

# The Outlook

## First Baptist Church Clayton

Show • Tell  
Grow • Serve

March 10, 2024

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## Holy habits lead to spiritual growth

By Dr. Len Keever

One of my favorite flowers are daffodils. They are the first bright colors of Spring. Their annual appearance reminds me that warmer weather is close.

Though folks love to see if Punxsutawney Phil or Sir Walter Wally are going to see their shadow to predict that Spring is near, I look for daffodils. Something about the yellow blossom surrounded by the bright green leaves against a gray landscape make me smile.

Last Spring, Cathy and I planted some daffodils in our yard. They were beautiful. I looked forward to having a patch of yellow blooming in my yard for years to come. Unfortunately, this Spring as my neighbor's daffodil patches are in full color, ours are slow in arriving. Whatever the reason, perhaps the shade, maybe the moisture in the ground, maybe the variety of the bulbs, our daffodils are growing slower than others.

This reminds me of something I thought of years ago. Spiritual growth is unpredictable. We cannot put God on a timeframe. All we can do is tend the ground of our heart and submit to God to do the growing.

Rick Warren penned a wonderful book titled 40 Days of Purpose. It sold like hotcakes! Church groups studied it. Pastors recommended it to those seeking a closer relationship with Jesus. You can still buy them. I saw some a while back on the discount rack at Walmart.

Personally, I loved the book because it offered those who desired a closer relationship with Christ a path to follow. However, there was a problem – what about those of us who need 41 days, or 62 days? Yes, we can do all we can do for 40 days, but that does not mean God will answer on our time frame.

The daffodils in my yard remind me that the timing of spiritual growth is uncontrollable. God provides when the time is perfect, not when we think it should occur. In Isaiah 55:8 we read, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD.”

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## First Baptist welcomes newest members

To cap off an inspirational and spiritually rewarding Elevation weekend, youth group members Phia Parker and Aubrey Payton made the decision to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. The young ladies were welcomed into the First Baptist Church Clayton membership and await Baptism.

Phia is the daughter of Derek and Jenna Parker. She has an older sister, Isabella and a younger brother, Gage.

Aubrey is the daughter of Ryan and Jenna Payton. She has a younger brother, Everett.



Phia Parker



Aubrey Payton

### WMU Ignite Conference set for April 19-20

The WMU Ignite Conference and 2024 Missions Extravaganza is set for Friday and Saturday, April 19-20. This year's conference is being held at Parkwood Baptist Church in Concord. The Keynote speaker is Holly Myers and the worship leader is Cindy Morgan.

It is \$85 for the weekend. You may register for Friday or Saturday only at a discounted rate. If anyone is interested in attending, please let Lynne Martin or Jennifer Blackley know and they will be glad to send the registration for all as a group.

Participants are also holding a Friday afternoon food packing party that starts at 3 p.m. and is a separate registration. Click on the link below for more information.

<https://www.wmunc.org/missions-conference>.

## Holy habits

Continued from page 1

The lesson of Lent is not that it only takes 40 days to grow closer to God. It is that it takes 40 days to establish a holy habit where God can more readily grow something in us when the time is perfect. We blossom in God's time.

I have noticed that when I embrace a new spiritual discipline in Lent, I have a hard time ending it once Easter arrives. Yes, I may go back to doing what I refrained from doing as an exercise of identifying with Jesus in the wilderness after Easter, I do enjoy desserts and an occasional soft drink. But, once I have taken on something that increases my awareness of Christ's presence, I cannot easily set it aside. Holy habits, spiritual disciplines, become more and more a part of my day.

I don't want to lose what I have gained. When Lent is over, I don't want to lose the closeness to God I have nurtured. Afterall, it may take me more than 40 days to get it. It may take me 80 days to bloom.

A relationship with God is not just for these 40 days. What we learn now may feed us for a lifetime. I don't want this journey to end – do you?

March 17 at 9:30 a.m.

# Easter Music

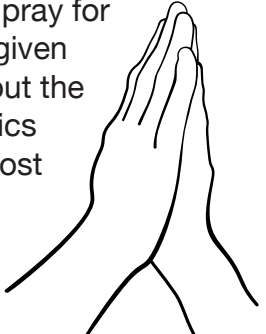
## Sunday

The Message of Easter in Song

featuring FBC's Shine Choir,  
Music Makers, Youth Choir, Adult  
Handbell Choir and Adult Choir



The Pastor Search Committee asks you to pray for them to be given wisdom about the characteristics and traits most needed by the next pastor of our church.



### Senior Adult Activities

The deadline to purchase tickets to the Easter Jubilee at the Rudy Theater in Selma has been extended until Monday, March 11. Tickets to the Tuesday, March 19 show are \$28. Easter Jubilee is an inspirational, entertaining and Christ-centered performance.

The bus leaves the church parking lot at 11:30 a.m. for the 12:45 p.m. performance. Dinner at the Golden Corral will follow the show. The bus will return by 5 p.m. Spaces are filling up so sign up now.

The NBC (New Beginners Club) luncheon is set for Monday, March 25 at 11:30 a.m. Please note the price to the catered lunch has changed to \$8.

Please notify the church office no later than March 20 if: 1) you are on the permanent list but cannot attend or 2) you are not on the permanent list but plan to attend.

**Mark your calendars** for Tuesday, April 2 for a trip to beautiful Airlie Gardens in Wrightsville Beach. Following the tour, we will eat dinner at the Oceanic Restaurant. Admission to the gardens is \$10.

Come enjoy the azaleas and other beautiful flora at this famous garden. The bus leaves at 8:30 a.m. and will return by 5 p.m. Space is limited so sign up now, or no later than March 26.

## 2024 Weekly Reports

Baptisms this year.....	3	New Members.....	4
<b>Worship Attendance</b>			
Sunday, March 3.....	195	Sunday, Feb. 25.....	170
<b>Sunday School Attendance</b>			
Sunday, March 3.....	160	Sunday, Feb. 25.....	161
<b>General Fund Giving</b>			
Sunday, March 3.....	\$12,200	Sunday, Feb. 25.....	\$13,462
Weekly Needs.....	\$14,860		



Congratulations to the First Baptist Church Clayton “Cheetah Hoops” basketball team for a great season. The team finished 8-3 and made it to the championship game before falling in a close game.

## *Memorials and Honorariums*

### **WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE GENERAL FUND**

#### **In Memory of**

Frances Reams by Candy Pope

Tony Bell by Bucky Coats

Tony Bell by Chris and Diane Pearce

Tony Bell by Jiles and Kim Harrell

Tony Bell by Joyce Nixon

### **WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE ANNIE ARMSTRONG FUND**

#### **In Memory of**

Frank Capuano and Tony Bell by David and Nancy Turlington

#### **In Honor of**

Lou Woodard by Lexene Lee

### **WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE HECK JONES FUND**

#### **In Honor of**

Jennifer Blackley and Lynn Matthews by Rudy and Edwina Oliver

### **WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE ORGAN FUND**

#### **In Memory of**

Tony Bell by Kenny and Vickie Adams

### **WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE YOUTH MINISTRY FUND**

#### **In Memory of**

Tony Bell and Carolyn Allen by Curtis and Elaine Moore

#### **In Honor of**

Cheetah Hoops players and coaches, First Baptist Church youth, Vickie Andrews and all the volunteers for Elevation Weekend by Nancy Blinson

### **WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE SENIOR ADULT MINISTRY FUND**

#### **In Honor of**

Lexene by Curtis and Elaine Moore

# **SBC DINNER RESPONSE**

## **SUMMARY 2024**

### **Concerns about disaffiliation**

(14 table responses)

- No concerns (9)
- Retirement accounts for pastors managed by SBC (3)
- Ability to continue supporting Annie Armstrong, Lottie Moon, Heck-Jones, etc. (2)
- FBC Clayton could possibly be viewed as moderate/liberal by outsiders who hear about the decision to disaffiliate from the SBC (1)
- Process of disaffiliation could result in a church split (1)

### **Concerns about remaining affiliated with the SBC**

(14 table responses)

- Loss of autonomy (8)
- That SBC would continue to exercise more control/influence over member churches (i.e., “What will happen next?”) (3)
- Effect on church staff---potential loss of staff and/or effect on staff morale/attitude (3)
- Sends mixed message regarding our support of female pastors (i.e., we say that we support ordaining/employing female pastors which would be in contradiction with SBC constitutional amendment.) (2)
- Would result in uncertainty/uneasiness among congregation (1)
- Sends mixed message to visitors/new members and potential senior pastor candidates (1)
- No concerns with remaining affiliated (1)

**Feelings regarding being a church that is  
“Not in friendly cooperation with SBC” (N.I.F.C.)  
if amendment passes and we remain with SBC**

(14 table responses)

- View it as a negative/unfavorable to be a church that is N.I.F.C. (9)
- Would be concerned about SBC eventually disfellowshipping us if we remained affiliated and classified as being N.I.F.C. (1)
- Would like a better definition of what is meant by N.I.F.C. (1)
- Would not want to be affiliated with any organization that doesn't share our beliefs regarding female pastors (1)
- No concern with being labeled as N.I.F.C. (1)

**Meaning of “Autonomous” and its importance**

(14 table responses)

- It means that we follow the Bible in making decisions for our church, and we have the freedom to govern ourselves without another organization dictating what we believe/how we operate (12)
- It is a basic tenet of our Baptist faith/heritage (1)
- 9 tables indicated it as being important or very important

**Value of autonomy vs. value of denominational affiliations**

(14 table responses)

- Autonomy is more important than our denominational affiliations (12)
- We should align with denominational organizations that prioritize autonomy of the local church (1)
- If we base our autonomy on what God wants, then denominational affiliation should not matter (1)
- What is the benefit of denominational affiliation? (1)