



# News

from the

## First Baptist Church

of Pittsburgh

October 2004

### EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ANYONE?

PASTOR GARY DENNING

Since November 1996, we have hosted the Biblical Archeology Society of Pittsburgh. That first year, Volkmar Fritz, Director of the German Protestant Archeology Institute in Jerusalem came to promote the excavation work at Kinneret where eight of us served as volunteers in September 1997. Ed and Mary Floyd had put me in touch with the Society as a means of publicizing the event. They promised to promote it, if they could include it as part of their series.

The result of that initial contact was an annual request to host a lecture at FBC. They have even asked me to suggest speakers. My choices have included Donald Redford (University of Toronto) a specialist on the Egyptian period of Ramses II, and John Van Seters (U. of North Carolina) a specialist on excavations in the Nile Delta, including the locations of Ramses and Pithom, store cities mentioned in Exodus 1. As you might guess, I have leaned toward speakers dealing with the Exodus from Egypt, the most important salvation event of the Old Testament, and the model for how Hebrew writing would express how God works His saving will in all of human history leading up to Christ.

This year our guest will be Ann Guinan, a specialist in ancient Near Eastern culture and languages. She is a research associate at the University of Pennsylvania Museum in Philadelphia, and has done extensive work with the British Museum in London as well. She will speak on "Libraries of the Ancient World."

Excavations of ancient libraries have given us everything from broader understanding of place names and people of the Bible, to our oldest existing copies of books of the Bible, down to Christian splinter-group writings not included in our Bible. Those attending our Wednesday noontime Bible studies have heard me bring in stories from the ancient world of the Bible that help us better understand the book of Genesis – creation, creation of woman, the great flood, etc. Where did archeologists find such stories? It was largely from fragments found in ancient libraries or even on tablets school children used for learning to write.

Join us in the Sanctuary for a fascinating evening Sunday, October 10, 7:30 p.m. as we hear about "Libraries of the Ancient World."

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## EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ANYONE? PART 2

### ALLEGHENY CO. RESPITE CARE COALITION

PASTOR GARY DENNING

We hosted the Allegheny Co. Respite Care Coalition on Monday, September 20. The organization was begun through the Western PA School for Blind Children, our neighbor. As you may know, the school currently deals with children with multiple disabilities beyond blindness. Last night families came, some with children being treated for as many as 11 disabilities.

The purpose was to meet with political leaders, and help them become aware of the acute need these families have for “respite care”. The families simply need to hire someone to care for their child so that they can have a moment of rest from the extreme levels of care these children require. As we sat in the room, I watched one mother plug a gravity-powered feeding tube into her wiggling daughter’s stomach. A father organized a feeding pump while his wife held their son still and the tube could be inserted. A third couple described the two-hour evening preparation they do with their wheelchair-bound 11 year-old son. (I have a picture of him visiting our farm animals during VBS 2003!) They feed him through the mouth, but they have to use a device to purge his bowels after feeding. Families spoke of strain on their marriages, other children who cannot do what their friends do, isolation from adult friends who tend to avoid them now, fears of what will become of their child when age or death prevents the parent or parents from providing 24-hour care. Even trips to hospital have given these families a common experience: The staff is not trained to deal with such complex medical issues, and parents have to stay with the child constantly to avoid deadly mistakes. And yet, the love in their voices made it clear they did not want their child to be institutionalized. They just want a break.

State Representative Dan Frankel explained that funding earmarked a couple of years ago for Respite Care had dissolved because of other budget needs. Nancy Blank, a nurse but also on staff with Senator Jack Wagner, explained that medical staff were not trained to handle such extreme care issues and that with current practices by insurance companies, it was unlikely that new people would specialize in the kinds of care these children needed. Adam Pope with Senator Arlen Specter’s local office, reiterated Rep. Frankel’s encouragement that families keep calling, writing, and visiting to keep the issues visible to their leaders. Jason Tigano with Rep. Mike Doyle, did the same, and Councilman William Perduto advised that two lines in their own handwriting would do more than any form letter.

Marion Clark bluntly asked guest speakers, “What can we do?” First, we have already done something. We hosted our neighbors for this meeting. They asked to come to FBC in spite of having a brand new building of their own. But I would like to get the word out to Masters or Doctoral students of social work that here is a good dissertation project.

A couple of angles strike me immediately. One would be to study the family dynamics. Interview these families, to find out the complexities of dealing with the medical issues, with one another in their families, with neighbors and friends, with agencies, etc. What common experiences can be identified, and thereby better addressed. That information, when properly quantified, could be useful for social agencies, for the medical community and for governing leaders. A second possibility would be to study the dynamics of government decision making on such issues. What are the compelling reasons for saying “yes” or “no” to issues like Respite Care? For example, is it not a large enough sector of the population to justify legislation? Then what would it take to promote it as an exceptional need, get some initial funding, and perhaps a better reception next year?

Do leaders need more grass-roots stories, more calls, more letters? I doubt it. But a well-written dissertation could be the foundation for precisely defining areas to concentrate energy, achieve funding, and ultimately bring some relief to weary families. Students – Angie or Lorenda or someone else: Contact the Respite Care Coalition and find out how you could do a front-line, quality project that would achieve your academic goals and offer great service to the community.

Contact:

<http://www.acrcc.org/>

[info@acrcc.org](mailto:info@acrcc.org)

1-800-876-7607

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August 29, 2004 was a joyous day for the congregation of FBC when we welcomed five new members; Marissa Lucas, James Lucas (Marissa's father), Kashia Lumsford, who first came to us a member of the evening children's program, Christina Motzko, who has been worshipping with us for some time and Nathan Locklin who has been worshipping with us for awhile and also volunteering in many ways. Marissa, James, Kashia and Christina were baptized that day. We welcome these new members. If you haven't met these new members yet, take an opportunity to greet them.



Several months ago we had contact with one of our former members, Mary Lou Spindt. Mary Lou and her late husband Rod had been active members of FBC a number of years ago.

She sent us word that another former member, James Wright, who had been active about the same time has died.

James Wright died in San Angelo, Texas on July 5, 2004.

We send our condolences to his wife, Wyn Nelle and their families.



**JOB: A MAN OF HEROIC ENDURANCE**

College/Young Adult  
Sunday School Class

CHAD ZOLL



**FIRST CONCERT OF THE  
2004-05 SEASON**

Have you marked your calendar for the first concert of the new season on October 11 at 8 pm? This is a Monday evening. The American University Chamber Singers directed by Daniel Abraham will be presenting this concert.



One day God was looking down at Earth and saw all of the rascally behavior that was going on. He decided to send an angel down to Earth to check it out. So he called one of His angels and sent the angel to Earth for a time. When he returned, he told God, "Yes, it is bad on Earth; 95% are misbehaving & only 5% are not." God thought for a moment and said, "Maybe I had better send down a second angel to get another opinion." So God called another angel and sent him to Earth for a time too. When the angel returned he went to God and said, Yes, it's true. The Earth is in decline; 95% are misbehaving, but 5% are being good."

God was not pleased. So He decided to E-mail the 5% that were good, because He wanted to encourage them. Give them a little something to help them keep going.

Do you know what the E-mail said?.....

I didn't get one either....

Why did Job go through so much suffering? What can we do to help console people who are suffering? These are some of the initial questions I had after going through the first 10 Chapters of Job on my own. I've always known life is difficult but I hate to think of life as unfair. When I think of Job, he is a man caught in the ultimate test of faith, with a cosmic battle in the background for man's soul. For him, life is unfair. Job has pursued God earnestly and was upright in God's sight. Come join the class and discover how Job deals with destruction, poor counsel, and the attack of Satan.

Sunday School is at 10 am on Sundays under the Balcony in the Library, before worship.



Sunday morning Bible Study



LESLIE SMEDLEY

Many sincere and heartfelt thanks to EVERYONE--there are many of you--who so kindly helped to arrange, cook, set up and clean up the celebrations we had for Nathan and Ron this past summer. The food and the fellowship were wonderful. Although we were sad to bid farewell to these two fine young men, they left knowing how much we were blessed by and grateful for the time they spent with us. Again, thank you to all who assisted.




## THANK YOU FOR THE FELLOWSHIP

CHAD ZOLL

Just wanted to thank the First Baptist Church for 5 great cookouts this summer. It is always fun hanging out with friends and family in the outdoors enjoying some burgers on the grill. I want to thank Casey Gnage, Ben Ontineo, and Curt Kovach with grilling and everybody who contributed food at each of the events. We even had an ICE CREAM social after our Sunday of Baptisms. This summer was truly a time of celebrations. Thank you.



"I can't eat Quaker Oats. I'm a Baptist."



...that you can get a preview of the Sunday sermon? Go to the FBC website, [first-baptist-pittsburgh.org](http://first-baptist-pittsburgh.org), and look at "Questions We're Asking."

# WISE ADMINISTRATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

## Healthy Church Characteristic Number 8

SEAN KING

First Baptist Church of Pittsburgh and Adams Square Baptist, Worcester Massachusetts, have different administrative structures. FBC has a Board Trustees, Adams Square doesn't. The ASBC building committee maintains the building. An auditing committee examines the records of the treasurer and the collector, who are elected directly by the congregation. The executive board at Adams Square is the equivalent of FBC's church council with the additional role of preparing and monitoring the annual budget. First Baptist has men and women on one deacon board; Adams Square has deacons and deaconesses as separate boards. I could continue comparing and contrasting the two church's administrative structures. My point is that the same functions are carried out in different ways, in ways that at a specific time and place seemed efficient.

Are those structures still efficient? Having looked through the history of Adams Square I know that there used to be a separate finance committee that prepared the budget but change occurred. Namely, there was a lack of interest in the committee so the decision was made for the Executive Board to absorb that function. Should we make any changes at First Baptist Pittsburgh? Is there anything we can do to be more affective? As an exercise I prepared an organization chart for the church. When names are placed in the chart the organization becomes less clear because some people appear in multiple locations.

It is possible to do things differently than expected. When I took over as treasurer for the International Student Association at Clark University, the previous treasurer was an accounting major who very carefully explained to me all the codes in the ledger and all the forms needed. When it was time to present the budget to the Allocations Committee of the Student Council to get our fair share of the student activities fee, I could answer all their questions and got exactly what I asked for. And I asked for exactly what the organization needed/wanted. The allocations committee was pleasantly surprised and commented that I didn't pad the budgets expecting it to be cut. Efficiency saves everybody's time. With good communication at the start there was both trust and efficiency that helped me with unforeseen situations that occurred later in the semester.

Administration is not just about efficiency but also accountability. *In the Name of Jesus* by Henri Nouwen cautions the reader about 3 temptations: to be relevant, to be popular, and to be powerful. Each temptation is countered by a comment from Jesus in John 21. First we are asked, "do you love Jesus more than these others?" If so then pray, for on the surface prayer seems irrelevant. Second we are commanded to "feed my sheep", which means we will see our sins and our inability to feed others on our own. Third we are told that when we grow old someone will take us where we might not want to go, a reflection that only eternal things matter. Without prayer and reflection on sin and powerlessness, nothing would be different. Prayer, confession, and worship give our administrative activity a focus on God's wisdom and accountability to the Holy Spirit.

1. God's empowering presence
2. God-exalting worship
3. Spiritual disciplines
4. Learning and growing in community
5. Commitment to loving and caring relationships
6. Servant-leadership development
7. Outward focus
8. Wise administration and accountability
9. Networking within the larger Body of Christ
10. Stewardship and generosity



WEEKLY EVENTS

Sunday: 10 a.m. Sunday School  
Pastor's Bible Study, Library  
Children, Downstairs  
Young Adults, under the  
balcony  
11 a.m. Worship  
4 p.m. Pittsburgh Chinese Church

Mondays: 12 n, English class  
3 p.m. Kumon School  
7 p.m. Bridge, 1st & 3rd Mondays

Tuesdays: 6:30 p.m. Prayer Group  
7 p.m. English classes

Wednesdays: 6 pm Light meal  
7 p.m. Alpha & Bible Study

Fridays: 3 p.m. Kumon school  
7 p.m. Chinese Students



October  
13-17  
2004

NEWSLETTER OF THE FIRST BAPTIST  
CHURCH OF PITTSBURGH  
159 N. BELLEFIELD AVE. PGH, PA 15213  
TELEPHONE 621-0500  
FAX 621-3136  
REV. GARY DENNING, PASTOR  
ALBERT JOHNSON, SR; PUBLICITY  
GUSSIE BOSS, EDITOR  
E-mail: first-baptist-pgh@usa.net  
Church Web Page:  
<http://www.first-baptist-pittsburgh.org>  
**News for November issue due Oct. 13-17**

MONTHLY EVENTS

Sunday Oct. 3 12:30 p.m. Board of Deacons  
Sunday Oct. 10: 12:30 p.m. Board of Trustees  
Tuesday Oct. 12 7:30 p.m. Church Council  
Wednesday Oct. 13: Newsletter deadline  
Wednesday Oct. 20 Print Newsletter  
Sunday October 24 12:30 p.m. Congregation  
Meeting

SPECIAL EVENTS

Sunday October 10 7 p.m. Archeology  
Society, Anne Guinan  
Monday October 11 8 p.m. American  
University Chamber Singers



LET US KNOW.....  
\_\_\_\_\_ Please correct my address  
\_\_\_\_\_ Please remove my name from your  
mailing list  
Please send the information to First Baptist  
Church of Pittsburgh, 159 N. Bellefield Ave.,  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

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**WORSHIP WITH US  
SUNDAY MORNING  
SUNDAY SCHOOL  
10 A.M.  
WORSHIP SERVICE  
11 A.M.**