



God Stuff Happenings in Our Churches – February 2016

MISSIONS

- **United Baptist Church, Concord, NH**, has been hosting a cooperative effort between NH Department of Health and Human Services and Easter Seals to support families and individuals with needs arising from military service. The initiative is called “**Ask the Question.**” The purpose of this initiative is to implement a statewide campaign that encourages agencies and organizations from a variety of provider sectors (including faith-based groups) to ask the question, “Have you or a family member ever served in the military?”, and provide information and assistance to providers regarding what to do when the answer is “Yes.” **Pastor David Denis** would like to encourage other American Baptist churches in New Hampshire to become involved in this initiative. For more information about how your church can participate, go to <http://askthequestionnh.com/providers/faith-based-groups/>.

From the website: *Faith-based organizations provide communities with an opportunity to come together with shared purpose. For many, helping those in need is a key part of the mission. Many military families are proud and quiet. They may participate in local services, but might not readily identify themselves as military. You might not know whether or not a family is dealing with military deployment, the wounds of war, or other challenges common to military-veteran life. The only way to find out is to ASK!*

- The children at **First Baptist Church, Chester, VT**, chose the Penny Project (an ABCUSA initiative to help fight child-hood poverty) as their Sunday school mission project for the first half of the Sunday school year. Their goal was to collect the equivalent of 18,819 pennies, which represents the number of children in poverty in Vermont in 2014. They enrolled the help of the congregation and the adult Sunday school class. They greatly surpassed that goal by collecting the equivalent of 28,850 pennies (of which 8,750 were actually pennies). The children will decide how the money is to be used.
- **First Baptist Church, Richford, VT**, is getting an early start on Operation Christmas Child for 2016. They will be collecting items for the shoeboxes throughout the year and will have a monthly theme for suggested items. Locally, they host a free community supper on Friday evenings.
- On Friday, December 4 the Sunday school and youth of **United Church of Hinesburg, VT**, had a cookie decorating event. They baked and decorated over seven dozen sugar cookies for the Missions & Social Justice Committee’s holiday food baskets. On Sunday, December 20th, they had a great turnout at Sunday school to help the committee to assemble the baskets. With generous donations from the congregation they were able to put together 17 food baskets for distribution to families in need within their community.
- **Gilford Community Church** provided 36 Christmas dinner baskets to families at New Beginnings, CASA NH, Lakes Region Child Care Services, Gilford Schools and 15 families in the community. One church member provided poinsettia plants for each basket. Also 10 large bags of warm, winter coats were delivered to Lakes Region Community Services Council Resource Center as a result of a coat drive the church held.

CHURCH NEWS

- **Third Baptist Church, Strafford, NH**, held a “Festival of Games Day” on January 1st. It included games for all ages – board games (for those from the old school) and computer video games, complete with prizes, for the younger generation. There was also a puzzle to put together, musical groups performing throughout the day, a potluck supper, and a movie to end the day.
- On November 22 **First Baptist Church, Berlin, NH**, welcomed Stephanie Mudgett as their newest member.

- **First Baptist Church, Keene, NH**, is celebrating its 200th anniversary this year with a variety of events. Their theme is “Honoring Yesterday, Illuminating Tomorrow.” Their first event was an anniversary celebration dinner on January 16. Included in the events this year is a campaign to raise funds for repairs to the church and grounds and a mission project to build an outdoor pavilion on the grounds, which will be available for use by community individuals and organizations.
- Congratulations to and prayers for **Rev. Stephanie Allen** (Memorial Baptist Church, Middlebury, VT) and her husband **Mitch Howell** and their family as they welcome their newly adopted baby son, Soren Howell, into their family. Soren was born 8 weeks prematurely and with a disease called Lissencephaly. Stephanie reported at the end of December that Soren has no chromosomal damage, is gaining weight and thriving as he adjusts to his new noisy family.
- In December several teens involved with vocal and instrumental music at **First Baptist Church, Bradford, NH**, did a Christmas flash mob at the Market Basket in Warner and sang Christmas songs. They also went to a retirement village in Warner, a nursing home in Webster, and a few homes of house-bound people in Bradford to share the togetherness of Christmas.

For those of you on Facebook in New Hampshire, check out the following Facebook page and consider “Liking” it: *Wish List NH*. *Wish List NH* is an ecumenical, community outreach that seeks to match severely needy families with the extra clothes, shoes, and gear we all have lying around. In its two years of existence this network has assisted children and adults representing 139 families.