

The Outlook

First Baptist Church Clayton

Show • Tell
Grow • Serve

May 5, 2024

Volume 47 Number 18

How are you growing spiritually?

By Dr. Len Keever

The Irises in our yard are especially beautiful this spring. Cathy planted the bulbs from her grandmother's Iris patch three years ago. Each year since, near the end of April, first of May, we see the evidence of growth that has occurred beneath the soil. This year there are twice as many blooming stalks of purple flowers. Seeing them, I am reminded of one of my favorite images in the book of Psalms.

Psalms 42:7 reads, "Deep calls to deep at the thunder of your torrents; all your waves and your billows have gone over me." This passage leads me to envision the Holy Spirit speaking deep within my heart, beneath the surface of my consciousness, encouraging growth, instilling wisdom, growing me stronger in the faith.

I imagine, like the Iris, that God is increasing my faith to produce more and more fruit for when God calls me into the right season. This growth, mostly unseen until called to show itself to God's glory, is often formed through life's struggles and challenges. This growth becomes evidence of God's work deep within when it breaks forth to add beauty where it was for a while absent.

Although I have never thought of myself as a preacher who preaches a series of sermons on a single topic, I am aware of threads that run through my writing during different seasons. At the beginning of our time together in January, I found myself coming back to the image of decluttering, making room for what God will provide us in 2024. This theme was because first, it was the beginning of a brand-new year, and second, it was the beginning of our time together.

I kept thinking that I needed to see you as a fresh, wonderful congregation where God wanted to show me just what I needed, and I hoped I could also help you to see the gifts God has for you in our time together. Often, we do have to declutter to make room for something new.

This spring, a different thread has emerged. I keep thinking that repentance is not only for admitting to God that we have sinned, that we were heading in the wrong direction, but I see it also as a time of admitting we were wrong about things and letting change

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Repentance

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of heart occur in our relationships and attitudes. I am not the same person I was 34 years ago when I first began serving as a pastor. God has enlarged my vision, created new space in my heart to love people I may not have understood years ago.

I see some things differently. I am less judgmental, slower to condemn, hopefully more patient as I wait to discover the movement of the Holy Spirit working deep to deep in my heart.

Suffice it to say, listing my faults and mistakes would be futile – there is not enough room. Telling all the times I have had to admit I may have only considered my perspective without considering what others perceive would not be profitable.

Cataloguing all the hurts and disappointments, the grief, and losses I have endured would take too long.

What is important is that like the Irises, God has been doing God’s work deep to deep in growing me into who I am becoming. Without the twists and turns, the inner struggles, and deep faith wrestlings, I would not be who I am today. If there is any beauty to my testimony, any glory to be assigned, it is to God who has been directing the inner growth of the Spirit.

Having said this, how are you growing? How have you changed? Do you see the work God is doing in your life? I have to say, from where I sit, I see a lot of wonderful beauty emerging.

Calling all Graduating Seniors!

We would like to invite you to participate in Graduate Sunday on June 2, 2024 at the 9:30 a.m. worship service. In addition, you and your family are invited to the graduate luncheon following the ceremony. If you would like to participate please call the church office by Monday, May 20 and provide the needed information.



2024 Weekly Reports

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| Baptisms this Year.....3 | New Members.....9 |
| Worship Attendance | |
| Sunday, April 28.....155 | Sunday, April 21.....210 |
| Sunday School Attendance | |
| Sunday, April 28.....117 | Sunday, April 21.....121 |
| General Fund Giving | |
| Sunday, April 28.....\$14,373 | Sunday, April 21.....\$15,438 |
| Weekly Needs.....\$14,860 | |

Join the seniors for a screening of “The Quiet Man”

Senior Adult Movie Night is set for Friday, May 10 at 5:30pm. The main entrée will be Zaxby’s Chicken Fingerz. Chips, popcorn and drinks are provided. Please bring a dessert or snack to share. The featured movie is “The Quiet Man,” John Ford’s 1952 masterpiece starring John Wayne and Maureen O’Hara. Sean Thornton (Wayne) an Irish-born American retired boxer, returns to his birthplace of Inisfree to purchase the old family farm. He soon falls in love with fiery red-headed Mary Kate Danaher (O’Hara), but also runs afoul of her bullying brother, “Red” Will Danaher. This romantic comedy-drama is a true classic! In order to get an accurate count for food, please notify the church office no later than May 8 if: 1) you are on the permanent list but cannot attend or 2) you are not on the permanent list but plan to attend.

On Tuesday, May 14, the First Baptist Church seniors will be traveling to the Sylvan Heights Bird Park in Scotland Neck. Join us for a stroll through this beautiful sanctuary that houses a vast diversity of birds from all over the world. The path totals one mile and is mostly paved and level with numerous benches and rest areas. It’s wheelchair and rollator accessible. Lunch will follow the tour at K&W Cafeteria in Rocky Mount. The bus leaves the church parking lot at 8:30 a.m. and will return by 5 p.m. Admission is \$12. Space is limited so sign up now.

Mark your calendars for Thursday, June 6. The seniors will be going to dinner at Lane’s Seafood and Steakhouse in Angier.



Please join us for the
Ordination
 of Keeley Tarkington

Sunday, May 19, 2024

4:00pm

First Baptist Church of Clayton Sanctuary
 411 N. Fayetteville St., Clayton, N.C. 27520

*Reception to follow in the Fellowship Hall

GAs and Acteens to be honored Sunday

First Baptist Church has a long tradition of honoring the young ladies who participate in GAs (Girls in Action) and Acteens, and that will continue on Sunday, May 5 at 5 p.m. with the annual recognition service. GAs and Acteens prepares participants for mission work and spreading the Good News.

GAs, girls in 1st through 5th grades, will cite their memory verse and talk about what the GA experience has meant to them. They will then receive certificates and roses.

Acteens, girls in 6th through 12th grades, will have one speaker from each grade level to talk about their "Quest for Confidence." Each Acteen will receive the Confidence charm for their bracelets. Acteens in the 7th grade will be presented crowns and our graduating senior will be honored. About 30 young ladies from First Baptist Church will be recognized. Everyone is invited to this special occasion. It will take place in the sanctuary.

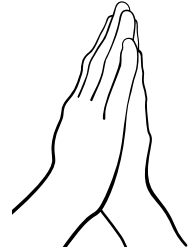
To the Church Family,

Thank you everyone for offering up prayers, sending cards, and for giving words of encouragement after the death of our niece Sarah. We are so blessed to be a part of this loving church family.



Much Love,
John and Lynn Gibson

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



Memorials and Honorariums

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE GENERAL FUND

In Memory of

Sherwood Davis, Shirley Carroll, Joe Capps and Margaret Norris by Joyce T. Lee

Roger Reams by Ronald Crowder and Debbie Ragland

Roger Reams by Emory and Jo Howard

In Honor of

John Allen by Joyce T. Lee

Denny Sutton and Linda Hester by the Hope Sunday School Class

Stephanie Parker's and Keeley Tarkington's graduation from Campbell

University Divinity School by Stewart and Tammy McLeod

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE ORGAN FUND

In Memory of

Roger Reams by Tom, Emily and Jay Vinson