



The Outlook

First Baptist Church Clayton

Show • Tell
Grow • Serve

May 4, 2025

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We are not alone. We are never alone.

By Dr. Len Keever
Pastor

I saw a squirrel in the woods behind my house this morning. I have been so preoccupied with moving, unpacking boxes, all the details of our Easter celebration at church that I haven't noticed one before.

Working to transform a strange house into a familiar home can be both blessing and distraction.

Changes, even the most positive ones, always come with a sense of uncertainty and challenge. Change can make us feel unbalanced. It takes a while for things to become familiar.

I'd finished my morning discipline. Laying my journal aside, I went out on the back porch so my heart could listen while I stayed silent. There was a movement in the trees.

I've seen birds during the last month, but no squirrels. The limb moved again and that's when I was able to see it dancing about. Nature's camouflage made it nearly hidden. Had it been still,



I may have missed it. It was its movement that gave it away.

I watched as it foraged. At first, I thought it was looking for food, but then saw it collect a tiny branch and haul it up further in the tree to a place hidden by new growth.

I couldn't help but smile when it returned to scavenge for another stick. I imagined it was building a nest where the squirrel and its mate would raise their young to entertain me in years to come. A small yellow leaf drifted between us, a remnant from last fall perhaps. I suddenly thought of the Aspen trees in Colorado we saw last October on our retreat. It made me want to go back there to pay better attention.

I wondered, how much am I missing each day letting distractions and busyness keep me from sensing God's creation encouraging me?

The words of a hymn returned. "All nature sings and round me rings the music of the spheres." God is not silent. God is not absent. God is not still, but active. Take a moment to watch; the movement of the Holy Spirit will alert you to God's presence.

We are not alone. We are never alone. Thanks be to God!



Star Quest was a sensation



Sunday School Class Spotlight

The Discipleship Sunday School Class was formed a few years ago before the pandemic. The class was originally taught by Jake Parker, and the class focused on studying passages of scripture and discussing how these passages could be applied to help us deepen our faith.

The class is now taught by Dionne Fortner, Jay Harrell, Sandy Stephenson and Joy Tribble. The class has recently begun using a study guide from the Life Guide Bible Studies series. We just completed a series on the final week of Jesus' life, and we will soon begin our next study on New Testament Characters.

The class is composed of both married couples and singles. Some of us have young children and some are empty nesters. We always find that our time of sharing and discussion leads us to discovering powerful truths in God's word that are impactful in our daily Christian walk. If you are looking for a group to join on Sunday mornings, we invite you to join us. We meet in the conference room (#122) next to the church office.



Senior Adults to tour Harris nuclear plant May 15

The FBCC Senior Adults will tour the Duke Progress Harris Energy and Environmental Center in New Hill on Thursday, May 15. Those attending will learn how energy powers our world. The center features interactive exhibits on electricity, energy efficiency and the benefits of nuclear power. This should be an interesting and informative tour.

The bus will leave the church parking lot at 9 a.m. The tour begins at 10 a.m. and lunch will follow at Golden Corral in Raleigh. The bus will return by 3 p.m. If you would like to join us, please sign up in the church office no later than Tuesday, May 13 and indicate if you will ride the bus or drive yourself.

The Monthly NBC (New Beginner's Club) luncheon will be Monday, May 26 at 11:30 a.m. The food will be catered by Smithfield's Chicken and Barbecue. Plates are \$8 each. The guest speaker will be Denny Schlindwein of Clayton. He is a retired Secret Service agent who was assigned to the protection detail of the late President Jimmy Carter. Schlindwein served on Carter's detail while he was in the White House and after he left office and returned to Plains, Ga. Please notify the church office no later than May 22 if: 1) you are on the permanent list but cannot attend or 2) you are not on the permanent list but plan to attend.



Seniors tour Legislative Building

The First Baptist Church Clayton senior adults visited the N.C. Legislature on April 15. State House representative Donna White, of Clayton, welcomed the group to the lawmakers' chambers and informed them of the processes and procedures the General Assembly follows. Pictured from left are Linda Hester, Georgia Immordino, Linda Nance, Rev. Stephen Nance, Lowell Harris, Lexene Lee, Dorothy Howell, Rep. Donna White, Betty Godwin, Edwina Oliver, Keith Blackley (bus driver) and Rudy Oliver.

Note of Thanks

Our family is so thankful for the many cards, messages, prayers, and acts of kindness and compassion expressed by so many of you following the recent passing of our father and grandfather, Gene Stephenson. The love and support shown by our First Baptist Church of Clayton family is something we've witnessed countless times over many years, and we have been humbled and blessed by it over the past few weeks.

– The Family of Sandy and Anna Stephenson



Memorials and Honorariums

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

Gene Stephenson by Jiles and Kim Harrell
Gene Stephenson by Bill and Sarah Brooks
Gene Stephenson by David and Pam Outlaw

Organ Fund in Memory of

Ella Jean Flowers and Ernest Blackley by Joyce T. Lee
Gene Stephenson by Ricky and Sherry Smith
Gene Stephenson by Gerald and Glenda Toler

Senior Adult Fund in Honor of

The birthdays of Jo Howard and Julia Gilbert by Joyce T. Lee
Jean Lee and Joyce Blackley by Joyce T. Lee



Weekly Reports

Baptisms this Year.....6 New Members.....11

Worship Attendance

Sunday, April 27.....182 Sunday, April 20.....330

Sunday School Attendance

Sunday, April 27.....153 Sunday, April 20.....125

General Fund Giving

Sunday, April 27.....\$13,371 Sunday, April 20.....\$15,085

Weekly Needs.....\$16,659