



The Outlook

First Baptist Church Clayton

Show • Tell
Grow • Serve

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Run the race to win it

By Dr. Len Keever
Interim Pastor

I am really enjoying the Olympics! Every four years for sixteen days our attention turns to a unique competition between athletes from all over the world. Countries compete without weapons of war, unless you count archery, fencing and shot-putters throwing a cannon ball.

There is potential for an Israeli and a Palestinian to stand next to each other on the podium jointly celebrating their accomplishments, united by the love of sport. For 16 days we hear uplifting stories of dedicated runners, wrestlers and divers that warm our hearts.

I love watching the Olympics; they are such a respite from what we see most nights on the news. This year another plus came to mind as I found myself glued to the television to see how team USA was doing. I realize that for just a little while our country has something to cheer about that unites us.

Red states and blue states, even purple states, put their differences aside to pull for the athletes representing our country. We sit on the edge of our seats hoping to see the United States represented on the podium.

Seeing our athletes perform makes me proud. It is fresh air. I mention this because this is a metaphor for how I envision Church. I love coming together in worship. It does for me what I've mentioned about the Olympics. Worship unites us to Christ. When we are together in faith, putting Jesus first, all the things that would otherwise divide us evaporates. Worship makes us one with the other.

Another wonderful image in worship is imagining the potential each service brings. In the Olympics, when a race begins, we might think we know who will win, but we really don't know. There have already been so many surprises in this year's games. One who was supposed to win in a swim meet came in fourth. Another who was supposed to win a medal in gymnastics did not qualify for the finals. In worship this same mystery occurs.

When we expect something to happen it may. When we don't think something will occur it can. Only if we are present is it possible to know. If we are absent, we miss

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Baptism service

On Sunday afternoon, August 4, Toni, Noelle and Dylan Franklin were baptized in a small, private baptism with friends and family. We rejoice with the Franklin family in this special, sacred moment in their lives and welcome them as members into the fellowship at First Baptist Church Clayton.

New Deacons to be ordained Sunday, August 18 at 4 p.m.

A Deacon Ordination Service will be held Sunday, Aug. 18 at 4 p.m. in the sanctuary. Paul Greer and Elaine Johnson will be ordained. Dr. Len Keever will deliver a short message.

The entire First Baptist Church family is invited to attend this most special occasion. All ordained Deacons are especially encouraged to attend for the Laying on of Hands.

Following the Ordination Service, a hot dog supper and ice cream social will be held in the Fellowship Hall. Hot Dogs, baked beans, chips, fruit and ice tea will be served.

All are invited to bring their best homemade ice cream to share. Votes will be collected and the winner of the best tasting homemade ice cream will receive a prize.

Please call the church office by Aug. 12 if you plan to attend and/or bring ice cream.

Run the Race

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the potential. The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 9:24, "Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it."

Hebrews 12:1 captures the same spirit, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us."

Reading this I think of the American cyclist whose bicycle slid out from under her during the race. Instead of giving up, she got back up and pushed through the disappointment to finish. Seeing her perseverance, watching her dedication, not letting defeat get a foothold, her bronze medal looked golden to me.

Being reminded of those who never give up faith even when there are storms and uncertainties, I am inspired to follow their example. Of course, invariably when I watch the Olympics, I have an urge to put on my running shoes and push past arthritis to get back in shape. It only takes a few steps to realize I will never be an elite athlete.

But there is one thing that I can do. I can finish the race Jesus has called me to run. Paul states in Philippians 1:6, "I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." This is the true race; it is the work we are called to finish. 2 Timothy 4:8 says, "From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing."

Let us all run to win! Let us finish the course.

Acolyte signups underway; training set

It's time to sign up for another year of Acolyte rotations and to train new participants.

What are Acolytes? Acolytes are 3rd - 5th graders that light and extinguish the candles during the 9:30 a.m. worship service. The flame is a symbol and visual reminder that God is with us as we worship and that He goes with us when we leave. Being an Acolyte is a wonderful opportunity for children to lead in worship.

How are Acolytes Scheduled? The schedule for the 2024-2025 church year will be created on Monday, Aug. 26. Each child who signs up will be assigned a Sunday based on last name in alphabetical order.

If you receive the schedule and realize that your child cannot be an Acolyte the Sundays that they are assigned, it is up to you to find a replacement and let the church office know of the change. All



Acolyte parent contact information will be shared with the schedule for those purposes.

Requirements?

*Everyone who would like to be an Acolyte, whether *new or returning*, must fill out this form by Aug. 25. Here is the link:

<https://forms.gle/abboQF3dExYs9W5g9>

*All new acolytes are required to attend a New Acolyte Training. Please plan to attend one of the following training sessions:

- Sunday, Aug. 25 following the worship service (this is the same day as Backpack Blessings)
- Sunday, Sept. 8 following the worship service
- Wednesday, Sept. 11 at 5:45 p.m. before FBC3M activities (plan accordingly as this will cut into dinner time)

Contact Keeley Tarkington, Minister of Music, at ktarkington@fbccclaytonnc.org if you have any questions.

Seniors to tour Holy Name of Jesus Cathedral

The First Baptist Church Clayton Seniors will tour the Holy Name of Jesus Cathedral in Raleigh on Tuesday, Aug. 20. The bus leaves the church parking lot at 10:30 a.m. for the 11 a.m. tour. Lunch and shopping will follow at the N.C. Farmers' Market. The bus will return around 4 p.m. For an accurate count for the tour, please sign up with the church office no later than Thursday, Aug. 15. Please let us know if you will ride the bus or drive separately.

The New Beginners Club (NBC) Luncheon is set for Monday, Aug. 26 at 11:30 a.m. Caroline McLeod, the SHIIP (Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program) Coordinator for Johnston County, will give an audio and visual presentation about Original Medicare, Medicare Part A and B, Medicare Supplements, Medicare Advantage and Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage. Caroline is a member of First Baptist Church.

Please notify the church office no later than Aug. 21 if: 1) you are on the permanent list but cannot attend or 2) you are not on the permanent list, but plan to attend.

Memorials and Honorariums

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE GENERAL FUND

In Memory of

Donald Varner and Keith Ferrell by Walter and Jill Rasor
Keith Ferrell, Donald Varner and Hazel Strickland by Anne Abene
Keith Ferrell by Ronald Crowder and Debbie Ragland

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE SENIOR ADULT FUND

In Memory of

Hazel Strickland and Keith Ferrell by Lois Weeks

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE ORGAN FUND

In Memory of

Donald Varner and Keith Ferrell by Jim and Judy Nappier
Keith Ferrell by Gerald and Glenda Toler

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE BAPTIST MEN'S FUND

In Memory of

Keith Ferrell by Rudy and Edwina Oliver



Volunteers still needed for Wednesday nights

Wednesday Night Fellowship Activities and Meals require volunteers and we're short. We really need church members to offer their time and talents to set up, prepare meals, serve and clean up. Currently, we do not have volunteers for the third Wednesday of the month. Please call Terry at 919-553-4161 to serve.



2024 Weekly Reports

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| Baptisms this Year.....14 | New Members.....20 |
| Worship Attendance | |
| Sunday, August 4.....168 | Sunday, July 28.....140 |
| Sunday School Attendance | |
| Sunday, August 4.....122 | Sunday, July 28.....129 |
| General Fund Giving | |
| Sunday, August 4.....\$17,644 | Sunday, July 28.....\$12,510 |
| Weekly Needs.....\$14,860 | |