



God Stuff Happenings in Our Churches – March 2016

On Monday, November 23, 2015, six members of New Hampton Community Church and seven members of First Baptist Church, Bradford landed in Managua, Nicaragua for a life-changing mission trip. Linda Blomstedt of New Hampton and Lynne Hubley of Bradford share their accounts of the trip.

Linda Blomstedt:

Even before we left NH, God had his hand in the details of this trip. Despite efforts to limit our car rental reservations to one van and one SUV, God knew better and provided two vans, which were exactly what we needed.

Knitters across the area worked for months ahead of time and enabled us to deliver three full suitcases full of teddy bears. God knew this would be a huge part of our trip in ways we never saw ahead of time. Only a few days before we left Karen (Mitchell, pastor Scott Mitchell's wife and co-team leader) was told about an orphanage and new start-up Christian school about an hour from where we would be working. What a blessing these bears were for these children! We delivered soccer balls and tennis balls as well.

God delivered dramatic healing to team members, both before and during the trip. Every day we had multiple examples of God's hand in our work, our travel safety, and our interactions with the people of Nicaragua.

There are lots of great stories from our work days at the Nicaragua Christian Academy in Matagalpa. We primed four concrete classrooms four times over, inside and out, in record time. We returned to our hotel each day with white spots all over us but with big smiles. This team worked so well together we were able to do more than the school director had planned! We worked in the library repairing and shelving books and helped the teachers clean up their classrooms.

Additionally, we were able to paint a back wall of the main building that had never been done before and helped move rocks from a wall. We delivered new books and school supplies as well. Since it was the end of the school year, we were blessed to be able to attend their end-of-year Christmas concert. It was wonderful to hear the kids sing "Silent Night" in Spanish!

This was a life-changing experience and one I would recommend whole-heartedly. Returning to the USA you realize how very rich and blessed we are. During this trip we were all blessed by the kids, the teachers, and the workers at the school so much.

Lynne Hubley:

On Saturday, November 14, our Fellowship Committee put on a Thanksgiving Dinner for the church body and the 7 of us who were going to Nicaragua. We dedicated all of the school supplies, tools and Children's Spanish books that people donated to accompany us on our trip.

We flew out of Boston to Managua, Nicaragua. 13 people and 2 vans then traveled to our hotel in Matagalpa. The hotel was absolutely quaint and the family who ran it were so hospitable and made us feel like family. Every morning, they made a delicious hot breakfast for us before we headed out to do our work.

Karen and Scott Mitchell were our leaders and they were utterly amazing. They organized and directed every detail of the trip and made it so enjoyable. Our primary mission work took place at the Nicaragua Christian Academy in Matagalpa. During the week, we completed priming the cement walls of 4 new classrooms. It was challenging because the primer was watered down -- we probably put on 6 coats all together. Even though the work was a little monotonous, we had the best time. There is nothing like working with fellow Christians doing work for God's kingdom.

This was the end of the school year for NCA, so we helped some of the teachers clean out their classrooms and take down bulletin board hangings. We also helped file books in their little library. Even though most of us didn't know Spanish, somehow we managed to communicate with the teachers. We enjoyed an unexpected treat during the middle of the week. Because this was the end of their school year, we got to go to their Christmas musical program which was delightful. We certainly recognized the tunes of all the familiar Christmas songs.

When we first got to the school, the principal gave us a tour and I was so impressed with the amount of faith she has. She truly believes this is God's school and He has done remarkable things.

On Thanksgiving Day we took a break from painting and drove to an orphanage which had a strong impact on my 2 teenagers who were with us. They got to play soccer and teach some of the children yoyo tricks, and I am sure that is a memory they will never forget. It was sad to see how many children have been orphaned, but hopeful to hear the stories of how this orphanage is breaking the cycle of poverty, abuse, prostitution and teen pregnancies, one child at a time.

We also got to meet a man named Stuart who used to work at the orphanage, but now is running a school. God put a vision on his heart to start his own school and God has provided in miraculous ways because of his faith. The New Hampton Community church had brought a bunch of knitted teddy bears and we go to hand those out to the children at Stuart's school.

When you live in a small town, your world perspective is very small. What I was reminded of on this trip is that God really does love the whole world. He looks for people who will say "yes" to his Call and then watch Him move mountains. I came back wanting more of that in my own life and for our church.

This was the first mission trip for First Baptist Bradford and I hope the first of many.

MISSIONS

- *Sliding Socks Playgroup* is a new church program that **The Madison Church** is sponsoring at the town's elementary school on Saturday mornings during the winter. It provides indoor fun for toddlers and elementary school age children
- Five members of **Memorial Baptist Church, Middlebury** recently went on a missions trip to Grande Goave, Haiti, where they helped with building a house, working with children and building relationships with churches in the area.
- The children and youth of **United Church of Hinesburg** gathered during Sunday School on January 31st for a mission project, making curried lentil soup mix for a local homeless shelter.

CHURCH NEWS

- On December 6, **Antrim Baptist Church** was buzzing with much activity as 30+ children, parents and grandparents came together for "A Christmas Celebration." There were fun crafts, cookie making, a Christmas Scavenger Hunt, a Christmas sing-along and the reading of the Christmas story.

In December church members were given a colored piece of construction paper and asked to write a prayer concern on it as it was revealed to them. Each week the concerns were made into an old-fashioned Christmas garland that adorned the tree in the Fellowship Hall. Each link was prayed for as it was placed on the tree. Prayers came in from all over the country.

- **Gilford Community Church** welcomed the following into church membership on December 6: Kathy McNutt, Trenton McNutt, Lawrence & Nicole Branch and their family, and Judy Buswell.
- **First Baptist Church, Keene** kicked off their 200th anniversary year on January 16 with a first class anniversary dinner and exciting program, complete with live music and a video presentation. It was announced that evening that they had received commitments for 2/3rds of their campaign goal toward improvements and repairs to the church building and grounds.

Pastor Mark Ferrin reports, "As I travel around Keene and beyond I hear many people saying it looks like you're doing some new things at First Baptist? I respond by saying, 'Yes, we are beautifying our space, but also we are trying to beautify our spirit and our lives by bringing the love of Jesus to the world, and by being the hands and feet of Jesus, and by proclaiming God's grace.' After all, these sentiments are what our mission is all about, isn't it? I am reminded of a Scripture from Isaiah 52:7 that says 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news of God.' May our feet and hands and hearts be beautiful to Mount Monadnock and beyond in this 200th year!"

- **The Community Church of Sandwich** welcomed Bob Michael into membership on January 17th.

- Congratulations to **Jeremy & Cristen Pataro (South Hampton Baptist Church)** on the birth of their daughter Makayla, born on January 18th.
- On January 24, **First Baptist Church, Bennington** celebrated the installation of their pastor **Mr. Robert “Bob” Wieggers** (pictured at right). Rev. Steve Magee, pastor of Exeter (NH) Presbyterian Church, gave the sermon. Rev. Dale Edwards gave the charge to the pastor and congregation.
- **First Haitian Baptist Church (French Speaking Baptist Church) of Manchester** and their pastor **Renaud Dumont** are pleased to announce that they have a new worship location. After renting space for several years they are in the process of purchasing the former Manchester Alliance Church on Merrimack Street and are already worshipping there. They ask for prayers as they seek a loan to help with the purchase.
- During Lent, **Middle Street Baptist Church, Portsmouth** is focusing on prayer. Participants meet weekly for a potluck dinner and then spend time studying, imagining and practicing various forms of prayer.



Church members are also engaging in a four-part Vision Summit where they are taking an honest assessment of the church and engaging in conversation about the past, present and future of their church. Once a month, for four months, they are meeting with Rev. Ron Bouthillette, lead pastor at The Bridge Community Church, Milford and adjunct professor of Church Revitalization at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, who is leading them in the discussions to help them understand better who they are as a church and where they would like to go.

- On January 31, **First Baptist Church, Rutland** celebrated the ordination of their co-pastor **Rev. Patricia “Patti” Stratton**. The charge to the ordinand was given by Rev. Dr. Glenn Miller, professor emeritus of Bangor Theological Seminary; the charge to the church was given by Rev. Dr. A. Roy Medley, ABCUSA General Secretary Emeritus; Rev. Dr. Debora Jackson, Executive Director of the Ministers Council ABCUSA, led in prayer during the laying on of hands. Revs. Dale Edwards and Malcolm Hamblett brought greetings from ABC/VNH and the Southwest Association of Churches and Ministers Council ABCVNH, respectively.

