



The Outlook

First Baptist Church Clayton

Show • Tell
Grow • Serve

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Symbols of Advent: the Manger and Light

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Remembering the Manger

The manger scene has long been a visible reminder of the story that changed creation forever. Mary and Joseph bedding down that night in a stable because there was no room in the Inn.

Jesus being born under the watchful eyes of livestock and Angels: the lowest and most high of creation. The announcement of the birth was delivered first to the poorest and most disenfranchised among us and then to the richest and most noble of scholars. When we enter the church through the vestibule or at the church office, we are greeted with the manger as a reminder that Christ's birth is for all of us.

Pause for a moment to imagine the wonder on the shepherd's faces, the joy Joseph and Mary must have experienced, and the humility of the wisemen bowing before the newborn. The manger serves as a powerful symbol that "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

Adorning the Sanctuary with Light

The book of John begins by telling us that the "Word became flesh and dwelt among us." John's gospel is filled with the image of light coming into darkness to illuminate creation with God's love and presence.

In Matthew 5, Jesus says, "Let your light so shine among men that they may see your good works and give glory to God in heaven." The light is the light of the Holy Spirit shining in each of us. None of us would light a candle and hide it in a closet. We light our lights to shine brightly so all can see. We light the sanctuary as a symbol of our shared faith, the presence of Christ among us, the hope of Jesus' presence in all our dark moments. Let us remember, Jesus is the light of the world exposing sin and drawing all creation to himself for salvation and reconciliation to God.



Let's go Christmas caroling on December 18

First Baptist Church Clayton is going Christmas caroling on Wednesday, December 18. Everyone is invited to participate. Bring your family and friends! We will meet in the church parking lot at 6 p.m. for a tailgate style supper (bring your own). At 6:30 p.m. we will head out to bring a joyful evening of song and cheer to the residents in The Walk neighborhood off Front Street in Clayton.

Fire on the Mountain Bible study series begins Jan. 8

In the New Year, Rev. Stephen Nance will lead a Bible study, "Fire on the Mountain: Displaying God to a Broken World." It begins Wednesday, January 8, 2025 and will be a six-session course from 9:30 to 11 a.m. each Wednesday in the SALT classroom and on Zoom.

"When the Israelites left Egypt, they were finally free, free from persecution, free from oppression, and free to worship their own God. But with that freedom comes a new challenge – learning how to live together the way God intends.

In this ninth volume of That the World May Know series, discover how God teaches the Israelites what it means to be part of a community that loves Him and the lessons we can learn to live out in our lives today.

Sign up in the church office. Student Discovery Guides are \$10 and will be available soon.

FBCC Youth want to deliver your Christmas cards

It's Christmas season and the youth at First Baptist can make it easy for you to send Christmas cards to fellow members.

Place your Christmas cards in the designated Christmas Card bins located in all vestibules and each Sunday School classroom. The Youth will collect the cards every Sunday morning and Wednesday evenings to sort and deliver.

Delivered cards may be picked up from the bright red mailbox located in the vestibule near the choir room. Cards will be sorted by last name. This mission project will continue through January 5.

If you have questions, see Lauren Rasor or Vicky Andrews. Donations are appreciated and will go towards the Youth Mission Trip Fund.



A Message from the Budget and Finance Committee

For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. – John 3:16

As we celebrate the season of giving and God's greatest gift to mankind, please consider a year-end contribution to First Baptist Church Clayton. Your gift will provide the church with a stable financial foundation for the upcoming year.

Moreover, your year-end gift will enable us to better serve our church family, our missions, our community and world. And most importantly, your gift can ultimately change lives when others are introduced to Christ.





Christmas

Monday, December 23 - Office is Open
The Church office will be closed
Tuesday - Friday, December 24 - 27

New Year's

Open Monday - Tuesday, December 30 - 31
Closing at 12 noon on New Year's Eve
Closed January 1 | Open January 2

Note of Thanks

Dear Church Family,
Thank you for your love and support for my daughter-in-law Janelle and my husband Denny.

Thank you for all the prayers, cards, food, texts, visits and memorials. It all meant so much to us and I am so thankful for your love and kindness.

Love, Joyce Sutton



Join us for a Joint Sunday School



Celebrate Christmas
COVERED DISH BRUNCH

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2024

After the 9:30am worship service, we will gather in the Fellowship Hall to enjoy a Christmas brunch together! Please bring a dish to share- you may bring it before or after the service.



Thanks for supporting the Cooper Christmas Tree project

The Francis Carroll WMU group would like to thank everyone for their generous support of this year's Cooper Christmas Tree.

The needs shared by the school were abundant and the response was overwhelming.

We appreciate those who purchased items or donated funds to support this project that touched all groups within our church. Elementary students shopped for children who could be their classmates; Acteens sorted gifts making delivery more organized and efficient; Challengers anticipated needs that were not on the list like a tackle box



to accompany the requested fishing pole; and grandparents signed up for shoes and socks, but brought in much more.

Because of your support, we have additional funds to support some immediate needs that have been shared with us for

underwear and other basic necessities. We will continue to support Cooper children beyond Christmas as we Show, Tell, Grow and Serve others in our community. We are so grateful for your response. Because of you, children will have warm clothes, shoes that fit, and a little something special for Christmas.

Memorials and Honorariums

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE General Fund in Memory of

Kevin McKenzie and Denny Sutton by Josephine Norris

Lottie Moon Christmas Offering in Honor of

Rudy and Edwina Oliver by Stewart and Tammy McLeod

Organ Fund in Honor of

Jim Elmore by Kenny and Vickie Adams

2024 Weekly Reports

Baptisms this Year.....	18	New Members.....	28
Worship Attendance			
Sunday, December 8.....	203	Sunday, December 1.....	381
Sunday School Attendance			
Sunday, December 8.....	150	Sunday, December 1.....	145
General Fund Giving			
Sunday, December 8.....	\$12,584	Sunday, December 1.....	\$26,465
Weekly Needs.....	\$14,860		