



The Outlook

First Baptist Church Clayton

Show • Tell
Grow • Serve

May 25, 2025

Volume 48 Number 20

Jesus gives us peace in the darkness

By Dr. Len Keever
Pastor

After several days of storms and rain, dark clouds and thick humidity, the sun came out this morning. The sky was blue, the birds danced around the bird feeder like excited children on Christmas morning. The sun's bring light revealed drops of water appearing like crystals adorning the grass.

The morning met me with promise, though I was still sitting in the shade, the light creeping towards me seemed like encouragement to sit and wait.

The sun's warmth I so desperately needed was growing closer. I found myself steeped in hope.

We do not always sit in the sun. Sometimes we sit in darkness, confusion, working through an unsettling unknown. Sometimes we sit in the shade, halfway, but not quite there.

In the unknown we wrestle with mystery as Jacob wrestled with God beside the Jab-bok. In the darkness God leads us through upsetting times, as the Psalmist wrote in Psalm 23, through the darkest valleys.

In the shade we begin to see the answers, we recognize more fully that we are ac-



companied. In the shade, hope discovers its roots have found good ground in which to be anchored, nourishment to sustain. In the shade we begin to smell the aroma of the feast, the table set before our enemies.

In the fullness of the light, our heads are anointed, our cups overflow.

It is a mistake to think that being a Christian will shield us from trouble in this world. It is a mistake to think that we are now immune from heartache and sorrow, grief and pain. As a believer, we continue to live in this world – working our way through the never-ending cycles of darkness to light to darkness again; paying the same for eggs and gasoline the same as those who do not believe, wondering “Why?” to so many challenges we face.

The difference is that as followers of Jesus we are never alone. The Advocate, the Holy Spirit is with us. The Holy Comforter encourages, nudges, and whispers wisdom.

This is the promising word of Jesus in John 14:25-27. Jesus gives us his peace in darkness, shadows and bright light. He says to us, “Do not let your heart be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.”

In Matthew 28:20, “Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” We have so much for which to be thankful.

Calling all graduating seniors

If you would like to participate in Graduate Recognition Sunday on June 1 at First Baptist Church Clayton, please call Terry McCallum in the church office at 919-553-4161.

She will need your full name, your parents' names, your grandparents' name if they attend First Baptist, the high school, community college or university you're graduating from and your future plans. There will be a



processional to begin the 9:30 a.m. worship service and Vicky Andrews will introduce the graduates.

Sunday School Class Spotlight

The BASIC Sunday School class stands for Brothers and Sisters in Christ and is open to all individuals making up the body of Christ.

James Faggart teaches the class and we use various study guide formats depending on our study topics. Over the years we have watched DVD series by Andy Stanley, utilized Sunday School lectionaries and during the last two years we have been reading through the Bible verse by verse to help us gain additional knowledge of God's word.

We are currently watching an online video series led by Gary Hamrick on Revelation. Our class understands the importance of prayer and sometimes our time is spent just lifting up our classmates, congregation and friends in prayer time. We are a very active class participating in church activities and we would welcome anyone seeking a class to consider visiting the BASIC class. We meet in room #223.



Dedicate the flowers in the sanctuary to a loved one

Did you know that the flowers in the sanctuary each Sunday can be dedicated in memory or in honor of a loved one? A \$50 contribution to the General Fund is all it takes and a message in the bulletin indicates the contribution. To reserve a Sunday, please call Terry in the church office at 919-553-4161.

Please know, however, that your \$50 does not purchase the flowers. It is a donation to the church.

For many years, church member Jody McLeod of Annie V's Florist has provided the flowers every Sunday as a loan.



He or someone on his staff prepares two arrangements and places the flowers in the sanctuary prior to the Sunday morning worship service. Afterwards, the flowers are picked up and taken back to the floral shop.

Jody does not charge for this service. We are thankful for this most generous

ongoing gift to First Baptist that brings God's beauty and warmth into His house every Sunday. If you would like to purchase the flowers to take home, please contact Annie V's or Jody. His contact information is listed in Realm.

Pastor Support Committee to meet quarterly

The Pastor Search Committee has now transitioned to a Pastor Support Committee for the next year.

During this time, we will be meeting with Dr. Keever once a quarter to make sure things are going well with the transition, gain an understanding of things the ministry staff is working on and discuss any questions or concerns he or the church staff may have.

We had our first meeting with the church staff on April 8 and Dr. Keever on April 28. Both of those meetings were very productive and we had wonderful conversations about the great things underway at FBC Clayton.

We will continue to be a listening block for all our staff and congregation to offer any comments or concerns they would like to share.

First Baptist called to fill urgent need at WLFJ

With Love From Jesus is running extremely low on non-perishable food items, particularly canned goods (all set on green beans, however). With the school year coming to an end soon, kid-friendly foods (pasta, soup, etc.) are also very much needed.

A food box has been placed outside the church office for WLFJ. Please consider dropping off some non-perishable items as soon as possible. Monetary donations are also accepted. For more information about WLFJ and how you can volunteer, please contact Rudy Oliver at 919-271-1178 or email reoholston@gmail.com.



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

From the Budget and Finance Committee

Did you know?

You can set up a recurring gift online. Go to <https://fbcclaytonnc.org> and click on the "Resources" tab then select "Giving." You can choose the frequency of your gift as well as the start and end dates. If you need help establishing a recurring gift, please reach out to Stewart McLeod, Budget and Finance chairman, at 919.669.7542 or wstewartmcleod@gmail.com.



There are other ways to support our budget. You may want to explore with your financial advisor ways of annual giving to First Baptist Church Clayton including required minimum distributions from IRA accounts, or gifts of securities and real estate.

If you feel led to support our church in this way, please reach out to our financial administrator Tommy Bedford at tommy@trinityconceptsnc.com for additional information to help you with that transaction.

10 Women of the Bible series
will not meet Monday, May 26

Dorothy Harris’ and Lynn Martin’s Monday morning Bible study, “Ten Women of the Bible” will not meet on Monday, May 26 due to Memorial Day.
The group will return to their regular schedule on Monday, June 2 at 10 am.

Note of Thanks

Dear Church Family,
Thank you for the visits and prayers over the past few weeks. Your love, friendship and concern is much appreciated.



- Curtis and Elaine Moore

Need to contact a member of the pastoral staff? Here’s how:
Rev. Dr. Len Keever, Pastor
919.820.0792

lkeever@fbcclaytonnc.org
Dr. Keever works remotely on Mondays and will be in the church Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays (other times by appointment) and welcomes your calls, requests and visits.

Rev. Stephen Nance
Pastor of Senior Adults
717.262.8400
snance@fbcclaytonnc.org
Rev. Stephanie Parker
Pastor of Children and Families
919.815.0946
sparker@fbcclaytonnc.org
Rev. Keeley Tarkington
Minister of Music
919.649.3155
ktarkington@fbcclaytonnc.org

Memorials and Honorariums

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE
General Fund in Memory of
Gene Stephenson by Judy Wood
Children’s Ministry Fund in Memory of
Noelle Franklin by Bucky Coats
Back Pack Buddies Fund in Memory of
Hogan Teem by David and Allyson Teem
Youth Fund in Memory of
Hogan Teem by David and Allyson Teem
Noelle Franklin by Jerry and Sharon Poole

Weekly Reports

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| Baptisms this Year.....6 | New Members.....14 |
| Worship Attendance | |
| Sunday, May 18.....182 | Sunday, May 11.....199 |
| Sunday School Attendance | |
| Sunday, May 18.....135 | Sunday, May 11.....129 |
| General Fund Giving | |
| Sunday, May 18.....\$13,787 | Sunday, May 11.....\$20,127 |
| Weekly Needs.....\$16,659 | |