

Remember what Christmas is really about. The birth of our savior. Now it's not to say gifts aren't fun! Just remember that giving is better than receiving at Christmas time. It's easy to get all caught up in the parties and gifts. Maybe this year you could do nice things for others or spend time with others and less with the gifts. Remember to bring your friends to our Christmas Cantata "The Jesus Gift" on December 22nd at 10:00 am. That way more people will be able to hear the wonderful sounds of Christmas. They will be truly inspired. Now that's the best gift you could give someone. Merry Christmas to you and your family. Enjoy the holidays!



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December 2013
Merry Christmas
This is your copy of *The Witness*
We wish God's blessings on



THE WITNESS

The Monthly Newsletter of the first Baptist Church of Central Square

Church Office hours: Mondays & Tuesdays from 9:00-12:00

Phone Number 315-668-2138

www.fbc-cs.com

"Our mission as a church is to share and respond to God's love for each person by welcoming all. Together, we can return God's love by becoming witnesses and followers of the teachings of Jesus Christ throughout our daily lives. We allow these things to help us become new people in Christ."

Lynn Bort, Moderator

Linda Heer, Church Clerk

Victor Vrooman, Organist

Cindy Cuny, Church Secretary

Cindy Cuny, Witness Editor

News and Upcoming Events about our Community of Faith
Notices Concerning Our Affiliated Denomination – The American Baptist Churches in the USA
Information to Help Live a More Fulfilled Life

PRAYER CONCERNS



Please keep these members and friends in your prayer; Diana Baxter, Mavis Cooter, Grace Fuller, Ken House, Stewart Smith, Phyllis Smith, Ray Olin, Helen Webb, our missionaries, our nation, and our denominational and local church leaders.

PRAYERS FOR DECEMBER

Dear Lord,

At Christmas time this year remind us that Christmas is not about the gifts but truly about the birth of the baby Jesus. About the celebration of your son. Maybe instead of gifts maybe we can spend time and do nice things for other people to help them out. Give us strength as we struggle with this every year. We pray for this in your name. Amen



MEETING NIGHTS

Trustees	December 8th	11:00
Deacons	December 10 th	6:30
Annual Meeting	January 19 th	after Church



Verse of the Month

Praise the Lord. Praise O servants of the Lord;
praise the name of the Lord. Let the name of
the Lord be praised, both now and forevermore.
From the rising of the sun to the place where it
sets, the name of the Lord is to be praised.

Psalm 113:1-3

WITNESS ARTICLES

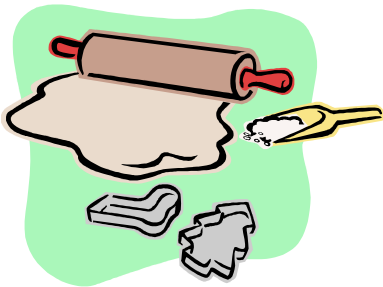
All articles for the January Witness are due in the church office by December 20th. Please write an article and submit it! If you need an idea, just ask.

Cookie / Treat Exchange



AB Women will be holding a Cookie/Treat Exchange Saturday, December 14th from Noon-2:00. This will be a time for fellowship and sharing some of our Holiday favorites!! There will be sampling and beverages as well as holiday music to enjoy while we visit! I ask that if you're interested in participating you let me know by Friday, December 6th so that a final count can be given to everyone a week in advance.

Contact Misty: **Call/Email/Text** (315)935-6267 or Mistydefalco@crouse.org



What is a Cookie/Treat Exchange??

Great question!! Let me give you an example: Say we have 10 people (including your-self) who will be attending; each person would bring 10 dozen of their favorite cookie or treat. This way everyone (other than your-self) will get 9 dozen treats and there's some for sampling! It's a lot of fun, and a great way to build a beautiful cookie/treat platter for your holiday parties!

Practice for Cantata



Practice will be December 21st at 9:00 at the church. Don't forget your singing voices!

Christmas Cantata



December 22nd will be our Christmas Cantata at 10:00. Please bring lots of friends and neighbors with you. This will be inspirational to you and your family. Please plan to attend.

Craft Show



Will be held On December 7th from 9 – 4 here at the church. Come start your Christmas shopping early. It will be lots of fun for the whole family. See you there!

Christmas Gift Bags & Caroling



Please come join the Diaconate Board as we continue our tradition of delivering holiday gift bags to our shut-ins and others. We will meet at our Fellowship Hall on Saturday, December 14 to assemble the bags. Note that this is the same day as the Cookie/ Treat Exchange sponsored by our AB Women. That event occurs from 12 noon until 2:00PM, so we'll plan to put our bags together around 1:30, and all who participate in the Exchange are encouraged to join us when we leave to deliver the goodies. If we have enough voices, we'll do our caroling as well! If you have any ideas for small gift items for our bags, please let us know.

Board of Deacons

Free Cell Phone and Minutes Program



“Safelink” is a service supported by the Federal Lifeline Program, whose purpose is to offer a cell phone, at no cost, including up to 250 free minutes each month to those who qualify as low income. The application is very simple and eligibility requirements are very easy to understand. If you are interested, please see Rich Mizerski for an application form.

Board of Deacons

Annual Reports



Attention all boards and committees: we need your reports in no later than January 10th. That doesn't mean to wait until that day. They will be accepted as soon as you have them done. So, please get started now so you are ready in time for the deadline. The annual meeting is January 19th. So, you can see it only leaves me 9 days to get them done. Be respectful about this. Sooner is better! Thank you.

Church Secretary

FAMILY CHRISTMAS CRAFT WORKSHOP



December 7th

Following the church service on Sunday, December 7th, there will be a light lunch provided by the Women's Society and then an opportunity to work on Children's Christmas Crafts. This is a great time for families to work together to make some new Christmas decorations. Some of the highlights for this year's workshop include light up snowmen, molded chocolate candies, & painted votive candle holders. Please plan to join us on this festive fun afternoon.

Children's Christmas Program December 15th



All the children are encouraged to join us this year as we present the Nativity Story through readings and singing of familiar hymns. We have begun to practice for this special Christmas presentation and will continue for the next several weeks. We hope that you will faithfully bring the children to Junior Church so that they can come to share in the true meaning of Christmas with our church family!

Nominating Committee News



The Nominating Committee has begun their yearly task of recruiting volunteers to fill the several positions in our church. We ask you to ***prayerfully*** consider how you can help our church to grow and share God's Good News in our community and beyond. We are looking for volunteers on the Christian Education Board, Trustees, Diaconate Board as well as an Assistant Treasurer and special committees such as Music Committee, Worship Arrangements, and Nominating Committee & Pastoral Relations Committee. Please speak with one of the members of the nominating committee if you would like to help in any way. The members include: Don & Nancy Flower, Courtney Cuny & Genie Rotundo.

A loss in our Family



Last month we lost a friend and a long time member. Ray Olin passed away on November 21, 2013. He cleaned our church well into his 80's before it became too much. We all loved Ray very, very much. During this holiday season please keep Delores and their two children in prayer. (Susan Fenton and David Olin) and their many grandchildren.

December 2013 Holidays and Remembrances



December 1: World Aids Awareness Day. This is noted around the world, by fundraisers and educational programs, and events. This day was created in 1988 by the United Nations World Health Organization. HIV/AIDS is still one of the world's biggest medical crises. Approximately 40 million people in the world have AIDS and each year, over 40,000 new cases are reported alone in the US.

December 6: Saint Nicholas Day. Yes, there really was a Christian Saint Nicholas. He lived in the country of Greece, just a couple hundred years after the birth of Christ, He became a priest, and later a Bishop of the early Catholic Church. True to the Christian concept of giving of belongings and following Christ, St. Nicholas gave up all his belongs; He was well known for giving to needy people. Especially children.

December 7: Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day. This commemorates the Japanese attack on the US Navel base at Pearl Harbor. The attack began at dawn Dec 7, 1941. It crippled the US Pacific fleet and caused the US to enter WWII. Over 2400 American servicemen and civilians were

killed. 5-8 battleships were sunk or damaged. On Dec 8, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared war on Japan. He stated in a speech to congress that “this is a day that will live in infamy”.

December 10: Human Rights Day was created by the United Nations in 1948. This promotes awareness of the importance of human right issues around the world.

December 15: Bill of Rights Day. After the constitution was signed by the original 13 states in 1789, 10 new amendments were added to the constitution on December 15, 1791 that protect our individual rights.

December 25: Merry Christmas! This is the biggest holiday of the year. It has both a strong religious and traditional meaning. Christmas created within us a sense of kindness and concern for our fellow man. We are more generous and giving. Christmas is celebrated in most countries around the world.

December 31: Happy New Year! See out the old year and ring in the new! But be safe!

(Holiday Insights.com)

PERSPECTIVES

When we read the Christmas stories, we find that the main characters had very different views on this new born king. For the wise men, he was someone they wanted to get close to as soon as they could and bring him gifts and honor. For Herod, Jesus was a person to be feared and gotten rid of as soon as possible. For the tax accountants in Bethlehem, Jesus was just one more for the tax rolls. (I don't think he would have been considered as a deduction in those days.) For the inn keeper he was either an inconvenience or a reason to give Mary and Joseph some make shift lodging. For Simeon and Anna, he was a justification of their lifelong hopes for a new hope in Israel.

Kent Keith, wrote in his book, Anyway: The Paradoxical Commandments, about a job he had as a college student. He drove and cared for an elderly man who had, in his younger days, founded a major industry. This older man's intelligence and eagerness for life were trapped in a broken body. It was difficult for him to walk, impossible for him to climb stairs, and his damaged esophagus made him unable to swallow food properly. This caused him to throw up while eating. It was hard for him to

care for himself, which meant that he was often bearing a disheveled appearance. Sometimes he had an unpleasant odor about him.

Kent's job was to take him places and look for entries with no stairs, no curbs, tables where he could be away from the view of the public, and clean up his shirt or coat whenever he made a mess. Kent found that he liked this man, but, even so, this man criticized him endlessly. “You are holding my arm too tightly”. “You are not holding me tightly enough”. “This table is too close to a cold window.” “I don't like this food: couldn't you find a better place.” And so on and on, every trip there was something wrong. Kent was becoming angry with this continual barrage of criticism.

One day Kent was waiting for this man and he began to think about what it must be like to have the physical limitations this man put up with every day. It struck him that this man was not angry at him but angry at his life. Kent states, “When I realized that, it all became easier. He didn't stop grumbling, but his grumbling stopped bothering me.”

When Kent adjusted his attitude about his man, he found that his whole PERSPECTIVE had changed.

Christmas time gives us a chance to see Christ and each other in a whole new way. We can be transformed and made new just as Joseph and Mary, the shepherds, the wise men, and Simeon and Anna were transformed by their encounter with the living Christ.

Pastor John