



The Outlook

First Baptist Church Clayton

Show • Tell
Grow • Serve

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The Kingdom of God is among you

By Dr. Len Keever
Pastor

In my devotions the other day I was led to Luke 17:20-21. It reads, “Once Jesus was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would arrive, and he answered, “The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed, nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There it is!’ For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you.”

The Pharisees wanted a date on the calendar, so they’d know to look for it when it appeared. Jesus basically said, it’s already here and you’re missing it. In fact, you are working against it.

I find comfort and challenge in this verse. With all the “stuff” happening around us, it is easy to look for a future event and miss the fact that God’s work is already taking place.

I think back to Elijah in 1 Kings 19. God was not in the earthquake, in the wind, or the fire. God was in the silence speaking in a calm, reassuring voice leading Elijah to truth, letting him know he was not alone.

I used to have a pastor who’d often say during his sermons, “Are you listening?” Mr. Usher wanted us to pay attention. He wanted us to hear something he believed was important. Together these verses lead

me to ask, are we listening to God or are we paying attention to the storm?

With all the noise, I feel the need to listen for the calm and reassuring voice of Jesus. I am drawn to want to look for where Jesus is at work and to follow him. His kingdom is present.

It is wherever someone gives drink to one who is thirsty, or food to the hungry.

It is where those who are sick are cared for and where the prisoner – the one who is held captive not only behind bars, but also by systems and addictions – is visited.

Jesus said if we do it to the least among us, we are doing it for him (Matthew 25:31f). In Luke 4:18-19, when Jesus preached his inaugural sermon he said, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

The kingdom of God is present among us. Perhaps if we can’t see it, it’s because we are not looking where we should be looking.





First Baptist Youth celebrate the “Souper Bowl”

This year it's Souper Bowl Wednesday; proceeds go to Clayton Area Ministries

First Baptist Church Clayton Youth Acteens and Challengers will be hosts to the Souper Bowl Supper on Wednesday, February 4 from 5:15 - 6:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Join us for an evening of hearty and delicious soup and tasty sandwiches provided by Baptist Men, and delightful desserts provided by the Women's Missionaryt Union (WMU).

The praise and worship band will perform at 6 p.m. to provide entertainment while you eat. There is no charge for dinner. Donations will be collected to help support Clayton Area Ministries (CAM). Join us in fellowship for a delicious dinner and a great cause.

Note: This is a time and day change from the traditional and annual fundraising lunch usually held on Super Bowl Sunday.

Emily Carole Farmer, Barrett Long to sing February 28

Mark your calendars for Saturday, February 28 at 5 p.m. Barrett Long and Emily Carole Farmer will represent First Baptist Church Clayton in a Community Church Youth Choir concert at Wake Forest Baptist Church

They will sing “Crown Him Lord of All,” “This Little Light of Mine,” “Noel,” “Sing

a Jubilant Song,” and “Be Thou My Vision” all in three and four part harmony. We look forward to this wonderful concert and hope you will join us to support our youth musicians.

Wake Forest Baptist Church is located at 107 East South Ave., Wake Forest, NC 27587.



Keep an eye out for emails

With frigid temperatures, and snow and ice in the weekend forecast, it is likely that Sunday Worship and Sunday School will be canceled. Keep a check on your inbox for notifications. Cancellations will also be listed on Facebook, local media outlets and television stations.

Basic SS Class scheduled to serve doughnuts

Weather permitting, the Basic Sunday School Class will serve doughnuts, coffee, milk and juice in the Fellowship Hall following the morning worship service on January 25. Stop by before your Sunday School class meets for a sweet treat and social time with your church family.



Bereavement and Casserole Ministry teams assist families in need

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 Deacons and are led by active Deacons. They are Prayer, Bereavement, Casserole, Celebration, Home-bound, Hospital Visitation, Transportation and Visitor/New Member. This week our focus is on the Bereavement and the Casserole teams.

The Bereavement Ministry team assists families in time of loss. Once the Bereavement team is notified of the death of a church member or family member, they make contact with the family to show Christian love and support. Team members also attend visitations and memorial services, and assist the family and church staff on the day of the service.

In the days after, the Bereavement team also sends sympathy cards and a series of books on grief and loss during the first year following their loss.

The Casserole Ministry team utilizes a prayer list and information from church staff to locate those with special needs. Meals are provided for church members and their families who have been hospitalized for surgery and illness. On occasion, meals are provided for those who just need a loving hand.

The Ministry teams at First Baptist Church Clayton 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 chairman Ann Austin at 919-333-6791 or ddhd@aol.com.

There is a bulletin board with information on all eight Ministry teams in the hallway near the south vestibule to the sanctuary. If the Lord leads you to join a Ministry team, there is a place on the vestibule where you can write down your name and contact information. A team member will be in touch.

30/30/30 Lineup: Something for Everyone

There are four new offerings for the second 30 minutes of the Wednesday night 30/30/30 activities. At 6:30 p.m., our staff of pastors and ministers have prepared in-depth studies on topics for people of all-ages.

Dr. Len Keever leads a study of Eugene Peterson's book *A Long Obedience In the Same Direction*. The class will focus on the Psalms of Accent and the difference in being a pilgrim and a tourist as we journey in faith. They meet in the church Conference Room.

Rev. Stephen Nance leads a Bible study called *The Word Made Flesh: Jesus as Revealed in John's Gospel*. His study focuses on Jesus' "sayings" and "signs" that reveal his person, nature, character and mission. They meet in the Basic Sunday School classroom.

Rev. Keeley Tarkington leads a study on the book "*Practicing the Way: Be with Jesus, Become like Jesus, Do as He Did*" by *New York Times Best Selling* author, John Mark Comer. This book offers nuggets of wisdom, thought provoking topics, and practical steps that will inspire you to not resign yourself to just growing another year older, but motivate you to take steps to mature and become more like Jesus. They meet in the Faith Classroom.

Rev. Stephanie Parker leads a series on faith foundation topics for parents of young children. Discussions revolve around the faith community and how parents can walk alongside others who are equally dedicated to raising their children in the Christian faith. They meet in the Salt classroom.

Memorials and Honorariums

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE

General Fund in Memory of

Gardner Temple and Henry Thomas Bedford by David and Nancy Turlington
Gardner Temple by Tom and Ida Mayes

Gardner Temple by Wakelon High School Class of 1958

Dean Temple, Dottie Brezeale, Helen Ellerbe and Jean Wheeler by John and Lynn Gibson
Gardner and Dean Temple, Jean Wheeler and Helen Ellerbe by Jay and Kathy Woodard
Helen Ellerbe by Martha McCullen

Women's Missionary Union (WMU) in Memory of

Helen Ellerbe and Dean Temple by Lowell and Dorothy Harris

Lottie Moon Fund in Memory of

Jean Wheeler and Dottie Brezeale by Lowell and Dorothy Harris

Baptist Men in Memory of

Gardner Temple by Carol Gilbert

Organ Fund in Memory of

Gardner Temple and Helen Ellerbe by Billy Parrish

Weekly Reports

Worship Attendance

Sunday, January 18.....141 Sunday, January 11.....212

Sunday School Attendance

Sunday, January 18.....96 Sunday, January 11.....140

General Fund Giving

Sunday, January 18.....\$22,211 Sunday, January 11.....\$24,392
2026 Weekly Needs.....\$17,470