

The Outlook

First Baptist Church Clayton

Show • Tell
Grow • Serve

February 23, 2025

Volume 48 Number 7

Part 4: What does membership mean?

By Dr. Len Keever
Senior Pastor

1 Corinthians 12 speaks of the variety of gifts we are given by the Holy Spirit. These gifts are for the building up of the Body of Christ. Our unique gifts reveal God's hand upon us. They not only help us to grow as believers, but they are also for the benefit of others.

Each of us is unique. Every one of us has been made special for purpose. I love how in Psalm 139:13-14 it says, "For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."



In Jeremiah 1:5 it says, "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you were born, I consecrated you." What was true for them is also true for each of us. God has blessed us with unique gifts that give our lives purpose and meaning. Church membership provides us a place to discover those gifts and to practice them by sharing them with each other.

When a person joins the church, they present their gifts for the body as an offering to God. They serve on committees, take on responsibilities, share in leadership, join with other servants in enhancing one another's spiritual gifts. Much like giving a tithe of their income to support the mission and ministries of the church, they offer themselves and their unique talents and abilities to make the church stronger.

Often when someone is considering joining an association or club the question asked is "What is in it for me?" When someone joins a church, the same question may be considered but from a different perspective.

The benefits of church membership are not about discounts or privileges. Church membership is about being a part of something where our contributions are necessary for the growth and enhancement of the body. Therefore, a better question would be, "How can I be a part of what God is doing here?"

When we become a church member, we affirm the work of God that takes place in a particular congregation. We become a part of that work. As Baptists we believe that God provides everything a local congregation needs to be the church within the membership.

We need each other. Every member is important.

All are invited to a special Ash Wednesday Service

Ash Wednesday

Plan to join us March 5 at 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary for our Ash Wednesday service where we'll begin the season of Lent. In preparation for Easter, we will reflect on how we may increase our attentiveness during the 40 days of Lent so that we may experience Jesus' presence with us as we wait for the resurrection.



To my church family and friends,

I was deeply touched by the outpouring of love and support from all of you following my mother's passing. Your kind words, messages, texts, calls, cards and memorial gifts have been a great comfort to me during this time of grief. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for thinking of me and my family. Your support has been overwhelming!!!

Love, Terry McCallum

A Message from Budget and Finance

Question: Do Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD) reduce Required Minimum Distributions (RMD) from Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA)?

Answer: Yes. A Qualified Charitable Distribution, i.e., a gift to First Baptist Church, satisfies the IRS's rules for Required Minimum Distributions.

If you want to give to the church and you are required to take a RMD, there is no reason not to utilize this tax-saving tactic.

Required Minimum Distributions are minimum amounts that IRA account holders must withdraw annually beginning the year they turn 73 (there are some exceptions – check with your tax advisor). RMDs are taxable income.

The PATH Act (Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes) provides an avenue for charitable giving directly from IRA retirement accounts, called Qualified Charitable Distributions. When this occurs, the taxable income on the RMD is eliminated.

It's a win-win for First Baptist and eligi-



ble church members. The church receives a gift, and the member avoids increased income taxes and taxes on Social Security, and increased Medicare premiums.

If you're interested in giving to First Baptist Church directly from your IRA, please contact our financial administrator, Tommy Bedford. His email is tommy@trinityconceptsnc.com.

First, however, please seek advice from your accountant or financial advisor to determine the best path forward.

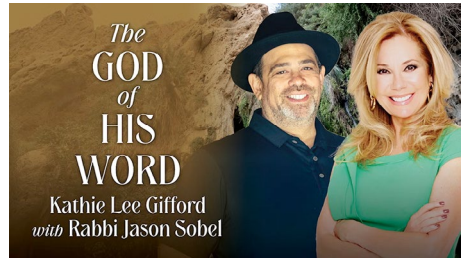
New Bible Study series begins February 26

A new Wednesday Morning Bible Study Series will begin February 26.

Led by Rev. Stephen Nance, Senior Adult Pastor, the video Bible study by Kathie Lee Gifford and Rabbi Jason Sobel explores some of the names for God used in Scripture revealing what they say about His nature and character.

You will discover that God's love, mercy and care for His creation never changes. The God of His Word always keeps His Word and He promises to always care for you.

There are six sessions: Feb. 26, March 5,



12, 19, 26 and April 5. They meet in the Salt Classroom and by Zoom. Sign up now in the church office. Study guides are available for \$10.

Baptist Men to hold fish fry

The Baptist Men will hold an Ole Fashioned Fish Fry on Tuesday, March 4 at 6 p.m. at Toby's Place (Tim Matthews' home), 77 Lancashire Run, Smithfield, NC 27577.

All men of the church, no matter your age, are invited. Please come prepared to fill your belly and your soul.



In addition to the food and fellowship, Baptist Men leaders will share information about mission and service opportunities. RSVP to Ricky Blackmon by Sunday, March 2. rickyblackmon56@gmail.com.

Young adults invited to weekly Echo Gatherings

Echo Gathering! Following the Sunday service, younger adults are invited to join the pastor in the Fellowship Hall for a gathering called Echo where we will simply ask the question, "What did you hear?"

It is a chance to form relationships and enjoy fellowship during the Sunday school hour.

Come and enjoy coffee and treats and stay afterwards for more information on Echo.

Join us this Sunday afternoon at With Love From Jesus

The King will reply, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." – Matthew 25:40

On Sunday afternoon, February 23, First Baptist Clayton will take its once-monthly turn to serve at the With Love From Jesus house in Clayton. If you would like to volunteer, please be there by 4 p.m. for sign-in and instruction. We will be distributing food, clothing and sharing the Gospel until around 7 p.m. You can also bring any items you would like to donate to the ministry. They are currently in need of nonperishable items. WLFJ often has over 80 guests come for food and clothing items. The WLFJ house is located at the southeast corner of W. 2nd S. Robertson streets.

If you are willing to help, see Rudy Oliver at church or call 919-271-1178, or email him at reholston@gmail.com.



Memorials and Honorariums

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE

General Fund in Memory of

Katie Price, Sarah Jolivet and Ella Jean Flowers by Ann Abene

Sarah Jolivet by Jean Bryant

Maezelle Godwin, Nadine Pender Greene, Faye Shehdan and Ruth Pitts Talton
by Joyce T. Lee

Katie Price by Jay and Kathy Woodard

General Fund in Honor of

Lowell Harris by the Hope Sunday School Class

N.C. Baptist Children's Home in Memory of

Sarah Jolivet, Ella Jean Flowers, Katie Price and Geoffrey Oliver

by David and Nancy Turlington

Youth Mission Trip Fund in Honor of

Sandy Stephenson by JoAnne Norris

Organ Fund in Memory of

Maxine Smith's birthday on February 14 by Ricky and Sherry Smith

Sarah Jolivet, Ella Jean Flowers and Katie Price by Lowell and Dorothy Harris

Keith Ferrell by Ginger Jones

Organ Fund in Honor of

Blondell Johnson's 90th Birthday by Lowell and Dorothy Harris

Jim Elmore and Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Tyson by Joyce T. Lee

If you are currently giving electronically, we are going to stop printing and mailing you offertory envelopes. This will save the church a lot of money. If you give electronically and would like to continue receiving the envelopes, please call the office.

Weekly Reports

Baptisms this Year.....	3	New Members.....	4
Worship Attendance			
Sunday, February 16.....	205	Sunday, February 9.....	180
Sunday School Attendance			
Sunday, February 16.....	157	Sunday, February 9.....	161
General Fund Giving			
Sunday, February 16.....	N/A	Sunday, February 9.....	\$10,866
Weekly Needs.....	\$16,659		