



The Outlook

First Baptist Church Clayton

Show • Tell
Grow • Serve

January 11, 2026

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God will reveal his vision for us

By Dr. Len Keever
Pastor

How many of you have made a New Year's resolution? We make resolutions because after having evaluated where we are, we want things to be better. Perhaps the bathroom scales have opened our eyes as to why it seems our clothes are shrinking.



Maybe a recent trip to the doctor's office has convinced you about something you need to change about your diet. Maybe it's something deeper that's churning and you want 2026 to be a better year so you vow to add something to your daily routine that will bring about the improvement you want to see. Regardless, resolutions are generally made because there is something about us, we don't like, something we know could be better if we just make the decision and follow the plan.

We aren't satisfied with the way things are because we know this is not as good as it gets. Where does this idea come from? Christian philosophers like C. S. Lewis tell us that our inner desire to want things to be better comes from a deep place that draws us toward God's perfection. We long for

faithfulness, peace, love, joy, community, all those wonderful things we would use to describe a relationship with God, because God is drawing us toward that existence.

Lewis said that if this desire for goodness and wholeness were not real, not worth searching for, then the urge for God's ideal would have died out in us many generations ago. But because we keep longing for better, because we have hope for better days, because we keep searching, it is proof that God is inspiring us to get there.

Our longing for better comes from that place in us where the Holy Spirit dwells. God is behind our desire for unity. God is behind our desire for grace and peace. God is behind our longing for forgiveness and our hope for eternal life.

These are evidence of God within us, that we would long for righteousness means God is calling us to be righteous. That we want to be loved means God is calling us to love, to care, to be compassionate, to be merciful. Our deepest longings often reveal where God is leading us.

As 2026 begins, let us remember that the desire for improvement, the longing for peace, and the hope for a better world is evidence that God is revealing God's vision for creation. Let's not be satisfied with how things are. Let's pray that God reveals to us what can be.

Improve your balance, health with Bada Bling Ballet

Do you want to improve your balance, your health, experience community, and have fun? Bada Bling Ballet Balance and Beyond Class for female Senior Adults starts Monday, January 19 from 10 - 11 a.m. in the Youth room located on the second floor.

There is no cost and the class is restricted to 10. To register, contact Stacie Moor at Bada Bling Ballet through cell or text at 919-763-5738.

Learn about Realm on Wednesday night

As we begin 2026, we wanted to offer our congregation and regular attendees an opportunity to learn more about Realm and how to perform tasks such as registering, looking up fellow members addresses, email addresses and phone numbers and communicating with church members, committees, ministries and classes.

On Wednesday, January 14, Keith Blackley will lead a “How To” session on Realm, the church’s data base and communications software tool. The Realm session will begin at 6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall following the 6 p.m. Praise and Worship Service.

Keith will share information about Realm’s capabilities and its easy to use format. You will also have the opportunity to ask questions. We look forward to seeing you Wednesday night.



Weekly Reports

Worship Attendance

| | | | |
|------------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|
| Sunday, January 4..... | 209 | Sunday, December 28..... | 159 |
|------------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|

Sunday School Attendance

| | | | |
|------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|
| Sunday, January 4..... | 144 | Sunday, December 28..... | 95 |
|------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|

General Fund Giving

| | | | |
|------------------------|----------|---------------------------|----------|
| Sunday, January 4..... | \$26,639 | Sunday, Dec. 21 & 28..... | \$35,018 |
| 2026 Weekly Needs..... | \$17,470 | | |

Missions Council – Matthew 25:35 update

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in.”

The Missions Council thanks you for your generous donations during our Matthew 25:35 focus. We were able to provide trunk-loads full of food as well as monetary donations to Clayton Area Ministries and With Love from Jesus.

As we enter the winter season, the need is still great. The Missions Council will con-



tinue collecting donations of food for both of these organizations.

Right now, there is an urgent need for peanut butter and jelly at CAM. Of course, donations of any non-perishable food items are

always appreciated.

Thank you for your continued generosity in meeting the needs of our community.

Be the Hands and Feet of God by serving others through Baptist Men missions

First Baptist Church welcomes all men to join us in missions for this year. We will have many opportunities to be the Hands and Feet of God.

Some of our missions coming up this year will be a blood drive, flood victims rebuild in the mountains, and cooking for community outreach.

This is just to name a few missions.

If you would like to join us and are not receiving our emails, please contact Ricky Blackmon at 919-524-5197.



The Baptist Men hard at work on a wheelchair ramp.

?? Prison Ministry, Anyone ??

“When did we see you sick, or in prison, and visit you?

The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’” – Matthew 25:39-40

The Gladys Creech Long Termer Social Ministry has served the women of the North Carolina Correctional Institute in Raleigh for over 45 years. We are always on the lookout for new volunteers. The group visits the women's prison on the 2nd Monday of the month from 4:15 to 5:45 p.m. for a time of devotion, prayer, fellowship with fun (games, art, puzzles, crafts, music and more). Our primary mission is to shine the light and love of Jesus. If you are interested in joining this mission group, please contact Susan Parker at sjp318@nc.rr.com or call 919-333-8394.

Memorials and Honorariums

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE

General Fund in Memory of

Dean Grattidge, Helen Ellerbe and Jean Wheeler by Joyce and Julie Nixon
Dean Temple by Donald and JoAnn Horton
Helen Ellerbe by Peter and Mary Hayes
Dean Temple by Judy and Jeneal Tender
Dean Temple by Rolly Bannister
Helen Ellerbe by Jean Bryant
Dean Temple by Eddie and Darleen Waldroup
Helen Ellerbe by Jo Ann Hardee
Helen Ellerbe by Nancy Blinson
Dottie Brezeale, Helen Ellerbe, Judy Cox, Dean Temple and Jean Wheeler by Lexene Lee
Dean Temple by John and Dolores Bagley
Helen Ellerbe by Emory and Jo Howard
Helen Ellerbe and Dean Temple by Hope and Earl Johnson
Helen Ellerbe and Judy Cox by Ayden and Betty Lee
Helen Ellerbe by Mike and Kathryn Fleming
Helen Ellerbe by Jim and Betty Goodwin
Helen Ellerbe by Dave and Cathy Carver
Helen Ellerbe by Bill and Barbara Williams
Judy Cox, Helen Ellerbe and Ava Spence by Ricky and Linda Blackmon
Those we lost in 2025 by Ricky and Linda Blackmon
Helen Ellerbe by the North Carolina Farm Bureau
Helen Ellerbe by Donna and Cecil Lee
Helen Ellerbe by Frankie and Tracy Tant
Helen Ellerbe by Jack and Judy Coats
Dean Temple and Helen Ellerbe by David and Pam Outlaw
Jean Wheeler, Dean Temple and Helen Ellerbe by Bucky Coats
Helen Ellerbe by Robert and Sandra Catherwood
Ava Spence, Judy Cox and Helen Ellerbe by Theresa Johnson
Judy Cox, Helen Ellerbe and Dean Temple by Vann and Lynn Martin
Dean Temple by Hunter and Judy Thompson
Helen Ellerbe by the Bill O'Neal Mission Group
Helen Ellerbe by Terry and Katherine Parrish
Helen Ellerbe by John, Jr. and Martha Zollicoffer
Helen Ellerbe by George and Harriet Hoyle
Dean Temple and Jean Wheeler by Jim and Judy Nappier

General Fund in Honor of

The Homebound Ministry Team and the Piecemakers Ministry by Bucky Coats
James Faggart by the Basic Sunday School Class
Lou Woodard by the Bill O'Neal Mission Group

Youth Ministry Fund in Honor of

FBCC Youth and Leaders by Ricky and Elizabeth Waddell
Dean Temple and Judy Cox by Curtis and Elaine Moore
Ellen Ward by Chris Pearson

Organ Fund in Memory of

Helen Ellerbe, Betty Bell, George Bell, Tony Bell, Delia Brown, Roy Brown,
Lala Bell, Rudene Poole and Pearl Moore by Paul and Bronna Greer
Dean Temple by Jean Bryant
Dean Temple, Jean Wheeler and Helen Ellerbe by Chris and Diane Pearce
Helen Ellerbe by Teresa Calton
Ava Spence, Joyce Blackley, Bernard McLeod and Helen Ellerbe by Walter and Jill Rasor
Rudolph and Belle Allen by Steve and Gwen Canady and Rudy Allen, Jr.
Helen Ellerbe by Ann Abene

Dottie Brezeale by C.P. Brezeale

Organ Fund in Honor of

Jackie Smith by Ricky and Sherry Smith

Music Fund in Memory of

Helen Ellerbe by Curtis and Elaine Moore
First Baptist WMU in Memory of
Jean Wheeler by Gerald and Glenda Toler
Jean Wheeler by Jean Bryant
Jean Wheeler by John and Dolores Bagley