor-help with the dishes, clean out the basement, etc.
7. The gift of leaving alone there are times in our lives when we want nothing better than to be left alone. Become more sensitive to those times and give solitude.
8. The gift of a cheerful disposition-try to be cheerful around those you love especially.
9. The gift of a game-offer to play your loved ones favorite game. Even if you lose, you'll be a winner.
10. The gift of prayer-pray for those on your Christmas list and let them know that you pray for them. Praying for someone is a way of saying, "You are so special to me that I talk to God about you."

—Selected



**Awana Club**

**Awana December Calendar Update**



- 3rd - Regular Club Night
- 10th - Christmas Theme Night
- 17th - No Club - Church Family Christmas Banquet
- 24th - No Club - Christmas Eve Service
- 31st - No Club - New Year's Holiday

**Awana Thank You!**

Thanks to everyone who participated in the AWANA canned food drive. While we did not make it all the way around the hallway downstairs, we still collected a sizeable amount of food. We are pleased to share that the food will be helping people right in our immediate community! The Deacons already have plans to distribute the food! Thanks again for helping, for the need is great!

Thank you to Jeff Miller and Lisa Sprague for helping with transporting AWANA kids who do not have a ride to and from church! What a blessing they are to this program!!!

**Operation Christmas Child is a WRAP!**

Operation Christmas Child was a HUGE success this year! We had soooo many donations, and we appreciate them all! One Sunday in November, the Kids Church kids worked together to fill shoe boxes--18 boxes all together!!! The kids enjoyed "shopping" through the items, picking things which would work for a girl shoe box or a boy shoe box. The kids also filled out biography sheets to let the recipient of the box know a little bit about the kids who sent them. It was a great day! After several hours of wrapping boxes, the lot was ready to ship. Thanks again!!

**Inclement Weather Cancellation**

Just a reminder—if Hamilton City Schools are closed due to weather and it is an Awana Club night, our Awana club will also be cancelled.

—Brandi Emenaker, Claire Metzger,  
& Sandra Imhoff  
Awana Leaders

*O come,  
O come,  
Emmanuel*



**The Reason For  
The Season**

*To us a child is born.  
Isaiah 9:6*

*Sleigh bells ring,  
Are you listening?  
In the lane,  
Snow is glistening!  
A beautiful sight,  
We're happy tonight  
Walkin' in a winter wonderland!*  
—Dick Smith & Felix Bernard

It's Christmas! The season for giving, for loving, for celebrating. All around us are joyous reminders of this happy season. Twinkling Christmas lights. Holiday music on the radio. Promises of snow on the evening weather forecast. The smell of fresh pine. Just baked gingerbread cookies.

And all around us are stressful reminders, too: irritated shoppers and crowded mall. Honking horns and traffic snarls. Frantic meal preparations and credit card debt. Sometimes we get so caught up in seasonal madness that we forget why we even celebrate Christmas at all.

But it doesn't have to be that way. Don't forget the true reason for the season: Love. God's love. And His love pierces this world's darkness.

One of the traditions of Christmas is the celebration of Advent, a heart preparation for the coming Savior. If we are willing to save money for Christmas gifts, to make a mailing list for Christmas cards, to shop for weeks, and to schedule holiday get-togethers, surely we can make time to prepare our hearts for the coming of our Emmanuel.

*O come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer  
Our spirits by thine advent here  
And drive away the shades of night  
And pierce the clouds and bring us light  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee O Israel!*

—Isaac Watts

Spend a quiet moment with God. Read. Pray. Reflect. Savor memories—old and new. Focus on the love and laughter that make Christmas so special. Prepare your heart for His coming.

This year, spend *Christmas with God*—you won't regret it!

—Quiet Moments With God  
*Christmas With God*



**From The Heart Of  
Marilyn**

**College Corner**

**E-Mail From God**

**Come See The Light**

*“Everything was created through him . . . What came into the existence was Life, and the Life was Light to live by. The Light-Life out of the darkness; the darkness couldn’t put it out.”*

– John 1:3-5, The Message

My Child,

My Son, Jesus, came into your world as Life itself—powerful, dynamic Life—full of energy and hope. He came into your world as Light, blazing out of the darkness, pushing back the shadows.

All of this Life and Light was contained in a human being, so people didn’t understand who they were dealing with when they met Him. He looked like an ordinary person. But He was with Me when the world was made. Every single thing in creation was created through Him. So no wonder people didn’t quite “see the Light” when they met Him.

Although they stood in darkness and didn’t understand the Light, they could never put it out? He’s still shining! Let Him shine in you.

The Father of Light,  
God

**College Student’s  
Christmas Brunch**

Sunday, December 21st  
9:30 a.m.

Family Center  
First Baptist Church

Hope to see you there!

–In His name,  
Marilyn Bowling  
College Coordinator



**Congratulations To  
Some Of Our Youth!**

**Congratulations!**

**Scott McRoberts** will graduate December 14th from ITT Tech with an Associates Degree in Applied Science and Software Applications and Programs.

**Ashley Wilson**, granddaughter of Lil Wilson, graduates from Miami University December 19th with a Bachelor of Science Degree.

Congratulations to **Heidi Martin** who received the character award for fourth grade for the first quarter at Fillmore Elementary. Heidi also received perfect attendance.

Also, congratulations to **Heidi Martin**, cheerleader for Hamilton Little Blue, whose squad received first place and the title of National Champions at the Mid West Fall Expo!

**Homecoming Courts**

Several of our youth were selected as members of their school Homecoming Courts this fall.

Hamilton High School - **Andy Cain,  
Sara Cain, and Katie Scott**  
Talawanda High School - **Noah Krall**

–Editor’s note: Please report items of interest, honors, roles in plays, etc. to the office so they can be noted in the Courier. Thanks!

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**Women’s Christian Book Club**

Open to 15 ladies who would like to discuss Christian Literature on the second Monday of each month beginning January 12. The book club meets at the Fairfield Lane Library from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The following books will be discussed:

January - *A Voice In The Wind* by Francine Rivers  
February - *The Eleventh Hour* by Michael Phillips  
March - *A Candle In The Darkness* by Lynn Austin

Contact Nancy Follmer at 863-3816 or Judy Farris at 777-0139 for more information.





We held our third MOPS meeting for the 2008-09 year on Tuesday, November 18th and it was an awesome one! We had a total of 31 ladies in attendance and a whole bunch of children! Four new moms came to visit our group and plan on becoming active members. I can't say it enough but we are definitely seeing God's hand in our group year. It is such a blessing to see so many moms come and fellowship with believers and also receive the word of Christ in each meeting. Every month we focus our topic on what the biblical view is. Thus far we have learned what the bible says about depression and finances. These scriptures and devotions have touched so many of the ladies and have given them a new perspective on their lives.

In November we also held our first quarterly dinner and a craft night. We made darling lunch tins and enjoyed Subway sandwiches with 11 moms! We will be having our annual moms only MOPS Christmas Party on Thursday, December 4th at the Fitton Center. We are hoping to see a big turn out!

Please continue to pray for our group, as our numbers continue to grow each month. May each mom that comes through our doors receive a special blessing as we share together being moms and Christians.

I do want to take this opportunity to say Thank You to all the ladies and gents who volunteer every month for the MOPS program (childcare, gym time, music, substitutes and of course the staff of FBC). Please know that you are a vital part of this ministry and without your dedication, love and support we would not exist. All of us involved in MOPS - steering and the moms who come to the meeting thank you and wish you a very Merry Christmas!

Be sure to join us at our December meeting, as three of our moms will be sharing their testimonies with the group. It is sure to be a heartfelt meeting.

Enjoying the Adventure with Him-  
Elise Martin, Coordinator



## A Musical Christmas Card Sponsored By Music And Worship Committee

As the Christmas season draws nearer, our thoughts turn to the sounds of Christmas music. Once again this year we are pleased to be presenting a wonderful gift from the vocalists and musicians of our congregation. Plan to be with us on Sunday evening December 21st, at 6:00 p.m. as we open the 2008 edition of *A Musical Christmas Card*. Come share with us the joy of Christmas as presented by our church family. A light buffet supper will be served at 5:00 p.m. in the Family Center.

—Rich Hazelwood



*Wise Men and Women Still Seek Him*

## KeenAger December Outing

Our December outing will be a trip to Immanuel Baptist Church to see their production of *One Bethlehem Night* on Friday, December 19th, at 7:30 p.m. We will meet in front of the church at 5:00 p.m. and eat at Bob Evans on Main Street before attending the play. There will be a free will offering. Following the play we will drive through Sharon Park to enjoy the Christmas lights. Please sign the list on the bulletin board.

—KeenAger Activity Committee  
Lil Senior, Betty Powell, & Bertha Campbell



## Women's Ministry Council News

The Women's Ministry Council wants to thank all of the "guinea pigs" who participated in our first Guinea Pig dinner in November. A great time was had by all with a full evening of fellowship, great food, and beautiful tablescapes. Everyone brought delicious appetizers, side dishes, entrees and desserts to enjoy, and the tablescapes were stunning featuring a variety of themes.

A special thank you to Diane Wallick for the beautiful after dinner music she provided and Florence Jones for her inspirational message on Faith. While the judges had a tough time deciding who would win the food competition in each category, the following dishes were chosen as the best of the best:

Appetizer - Sausage Rolls- Betty Powell  
Side Dish - Spinach Apple Nut Salad - Mary Law  
Main dish - Underground Ham - Karen Buchanan  
Dessert - Coconut Cake - Jean Riczko

The winners of the tablescapes contest received a beautiful trifle dish full of goodies designed by Lois Anderson and Johnnie Wallace. Guest judges Gail Schlenk and Bonnie Whittlesey chose the following winners based on their sentimentality and simplicity:

Carolyn Dudley - Collection of Sewing Memories  
Smith Circle - Using Your Gifts

The Women's Ministry Council wants to thank all of the women of First Baptist for another great year of fellowship and service to our Lord. Watch the Courier for details about the upcoming schedule for 2009!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!  
The Women's Ministry Council

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### Address Your Mess Suppress Excess To Impress

When visitors walk through our facility their first impressions may be influenced by what they see in the hallways, coat rooms, and stairwells. Using those spots as stockpile sites can present a shabby appearance. Sometimes items seem to have been just tossed on the floor. If you have supplies or equipment stored in those areas, please move them behind closed doors or into bins. Let's all do what we can to keep things looking neat.

## Corrections And Additions To The Courier

Please update your directory with these additions or changes. Call the church office with additions or changes to your address, phone number, or e-mail address.

**Glover, Carm**  
1406 Cotswold Lane  
Hamilton, Ohio 45013

**Tiernan, Cleo**  
Woodland Country Manor  
4166 Sommerville Rd  
Sommerville, OH 45064  
Phone # 523-4449

**Williams, Robert & Sandra**  
4038 Gateway Drive  
Englewood, OH 45322

**Wilson, Lil** (December 15 - March 1)  
7085 Bayou West Place  
Pinellas Park, Florida 33782  
Phone # (727) 544-2059

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### The Hinge

A well known preacher once said, "The hinge of history is on the door of a Bethlehem stable."

Christ was born at just the right moment in history, not a day too soon or too late. "When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son," wrote Paul (Galatians 4:4).

He was born in the right place-Bethlehem-just as Micah 5:2 had announced centuries before.

He was born of a virgin, just as Isaiah 7:14 prophesied seven hundred years before.

Yes, Jesus Christ's birth is the hinge of history: all history prepared the way for his birth; and all history has felt His influence since His birth, life, death, and resurrection. To leave out Jesus Christ is to make a mockery of history and to ignore the greatest Person who ever walked this earth.

But He also wants to be the center of our lives. He wants to be born in our hearts! He wants to give us the gift of forgiveness and eternal life!

This Christmas season, as men's hearts are fixed on a holiday, why not lift your heart to the Christ of Christmas and make it a *holy* day? It can be a day of salvation, a day of new beginning for you. For Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

**KingsKids  
Presentation**



Sunday, December 7th  
6:00 p.m.  
in the sanctuary

In reversing the story, both the children and all who attend, will be presented with the understanding of how man's sin created a need for the Savior, the prophetic voices of Isaiah and others, the long wait for Jesus' birth, God's choice of Mary to be Jesus' mother, and the choice of announcing Jesus' birth to "stinky, smelly" shepherds. You won't want to miss the special appearances of Mr. and Mrs. Jeremy Spence and Pastor Bill! Come celebrate Christmas with us!

—Ruth Metzger, Debbie Allen, Lauren Schwartz

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**Focus Class Christmas Party**

Focus Class members will gather for a covered dish dinner and Christmas party on Friday, December 12th, at 6:00 p.m. at the home of Tom and Peggy Avance, 1087 Susan Drive. Please see Carol Howard for suggestions of what to bring. Visitors looking for a class are welcome to attend.

—Carol Howard



*The  
Wonder Of  
Christmas*

*A Timeless Story*

Presented by  
First Baptist Chancel Choir & Orchestra  
Directed by Mike Wallick

Sunday Morning  
December 14, 2008  
10:30 a.m.

Created by  
Tom Fettke & Ken Bible

The wonder of Christmas is found in a story—a timeless story, one that never grows old whether we're telling it or hearing it.

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**Mitten Tree**

The Board of Christian Education will once again be sponsoring the Mitten Tree. We encourage you to bring scarves, gloves, hats, and mittens for both children and adults to decorate the tree. The items will be donated to local missions. The tree will be located in the narthex of our educational building.

—Linda Wallace

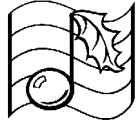




## Free Brass Quintet Christmas Concert



In Oxford, the Midday Music in Oxford series presents the fourth annual Christmas concert by the award-winning Canterbury Brass quintet at 12:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 17th, at the Oxford Presbyterian Church, 101 N. Main Street in Oxford. All are welcome. For information call Jack Daugherty - 523-6969.



### Caroling

## Christmas Caroling

This year, plans are to meet at the church at 4:00 p.m. Sunday, December 14th, and enjoy light snacks, coffee, and cider served by the Family Life Committee, a little fellowship with one another, and divide into teams to receive assignments for this very special mission. We will leave promptly at 4:30 p.m. to deliver tins of homemade cookies and sing carols to our shut-ins. It is guaranteed that you will receive the greater blessing as you bring Christmas cheer into the homes of our shut-ins. Bring your little ones as they love to have the children visit them. Please sign the list on the KeenAger bulletin board if you plan to join us for caroling.



## Cookies and Candies Needed!

As the carolers go out, they take a tin filled with homemade Christmas goodies to leave at each home visited. We are in need of cookies and candies to fill these tins. You may bring the goodies and place them on a table outside the Family Center on Sunday, December 7th or on Wednesday, December 10th. We will be filling the containers on Friday, December 12th at 9:30 a.m



## Christmas Eve

Wednesday  
December 24  
6 o'clock

*We will meet together as a church family to praise and worship the One whom God provided for our redemption! Join us and share in the singing of carols, a devotional message from the pastor, Christmas communion service, and a candle lighting service. Bring your entire family, your out-of town guests, and friends for this hour which will prepare your heart for Christmas day, as we celebrate the birth of our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ.*



## Christmas Banquet Wednesday, December 17th 6 o'clock

Enjoy an evening of Christian fellowship as we celebrate the joy of the season with a wonderful meal prepared by our chef, Tim Swicegood. The beautifully decorated tables, each one different as each one is decorated by a different lady, the delicious meal, and a wonderful evening of music presented by Edgewood High School's Choraliers directed by Sue Combs. Joey Braun is a member of the Edgewood Choraliers. Join us and receive a blessing!

The menu for the evening is Turkey and Dressing, Mashed Potatoes, Gravy, Green Beans, Sweet Potatoes, Cranberry Sauce, Rolls, Beverage, and a variety of pies. The cost for the dinner will be \$5.00 for adults and \$3.00 for children under the age of 12; \$15 for **immediate family living in the same household**. Make your reservation on the green sheet in the Fellowship Folder. You won't want to miss out on the joy of receiving an evening of blessings for the entire family!





## Carpenter's Hands Signs Of Love



### Silent Dinners

The **Silent Dinner** for **December** will be held on Friday evening, December 5th, at Tri-County. See you there!

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### Interpreter Schedule for December

<b>December 7</b>	Jo Manson	Maria Miller
<b>December 14</b>	Jo Manson	Maria Miller
<b>December 21</b>	Jo Manson	Maria Miller
<b>December 24</b>	Jo Manson	Maria Miller
<b>December 28</b>	Jo Manson	Maria Miller

### Happy Birthday



December 17 - Bart Reed  
December 22 - Joe Janutolo

-Maria Miller  
Director of Deaf Ministries



### Camp Kirkwood Fundraiser

Kirkwood Camp and Conference Center is raising money to further the ministries of Kirkwood through the Buy A Brick Program. The bricks will be placed near the lodge/conference center. The cost for the bricks are as follows: 4 x 8 brick for \$75.00 and an 8 x 8 brick for \$200.

You may pick up an order form in the church office and return to:

Kirkwood Ministries, Inc.  
Buy A Brick Program  
5719 State Route 73, West  
Wilmington, Ohio 45177

If you have any questions regarding this program, please contact Kim at [kflach@campkirkwood.net](mailto:kflach@campkirkwood.net) or call the Camp office at 937-382-3535.



(Addresses of those who have served us over the years.)

Rev. & Mrs. Branan Becknell  
1 Waldo Avenue  
Rockland, Maine 04841

Rev. & Mrs. Jim Bell  
8664 Mt. Hope Road  
Harrison, Ohio 45030

Rev. George Davidson  
1506 Gaskill Avenue  
Glouster City, NJ 08030

Rev. & Mrs. James Flye  
P.O. Box 6  
Island Falls, Maine 04747

Mr. & Mrs. Brian Martin  
407 W. Walnut Street  
Greencastle, Indiana 46135

Cherie Young Owens  
109 Timberland Drive  
Canton, Georgia 30114

Pastor Tim Schwartz  
2921 Minnesota Avenue  
Kansas City, Kansas 66102

Rev. & Mrs. George Scripture  
1153 N. Arbutus Trail  
Warsaw, Indiana 46580

Mr. & Mrs. Ted Soderholm  
3110 E Linden Street  
Tucson, Arizona 85716

Dr. & Mrs. Douglass Willey  
Hoosier Village  
5300 96<sup>th</sup> Street  
Woodside # 17  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46268



## Child Care Schedule

### Nursery (Morning)

December 7 - Aleesha Spence & Teen Helper  
December 14 - Kathy & Dick Inloes  
December 21 - Jenny & Rob VanMeter  
December 28 - John & Ruthie Wallace

### One & Two Year Olds

December 7 - Stan & Mary Brown  
December 14 - Rick & Vickie Baker  
December 21 - Florence Jones & Teen Helper  
December 28 - Monica Rose & Hailee

### Kinderchurch

December 7 - Brandi Emenaker & Teen Helper  
December 14 - Brandi Emenaker & Teen Helper  
December 21 - Brandi Emenaker & Teen Helper  
December 28 - Brandi Emenaker & Teen Helper



## Attention All Morning Worship Child Care Workers

Just a reminder that all child care workers should try and trade with someone on their schedule sheets when something comes up and they are not able to keep their scheduled Sunday. Also, it would be extremely helpful if child care workers would be in their scheduled room by 10:15 a.m. to help with the transition time between Sunday School and Morning Worship time. Several of our Sunday School teachers need to be relieved for choir and the adult worship service. When you have difficulty finding someone with whom to trade, please call the following Child Care Coordinators:

Brandi Emenaker - (738-2439)  
Claire Metzger - (642-0434)

Thank you for volunteering as a child care worker and may you always know how much we appreciate you!



## Wednesday Family Dinners

### December 3

Menu: Beef Stew over Hot Buttered Noodles, Cole Slaw, Rolls, Dessert  
Hosts: Keystone II

### December 10

Menu: Sweet and Sour Chicken, Fried Rice, Jello Salad, Rolls, Dessert  
Hosts: Chancel Choir

### December 17

Menu: Turkey and Dressing, Mashed Potatoes, Green Beans, Sweet Potatoes, Ambrosia, Cranberry Sauce, Rolls, Variety of Pies  
Hosts: Trustees

### December 24

There will be no meal because of Christmas Eve service

### December 31

There will be no meal because of no service

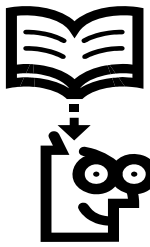
Reminder: Adults should contribute \$4.00 per person for the meal; \$12.00 for **immediate family living in the same household**. The cost for children under 12 years old who eat at the "Hot Dog" table is \$1.25. If they chose to eat from the main table, the cost is \$2.00. Be sure to make your reservation on the Friendship Folder each Sunday.

The cost for the Christmas Dinner, December 19th, will be \$5.00 for adults and \$3.00 for children under the age of 12; \$15 for **immediate family living in the same household**. Make your reservation on the green sheet in the Fellowship Folder.

Reminder: Anyone desiring to borrow items, such as, chairs, tables, coffee pots, etc. are now required to fill out a sheet in the office with name, date, item, and number borrowed and then the date, item, and number returned. Please see Ellie.

## December Greeters

Don Gingrich, Evelyn Maddox, Nancy Follmer,  
Mary Petry, & Jerry Hampton



# Pastor Jeremy's Think Tank

## *Under Construction*

As I am sitting in my office at home writing this article I have just finished, for the most part, tearing off a roof, replacing boards, and putting on a new roof for my office. It has been a painstaking project but one that, believe it or not, has been a great one for me to do.

I have had a couple friends, another local pastor and his wife, join me to help with the task and provide the necessary hands when my two just weren't enough. This project has also been somewhat of a healing project for me as well. You see the past month, or two, or really this past year, has been one where I have been poured out mentally, spiritually, emotionally and, yes, even physically while doing ministry and this project has allowed me to step away, even for just a couple days, and just focus on something "non-ministry" related. The previous sentence may seem odd to you but trust me sometimes I must just get away and allow my mind focus on something else.

This project has also been a reminder that sometimes in my life I must go under construction for the Lord and allow him to take the old off and replace it with new things so that I may function in the way I was created for. Before putting on a new roof my office at home would leak at times, although I just found out a couple weeks ago, and it was no longer serving as the best space to work in. It was time for the roof to be renewed so that water would no longer come and the space be used as it was created for.

I can attest that putting on a new roof, as anyone who has can tell you, is not always a fun process which can lead to aches, pains, and just frustration t times. It is a tedious task of measuring out the new boards and trying get it just right so you don't have to cut while 15 feet up in the air. It is also a long task as you meticulously cut each shingle to fit in the right spots so you can complete the roof and make it look nice. Yet, in the end it is rewarding because you see a job well done and no longer have to worry about what damage the rain and snow may do.

I believe that sometimes our life is very similar to the roofing project I just completed. Due to time, weather, stress, and other things of life we must occasionally go back to our Creator and let him tear off the old and then go through the tedious process of identifying what must be replaced and what can stay. It is not always enjoyable for us but in the end we become more effective and usable for the purpose He created us for. In the end, like my roof, we look better, function better and overall add to the value of things around us but it isn't something we normally "wish" to

have happen. So the next time you need to be re-roofed, whether it be your house or your life, remember in the end it is worth it.

Still under construction,  
Jeremy

## Upcoming Events:

**Small Groups:** Sunday nights in December and January there will be no small groups unless you talk with your leaders about it. Most have finished for the year and will start back up in February. We will be doing other activities on Sunday nights and I know you will enjoy the many activities which are being planned.

**December 14th:** Christmas Caroling to the shut ins of our church. Starting around 4:00pm we will meet with the rest of the church to carol. You will be put into groups that will visit different shut-ins of our church to brighten their day during this Christmas season.

**December 17th:** No Lifeline this evening as it is the Christmas Banquet starting at 6:00pm. You **MUST** sign up for the dinner so we have enough food for you and your family. If you need to sign up and cannot do it on a Sunday morning please let me know ASAP!!

**CREW Christmas Party:** We will get together at the Braun's for the CREW Christmas Party again this year but we are not sure if it will be the 14th or the 21st just yet. Please be watching for more information but you will find some information in the paragraph below.

For the CREW Christmas Party you will need to bring a gift of no more in value than \$5. This can be "new" gift or something you have around the house you want someone else to enjoy. The party will end around 9:30pm. Keep listening for details as you never know what may change.

**December 21st:** The "*Singing Christmas Card*" will be presented during the evening service. You won't want to miss this time as some of our fellow CREW members sing songs of Christmas.

**December 24th:** Instead of Lifeline this evening we will be joining the rest of the church for a special Christmas Eve Service. It is a great time to celebrate the birth of our Lord and I hope you and your family will join us this evening.

**December 29th:** Open gym for ONE Bible Study group from 8:00 p.m. - midnight.

**December 31st:** Starting at 6pm and ending at 12:00am we will have a New Year's Eve Event at the church. Plans include pizza, bowling, roller skating, worship, short devotional, and watching the ball drop. Please bring \$10 to help with the cost and be ready to have some fun. Hope to see you start the New Year with the CREW and focusing on God.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>December 2008</h1>						
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 9:30 MOPS Steering Committee	<b>3</b> 5:00 ABW 6:00 Family Dinner 6:30 Awana Club 6:30 Lifeline 6:45 Bible Study & Prayer 6:45 Carpenter's Hands 8:00 Chancel Choir	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> Carpenter's Hands Silent Dinner @ Tri-Co. Mall	<b>6</b> 8:00 Men's Prayer Gathering
<b>7</b> 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 4:45 Women's Council 6:00 KingsKids <i>"Christmas In Reverse"</i>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 10:00 Holloway Circle 11:00 Abell Circle Christmas Lunch @ West Alexander	<b>10</b> 6:00 Family Dinner 6:30 Awana Club Christmas Activities 6:30 Lifeline 6:45 Bible Study & Prayer 6:45 Carpenter's Hands 8:00 Cantata Rehearsal	<b>11</b> 6:30 Trustee Christmas Gathering @ Berkeley	<b>12</b> 9:30 Ladies Packing Cookies	<b>13</b> 10:00 Chancel Choir/Orchestra Rehearsal 5:30 FOCUS Class Party @ Avance's home
<b>14</b> 9:15 Sunday School 12:00 AB Girls 10:30 Worship - Cantata <i>"The Wonder of Christmas"</i> 4:00 Carolers gather for Light Snacks 4:30 Carol to shut-ins CREW Christmas Party @ Braun's	<b>15</b> 11:00 Women's Christian Book Club @ Fairfield Library 6:30 CE Board Covered Dish Christmas Gathering @ Linda Wallace' home	<b>16</b> 9:30 MOPS 10:30 Matthew 25 Christmas Party for volunteers	<b>17</b> 6:00 Christmas Banquet w/Edgewood Choraliers	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 5:00 KeenAgers to Bob Evans 8:00 Immanuel Baptist to see <i>One Bethlehem Night</i> followed by tour of Sharon Park to view Christmas lights	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b> 9:15 Sunday School 9:30 College Students Christmas Brunch 10:30 Worship 5:00 Light Buffet 6:00 <i>"Musical Christmas Card"</i>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 6:00 Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service	<b>25</b> Have A Blessed Christmas!!	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b> 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 6:00 No Evening Service	<b>29</b> 8:00 ONE Bible Study Group Open Gym	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> 6:00 CREW New Year's Eve Event			



# December

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

1 - Melissa Geiss  
Kristy Keller Harden  
Scott McRoberts

2 - Teresa Patrick  
Olive Belle Young

3 - Mike Braun  
Jordan Brown  
Arah Mae Williams

4 - John Campbell

5 - John Riczko  
Sally Williamson

6 - Preston Harris  
Virginia Tankersley

8 - Mike Click  
Luella Lerch  
Mary Lewis  
Justin Van Meter

10 - Amber Farmer  
Daniel French  
Barry Pickett  
Linda Stanger

11 - Juli Ford  
Jennifer Wallace  
Noelle Wilson

12 - Larry Bowling  
Betty Eicher  
Walter Jackson  
Abigail Riczko

13 - Kim Schuermann

14 - Brad Begley  
Brandi Emenaker  
Earl Gabbard  
Leigh Anne Gribble  
Amanda Scott  
Alexander Sprague  
Michael Stanger  
J. K. Walker  
Kim Wolter

15 - Dan Morrow

16 - Jack W. Baker  
Holly Graves

17 - Bart Reed

18 - Sharon French

20 - Lindsey Minnich  
Joseph Wallace

21 - Brooke Begley  
Susan Zeek

22 - Paul "Bud" Braun

23 - Brad Hoover  
Kris Simpson

24 - Marilyn Becknell

26 - Chelsea Dennison  
Beth Grubbs Payne  
Loretta Hampton

27 - John Haberthier  
Steve Turner

29 - Merritt Becknell  
Thomas Farris  
Karen Gerth  
Shirley Henson  
Chuck Riczko  
Lil Wilson  
Judy Young

30 - Judy Farris  
Ralph Shearer

31 - Darryl Paragin

**Note:** Please call the church office if you notice that one of your family members has been inadvertently overlooked on the birthday calendar. We do not intend to overlook anyone but do not realize it unless you inform us.

## Personal Notes



### From Bert Brantingham

The "Birthday Surprise"! To have an "aged" birthday remembered in such a fantastic way was overwhelming! My husband, my family and relative, out of town friends, neighbors, and church family made it an unforgettable time. My appreciation to Bill who kept it very quiet and did a superb job to surprise me. In appreciation to each one who assisted Bill at the church festivity, you are thanked and we are grateful to all. God Bless! With love to all!

### From Karen Buchanan

I would like to thank my church family for their cards and especially their prayers. I am doing very well.

### From Brandi Emenaker

Thank you for the lovely card, fabulous luncheon, and gift certificate in honor of Pastor Appreciation Month in October. What a special treat! Any day that I do not have to cook is a special day indeed! I want to thank the church for their support of our Children's Ministry. I also want to thank the very many people it takes to make this program so successful. Without the help of many, this ministry would collapse. THANK YOU for your encouragement and support!!!

### From Bob Stanger

I want to express my heartfelt thanks to all of you who extended so much love and concern for me and my family during my recent traumatic illness. It brought tears to my eyes when I learned that so many had prayed at Wednesday night prayer meeting during the time of my surgery throughout the night of October 8th and morning of October 9th. It was only through the miraculous hand of God, the prayers of

many, many believers, and the skill and knowledge of medical personnel that I am here today. GOD IS SO GOOD! I also want to let you know how much I appreciated the many cards, telephone calls, flowers and visits. I didn't know I had so many friends. Also, thanks to Pastor Den and Pastor Bill for the many visits they made on my behalf to Ft. Hamilton Hospital, University Hospital and Berkeley Square. They have been of so much encouragement to me and my family. I am truly blessed to be part of such a loving and caring church family.

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## "It's A Wonderful Life"

Presented by Greater Hamilton Civic Theater  
Parrish Auditorium, Miami University Hamilton  
Thursday, Friday, Saturday - December 4, 5, & 6 at  
8:00 p.m.  
Sunday, December 7 at 2:00 p.m.

**Krys Schram** - Mrs. Martini, Women's  
Trio  
**Denice Cox** - Ma Bailey  
**Bob Borden** - Orchestra

It's A Wonderful Life is a heartwarming, faithful musical adaptation of the classic Frank Capra film. As George Bailey contemplates ending his life, his guardian angel Clarence intercedes, showing him just how much he means to everyone he has known and what life would have become for the residents of Bedford Falls if he had never lived. A holiday show the whole family is sure to love!

Tickets: call 737-PLAY  
Adults - \$15, Sr. Citizens/Students - \$14

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The Courier is a monthly publication of The First Baptist Church of Hamilton, Ohio. Deadline for articles to be submitted is the fifteenth day of each month. The pastor: Dr. Dennis M. Metzger; Editor: Ellie Dinger. Our purpose statement: *We are believers in Jesus Christ, called of God, Gathering for Worship; Instruction and Fellowship...Scattering for Care, Evangelism and Transformation of the World for His Kingdom.*

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