



FIRST WORD

May 2008

From the Pastor...

“Great Expectations”

I just finished reading reviews of a new book by Eric Weiner titled, *The Geography of Bliss: One Grump’s Search for the Happiest Places in the World.* Weiner, aptly pronounced “whiner,” measures levels of happiness in a wide variety of places such as Iceland and India, Africa and America, Britain and Bhutan.

His list of happiest places is somewhat surprising. Iceland is number two on the list despite the cold climate and moderate standard of living. Denmark is also high on the list (of course, this country produced our own “Happy” Harrison!).

One reviewer observed that Weiner found that “a myriad of factors contribute to happiness: society, culture, community, relationships, belonging, trust, openness, creativity, action, flexibility, unpredictability, altruism, a healthy balance of comparative feelings, hedonism, but not too much, and money, but just a bit. And, yes, place--if it allows these things.”

Where did the United States rank? Somewhere in the middle of the list.

We’re happier than residents of Moldova, but we’re not nearly as happy as those in Bhutan.

Why doesn’t the US rank higher in happiness? One of the main factors in happiness is expectations. And that’s where the US falters. Weiner found that we have the highest expectations of any culture in the world in terms of success, wealth, and opportunity. In fact, we have set the expectation bar so high, very few can clear it.

Much of our unhappiness can be laid at the feet of unfulfilled expectations. We want more out of life—and expect more—but we’re not getting it.

High expectations taken to their extreme creates a kind of perfectionism. Perfectionists try their best to make life perfect and become frustrated and even enraged when they discover that life can’t be perfect.

One of the best pieces of advice I received about raising teenagers was: “Lower your expectations and raise your tolerance.” That advice could apply to other areas of life as well. If we had more realistic expectations of ourselves, of each other, and of Life itself, we would be happier.

Perhaps a healthy dose of gratitude and humility is what we need to reset our expectations. Being grateful for what we have and not always craving more leads to greater happiness. Being humble and honest about our gifts and abilities also lowers our expectations to the level of reality.

The spiritual path paved by Jesus is surely one of gratitude and humility. I don’t know if there are really happy places, but I do believe we can find happiness on our life journeys. It all depends on how much (or how little) we expect.

Bob

Come and Meet Our New Pastor: Rev. R. Randy Day

On Mother’s Day Sunday, May 11, Rev. Day will be preaching at our 10 a.m. worship service. This is an opportunity to meet Randy, Emily and their children and welcome them to First Church.

May 11 will also be our “Bring A Friend” Sunday for the month of May (instead of May 4). What a great opportunity to invite a friend or neighbor to church!

CE Update/News

The Bible stories taught in the spring quarter are some of the foundational stories of our Christian faith. This month's unit "Travels with Paul" is building on previous stories of Paul, in which the children learned how Paul went from being a persecutor of Christians to one of the most influential Christian missionaries of all times.

"Travels with Paul" gives children an insight how Paul spread the good news of Jesus Christ to the Gentile world. The children learn how his letters made an impact on the early church.

Come join us on May 11th as we celebrate Pentecost, the birthday of the church, at Sunday School. The children will learn how the Holy Spirit gave them the power to carry

the good news message to all nations everywhere.

Congratulations to Emily Abbott who completed the 30 hour famine, and congratulations to the participants of the 24 hour famine, Kelly Spector, Christian Morales, and Nicholas Debany! Together they raised \$1065.00!!!

Susanne Frank, CE Director

New Member Sunday is May 18

On Sunday, May 18, we will welcome new members to the First Church family. As an interdenominational church, we accept each person's baptism and membership from their previous denomination. Therefore, new members are asked only to support First Church with their "prayers, presence, gifts and service." See

You Are Invited To...

First Church of Round Hill's Annual Meeting Sunday, May 18, 10:45 a.m.

(following a shortened worship service)

The purpose of our Annual Meeting is to celebrate our past, present and future and elect officers and leaders for the year beginning June 1. Besides electing leadership, we will hear about our new youth program and new pastor transition plans.

Bob Walker if interested.

Sympathy

Our prayers and deepest sympathy are with Catherine, Elizabeth and Perry Skjelbred on the loss of husband and father Perry on April 11. A service of remembrance and thanksgiving for Perry was held at First Church on April 23rd.

YOUTH GROUP IN MAY

May 4th – Rob Bell Series in Youth Room

May 11th - Rob Bell Series

May 18th - Rob Bell Series

May 18th – Youth Event at Rye Playland, 11-3. Immediately following the service we will be heading over to Rye Playland for a day of fun. Roller Coasters, games, and rides! Pick up will be at the church. Please provide your child with enough money for lunch and games.

Coming in June

June 8 – Multiple Myeloma Run for Research

June 14 - Youth Whitewater Raft Trip

June 15 - Children's Sunday and Picnic

FIRST CHURCH OF ROUND HILL

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•FIRST CHURCH OF ROUND HILL STAFF•

Robert M. Walker, Pastor
Avery C. Manchester, Pastor Emeritus
Gwendolyn Hillman, Director of Music/Organist
Susanne Frank, Director of Christian Education
Daisy Melo, Youth Director
Annie Callahan, Secretary
Sandy Regan, Financial Secretary
Ernesto Damm, Property Manager

First Church of Round Hill is a Christian community, rich in heritage, open and caring, bound together by our faith.