



The Outlook

First Baptist Church Clayton

Show • Tell
Grow • Serve

February 15, 2026

Volume 49 Number 6

The Promise of Salvation is Real

By Dr. Len Keever
Pastor

The season of Lent is emotional. It is like entering a dark tunnel and walking toward the light at the end while trying not to stumble on the unseen obstacles that lie in the way.



Even the weather seems to speak to its rhythm. In the beginning, the nights are longer, the landscape is gray, the weather is cold and dreary. Such is the mood of a repentant heart. Such is the real-

ization of one's lostness, the awareness of how far one has drifted from the path.

In the season of Lent, one wakes in the dark realizing the costly weight of missteps and compromises. It is an awakening that moves a person to repentance, confession, the search to find oneself back on the path from which they'd strayed, back on the journey to follow Jesus.

In Lent we shiver, not so much from the chill in the air, but from the knowledge of just how far we have drifted from the commitment we made to Jesus to love others as he has loved us. In Lent, the shrieking, mocking howls of our failures call out re-

mindings us that we cannot do this by ourselves.

In Lent we rush to catch up with Jesus as he moves toward the cross. We sprint toward him and as we do the days get longer, the sun shines more brightly and flowers begin to add color to the landscape; buds on the trees announce that God is not finished, God is actively renewing creation's beauty.

As Winter wanes and Spring is born, hope in us is refreshed. Watching how God creates and re-creates warming nature with the sun, bathing the earth with rain – we know the promise of our salvation is real.

As we ponder once more the narratives of Jesus' passion, think deeply about the crucifixion and sense the wonder of the resurrection, we discover our faith is being refreshed and our feet are more firmly fixed.

The journey of Lent is a pilgrimage. We are not tourists. We are not visitors. We are members of God's family. We are residents of Christ's kingdom, not vacationers. The season of Lent is an opportunity to renew our relationship with Jesus, to seek forgiveness and rededicate ourselves to Christ. To return to where we should have been all along.

On February 18 at 6:30 p.m., we will com

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On Friday, February 6, the RAs held their annual Derby Car Race and lock-in. 5th graders Kai Eason and Austin Harrell were the race winners, with Kai placing first and Austin Harrell coming in second overall. All the boys did a great job preparing their cars and making the race fun and encouraging. We are grateful for our RAs and their dedicated leaders.

So we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. – 1st Thessalonians 2:8



Blood drive set for February 27

The American Red Cross and First Baptist Church Clayton will hold their third annual Blood Drive on Friday, February 27 from 12 noon to 5 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

According to the Red Cross, local blood supplies are severely low. Since Thanksgiving, supplies have been depleted by 35% due to historic levels of flu cases, the Christmas holiday and weather. Please consider donating blood. It could save a life.

Call Terry in the church office at 919-553-4161 to make an appointment to give blood. You may also use the link or the QR code to sign up.

<https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/drive-results?order=DATE&range=10&zip-Sponsor=FirstBaptistClayton>





The GAs and their leaders held their annual lock-in on Friday night, January 23. It was a night filled with fellowship, fun with friends, reminders of God's love and a dance party of course. In GAs, these girls learn what it means to be on mission for Christ, putting the example of Jesus into practice. We are grateful for our GAs and their leaders.

Join us Sunday, February 22 at WLFJ

On Sunday, February 22, First Baptist Church Clayton will take its once-monthly turn to serve those in need of a helping hand at the With Love From Jesus house.

If you would like to serve, please let Rudy Oliver know as soon as possible and come to the WLFJ house at 4 p.m. for sign-in and instruction. We will distribute food, clothing and share the Gospel until around 7 p.m. You can also bring any items you would like to donate to the ministry.

They are currently in need of nonperishable items. WLFJ often has over 80 guests come for food and clothing items.

The WLFJ house is located at the southeast corner of West 2nd and South Robertson streets. Rudy can be reached at 919-271-1178, or email him at reholston@gmail.com.

Young adults invited to Echo

What is Echo? It is a gathering of younger adults (and those who think young) sharing what they've heard in the worship service. It is an opportunity to share what continues to reverberate after the benediction. Younger adults face different challenges when it comes to building relationships in church. We are offering time to drink coffee, get to know one another, and discuss issues that are unique to their lives. If you want to come and check it out, we meet in the Fellowship Hall after the Sunday morning worship service. We look forward to seeing you!

— Dr. Len Keever

Promise of Salvation

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memorate the beginning of Lent with an Ash Wednesday service. The wearing of Ash is a sign of contrition, a symbol of heartfelt sorrow for our failures, our sins, the things in our lives for which we are deeply sorry.

We begin our pilgrimage through Lent with the realization of how much we need forgiveness, and how only Jesus can save us. We start with honest confession and remorse. Only Jesus can make us new again. We cannot do this on our own.

“If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” – 1 John 1:9

Memorials and Honorariums

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE

General Fund in Memory of

- Jean Lee, Jackie Fussell and Betty Matthews by Tom and Ida Mayes
- Ricky Dean Barbour, Jean Lee and Betty Matthews by Paul and Bronna Greer
- Gardner and Dean Temple, Jean Lee, George Lovering, Jackie Fussell, Betty Matthews, Emily Morgan and Ricky Dean Barbour by Andy and Gloria Pleasant
- Betty Matthews, George Lovering, Jean Lee and Jackie Fussell by Lexene Lee
- Helen Ellerbe by the Farm Bureau Insurance Group
- Betty Matthews by Jerry and Elaine Davis
- Jean Lee and Jackie Fussell by Jim and Judy Nappier
- Betty Matthews and Ricky Dean Barbour by Jiles and Kim Harrell
- Gardner Temple and Jean Lee by Vann, Lynn and Adam Martin
- Jean Lee and George Lovering by David and Pam Outlaw

Organ Fund in Memory of

- Ricky Dean Barbour and Betty Matthews by Gerald and Glenda Toler
- Jean Wheeler and Dean Temple by Emory and Jo Howard
- Jean Lee by Carol Gilbert
- Dottie Brezeale by Phil and Nancy Parker
- Jean Lee by Kenny and Vickie Adams

Baptist Men's Fund in Memory of

- Betty Matthews by Chris and Diane Pearce
- George Lovering by Rudy and Edwina Oliver
- George Lovering by Lowell and Dorothy Harris

Senior Adult Fund in Memory of

- George Lovering and Gardner Temple by John and Dolores Bagley

WMU (Women's Missionary Union) in Memory of

- Jean Lee and Jackie Fussell by Lowell and Dorothy Harris

Youth Mission Trip Scholarship Fund in Memory of

- Chuck Turlington by Gerald and Glenda Toler

Heck Jones Fund in Memory of

- Betty Matthews, Jean Wheeler and George Lovering by David and Nancy Turlington

Youth Ministry Fund in Memory of

- Jean Lee, Jackie Fussell, Ricky Dean Barbour and George Lovering by Curtis and Elaine Moore

Weekly Reports

Worship Attendance

Sunday, February 8.....196 Sunday, February 1.....no service

Sunday School Attendance

Sunday, February 8.....156 Sunday, February 1.....no classes

General Fund Giving

Sunday, February 8.....\$23,971 Sunday, Jan. 25 and Feb. 1.....\$11,276
2026 Weekly Needs.....\$17,470