

United Baptist Church

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Rev. Bruce Stevens, Pastor

December 2007

Baptist Hill Notes

Ask God One Question

I have received 34 responses to my invitation to ask your unsaved contacts *“If you could ask God one question, what would it be?”* Many of them are very thoughtful and serious questions (*“Why did you let me marry my ex-wife?”* does not qualify). I plan to respond to the questions in a series of sermons starting in January. Kathy Comstock turned in thirteen questions and got into some fruitful conversations – great job Kathy! Here is my preaching schedule:

- ↪ Jan. 6 – **Heaven** – will I get there? How? What about my pets?
- ↪ Jan. 13 – **Suffering** – why does God allow so much suffering?
- ↪ Jan. 20 – **Future** – how will my family do? How do I handle the stresses of life?
- ↪ Jan. 27 – **Forgiveness** – why do good people/humanitarians need forgiveness?
- ↪ Feb. 3 – **Hell** – why does God send bad people to hell rather than take them to heaven and teach them to be good?
- ↪ Feb. 10 – **Sex** – why does the church hate homosexuals? What should I do if I know I should be good but I still want to be promiscuous?

Remember that the goal of this ‘exercise’ is to assist you in starting spiritual conversations with others. Even though it is too late to submit more questions to me, it is not too late for you to start conversations by asking them “the question” and then showing them the top six that I will be addressing. Consider inviting them to church to hear what I have to say. You can then follow up and see what they thought.

For the love of others and the love of God, find ways to talk to others about the gospel.

Alpha graduate and University of Maine student, **Wayne Clark**, plans to go on a several-month mission trip to Tajikistan with Eastern Mennonite Missions. He will leave for Harrisburg, PA mid-January for two months of training and then to Central Asia for six months. He considers UBC his home church, so it is our privilege to support him any way we can – in prayer and money. If you want to give towards his expenses send a check to the church in his name.

Our **Thanksgiving Offering** tally as of December 2nd is \$1187. Many church families will see this money as an answer to prayer for God to provide this winter.

The Golden Compass is a soon-to-be-released movie geared to children that will look somewhat like the Narnia movie, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. But *The Golden Compass* is based on a trilogy of books by Philip Pullman, an avowed atheist whose anti-God sentiments become increasingly obvious in the latter two books (and to-be movies) of the series. If you want to read a detailed and balanced perspective on whether Christians should let their kids see the movie, go to

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/movies/commentaries/fearnotthecompass.html>

Beginning in January the leadership of the church will begin to implement the **Child and Worker Protection Policy** and **Ministry Restrictions for Sexual Offenders Policy**. One of the requirements of the former policy is to have a background check on all people working with children. The Pastors and Deacons will be the first to undergo the checks. Studies show that 77% of churches have some screening process in place for those working with children. It is a sad commentary on our times that we need to take such steps. We will post copies of the policies on the bulletin board and email copies to any who ask.

Our **Christmas Sunday** is the 23rd with extra music and readings. Our **Christmas Eve** service is from 6:30-7:30. A **New Year’s Eve** game-night is planned, starting at 6:00 and ending with a devotional around 8:30. Bring a friend. No Evening Service on the 23rd and 30th.

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Travelers on Earth

An American traveled to Poland to visit the famous rabbi Hofetz Chaim. Noticing that the rabbi's room only had a table, a chair and some books, the American asked, "Rabbi, where is your furniture?"

The rabbi replied, "My furniture? My friend, where is your furniture?"

"But I am a tourist, I am only passing through," said the American.

"So am I," replied the rabbi.

This short story reminds us that life becomes so much simpler when we realize, like Rabbi Chaim, that **we are travelers on earth and not permanent residents**. We need to remember this truth as we go through this very busy Christmas season. There will be a strong temptation to purchase many things.

The outlook of a resident is very different from that of traveler. Residents get very attached to their possessions and go to great lengths to protect them.

Travelers, on the other hand, take few things on their journey because they want to keep things light so they can travel quickly and efficiently.

As Christians, we are travelers here on earth. We still live in, work in, and minister in the world. But we know that everything about this world is temporary and that our real home is in the presence of God.

Consider the following verses from the New Testament:

"He [God] will reward you according to what you do. So you must live in reverent fear of him during your time as foreigners here on earth." 1 Peter 1:17 NLT

*"All these faithful people [Abraham, Isaac, Jacob] died without receiving what God had promised them, but they saw it from a distance and welcomed the promises of God. They agreed that they were no more than **foreigners and nomads** here on earth... They were looking for a better place, a **heavenly homeland**. That is why God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a **heavenly city for them**."* Hebrews 11:13,16 NLT

"Our citizenship is in heaven. We eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ." Philippians 3:20 NIV

*"The time that remains is very short...Those in frequent contact with the things of the world should make good use of them without becoming attached to them, **for this world and all it contains will pass away**."*

1 Corinthians 7:29, 31 NLT

I hope you have a great December!

Scott Benner

Associate Pastor

Upcoming Events:

- ♦ **Christmas Eve Service** - Monday, December 24 at 6:30 p.m.
- ♦ **New Years Celebration** - Monday, December 31 – 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

(Please note there will be **no evening service** on December 23 or December 30)

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 12 Robert LaBree
- 15 Janet Barclay ♦ IVCF
- 16 Warren Rand
- 17 Virginia Beal
- 18 Debbie Ramp
- 19 Kay L. Gagnon
- 20 Gerri Dumond
- 21 Omar Reyes
- 22 Tanisha Vadas
- 23 Sandra Sherbourne
Brandon Silk
Ted Perrin
- 24 Scott Brill ♦ IVCF
- 27 Phyllis Dunton

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 5 Joyce Raychard ♦NEBC
Travis Vicary
- 6 Evie Kidder
Annie Shorey ♦Free Indeed
- 7 Paulyne Mitchell
- 9 John Dykstra
Susan Morin
- 14 Andy Spohrer
- 15 Deanna Lander
Arlene Holmes