



# The Outlook

## First Baptist Church Clayton

Show • Tell  
Grow • Serve

March 2, 2025

Volume 48 Number 8

## Part 5: What does membership mean?

By Dr. Len Keever  
Senior Pastor

I know a person who is a member of a certain organization. He pays his dues annually and carries his updated membership card in his wallet. The thing is, he has not been to a meeting in over 10 years, does not participate in their special events, he doesn't even read their newsletters and can't name one of the officers.

I asked my friend why he continues to pay his dues and he told me it's because it is just too hard to get back in if he ever wanted to. Here is the question: Is he really a member?



I thought of this as I began to write this 5th installment on Church membership. Church membership is more than paying dues. It is making a commitment to be a part of the work of Christ that a local congregation does.

A few weeks ago, I mentioned membership as a discipline. In a few weeks we will begin the Lenten season where we will spend time thinking about how to take on habits that nurture and strengthen our relationship with Christ.

ship with Christ.

Certainly, Bible study and prayer are wonderful Spiritual Disciplines as are works of service and giving. When each of these are done as a regimented routine, they reinforce the bonds of relationship with Jesus, improving the foundation of our faith. Church membership and attendance are also ways we can strengthen our relationship.

As I gaze out the window I am beginning to see some green return to my lawn. The limbs of a maple tree are starting to turn red, indicating the rising of the sap that will soon help the buds to fill out into beautiful leaves that will draw in the sunlight feeding the tree and help oxygenate the air.

The view from my window provides two wonderful examples of why membership matters. First, I'm reminded that a well-manicured lawn takes constant attention. No one would mow their yard once a year and think that is enough.

The second is that we need exposure to good worship and Christian fellowship. Putting

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### Hardee and the Phillips are baptized

On Sunday, Feb. 23, we celebrated the baptisms of Swade Hardee and Terry and Matt Phillips. Dr. Len Keever officiated at Swade's baptismal services. Rev. Stephanie Parker officiated at the Phillips'. We pray for their faith journeys as we grow spiritually alongside them in this faith community.



### 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.



## Church membership

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down deep roots into a church community is like the tree drawing both nourishment from the ground as well as the sun. Consistent attention to putting Jesus first allows the air of the Holy Spirit to help us grow. Church membership is adopting strong spiritual habits where we discover more of who God is as well as who we are.

Psalm 119:11 says, "I treasure your word in my heart, so that I may not sin against you." The treasure of God is not something we keep in our wallet. It is kept in our hearts. If you want to grow closer to Jesus, the soil of church membership is integral to good spiritual growth.

I remember years ago a preacher stating that there were no such things as tumbleweed Christians. Once the tumbleweed breaks free from its roots, it just goes where the wind blows without anchor to keep it from being tossed in the storm. It no longer grows but dries out in the hot baking sun.

If you are not a member at First Baptist Clayton, I hope you will consider putting your roots down here with us. And if you are a member whose involvement has been taking a break, I hope you will discover that this is the perfect time to re-engage with the church. We need you! (And I hope you know you need us as well).

## ***First Baptist welcomes our newest members***



Joan and Pate Phillips, left, and Steve and Beverly Hall came forward last Sunday to join our church family. The Phillips join by transfer of letter, and the Halls are awaiting Baptism. First Baptist is pleased the two couples seek to come alongside us as we Show, Tell, Grow and Serve.



Our 1st-5th grade boys held their RA Derby and Lock-in Friday, February 21-22. The boys had a great time of fellowship and fun. Congratulations to the Derby Winners! 1st Place - 5th Grader Emmett Collins (left) and 2nd Place - 5th Grader Hank Fortner.

# FBCC to help with Hurricane Helene recovery

First Baptist Clayton will team up with N.C. Baptist Men Disaster Relief to help Hurricane Helene victims in the Swannanoa area. Men and women, age 18 and older, are encouraged to volunteer. The mission trip is March 30 through April 4.

The construction and repair work will consist of installing insulation, hanging sheetrock, and plumbing and electrical jobs.

You do not have to be skilled at any of this work to help. Just come and do whatever you can. The homeowners will most likely be on site and you will have the opportunity to witness to them.

The team from Clayton will sleep in the Swannanoa Baptist Church. Bring a cot or blow-up mattress, and sheets, blankets or sleeping bag. There will be a shower trailer at the church. All volunteers will be provided three meals per day.

We will gather in the First Baptist parking lot at 8:30 a.m. on Sunday, March 30. Dr. Len Keever will commission the group and pray for safe travels. We will pull out at 9 a.m. After five days of work, discipleship and fellowship, the First Baptist team will depart for home at 9 a.m. on Friday, April 4.

If you commit to this effort please make sure it is a firm commitment. Sign-up sheets are located in the side vestibules. An information packet will be available Sunday, March 9. We may take one of the church buses. Prayerfully consider joining us on this relief effort to assist our neighbors in the mountains.

If you are interested or have questions please contact Richie Johnson at 919-669-1687 or send email to JRJ02201959@gmail.com.

## *Memorials and Honorariums*

### **WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE**

#### **General Fund in Honor of**

Linda Britt by the Bill O'Neal Mission Group

Ava Spence's Birthday, Blondell Johnson's 90th Birthday and Mary Baker's Birthday  
by Joyce Nixon

#### **Heck Jones Fund in Honor of**

Lexene Lee by Joyce Nixon

## Weekly Reports

Baptisms this Year.....3	New Members.....8
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### Worship Attendance

Sunday, February 23.....215	Sunday, February 16.....205
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### Sunday School Attendance

Sunday, February 23.....144*	Sunday, February 16.....157
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\*Not all classes reported attendance

### General Fund Giving

Sunday, February 23.....\$12,667	Sunday, February 16.....\$14,959
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Weekly Needs.....\$16,659	
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