

CONNECTIONS

From the Pastor's Desk...

I'll admit it. I am still putting away Christmas decorations. Oh, all the major stuff is done, Christmas Tree is down, ornaments carefully packed away. But there is still some garland and Christmas Village that needs to be stored for the next 10 months until once again it will adorn our home. Hopefully after this weekend, all of the trappings of the holiday season will be cleared away (remember I said that my Holiday season begins with Halloween and ends with the Superbowl?).

But then I look at the calendar and wouldn't you know it, another Holiday Season is nearly ready to begin. The season of Lent seems to always catch me by surprise.

Each year when we look to the story of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, we are called to prepare ourselves for Holy Week and Easter by walking the path with him. It is a journey that has a somber ending, and a glorious, surprising new beginning. Along the way, we are challenged to dig in deep and explore what it really means to be a disciple of Jesus.

Instead of just following the ever circling calendar, finding ourselves in the same place we were last year at this time, let's envision our journey as a spiral, that each year brings us a little closer to understanding the mystery and meaning of who we are as Jesus' followers.

Again this Lent, there are devotionals available to help you in your personal and family journey to Easter. We are offering three different ones in the hope that you will find just the right voice to speak to you on the way.

First, "Living in the Moment" by Stephen J. Carter offers reflections for people living in the midst of the world of Online Dating, Harry Potter, Reality TV, Facebook, and Texting. Here you will find short daily devotions that will challenge you to understand your place in the modern world as a follower of Jesus.

Second, "With God, All Things are Possible," by Kris Berggren is a family devotional that offers reflections that are easily understood by all members of the family, yet are springboards for deep discussions. This devotional will help you plan time to gather the family each day for fellowship and interesting conversation.

Third, "A Clean Heart Create in Me," offers materials collected from the writings of C. S. Lewis. Some of you may have used this devotional last year, but for those who did not, you will find deep reflections on the nature of God and our relationship to God through Jesus.

In offering these resources this Lent, it is hoped that you will not find yourself in the old familiar place on the circle of the Christian seasons, but rather find yourself along a spiral that will lead you closer to the one who we call Master and Rabbi.

I look forward to meeting you on the journey, as we encounter the truths of Christ this Lent, and as we explore the truths of discipleship together as the family of God.

Wishing you Peace in God's Shalom,

Pastor Greg



A Publication of



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In Worship This Month

Sunday, February 5
10:30 am—Worship
with Communion

Sunday, February 12
10:30 am—Worship

Sunday, February 19
10:30 am—Worship

Wed., February 22
6:00 pm—Ash Wed. Service

Sunday, February 26
10:30 am—Worship

February Birthdays

- 01, Hannah St. Onge*
- 02, George Murray III
- 04, Kendall Rosen*
- 08, Brittany Bertorelli
Nicole Taranto
- 09, Frank Maynard
Susan Cochran
- 14, Debra Grandelski
- 15, Barbara White
- 17, Jeremy Grandelski
- 23, Marilyn Poer
- 24, Christine Guerin
- 26, Katrina Grandelski
- 29, Nancy Chase Charron



Pastor:
Rev. Greg Thomas

Organist/Choir Director:
Howard W. Curry

Administrative Secretary:
Kris Useted

Ladies Luncheon

The next Ladies Luncheon will be held at: "The Gentleman Farmer Diner"
in Plainfield at 724 Norwich Rd. on Wednesday, February 8th at noon.
As usual there will be a sign-up sheet in the narthex.
All ladies in the church are welcome.

**DON'T FORGET ABOUT THE
VITAL SKILLS WORKSHOP ...
AT CORNERSTONE ON FEBRUARY 4TH!**

Attend a workshop or two and/or volunteer to help.
Contact Caroll Marston for more information.

Ash Wednesday—February 22

Too many footsteps along the wrong path, Too many straps binding us to a corrupted world, Too many I-s and Me-s and not enough us and we. Lent is the time we strip away all that is not essential to us as Children of God and place our feet on the path with Jesus. Join us for the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday, February 22, as we remember that without Christ, we are but ashes and dust.

Ash Wednesday service begins at 6 p.m. and will include a service of ashes.

In the mail....

January 10, 2012
Dear Rev. Thomas,

Thank you to the Cornerstone Baptist Church congregation for the generous \$125 donation to the Access Community Action Agency Emergency Fuel Assistance. Your help is needed now more than ever.

Your continued generosity during these difficult times will continue the important work of warming the homes of seniors and hard working low-wage families, and partnering to build economic stability throughout the community.

Knowing you have many options for where to send your contribution, you can rest assured that your gift will provide critical resources to make good things happen for people struggling to make ends meet. Your confidence in us is both inspiring and humbling.

In spite of the challenges before us, together we will continue to make a difference every single day for people in need. Thanks again,

Sincerely,
Peter S. DeBiasi
President /CEO

Remember: The last person to leave the church building should be sure that all doors and windows are closed /locked, door alarms set. In addition, the Academy Street door into Fellowship Hall will be kept locked during the Sunday worship service. Thank you for helping us take care of our facilities.

Connections is published 11 times a year at The Cornerstone Baptist Church, and is put together by a host of valuable volunteers. Please try to have articles and information to the office by the 15th of the month, and no later than the 20th.

Sunday School News



We know it is still winter outside, but it is never too early to begin thinking about Camp Wightman!

This past summer, Cornerstone Baptist was blessed to have had more campers attend than ever before, and that means we awarded more camperships than ever before. In the past, every person who wanted to attend camp was automatically awarded half of the cost...this year, it has been decided that the awards will change as we need to be better stewards of the money that we have been budgeted.

As of now, every child who wants to attend camp will automatically be awarded \$100. We will begin a point system that will allow campers to increase their award amounts. Each child who attends Sunday School regularly, participates in Family Sunday Worship, assists with Campership Breakfasts and other fundraisers that are deemed necessary, will be given points; participation in each area is worth 1/3 of their campership amount. In this way, they are able to earn additional money toward their campership awards (up to half of the cost of the particular camp fee).

If you have any questions about how the new campership system will work, please see Cindy or Bethany.

Upcoming events:

We are looking at a couple of new fundraising opportunities: selling children's **Christian T-shirts** and children's & adult **Cornerstone Baptist T-shirts** and also selling **Note cards and Christmas cards** that have been designed by our kids or using photos that have been taken here at church—we'll keep you posted.

We are considering many options for our Lenten Mission Project this year...if you have any thoughts or suggestions, let us know!

Library News

Cold winter days— a perfect time for a good book. I especially love to sit by a window where I can see the snow falling while I read.

Our church library has a wide range of books to choose from:

Books on devotions — prayer — women of the Bible, and books by Billy Graham, — Anne Graham Lotz — Catherine Marshall — Max Lucado and Mother Teresa.

There's also a wide range of titles:

“God at Ground Zero” —“Amish Proverbs”—“3,285 Questions and Answers” and “Chocolate for Lent” to name a few.

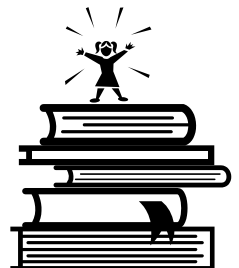
And have you read the Joshua series by Joseph F. Girzone?

How about “Chicken soup for the Soul”?

There are VHS tapes —“10 Commandments” — “Greatest Story Ever Told” and more...

Take a minute and check out the library upstairs, next to the church office and the Children's Library downstairs, next to the nursery. You might just find that perfect book to read while the snow falls!

Cindy





K I D S K L I P S

John Crossword

Jesus said:

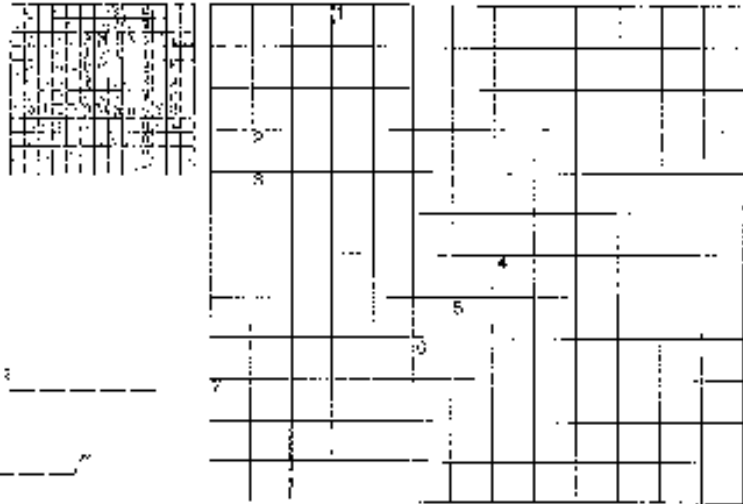
John 10:9 "I am the _____"

John 12:11 "I am the _____"

John 11:25 "I am the _____
and the _____"

John 14:6 "I am the _____ and the _____"

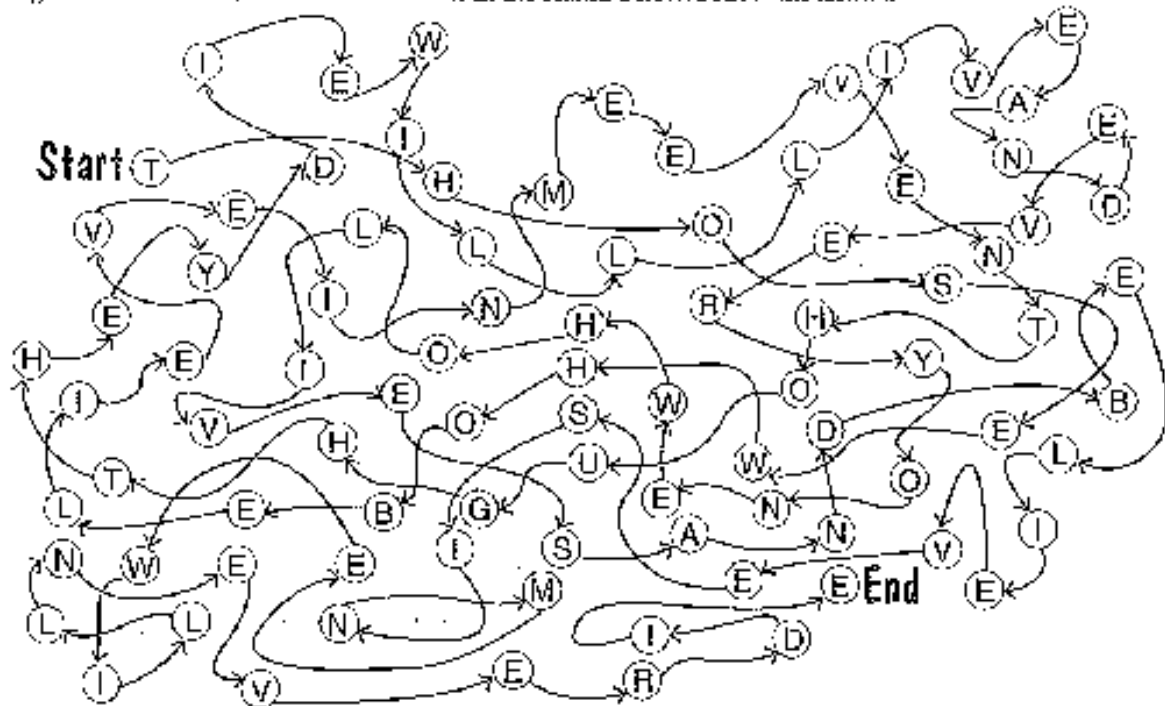
John 15:1 "I am the _____"



Fill in the crossword with the words from the above blanks.

John 11:25b, 26a

Begin at "Start" and write down each letter in the blanks below. Follow the arrows.



There are those who believe in me, even though they do not see me; and because of their faith will have eternal life.

Connections

A letter from the Clemmers—January 2012

A person of stature

Zoal Gatkwath Pook is a tall man who must stoop to go through doors. But he is also tall in my eyes for other reasons. Let me tell you a story from South Sudan.

The problem

The principal cause of death for girls and women between the ages of 13 and 40 in South Sudan is pregnancy. In the two States where Bill is working, less than a third of pregnant women have access to any kind of prenatal care and only 1 out of 10 women deliver in health facilities. Most have their babies at home with traditional and untrained village workers without access to medicine, medical supplies, lights, or running water. Women in need of a C-section have no place to go and even the most minor complications of labor and delivery can mean death to mother and baby.

The solution

In response to a request from the Upper Nile State Ministry of Health, IMA World Health solicited a grant from the United States government to set up advanced and emergency obstetrical services in five strategic counties so women with danger signs of pregnancy or problems while in labor could come for help. Aside from building and equipping these centers, it is necessary to train health workers to run them. It is rare to find a doctor in the interior and indeed none were found willing to work in these isolated yet needy areas. Nurses and midwives were thus recruited for advanced training in obstetrics and 13 of them were chosen to attend a 9-month program at a

medical training college in Western Kenya. That is where I come in.

The Great Lakes University in Kisumu, where the South Sudanese students are in training, is less than an hour's flight from Nairobi. I have started to visit them, helping them to get settled in to a new culture and surroundings, purchasing books and supplies, and even reviewing their curriculum. It has been an exciting time for the students: 24-hour electricity, running water, classes with desks, labs with mannequins, and access to computers and the Internet. For one student, however, the experience has been marred by tragedy.

The tragedy

Zoal Pook is a nurse who was sent by his village to be trained in advanced obstetrical care because of his commitment, his sharp intellect, and his passion to learn and bring relief to his community which has seen more than its share of women dying in labor. He left his own wife, 6 months pregnant, behind. Zoal felt torn leaving his young wife, but was fueled by the desire to develop skills to help many others. A week before my trip to visit Zoal and his colleagues, I received a note from Bill that Zoal's wife had gone into labor the night before in the village. No one could provide the necessary care and **both** mother and baby died during delivery. Word was sent to Zoal of the tragic news with the offer to fly him back home to be with his family and bury his wife. The grieving Zoal responded, "My heart is with my family and I want desperately to be with them.....but my commitment is to the health of

my people and I must stay and finish this program so others will not die."

Standing tall in my eyes

I met with Zoal during his time of grief. He told me that he was thankful to have been able to be in communication with his mother and brother back in Upper Nile State. He admitted that it has been devastating to lose both wife and child, but he also told me that "all things work through the plan of God".

After spending time talking, Zoal took his leave, ducking through the doorway to return to class. Yes, he is physically tall, but as he completes his training and returns to his village, giving of himself to save others from the tragedy he has endured, he will stand tall among his people tomorrow, as he stands tall in my eyes today!



Ann H. Clemmer

*Bill & Ann Clemmer
International Ministries
South Sudan*

"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." 1 Peter 4:10



Correspondence: clemmer@cmi.org
How to support our ministry: <http://www.internationalministries.org>
Mail Address: 71 Forest Avenue
Orono, Maine 04468

Connections

Women's Retreat

More information will be on the ABCCONN website. They are planning a very relaxing time! Everyone will come away feeling so serene...just think of floating in the Caribbean!!

cut here

Wish you were on a beach someplace?

Are you longing for a time to slow down, wiggle your toes in the sand and bask in the warmth of God's presence?

**Come, join in the 3rd Annual Women's Retreat
at Camp Wightman
Friday, March 9 to Sunday, March 11, 2012**

**Cost is just \$145.00 for 2 nights, 6 meals and all programs.
It all begins on Friday night with dinner at 5:30pm
and ends with lunch on Sunday at 12:30 pm.**

Mail registration to:

**Camp Wightman
207 Coal Pit Hill Road
Griswold, Connecticut 06351-9109**

**Registration Form
Deadline—March 1st, 2012**

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone Number: _____

Roommate Preference? _____

Dietary Considerations: _____

Payment Method

Check for \$145.00. OR Credit Card—Type: _____

Credit Card Number: _____ Expiration Date: ____ / ____
Month Year

**February
2012**



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On the back page...

Maybe I'm not making big changes in the world, but if I somehow helped or encouraged somebody along the journey, then I've done what I'm called to do.

- Sister Thea Bowman

Keep knocking, and the joy inside will eventually open a window and look out to see who's there.

- Rumi from "The Sunrise Ruby"

What we give to the poor, we lend to the Lord.

- Sojourner Truth

For now, it seems that some fasting is the best way to remind myself of the millions who are hungry and to purify my heart and mind for a decision that does not exclude them.

- Henri J.M. Nouwen

The church has lighted my way. Instead of struggling through a wilderness I have a road—a road to virtue and truth. Only a road—the road to an end—not the end itself—the road to truth, not the fullness of truth itself...In one word, she has taught me how to seek God.

- Maude Dominica Petre

From: *Editor's Clip Sheets*
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