

First Baptist Church of Littleton Good Newsletter



“Journeying to God’s Sacred Beat” November 2012

Our Land

What majesty we have in this land of ours
Great mountains rivers and city towers

What simplicity we have in this land of ours
Country roads old mill streams
and hidden bowers

Teeming streets of LA or Chicago
Open spaces of Wyoming and Idaho

Mount Rushmore and San Francisco Bay
Phantom of the Opera- or a third grade play

The Lincoln Memorial and Statue of Liberty
Pee-wee football and the Boston Symphony

The Mississippi and Great Salt Lake
A hidden creek or Maine clambake

Niagara Falls and rolling hills of Vermont
Folks who have plenty – others who want

Great institutes of learning
Wheels of Justice that keep on turning

Old Woody had it down just fine
This land indeed is yours and mine.

Bud Lamson
Author and Poet



GoogleDoodle
4th of July 2012

Family Concert/Talent Show and Pot Luck Supper

Saturday, November 10

4:00 Talent Show

5:00 Pot Luck Supper

Are you thinking about what talent you can share with us on Saturday, Nov. 10? Let's have a ball as a church family and come ready for a night of fun and laughter. Speak to Anne Lee if you have something you would like to do.

- A through M bring a salad or main dish
- N through Z a dessert.



Thanksgiving Sunday November 18

Sunday morning worship

9AM Sunday School

10AM Worship with March Forward offering for Loaves and Fishes. See shopping list inside.

7:00PM Interfaith Thanksgiving Service at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 616 Great Road, Littleton, MA.

Pastoral Daze

Will Our Children Think More Deeply? Will We?



⁶These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. ⁷Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home, when you are building Legos, eating popcorn, watching Forest Gump, sitting at the kitchen table, when you walk along the road, lie down and get up.” Deuteronomy 6:6-7 (DJB)

“No, not really. Heaven and earth are not on the same level. Maybe your fingertips can brush heaven, Mom, but heaven and earth are definitely separate.”

Isn't that interesting?

“Heaven and earth are not on the same level” but we can brush heaven with our fingertips.

These thoughtful words came from Caroline's middle son in the midst of a discussion on Legos or heaven and hell. This is another example of “talking to your children when you stand up, sit down, walk along the way, go in and out” from Deuteronomy 6.

(You can read her column H-E-Double Hockey Sticks, following this story)

I believe his words reflect someone who is thinking deeply. I just love eavesdropping in on their conversations, which I witness and listen to, as a sign of hope. A sign of hope that despite the extremely nasty, fearful, negative tone of the elections, political discourse, and all the name

calling that seems to fill the airwaves these days, that there will always be a myriad of people, young and old, who think more deeply.

In these closing weeks of the election season, I had often found myself so discouraged when I hear the hate that spews right out of people's mouths. Reminds me of the manner in which the whale vomited, or spewed Jonah right out onto dry land. I wonder and worry what will become of our country when the “we” of “we the people” is so divided.

But I worry too much.

It has been a joy during those times when I am most discouraged, to discover that God has sent along someone to talk with, and a conversation opens up where I find myself sharing and listening to those who think differently than I do. This is an example of what Parker Palmer means when he gives us an image of hope by allowing our hearts to break open instead of apart. *“If your heart breaks apart into a thousand pieces, the result may be anger, depression and disengagement. If it breaks open into greater capacity to hold the complexities and contradictions of human experience, the result may be new life. The heart is what makes us human...”* (Healing the Heart of the Democracy, page18)

My heart is doing much better these days thank you.

This is an image that has been very helpful to me and I now try to frame my own political and theological conversations with a heart that is open. As a result I *have been* blessed with conversations that are creative, compassionate, and based on a common understanding of how we care for ourselves and one another. I am curious as to how others are thinking deeply. These last few months conversations, particularly in church, have been fruitful times of thinking *together* more deeply.

This never happens online and only happens in person. I have observed that the most hate filled conversations happen on Facebook, talk shows, or blogs - those places where we truly do not have "face" time together.

And so I am reminded to seek more "face" time and less time on Facebook. I am reminded to get up from the computer, take a walk with someone, call someone, visit someone, talk with and listen to the children and youth that cross my path, and see where God is at work speaking, teaching and guiding. God is always there. Always. God always shows up, and as matter of fact is already there just waiting for us to notice and give thanks.

Immanuel, God is with us. These moments of discovery and thinking more deeply with a heart that is broken open are *those moments* that point towards God. They are moments of creation, life and hope which put the "we" back in "we the people," and allow us to join hands enabling us to brush heaven with fingertips that are joined together.

©2012 Rev. Deborah J. Blanchard
Rev. Deborah J. Blanchard is the minister at First Baptist Church on Littleton Common, and is the manager for blues guitarist Ronnie Earl and his band, the Broadcasters. She is the author of *The Christmas Church*, a story of Christmas meeting-place-moments.



Picture from
Go Red for Women, We Heart

Boy to the World!

H-E-Double Hockey Sticks

By Caroline Poser



Due to my middle son's renewed interest in Legos, there are Lego structures all over the kitchen, dining room, and living room. Occasionally they get knocked over by his brothers or the dog, when any or all of them

are being rowdy. "What do you expect, honey, when you leave your creations in the public domain? We all can't tiptoe around them!" I admonish him before he yells at his brothers (or the dog) yet one more time.

One of his designs needed to be rebuilt a few times. It looked kind of random to me but he was very particular about how it was put together. When I asked him about it, he told me it represented heaven (yellow), earth (white), and "H-E-Double Hockey Sticks" (red). (He's not entirely comfortable with the word "he**".)

"Wow, hon, look at that: it seems that there is hell on earth here." (I, on the other hand, am not uncomfortable with the word at all.)

"What do you mean, mom?"

"Well, see how the white part and the red part are on the same level here?"

"Yeah."

"Well, it's just kind of a visual reminder that you don't actually have to sink to the depths of hell to be miserable. You can be miserable right here on earth."

"I guess..."

“Well, haven’t you ever heard that expression ‘living hell’?”

Blank look.

“Okay, say you do something you know is wrong and you don’t feel all that good about it – isn’t that kind of hellish?”

“Well, it feels bad, yeah.”

“And you made this so it looks like if you do descend into hell, it’s a pretty long way to get back up...”

“Yes, it is. It’s bigger than heaven.”

“Why is that?”

“I don’t know. I didn’t mean it to be. I just had all those red pieces.”

I thought about the “slippery slope.” Temptation is out there: start taking steps in the wrong direction, you get closer and closer to the edge, and before you know it, you’re sliding and then sinking to new depths. From the American Heritage Dictionary, the slippery slope is “a tricky precarious situation, especially one that leads gradually but inexorably to disaster.” How many of us have ever ended up in a disastrous situation, but “didn’t mean it to be?” I know I have, and it is a long road back, but thankfully, not impassible, nor impossible. Certainly more than I wanted to share with my son at that time, so instead, I commented, “Oh, but look – it seems like you have made it possible to have heaven on earth, too...”

“No, not really. Heaven and earth are not on the same level. Maybe your fingertips can brush heaven, Mom, but heaven and earth are definitely separate.”

“Hmmm,” I shrugged, and smiled at him. “Well, make sure you move that awesome structure to the side table so it doesn’t get bumped again.”

I didn’t want to debate his philosophy, even though I did not entirely agree. I think about heaven and the afterlife a lot, especially around the anniversary of my mother’s passing, which is just prior to Thanksgiving. I have written about this before. Where is heaven? We can’t see or hear everything in the electromagnetic spectrum; in fact the portion that we can see and hear with our human eyes and ears is just a small percentage including certain colors of light and radio waves. We can feel some things that we can’t see, such as infra-red light. Is it possible that heaven is right here among us? If you have a living hell, couldn’t you have a living heaven? If heaven is a state of mind, as some people say, couldn’t hell be the same?

I also thought about a conversation I’d had with my oldest when we were discussing our souls and whether or not they existed before they were in our bodies and what happens to them after our earthly existence is finished. This conversation touched on karma, reincarnation, and paganism, too, and had originated when my son had asked, “Why did God make porcupines, anyway?” after our friend’s dog had to have surgery to remove the quills. I told him I surely didn’t know, just as I didn’t know why He made mosquitos, or more importantly, why He lets bad things happen to good people, and hopefully we’d have all our questions answered someday.

“When we die and go to heaven, we can ask God.”

But still I wondered about people of different faiths. I had read a quote attributed to Bishop John Shelby Spong, “God is not a Christian. God is not a Jew or a Muslim or a Hindu or a Buddhist. I honor my tradition. I walk through my tradition. But I don’t believe my tradition defines God, it only points to God.” So, it seems there have to be

many paths to heaven, just as surely as there are many paths to hell. Could one man's heaven could be another man's hell? Is that why there are many rooms in heaven?

Off from school, thanks to Hurricane Sandy, my middle son was eating butter-flavored microwave popcorn and watching a movie with his younger brother and the dog. I overheard him sigh, "Mmmm, this is heaven in the palm of my hand!"

"Hon," isn't that like brushing heaven with your fingertips?"

His crooked smile and glance at me indicated he knew what I meant.

"Yeah...but look," he pointed to the TV where "Forrest Gump" was on. It was the scene where Jenny is walking slowly "home" towards Forest, as he's mowing the lawn. "That's what heaven on earth is, Mom."

Apparently he'd been doing a bit of thinking on the topic as well.

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Caroline Poser lives with her family in Groton.

www.CarolinePoser.com.

First Baptist Winter Retreat

It's not too early to start thinking about our winter family retreat at Pilgrim Pines Conference Center in Swanzee, NH. The dates are Feb 1-3, 2013.

The cost is \$129.00 per person. This includes 2 nights of beautiful lodging and 5 wonderful meals. We had a wonderful time hiking, skating, playing games, talking with each other and just plain relaxing. IT WAS GREAT!

There was no snow so we couldn't sled but there is a great hill for that also. Please sign up on the

sign-up sheet on the kiosk in Fellowship Hall. No money is needed now but will be due on or before January 20, 2013.

Fall Holiday Fair

It's coming quickly, Saturday, Nov. 17 from 9:00 to 3:00. We still need help with the bake sale table, set up and clean up, auction items and advertising. Please tell your friends that Santa and our Teddy Bear Christmas Tree will be here for bring your own camera pictures.

If you haven't already, please take a poster to put in your car window to help with advertising.

We need items for our auction. Could you donate a gift certificate from one of your favorite businesses, a week at your vacation home, a basket of some sort, a meal, baked goods, a service, for example: babysitting, plowing, lawn mowing? *Be creative!*

Please speak to Anne Lee if you can help with the fair and a member of the Finance Board (Gretchen Webster, Dick Huebner, Donna Horvath, Tom Alsup, Dave Mackersie, Constance Smithwood) if you have an item or would like to help with the auction.

charlieandannelee@gmail.com

Women's Ministry Holiday Table

The Women's Ministry is once again having a table at the town holiday bazaar on Saturday, Dec.1 at Littleton Middle School. We would appreciate any and all bake goods and crafts. While you're baking for the fair make a double batch for the bazaar also. Thanks for keeping us in mind

Women's Ministry Sunday, January 6

Epiphany Party and Lunch

Where: Fellowship Hall

When: Right after coffee hour

What to bring: yourself, a friend, Yankee Swap gift for you and your friend, we will pick new and reveal old Secret Pals.

Sunday, April 28:

Concord Players present *The Sound of Music*.

Where: Concord Playhouse

When: Matinee

Look for more information to come but put it on your calendar now.

Hopefully we will also get in a trip to Tower Hill Botanical Gardens or a River cruise on the Concord River. More information to come

Thanksgiving Shopping List for Loaves and Fishes

TO DONATE: Food items below or checks made out to Loaves and Fishes. A \$50 donation will provide a holiday meal for a family of four.

Your gifts will be gratefully accepted.

Our Most Needed Items for Thanksgiving:

Turkeys – 16+ lbs.

Chickens – 5 lbs.

Broth and gravy

100% fruit juice

Pies (apple, pumpkin – regulations prevent us from accepting homemade baked goods)

Stuffing

Cranberry sauce – canned

Boxed potatoes and side dishes

Cake mix and frosting

Coffee, tea, and hot chocolate mix

Fresh vegetables (white/sweet potatoes, onions, squash, carrots)

Canned pumpkin

Pineapple - sliced

Nuts/popcorn/crackers/snacks

Communion Offerings

A reminder from the Diaconate Board that the Deacon's offering will continue to be received on Communion Sundays. Please use one of the envelopes marked *Communion Offering* and place your gift in with the regular offering. Thank you!

AND

We are looking for an Editor-in-Chief of this **newsletter** as well as someone to take over the **website**. If you are interested in either of these important ministries of communication please speak to Pastor Debbie. New ideas and formats for both are welcome!

My Teaching Day for Foxy



I haven't written anything for quite a while, but that's just because every day and every visit have just become routine for me and my folks. But – today was different. I had an unexpected visit from my favorite girl, Foxy (Mikey's pup), and Mom and Dad had already planned on a visit to see Lois Grant in Westford. I let them know that I'd be happy to show Foxy the ropes, so we all decided to drive on over to see Lois.

Doggone, I must confess that the folks over there are just as pleased to see Foxy as they are to see me! I was so excited that I let out a couple of yips and hollers when Nancy came around from her desk to say hello to me, but I think Foxy was interested in someone else so she didn't notice my lapse of manners with Nancy. As usual, after the excited greeting, I settled down and showed Foxy how a well-trained Therapy Dog works the rooms.

Lois was in the corridor on her way to bowling, but she was very happy to return to her room, trailing us behind her. After I introduced Foxy to Lois, they got along really well. Soon Foxy and I were asleep on the floor while Mom and Dad chatted with Lois, and we didn't wake up until Dad announced that we should leave so that Lois could go bowling.

Imagine what it's like going down the corridor with me, making so many stops for folks to pat me, and double the time with TWO dogs! When they weren't stopping to pat me, the nice people were pausing to pat Foxy, even though they had to reach further over to reach her head, since she's built so much shorter than I am. I guess God made us dogs in different sizes so that there'd be a comfortable size for everyone.

On the way back home, we stopped in to my favorite store, "Petthings" in Westford. It smells so doggone nice there! Dad usually gets some of my favorite treats, pig's ears, and Mom picked up some toothpaste and other grooming things for me, which aren't as high on my favorite list as the yummy pig's ears, but they have to be bought anyway.

You should have seen Foxy, at all our stops, loading herself into the car. The back door on the wayback is lifted up, the command "jump" is given by either Mom or Dad, and Foxy gracefully lands in the wayback and folds herself up for a ride. I continue to use the back seat and Mom and Dad are pleased that us pups don't try to get in each other's spot.

Soon we were back home, each receiving a treat for our good behavior, and Foxy's first lesson on being a Therapy Dog has been a great success.

Mosby Mac Fisher, Therapy Dog Trainer

Christmas Flowers Order Form 2012



The time to order Poinsettias for Christmas will be here in no time.

The cost this year is \$14/plant.

Plan to order a plant in memory or honor of someone special to you.

Please give orders and payment to one of the Chancel Team Members ~ Lynda Fisher, Dawn Gravlin, Marge Payne, Harriet DiLuzio or Carol Huebner.

Orders may be mailed to: Carol Huebner, 17 Sherwood Drive, Westford, MA 01886 Checks should be made payable to "Deacons Fund" The order deadline is December 16th.

Quantity_____

Your Name: _____

Phone: _____

Please include the words of recognition you would like to use in the bulletin.

In memory of (or use your own words)

Leave_____ Pick Up_____



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