

The Outlook

First Baptist Church Clayton

Show • Tell
Grow • Serve

April 7, 2024

Volume 47 Number 14

Living to Die

By Rev. Stephen Nance

“Hail, Caesar! We who are about to die salute you.”

So was the appeal of a band of condemned criminals to Emperor Claudius in 52 A.D. just before being forced to fight to the death in a mock naval battle for the Emperor’s amusement.

Whoever these men had been before, whatever they had done, whatever dreams they had harbored for their lives, all of that was in the past, dead and gone. They had no future; their only purpose now in living was to die violently and publicly for the entertainment of the crowd.

Twenty years earlier, a different crowd of onlookers gathered to witness the violent and public demise of another who lived to die, not in a staged naval battle on an Italian lake, but on a rocky, barren hill outside Jerusalem.

When Jesus died in public humiliation and shame on that cross on Golgotha, his enemies thought they had won. They believed they had rid themselves of this upstart of a rabbi who had threatened their world. They were wrong. Jesus’ purpose in living was to die.

He said so himself: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45 CSB). Even at death, he was in control. As he had said earlier, “I lay down my life so that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have the right to lay it down, and I have the right to take it up again” (John 10:17b-18a CSB).

Jesus willingly laid down his life for us in order that we might be made alive – fully alive – with his divine life: “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21 NIV). He lived to die so that we might live.

We who know the Lord – we who have become his children by faith – we too have been made alive in order to die. Jesus said, “If anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will

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lose it, but whoever loses his life because of me will find it” (Matthew 16:24b-25 CSB).

Self-denial is a type of death: to self-will, to worldly attractions, to anything and everything that opposes God. To take up the cross is to die, because on the other side of the cross lies the grave.

Beyond the grave lies life – resurrection life – but the path to it runs through the “cross” of death to self. This is what Paul meant when he wrote, “I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20 CSB).

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in his classic The Cost of Discipleship, said, “When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.” You may be called of God. You may be born again of the Spirit. You may be alive in Christ. But the real question now is, “Now that you are alive, have you died?”

Rev. Stephen Nance, Pastor of Senior Adults, will deliver the sermon Sunday, April 7. It will be an expansion of this column.

Senior Adult Ministry

Senior Adult Movie Night will be held Friday, April 12 at 5:30 p.m. The classic 1969 Disney comedy that spawned several sequels, *The Love Bug*, will be screened. Down-on-his-luck race car driver Jim Douglas (Dean Jones) finds himself in possession of a Volkswagen Beetle with a mind and personality of its own – and the heart of a champion. Co-stars Buddy Hackett, Suzanne Pleshette and David Tomlinson guarantee lots of laughs.

The dinner entrée will be announced later. Popcorn and drinks will be provided. Please bring a dessert or snack to share. To ensure an accurate head count, please notify the church office no later than April 10 if: 1) you’re on the permanent list and cannot attend or 2) you are not on the permanent list and plan to attend.

The Wednesday Morning Bible Study, “Walk as Jesus Walked: Being a Disciple in a Broken World” begins April 17 and continues through May 15. In this seventh volume of “That the World May Know,” Ray Vander Laan will take us to five different locations in Asia Minor to help us better understand the meaning – and cost – of discipleship. “As disciples of Jesus, we’ve discovered that following him demands an intense commitment to the Biblical text and complete devotion to the Christian community. There is more, however. Join us to discover the fierce passion of our early Christian brothers and sisters to walk like Jesus – even when the path becomes treacherous.

The class meets from 9:30 to 11 a.m. in the SALT classroom and via Zoom. Study guides are \$10 and will be available soon. Sign up today.

The NBC Luncheon will be held Monday, April 29 at 11:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Fried chicken will be provided. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share. The program will be announced soon. To ensure an accurate head count, please notify the church office no later than April 24 if: 1) you’re on the permanent list and cannot attend or 2) you are not on the permanent list and plan to attend.

Memorials and Honorariums

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE GENERAL FUND

In Memory of

Carolyn Allen and Tony Bell by Doug and Sandra Phillips

Hugh McCullen by Jeff and Jackie Tarkington

Ami Moon by Walter and Jill Rasor

Ami Moon and Sarah Bradley by Andy and Gloria Pleasant

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE ANNIE ARMSTRONG FUND

In Memory of

Warren Steen by Lois Weeks

Ami Moon by David and Nancy Turlington

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE BUILDING FUND

In Memory of

Ami Moon by Fred and Texie Lee

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE YOUTH FUND

In Memory of

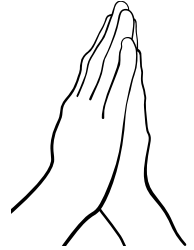
Ami Moon by Doug and Sandra Phillips

Ami Moon by Carol Gilbert

Ami Moon by David and Jo Earp

Ami Moon by Jeff and Jackie Tarkington

The Pastor Search Committee asks you to pray that they will seek God in every aspect, and that each member will seek the Lord's will.



2024 Weekly Reports

Baptisms this year.....	3	New Members.....	4
Worship Attendance			
Sunday, March 31.....	270	Sunday, March 24.....	185
Sunday School Attendance			
Sunday, March 31.....	91	Sunday, March 24.....	161
General Fund Giving			
Sunday, March 31.....	\$17,224	Sunday, March 24.....	\$11,371
Weekly Needs.....	\$14,860		

Notes of Appreciation

Dear church family,

I want to thank everyone for their prayers, cards, food and visits during my recovery. Hopefully, I will be back at church soon. Thank you so much.

God bless you,
Nancy Martinez

Dear First Baptist Church families,

I want to give my heartfelt thanks to all of you who have prayed with us through the last few weeks. Haley and I are so fortunate to have you in our lives. Your kindness has touched our hearts. Words cannot express our gratitude for the food, cards, visits, phone calls, and most of all, your prayers. Please know your friendship means so very much.

In Christian love,
Donna Brown and Haley Moon



Dear First Baptist friends and family,

Thank you so much for all of the prayers each of you have prayed for my mama, Sarah Jolivette, and myself during her hospitalization, rehab and release back home with me. The cards, texts, phone calls and spaghetti dinner (my favorite!) are greatly appreciated.

Thanks also for the gift cards and monetary donations. These gifts helped enormously to buy gas driving back and forth to Pinehurst daily.

Volunteers, I could never thank you enough for coming to my rescue! Each one of you are a "True Angel." Thank you! Thank you! Thank God for you! Job well done.

Lastly and most importantly, I am deeply thankful for all of the love, support and care you have shown me and continue to do so. Your thoughtfulness and friendship is a precious gift.

With love and appreciation,
Terry McCallum

?? Prison Ministry, Anyone ??

"When did we see you sick, or in prison, and visit you?

The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'" Mt. 25:39-40

The Gladys Creech Long Termer Social Ministry will be returning soon to NCCIW on State Street and we need some new faces to keep this group going for another 45 years.

We typically visit the prison on the 3rd Monday of the month from 6:30 to 8:00 pm for a time of devotion, prayer, fellowship with food, and some fun (game, art, puzzle, craft, music, etc.)

Mainly we try to shine the light and love of Jesus.

If interested contact Susan Parker at: sjp318@nc.rr.com or 919-333-8394