



The Outlook

First Baptist Church Clayton

Show • Tell
Grow • Serve

June 8, 2025

Volume 48 Number 22

Teach me new ways, the ways of Christ

By Dr. Len Keever
Pastor

I witnessed something disturbing yesterday. Nature is not always beautiful and peaceful. It isn't always Cardinals, Bluebirds, Goldfinches and Robins. If we watch long enough, we see things that alert us that ugliness is present.



I was driving up Church Street and two vultures were fighting over the carcass of a young squirrel who hadn't yet learned the art of looking both ways before he crossed the road. These birds of prey were filled with greed and lust – fighting over the unprotected, the vulnerable, the innocent.

Working in tandem perhaps, but at that moment it looked like the only thing that united them was their lust. Surely, if one of them became weak and wounded they'd turn on the other and take advantage. Watching the birds, I couldn't help but think of Evil and the tendency in so many of God's creatures to exploit those who have no power to de-

fend.

My heart was breaking for the squirrel. I imagined that what I was feeling at that moment was like the compassion of God. I thought about how God hurts with us when the weak are preyed upon by Evil; helpless before the maliciousness of vultures and the indifference that lies so deep in the treatment of the wounded.

I imagined how God must feel watching humans take advantage of each other; the strong overpowering the weak, the ones who have closets full of coats leaving the cold ones out in the rain, shivering, unprotected, suffering, the prey of Evil. I thought how both, the cold who suffer, and the warm whose hearts that are cold, are subject to Evil's cruel intent to undermine the goodness of God's creation by pitting us against each other; nurturing divisions that corrupt God's desire for us.

With this on my mind, I also imagined that God couldn't take it anymore! God emptied himself to become vulnerable too, defenseless against Evil, yet demonstrating such a powerful love for creation that it overcame

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New Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Terry McCallum is available by phone and email until noon on Friday.

Note of Thanks



To my Church family,

Thank you for the prayers, cards, phone calls and memorials sent upon the death of my sister, Evelyn Belda. My church has been a blessing for over 70 years and I am truly thankful.

I am also thankful for the visits from several of you. What a wonderful surprise!

With love and appreciation,
Lois Weeks



Congratulations to Ellie Stephenson who graduated from the University of North Carolina on May 10 with a degree in Political Science. She is the daughter of Sandy and Anna Stephenson and the granddaughter of Gerald and Glenda Toler.

Teach me new ways

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all the vultures could produce, all of Evil's intentions, all that Satan could muster, even death itself, to rise victorious.

Then I wondered, what would the vultures do if suddenly the squirrel came back to life? Would it change them? Would they be filled with such light that it changed them, overwhelming them with love, transforming them into healers and encouragers, defenders of the weak, helpers in the storms?

Would they fly away, transformed, or not – still unmoved by love's power to overcome? Would they put aside what they'd experienced, looking for another victim to consume; compartmentalizing their experience, not letting it move them? Or would they become disciples of the one whose love overcame, followers of the one who embraced the weak, fed the hungry and welcomed the stranger?

"Lord, if I am a vulture I don't want to be a vulture anymore. Keep me from my old ways, the ways of this fallen world, and teach me new ways, the ways of Christ. Transform me into something new that I may always be kind and caring, filled with such Christ-like love that Evil cannot find a place in me to vent any attitude or allegiance that are unlike Jesus.

Fill me with your Holy Spirit, O Lord, on this Pentecost Sunday that I too may be changed to reflect your glory in all the things I do. That your love may lead me to awake each day to love as Jesus loved. I ask this always in your Name. Amen!"

Parking lots to be resurfaced June 18-20

Both First Baptist Church parking lots (Fayetteville and Church street) will be closed Wednesday-Friday, June 18-20 for re-surfacing and re-striping. Please park on the grass lot at the corner of Fayetteville and Hinton streets these days.



2025 graduate honored



Lacyn Rae Hubbard was honored during Graduate Recognition this past Sunday. Youth leader Vickie Andrews said she has enjoyed watching Lacyn grow in her faith through the years.

Lacyn graduated from Clayton High School and will be attending N.C. State University this fall.

She is the daughter of Kevin and Melissa Hubbard. First Baptist Church Clayton wishes Lacyn well in all her future endeavors.

Registration now open for VBS 2025

We are taking VBS 2025 on the road! Well, not literally, but the theme is focused on road trips.

We will look at “road trips” of people in the Bible who, through

various twists and turns along the journey, learn the important message of our theme verse – that God is with us wherever we go. – Joshua 1:9

WHAT: Join us for a meaningful four days of scripture, song, games, crafts, science and fellowship at Vacation Bible School.

WHEN: Sunday, July 13 – Wednesday, July 16. 5:30-8 p.m. Sunday, Monday and Tuesday; and 6 to 8 p.m. on Wednesday.

WHERE: VBS begins in the Fellowship Hall with a meal the first three nights at 5:30 p.m. Caregivers are invited to eat. After the meal, caregivers will take their child to sign in at his/her “Parking Garage” or home base. Pick up will be at your child’s “Parking Garage” at 8 p.m. sharp. On Wednesday,



we will gather at 6 p.m. for a closing ceremony and Food Truck Dinner.

WHO: VBS is open to preschool children ages three (as of 7/12/25) through five, and

grade schoolers who have completed Kindergarten through completion of 5th grade. If you sign up a child who is three, you are required to volunteer.

WHY: To grow in relationship with God and one another!

HOW: Register online by using the QR code.

Registration closes June 23. After registration closes, we cannot guarantee a shirt or spot.

Be sure to hit the final “register” button to complete registration. If you do not get a confirmation email, your registration did not complete.



Memorials and Honorariums

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE

General Fund in Memory of

Lin Shehdan and Tom Medlin by Bucky Coats
 Lin Shehdan and Tom Medlin by Ricky and Elizabeth Waddell
 Tom Medlin and Lin Shehdan by David and Jo Earp
 Tom Medlin by Jo Ann Hardee
 Tom Medlin by Durwood Hatcher and Peggy Morgan
 Tom Medlin by Joe and Linda Hester
 Lin Shehdan by the Hope Sunday School Class
 Tom Medlin by Jim and Judy Nappier
 Lin Shehdan by Jean Bryant
 Lin Shehdan by Chris and Diane Pearce
 Lin Shehdan, Noelle Franklin and Tom Medlin by Andy and Gloria Pleasant
 Lin Shehdan, Noelle Franklin and Tom Medlin by Judy Wood

Children's Ministry Fund in Memory of

Noelle Franklin by Chris and Diane Pearce

Backpack Buddies Fund in Memory of

Tom Medlin by Chris and Diane Pearce

Organ Fund in Honor of

Tom Medlin by Teresa Ann Calton
 Tom Medlin by Sandy and Anna Stephenson

Senior Adult Fund in Memory of

Tom Medlin and Lin Shehdan by John and Dolores Bagley
 Lin Shehdan by Lowell and Dorothy Harris

Baptist Men's Fund in Memory of

Tom Medlin and Lin Shehdan by Rudy and Edwina Oliver
 Tom Medlin by Lowell and Dorothy Harris



Weekly Reports

Baptisms this Year.....6 New Members.....13

Worship Attendance

Sunday, June 1.....187 Sunday, May 25.....126

Sunday School Attendance

Sunday, June 1.....130 Sunday, May 25.....104

General Fund Giving

Sunday, June 1.....\$14,634 Sunday, May 25.....\$8,860

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