Welcome to the Greers!
Rev. Bruce Greer officially begins work as Interim Minister at FBCN

On July 19th, FBCN officially welcomed its new Interim Senior Minister, Rev. Bruce Greer, and his wife, Dale, to the congregation during a Sunday service followed by a reception in their honor.

The reception gave members of the congregation an opportunity to meet and officially welcome the Greers, who will be helping to shepherd the church through a process of discernment and its search for a new senior pastor over the coming year.

Jenny Weisz, moderator, formally welcomed the Greers on behalf of the church, and also presented Rev. Linda Moore with a gift, thanking her for stepping up so admirably to serve the church and its members during this time of transition. The gift was a lighthouse — a favorite symbol of Linda’s — in this case representing the light Linda has been for so many in the church over the past months.

Many in the church pitched in to help with the event, providing support and delicious food. Many thanks to all for their work and contributions!

It was a joyful morning for fellowship, celebration, and anticipation for the coming year.

Grace and peace to all who call the First Baptist Church in Newton their faith community, and to this congregation’s many friends, near and far. Thank you for the privilege of serving as your interim pastor as you journey forward in faith and service. I pray that our time together will be fruitful, as we take a long look at cultural and congregational dynamics in preparation for the pastoral search process. I come to this congregation with deep respect for its rich heritage and an interest in your ministry over many years.

Coming here feels like “déjà vu all over again,” as Yogi Berra allegedly said. Connections abound! My parents (Jean and Dorothy Greer) attended here in the mid-1970s, when Gene Bartlett served as pastor and I attended Andover Newton. George Sinclair was one of my professors and Joe O’Donnell served as Dean of Students. Joe knew my father, also an Andover Newton graduate (1948), over 50 years ago. My father officiated at Meta Moy’s wedding over 50 years ago when he served the East Baptist Church in Lynn. In 1982, Mark Clinger, Associate Pastor under Gene Bartlett, followed me as pastor at the
First Baptist Church of Plymouth. Steve Ott has been a valued colleague for over 10 years. I could go on!

My Baptist roots in Massachusetts run deep. My maternal grandmother, who died at 105, served as treasurer for the Massachusetts Baptist Women. My mother attended First Baptist, Wakefield as a girl. My parents met at First Baptist, Norwood, married at First Baptist, Melrose, and honeymooned in Ocean Park, Maine. Three generations of my family attended Ocean Park summer camps. My father served pastorates in Grafton, Lynn and Westwood, and interims in Melrose, Lowell and Millbury. I served pastorates in Plymouth and Sandwich, and an interim in South Hadley. Many friends have served ABC pastorates and positions in this state, and some of them are still here. I have attended Andover Newton graduations in this sanctuary off and on over the past 40 years. I could go on!

With so many deep connections, how odd and wonderful it is to be here with you at such an important time. Yet, before we delve into interim time business and the important tasks ahead of us, let’s get acquainted. A little about me – born in Georgia, I lived in six states growing up and added three more as an adult. Dale Rogoff Greer, my wife of 36 years, is a New London, Connecticut native and lifelong American Baptist. She serves as a clinical nurse specialist with the state department of public health. We have three children: Amy (30) of Providence, a Brown University archivist and Simmons College Ph.D. student; Jonathan (27) of Boston, a second-year surgical resident at Massachusetts General Hospital; and, Jeffrey (23) of Washington DC, a web page editor for U.S. News and World Report magazine and sports reporter (his true passion) for the Washington Post. We are very close and cherish our time together, especially over a fierce game of Chicken Foot.

My interests are wide and various, including lifelong interests in railroads and fire apparatus. Having seen Ted Williams play at Fenway, my loyalty to the Red Sox runs deep! I am almost as passionate about the Celtics and Patriots. Travel almost anywhere is a special joy. While in Colorado, I fell in love with high altitude hiking, managing to climb my first “Fourteener” while living there. I am a devoted NPR listener, a big fan of Garrison Keillor and Bill Moyers, and an active op-ed and book review reader. In addition to work-related literature, my reading spans interests in transportation, current affairs, behavioral and social science, history and spiritual autobiography. Though my musical tastes are eclectic, I especially love choral and organ music. Plus, I am partial to pubs and tea rooms and the good things they serve.

So much to talk about, so little time! I look forward to meeting each of you in days to come, and to the good work that awaits us, in Christ’s name. Much more on the work of an “intentional interim minister” next month. For now, as Garrison Keillor says: “Be well. Do good work. Keep in touch.”

Grace and Peace, in Christ,
Bruce A. Greer

P.S. Please be in touch with me in any of the following ways: 617.244. 2997 ext. 11 (church office); 617.599.6305 (cell, on 24/7); bgreer@fbcnewton.org (church e-mail).
From the Minister for Christian Education

Sunday School – It’s For Life!!  Is it??.

You are about to begin your fourth year of the not-so-new-anymore Sunday school schedule. Can you believe it? You have already completed three years under the new schedule and Sunday school programming.

The title of this article comes from promotional literature that I found on line: Sunday School – It’s For Life! It’s the promotional material of the United Methodist Church. I happen to agree with it, but hey, I am an educator, I think all education is for life! I might have a little bias when it comes to what I believe about Sunday school. So I bring the question to you – do YOU think that Sunday school is for life?

Well, you have the opportunity to answer that question and let me know. For the coming year, one of my goals will be to work on the Sunday school program, along with the Board of Education, to really focus on the goals, the curriculum, the purpose, the participation, and everything in-between. I want to work on what we have learned over the past three years as we laid the foundation, see where the strengths are and where we need to improve. We are just in the toddler stage of this program and there is so much more to see!

However, I am going to need your help. I need to know what you think. I have included in this newsletter a Sunday school survey and I would like your feedback. I am also going to send this survey by email, which will allow you the opportunity to answer the questions electronically.

I did an impromptu survey in the hallway at church over the past few months. I had one question on the board: Why Do You Go to Sunday school? Here were some of the responses.

- To learn about God and Jesus
- Because God is da bomb! (translation: that is a good thing!)
- To have fun and learn about God and Jesus and because the teachers are great!
- To care about things God has told you to do
- To be a responsible member of the Body of Christ
- Because I truly enjoy learning with my students
- To learn more about my faith, to share my faith
- To experience love, truth, faith, fellowship
- To meet and make friends
- To pray more with God

Mary Lou Pitzer, from Fredericksburg, Virginia, has not missed a day of Sunday school in over 50 years. This is what she says about it. “I don’t know how you know the Bible if you don’t go to Sunday school...in Sunday school you meet people, hear about their families, hear the prayer chains and concerns about the community,” she says. “You just feel a part of God’s work.”

I hope you will feel a part of God’s work by participating in this survey and in Sunday school as we begin again in September. Continue to keep the Board of Education, the incoming Sunday school teachers, the students and me in your prayers as we prepare and plan for the coming year. And please remember, without you, this is not possible....because Sunday School IS for Life and you are a part of that life!

Blessings,

Linda
FROM THE MODERATOR

Bruce Greer, the new Interim Senior Minister, brings creative leadership to our church family as we begin planning for a full fall schedule of church worship and other activities. Some of you may be out of town on your vacations and have missed the opportunity to participate in worship led by Bruce. Please join us in worship when you return to town and extend the warm hand of fellowship to Bruce and his wife Dale.

The church staff and members are busy preparing for a full fall calendar. Fellowship opportunities abound. Service opportunities in the church and community need your helping hand. A new young adult group is forming. The musically talented youth group will be providing music for our worship services more frequently. Deacons are hosting a dinner on the grounds on Sunday September 13th and organizing group dinners in our homes on October 17th. Coffeehouse is scheduling command performances by Broadband (with our own Carolyn Dwyer) and with Rock My Soul.

David and Larisa Pazmino are expecting the birth of their second son (a brother for Oliver) this month. Beverly Booth will be celebrating a birthday and moving into his new home at Petty House this month. Magda and Fernando Lopez have travelled to Peru to help a church with funds raised by our members this summer. Many of you will be completing your vacations this month. Visitors are moving to town and joining us in worship. We welcome one and all. Join us to celebrate new life in the church and anticipation of new beginnings and opportunities for worship, service, and fellowship at First Baptist Church in Newton.

Jenny Weisz

2009 ABCUSA Biennial
—
The Swans Report

ABCUSA Biennials are very enjoyable. We were privileged to join with several hundred other American Baptists at the 2009 Biennial in Pasadena California, June 26 – 28. FBCN helping with our expenses is much appreciated. These gatherings always provide rich experiences of inspiration, information, reunion with friends and colleagues and meeting new ones, deliberation, and celebration of what we have done and we can do together in global, national, and local mission.

Besides the plenary sessions, we enjoy gathering with many significant groups within the ABCUSA such as: Baptist Peace Fellowship, Coalition for Baptist Principles, Roger Williams Fellowship, Association for Welcoming and Affirming Baptists, Ministers’ Council, Women’s Day, and Statements of Concern.

The overall theme of the Biennial was “These Hands . . . These Feet.” One of the most inspiring speakers was Nick Vujicic. This young man, born with neither arms nor legs, marveled that God would choose one without limbs to be God’s hands and feet. Nick’s challenge to us all is, “What are you going to do with what you do have? What is the point of being complete on the outside and broken on the inside?”

Women’s Day, “Women . . . Sent for God’s Purpose,” continues with its National Mission Project, “Break the Chains, Slavery in the 21st Century.” Much has been accomplished in the efforts to end sex trafficking; there is an almost unimaginable amount still to do. A significant proportion of sex trafficking of girls and young women takes place within the United States.

At the Ministers’ Council, speaker Leonard Sweet presented a fascinating interpretation of our creation as “God sang, ‘Let there be light!’” Taking a thought from Byron Green’s book Elegant Universe, Sweet celebrated that all of life is music: “Vibrating strings of energy.” Each of us has the exciting adventure of finding our song and helping others to find theirs, and so resonate with God’s love and justice for all.

One of the most important items of business for the delegates was the proposal to reorganize the ABC. It failed by a small amount to receive the ⅔ majority required for passage. In some ways this was disappointing, but in others, it offers the opportunity to rework the by-laws so that, in particular, the Baptist principle of the significance of the local church is maintained.

We look forward to sharing in greater detail with you, sometime in the fall, the joy of the Biennial meeting – being Christ’s hands and feet.

Edith and Gordon Swan
A Note about Uninvited (Furry) Guests

We try more and more to be a welcoming church. But mice are not invited! Recently we have had in our large building considerable problems with mice. We are working with the Meetinghouse Day Care to take some corrective measures. However, in a building such as ours, it is likely to be an ongoing issue.

So, we urge everyone to be extremely diligent in making sure that ALL food left in the Church is in sealed ‘mouse proof’ containers. Also, please carefully clean any food preparation and eating areas after use. In addition to food, mice apparently enjoy other items such as ‘kid safe’ crayons and biodegradable packing peanuts made of starch. We will need to take steps to carefully store these things as well. If you notice any signs of mice, don’t panic, just please notify the office immediately.

Many thanks!
Edith Swan

Treasured Table Repaired, but Please Handle with Care

The mahogany table that was broken and resting in the Library for a long time has now been repaired and refinished. I delivered it to the church on Sunday. I’m not sure whether it was used in the library or in some other location. I do know that Alice Wolpert’s husband did an excellent job some time ago of reinforcing the decorative legs. However, asking a delicate but dedicated table to support a heavy TV was just too much and brought this lovely furniture to its knees. Thank God for that previous superb supporting craftsmanship, the beautiful piece was able to be saved and has returned to church willing to use its unique gifts to display appropriate light objects such as flowers, communion elements, or even a few books. Let no TV or person sit on it!

For the reception of our new Interim Senior Minister, the mahogany sculpture elegantly graced the top of the stairs in the Chapel. It held some flowers to celebrate the beauty of opportunity for growth in transition. The Deacons and/or the Library Committee will decide where the table will ultimately reside, but please don’t pressure it to carry more than its fair load, and handle it with care and all due respect.

Thanks,
Gordon Swan

A Thanks to Gordon Swan
For his wonderful work restoring and caring for this treasured part of the church’s collection.

A Few Housekeeping Notices
• Blessed are the church members who fulfill their pledges before leaving for vacation.
• They then go forth with a light heart.
• They wear casual clothing as they wander in pleasant places.
• They anoint their bodies with SPF 30 and insect spray.
• They sit beside still waters, hoping that the fish will bite and the insects will not.
• They build a fire of charcoal and place savory meats there-on; the wind wafteth to their nostrils a pleasant scent.
• Night cometh. They close their eyes in glad tiredness with thanksgiving to God.
• Their sleep is undisturbed.
• For they know that the good work of their Church will not be diminished while they are away.

From the Trustees
—
Blessed Are Those...
PRAYERS OF JOY AND CONCERN

JOYS:
We celebrate Tara Vance and Andrew Wommack who were married on August 1st.
We celebrate with Magda Lopez as the church was able to raise more than $2000 for her
mission to Peru (see article below)

SPECIFIC PRAYERS:
Sarah Fae Heim, mother of Mark Heim
Jewel Foster
Clara Gallup
Magda Lopez

ON-GOING PRAYERS:
Philip Palmer
Luz Reardon
Anna and Jim Zhou

Funds and Prayers for Magda’s Mission to Peru

When Magda Lopez approached the church about her mission trip to Iquitos, Peru, she
hoped to raise $1300. She planned to spend the money to finish the construction of bath-
rooms in the church there, a project that would not only provide much-needed sanitary
facilities, but also serve to teach lessons of proper hygiene in an area where few have
daily access to such facilities. FBCN responded to Magda’s call and spirit of service, raising
more than $2000 for her trip. Magda says she will use the additional money to purchase
tables, chairs and other supplies for the church’s children. We pray for Magda’s travels,
her work, and for the people of Iquitos (see picture in sidebar).

From the Ximines Family:

My parents, Popsie and Esmie, have been a part of the First Baptist Church for over
25 years and even though they left for Florida 4 years ago, the church never left
their hearts. Growing up in this church and returning after some time, I could feel
him here, his spirit in every room, in every pew. As a child this church helped raise
me, and now it has helped me put my father to rest. Though he’s gone, I know his
spirit lives on here at the First Baptist Church and in the hearts of all who knew him.

Your prayers of love, your kindness, and support during this most difficult time are
impossible to repay.

Our family thanks our larger family, “the family that is the First Baptist Church”, for
all your efforts on our behalf and in memory of Osbourne “Popsie” Ximines.

Love,
Colleen Ximines Guzman and family
HAPPY 40TH TO BILL HERZOG!

On July 20, 1969, as Apollo 11 landed on the moon, forever impacting the world’s understanding of its place in the cosmos, Bill Herzog was also contemplating his role in God’s creation. With a screen projecting news of the lunar landing in the background, Bill was ordained at the First Baptist Church of West Covina, California, taking an important step in his life dedicated to Biblical scholarship and the work of churches and seminaries around the country. Congratulations Bill, on this 40th anniversary!

GUSTY FAMILY CELEBRATES IMPROMPTU WEDDING ON THE TALL SHIPS

On July 13th, The Boston Globe published the heart-warming story *From Tall Ship to Love Boat*, about the last-minute marriage of Claudiu Badea (the Gustys’ nephew) to girlfriend Alina Orasanu of Romania. According to the article, when Claudiu was touring the 70-yr-old Romanian tall ship, Mircea, docked in Boston Harbor for Sail Boston 2009, he got an idea: Why not get married on it? He sent Alina — who was en route to visit him from Geneva — a text message with his proposal, and she joyously accepted. They were married shortly after her arrival with the ship’s military priest and two local Roman Orthodox priests presiding. Along with some of the ship’s command staff, about 40 family members and friends were there to witness the couple’s pledge of lifelong love. The full story can be obtained on the boston.com website or, of course, by asking the Gustys!

AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS CONVENTION

The Northeast (New England and New York) Regional Convention of the American Guild of Organists was held from June 30th-July 4th in Boston, involving some 400 organists and with several ties related to our church.

Included in the many events were a number of competitions:

- With Sean Redrow one of three judges for the New York Regional competition Tuesday, held at the Church of the Advent, Boston;
- With Jacob Street, the current Holy Cross Organ Scholar and sometime performer (Hardy Series) and substitute organist (with Sean away) at our church, winning the New England competition, also Tuesday, held at Old West Church, Boston;
- With Jake Street then playing a stunning Competition Winner’s Recital Wednesday, again at Old West Church.

A highlight of the convention was a gala concerted program of organ and orchestra at Boston Symphony Hall Wednesday evening, featuring organist James David Christie, College Organist at Holy Cross and Professor of Organ at Oberlin Conservatory, and the New Philharmonia (NewPhil) Orchestra, Ronald Knudsen, Music Director. NewPhil is the 80-member, non-professional, Newton-based orchestra that uses our church as its principal venue. Several color photos in the Symphony Hall program handsomely showcased the orchestra in our chancel.

AUGUST MUSIC

For a schedule of the wonderful soloists who will grace us with their music during worship this August, please see pg 8.
The "Second" Northeast Gathering  
—  
At FBCN!  
—  
Friends and Members of the Alliance of Baptists

**August Worship Schedule**

9:30am Sunday School  
10:30am Worship Service  
11:30am Fellowship Hour  

*See the Calendar or visit www.fbcnewton.org for additional events and activities*

**When:** Saturday, September 19, 2009  
9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. with lunch

**Where:** First Baptist Church in Newton Centre  
848 Beacon Street, Newton, MA 02459

**Why are we being gathered?**

- To meet and greet our growing membership in the Northeast
- To share the "Good News" of the Alliance to those who are searching for more "leaven" in their Baptist life
- To introduce our new Leadership Team and Board of Directors to the body, mind and spirit of the Alliance at work in our region and...vice versa!

**Worship celebrated with**

The Rev. Cynthia Maybeck and Musician Burns Stanfield

Registration: $10.00 includes light continental breakfast and lunch. May be paid at the door or mailed to Ellen P. Tatreau, 69 Fort Point Road, No. Weymouth, MA 02191

**Registration Deadline: September 7, 2009**
Please include your name, address, and phone/email with your registration.

**AUGUST SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE**

As we continue to meet for the intergenerational Sunday school time at 9:30, these are the lectionary scriptures and themes for the day’s bible study (topic and scripture are subject to change). Please join us the chapel.

August 2 — John 6:24-35  Receive and offer the bread that gives life  
August 9 — Ephesians 4:25-5:2  Respond to God’s generous grace in ways that nourish the community of faith  
August 16 — 1 Kings 2:10-12; 3:3-14  Pray for the will to live in God’s wise, just ways  
August 23 — Psalm 84  Draw strength and joy from our dwelling with God  
August 30 — James 1:17-27  Delight in Christian practices of receiving and giving of love

**GREAT SUMMER MUSIC FOR AUGUST!**

We are blessed with a wonderful roster of soloists to grace us with their music during worship in August. Come and join us for some great music!

Aug. 2 - Aaron Styles, Bass  
Aug. 9 - Alexa Lokensgard, Soprano  
Aug 16 - Eunhee Kang, Soprano  
Aug. 23 - Alexa Lokensgard, Soprano  
Aug. 30 - Dan Hershey, Tenor
## The August 2009 Calendar

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### August Birthdays and Anniversaries

Best wishes to FBCN members celebrating in August:

*If there is a missing birthday or anniversary, please let Linda Moore know.*

**Birthdays**
- 1 - Steve Ott
- 5 - Alice Wolpert
- 7 - Burton Bagby
- 9 - Adrian Gusty
- 11 - Henry Pollard
- 13 - Susan Duncombe
- 19 - Beverly Booth
- 20 - Peg Mayer
- 24 - Amy Feldman
- 29 - Lynne LeVesque

**Anniversaries**
- 4 – Sandra and Bernie Carpenter
- 7 – Edith and Gordon Swan
- 9 – Amy and Greg Feldman
- 22 – Lisa Crockett and James Cooke
- 23 – Julie-Ann “JBird” and Jacob Burkhart
- 21 – Ansaya and Denis Odvarka

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**SAVE THE DATE: SEPTEMBER 1**

Church Council will meet at 7:00pm at the church in the Everts Room.
Save the Date!!!
Sunday, September 13
FBCN All Church Picnic
immediately after church
on the front lawn
Invite your family and friends
to join you and your church family
for this fun time
good food
a fun game
good fellowship
Sponsored by the Deacons

If you no longer wish to receive The Beacon, please email Donna Vello at dvello@fbcnewton.org or call the church office at 617-244-2997 to have your name removed from our list. If you have questions about The Beacon, or would like to submit something for next month’s edition, please contact Amy Clark Feldman at amyelizabethclark@yahoo.com or 617-938-8112.
Sunday School Survey for First Baptist Church in Newton

What is your age range?

___child  ___youth  ___ 18-24  ___25-44  ___45-64  ___ 65 and above

In the last 12 months, would you say you attended Sunday school....

___every week  ___once a month  ___ do not attend
___twice a month  ___once a quarter

If you do attend, which class do you participate in? __________________________

When you do attend, what is the major reason for attending?

___ Someone made me attend
___ Habit
___ Fellowship opportunity
___ To gain a deeper understanding of God

Which of the following has the greatest impact on your desire to attend Sunday school?

___Topic
___Teacher
___Time
___Other ____________________________

Which of the following has the greatest impact on your desire not to attend Sunday school?

___Topic
___Teacher
___Time
___Other ____________________________

What do you enjoy most about Sunday school?

How can the Sunday school program be improved?

What do you believe the purpose/mission of Sunday school should be?

Name, although not required ____________________________