



The Outlook

First Baptist Church Clayton

Show • Tell
Grow • Serve

March 22, 2026

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Discover God's treasures

By Dr. Len Keever
Pastor

Yesterday, Stewart called me with a fun invitation. On the top floor of the church, hidden away in a Building and Grounds closet, under boxes and old papers, is an old safe that has not been opened in years.



Today (March 17), a technician from the safe company will arrive to open the safe. Will he use gadgets like James Bond? Will he use a stethoscope like Richard Dawson in Hogan's Her-

ros? What wonders will we find? The anticipation has captured my imagination.

The invitation to observe the opening of the safe reminded me of one of my favorite stories in the Old Testament, the story of Josiah's Reform. In 2 Kings 22:1-23:25 we read the story of Josiah who became king at eight years of age. In his eighteenth year, Josiah sent for the high priest Hilkiah to add up the silver that had been given to the house of the Lord.

When Hilkiah reported back to the king he informed Josiah that in his search, he found a scroll of scripture that had been hidden away. It was a book of the law that had not

been read in a long, long time.

Josiah was intrigued. He had the book of the law read to him and when he heard it, he was so moved that he tore his clothes in repentance for the nation, for himself, for his reign over Israel. He was so convicted by God's word that he called the people together to hear the word of God, the law, the ethic of the Lord being read to them.

What was discovered in the scroll was much more valuable than the silver, more valuable than anything material. It had the ability to do what no king could do, change the hearts of the people. The reading of the scroll brought about reform in Israel, a revival of worship, a rededication to God.

God's word has the power to not only change a person, but it can also change the direction of a nation when its people humble themselves and pray. Do you remember that familiar verse in 2 Chronicles 12:14, "If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

My first thought when I read the Bible isn't how I can use it to change someone else. My first thought is how it speaks to me and

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Palm Sunday service on March 29

Join us and bring a friend on Sunday, March 29 at the 9:30 a.m. worship service to celebrate Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

This special Palm Sunday worship service will begin with a procession of palms by the children of the church.

Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

– Zechariah 9:9

The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" – Matthew 21:9



Safe cracking reveals good news and not so good news

The not so good news is that there wasn't a gold bar in the old church safe. In fact, it was empty. The good news is that a combination was discovered and the safe can be used once again.

Matthew Moore from Talton Safe Company in Raleigh was at the church Tuesday, March 17 to help us open up an old safe that had not been used in decades.

It turned out the safe was already open so Michael didn't have to crack it, but he was able to use his locksmith skills to help us determine the long lost combination.

The safe and all our church financial records will eventually be moved from an upstairs closet to a newly built downstairs space. The move is necessary to make room for the new organ.

Stewart McLeod, budget and finance chair, Tom Mayes, church treasurer, Ginger Jones, church historian, Rev. Keeley Tarkington and Dr. Len Keever were on hand to witness Matthew's magic hands. The safe was manufactured in 1906 by the Hall's Safe Company of Cincinnati, Ohio.



Ginger Jones inspects the church safe

God's treasures

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can change me. Josiah's reform began with the king being moved by God's word and culminated in his sharing his discovery with the nation.

Each week in worship and Bible study we can share with each other what God is showing us, the discoveries, and the insights we glean from listening to scripture. What a wonderful gift it is to discover this treasure. I don't know what we will find in the safe this afternoon, but I know what it said to my heart and I am thankful. Let us mine the treasure that is God's word. May it speak truth to us.



Senior Adult Banquet

Last Sunday the Youth at First Baptist Church Clayton fed and entertained the senior adults of our church. Pictured at the top are the youth servers. Above, Braxton Andrews (with bow tie) pauses for a moment with his grandparents Ricky and Elizabeth Waddell (back), Doug and Sandra Phillips (front), Jeff and Jackie Tarkington (left), and Ted and Terry Williams (right).

This year 45 youth and 30 parent volunteers honored 107 senior adults. In addition to the delicious meal, the youth presented a wonderful show entitled "A Night at the Oscars."



On Wednesdays at 12 noon during Lent, and each day during Holy Week (March 30-April 3), Dr. Keever will be live-streaming a short midday devotion. These devotions will be streamed the same as our Sunday Morning services. Please make plans to join us as we journey toward Easter together.

Memorials and Honorariums

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE

General Fund in Memory of

- Janice Murphy by the Bill O'Neal Mission Group
- Helen Ellerbe by Perry and Jean Harris
- Bobbie Sue Batts by Jim and Judy Nappier

General Fund in Honor of

- The Homebound Ministry Team by Art and Frankie Holder

Organ Fund in Memory of

- Geoffrey Oliver by Gerald and Glenda Toler

Youth Ministry Fund in Memory of

- Geoffrey Oliver by Bill and Lou Woodard

Annie Armstrong Fund in Honor of

- Lexene Lee by Joyce T. Lee

Lottie Moon Offering Fund in Honor of

- Jean Allen by the Jean Allen WMU Group

Senior Adult Fund in Memory of

- Mr. and Mrs. Charles Beddingfield, Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Lee, Mr. and Mrs. Elton Pittman and Mr. and Mrs. Ray Hardee by Joyce T. Lee

I would like to thank you all for your prayers, calls and food since I was diagnosed with Mantle Cell Lymphoma last October.

Recently other issues have affected my health. I am currently in Indiana with my daughter, Georganne. She is a career nurse and now a VP with Deaconess Health System. Please continue to pray for me, my family and medical team.
- Love, Bucky Coats



Weekly Reports

| | | | |
|--------------------------|----------|----------------------|----------|
| Baptisms this Year..... | 0 | New Members..... | 7 |
| Worship Attendance | | | |
| Sunday, March 8..... | 193 | Sunday, March 8..... | 174 |
| Sunday School Attendance | | | |
| Sunday, March 8..... | 135 | Sunday, March 8..... | 129 |
| General Fund Giving | | | |
| Sunday, March 15..... | \$28,114 | Sunday, March 8..... | \$22,163 |
| 2026 Weekly Needs..... | \$17,470 | | |