



# THE BEACONLIGHT



Newsletter of the First Baptist Church of Fitchburg

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Dear Congregation,

I am living a pretty sheltered life up here at Oceanwood camp in Maine. Even so, as I return home on the weekends, it is clear that the state of the nation has not yet been fully rectified in my absence. As I remember having asked each of you months ago to limit your news intake to 15 minutes or so for the sake of your health, I wonder if perhaps even that may be enough to set a tone of discontented speech throughout your day. This, above all is most concerning to me, as I am reminded again and again that the Israelites that never made it to the Promised land, were kept from their blessing not for having committed any particular sin, but rather for their grumbling.

Jesus said in *Luke 6:43-45*:

*“For it is not a good tree that bears bad fruit, nor again, a bad tree that bears good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For they do not gather figs from thorn bushes, nor do they pick grapes from brambles. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”*

Just to be clear, I do not believe that Jesus was expecting people to refrain from having a negative opinion. He certainly had much to say about injustice, intolerance, forgiveness and providing for those in need. The difference, however, between Jesus speaking up for reform and those ancient Israelites, was the difference between believing the best and worst of God and others.

For Israel, they showed time and again that they did not trust God to show up I their situation, and when He did, that what God had to offer them was not good enough for them to be grateful. Our Lord Jesus, however, continually called people to rise up to the expectations that He had for them, trusting that they were capable of mighty and wonderful things, should they only choose life, choose love, and chose to put the needs of others before their own comforts.

When I read the passage above, I am encouraged that for those of us that are in Jesus, we are made good fruit. As children of God, we come from good stock. The challenge for us is to avoid falling to far from our Tree of life, which is Jesus, and letting that separation from God sour or outlook on life or others. We are called to reflect the father, not only by resembling Him in our actions, but in speaking life to all we encounter.

Rather than grumble, we pray. Instead of hurling curses at the evil we see, we can offer prayers and blessings into the negative situations we encounter. We can ask ourselves, “if words are creative, then what may manifest from what I have just spoken?” This sounds like speaking to God and others about what we desire to see now and in the future (ex. Lord, please heal this land, we trust You to provide for Your people...), and less like adding to the sounds of defeat and anger around us (ex. Look at this mess, it will get worse, this cannot be

fixed). This passage reminds us to speak good things that will nourish and sustain others as evidence of who we are and from which kingdom we come.

My favorite thing about this scripture is that Jesus does not say that the trees come from the seeds of the previous fruit. That is to say, we are not destined to become good or bad fruit based on our parents, lineage, or genetics, after all, we become new creations through Christ Jesus as He strips away the old bark and makes us into a new strong and beautiful tree (2 Cor. 5:17-18).

What Jesus is asking here, is that we not let our new tree grow so dry that it ignites and endangers others, nor so immersed in the murky waters around us that we rot. Keep your words healthy and free from the things that bug, so that they will be able to feed into others in their time of need. Apple trees produce apples, peach trees produce peaches, and trees that are made in the image and likeness of God, produce the love of Christ and the Spirit of Peace.

If you find that you are not speaking life and love and truth to others, I humbly ask you to check your heart. Ask God to show you what is at the root and help heal you from the inside so that better things grow forth in your life. May you be fruitful and multiply the good things this summer from the material you have been given, always.

May the Lord bless and keep you all.

Regards,  
Pastor Meredith

### *Pluck A Plum Where There Is No Tree*

A poem by Saiom Shriver

God who freed  
from fruit the seed  
can pick a pear  
from a baby tree.

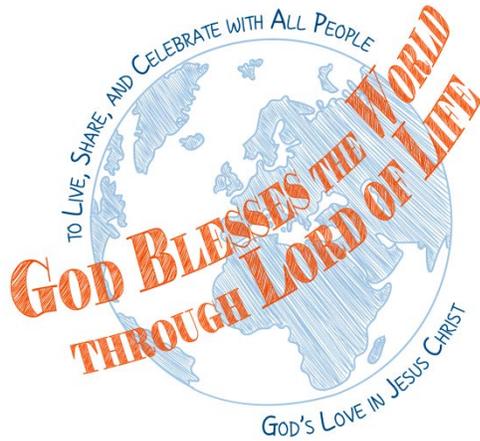
God who sired  
the hallowed fig  
does harvest fruit  
from a barren sprig.

God made blooms pastel  
and bright fruits  
and can a kumquat take  
from a tree of quince.

Who made Pluto and  
the Pleiades  
can pluck a plum  
where there is no tree.

=====

(to Senator George Mitchell.. tireless worker for peace in America and Europe)  
The Sanskrit word for the Wish Fulfilling Tree is Asritakalpalateeka.  
It is spoken of in Revelation.. the tree with 12 kinds of fruit.)



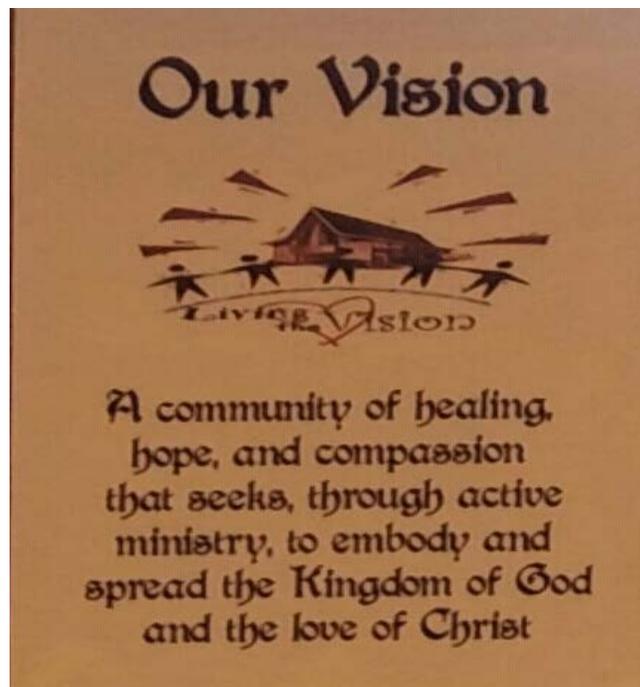
As we as a congregation  
Can now physically meet  
Every week some of us  
Are still staying home  
Our Love for each other  
Is still there!!!!

Please pray for each other, the doctors and nurses who are providing care for the Corona Virus

If you are able in these trying times could you please mail your offering envelopes to:

First Baptist Church  
1400 John Fitch Highway  
Fitchburg, MA 01420-2035

Remember the church has regular monthly bills to pay during this pandemic.





## **CYC is going virtual this year.**

Christian Youth Conference is a two-week conference for high school students. The camp is traditionally held in Ocean Park, Maine at Oceanwood Camp and Conference Center, however, due to COVID-19 this will be held as a virtual experience.

This virtual conference is entirely FREE. Camps will be able to participate in many spiritually-enriching experiences online. The virtual experience will include worship service, devotions, classes and even contests and games.

The theme this year is “Into the Wilderness” as students focus on the story of Moses wandering in the dessert and Jesus’ 40 days in the desert.

While this is a departure from the traditional two-weeks, as we won’t be able to enjoy the wonderful the Soda Fountain, Funtown-Splashtown or the beautiful beach, it offers us different types of opportunities. We will have an even more closely-knit program and a chance for teenagers to get a taste of what camp is like – get their toes wet.

This also allows us to invite people to be a part of the experience that may not be able to otherwise. We will have guest speakers and even students who may find a trek to Maine more challenging in a usual year.

Also, students can participate at their own pace and in the activities that they would like to participate in.

Before the Conference students will receive a care package with camp swag, a devotional and all the things that students will need for engagement with the program at home.

To sign up for this unconventional but still amazing experience go to:

<https://cycop.org/register/>

# Thank You for Investing in Futures!

## A Letter from Your World Relief Officer

For we are co-workers in God's service;  
you are God's field, God's building. 1 Corinthians 3:9

### Invest in futures!

Dear American Baptist Leaders,

For over 200 years, American Baptists have been investing in the futures of people all around the world! From our local communities here in the U.S. and Puerto Rico, and wrapping all the way around the globe, ministries have been undergirded by American Baptists for over 200 years. That's hard for me to get my mind around. What God has done and continues to do through American Baptists is invest in God's people by meeting spiritual and human need.

You can probably recall American Baptist ministries that you and your congregation have supported. Some may have been one-time investments made to address one specific need at one specific time, while others are investments made over many years—often decades—as American Baptists walk alongside communities, growing as they grow, and changing as they change.

The One Great Hour of Sharing promotional materials for 2020 feature the ministry of the New Life Center Foundation in Thailand. American Baptists have invested in the lives of young girls in northern Thailand for over 30 years! American Baptist International Ministries' missionaries Dr. and Mrs. Paul and Elaine Lewis founded the New Life Center (NLC) in 1987, and Rev. Luran Bethell, Miss Karen Smith, Miss Kit Ripley, and Miss Jeni Pedzinski have provided leadership there alongside NLC's tribal staff.

The Royal Thai Government has worked to improve education in rural areas, and later began implementing nationwide anti-trafficking campaigns and working alongside secular and faith-based initiatives. So while the context in which the ministry has been carried out has changed dramatically over the last three decades, the core reason for the ministry remained the same: To invest in the futures of ethnic minority girls who are at risk for, or victims of, human trafficking, forced labor, and sexual abuse. Today, over 1,000 have received this investment in their future and graduates are employed in areas that include government, business, banking, human rights advocacy, non-profit administration, Christian ministry, healthcare, social work, tailoring, and food services. Many are happily married and raising families.

The New Life Center Foundation is one example among the literally hundreds, if not thousands of ways that God has used American Baptists around the world. Thank you for the investment you have already made in the lives of women, men, girls and boys all around the world! Your generosity through One Great Hour of Sharing continues to witness to the power of God to "give the growth" to the seeds that we plant.

In grateful partnership,  
Lisa Rothenberger-Winter World Relief

# July's Mission Offering One Great Hour of Sharing

## History

Fifty years ago, during World War II and immediately following, Protestant churches made appeals for relief and reconstruction. In 1946, Bishop Henry Knox Sherrill, newly-elected Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, set a goal of one million dollars per year for the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief. On nationwide radio, he challenged members to raise "one million dollars in one hour." His impassioned challenge worked. During the first three years, Episcopalians raised \$3.8 million.

In 1949, church leaders from several denominations formed an ad hoc committee to organize an appeal aimed at supporting the separate campaigns of American churches. While the post-war language seems a bit stilted, their joint statement in support of this effort is still remarkably contemporary:  
"This nationwide united effort by America's Christians has an importance far beyond the practical goal of fund raising. For this great joint program will not only strengthen the vitally important relief and rehabilitation work of the churches overseas, but will also prove to all the world how great is the power generated when Christians unite in a common cause."

A cast was recruited from among the foremost dramatic and musical talent in the United States, including Gregory Peck and Ida Lupino, and a script was written under the direction of playwright Robert Sherwood. President Truman brought greetings. Major networks and many independent stations carried the program on Saturday, March 26 at 10 p.m., EST. The broadcast, called "One Great Hour," closed with a request that listeners attend their local church the following morning and make a sacrificial contribution. No exact measure of income was possible, but it was estimated that more than 75,000 churches participated.

In 1950, the title "One Great Hour of Sharing" was used for the first time. A logo depicting a church steeple clock with hands fixed at eleven was also adopted. A series of six fifteen-minute radio programs was produced to promote the effort, but problems with radio stations brought disappointing results.

The next year, the name of the offering was changed to "One Great Time of Sharing." In 1952, the name was changed back to One Great Hour of Sharing, and has remained so ever since. By 1954, the announced goal for all giving to One Great Hour of Sharing reached eight million dollars.

From the beginning this has been an ecumenical effort. As denominations changed and merged, One Great Hour of Sharing has varied from eight to twenty-nine participating communions. Currently, the One Great Hour of Sharing committee officially comprises nine Christian denominations: American Baptist Churches USA, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Church of the Brethren, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Reformed Church in America, United Church of Christ, and Church World Service. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) calls the offering Week of Compassion. In various ways, all work in cooperation with Church World Service, the relief, development and refugee assistance arm of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

At times, One Great Hour of Sharing has been coordinated with the Roman Catholic Bishops' Fund Appeal for Overseas Aid and the Jewish Passover Appeal. Efforts were made to combine forces to attain the endorsement of the Advertising Council. Joint approaches were made to editors and program directors of radio and television. Free time and space were donated. Today, changes in FCC guidelines have all but eliminated this promotional opportunity. Yet, the offering survives, even thrives, in local congregations.

The purpose of One Great Hour of Sharing has remained the same: to collect special gifts to assist those in need. Contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing make a difference in the lives of people. Church World Service, with overseas partners are often the first on the scene following a disaster of natural or human origin. The needs of the people are identified and priorities are set to bring long-term solutions that will improve the quality of life for individuals and communities around the world. One Great Hour of Sharing, nearly 50 years old, continues to respond to needs equally critical as when it was first created.

# Recipe of the Month

## Chicken Fajita Skillet



- **Ingredients:**
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 6 boneless skinless chicken thighs (about 1 1/2 to 2 pounds)
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil, divided
- 1/2 medium green bell pepper, sliced
- 1/2 medium red bell pepper, sliced
- 1/2 medium yellow bell pepper, sliced
- 1 medium onion, sliced (about 1 1/2 cups)
- 1-1/4 cups Jasmine rice
- 1 can (10 oz each) Ro\*Tel® Serrano Diced Tomatoes with Serrano Peppers, undrained
- 2 cups chicken stock
- chopped cilantro, lime wedges and sour cream, optional

### **Preparation:**

Stir together salt, chili powder, pepper, oregano, garlic powder and cumin in small bowl. Season chicken on both sides with about half of the spice mixture.

Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat until hot. Pour in 1 tablespoon oil, peppers and onion. Cook until vegetables are lightly browned, about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove to a plate and set aside.

Add remaining 1 tablespoon oil and chicken to skillet. Cook until chicken is browned, about 3 minutes a side. Remove to a plate.

Add rice, undrained tomatoes, chicken stock and any remaining spice mixture to skillet and stir to combine. Place chicken on top of rice; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, cover and simmer 15 minutes, until rice is tender, and chicken is cooked through (180°F).

Pour peppers and onions back into skillet and continue heating until hot, about 3 minutes. Serve with chopped cilantro, lime wedges and sour cream, if desired.

# Local News

## *Reminder to get your Camp Information In*

Once registered for camp.....

Each camper is eligible for a \$100 scholarship from Central Massachusetts Baptist Association plus money from the church camp scholarship fund.

Please give the following information to Mark Bigelow, camp scholarship coordinator for our church:

Campers Name:

Which camp (Grotonwood or Oceanwood):

Camp Program Attending:

Dates of Camp Program Attending:

*“With  
GOD  
All Things  
Are  
Possible!”*

Pastor Meredith  
Will be in her office:

Tuesday 1 - 4

Thursday 9 - 12

*Let May Goff know your favorite hymn  
We will sing one a week as long as they last*

### *Careful Planning Makes a Difference*

**ANTHONY V. FEROCI, JR.  
ATTORNEY AT LAW**

114 Merriam Ave - Suite 204  
Leominster, MA 01453  
978-466-5011

Elder and Disability Law  
Medicaid Planning  
Estate Planning



637 Lancaster Street (Route 117) - Leominster, MA 01453 - Phone: 978-227-5556  
Email: [restore@ncmhabitat.org](mailto:restore@ncmhabitat.org)

# *Funny*

Funny how simple it is for people to trash God, and then wonder why the world's going to hell.

Funny how we believe what the newspapers say, but question what the Bible says.

Funny how everyone wants to go to heaven, provided they do not have to believe, think, say, or do anything the Bible says.

Funny how someone can say "I believe in God," but still follow Satan who, by the way, also "believes" in God.

Funny how we are quick to judge, but not to be judged.

Funny how you can send a thousand 'jokes' through email and they spread like wildfire, but when you start sending messages regarding the Lord, people think twice about sharing.

Funny how the lewd, crude, vulgar and obscene pass freely through cyberspace, but the public discussion of God is suppressed in the school and workplace.

Funny how someone can be so fired up for Christ on Sunday, but be an invisible Christian the rest of the week.

Are you laughing?

Funny how, when you go to email a message like this, you will not send it to many on your address list, because you're not sure what they believe, or what they will think of you for sending it to them.

Funny how I can be more worried about what other people think of me than what God thinks of me.

Are you thinking?

Pass this on... if you think it has merit. If not, then just ignore it. No one will know that you did. But, if you do ignore this meaningful thought process, don't sit back and complain about the sinful shape of the world!

*Author unknown*



### July Birthdays

- 5. Caitlin Blake
- 7. Mason Ruschioni
- 11. Emily Christian
- 13. Tom Adams, Jr.
- 18. Pastor Jean Wright
- 18. Colin Ruschioni
- 20. Jean Osgood
- 21. Pastor Meredith Christian
- 27. Courage Yangsi
- 27. Irfan Rafiq



### *Happy Anniversary*

### July Anniversaries

- 
- 03. Humphrey & Anne Mutindwa
  - 12. Jim & Lynne Ruschioni
  - 29. Bob & Karen Simpson

### Aug Birthdays

- 03. Holly Primeau
- 04. Mark Bigelow
- 06. Phil Goff
- 08. Kim Rooney
- 13. Megan Force
- 13. Anne Ndunda
- 19. Kaitlin Rooney
- 29. Phoebe Mbunwe 1st Birthday

### Aug Anniversaries

- 24. Mark & Diane Bigelow
  - 31. Tom & Debi Cross
- 



IF YOU'RE BIRTHDAY OR ANNIVERSARY IS NOT HERE, LET US KNOW AND WE'LL INCLUDE IT IN THE BEACONLIGHT! REMEMBER TO NOTIFY THE CHURCH OFFICE WITH ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO YOUR ADDRESS OR TO OUR MONTHLY LISTING OF BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES  
 CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE  
 978-345-5622  
 E-MAIL: [FBCBEACONLIGHT@COMCAST.NET](mailto:FBCBEACONLIGHT@COMCAST.NET)

# PRAYER LIST



*Anoura Rose Angelin*  
*Annie De Martino*  
*Bette Adams*  
*Claire Budroe*  
*John Mim*  
*Cindy Beck*  
*Connie & Will Gariepy*  
*Daniel Bascomb*  
*Susan Force (Bette Adams daughter)*  
*Kathy Gosselin*  
*Kathy Young (coworker of Diane Bigelow)*  
*Kim & Katie (Bette Adams daughter & granddaughter)*  
*Linda Gosselin*  
*Lorraine (friend of Pam Chapman)*  
*Mark & Diane Bigelow*  
*Marsha – return of lung cancer*  
*Nancy Peters*  
*Roberta Poole*  
*Ed Guerard*  
*Tom and Karen Adams*  
*Karen Simpson*  
*Elaine Corzine*  
*The Blake Family*  
*The Steward Family*  
*Roger Abell*  
*Pastor Becky*  
*Primeau Family*

## ***Our Missionaries***

*Light A Candle Ministries*  
*Rovaungha Richardson, William Seo*  
*mission trip to Afganistan*

*Daniel Auguste and the Haitian*  
*Missionary Team*

## ***Other Concerns***

*Baptist Church of Grafton*  
*First Baptist Church of Gardner*

*For those under persecution for their*  
*faith.*

*Prayers for those suffering from acts of*  
*violence around the world*



**IF YOU HAVE A PRAYER REQUEST, PLEASE, LET US KNOW AND WE'LL INCLUDE IT IN**  
**THE BEACONLIGHT!**

**REMEMBER TO NOTIFY US WITH ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THESE LISTINGS.**

**CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE**

**978-345-5622**

**F-MAIL · FRCBEACONLIGHT@COMCAST.NET**

