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Pastoral Ponderings

When I was a youth and campus minister, I often heard from young people who were yearning to follow God's will in their lives. As they considered their potential futures, deciding on a vocation and a major, thinking about where they would live and whether they would marry, there was often a good deal of adolescent angst tied up in the question about God's will. But they were always sincere in their desire to please God. I lost count of how many times I heard, "If only God would just tell me clearly what God wants, I would do it." That sentiment has not been limited to young people. I have heard that in many variations through the years of ministry.

For about the last year, I have been asking a form of this question about God's will for Emmanuel. I have said, "What is our shared vision for ministry? What is the future that God is calling us into?" I did this out of a need to set priorities among all the good ministries we have happening here. We have discussed this question in small groups, at Coordinating Council, and most formally, in three discernment sessions held this April, May and June. To be truthful, no one said, "If only God would just tell us clearly what God wants, we would do it." But, in those conversations, I sensed some of that same sincere desire to please God that I used to hear from youth and students.

In light of recent events and our discernment sessions, I have been imagining this conversation:

God: **How would you like to reach 200 people you have not met yet with the good news of my love?**

EBC: That sounds like just what we've been hoping to do. Is that what you want us to do?

God: **Yes, it is what I want. I should tell you that many of these people don't speak English.**

EBC: We have a few folks who speak Spanish. We might be able to help with Spanish.

God: **Thank you for that offer, but these folks don't speak Spanish either. They speak Karen, which is a language from Burma.**

EBC: We don't have any Karen speakers in our congregation. This might be a problem. And you know what? We looked up Burma on the map. It's now called Myanmar by the way, and it's on the other side of the globe. Getting there by airplane takes 40 hours and costs about \$4100 roundtrip. If we sent a missionary, we could have to pay for travel and a salary. We are not a wealthy church, God. Are you sure you were thinking of us for this mission? Maybe you have us confused with another church.

God: No, I am not confused. I am not asking you to go to Myanmar. There are more than 200 Karen people already in your neighborhood. And they already know about me and they even know about being Baptist. Two hundred years ago, Ann and Adoniram Judson went to Burma. They didn't go by plane, but by boat and it took much longer than 40 hours.

EBC: We've heard of the Judsons. So, you're saying that the Karen people who live in our neighborhood are descendents of the Karen who became Baptist Christians in Burma because of the work of the Judsons?

God: Yes, and now they are asking for your help, because you also share spiritual kinship with the Judsons.

EBC: This is very exciting . . . but . . . God, remember how we said we're not a wealthy church? We provide for our pastor, but she doesn't speak Karen, and we can't afford to pay another pastor for the Karen congregation.

God: Believe me, Emmanuel, I know your finances! I am not asking you to pay another pastor. The Karen Baptists already have a pastor who is also Karen. And, along with several others in that congregation, he is receiving theological education every other Saturday in Utica, New York. That is happening through a partnership with Central Baptist Seminary, another Baptist institution which also shares spiritual kinship with the Judsons.

EBC: It is starting to appear that many things are already in place for this congregation. So, if you aren't asking us to support a missionary to Myanmar and you aren't asking us to provide a pastor for them, what are you asking of us?

God: First of all they need a place to gather for worship and choir practice and fellowship and Bible study, all the things that you do in your church. I'm asking you to share your space with your Karen brothers and sisters, who are my children too. It will mean some inconvenience, when you both want to use the building at the same time. It will mean the carpet will wear out sooner and you might have to paint the walls more often, but it will also mean that your wonderful old building, which you have been renovating for mission and ministry, will be providing for more people than you had anticipated. (Great job on the building renovation, by the way!)

EBC: We hate to sound like a broken record God, but it costs money to keep this building standing and to heat it in the winter. Are the Karen going to help us pay for those costs?

God: Yes, they will help, but it will still cost you some money, maybe about \$5,000 per year. But here's the thing – compare that with the cost of paying for one person to travel to Myanmar or paying an additional pastor's salary. Compare it with the difficulty of travelling to Burma in 1813 and living there for 40 years, and being imprisoned there for almost 2 years, which was the Judson's experience. Think about sharing my love with 200 more people. Do you really think I'm asking that much? And if I am -- if you knew it was really what I wanted -- would you do it anyway?

Blessings,

Kathy



FOCUS Summer Worship Schedule:

All services at 9:30 a.m.

July 7	Emmanuel Baptist (275 State St)
August 4	Trinity United Methodist (235 Lark St.)
September 1	First Presbyterian (362 State St.)

From Service to Others...



The Karen Story

The Karen people are one of several ethnic groups in Southeast Asia who have endured an ethnic cleansing program in Eastern Burma. As a result, thousands of Karen went into hiding within Burma. In addition, a series of nine refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border were set up to house the Karen fleeing the violence in Burma.

No end to the difficulties was in sight for Karen refugees, so governments around the world began to accept Karen people from the camps in Thailand for resettlement. Several thousand Karen from Tham Hin, the southern most camp in Thailand, were brought to the U.S. in 2006. Many more have come to the United States in the ensuing years. Through the efforts of the Albany office of the United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, many Karen refugees have been resettling in the Capital District.

The Karen were some of the earliest converts to Christianity in Southeast Asia, and one of the fastest-growing churches after American Baptist missionary efforts began with the arrival of Adoniram Judson in Burma in 1813. The excitement and interest of these early mission efforts were the reason Baptist churches in the U.S. formed societies to work together that led to the formation of our Baptist denominations that exist today. For nearly 200 years, the Karen have been receiving our missionaries and their message, and they are proud of their links to Baptists in America.

(This was adapted from an article on the website “Karen Konnection” which is done by Duane and Marcia Binkley. The Binkleys serve ethnic Karen, Chin and Kachin refugees originally from Burma who are coming to live in the United States. They also maintain relationships with Baptist organizations in Thailand and within the refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border. The Binkleys are jointly appointed by American Baptist Churches International Ministries and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. For more information on the Karen, check the website: www.karenconnection.org) (NH)

Migrant Ministries North

Ministering to and with approximately 300 migrant workers August – October
Health Care Kit Items Requested:

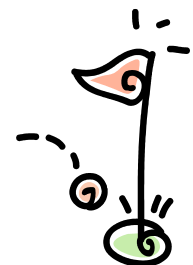
Shaving cream
Razors
Deodorant
Wash cloths
Hand towels
Soap
Toothbrush
Toothpaste

Work socks (white or black)
Heavy combs or picks
Pens
Pencils
Writing tablets
Books: for workers to take home to their children

If you have questions about Migrant Ministries, you may speak with Karen Kendall.

save the Date...
September 10

**Annual FOCUS Golf Outing
at Orchard Creek Golf Course
to benefit
FOCUS Interfaith Food Pantry & Soup Kitchen**



More from Service to Others...

Special Offering to be Received

During the month of July, you are invited to donate to the annual New York State Regional Offering. Monies raised support and enhance our shared ministries with American Baptist Churches of NYS such as: area field ministry, outdoor ministries, stewardship education, youth ministries and the lay study program. Envelopes will be available for your convenience.

Dessert & Discussion with Garrett Zambrows

Bicyclist, Garrett Zambrows has embarked on a cross-country biking trip, “Riding Against the Traffic”, raising awareness of the global problem of human trafficking. Along his route, Garrett is speaking at various churches, and Emmanuel will host an evening of discussion with him on Saturday, July 20 at 7:00.

Funds raised from Garrett’s trip will go to the anti-trafficking mission work of Debbie Kelsey and Melinda Baits, both missionaries with International Ministries, and to CASA for Kids, which helps abused and neglected children in Indiana. Join us on July 20 and learn more about these issues.



School Supplies Drive Needs Donations, Volunteers

The FOCUS Schools Supply Program is right around the corner. Through this initiative supplies are collected during the summer for children who use the FOCUS Interfaith Food Pantry. Your donations can be dropped off in the Pantry collection basket in fellowship hall through the end of July. Requested items include:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| #2 pencils | Pencil sharpeners |
| Rulers | Pencil boxes/Pencil pouches |
| Pens — blue, black, ink | Pink erasers |
| Pocket folders — plain and 3-hole punched | Glue bottles |
| Marble composition books | Glue sticks |
| Colored pencils | Sticky notes |
| Highlighters | Colored markers |
| 3-ring binders | Crayons—24 count |
| School scissors | Combination locks |
| Notebook paper — wide ruled and college ruled | |
| Spiral notebooks — wide ruled and college ruled | |

Cash donations are also welcome. Checks should be made out to FOCUS and marked “FOCUS School Supplies”. They may be sent to: Alan Tedrow
FOCUS Churches of Albany, 275 State Street, Albany, NY 12210.



Volunteers are also needed to help sort, pack and distribute the supplies during the last week of August. Preparation Days: Aug 26, 27, 28 from 10 a.m. to Noon. Distribution Days: Aug. 28, 29, 30, from 10 a.m. to Noon. If you can help, or if you would like more information, please call the FOCUS office or email beccal@focuschurches.net. Thank you!

CACC Summer Shelter Needs

Please keep your eye out for men’s inexpensive flip flops (for use in the shower). Also, we could use travel sized soaps, shampoo, and deodorants. Please hold on to these items until we start collecting supplies in October.



A Front-Line Peace Witness: BPFNA/Quaker House Friendship Tour

September 7 – September 9, 2013

Register Now at this link <http://www.bpfna.org/gather/qhft-registration>

Join the [Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America](#) and [Quaker House](#) for a Friendship Tour exploring crucial military issues such as:

- Suicide
- PTSD
- Domestic and family violence
- Use of torture and drones
- Lack of truth in military recruitment
- Impact of repeated deployments

Located near Fort Bragg (one of the largest military bases in the US), Quaker House is a manifestation of the peace testimony of the Religious Society of Friends. In line with this testimony, Quaker House seeks to support peacemaking efforts in the region and throughout the U.S. through education, advocacy, and counseling. Quaker House was established in 1969 after a GI stationed at Ft. Bragg hitch-hiked to the Chapel Hill Friends Meeting and asked for assistance in applying for Conscientious Objector (CO) status. The Meeting decided that Quakers needed to be in Fayetteville to provide support to GIs who opposed the Vietnam War.

Currently, Quaker House assists military personnel who, for reasons of conscience, seek separation or transfer to non-combatant service on grounds of conscience. It has been a key member of the GI Rights Hotline Network since that group's founding in 1994. Quaker House also provides education on related peace issues.

Location Information

Quaker House
223 Hillside Ave
Fayetteville, NC 28301

Contact Information

LeDayne McLeese Polaski
ledayne@bpfna.org

Historic Friendship Tour to Burma/Myanmar & Thailand

December 3 – December 20, 2013

This year marks the 200th anniversary of Ann and Adoniram Judson's arrival in Burma. Celebrate this historic occasion with us! Friendship Tour participants will learn about Baptists in Burma and form lasting relationships with Burmese and ethnic minority Baptists. Participants will also meet indigenous refugees living on the Burma/Thailand border and visit community development organizations in both Burma and Thailand.



Cities and sites visited will include:

Burma: Yangon and Mandalay

Thailand: Bangkok, Chian Rai, Refugee settlements along the Thailand/Burma border

Costs: \$1,800 per person submitted directly to BPFNA. Includes in-country costs (lodging (two per room); two meals per day; ground travel; air travel in Burma and Thailand). \$2,200 (estimated) paid by participants to MTS Travel for international airfare, Burma visa and the first night in the Bangkok hotel.

Registration Deadline is August 1, 2013. Deposit: \$400 deposit to BPFNA with registration

Contact: Julie Warner 651-353-9594 Warn0153@umn.edu

Looking Ahead...



Lake Otsego is beautiful in the fall. The trees start to turn and the lake reflects God's creation. Join the Emmanuel congregation this autumn for an overnight retreat at Pathfinder Lodge. We will be seeking the leading of the Spirit under the direction of David Reed-Brown, pastor for twenty years and currently serving as Director of Christian Education at North Church in Hartford, Conn. Besides pastoral talents, David is a skilled professional magician who appeals to young and old alike.

The retreat starts Friday night, September 13th with dinner, and ends after dinner on Saturday the 14th. Early registration fee for adults is \$60, children (ages 6-12) \$30, children 5 and under are free! Scholarships are available, so don't let money get in the way!

Besides cozy cabins with full bathrooms, there are spaces for campers and tents if you really want to rough it. The space is handicap accessible. Look for EBCoupons in the Sunday bulletins. The sooner you make reservations the lower the price. This is a wonderful fun fellowship event providing us all time to reflect on God's presence in our lives and the life of our church. For more information contact Marilyn, Gretchen, Amy or Mark. Sign up now. Your presence is important.



If you want to support this great campus ministry program and learn more about it, this will be an enjoyable event:

Save the Date:

Thursday, September 26, 2013

Protestant Campus Ministry

Patron's Dinner

First Lutheran Church
(181 Western Avenue, Albany NY)

6:00 p.m. Silent Auction

7:00 p.m. Dinner and Program

Featuring: Bishop Marie Jerge
Upstate New York Synod, ELCA

**Remember the
Food Pantry**

July: shampoo

August: razors & toothbrushes

Mark Your Calendar...

- July 4 ~ *Church Office Closed*
- 7 ~ FOCUS Worship at Emmanuel
- 14 ~ Quarterly Congregational Mtg.
- 20 ~ Dessert & Discussion w Garrett Zambrows
- 28 ~ Picnic at Donley/Wilkerson's
- 30 ~ Coordinating Council

August

- 4 ~ FOCUS Worship @ Trinity
- 17 ~ Work Day
- 25 ~ Diaconate
Valley Cats Ballgame



Picnic Planned

Emmanuel members and friends are invited to enjoy food and fellowship at the Donley/Wilkerson house on July 28 at 12:30 p.m. Please bring a dish to share; meat for the grill and beverages will be provided. The pool will be open so remember to pack your bathing suit and towel. Also, if you have a lawn chair you can bring, it would be helpful.

Deadline for the September issue of the MOSAIC is August 18.

Work Day Scheduled

Saturday, Aug. 17

9 a.m. to Noon

Lunch will be provided.



Summer's Here!

Summer has begun, and with it come staff vacations and abbreviated church office hours (9 am to 1 pm). If you have a pastoral need during Pastor Kathy's time off, July 15-22 and August 7-13 you may contact the church office. Arrangements for clergy support will be in place.

When Dorothy is away (July 29-August 19), volunteers will staff the office so your messages and needs will be heard. We hope that you, too, find time for rest and relaxation in the summer months. Enjoy!

Men's Gathering Scheduled

Emmanuel men are invited to meet for lunch at Otis and Oliver Restaurant at 11:45 on Wednesday, July 10. The restaurant is at Mill Rd. Golf Course in Latham) If you plan to attend, please contact Bob Hunziker or Roy Mallory so adequate seating can be arranged. Hope to see you there!



Summer Office Hours:

9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Church Office Closed: July 4

MaKayla Smith
Lydia Johnson
Amanda Gibson
Kevin Cole
Bessie Gibson
Nancy Horan
Beth Fuchs
Tracy Collins
Andrea Carver
Kendra Lahut
Rebecca Lamar (Malone)
Jim Wilkerson
Esther Moore
Elaine Clark
Amber Collins
Randolph Franklin



1st
3rd
4th
6th
10th
11th
13th
14th
14th
14th
21st
23rd
26th
29th
31st
31st

AUGUST

Elisabeth Scheu
Bill Silverman
Kimberly Norwood
Sam Hill
Michael Green
Ruth Johnson
Beverly Norwood
Parmilla Allen
Shamaal Ford
Karen Kendall



1st
2nd
5th
8th
11th
21st
22nd
23rd
26th
30th

If your birthday is not published in our monthly listing, please notify Dorothy at 465-5161.

Emmanuel Baptist Church
275 State St.
Albany, NY 12210

