

# The Outlook

## First Baptist Church Clayton

Show • Tell  
Grow • Serve

February 2, 2025

Volume 48 Number 4

## What does membership mean? Part 1

By Dr. Len Keever  
Senior Pastor

This morning, I remembered a cartoon I saw years ago. The drawing was of a pastor complete with clerical collar standing to the left of a church sign. The pastor was frowning and looking defeated.

To the right of the sign stood a man holding the letters from where he had changed the sign. Unlike the pastor he was grinning from ear to ear as if he had just done a terrific job. The sign read, "Come join our 80% less church: Only an 8% tithe, and you choose which 8 of the commandments you want to follow."



In the caption underneath the pastor bemoaned, "I don't think that's what the membership committee meant by making our church more attractive to new members."

The cartoon spoke to me on many levels. Today it informs me as I begin a series of Outlook articles on what it means to be a member of the church. For the next several weeks I will be writing on a variety of topics related to church membership. My hope is that in pondering the meaning of membership we might be more inclined to be a 100% church, committed to our mission to be the Body of Christ at 411 N. Fayetteville Street, Clayton, North Carolina.

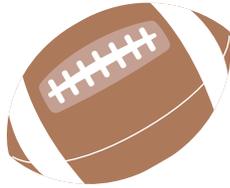
For starters, church membership is not like joining an organization or a club. It isn't like the conversation I heard a few days ago where someone on the staff of the gym said to a prospective member, "For (blank) dollars your membership entitles you to these services and for a few dollars more you get additional benefits."

Church membership is not like secular memberships. Church membership is being a part of the work of Jesus. Let me explain.

When we become a Christian, accepting Jesus as our Lord and Savior, several things happen simultaneously. First, our sins are forgiven, the Holy Spirit takes up residence in our hearts in deeper ways, we begin the long journey of becoming new creations in Christ. At the same time, we become a part of the Church.

See Church membership, page 3

# SOUPER BOWL LUNCHEON



WMU Focus Sunday-  
Clayton Area Ministries

February 9



Please join us for WMU (Women's Missionary Union) Focus Sunday on February 9 at 9:30 a.m. We will be blessed as our ladies lead the service in word and song. Dale Matthews from Clayton Area Ministries will share the message during the morning worship.

You will have two opportunities that day to help meet the needs of Clayton Area Ministries. There will be collection bins in each vestibule and in the hallway outside the fellowship hall for donations of canned goods and non-perishable food items.

Join us in the Fellowship Hall for the Annual Souper Bowl Luncheon sponsored by Youth Acteens and Challengers on Sunday, February 9 after Sunday School. The youth will serve delicious hot soup, savory sandwiches and delectable desserts. All donations will go to support Clayton Area Ministries (CAM) and its efforts to serve local needy families. Eat-in or take-out.

Need to contact a member of the pastoral staff? Here's how:

**Rev. Dr. Len Keever**  
919.820.0792

lkeever@fbcclaytonnc.org

*Dr. Keever will be in the church office,  
Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday  
(other times by appointment) and  
welcomes your calls, requests and visits.*

**Rev. Stephen Nance**

717.262.8400

snance@fbcclaytonnc.org

**Rev. Stephanie Parker**

919.815.0946

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# Church membership

Continued from page 1

Please note that I spelled Church with an upper case “C.” We literally cannot be a Christian all by ourselves, being absent from the Body of Christ. The Church is Jesus’ body on earth. The Church is commissioned to do the work of Christ.

Church, spelled with an upper case “C” denotes all churches, all expressions of Jesus’ work of reconciling the world to God. It speaks of the Universal Body of Christ in all its shapes and forms.

I had a professor who once said, “There is no such thing as a Lone Ranger Christian.” Of course, that reference may not be understood by a younger person. To me it spoke volumes. I cannot grow as a Christian or be a part of Jesus’ work apart from community. The community is where we learn to love like Jesus, grow in understanding scripture, be encouraged to practice and understand the disciplines/habits that help us as we grow deeper into the Christian life.

Next week we will look at what it means to be a part of a local congregation. For now, whether you are a member of First Baptist Church of Clayton or walking with us as you search for a place to belong, we are all a part of a larger fellowship of Christians striving to be who Jesus wants us to be both to ourselves and our neighbors as a part of the Body of Christ.



## ***Baptist Men lead worship service***

The men of First Baptist filled the chancel last Sunday and presented a wonderful performance of *To God be the Glory*. Ricky Blackmon and Tim Matthews presented the Children’s Message and guest minister, Rev. Kelvin Gurley of Hope Center Ministries, delivered a powerful sermon on the prophet Nehemiah.

# Memorials and Honorariums

## WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE

### General Fund in Memory of

Sarah Jolivette and Ella Jean Flowers by Van and Lynne Martin  
 Sarah Jolivette and Ella Jean Flowers by Bill and Sarah Brooks  
 Ella Jean Flowers by John and Lynn Gibson  
 Sarah Jolivette and Ella Jean Flowers by Cecil and Donna Lee

### Youth Fund in Memory of

Chuck Turlington by Rudy and Edwina Oliver

### Organ Fund in Memory of

Ella Jean Flowers by Billy Parrish



## Seniors Look Ahead

Mark your calendars for Thursday, March 20. The First Baptist Church seniors will attend an Easter Jubilee at the Rudy Theater in Selma. Dinner at a local restaurant will be part of the fun. More details are coming soon.

Rev. Stephen Nance is also planning field trips to the Harris Energy and Environmental Center at the Duke Energy Progress Nuclear Plant in New Hill, the North Carolina State Legislature Building and the North Carolina Museum of History. Date and details are in the works.

### Weekly Reports

Baptisms this Year.....0	New Members.....2
Worship Attendance	
Sunday, January 26.....208	Sunday, January 19.....184
Sunday School Attendance	
Sunday, January 26.....166	Sunday, January 19.....111
General Fund Giving	
Sunday, January 26.....\$11,427	Sunday, January 19.....\$16,538
Weekly Needs.....\$16,659	