



The Outlook

First Baptist Church Clayton

Show • Tell
Grow • Serve

August 24, 2025

Volume 48 Number 32

PACKED.... with Purpose?

By Rev. Stephanie Parker
Pastor of Children and Families

As much as I do not want to admit it, summer is rapidly coming to an end. While the season does not technically end until late September, beach trips are becoming less frequent, extended daylight is slipping away and the pool is closing soon. Truthfully, it makes me a little sad.



Don't get me wrong, I am grateful for the gift each day is, but summer is my very favorite season. I love the heat, the sun and the different pace it lends.... and I'm

saying that as someone who has some of my most intense work weeks during summer months!

School starting is another traditional sign of summer's end. Many children and youth in our congregation have been in school for several days, some for weeks now. Still, we all feel the chapter closing when the grid on the back of the bulletin extends and our personal calendars become bombarded with meetings, sports practices and school events. The hours of daylight might be shrinking, but we are packing everything we can into the time we have.

If you are the parent of a child or youth, you get it. As a parent of 5th and 7th graders, I'm right there in the trenches with you. The expectations and pressures today, real or assumed, are go, go, and GO some more. It is next level, and it is overwhelming.

Many of us are just trying to do the best we can to continue our careers, get kids to school and activities, maintain houses, and find a few hours to catch some sleep. If we aren't careful with all the packing, we can squeeze Jesus right out of it even when we are at organized church. And none of us wants that.

One way we can partner in the quest to intentionally pack Jesus and his greatest commandment from Matthew 22:37-39 into this year is by walking alongside each other in this faith community. We begin a new ministry year in just a few days, and there are places for all ages to engage on Sundays, on Wednesdays and on other days for Bible studies, small groups, and special retreats and activities.

And if you are one of those parents or caregivers of a youth or child, join me in the trenches of learning starting September 10 for "Sparking the Conversation." I'll be leading a study during our second "30" of

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Jeff Tarkington's homemade strawberry ice cream took first place honors at the 2025 FBCC Ice Cream Social this past Sunday. Many gathered in the fellowship to sample the homemade delights. Glenda Toler won second place with her peach ice cream and Jessica Collins claimed third with strawberry cheesecake.



Packed with Purpose

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30/30/30 Wednesdays focused on what narratives we are normalizing with our children and youth and how those align (or don't) with the narratives of Jesus.

As we bless the backpacks this Sunday and pray over our bag-carriers, maybe you will want to tuck away the scripture printed on this year's tag. It's our Road Trip VBS verse found in Joshua 1:9 and one we desperately need to remember as we zig and zag from one place to the next: "The Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Make it a mantra. Make it a breath prayer. Make it a practice to remember that in all the going, *God is with you*. If this truth brought comfort to the Israelites entering a new land, surely it can bring us comfort as we enter a new ministry year to remember the one who loves us unconditionally, offers grace freely and gives an invitation to be still.

As we are packing backpacks, schedules and time, let's be sure to pack the one who never leaves or forsakes us so we can remember we are packed with a divine purpose to love God and to love others as we go.

Dedicated ministry team visits the sick

At First Baptist Church Clayton there are eight Ministry Teams dedicated to loving and supporting our church family. These teams function under the auspices of the Deacon Ministry and are led by active Deacons.

They are Prayer, Bereavement, Casserole, Celebration, Homebound, Hospital Visitation, Transportation and Visitor/New Member. This week we are focusing on the Hospital Visitation team.



These ministry teams are not committees and members are not elected by the church. To participate, all you have to do is volunteer. And you do not have to be an official member of our church to serve on a ministry team.

For more information about the Deacon Ministry, contact incoming chairwoman Ann Austin at 919-333-6791 or dddhd@aol.com.

Hospital Visitation Ministry Team

Just as the name indicates, this dedicated team visits churchgoers who are hospitalized. These caring folks show God's love with prayers and presence for the ailing. The team is led by Kim Harrell. She is assisted by Jiles Harrell, Kathy Wilkerson, Elaine Johnson, Susan Parker and Betty Lee. The team needs more volunteers. If you would like to be part of this caring ministry, please contact Kim at 919-264-9832.

We are happy to announce that Jennifer Petit has joined the Casserole team. Also, Jo Earp has joined the Celebration team. Thanks and congratulations.

Note of Thanks

Dear First Baptist Church Clayton,

We deeply appreciate First Baptist Church's compassionate gift in memory of Noelle Elizabeth Franklin for the Pediatric Oncology Fund. Your kind tribute will be shared with the family.

Your generous support provides comfort and hope to patients battling cancer who rely on UNC Health for the highest quality care when they need it most. We accelerate promising research into life-changing cancer treatments and improved care. With your commitment, we can train the next generation of research and clinical leaders, bringing us closer to cancer cures.

We are so grateful for the impact we can create together as we improve health and well-being across North Carolina and beyond.

With appreciation,

Leslie H. Nelson-Bernier

Chief Philanthropy Officer, UNC Health / President, UNC Health Foundation

Memorials and Honorariums

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE

General Fund in Memory of

- Joyce Blackley and Jerry Johnson by Bucky Coats
- Joyce Blackley and Jerry Johnson by Brandon and Vicky Andrews
- Joyce Blackley by Billy Parrish
- Joyce Blackley by Jo An Hardee
- Jerry Johnson by Hope Sunday School Class
- Jerry Johnson and Joyce Blackley by Jiles and Kim Harrell
- Jerry Johnson by Paula Medlin
- Tom Medlin, Joyce Blackley and Noelle Franklin on her birthday by Candy Pope
- Jerry Johnson and Joyce Blackley by Lexene Lee
- Jerry Johnson and Joyce Blackley by David and Jo Earp
- Jerry Johnson and Joyce Blackley by Tom and Ida Mayes
- Joyce Blackley and Jerry Johnson by Gerald and Glenda Toler
- Joyce Blackley and Jerry Johnson by Anne Abene
- Joyce Blackley by Paul and Bronna Greer
- Joyce Blackley and Jerry Johnson by Andy and Gloria Pleasant
- Joyce Blackley and Jerry Johnson by Judy Wood
- Jerry Johnson by John and Delores Bagley
- Jerry Johnson and Joyce Blackley by Jean Bryant
- Jerry Johnson and Joyce Blackley by Chris and Diane Pearce
- Joyce Blackley and Jerry Johnson by the Bill O'Neal Mission Group

General Fund in Honor of

Sally Bierce's 84th birthday by Shirley Shires

Baptist Men Fund in Memory of

Jerry Johnson by Rudy and Edwina Oliver

WMU Fund in Memory of

Joyce Blackley by Rudy and Edwina Oliver

Organ Fund in Memory of

Joyce Blackley by Ricky and Sherry Smith

Jerry Johnson and Joyce Blackley by Tom, Emily and Jay Vinson

Senior Adult Fund in Memory of

Joyce Blackley by John and Delores Bagley

Weekly Reports

Baptisms this Year.....10 New Members.....19

Worship Attendance

Sunday, August 17.....162 Sunday, August 10.....187

Sunday School Attendance

Sunday, August 17.....128 Sunday, August 10.....147

General Fund Giving

Sunday, August 17.....\$10,984 Sunday, August 10.....\$18,284

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