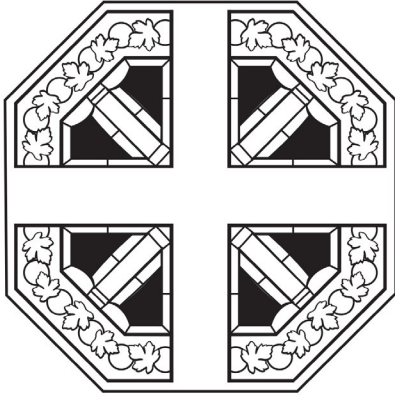




The Outlook

First Baptist Church Clayton

Show • Tell
Grow • Serve

July 19, 2026

Volume 49 Number 27

Prayer is a duty and a blessing

By Dr. Len Keever
Pastor

I love ah-ha moments, those times when some revelation occurs and it's like scales falling from your eyes and you gain a new insight into an old story. These things can happen any time.



Better said, they happen on God's time when the Holy Spirit reveals something that enriches your faith, deepens your relationship with scripture, your understanding of the Biblical narrative.

They happen when an old story in the Bible sheds new light on current opportunities.

One of those happened Monday night during the Bible study at Vacation Bible school. The lesson was on Queen Esther and her courage in speaking to the king, revealing that she was Jewish and pleading for the welfare and safety of her people. Esther is an example of God using both women and men to protect the Hebrew children.

Like with Joseph in Egypt, God used her in a mighty way placing her at the right

place at the right moment. I have admired her courage and faith for a long time. Studying the story again, it was exciting to see how it speaks to one of our most important duties as a church.

In the 4th chapter of Esther, when Mordechi convinces Esther to speak to the king about the plight of the Jews, she asks that all the Jews in Susa join her in a three-day period of fasting and prayer so that God would give her the courage and strength to face King Ahasuerus.

The importance of Esther's prayer cannot be overlooked. She knew that only by God's wisdom would she have what she needed to speak to the king. She also knew that her prayers alone would not be sufficient.

She needed to know that the entire Jewish community in Susa was also praying to God for her strength. She needed to know that when she spoke to the king, she was not alone.

Following my sharing the story with the children, Cathy showed them a picture of Mina and Gennady Podgaitsky, two of our friends who are CBF missionaries. They've served for years in Ukraine but

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VBS students find their strength with God

We have wrapped another meaningful Vacation Bible School at First Baptist Church Clayton. Snowball Mountain Challenge was all about finding our strength with God.

Through Bible stories like Joseph's gift of interpreting dreams, Esther's courageous stand to protect her people and the widow's willingness to give her all, our participants learned that when we begin with God as the source of our strength, we can share our gifts, be brave and give our all.

In science, crafts, games, music and Bible Story, the stories were brought to life in creative ways. VBS does not happen without the dedication of incredible volunteers. Like our focus lessons each night, our volunteers showed up, demonstrating divine strength as they shared their gifts in their assigned areas, showing bravery in working with lively children and giving it their all every night.

From the bottom of my VBS-loving heart, THANK YOU volunteers, for showing us all what it looks like to find our strength in God!

— Peace, Rev. Stephanie Parker

FBCC welcomes the Shaw family

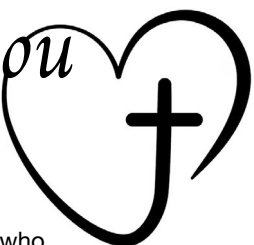
On July 12, Brandon and Katie Shaw, and their son, Robbie, were welcomed into the First Baptist Church Clayton family. Brandon joins by transfer of letter and Katie is awaiting Baptism. FBCC looks forward to walking alongside the Shaws in their faith journey.



I would like to thank Dr. Len Keever and the First Baptist Church Men who loaded a U-Haul truck for me. I have moved to Boonville, Indiana to live with my daughter, Georganne, and her husband, Peter Gairhan. I continue to receive chemo-treatments for Stage 3 Mantle Cell Lymphoma cancer every eight weeks.

Thanks also to all First Baptist Church Clayton members who continue to pray for me, have sent cards, called, etc.

– Love, Bucky Coats

thank you 

Memorials and Honorariums

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE

General Fund in Memory of

Doris Grissom by Lexene Lee

Doris Grissom by Julia Blauvelt

Doris Grissom by Robert Grissom

General Fund in Honor of

Curtis and Elaine Moore by Joe and Linda Hester

Billie Hardee Sunday School Class to serve doughnuts

The Billie Hardee Sunday School Class will serve doughnuts, coffee, milk and juice in the Fellowship Hall following the morning worship service on July 19. Stop by before your Sunday School class meets for a sweet treat and social time with your church family.



Prayer is a duty

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now, because of the war, have had to relocate to Poland to assist the Ukrainian people from there.

“When we pray for them,” she told the children, “We are like those in Susa who prayed for Esther.” It’s true, when we pray for those who go to do God’s work, we become an important part of that work.

Praying for the ministries of the church is an important responsibility we all share. Personally, I have long known that when I go to visit someone in the hospital, I am not alone. I go with the prayers of those who pray for me.

People who are facing surgeries, healings and difficult situations often tell me how they have felt the prayers of others in their circumstances. When Esther addressed the king, she was not alone, she had God’s presence with her, and she had the prayerful support of the community who joined her in seeking God’s guidance for her. When we are prayed for, we are not alone either.

Please continue to pray for the church staff, our teachers and volunteers. Pray for those who work in the Child Development Center. We are blessed when we are prayed for.

Weekly Reports

Baptisms this Year.....	4	New Members.....	12
Worship Attendance			
Sunday, July 12.....	192	Sunday, July 5.....	145
Sunday School Attendance			
Sunday, July 12.....	148	Sunday, July 5 (joint).....	120
General Fund Giving			
Sunday, July 12.....	\$19,503	Sunday, July 5.....	\$18,553
2026 Weekly Needs.....	\$17,470		