

~ Visions ~

GLENDALE BAPTIST CHURCH

A caring community of equality and grace.

1021 Glendale Lane

Nashville, Tennessee 37204

269-0926 or 269-3149 — Fax. 269-0988

URL: www.glendalebaptist.org — E-Mail: GBC@glendalebaptist.org

Update from your Discernment & Search Committee

We made our first verbal report to the church on Wednesday night, May 7. At that gathering we did three things:

- 1) We presented the covenant we have written to help guide our work together (copies are available at the church).
- 2) We watched a video clip from the movie "Hanging Up" and had table conversation in response to the following questions:
 - In what ways has our congregation experienced "uproar" in the past year?
 - What demands has this made on your life? On our life together?
 - What individual and communal losses and grief have you experienced in the past year?
 - What wisdom and comfort have you wished for?
 - Who has offered you an arm or shoulder to lean on?
 - What courage or bravery have you observed in yourself, others, or the community as a whole?

The responses to these questions guided us in planning and leading a worship service on May 18. The purpose of that service was to honor our courage and our grief from the past year and to help us detach from anything preventing us from being most open to our future possibilities.

- 3) We reported our plan to listen to the church in small groups over the next two months (May and June). We want to build on the work we as a church have already done in the visioning process over the past year, as well as hear new thoughts and ideas. We will report back to the church about what we have heard at a town meeting in July.

Church Council

Current staff

Choir

Each Division

Homebound members

Primetimers

Sunday School: Adults, Youth & Children

Parents of children/youth

Please continue to remember us in your prayers, as we continue to seek God's wisdom for our congregation at this time in our life together.

Interim Committee/Sacred Storytelling

The church charged the Interim Committee with the responsibility of working out the details for this interim period. That includes searching for a person to serve as our Interim Pastor as well as working with the Worship Division and Staff in coordinating worship between when Mark left and when we have an Interim Pastor in place. We are currently in the process of getting ready to recommend someone to the church for that position which would begin in the fall. We are very excited about this person and will be making a recommendation within a couple of weeks.

We've also been busy planning for the next 3 months. In coordinating worship for the summer, the Interim Committee, Staff, and Worship Division have been working on a special and exciting series for June, July, and August . . . that of Sacred Storytelling. This idea came out of the wonderful stories shared by different church members during our study of *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*. So, beginning June 1, the umbrella theme for the summer will be Sacred Storytelling, including many different people and diverse stories of faith. The Interim Committee, in consultation with the Administration Division and with the support of the Church Council, presented a proposal at the Quarterly Business Meeting on May 18 to hire Karen Turner as Worship Assistant during the months of June, July, and August. The proposal was approved, and Karen will coordinate this special summer series, which will allow April to continue to work on educational efforts and other specific duties set out in her call to serve here.

Frenchie and Phil Fortenberry wrote the following as a way to introduce the church to a summer of sacred storytelling.

Sacred Storytelling

Because we are created in God's image, everything we do has an element of the sacred. The living of our lives--complete with the high points, low points and those in-between--is often worth sharing. Sacred storytelling is when people tell about events, situations, or times in their lives that were significant in some way that makes them who they are.

In Jesus' parables, we have the example of divine storytelling. It was through storytelling that he connected to the large numbers of people whom he could not reach on a personal basis. These stories were filled with both simple and profound meanings. His listeners understood Jesus to be primarily speaking of relationships.

When one's personal story is shared, it forms connections to the listener. Connecting with another person through the telling of your story or listening to another's story connects you with God. Connecting with human beings and other parts of God's creation is all important to our making it in this life. When Jesus said "I come to bring you life more abundant," He was speaking of relationships. A relationship with people shows us what God is like. There is power in connecting with another person. Through sharing stories, we identify our connection to each other and strengthen that connection. I remember feelings that began deep within and washed over my heart when I heard Charles Warford, Margie Halbert, Bill Northrup, Linda Ray Miller, Bill Halbert, Nell Magee, and others share their individual stories in March. Some were shared with joy, relief, and even anguish. I feel privileged to be entrusted with their sacred stories.

A story becomes sacred when a piece of a person's heart is shared with another in love and trust. When that story is received by another in respect, love, trust, and gratitude, a bond is formed that is strong and kind.

All of us in the Glendale family have a sacred story or stories to tell. What is your sacred story? A sacred story may encompass one's whole life journey or it may be a small piece of that journey. Maybe you are already aware of it. Perhaps there is just a seed of something you want to share with us that is beginning to form in your mind. Some of us will be able to use great organization and speaking skills to tell our story. Others will come with a passion and a depth of feeling about what they share. Some stories will almost write themselves for the teller. Some will only come after great travail and labor. Some person's story may have occurred in the past, and he or she will now be able to look back on it as significant. Some will tell of a journey they are presently on and do not know where it will carry them. Some will encompass great joy, some will harbor deep sorrow. All are sacred in the telling.

Both telling your sacred story and listening to another's sacred story have the power to change your life. We invite you to embark on this journey of faith with fellow Glendalers this summer. Begin with us on May 25 when April Baker and singer/songwriter extraordinaire, Kate Campbell, will lead us in worship and begin our journey of sacred storytelling.

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"The way we are with each other is the truest test of our faith." (Clyde Reid)

APRIL, 2003 GIVING UPDATE

The budget and finance committee reports that for the month of April just ended, church undesignated offerings totaled \$63,755.48 year to date, compared with \$71,177.21 for the same period last year. Average weekly undesignated giving year to date has been \$3,750.32, compared to average giving of \$4,186.89 per week for the same period last year. The church budget passed by the congregation for 2003 would require average weekly undesignated offerings of \$5,329.09 per week to be fully funded.

Monthly giving for this April totaled \$16,019.25, compared with a monthly giving total of \$12,054.65 for 2002.

Weekly undesignated giving in three of the last four weeks exceeded that from corresponding weeks in 2002 (oddly, Easter week failed to match the corresponding Sunday from 2002 by \$901.23). The average gap per week between 2002 and 2003 is closing—now at \$301.27 per week. Of course, change can reflect declining 2002 giving as much as increased 2003 giving. Still, we can project 2003 undesignated 2003 giving to be in the range of \$200,000.00 if giving continues current trends.

Annual giving analysis shows less giving in comparison with highs in 2001. The absence of a full-time senior pastor will result in reduced budget expenditures over the last three quarters of 2003, absorbing some of the giving deficit in the process. The budget and finance committee recommends that some consistent portion of that budget savings be allocated to debt reduction on a systematic basis.

Thank you for your continued systematic giving in support of the ministries of Glendale Baptist Church.

HABITAT UNITY BUILD 2003

A little advance notice is always a good thing. So here it is. Habitat for Humanity has scheduled the Unity Build 2003 to begin September 12 and 13 and to continue for the following three weekends. Before everyone scatters for the summer, please put those dates on your calendars. The schedule will go something like this – 1st weekend - heavier work, including decking and roofing; 2nd weekend - siding and insulation; 3rd weekend - siding (part two), interior finishing, cabinetry; and 4th weekend – finish and yard work. So, sharpen your saws, find your hammers, buy some new gloves, or pick out your favorite recipe that feeds a lot of hungry people. We are looking forward to **BIG** Glendale participation.

Cuba Partner Church Report

As you are probably aware relations between the U.S. government and the government of Cuba have worsened in the recent period. The U.S. recently expelled 14 Cuban diplomats from the U.S. They were posted at the Cuba Interest Section in Washington, D.C., and at the United Nations in New York City. Cuba is listed as a terrorist nation by the US government. The US has announced tighter restrictions on travel to Cuba and that now a Department of Commerce license along with a US Department of Treasury license will be required to make financial gifts to Cuban churches.

Of course, these developments have implications for our partnership. We are monitoring these actions and hope you will join us in prayer that somehow more peaceful relations may be forthcoming instead of these continued bellicose maneuvers.

While at the Alliance of Baptists annual national convocation in Vienna, Virginia, Glendalers met and talked with Dr. Francisco "Paco" Rodes-Gonzales, the president of the Fraternity of Baptist Churches in Cuba and a professor of Baptist

Studies at the Ecumenical Seminary in Matanzas, Cuba. We asked him to take funds to the Fraternity to provide for a theological studies scholarship for the pastor (Niubes Montes de Oca) of our partner church in Santa Clara. We also sent arts supplies for the children's program in Santa Clara with the Cubans who were able to get visas to travel to the US for the Alliance meeting. Also we asked him to take a letter to Niubes from our Associate Pastor April Baker.

In our conversations, we discussed the fact that we have had no direct word from our partner congregation since we were there in November, 2002, for its service constituting it as a church. Paco promised to help us obtain mailing addresses and work on other means of communication, such as email addresses.

Please continue to pray for our partner congregation in Santa Clara: Iglesia Bautista Alberto J. Diaz (Alberto J. Diaz Baptist Church). Also work and pray for peace between our nations.

David Gooch, Cuba Partner Contact Person, Missions Division

Youth Camp

Eight youth, including three current sixth graders, will leave for youth camp on June 29. Thomas Conner and Anne-Leslie Owens will chaperone.

Special Studies Class

The Special Studies Sunday School class has begun reading and discussing *The Good Book*, by Peter Gomes. MATrotter facilitates this group, which shares teaching responsibilities.

Two new books have been placed in the library related to spiritual discernment:

Discerning God's Will Together: A Spiritual Practice for the Church By Danny E. Morris & Charles M. Olsen (Nashville, TN: Upper Room, 1997)

Selecting Church Leaders: A Practice in Spiritual Discernment By Charles M. Olsen & Ellen Morseth (Nashville, TN: Upper Room, 2002)

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

New Members Dinner

The Almost Hawaiian Luau, our annual new member dinner held on May 4th, was a tremendous success. We had a great time AND got out by 8:00! (Check out the photos on the stair hall bulletin board!) Many thanks to Vic, er Vicky Victory, and her gong, grass skirt, and coconut bra (it was a sight to see) and everyone who made the evening possible. We ate well, laughed together, and got to know our new members a little better. Welcome new members.

Church Directory

The Church Directory has been completed and was passed out at the new member dinner. Extra copies are available in the foyer. Thanks go to Kristie Valentine, Rosalyn Ramage, David Gooch, MATrotter, and Connie Moore for assembling and editing the directory.

Kid's Corner



*And a little child shall lead them...
(quotes from children around the world)*

Why on earth, do we have war! Money for war but none to feed the poor.

Cheryl Workell, 17, Barbados

Summer Plans

Julie and April are working a program for the summer that will provide the children of Glendale opportunities for fun and education focused on helping others and being Baptists. Details will be announced soon, along with a calendar of activities for the children's summer program.

Older Children (those currently in grades 1-6)

We will go to the Nashville Sounds game on Saturday, June 7. We will meet at the church at 5:15.

Younger Children (toddlers – first grade)

We are planning a trip to the Zoo in June. Date and time will be announced in the bulletin, Wednesday night announcements, and via email. If you need a phone call or written announcement, please let April or Rita know so we can get the information to you.

Faithful Friends

The next Faithful Friends worship service will be Sunday, June 22.

Summer Reading Program

The summer reading program in the library will focus on the Heifer Project. As children read more books, they will be able to ask more people to donate money to Heifer. We will plan some educational programming around this, including at least one Faithful Friends worship service. More details will be available soon.