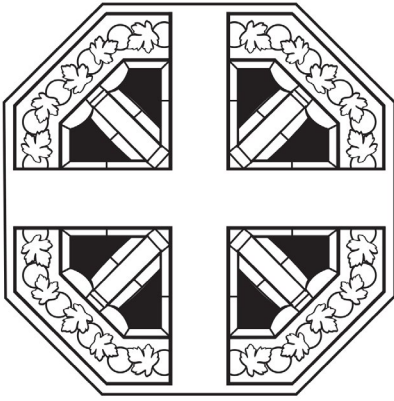




The Outlook

First Baptist Church Clayton

Show • Tell
Grow • Serve

November 16, 2025

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What matters is a thankful heart

By Dr. Len Keever
Pastor

November brings out the nostalgia in me; though to be honest it does not take that much to do so. Sometimes I think I was raised in a Norman Rockwell painting (anyone under 60 is probably Googling who Rockwell was



about now, if so, keep the search engine open, you may need it before the article is over).

I love November. It is a high and holy month for me. In November, we celebrate Thanksgiving, end the Christian Calendar with Christ the King Sunday, and on years like this, begin Advent.

This month is about faith, family, and gratitude. It is about raking leaves, remembering our loved ones and reflecting on the blessings of the year. What's not to love?

As a child, I loved to watch the Red Skelton show with my grandfather (here's another chance to Google). I loved the characters Red created; none more than Freddie the Freeloader. Freddie was my favorite. He was a hobo who lived in a shack filled with junk that others threw away.

Broken things became his treasures; dis-

carded things were his heart's desire. Freddie always smiled, always seemed grateful, thankful for a tiny morsel of bread, thankful for a three-legged chair he'd perfectly balance himself on for a Thanksgiving meal of a half-eaten loaf of day-old bread and leftovers someone threw away heated by a candle in a soup can.

Freddie's gratitude, while in immense poverty, endured him to those who came to love him. He taught us that riches didn't matter nearly as much as a thankful heart. Remembering Red Skelton, still dressed as Freddie, saying to his audience, "Good night, and may God bless," still touches my heart like a good sermon.

I hope we don't lose the model of Thanksgiving gratitude Freddie showed. He made us pause to see that being grateful for even the simplest thing can bring joy to our hearts. Red's caricature made us smile, sometimes he made us cry, he always touched us deep inside.

Sadly, I am afraid that just as the memory of old shows fade, so too is the unique place gratitude and Thanksgiving have for us today. Are we losing our ability to be grateful? Is gratitude being overshadowed by greed and the lack of unity all around us?

See A Thankful Heart, page 4

Many volunteers needed for Live Nativity

Volunteers are still needed to help us share the true meaning of Christmas with the Clayton community at the Live Nativity during the Town of Clayton's annual "Christmas Village and Tree Lighting Celebration" on December 4.

FBCC's Live Nativity includes a stable, hay, manger, Star of Bethlehem, characters of Mary, Joseph, Baby Jesus, three Wise



Men and Angels and live animals.

It takes a village to successfully do the Nativity. Between 80 and 90 volunteers are needed!

Please pray about being a part of this special event and reach out this week to one of our Mission Council Co-Chairs, Gwen Canady and Robin Little, or to the church office to sign up to participate. You will be blessed by the opportunity.

Christmas gifts sought for Cooper

The Frances Carroll WMU group has partnered with Cooper Academy again this year to provide Christmas gifts to students in need as a mission focus.

Rather than have a "Christmas for Cooper" tree with wish list items attached, the Wish List from the students and how to purchase Christmas gifts for them is all online. See the QR codes below, or call Terry in the church office at 919-553-4161 for assistance. Online links are also available in your Friday Reminders email and the digital Outlook.

We will be collecting the gifts in a variety of ways again this year. You can place unwrapped gift(s) in the box outside the church office, ship gifts to Lauren Rasor (745 Maggie Way, Wendell, NC 27591), or we can arrange a pick-up of your items no later than Wednesday, December 3. You may also donate towards a larger item or make a donation towards unpurchased gifts with an online contribution.

We need all gifts no later than Wednesday, December 3, to get them to Cooper the following week before students leave for holiday break. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate

to reach out to Lauren Rasor at 919-796-6197 or Audrey Harrell at 919-673-0965.

It's likely to be another season of high need for our community, and we appreciate your continued support of this project! Last year, we heard that it would be helpful to have the list earlier. We are grateful to the counselor at Cooper for helping us get the information.

Thank you for helping us **SHOW** God's love in this very tangible way to our community.



Free Thanksgiving meals to be served to the needy

Serve the Need in Johnston County and the Clayton Civitan Club, in partnership with First Baptist Church Clayton and other churches across the county, will be serving free Thanksgiving dinners to the less fortunate in our community on Wednesday, November 26.

From 5 to 7 p.m., a traditional Thanksgiving meal will be served in the Fellowship Hall to anyone in the community. Spread the news to people in the Clayton community who you think may not have the opportunity to enjoy a Thanksgiving meal this year.

Volunteers are needed from 4 to 7 p.m. at First Baptist to serve and clean up. The Feed the Need meal is a long-running annual event that serves to further the Serve the Need organizations's mission to improve the lives of others through service and collaboration. For more information or to volunteer, contact Tim Matthews.

Wednesday Night Schedule for the Holidays



Nov. 19	Church-wide Thanksgiving Meal from 5:30-7:30 p.m.
Nov. 26	No Wednesday Night Activities Feed the Need from 5-7 p.m.
Dec. 3	Wednesday Night Meal & 30/30/30 from 5-7:30 p.m.
Dec. 10	Wednesday Night Meal & 30/30/30 from 5-7:30 p.m.
Dec. 17	Christmas Caroling in Clayton at 6:30 p.m.
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve Communion Service at 5 p.m.
Dec. 31	No Wednesday Night activities

Church-wide Thanksgiving meal is Wednesday night

If you signed up for the church-wide Thanksgiving meal on Wednesday, Nov. 19, don't forget to bring your favorite salad, side-dish and/or dessert to share. Food may be delivered to the Fellowship Hall after 3 p.m. on Wednesday. The church cook team is providing ham, turkey, dressing, gravy, rolls and beverages.

The Thanksgiving meal begins at 5:30 p.m.



Support the CDC this Christmas by sponsoring a luminary

On Christmas Eve, luminaries are placed around the church to welcome the Light of the World into our hearts and minds. Each luminary represents support for the Child Development Center and we encourage you to do so again this year by sponsoring a luminary for \$5.

This year, donations will go toward the re-surfacing and upgrading of the CDC playground.

Luminaries may be purchased in memory

or in honor of someone. Checks are welcome and donations may be made online at fbcclaytonnc.org. In the memo line, please indicate if your gift is in memory or in honor of someone.

The deadline to sponsor a CDC luminary is Sunday, December 7.

Tara Senarian, CDC Director, and the entire staff appreciates all the support First Baptist Church Clayton provides.

Merry Christmas!

Memorials and Honorariums

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

Judy Cox by the Faith Sunday School Class
Billy Niles Harrell by Gerald and Glenda Toler
Russell Murray and Harold Pope by Bucky Coats

Organ Fund in Memory of

Judy Cox by Diane and Chris Pearce
Bernard F. McLeod by Josephine Norris
Judy Cox by Jo Ann Hardee
Judy Cox by Jay Vinson
Judy Cox by Gerald and Glenda Toler
Judy Cox by Joe and Linda Hester
Judy Cox by Anne Abene

Youth Ministry Fund in Memory of

James Richard Hart, Sr. and Papa Pope by John Brooks and Lauren Rasor

Youth Ministry Fund in Honor of

Anne Abene by the Hope Sunday School Class

Children's Ministry Fund in Memory of

Judy Cox by John and Dolores Bagley

WMU in Memory of

Judy Cox by Bill and Lou Woodard

A Thankful Heart

Continued from page 1

I wonder, what memories will our children and grandchildren have of November in years to come? Will they be of sitting around the table listening to the stories grandpa tells or grandma sharing a recipe?

Will they remember a sincere prayer of thanksgiving for how God has been with family members during a difficult time that year? Or will their memories be about Black Friday shopping, trying to get to the store before the latest and greatest gadgets are sold out? Will it be about Cyber-Monday shopping?

I don't know what Thanksgiving memories my children and grandchildren may remember. Tonight, as I write this, I am thankful for my Grandfather's shoulder that I leaned on to watch Red Skelton. I am thankful that Freddie taught me to be thankful for what I have, not what I don't. I am thankful that God has blessed me with this wonderful family called church. We serve an awesome God, always worthy to be praised.

Weekly Reports

Baptisms this Year.....	10	New Members.....	22
Worship Attendance			
Sunday, November 9.....	179	Sunday, November 2.....	176
Sunday School Attendance			
Sunday, November 9.....	91	Sunday, November 2.....	141
General Fund Giving			
Sunday, November 9.....	\$23,642	Sunday, November 2.....	\$12,208
Weekly Needs.....	\$16,659		