



# The Outlook

## First Baptist Church Clayton

Show • Tell  
Grow • Serve

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## Finale: What does membership mean?

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Perhaps the correct heading for this article should be “How do I unite with the church?” Notice I didn’t say join or become a member. As we have said, membership and joining are not like with other things.

So many of the words we use have many meanings. The word ‘love’ comes to mind. I love the Lord my God and I love my first sip of coffee in the morning. Same word, completely different meaning. So, today I will say unite rather than join because I think that is a better word for what membership means.

As a refresher, when we unite with a church, we are first making a public statement of faith that Jesus Christ is the risen Son of God. Our public acknowledgement is testimony to others that we share commitment to Jesus and want to serve alongside others who are working to honor Christ. Matthew 10:32-33 comes to mind, “Everyone, therefore, who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven, but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.”

Identifying ourselves as believers is not a once in a lifetime thing; it is a daily exercise of growing in faith.

Secondly, when we unite with a church, we are both sharing our gifts with the local congregation and stating we need the gifts of others to serve Jesus more fully. God did not create us to be in isolation but to be in community. In the second chapter of Genesis, (v.18) the Bible tells us, “The Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.’”

And while we see this as God’s plan that Adam and Eve would complement each other, it also indicates that all of humanity is created to help one another and be in community. When we unite with a church we become a part of God’s family in this world.

As Baptists we believe that every person is competent and free to make their own decisions regarding faith. For this reason, at the end of our worship service we offer a hymn



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# Volunteers sought for hurricane recovery trip

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 Sunday, March 30 through Friday, 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 blowup mattress, and sheets, blankets or sleeping bag. There will be a shower trailer at the church. All volunteers will be pro-



vided three meals per day.

We will gather in the First Baptist parking lot at 8:30 a.m. on Sunday, March 30. Rev. Keeley Tarkington 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](mailto:JRJ02201959@gmail.com).

## Church membership finale

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of invitation where people are given the chance to respond by coming down to unite with the church. If you are making a first-time profession of faith, or if you are coming from another expression of Christianity, the next step is baptism. As Baptists, we affirm a believer's baptism.

This is very important to us as we participate in the death and resurrection of Jesus in the baptistry. Every Baptist believer has taken this step. It is both testimony and an affirming memory for us.

We die to the old life and are raised into new life. If you have never had this experience, we will be talking more about it as you prepare for baptism.

If you have already been immersed in baptism, we will contact your former church and let them know that you are united with us. If a former church did not keep records of baptism or one does not know how to get in touch with them, we accept new members on a statement of faith.

Finally, in those rare occasions someone wants to unite with us but also remain on the roll of another church, they can come under the watch care of the church where their membership remains elsewhere while they identify and join in ministry at First Baptist.

I hope these articles have been helpful. We would love to talk with you if you are interested in uniting with First Baptist. Please feel free to contact any of our pastors at any time. We'd love to talk more.

Next week we will begin a series of reflections on the Lord's Prayer.

Thanks for reading!

## Youth Sunday delights, inspires FBCC congregation



The Youth Sunday theme “How Do I Fit In?” encouraged First Baptist members and guests to follow the words of Paul and not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed to the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will. The morning worship, which capped off Elevation Weekend, was led by the youth through music, song, speakers and a video presentation.



## Baptist Men gather for fish, fellowship and mission planning

The men of First Baptist, ranging from age 12 to 86, enjoyed a delicious fish fry Tuesday night at the home of Deacon Chairman Tim Matthews. In addition to the fellowship and a devotion, Tim and leaders of the Baptist Men shared their vision and plans to serve others in the coming year. 49 men, both members and guests attended.



## 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.

## Volunteer clean-up day set for Saturday, March 22

First Baptist Church will have a volunteer-led clean-up day Saturday, March 22 from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. The team will focus on the Child Development Center wing. The Building and Grounds Committee will have all the needed cleaning supplies and accessories.

Please consider giving your time to make our church building spic and span for the CDC. We will meet in the Sanctuary. Sign-up sheets will be in the church foyers and Sunday School classrooms. Thank you for your love and support of our CDC!

# Memorials and Honorariums

### WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE

#### General Fund in Memory of

Ella Jean Flowers by Doug and Sandra Phillips  
 Rev. Michael Tart's Birthday by Randolph and Tart

#### General Fund in Honor of

Noelle Franklin by JoAnn Hardee

#### Annie Armstrong Easter Fund in Memory of

Sarah Jolivette, Ella Jean Flowers and Katie Price by Kay Earp

#### Child Development Center Fund in Memory of

Gwen Starling by Bucky Coats

#### Organ Fund in Memory of

Ella Jean Flowers by Jim and Judy Nappier

#### Children's Ministry Fund in Honor of

Blondell Johnson's 90th Birthday by Joe and Linda Hester

## Weekly Reports

Baptisms this Year.....	3	New Members.....	8
<b>Worship Attendance</b>			
Sunday, March 2.....	281	Sunday, February 23.....	215
<b>Sunday School Attendance</b>			
Sunday, March 2.....	162	Sunday, February 23.....	144
<b>General Fund Giving</b>			
Sunday, March 2.....	\$14,080	Sunday, February 23.....	\$12,667
Weekly Needs.....	\$16,659		