

Morning Star

Volume XVI, No. 1

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, TARRYTOWN, NY

Winter 2008

Living the Dream

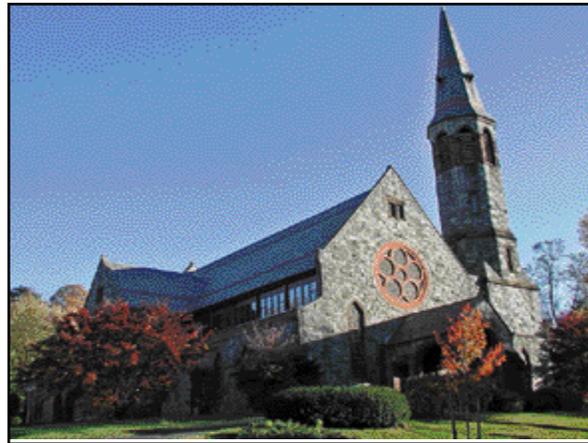
by Dr. Torrey Robinson, Pastor

When we met for worship on December 23rd, the significance of that date slipped past us. Yet that Sunday, two days before Christmas, marked the 18th anniversary of the fire that gutted our church building. This issue of the *Bright and Morning Star* focuses on the recently completed reconstruction of the Fellowship Hall. But the joy of this rebirth cannot be fully appreciated without being juxtaposed with the devastation of that awful fire and the struggle to rebuild.

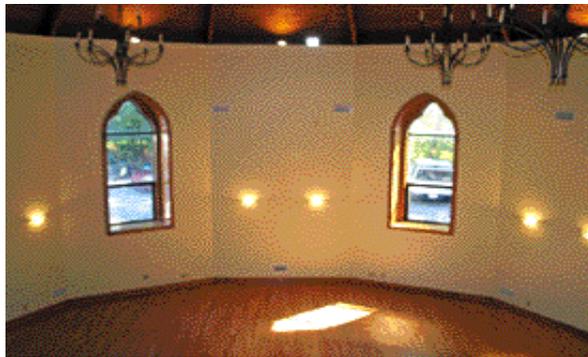
The fire apparently started in a blower motor in the basement. The resulting conflagration was awful. Some of you have seen the video footage. The day was bitter cold. Spray from the hoses froze in the icy air and made the task of fighting the blaze that much more hazardous for those who had to climb ladders in an attempt to douse the flames.

It took 100 firefighters from five surrounding communities to extinguish the blaze. Yet when the last spark was finally snuffed out the church's nightmare had only begun. Reconstruction following the fire may have been worse than the fire itself. For starters, there were problems with insurance. The church was underinsured. To make matters worse, serious and costly mistakes by the contractor who undertook the initial reconstruction resulted in a prolonged legal battle.

The contractor initiated a suit against the church and the church countersued. The lawsuits held up the rebuilding efforts for six years. Finally, after more than half a decade, both sides agreed to drop their respective litigation.



Our beautiful church building as it looks today.



The brand new Fellowship Hall, finally finished!

tion. Though there was no compensation for the faulty and incomplete construction, the church was finally free once again to proceed to rebuild.

Though construction on the church building was halted in 1991 the church was granted a temporary certificate of occupancy after meeting village requirements. The congregation made extensive use of the unfinished sanctuary. Amazingly, the church managed to grow despite the limitations of a church without bathrooms, kitchen or adequate ministry space.

Of course, everyone was anxious to get on with reconstruction, but before the church could proceed, they had to correct some of the mistakes made by the contractor. The most egregious error involved the roof. The need to rebuild the restrooms and add classroom space was obvious.

Unfortunately, the buckets situated around the sanctuary on rainy days evidenced that the new roof, replaced after the fire, was already deteriorating badly. The interior work had to wait until another roof could be installed.

The church undertook a series of capital campaigns in the years following the fire to raise the money needed to finish reconstruction. Those who were part of the church after the fire may remember the Nehemiah fund. Along

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with later stewardship campaigns - Find Us Faithful, First Things First and Building in Faith, God provided through the sacrificial giving of the church family.

Altogether the little congregation was able to raise a large amount of money, more than a million dollars, for the rebuilding effort.

Once the current roof was in place, the decision was made to rebuild the fellowship hall in distinct phases as funds became available.

In 2005, sixteen years after the fire, bathrooms and classrooms were built. Finally, this past September, nearly two decades after the awful fire, the beautiful fellowship hall, kitchen and mezzanine were completed. This edition of the *Bright and Morning Star* focuses primarily on this final phase of work.

The evening of the fire in 1989, former FBC pastor, Bruce Boria made a statement that was quoted in the Westchester County newspapers. Faced with the devastation of a burned out church building, Pastor Bruce stated, "I believe in God's provision."

"Our Future is as Bright as the Promises of God."

- Pastor Bruce Boria, 1990

Not many weeks after the fire, Bruce Boria made another public statement of faith. He placed a sign in front of the church stating, "Our Future is as Bright as the Promises of God." It may have been a strange site to the community at the time. But today, almost twenty years later, those of us at First Baptist Church are eyewitnesses to the reality of that faith.

The long night is over. The nightmare of the fire and subsequent reconstruction has given way to the reality of a beautiful, finished, usable space. We are living out the hope, the dream of a completed fellowship hall, kitchen and mezzanine. The wait for new space can finally give way to praise. ★

Some thoughts on the new kitchen...

by Regina Mignogna

During the hard times in life, we, as Christians, maintain our sanity by remembering that God is in charge. On December 23rd of 1989, FBC had a terrible fire that left our church family without a kitchen, bathrooms, classrooms, and a fellowship hall for way too many years. During those inconvenient years, the Lord strengthened us in ways I never could have imagined.

Through prayer, faithfulness and obedience, FBC starts 2008 with all of these rooms. The best part is that they are more beautiful and functional than I could have ever imagined.

In September of 2006, our summer condo in NJ flooded completely. Again, God was in charge. The months that followed were very busy for me. I was able to take time off from work to plan and refurbish the kitchen, as well as rebuild the rest of the condo.

Soon after that project was completed, Paster Torrey asked me to serve on the church Building Committee. I agreed, but wasn't really sure what my contribution could possibly be.



Once the construction plans were drawn, the committee began to look at the details of how the space could be used. I was asked to furnish the kitchen. It was then that I knew God had prepared me for this task only

months before. It all made sense to me. I remember feeling that this was something I was capable of doing. I had just redone a kitchen; I knew the questions to ask, the materials to use, the pitfalls to avoid, and where to shop. I agreed to serve on the committee.

I began my task and along the way I really felt God's presence. The people with whom I worked seemed to know exactly what I wanted and were able to assist me with unbelievable ease. I wasn't second-guessing myself through the whole process either. I felt encouraged and inspired by God. Decisions didn't take forever and each decision felt right. It was a comfortable, awesome feeling. One that I believe God gave to me.

God is with us in all that we do. He prepares us in ways that are difficult to know unless we open ourselves to Him. Our new kitchen and fellowship hall will be serving our church and community for many years to come. For me, it will always be a reminder of how God takes care of us and is a God of all the details, both big and small. ★

This newsletter is published by The First Baptist Church of Tarrytown • **Dr. Torrey Robinson**, Pastor; Stephen Armstrong, Youth Pastor • 56 South Broadway, Tarrytown, NY 10591 (914) 631-6372 • Project 9:30 @ 9:30 a.m. • Worship service Sunday 10:30 a.m. • Sunday School @ 10:30 a.m. • Spanish Church 3:00p.m.

The Bright and Morning Star is seeking contributions for the next issue on any topics of interest which glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. Please send articles to: The Bright and Morning Star Newsletter at the address above.

Project 9:30: Kid's Church

by Regina Mignogna

FBC has a wonderful opportunity in its hands. With the completion of the beautiful fellowship hall in September, FBC can now offer our community a kid's church program where kids of all ages come together and learn God's words, meet new friends, sing great songs, discover their gifts and talents, and have a ball.

We are now into our second three-month semester of Project 9:30. The first semester was very encouraging. Kids brought their friends, grandparents and cousins to church. We begin this new semester with a renewed enthusiasm and anticipation of what God will do.

Each Sunday, we begin at 9:00 for those who want to ease into the morning with a cup of coffee, tea, or juice, and a delicious "loved-baked" goodie. We begin at 9:30 with songs and prayer. Each week a message is presented

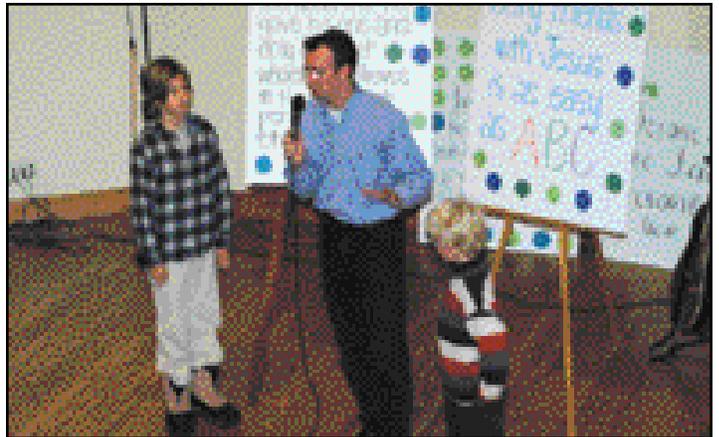
from the Bible that makes the kids think and then "flip" their thinking to learn how Jesus might see things. Our goal is for the kids to feel the joy and benefit of seeing life through Jesus' eyes.

We equip the children with God's words so that when they find themselves in confusing situations they have "the armor of God" from which they can draw strength and assurance to do the right thing. Bible verses are memorized and children earn small prizes as reinforcement. Faith grows when we get to know God through His words and then see how He guides us through our day.

Project 9:30 is active and alive with people who want to know, serve and grow in the Lord. In today's world we all need to stand firm in who we are. The best way to do that is by knowing our creator. Join us, won't you?★



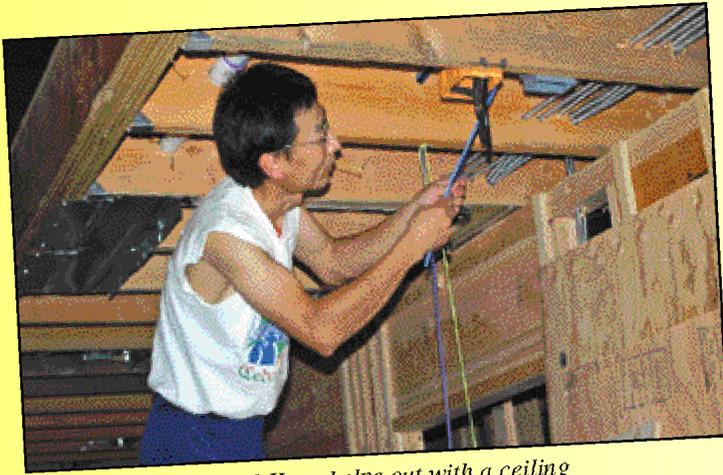
The parents love to hang out and sing the songs



Daniel Hoster teaches the kids about God in a fun way each week

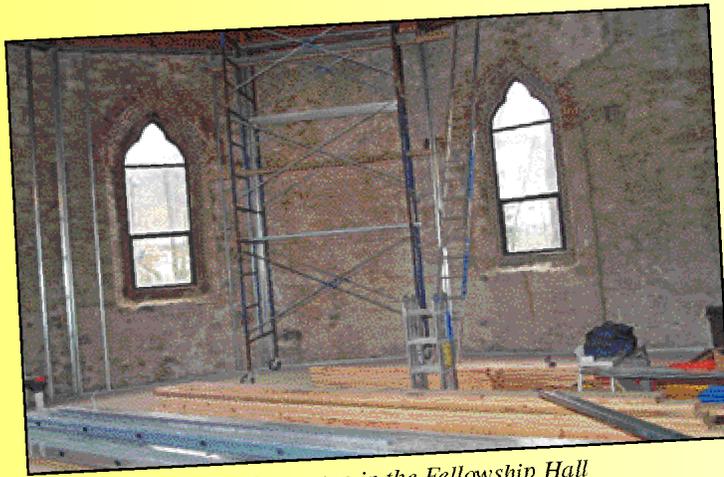


The kids love the hands-on projects and Bible verses



Daniel Kang helps out with a ceiling

Some memories of the construction of the new Fellowship Hall...



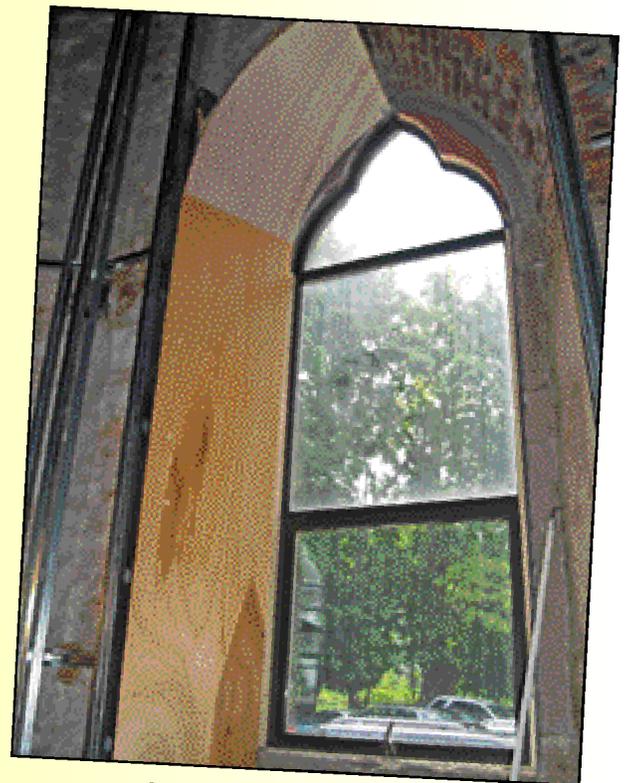
Scaffolding setup in the Fellowship Hall



The doors to the Fellowship Hall before finishing



The kitchen partially finished



One of the beautiful windows

Hey Kids!

The
Bright & Morning Star Kids

is seeking your stories,
poems and articles
for the next publication!

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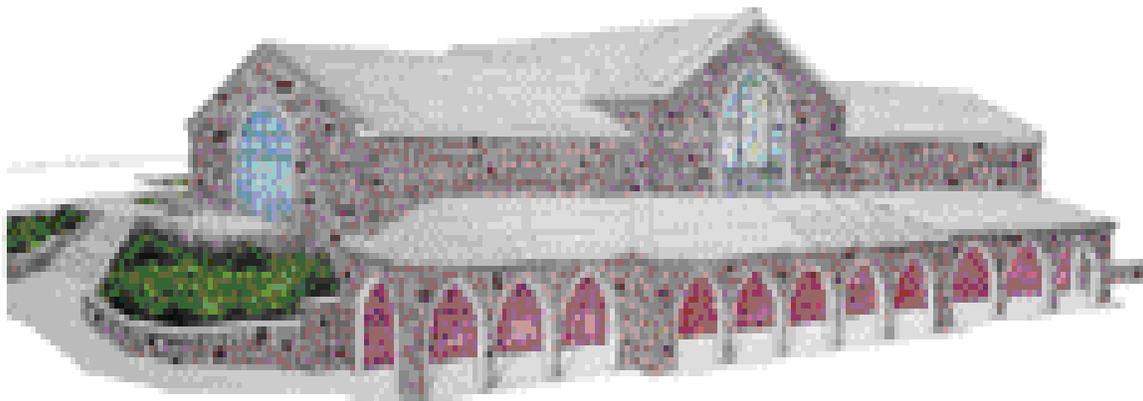
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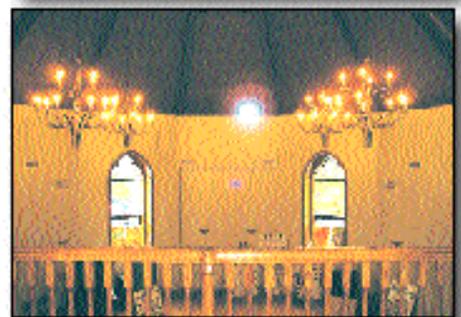
CONSTRUCTION COMPLETED!

By now, we hope that you have all had a chance to enjoy or at least visit your new Fellowship Hall, kitchen and classrooms. We are proud and honored to have been selected to partner with you on this momentous project and to help you realize this dream for your church. You should be very proud of yourselves for your commitment and support that made this dream a reality.

Working with your Construction Committee and Rev. Torrey Robinson was a pleasure. They were knowledgeable, reasonable and extremely dedicated to the project. We want you to know how much we enjoyed working with you. Thank you for making us a partner on your team. When we think back about our past projects, your construction stands out in our minds with warm memories and thankfulness for the new friendships made.

We hope that the New Year brings you all much health and happiness. We wish you many years of enjoyment in the new Fellowship Hall, kitchen and classrooms! Again, thank you for the privilege of working with you on this project.

Eric Messer and the Sunrise Team



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It is Finished

by Dr. Dan Rizzi

On November 14, 2007 I received an E-mail from Pastor Torrey stating, "Today makes it official. We passed our permanent certificate of occupancy inspection." Wow; at last; at long last... tears erupted in my eyes. This emotional message finally brought to completion a good work that had begun 18 years before.

The agonizing, prolonged process that had begun immediately following the disastrous destruction of our cherished church building was now living proof of an answer to our prayers.

Why did it take so long? We have heard this question many times over the years, and the disappointing pace and many disheartening surprises have been very difficult not only

to explain but also tremendously difficult for the committee and congregation to maintain their courage and fortitude to continue.

Therefore, may I, very briefly, make an attempt to present some of the history as I remember?

Unfortunately, the construction company we decided upon did not live up to its promise and, either by intent or incompetence, did not complete the project as we had envisioned or for which we contracted. Much of the work completed was either improperly or poorly done. When our funds were depleted we had an incomplete building with much work questionable and/or dangerous. We were, therefore, forced into a prolonged, costly litigation. After six long, agonizing years, it was decided by the congregation to end the nightmare and begin anew without the onerous burden of the protracted litigation. After all, there remained a possibility we could lose and all our resources were being expended without any progress for the space we so desperately needed.

To provide a complete accounting of all that has transpired since 1990 would necessitate a separate, lengthy document. Therefore, please accept this very brief outline version of a history, again, as best I remember:

1. When our insurance money was nearly expended we discovered that much of the work was improperly performed, was incomplete, poorly done or not done at all. We withheld final payment (over \$100,000) and the construction company initiated a suit against us. Although, no one wanted to sue, we were forced into counter suing to protect our interest. This began 6 prolonged years of depositions, hearings, meetings and positioning utilizing 3 attorneys (long story) and drastically delaying our need to reconstruct.

2. After over \$100,000 in legal fees and expenses, it was decided by the congregation to terminate the process, if possible, accept our situation, and with the Grace of God, start over.

3. Once we reluctantly concluded to bring to an end to the costly litigation, we were once more allowed to direct our resources to rebuilding in earnest.

4. Two architects and another construction company later, we began again. However, our Restoration Architectural firm strongly recommended that before we proceeded with the original plan that we should have a Condition Survey, Needs Assessment, and a Master Plan before any actual work began.

5. We did not want to compromise our ideals regardless of the unforeseen circumstances so it was painstakingly decided (we so desperately needed space) in order to protect the integrity of our historical building, we had to redirect our resources and address the following situations and problems

keeping in mind at all times, "What would you do if it was your house?"

A. A serious drainage problem around the entire perimeter of the building had to be addressed and corrected.

B. The basement (excavated dirt floor) was bubbling with water which necessitated installing a drainage system, water proofing and covering the entire area with a cement floor.

C. The drainage direction of the entire parking lot had to be corrected.

D. All the window wells were cleaned and rebuilt.

E. The fire alarm system had to be reactivated.

F. The chimney, parapets and entire building required re-pointing.

G. Above all, we had to completely replace the entire roof over the sanctuary and Fellowship Hall including the Isle roofs. (Another very long story)

H. In order to avoid major expenses and inconvenience in the future, it was decided to move the large air handler machinery from the top of what could become a mezzanine to the basement where it originally belonged. A major operation and expense.

I. We installed an ADA approved walkway ramp to our current entrance to make it handicapped accessible.

J. It was recommended that the mechanical system (HVAC) for the entire church was incomplete, poorly done or not done at all requiring a major repair and expense.

K. We laid the sub floor for the Fellowship Hall.

All of the above was accomplished on a pay as you go basis and because of the astonishing giving of our congregation I feel we accomplished much without ever considering borrowing. With all the many deflating, discouraging obstacles we were challenged with (exhausting meetings, Planning



Faithful members of the Building Committee...
Dick Kirby, Dan Rizzi and Rick Zacharia

It is Finished *continued from page 7*

Board and Architectural Review Board Scheduling, part time village inspector, contractor, architect and village scheduling and approvals, weather conditions and seasons, bidding process, pricing, specification preparation, inspections and approvals, office down time, sick time, and finally, money limitations) we continued to place our faith in God's promises. The amazing thing is that although most of what was accomplished was not visible, the congregation continued to give sacrificially and spurred us on (we've had 4 successful stewardship programs). The external and other essentials required prior to building internally were completed. The integrity of the building was assured. At long last we were ready for the construction work in the interior of the Fellowship Hall.

Now, we have an absolutely beautiful finished Fellowship Hall. It is indeed a magnificent physical demonstration of God's grace. We have much for which to be grateful and for

which to praise our precious Lord.

We now have much more to do. Although we have the space we have been praying and sacrificing for, there is much more to be done. But not to be discouraged, we have the "Promises of God" and He will provide as He has for this church for over 160 years.

With this completed work, it had also become the time for the final steadfast four to relinquish the awesome responsibility of the Building Committee after over 15 years and pass the baton on to a new, fresh, forward looking group of dedicated leaders. We have witnessed God's will and timing, and always remember the sign Pastor Boria placed in front of the church in 1990, "Our Future is as Bright as the Promises of God."

A very grateful committee, Lois and Dick Kirby, Mike Hemsing, Pastor Torrey, and Dan Rizzi thank you for the privilege of allowing us to serve in such an important and vital way. God is good. Praise God.★



Today's Christian Music

Please call the Church office for more events and times 914-631-6372 or visit www.fbctarrytown.org

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