



# News

from the

## First Baptist Church

of Pittsburgh

September 2006

### “Be My Witnesses”

PASTOR GARY DENNING

Jesus told his followers, “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

The challenge to be witnesses to Christ is renewed every time we experience change. Change came for those early disciples as Jesus ascended to heaven. They would be without him physically, but his challenge would remain to carry out his mission of reconciling the world to God. ( 2 Corinthians 5:19-20) Christ’s promise was to give them the power to carry out that challenge.

If you are a church or a business in Oakland, you can count on an annual invitation from the Pitt News to advertise in the Welcome Back edition of their newspaper. The Pitt News represents the influx of new students as the biggest change in Oakland and the biggest opportunity of the year. Their advertising is not subtle. This year’s invitation read, “A sample of the \$84.8 million spent annually by The Pitt News’ readership, a share of which could be yours. You want it? You got it.” Then follows what purports to be a letter from a returning student: “Dear Pittsburgh, We all had a great summer, but we miss you, all 27,000 of us. SO WE’RE COMING BACK! Together, we students have about \$7 million per month to spend (that’s after we pay for tuition, rent and books!)” It goes on, but what should you do? According to the invitation, you should immediately advertise your business or organization in their newspaper and profit from all that money.

We at First Baptist face this challenge each year with the promise from Christ that the Holy Spirit will empower us to be his witnesses.

The challenge often comes in the form of a question, not unlike the spirit of that newspaper invitation. A parent or student ask, “What kinds of programs do you have for students?” Sometimes I wish I could answer with the same spirit and say, “We have a strong student ministry

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reaching an average of 100 students at our weekly meetings, hosting annual retreats, taking mission trips to Central America; and from that group an average of two a year have chosen to go into full-time Christian ministry!" But Christ did not promise any of those glamorous, marketable success stories. Christ promised an empowering Holy Spirit to be his witnesses in the world.

What I should be able to say to any parent or student is that here at FBC they and their student will encounter a Holy Spirit empowered witness to Jesus Christ. What particular form that witness takes will vary according to the gifts of individuals in the church.

For example, if their student joins the choir, they will encounter expert musical leadership from Richard and Michael. They will have opportunities to provide strong worship leadership on Sundays and to be as active as they choose to be in concerts. With Richard and Michael they will discover how faithfulness to Christ translates into dedication to high quality in the use of musical gifts.

What if they are looking for Bible study? If they join us on Sunday mornings at Sunday School, they will have opportunity to gain background understanding of the Scripture text used in worship that day, and they will discover how faithfulness to Christ can translate into dedication to high quality in the use of Biblical scholarship.

On Wednesdays they will find that same faithfulness to Christ devoted to lay-leadership in weekly study of some book of the Bible or some Biblical theme. At Advent, Lent and Pentecost, the pastor will again bring his own expertise and occasionally that of a guest speaker to increase our understanding of the life and purpose of Christ, the history of our faith, and the goal of our mission to reconcile the world to God, beginning with ourselves.

What if they are looking for mission opportunities? No student would have doubted the value of their mission efforts if they had worked with our children at VBS the first week of August. Those opportunities are as close as the children of our church, the neighborhood teens we have built relationships with over the past 10 years, the senior adults in our various nursing facilities, and through East End Cooperative Ministry whom we support, they can work with soup kitchens, food pantries, homeless shelters, after-school programs, meals-on-wheels, and a number of opportunities that may not be the same as a long-distance mission trip to Central America, but which will represent the faithful witness through ongoing ministries that need willing hands with staying power.


The 27,000 students, the \$7 million, and the high profile appearance of many student ministries were not promises Christ made to us. Holy Spirit power to be witnesses and the challenge to be ambassadors of reconciliation - those were the promises. It is to that promise that we are called to be faithful again this year as we face the biggest change of our calendar year - new people coming to church especially in September and October.

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



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

## BIBLICAL ARCHEOLOGY SOCIETY MEETS AT FBC

REV. GARY DENNING

Since 1996 our pastor has annually hosted one meeting of the Biblical Archeology Society of Pittsburgh. On Sunday, September 17, 7:30 p.m., Dr. Peter Feinman will speak at FBC on the topic: "Finkelstein's Achilles' Heel: The Omrides and Davides". Finkelstein is a Jewish archeologist who has challenged the dating of Old Testament writings, suggesting that they were actually written as late as 100 years before Christ by Jewish people living in Alexandria, Egypt, and that the stories of David especially were mythical creations to establish a Jewish right to the Holy Land. The Omri dynasty of the north and the Davidic dynasty of the south never existed, according to Finkelstein. Dr. Feinman will clarify and challenge Finkelstein's position based on his own archeological findings as well as those of others. Keep in mind that in 1993 the first actual tablet was found in the ancient city of Dan, with the words, "house of David" (alluding to the Davidic dynasty?) by archeologists. Pastor Denning got to see it in 1996 as the team from Kinneret visited under the leadership of Volkmar Fritz who spoke at FBC that same year. Feinman will bring the latest reports from archeological evidence, and address Finkelstein's contested theories.

Other Biblical Archeology Society meetings are scheduled, but the locations have not yet been determined:

Dr. Clemens Reichel: Origins of Cities in Mesopotamia  
Sunday Dec 17, 7:30 PM Tel Hamukar

Dr. James Hoffmeier: Israel in Egypt: the Eastern Delta  
Sunday Jan 14, 7:30 PM

Dr. Yohannes Zeleke: Early History of Ethiopian Jews  
Sunday Mar 18, 7:30PM

## THIRD SATURDAY PRAYER AND PRAISE 10TH ANNIVERSARY!

The Third Saturday Prayer and Praise Service will celebrate its 10th anniversary on Saturday, September 16, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. Come join with us in a Spirit-filled afternoon as we enjoy music provided by the Gospel Envoys of Pittsburgh, testimony of God's work in our lives, and prayer for strength in all that we do. Meet people from some 20 or more Pittsburgh churches who have devoted themselves faithfully to such prayer and praise in our church for 10 years.

Congratulations  
on Your  
New Baby!



Mary Floyd has proudly announced that she and Ed have another grandchild.

Eric Millirons Floyd, 9lb 3oz, was born July 24 in Charlottesville, Virginia. He's John and Julie's 2nd child.

Congratulations to the parents and the grandparents.

NEWSLETTER OF THE FIRST BAPTIST  
CHURCH OF PITTSBURGH

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**News for October 2006 due Sept. 20, 2006**

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR "HEART" WORK

PETROULA DELIVORIAS

Now that Vacation Bible School is behind us, I get the chance to reflect upon the week and tell you all about it! Of course, it's not as exciting and rewarding as being there yourself, but I hope my account and especially the pictures bring you joy, as well as encourage you to join in on the fun!

When I think of VBS and all the pre-VBS activities, I can't help but think of all the people who worked so hard to make Vacation Bible School such a great success. There are too many volunteers to name and thank, and as far as their contributions go, I think you will be able to get a glimpse of that in the pictures. Of course, a camera can't capture all of the 'heart' work, and there are many people who worked behind-the-scenes to make it all happen, but I hope you get the idea.

"Forgiveness Takes 'Heart' Work was our theme for this year. It was rewarding for me to see all of the children come back each day that week to learn about their Christian faith. The joy of learning is clear on their faces, and the spirit of unity is evident as they sing songs together, learn lessons together, and do a lot of fun hands-on activities together. It was good to see the volunteers joyful too.

Throughout the week, the heart changed moods. Alan Davidson was the mastermind behind that as he skillfully and artistically designed the heart and all its facial expressions. Day 1's face was full of shock to show how Esau might have felt upon learning that Jacob took his birthright AND blessing. Day 2 showed how Joseph was sad when his brothers sold him into slavery, and Day 3 portrayed the heart of the unmerciful servant when it came to forgiving debt. On Day 4, the heart was weary like Stephen when he was condemned and later killed by the Sanhedrin. On the last day, the heart was joyful, showing how we are when we accept Christ into our lives as our Lord and Savior, remembering God's great love for us.

The children had a great time guessing why the heart felt each emotion, and the experience was enhanced by the special appearance of "Hearty," a heart-shaped puppet skillfully crafted by church member Marie Taylor. Hearty opened each day with the day's lesson and memory verse, and also encouraged the children to sing songs from VBS. The most requested song of all was "Jesus is the Rock."

I hope the pictures make you smile and laugh, and that they bring much joy to your heart. If you are interested in being a part of such a wonderful time, please get in touch with me. I'd love you to be a part of this.



← Alan changes the heart's face for the day, while Joshua watches in awe.

→ The heart is surprised by how well we can sing.





Hearty teaches the children the memory verse for the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant. Hearty is the puppet, pictured above right that Marie Taylor made for VBS.



Ben captivates his audience during the lessons.



Stacy led the children in singing "Lord I lift Your Name on High. Joshua, the background, proudly looks on.



Joshua proudly holds up his picture of Joseph. "This is good"

Victoria beams as she holds up her very own colored coat.



Van Beck Hall gives history lesson about Forbes Field during the field trip.



LUNCH! Leslie and Al dish up the food!



Jesus answered, "It is written: Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." Matthew 4:4 NIV

Do you know what context Jesus made this quote? It was during a confrontation with the devil in the desert. This statement was made in response to Satan challenging Jesus to turn the stones to bread. Do you realize that this quote of Jesus is taken from one of the books of Moses, Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy 8:3 states, "He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." Did you know what context Moses made that comment. It was to remind Israel what the Lord did for them the past forty years of wondering the Desert. So, do you know the Bible? Do you know so when you cross the desert places that you are able to live on the words of God rather than your own resources?

I encourage you to take advantage of the Bible Studies at First Baptist Pittsburgh. On Wednesdays, beginning September 6, we will have two studies that begin at 7pm. One is the ALPHA course and the other a study on the book of Nehemiah.

ALPHA is a video Bible Study where we watch Pastor and author Nicky Gumbel, an Anglican priest, talk about questions Christians face. Questions like, why should I read the Bible? How can I resist evil? What about the Church? After Nicky's presentation, then we talk about the topic or question and ask questions of our own and look through the Bible for answers. I would encourage you if you haven't been through an ALPHA course to come out and take part and dig deeper into your faith.

For those who have gone through ALPHA, a second Bible Study will take place at the same time. The study of Nehemiah is the study of a man who grieved the destruction of his homeland. Nehemiah is interesting because it follows on the heels of Ezra and the overseeing of rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem.

I would encourage everybody to attend either the ALPHA or Nehemiah studies and get to know the WORD of God. So you can rely on the WORD of God when you are found in the desert places.

#### WEDNESDAY EVENING SCHEDULE

6pm-A light meal and time of fellowship

7pm- Start time for the Bible studies.

8:30pm- Ending Time / Wrap up

# SEPTEMBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
<p><b>Please note that this calendar shows ONLY FBC activities and events. To schedule additional meetings or events please contact the office. There are other groups using our building.</b></p>						
3 10 am Bible Study Sunday School 11 am Worship Service 12:30 pm Deacons Meeting	4	5 6:30 pm Prayer Group 7:00 pm Planning Committee	6 12 n Genesis Bible Study 6 pm Light supper & Bible Study see article pg. 6	7 6 pm Choir Practice & light supper	8	9
10 10 am Bible Study Sunday School 11 am Worship Service 12:30 pm Trustees Meeting	11	12 6:30 pm Prayer Group 7:30 pm Church Council	13 12 n Genesis Bible Study 6 pm Light supper & Bible Study see article pg. 6	14 6 pm Choir Practice & light supper	15	16 1-4 pm Prayer & Praise
17 10 am Bible Study Sunday School 11 am Worship Service 12:30 pm Music Com. Meeting	18	19 6:30 pm Prayer Group	20 12 n Genesis Bible Study 6 pm Light supper & Bible Study see article pg. 6	21 6 pm Choir Practice & light supper	22	23
24 10 am Bible Study Sunday School 11 am Worship Service 12:30 pm Congregation Meeting	25	26 6:30 pm Prayer Group	27 12 n Genesis Bible Study 6 pm Light supper & Bible Study see article pg. 6	28 6 pm Choir Practice & light supper	29	30

The First Baptist Church of Pittsburgh  
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TIME VALUE



**Worship with us  
at First Baptist Church  
of Pittsburgh**

**Bible Study and Sunday  
School at 10:00 AM**

**Worship Service at  
1 1:00AM**