

THE BULLETIN

VBS IS ALMOST HERE!

Vacation Bible School is a time of excitement, creativity, energy, and (most importantly) Bible-learning. It's a time when we can host our own children and children from our community to learn God's word through the words of our teachers, the songs that we'll sing, the crafts that the kids will make, the puppet plays we perform, and the games that we'll be playing. It's a special opportunity to "get a foot in the door" to share God's love and God's ways with families we know from school, from little league, from dance class, from karate, and from ...well, you get the idea — by asking them come to Bible class and church regularly with your family. It's a time when we can exercise a number of creative gifts in service to the Master by serving these "little ones" (see Matt. 10:42 and Matt. 25:40). And there's something that every single one of us can do.

You could...

- Ask your neighbors to come
- Ask our teachers and other leaders if they

This Sunday we'll be looking at the Bible on the topic of fundamentals of love. One of Christianity's great pillars is love, and yet because of the world's skewed definition of it, we sometimes we have a hard time getting a real handle on it. Come, take notes, compare the Bible's definition to your practice; you'll be glad you did.

While we're thinking about VBS let's not forget that we have an exciting a cappella singing workshop with Keith Lancaster on

could use some help, if there's some way you could pitch in

- Provide cookies or other treats
- Come to the open house night on Wednesday (even if you don't have a kid in the program) to be a friendly face and determine to not let one single visitor escape without you shaking their hand
- Be a puppeteer
- Be a chaperone
- Help clean up after open house
- Provide goodies for open house
- Post a flyer in your local grocery store bulletin board
- Provide rides for children you've invited
- Pass out a few flyers in your local neighborhood
- Send a card to the visitor families, inviting them to come back regularly

The Manchester church of Christ

66 Mammoth Rd.
Manchester NH 03109
603.623.5559

mht_church@comcast.net

www.mhtcoc.org

Elders' Link: August

Duane Coss 424-9152
drcoss@myfairpoint.net
Barry Fogal 487-2387
bfogal@comcast.net

If you have any concerns that the elders should be aware of, or need to speak with them, please contact Duane or Barry this month.

Our Worship Services

Sunday AM: 8:30 & 11:00

Bible Class: 10:00

Sunday PM: 6:00

Small Groups:

West Side Small Group:

6:15PM at Doug Paul's house

Merrimack Small Group:

5:30PM, contact Stuart

Peacock

Wednesday PM Devotional/Bible Classes: 7:00



October 17; be sure to note this on your calendar, the sooner the better. Soon we'll receive some CD's that he wants us to listen to, for the purposes of learning the songs on it; and we'll (in the latter part of August) begin some Sunday evening classes to learn and practice these songs that we're hearing on CD. We'll probably be suspending our usual Sunday PM small groups during this time, so we can all meet together — the format will be a lot like Wednesday: short devo and communion service, followed by the singing class. This is going to be a little different, but it'll be great! Stay tuned for more details.

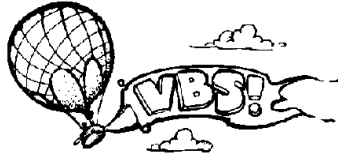
OUR FAMILY

NEWS TO USE

"So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household," Ephesians 2:19, NAS95

Coming up in August...

Body & soul workshop will be meeting this Sunday, August 8th at 1pm.



VBS Barb Steffensen is looking for about 5 more people who would be willing to accompany the VBS classes to the different activity areas and stay to assist as needed—please see Barbara if you can and would help...we need you!!!!Thank you!!

What else?

Singing and fellowship The Keene church of Christ invite us to join them on Sunday, August 13th at 2pm for an afternoon of singing and fellowship. See the flyer on the bulletin board for further details.

Family Retreat Mark your calendars for the weekend of August 27th-29th for the Gander Brook family retreat. Forms will be avail-

able soon.

Labor Day cookout will be held at the Potters so mark your calendars so you don't miss out on the food, fellowship and fun. Details to follow.

This and that...

Special need Darlene Chamberlain's car is in need of two major repairs before it will pass inspection by the end of the month. Please let her know if you know of someone who could help her...finances are a factor.

Take a look If you haven't been in the teen room in the basement of the annex recently, you should check it out. It has been given a much needed facelift by the college students and teens. CAUTION: the floor is still wet so please stay on the stairs.

Kitchen help There is still a need for a couple more volunteers to help cook for the Ladies Retreat in September. Please see Dick Potter if you are able to help.

Financial need There have been some problems with the water system at Gand-

er Brook the past couple of weeks and the cost for repairs will be over \$6000. Please see Mike Moser if you are able to help meet this financial need.

GB Retreats Registration forms for the Men's and Ladies retreats are available on the table in the foyer. They are also available online at www.ganderbrook.org/retreats.cfm

Food Drive The sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the foyer has been updated and we are still in need of several items. Please take a look to see how you can help this important ministry.

Attention men The service schedule for July through September can be found on the bulletin board in the back of the auditorium.

Worship Leaders

8:30

Songs.....Stuart P.
Closing Prayer.....Doug P.
Scripture.....Eric A.
Lord's Supper.....Ken B.
Coordinator.....Doug P.

11:00

Songs.....Rick G.
Closing Prayer.....David S.
Scripture.....Gary D.
Lord's Supper.....Pete S.
Coordinator.....Pete S.

PM Songs.....Ken B.

Wed songs.....Doug P.

Prayer Concerns

Health: Doreen Lee, Duane Coss, Barry Fogal, Peggy Mailloux, Pete Steffensen, Penny Ranger, Manley Jones

Leadership: Ministers, Elders, Deacons

Evangelism: Bible studies in progress, our website, MNFM, food pantry, Give Away Day contacts

Return to the Lord: Brethren who have forsaken the assembly

EXCUSES AT THE JUDGMENT SEAT

There have been, of course, a number of times when as a minister I have had to confront someone about their sins. Occasionally, in the midst of such an appeal, the person I was confronting would tell me that they had no intention of repenting of their deeds (or lifestyle, or choice, or whatever the euphemism for sin might be); and even more regrettably, in a flourish of self-confidence (or hubris), they have added that they would just have to deal with that (the sin) at the judgment — as if to say, “It may be wrong in many circumstances, but I’m sure that when I explain my situation to God that He will understand and give me a pass on this matter.” Is this true? Will we get the opportunity to offer to God excuses for our sin, to play lawyer with the Lord, the Great Judge of us all? Will we be able to explain our way out of Hell, like we tried to escape punishment from parents or a legal authority on this earth? The opportunity to explain away our sin and get “a pass” on our sin is actually a commonly held belief in the world, but the preeminently important question is not whether the idea has popular support, but whether it’s Scriptural true, whether it is spiritual reality. In the New Testament there are both some direct and indirect references to judgment day scenarios that include pleas (stated or implied) made by those who have been otherwise judged guilty by the Lord. Let’s take a look at a few:

We have Abraham as our father (Matt 3:9) — In John the Baptist’s fiery preaching, he also challenged the religious leaders of Judaism, who were relying on their Jewish heritage and being born into the covenant to get them a pass on sinful things they were doing (see Matt. 23:14). John tells them that being a son of Abraham wouldn’t cut any ice with God, who could raise sons from stones, if He wanted. There would be no special treatment from God on the basis of who you are — rich or poor, educated or not, from a notable family or not, etc. — a fact to which Paul adds, “There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God.” Romans 2:9-11, NAS95.

I heard, just didn’t do (Matt 7.24ff) — This parable’s powerful storm appears to be trying to picture the

scouring effect of the judgment day, and the difference between those who stand and those who do not stand on that last day is not merely those who heard, but those who heard and decided to do obey it. The last day will offer no successful opportunity to say that we did a lot of Bible reading, listened to a lot of sermons, or attended hours of Bible classes. The difference between the house built on the sand and house built on the rock boils down to obedience.

Didn’t we...? (Matt. 7.21-23) — Here Jesus tells us that on that great day of judgment there will be (Jesus says “many”) religious but disobedient (see v. 23) folks who will say, “Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?” (Matthew 7:22, NAS95). In other words, “Weren’t the ways in which we decided to serve you enough? Did we really have to do everything that you commanded?” Sadly, Jesus confirmed that this defense is a misfire, too; it will be rejected. Partial, smorgasbord obedience won’t be enough and will not provide the pass some would like to get.

I didn’t know it was you (Matt. 25:31ff) — In this judgment scene Jesus has divided the sheep from the goats and has already told the righteous that they are entering Heaven, because of their service to Him as they served others. Then to the goats (the unrighteous) He will proclaim their doom and their lack of service to Him. They are said to respond, “...Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?” (Matthew 25:44, NAS95). Their defense is that they never technically saw Him in need, implying that they would have served Him, if only they had had the chance. But Jesus, the King and Judge, will reject their attempt at a loophole defense — excuse rejected.

We waited faithfully for a while (Matt. 25:1ff) — In the context of the Day of the Lord, Jesus told this parable, which carries a judgment day teaching about how long we must be faithful. It implies that there might be those on the last day who may want to argue that they had been faithful Christians for a while. But this parable teaches that “a while” won’t be accepted as an excuse; the standard measure of faithfulness remains, “Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the

devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.” Revelation 2:10, NAS95.

I didn’t know when to expect you (Matt. 24:44-51) — This parable is one that implies that there might be some who would like to plea that, if only they had known when to expect the Lord’s return, they would have cleaned up their act in time for His arrival. Perhaps they might even claim that it was unfair for Him to surprise them. But the parable notes that servants found living unfaithfully will be given no special consideration, being surprised by the Lord’s appearance will be no excuse.

I was afraid to use my talent (Matt. 25:14ff) — Some the Lord tells us in this parable will fail to use the talents, gifts, opportunities, monies, possessions, and other stewardships for fear that we might somehow mess it up. “We would have served You, Lord — used our talents, gifts, etc. — but we were afraid, because You expect our best. If we failed, You’d be displeased!” This excuse, hoping to shift the blame to the Lord Himself, is likewise rejected.

And there are some others, but the bottom line here appears to be that these direct and indirect references to excuse-making at God’s bar of justice may really be a rhetorical device for warming men away from excuse-making, rationalizing, and justifying their sins in this life — before they get to the judgment seat of God — because there is no successful occurrence of pleading one’s case before the Lord. All excuses, all pleas to the effect that “But don’t you think my situation was different?”, all attempts to talk God out of executing justice will be vain. There is one and only one lawyer or advocate (1 Jn. 2:1) who can get us off the hook, and He will argue not on the basis of extenuating circumstances, but that the justice due to us has already been meted out. The evidence He will offer will be the nail-scars in His own hands. It is nothing less than real repentance that unlocks the door of mercy and forgiveness of God, not our foolish and delusional attempts at making excuses.

Were you hoping to make excuses?

Our Congregational Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Happy Birthday: Eva Blackman	2 Monday Night for the Master 6pm Happy Birthday: Leslie Davis Happy Anniver- sary: Scott & Terri Apgar	3 Happy Birthday: Dick Potter Cecilia Skerry	4 Happy Anniver- sary: Larry & Vickie Glass	5 Happy Anniver- sary: Mark & Glenna Evans	6 Happy Birthday: Tom Carroll	7 Gander Brook Week 6 Happy Birthday: Jen Devoe Jamie Hazelton
8 Body & Soul workshop	9	10	11	12 Happy Birthday: Heather King	13 Happy Birthday: Chris Dion	14 Happy Birthday: Betty Baron Glorian Potter

Stats

Sunday morning attendance.....No count
 Sunday morning contribution.....\$3043.00
 Weekly budget.....\$3710.00

Thought Food -

“Instead of waiting for someone to take you under his or her wing, go out and find a good wing to climb under.”

Dave Thomas

Teen Stuff

The church of Christ
 66 Mammoth Rd.
 Manchester NH 03109