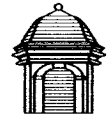


BAPTIST BY-LINES



First Baptist Church of Painted Post, NY

Gary McCaslin, *Pastor*

APRIL 2009

From the Pastor ~ CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF CHRIST

Barbara Brown Taylor is a distinguished teacher and lecturer.

A few years back, she decided to “take a parish” and became the pastor of a small Episcopal church in rural Georgia. Imagine how delighted the people must have been to have this internationally known religious figure in the pulpit each week. Attendance grew; all was well.

But after a few years, The Reverend Doctor Barbara Brown Taylor decided to go back to teaching. She details her reasons in a book: ***Leaving Church: A Memoir of Faith*** and two of those reasons stick in my mind.

First, Taylor did not like being the person to whom so many people always addressed questions. Some of which, I can imagine, are similar to the one’s I hear.

Don't you think we should _____?
What are people going to think if we _____?
When are we going to get _____ fixed?
(insert any number of items or issues above...)
Who is going to teach Sunday School?
Why did he/she/they leave the church?
What are we going to do to balance the budget?
What can I do to have more faith?

A second reason for leaving that I remember was that Rev. Taylor secretly wanted to use too many of her teaching

privileges in the parish and she knew that she just couldn’t say things like:

I am sorry to inform you Mr. Jones, but based on your attitude, behavior and attendance over the past six weeks, I am afraid you have flunked Lent!

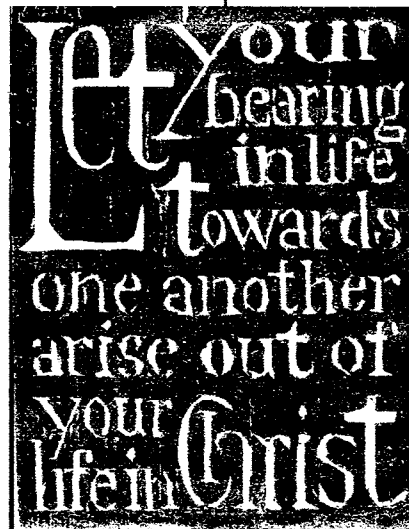
I have no doubt these two reasons for leaving the ministry have crossed many a pastor’s mind... and not just at Lent!

Seriously, when Easter arrives, no one will be handing out grades for Lenten piety. Easter is the beginning of our Life in Christ and, of course, we will all flunk being the kind of Christian that God calls us to be through the Easter Message.

Thankfully God’s love surrounds us eternally and the whole process is self-evaluating because each individual is the only one who knows ~ in the deepest part of his or her heart ~ what is truth.

Yes ~ we are all human and therefore we all mess up on occasion but we do better practicing our faith when we live the journey in community with others. You are invited to jump aboard with this Baptist band of practicing Christians. And may your life in Christ be one of Joy and Peace and Grace all your days.¹

¹ Woodcut by Sally Elliot used with permission of the **Catholic Worker Newspaper**, March-April 2009



APRIL Ushers

Dick Paul
Brad Kinsmen
Gordie Loomis

Communion

Elements/serve Keith Cooper

Children's Church

5- Elise Johnson-Schmidt
12- Amy Grant
19- Lori Cooper
26- Billie Jo

PAINTED POST PANTRY

April

20 - Babbette Thornton and
Sheila McLean

21 - Lynn Peffley and
Irene Lawson

22 - Flo Gabel and
Judy Cooney

23 - Betty Kinsman and
Lynn Wetherill

24 - Dick Paul and
Lynn Decker

If you would like to **volunteer**,
please call Lori Cooper 962-1736



**Painted Post Churches
Food Pantry (PPCFP)**

Relevant February Numbers
(previous months are not in bold):

Children **209**, 336, 451, 335,
Adults **315**, 479, 558, 438
Seniors **28**, 38, 30, 30
People TOTAL ~ **552**, 1039, 808, 964,
Households TOTAL ~ **147**, 235, 206,
222, which includes
NEW Households ~**25**, 28, 52, 39

FBC Finances

February 2009

Total Income	\$ 7,662.00
Total Expenses	-7,388.32
Difference	(+273.68)
Missions	\$101.00

PRAYER CONCERNS

Shirley Sowersby Jan Grace
Betty Hough

THOSE IN THE MILITARY

Ryan Dick Derek Rose
Erik Bailey Randy Hayberg
Matthew Fassett Joshua Jenkins
Justin Rockwell Doug Bennett
Christopher Lundgren Jeff Hall
Charles Meador Daryl Goodwin
Josh DiBartolomeo

*Please Notify the
Church office of any
updates 962-1736*

Easter Offering 2009

will be placed in the **Pastor's Aid Fund**
(formerly the Deacon's Fund)
and will be used, at the Pastor's discretion,
when people call the church
with financial emergencies.

Mark your May Calendars:

Mother-Daughter Banquet
Thursday 14 May

Spring Cleanup Day
Friday evening and Saturday morning
May 8 and 9

Here's another way to contribute...

When you are shopping, and you see a good buy on paper towels, toilet paper, firm paper plates, (no styrofoam) spray cleaners, dish soap (no lemon) or any similar etc, please buy an extra for First Baptist Church.

~ **Thank YOU!!**

Two Pews Available

We decided at the Annual Meeting in January to remove the two front pews in our sanctuary. Do you know of a good home for these 12' 11" long and very heavy pieces of furniture? Contact Dick Paul @ 962-5673

**BYFOTFBCOPPNYASCK
NEWS & Notes for All**

Greetings to

Baptist Youth Groupers
*who are anxiously
awaiting news of the Big
Brainstorming Calendar
Meeting on March 8th to
which no one wore his or
her neat keeno super
duper FBC BYF
T-shirt except*

Allie and Aaron Grant!
Way to go GRANTS!

The very next weekend we
decided to go to **TITANIC!**
at West High where our own
**Wendy Griffin and Dana
Schmidt** were wonderful!

A teen skate is planned for
Saturday 28 March ~ details
on how that went will follow.

Sunday 5 April is part of
Palm Sunday weekend
and we will all be off to see
Derick Abbey in the East
High production of

**A Funny Thing Happened
on the Way to the Forum.**

Easter Sunday is the next
weekend and that means the
FBC Men of all ages
will gather to help
prepare a delicious
breakfast for everyone.

Friday 24 April the FBC
kiddos will stay on after
Game Night to sleep over,
watch a great movie
provided by the
pastor, have a

discussion and maybe,
just maybe, get some sleep.

All we need are some
chaperones and

we are set to go!
Sunday 3 May, right after
church we are planning an
afternoon at Harris Hill and
if they are not open yet we
will postpone a little.

Saturday 30 May, we are
meeting at the church for a
hike and maybe another
sleepover upon our return ~
this is still under discussion...

Saturday 13 June is Colonial
Day Donut sales and

Saturday 20 June is a Canoe
Ride down the Chemung or
an adjacent River.

Monday 6 July begins VBS,
Monday 3 August a few
rowdies want to check out
Kingdom Bound and before
you know it, we will
all be saying

Where did the summer go?

Peace and cheers to y'all
with schmooches—gary

Questions contact the Pastor
garymccaslin@gmail.com

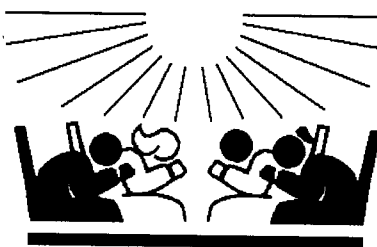
Wednesdays

Prayer Meeting ~ 6 pm

Bible Study ~ 7:30

We meet in homes so
please call

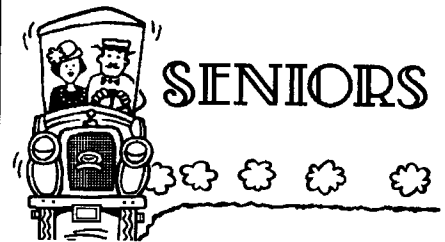
Gary @ 329-6173 to
find out where we are.



ABW

**Wednesday April 8 ~ 10am
at The Central Restaurant
For Breakfast**

Leader~ Ruth Campbell
Program~ Visit Homebound
Location ~ Church Fellowship



New Time: 1pm

Retirees' Luncheon

Wednesday,

April 15, 2009

at The Olive Garden

**Call Joe and Harriet
Anderson**

**at 962-5616 for
reservations.**

*Anyone 55+ is invited
for lunch.*



Monday Morning

May 12

Delivered to FBC by noon

Thank you!!

Shepherd's Table Dinners @ SALVATION ARMY



The next FBCPP turn for serving at the Salvation Army is Sunday, May 31. Additional dates are: July 26, September 13, November 29, and December 20. Butch Abbey is coordinating these meals and he'd love some good folks to help with preparation.

The Stewardship Council provides the money ~ helpers simply need to purchase and prepare the food *in the Salvation Army kitchen* on Denison Parkway starting around 3 pm.

If you are interested but have never done this before, please call Lori Cooper at church and she can answer all your questions ~ please call her at 962-1736. Thank you to all who volunteer for this valuable Christian service.



Off to College Following is a list of young people connected to FBC who are away at college and we just know without asking they'd love some mail. Remember them when you're buying stamps.

Brittnee Abbey
241 Lexington Ave, Apt 1A
Buffalo, NY 14222

Brandilynn Borden
Box 0563
10 Mac Vittie Circle
Geneseo, NY 14454-1427
Email: beb8@geneseo.edu

Alyssa Cooper
SUNY Cortland
709 Clark Hall
Cortland, NY 13045
Email: Alyssa.Cooper@cortland.edu

Samuel Gerth
5 Samaritan Road, Box 80
Albany, NY 12208
Email: Samuel.Gerth@acp.edu

Colin Gordon
Box 2013 ~ SUNY
735 Anderson Hill Road
Purchase, NY 10577-1499

Chelsea Koziatek
331 S Mercer, Apt 21
Bowling Green, Ohio 43403

Caylynn Lott
SUNY Potsdam
2266 Barrington Drive
Potsdam, NY 13676

Andrew Naylor
Mailbox # 610
401 Van Buren Street
Syracuse, NY 13210
Email: ARNaylor@syr.edu

Melyssa Swett
CPO Box #1521, Houghton College
One Williard Avenue
Houghton, NY 14744
Email: melyssa6647@aol.com

Patrick Wetherill
221 Atwood Street, Apt A
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Brittany Wilson
Gannon University PMB1641
109 University Square
Erie, PA 16541-0001
Email: wilson050@gannon.edu

Helen McElwain Lunch
Sunday, April 5



Please remember the first Sunday of each month is when folks are invited to gather in the Narthex and simply grab a bite to eat in the "spirit of Helen McElwain." Helen was fond of recruiting people after worship to go to lunch for a meal and a little chat.

Spring Lectionary Readings from Ash Wednesday through Pentecost are listed on a yellow sheet in this newsletter, and extra copies will be available in the Narthex. If you would like a copy, you may email the pastor (garymccaslin@gmail.com) or call Lori at church and we will send one out right away.



Meet for Breakfast

Men's Breakfast

will be at the Central Restaurant on SATURDAY ~ APRIL 25 AT 7AM

We meet early and will get you home for all of your Saturday chores...


FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH CHOIR REHEARSAL

Thursday evening @ 6:30 pm
in the Sanctuary
In the chilly months of Winter,
they meet in member's home
so call ahead...

Everyone is welcome



Do You Have a Prayer Concern?

 You can start the **Telephone Prayer Chain**, by calling either Ruth Campbell (962-0414), Clara English (962-2042) or Lori Cooper at the Church office (962-1736). In addition, you may begin the **Email Prayer Chain** by sending an email to fbcpaintedpost@verizon.net or garymccaslin@gmail.com.

Using Our Energy and Our Heads Wisely

It's chilly outside and in these very cold months, please remember:

1) Keep those thermostats down! If you put a thermostat up for a meeting, be sure to put it back to 55 degrees. If you do not know how to change the temperature, find Gary, Dan Borden, Sandy Ostebo or Ray Koziatek and get a lesson. If you happen to come in and the church is warm and empty, (and it is not Sunday morning) take a quick tour of the thermostats ~ someone may have forgotten to turn a thermostat back.

2) Keep those doors closed! Let the heat warm rooms and not the whole church.

3) Turn off those lights! Every little bit helps!!

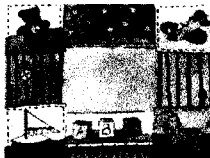


Watch Out for NUTS!!

Please clearly label any food items that contain nuts in order to help folks who may have an allergic reaction. *Thank you.*

Do You Have a Quilt You'd Like to Hang?

For several months this past winter, Dorothy Paul displayed one of her beautiful quilts on the big empty wall in the Church Library. We were sad to see it taken down (quilts lose color if displayed too long) and began wondering: Might there be some quilters reading this article with a beautiful piece of quilted history that might benefit from a few weeks on display? Please contact Lori Cooper to make arrangements. *Thank you!*



FBC is Going Green

We are slowly becoming a Styrofoam-free church environment. We have purchased as a trial some new cups that will biodegrade in the ground in a year as opposed to the Styrofoam that will still be hanging around literally thousands of years down the road.

The costs are the same and when purchased with other organizations, we can actually save money on the venture. Thanks to Sue McInroy for pointing us in this direction.

You Can Help

Choose Hymns



Write a note to the pastor if you have a favorite hymn we have not used in worship and get ready to sing! Thank you!!

e By-Lines

If you would like to receive the By-Lines by email, send a note to:

fbcpaintedpostny@verizon.net

Pantry Volunteer Needed

We are still in need of a volunteer from the First Baptist community for a three hour shift once every four weeks at the Painted Post Churches Food Pantry. *Might that person be you? Contact Gary or Lori ~ 962-1736*

Church Family and Friends!

The Christian Education Team is sponsoring Game Night

on April 24 from 6-9 pm in Fellowship Hall


We provide the tacos and drinks and

you bring snacks or dessert **and** your favorite game.

This is a chance to come and enjoy the fellowship of others and still spend time as a family.

We had a great time in March and are looking for a repeat...

Need a Ride? **to church sometime?**



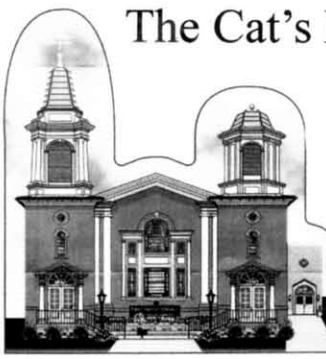
...because it would just make your life a little bit easier? Call the church and we will help arrange a ride with folks coming from your part of town. **Call Lori ~ 962-1736.**

Corning Meals On Wheels Needs Volunteers
 - drivers/visitors 11:15-12:30, Monday- Friday. Could be one day a week or be a substitute for people on vacation. For more information, call Corning Meals on Wheels at 962-7985.

Blanket Mission Sunday on April 26
 As with our Mission Sundays in the past, there  will be **free hot dogs** for all and salads and dessert for a small cost. All proceeds raised will buy blankets for CWS and our Painted Post Storehouse, which distributes clothing and blankets locally.



The Cat's Meow Reproduction of First Baptist Church (only 6 left)



You can now have a beautiful keepsake of our church. They make wonderful gifts for members and anyone who has been associated with our church over the years.

Please contact Donnalynn Ostebo at (607)962-6787 or the church office at (607)962-1736. The cost is \$20.00 each plus a shipping fee for those we have to mail.

THANK GOD FOR EVOLUTION (TGFE) Book and Movie Discussion.
Sunday afternoon, April 4, from 4-6 pm in Fellowship Hall at the First Baptist Church in Painted Post we will be reading the Introduction to Michael Dowd's book **Thank God for Evolution** and discussing how all of these ideas fit into our lives.

REMEMBER: You can download the first fifty pages of Dowd's book from his website: thankgodforevolution.com.
 If you believe evolution and religion can co-exist nicely in your brain and your soul, you are welcome to come March 1 even if you have never read or heard of Michael Dowd. Come to think about it... you'd be welcome even if you didn't think they can co-exist! **Questions? Call Gary at 607-329-6173**




Kitchen Helpers Ruth and Nicole
Ruth Campbell and her granddaughter **Nicole Burgio** came into church this past month and gave the FBC Kitchen a good cleaning. Old and unused items were tossed out and remaining items were organized and storage areas labeled. What a breath of fresh air ~ thank you Ruth and Nicole!


Raymond for Fixing Our Furnace
 The furnace was not pumping out heat and the church was getting chilly one day last February. We called Raymond Koziatek, he was able to repair the unit and we were warm once again! *Thank you Ray!* for the furnace work and the new hardware in women's toilet (that we mentioned when you came for the furnace...)


Events from PALM SUNDAY to EASTER ~


Gary will be away Palm Sunday

 Lisbet Ostebo and Tim Jenkins are getting married in Virginia on Saturday, April 4 and Pastor Gary is honored to have been asked to officiate the ceremony. So that Gary and Annie can “enjoy all of the wedding festivities,” they will not be in church on Sunday, April 5.

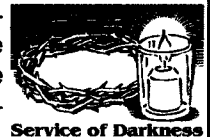
We are delighted to have Jim Ketcham filling in as our preacher for the Palm Sunday service. Jim grew up in an American Baptist home, has served four American Baptist Churches and worked for several years for Church World Service ~ the CROP Walk people. Jim and Jan Curtis and their son John have been active since joining our congregation late last year. Please welcome Jim to worship on Palm Sunday.

 **April 5 ~ Palm Sunday with the Brassworks** ~ Our Palm Sunday tradition of having the Brassworks in worship will continue this year. The wonderful musical feast this talented group of musicians provides adds to the glorious celebration of Palm Sunday as players fill the choir loft. This is our thirteenth year having brass and organ for Palm Sunday ~ be sure to come early to get a seat to hear the Prelude. Thank you to the Brassworks for this wonderful Palm Sunday worship experience. A delicious **Coffee Time** will follow in Fellowship Hall.

 **April 9 ~ Maundy Thursday Service** of Tenebrae at First Baptist Church hosted by the Spiritual Life Committee ~ 7:30 pm in Fellowship Hall – please bring a candle and a holder for your table. We will share Communion and remember Jesus’ betrayal, trial and crucifixion with this dramatic reading. This service ends in darkness and is the one time no one will offer greetings to people as they leave.

 **April 10 at Noon ~ Community Good Friday Service** ~ will be held at Christ Episcopal Church on the corner of First and Cedar in Corning. Rev. McCaslin will be one of several local clergy participating in this service.

April 10 ~ Friday Evening ~ Tenebrae ~ a Service of Shadows. Our sanctuary will be darkened and time together, from 7-8 pm, will consist of quiet music and an opportunity for those gathered to pray, meditate, reflect the solemnity of the day. People are welcome to come whenever and leave whenever they choose, but everyone should know communion will be offered at 7:30 pm.



This service is open to the community and you are cordially invited to join us for this very personal and solemn Good Friday observance.

Easter Breakfast by the FBC Men ~ Calling Men and Boys of all ages! This is our opportunity to prepare a delicious offering for our church community. You are invited to let Pastor Gary know if you can come and gather in the FBC kitchen at 8 am on Easter Sunday to prepare and serve breakfast at 9:30 am sharp. Part of the deal is preparing a secret breakfast dish at home (Pastor Gary will send you the recipe) We will have everything all cleaned up by 10:45 am in time for Easter Worship.



Easter Egg Hunt ~ after breakfast and before worship on Easter Sunday!



Easter Sunday Worship ~ come and celebrate the Risen Christ!



BOOK DISCUSSION ~ “The Shack”

Carol Koziatek has volunteered to coordinate a book study of **The Shack** by William Paul Young. The study will begin Sunday 26 April at 9:30 am in Fellowship Hall. We have several books that can be borrowed from the church. **The Shack** has been on the New York Times bestseller list for over forty weeks and has appealed to people who profess both liberal and conservative theologies. We hope you will consider reading **The Shack** and joining the discussion.

You are welcome to join the Sunday morning discussions even if you have not read the book. The Shack may be purchased on line or through any bookstore. Here is ordering information: **The Shack** by William P. Young, ISBN: 978-0-9647292-3-0. Also, if you interested, you can visit the website at www.theshackbook.com and find out more about this intriguing book.

THE PEOPLE OF GOD AT WORSHIP

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT –

MARCH 15, 2009

MORNING PRAYER

God of Glory and Wonder, God of Majesty and Grace, God of Peace and Hope, we know our lives are so busy and our thoughts so hurried, we hardly take time to be still and breath. You fill our hearts and our souls with a sacred Joy and we can hardly imagine words of thanks. Let our lives be a Thank You! Let the dance that is your Spirit guide our hands and hearts in all we do ~ in the name of the Living Christ ~ AMEN

INVOCATION

*We gather to worship and sing praises to
the One Who Gives Us Life ~
the One Who Is Mystery ~
the One Who is Majesty,
the One Who fills our lives with Hope
and Beauty and Promise and Hope.
We gather to sing praises to
the Living Christ who is alive
in our hearts this day.*

SCRIPTURE

Exodus 20:1-17 *(This passage was not read in the worship service but is included for reference.)* Then God spoke all these words: {2} I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; {3} you shall have no other gods before me. {4} You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water

under the earth. {5} You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, {6} but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments. {7} You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name. {8} Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. {9} Six days you shall labor and do all your work. {10} But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work--you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. {11} For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it. {12} Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. {13} You shall not murder. {14} You shall not commit adultery. {15} You shall not steal. {16} You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. {17} You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

John 2:13-22 The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. {14} In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. {15} Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple,

both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. {16} He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" {17} His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." {18} The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" {19} Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." {20} The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" {21} But he was speaking of the temple of his body. {22} After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

~ SERMON ~

The Facts of Life

When we talk about our relationship with God ~ what are they?

GODLESS AMERICA?

I am not sure if you saw the news this past week but according to a recent American Religious Identification Survey, we live in a nation that is growing more and more godless with each passing year.

What this means is that fewer people are going to church and when they do go, they don't give a hoot about denominations.

Americans who are getting married are not choosing ministers to hold the service and when they

die, more people are choosing not to have religious funerals.

The articles I read on this godless issue have been celebrated by atheists as part of a "Gradual Awakening" to the true nature of religion in America. More and more people are not seeing the value of religion in their lives.

One of our scriptures for today is from Exodus 20. This is the collection of laws we call the Ten Commandments which God is supposed to have given to Moses and the Hebrew Children when they were roaming around in the wilderness after God delivered them out of Egypt where they had been living under mean old Pharaoh.

How do we look at such a story of deliverance in this modern age? And how do we see these commandments in light of the recent findings of our country's godlessness?

Such questions only produce others like:

Why listen to Gary?

What does Gary McCaslin or any minister know about a God who created the Universe 13.7 billion years ago and is finally unknowable to all who seek "to know God?" Are we Christians participating in a totally irrelevant practice and being guided by some ancient, out of date irrelevant texts?

Can't you just hear the critics thinking:

God gave Moses tablets of stone? With laws on them? Please... just read me another fairy tale!

HOW WE SEE THE BIBLE

When I started in this preaching business years ago, I decided to construct my sermons assuming the people I was preaching to did not know the Bible stories. I quickly found out this was a safe assumption because most people really *didn't* know the stories.

What I did find was that most people had a childlike understanding of the Bible because they heard the stories that were appropriate for children when they were children, but they never stuck around for the other stories of the Bible and the discussions of those stories that give power and meaning to people's lives.

A CRITICISM

And when people don't have an adult understanding of the Bible, I hear them wondering...

*Why don't we just toss out
the whole thing?*

Who needs religion?

*Who needs all the old stories
that have nothing to do
with my life today?*

*I've got enough on my plate
without trying to squeeze in
some old beliefs put forward
by an institution that is
struggling to pay the bills*

and only wants money to survive.

That's a pretty harsh perspective but nothing many of you haven't already heard.

GUIDELINES FOR TOSSING

As you might imagine, I have a few comments to make on such an evaluation of religion.

The first is, in many ways, the criticism is correct.

If our religious faith is based a literal, word-for-word pre-teenage understanding of God as an old man in the sky watching over us and keeping tally of all our good deeds and evil thoughts like some kind of obsessive, judgmental, holy Santa Claus, then we should throw the whole thing out.

And if our religious faith is simply holding on to a certain set of beliefs and getting others to believe as we do so that we go to heaven when we die, then we should throw the whole thing out.

And if our religious faith does not include some kind of language about God ~ as so many people know God ~ within the majesty and mystery of all Creation ~ including the entire Universe, then ~ yes ~ we should throw the whole thing out.

In this world, which is so desperately in need of love and compassion, we need a childlike faith that accepts Christ as a Way to our salvation. We do not need a childish faith rooted in a first century understanding of the world.

RELIGION BASED ON BERNIE

A second comment on the whole idea to throw out religion focuses on Bernie Madoff. Somehow I think it is an interesting coincidence that the same week we

found out we were becoming a godless nation, Bernie Madoff found out he was going to spend the rest of his life in jail for stealing over \$50 billion from unsuspecting people who trusted him with their life savings.

He says he only started his "Ponzi" scheme during a recession in the late 1990's as a way to get through the recession but then once the it passed, Madoff discovered he could not stop. His scheme had so much inertia, he said:

it took on a life of its own.

Once again, greed and fear and ignorance ruled and now, not only is Bernie Madoff in jail, but thousands are without their life's savings.

Bernie Madoff thought he was just accumulating money but his scheme ~ that he knew was going to eventually be discovered ~ had such a far-reaching effects into so many people's lives.

What we need is a religion that gets inside of people and reaches out to touch as many people as Bernie Madoff robbed... but instead of deceiving and stealing ~ reaching out with a commitment to serve.

BERNIE'S RETRIBUTION

I don't think the Bernie Madoff should go to jail for the rest of his life.

I think he should shadow a social worker or a garbage collector or a daycare provider, working side by side with these people every day, for the rest of his life.

I think Bernie Madoff should change a few diapers ~ children and adult. I think he should take out his own garbage and be in a position where, day after day, he can *hear* the endless stories and *live* the life of those whose lives are so precariously balanced from paycheck to paycheck that one bout with the flu might begin an avalanche of events that ends with a family being homeless.

He can go home and sleep, but his home would be in a part of town where it might not be safe to go out at night and he has to come home exhausted, cook his own meals and get up at the crack of dawn when he'd rather sleep in.

He'd have to rub elbows with those who serve first and worry about the money later.

And you know what I think? I think it wouldn't take too long in this process before Bernie Madoff met people who believe in a God Who is Love and Compassion and is a source of Strength for all these impossible times.

If we are going to see a change in our Godless America, then we will need the creativity and determination of a Bernie Madoff who has *the sacred sense of God* right here in his soul and not a Bernie Madoff who is trying to fill some kind of empty space in his soul with billions and billions of dollars... because you and I know, when we ask how many billions it will take to fill that kind of hole, there is no final answer to the question.

What will it take to get that kind of religion in the minds and hearts of the people?

BEYOND GODLESS ~ SPIRIT OF LAW

I don't have the final answer to that one either but I believe we can discuss the right direction we should be headed. It will require a great repentance or huge turning of our entire species in a brand new direction.

Religion will only begin to make sense to people when we *embrace the spirit of the law instead of the letter of the law.*

In many ways today, laws are only seen by too many people as something we work to get around.

We have to remember that when the Ten Commandments were written, they called on a kind of human behavior that was unknown at the time.

Almost three thousand years ago, the Ten Commandments that we see as old and arcane and don't even think about unless someone is trying to remove them from a courthouse... these commandments were radical statements that asked people to practice *a loving restraint* with those within their Hebrew community.

And that was fine for a while but it wasn't enough. And so Jesus came along and expanded this loving restraint not only for those *within* the community but to every person... those who *believed* differently about God, those who *spoke* differently, those who *dressed*

differently... even those we would call our enemies.

Jesus put right out on the table the truth about violence and hatred and revenge. And that truth we all know but never want to admit is simply this:

There is no end to the increasing circle of violence that grows and grows as hatred consumes a soul.

The "Spirit of the Law" I mentioned earlier is based on

Do unto others.

That's all we need; it is not rocket science. The problem is that *doing unto other human beings* is not even enough for our world today.

We must also cease the war our society has been waging on the Earth since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution over two hundred years ago.

JOANNA MACY'S GREAT TURNING

Joanna Macy is a Buddhist teacher who talks passionately to everyone who will listen about *The Great Turning* ~ a new kind of Revolution for our species.¹

Macy points out that humans have had an *Agricultural Revolution* about ten thousand years ago that changed who we are and an *Industrial Revolution* about two hundred and fifty years ago and now we are poised for the *Greatest Revolution* ~ a new way of thinking that will move us

from an industrial growth society

¹ <http://www.joannamacy.net/html/great.html>

to a life-sustaining civilization.
As long as we have an economic system dependent only on ever-increasing corporate profits, the more we will continue to simply extract materials from the Earth and turn them into consumer products, weapons, and waste.

Joanna Macy believes
a revolution is underway because people are beginning to realize our needs can be met without destroying our world.

We have the technical knowledge, the communication tools, and material resources to grow enough food, ensure clean air and water, and meet rational energy needs.

And one more thing about this Great Turning: it simply will not happen unless we open our eyes to the reality that *we are all connected each to one another... and with every living organism on this planet.*

The wall that Jesus took down between humans now needs to be removed between humans and all life on this planet.

THE NECESSARY UPSET **AND STRUGGLE**

And finally, we need to remember nothing is going to change without a struggle. That's one of the lessons of the story we read this morning ~ Jesus turning over the tables in the temple.

It always used to bother me that the Gospel of John put this story of turning over the tables in the temple at the very beginning of

Jesus' ministry when Matthew, Mark and Luke put the story at the end.

I always used to feel it made John sort of out of touch with reality. Jesus turned over the tables when he arrived in Jerusalem for Passover on the day we call Palm Sunday and it is clearly one of the events that led to his arrest and crucifixion. It never made sense to have it at the beginning of his ministry.

But... when we see John as a symbolic Gospel and see the overturned tables at the beginning, I have come to see this story now as a symbolic event signaling a message that will be presented over and over again throughout the entire Gospel of John:

Jesus is coming into the lives of the people and he is going to turn every thing we thought we knew about God and the world upside down!

Some of the things Jesus says are going to seem very violent and some of the things he does are going to make people upset but the way we see the world will never be the same again.

The temples we have in our minds that we thought were all neat and tidy and business like and orderly, they are all about to be flipped upside down... look out!

Martin Luther King said

Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle. And so we must straighten our backs and work for freedom.

I would only add that change does not come only through continuous struggle but also through the choices we make every day to speak and live the Way Christ calls us to live.

We too often cannot straighten our backs because we are carrying the burdens labeled

I am only one small voice,
and
my life is too insignificant to make a difference and bring change.
What we need instead is to embrace a vision that will transform all we know.


Now is the time and this is the day let make the decision to let Christ rule in our hearts as we embrace the world. May it be so for all of our days. AMEN

In preparing this sermon, I came across these Earth Commandments² that compliment the sermon but only found a place in this final editing.

² <http://www.earthcommandments.com/>




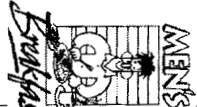
EARTH COMMANDMENTS:

1. Thou shalt see thyself as part of the whole and not place thyself above other creatures.
2. Thou shalt live in balance and harmony with all creation and not seek dominion over nature.
3. Thou shalt not multiply thy species endlessly without regard to the limits of my bounty.
4. Thou shalt not empty the seas of fish and the forest of trees, nor turn fertile fields to deserts and take the blue from the skies.
5. Thou shalt not overgraze thy sheep till pastures disappear and famine visits the land.
6. Thou shalt not produce what cannot be destroyed and returned to dust upon the earth.
7. Thou shalt not harvest greed, envy, and hatred but instead husband thy seed stock and plant as well the seeds of peace, love, and tranquility.
8. Thou shalt be a friend to the world and to all creatures great and small by doing unto all species as you would have them do unto mankind.
9. Thou shalt walk lightly upon the earth and nurture the balance of existence, seeking not a kingdom in the sky but a heaven on earth.
10. Thou shalt keep the earth a paradise as it has been for all eternity.


Every Sunday
 9:30 Sunday School
 10:45 Worship
 Coffee hour the 1st & 26th
 TGFE--the 1st at 4pm in fellowship Hall

April 2009



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Palm Sunday communion Brassworks 4 TGFE 	6	7	8 ABW 6:30 Scouts	9 6:30 Choir 7:30 Maundy Thursday	10 Good Friday 7-8 Meditation & communion	11
12 Easter 9:30 Breakfast and Egg Hunt	13 	14	15 1:00 Senior Luncheon 6:00 Prayer / Bible study	16 6:30 Choir	17	18
19	20	C - P P S c h o o l s S p r i n g B r e a k				
26 PANTRY SUNDAY 	27	21	22 6:00 Prayer / Bible Study 6:30 Scouts	23 6:30 Choir	24 6--Family Game Night/ Tacos	25 7 am Men's Breakfast at The Central 
28	29	30	6:00 Prayer / Bible Study 6:30 Scouts			

A Victim Treats His Mugger Right <http://www.npr.org> Morning Edition, March 28, 2008

Julio Diaz has a daily routine. Every night, the 31-year-old social worker ends his hour-long subway commute to the Bronx one stop early, just so he can eat at his favorite diner. But one night last month, as Diaz stepped off the No. 6 train and onto a nearly empty platform, his evening took an unexpected turn. He was walking toward the stairs when a teenage boy approached and pulled out a knife. "He wants my money, so I just gave him my wallet and told him, 'Here you go,'" Diaz says. As the teen began to walk away, Diaz told him, "Hey, wait a minute. You forgot something. If you're going to be robbing people for the rest of the night, you might as well take my coat to keep you warm." The would-be robber looked at his would-be victim, "like what's going on here?" Diaz says. "He asked me, 'Why are you doing this?'" Diaz replied: "If you're willing to risk your freedom for a few dollars, then I guess you must really need the money. I mean, all I wanted to do was get dinner and if you really want to join me ... hey, you're more than welcome. "You know, I just felt maybe he really needs help," Diaz says. Diaz says he and the teen went into the diner and sat in a booth. "The manager comes by, the dishwashers come by, the waiters come by to say hi," Diaz says. "The kid was like, 'You know everybody here. Do you own this place?'" "No, I just eat here a lot," Diaz says he told the teen. "He says, 'But you're even nice to the dishwasher.'" Diaz replied, "Well, haven't you been taught you should be nice to everybody?" "Yea, but I didn't think people actually behaved that way," the teen said. Diaz asked him what he wanted out of life. "He just had almost a sad face," Diaz says. The teen couldn't answer Diaz — or he didn't want to. When the bill arrived, Diaz told the teen, "Look, I guess you're going to have to pay for this bill 'cause you have my money and I can't pay for this. So if you give me my wallet back, I'll gladly treat you." The teen "didn't even think about it" and returned the wallet, Diaz says. "I gave him \$20 ... I figure maybe it'll help him. I don't know." Diaz says he asked for something in return — the teen's knife — "and he gave it to me." Afterward, when Diaz told his mother what happened, she said, "You're the type of kid that if someone asked you for the time, you gave them your watch." "I figure, you know, if you treat people right, you can only hope that they treat you right. It's as simple as it gets in this complicated world."

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SUNDAY SCHEDULE

9:30 am Sunday School
10:45 am Morning Worship
APRIL 2009

FIRST SUNDAY
SUNDAY SCHOOL
APRIL 5TH
NO BREAKFAST THIS
MONTH

Come and Celebrate
Palm Sunday with the
Brassworks
and a delicious
Coffeetime
after Worship



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