

First Things

A Newsletter of the First Baptist Church of Trenton

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SUMMER 2013

From the Senior Pastor, The Rev. Elizabeth B. Congdon

FINDING OUR REST

"...the LORD gives rest to your kindred, as to you....." Deuteronomy 3:20a
Restlessness is not a new experience. Sixteen hundred years ago, the Christian monks of the Egyptian desert, the Desert Fathers, noticed a phenomenon. When they were at work, they felt drawn to prayer; when they prayed, they felt drawn to work; when they settled in one monastery, they became convinced that true spirituality could be found only in the monastery down the road. The monk's task was not to flee from this restlessness, but to stay put and wrestle with it. I was ever so surprised when I spent a day with the Desert Fathers now living in one monastery in Egypt. They were not what I expected. They were not hermits, living separated from life. No, the monks I spoke with were outgoing professionals (doctor, engineer, and a mathematician) who had completed their education before entering the monastery. They had a sense of humor. They went off to work each day; some working to transform the desert into farmland with irrigation and others worked in clinics. Each took turns being with the "daily invasion" they called it; barbarians in the olden days, tourists nowadays. They were historians, good humored, well versed in many religions. In talking and asking questions I learned that they lived in individual cells and would arise each day at 4:00 am to pray. Prayer and vocation (service and work) were ways they lived with the struggle.

Where is our rest? Sometimes the struggle is a restlessness in the voice of ambition or anxiety: "If I do not write the perfect paper, I will fail, the perfect lecture, I will not get tenure, the perfect blog, I will be criticized." Maybe I struggle thinking I must find just the right job. "If I don't have lunch with this friend, right now, I will be alone and friendless the rest of my life." But sometimes restlessness is a voice from deep within, a sense that I will not be myself unless I do precisely this—write a poem, teach a class, walk in the woods, play with a child. Whether they distress or inspire us, voices of restlessness cannot be ignored.

Listen to your restlessness. Restlessness signals God's draw on our lives, and no single commitment curbs that restlessness unless it is oriented to the larger horizon of God's magnetic love. Through vocation, our purpose, our call, God turns our restlessness into rest in God, orients the times of our lives to eternity, to time marked by the presence of God. Restlessness, then, need not threaten either our commitments or our efforts to discern which commitments to make. Because God speaks through our everyday thoughts and encounters, vocation is not an alternative to restlessness, but a way of listening to restlessness.

Our restlessness is like the mysterious stranger who wrestled all night with Jacob before blessing him with a new name, Israel. When we wrestle with that stranger, our own restlessness, God also gives us a name—a vocation, purpose, a call that pulls the energy of our lives in particular directions. God's lure on our respective lives is like a magnet, and restlessness is the lifelong aligning of our own "iron filings"—the many minutes of our time, energy, and attention—to that magnet. As St. Augustine confessed to God, "Our hearts are restless until they rest in thee." May you find your true rest this summer.

I Too Will Rise

I woke up to a day where the sun seemed to shine very bright
From the way its warm radiance embraced me things seemed to be just right
But how things changed once I found that I have to now fight for my life
After the doctor gave me news that canceled the light and filled me with fright

Is this the reward that life offers me after trudging through my life trials
Because if it is, I'm ready to go to that place of denial
For I hoped it was a mistake of some kind because I'm about to lose my mind
I've been devastated by the question with an answer I can't find

Why is this happening can someone tell me
Because this is a reality that I would've never imagined or even dream
Help me somebody, I need to hear something that'll make me feel more serene
Something that will get me through this horrifying thing

But just when I was about to go over the edge from the news that I dread
I was reminded of the One who can raise my spirit above the negativity in my head
No longer will I be consumed by the pessimistic views and things people said
I will believe that I too will rise over my situation like Jesus even after He bled

Greetings FBCT family and friends,

I hope this day finds you well. I'm just returning from the ABC Biennial Mission Summit held in Overland Park, Kansas. It was a time of revival, restoration, recalling, and recapitulation. There were many sessions that one could sit in on and receive a word that would remind them of what they are called to and to whom called them to it. Furthermore, it was a time of transformation, which was the driving theme of the conference. All the speakers talked about being transformed. They talked about being transformed for justice, transformed for mission, transformed by spirit, and transformed for today. After hearing these messages one thing that resonated in my spirit was if we the body of Christ want to be more effective when it comes to transforming lives of those in need, we have to go through the process of transformation daily in our own lives. When I think about transformation, I realize it's not something that happens once and we're done, but it's an ongoing process. Apostle Paul reminds us in Romans 12:2 "not to conform to this world but to be transformed by the renewing of our mind." If we look at the word, renewing, the letters i-n-g suggest that being transformed is an ongoing process. It is something that we have to do again and again. Once we enter or re-enter the process of transformation, we will be able to impact the lives of the very ones that Jesus commissioned us to go to in Matthew 28:19-20. Once we're transformed, we'll be able to help correct the flaws of the justice system helping those who have fallen victim to it, we'll be able to go abroad to the ends of the earth where all God's people are in order to give them the good news that Jesus lives and still saves, we'll be able to be open to the spirit that leads, comforts, convicts, and empowers us to carry out the mission that seems impossible yet it is possible because God is involved, and lastly we'll be able to have relevant ministries that addresses the problems of today. In a nutshell, God has called all of us to be transformed for a work that goes beyond ourselves, but gives Him honor, and help those that are in need. My friends, Be ye transformed.

Blessings to you,
Rev C Nadir Powell
Associate Pastor, First Baptist Church Trenton

SUMMER WORSHIP

Beginning on Sunday July 7 worship will be at 10:00 am. We will continue to worship at 10:00 until and including Sunday, September 1st. We return to 11:00 worship on September 8th.

HOW DISCIPLES GARDENS GROW

Plant 3 rows of peas:

Peace of mind
Peace of heart
Peace of soul

Plant 4 rows of squash:

Squash gossip
Squash indifference
Squash grumbling
Squash selfishness

Plant 4 rows of lettuce:

Lettuce be faithful
Lettuce be kind
Lettuce be obedient
Lettuce really love one another

Water freely with patience and cultivate with love

To conclude my garden I must have thyme:

Thyme for God
Thyme for study
Thyme for prayer

(I thank Rev. Jay Rambo for sharing this information.)

PREPARING FOR AN EMERGENCY

(Praying this will not be needed, Pastor Liz)

In preparing for hurricanes, earthquakes, or other emergencies it is a good idea to have adequate supplies for safety and comfort for at least three days. Here are some things that may be needed:

- At least a three day supply of drinkable water allowing one gallon per person per day for drinking and sanitation purposes
 - At least a three day supply of non-perishable foods
 - Food and water for pets
 - Manual can opener and eating utensils
 - Prescription medications;
 - First aid kit and a first aid manual
 - Paper towels, moist towelettes, diapers, toilet paper and garbage bags
 - Personal hygiene items (including feminine supplies)
 - Disinfectant such as Chlorine bleach (plain, unscented and uncolored) and a medicine dropper. (For disinfecting: Chlorine can be used as a disinfectant, one part bleach to nine parts water. For drinking: In an emergency, when water cannot be boiled for a full minute after filtering through clean clothes, chlorine can be added to water for drinking. Use 8 drops (1/8 tsp) per one gallon of water and let it stand for 30 minutes. This process will kill many but not all organisms.
 - Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
 - Flashlight and extra batteries
 - Radio with extra batteries
 - Matches in a waterproof container
 - Fire Extinguisher
 - One blanket, change of clothing and sturdy footwear per person; additional warm clothing if you live in cold weather climate
 - Extra pair of glasses and/or contact lenses
 - Extra set of keys, a credit card, cash
 - Documents like birth certificates, bank account records, insurance policies in a waterproof container
 - Local maps
 - List of important phone numbers and a cell phone
- For additional information contact www.cdc.gov

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The Board of Christian Education has been busy planning for next September's Sunday School classes. Curriculum for all the classes has been ordered. Philip Wilson and Abby Amutah have volunteered to teach the adult class along with Rev. Powell and Pastor Liz. They will each teach class for a month. We will have two youth classes and two new seminarians to teach those classes. The Children's Worship class will continue to meet and "Second Hour" will continue.

This year there are four campers going to Camp Lebanon. We will all be anxious to hear about all their wonderful experiences. Another movie night is planned so watch for the announcement of the date, time and movie. Kids Camp with Central: Christ Centered Church of Ewing will be 8/19/13 – 8/23/13.

Mothers Day was celebrated with free ice cream for everyone. Fathers Day was pizza for all. Thanks to Robin Kay and her helpers for making the delicious pizza. The weeks after Mother's Day the youth sold ice cream and they have made over \$125.00. Thanks to everyone that participated and enjoyed all the different flavors of ice cream. Nice selections Richard!!!

Lyn Wood

PRAY FOR CARLOS BONILLA AND MAYRA GIOVANETTI, HELPING TRAIN LEADERS AND SHOWING THE REALITY OF GOD'S LOVE AND MERCY IN NICARAGUA.

PrayerCall by Bob Santilli April 24, 2013

Carlos and Mayra are working with the Baptist Theological Seminary in Nicaragua, accompanying them in the program of informal theological education in the churches of the Baptist Convention of Nicaragua and as writers of curriculum material for the Seminary. They seek each day to show others God's love and mercy, as a reality. Mayra writes: Today we are celebrating 90 days from our arrival to Nicaragua. God is good. Last Sunday we celebrated 10 years of ministry of the Baptist Church "Ebenezer-Los Altos" in Masaya. What a joy to celebrate with this congregation God's faithfulness throughout these first ten years! God is good. As a Puerto Rican, I am proud and humbled at the same time as we visited the Roberto Clemente baseball stadium in Masaya, in honor of our dear player who lost his life on New Year's Eve of 1972 on his way to Nicaragua with aid after the earthquake that the country had experienced on December 23rd. How much they love and appreciate Roberto's sacrifice! God is good.

If Roberto's sacrifice is appreciated, there is a sacrifice that we all should appreciate even more, as it is of eternal consequences. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross paid the price on our behalf to buy us life eternal with Him. How not appreciate His sacrifice! Our love for Him moves us to be where we are and inspires us to do what we do. During the anniversary service, there was music, there were Bible reading, and there were prayers. The day had begun with a delicious lunch, lamb barbecue! How appropriate, as we remember the Lamb that gave Himself for us... Then we went downtown to see the stadium, the volcano, and the lagoon. What a beautiful country Nicaragua is! And how picturesque the cities... We returned to the church for the evening service and shared the Word of God, "prepare ye the way"... Yes, the message is still the same as of old. Yes, the mission of the church is the same as it was given to the disciples. Yes, you continue to be part of the message that ignites His mission... Today, the challenges that the church and the communities that surround us face can be overwhelming. Yet, God is good and has promised to be with us every day and in every circumstance. We need not despair, for He is with us A L W A Y S... As the service ended, and a hearty meal was shared with all attendees, our/your new siblings in Masaya were thrilled that they were not alone and asked us to return. Last Friday we had a meeting in CEPAD, a partner with our mission society; the needs are so many, yet the opportunities for partnership are greater! CEPAD puts in action, throughout Nicaragua's communities, the faith and Bible principles that are shared at the Seminary... Isn't this great! Thanks for making it possible for our family, the Parajon, and the Pierre to represent the Lord and each of you here in Nicaragua in a wide variety of ministries, as well as our colleagues in other parts around the world.

PRAY FOR J.D. AND RHONDA REED, TRAINING LEADERS AND HELPING ESTABLISH NEW CHURCHES AND MINISTRIES IN BOLIVIA.

Journal by Bob Santilli April 15, 2013

J.D. and Rhonda are serving in partnership with the Unión Bautista Boliviana, and live in the city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra. Their primary focus is to aid in development of leadership in the areas of theology, planting churches, and beginning to develop new ministries in the southern part of Bolivia. J.D. writes Last week, I travelled to a community on the outskirts of the Southeast side of the city called Barrio Plan 3000. This odd named barrio was an experiment by the local and state government. In the early 1980's a flood of the River Piraí, left over 3,000 families homeless and struggling to survive on the outskirts of the city. The government found and developed this area for them so that they could start a new life back and get back to normal.

What started out as a good idea became an interesting experiment in helping people, and now it has turned into a very dark and hard place. This barrio now has over 330,000 residents with no labor force to sustain it. It is the most densely populated community in the city and one of the most dangerous. The attitude there is survival. Because of their desperation, many people have turned to those things that can make them a fast living so that they can survive. This has made Plan 3000 the most feared and dangerous parts of the city.

As a beacon of light in this dark part of the world, there are three tiny Baptist churches, one of which is Iglesia Bautista Vida y Fe (Faith and Life Baptist Church). Pastor Juan Carlos invited me to the church so we could begin another leadership group. At the time of this writing, this is our 5th group of 7 that has yielded 47 total students so far.

When we got there the atmosphere was light, and people were excited about the opportunity to learn and grow. As we finished my part of the evening and it was time to bring out the coffee (at 10:00pm) and talk and eat together. The pastor looked at me and in broken English said, "Stay right there!" He proceeded to share with the church about our conversation in the car about how I sometimes get frustrated with my abilities in Spanish. He then told me that the church wanted to commit to pray for me and my frustrations every day. Since I am supporting them, they want to support me.

They began to pray. They prayed that my mind be open. They prayed that my ability to speak would match my enthusiasm to help and work in churches. They prayed for my family...for more opportunities...for diligence as I continue to work on Spanish...for everything. I was speechless. All I could say was thank you. As I was getting ready to leave, I told the pastor that if his reaction to me was how their church does ministry, they will make a huge difference in their community.

The words of an old Dottie Rambo song rang clear in my mind as I drove home that night.... "He looked beyond my faults and saw my need."

REFLECTIONS FROM THE MISSION SUMMIT 2013

AMERICAN BAPTIST (AB) BIENNIAL GATHERING

At this very special gathering we celebrated 150 years since the Emancipation Proclamation, 200 years since Adoniram and Ann Judson arrived in Burma (Myanmar), and 375 years since the first Baptist church in America was established by Roger Williams in Providence, Rhode Island. It was a privilege to be among the 2,455 who participated in this mission summit between 6/21/13 and 6/23/13 in Overland Park, Kansas along with the Rev. Powell and Rev. Mild.

Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow*, spoke of the caste system and mass incarceration today. We are challenged to address these injustices.

Mission Summit Conversations were something new. No workshops this Biennial where experts tell us what to do. Instead we sat around tables and talked. We were able to select from a long list of topics and able to change if we so chose. I stayed with the same topic, adaptive leadership, for the three sessions and each time we went deeper talking about what it means to be relevant. What delighted me and made me proud was how over 1,000 participated in these conversations. It was something new and over 1,000 of the 2,455 attendees participated with a new breath of enthusiasm. Even more important is that the focus and learnings are available on www.missionsummitconversations.com for all to review.

The music, preaching and teaching were highlights indeed. Mary Mild has purchased DVDs of the worship services and so all can enjoy these wonderful sessions.

Resources galore were available at the exhibits. Resources are available at www.abc-usa.org, www.americanbaptisthomemissionsocieties.org, and www.InternationalMinistres.org. Amazing exhibits. We could sit in a cell and learn about prison ministry. We wrote letters to those incarcerated, or those in the armed services. We saw a ship and learned of mission.

We had a short course about the history of mission with Dr. Allen Yeh at the International Ministry luncheon and were present for the Commissioning the Rev. Saw Ler Htoo as a home missionary of the American Baptist Home Mission Society (ABHMS) luncheon; a treasured moment. Over 500 sang in Karen and Chin choirs. Many were there from Burma!

Days and evenings were full of fellowship. It was delightful to see Evan and Breanna Bever.

AB Women in Ministry and Minister's Council's breakfast brought inspiring messages from the Reverends Patricia Hernandez and Debora Jackson "For such a time as this" (Esther 4:14b).

I found this Biennial to be deeply spiritual as we disciples allow God the Spirit to transform us.

The Rev. Elizabeth B. Congdon

JULY 2019

SUNDAY EVERY SUNDAY:	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
10:00 Worship 11:15 Karen Karenni Worship	1 4:00 STSK	2 4:00 STSK	3 4:00 STSK 7:00 Poetry Group	4	5	6
7 Communion Pray for campers Mai Juah, Precious Hla, Shannon Wea	8 4:00 STSK	9 4:00 STSK	10 4:00 STSK	11	12	13
14 Pray for camper Adam Juah	15 4:00 STSK	16 4:00 STSK	17 4:00 STSK 7:00 Poetry Group	18	19	20
21	22 4:00 STSK	23 4:00 STSK	24 4:00 STSK	25	26	27
28	29 4:00 STSK	30 4:00 STSK	31 4:00 STSK			

JULY SERMONS

7/7	Luke 10:25-37	“Disciples Minister to Those in Need”	Pastor Liz
7/14	Luke 10:38-42	“Disciples Live in Christ”	Pastor Liz
7/21	Lamentations 3:22-23	“New Mercies I Do See”	Rev. Powell
7/28	Luke 11:1-13	“Disciples Pray”	Pastor Liz

AUGUST 2013

EVERY SUNDAY: 10:00 Worship 11:15 Karen Karenni Worship	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4 Communion	5 4:00 STSK	6 4:00 STSK	7 4:00 STSK 7:00 Poetry Group	8	9	10
11	12 4:00 STSK	13 4:00 STSK	14 4:00 STSK	15	16	17
18	19 4:00 STSK 6-830 Kids Camp	20 4:00 STSK 6-830 Kids Camp NEWSLETTER INFO DUE	21 4:00 STSK 6-830 Kids Camp 7:00 Poetry Group	22 6-830 Kids Camp	23 6-830 Kids Camp	24
25	26 4:00 STSK	27 4:00 STSK	28 4:00 STSK	29	30	31

AUGUST SERMONS

8/4	Luke 12:13-21	"Greed Sneaks In"	Pastor Liz
8/11			Rev. Powell
8/18	Luke 12:49-56	"Playing Dumb"	Pastor Liz
8/25	Luke 13:10-17	"What Does Compassion Look Like?"	Pastor Liz

KIDS CAMP CHILD REGISTRATION FORM

Parent/Guardian First Name _____

Parent/Guardian Last Name _____

Parent/Guardian Email Address _____

Parent/Guardian Cell Phone _____

Home Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Are you a Kids Camp Volunteer? Y or N

Emergency Contact

This person will be contacted should an emergency arise when the Parent/Guardian cannot be contacted. This person should be someone other than the Parent/Guardian and at least 18 years of age. It's imperative that this person has permission by you to be responsible for the child. Valid I.D. required at pickup.

First Name _____

Last Name _____

Cell Phone _____

Alternate Pickup

During Kids Camp, you may have one person other than the parent/guardian and emergency contact person pick-up your child. This person must be at least 18 years of age. Valid I.D. required at pickup.

First Name _____

Last Name _____

Cell Phone _____

Relationship to child _____

Relationship to child _____

Child Information

Child First Name _____ Child Last Name _____

Child Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY) _____

Grade your child completed in June _____

Please list any medical restrictions, special needs, or allergies your child has (includes food allergies).

Child First Name _____ Child Last Name _____

Child Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY) _____

Grade your child completed in June _____

Please list any medical restrictions, special needs, or allergies your child has (includes food allergies).

Child Information (continued) Please add additional Child information

Child First Name _____ Child Last Name _____
Child Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY) _____
Grade your child completed in June _____

Please list any medical restrictions, special needs, or allergies your child has (includes food allergies).

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