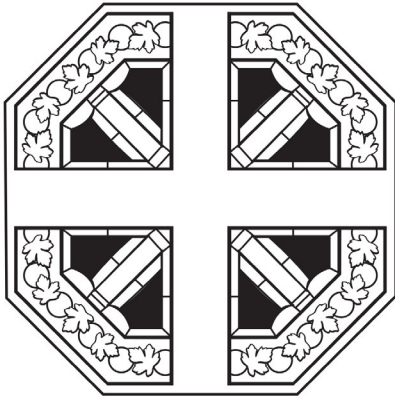




The Outlook

First Baptist Church Clayton

Show • Tell
Grow • Serve

August 9, 2026

Volume 49 Number 30

God loves us all, no matter what

By Dr. Len Kever
Pastor

I was traveling to Rex to see a member there. The rain was pouring down. Visibility was diminished with the mist being thrown up by the early morning traffic. The glare was strong.

The rain clouds were so dark that wearing sunglasses didn't help with seeing. The lanes were full. Mostly everyone was going at a safe speed. Safe arrival was on everyone's mind.... well mostly everyone.



A dark pickup truck ran up behind me. The fact that there were no headlights on meant it caught me by surprise. My first thoughts were how dangerous it was to travel without headlights in that downpour, in heavy traffic.

It pulled out in front of a car to my left to pass me. As it went by, I noticed that the front end had been damaged – probably from driving without headlights.

As it passed, I heard what sounded like a motorcycle. "Who would drive a motorcycle in this rain?" I thought to myself. It was not a motorcycle at all. It was a car.

The driver driving as if it were at the Char-

lotte Motor Speedway on a sunny afternoon weaving in and out of traffic without regard to the others on the road.

That's when I noticed a tractor trailer barreling down the left lane. It must not have been raining over there. He was flashing his lights for cars to get out of his way. Cars merged into the middle right lane to let him pass.

The break lights ahead made it look like Christmas. It also increased the glare. I heard myself say out loud, "what's the rush, we are all just trying to get there safely?"

That's when the thought occurred how church must sometimes look like a rush hour morning commute. Everyone trying to get to the same place many with kindness and respect for others who are growing in Christ, longing for the peace of eternal life, longing for safety and comfort on the journey – and some rushing on without respect for others.

Some dart in and out distracting the flow. A few bully their way ahead like that semi thinking they deserve wider lanes and more consideration. There are even those who pull off the road and hesitate, waiting for the urge to hit them that it is safe to travel again.

Still, we are all trying to get to the same

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God loves us all

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place. And God loves us all.

God loves the ones who are patient, the ones in a hurry, even the ones who have not learned to take others into consideration. God loves the ones who are kind and make room for others to fit in.

God loves the ones who for whatever reasons pull off and wait. God loves those whose life seems to stall out in storms and those whose spiritual batteries seem to give out at the worse possible moment.

God even loves that guy who still doesn't have his lights on who just pulled out in front of me from another lane and almost clipped my fender. And if God loves him, I am supposed to love him too. Bless his heart!

**PACKED
WITH
PURPOSE**

**SUNDAY,
AUGUST 23
9:30 WORSHIP
SERVICE**

**BACKPACK
BLESSINGS AND
BIBLE
PRESENTATION**

**BRUNCH FOR ALL YOUTH
AND CHILDREN FAMILIES
AND VOLUNTEERS IN THE
FELLOWSHIP HALL
FOLLOWING THE SERVICE**

Memorials and Honorariums

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS TO THE

General Fund in Memory of

Doris Grissom by Clara Gay

General Fund in Honor of

Cathy Price by the Bill O'Neal WMU Group

Linda Hester by the Hope Sunday School Class

Cathy Price by the Faith Sunday School Class

Margaret Gardner's 90th birthday by Ricky and Elizabeth Waddell

Organ Fund in Memory of

Bill Gilbert by Carol Gilbert

Organ Fund in Honor of

Lois Weeks by Tom and Ida Mayes

WMU Fund in Honor of

Val Vinson and Lois Weeks by Rudy and Edwina Oliver

Heck Jones Fund in Honor of

Lois Weeks by Lexene Lee

Music Fund in Honor of

Margaret Gardner by Lexene Lee

Volunteers sought

Volunteers are needed to assist Bronna Greer with the upcoming church directory project. She needs people to greet and sign in members at the September 10-12 photo sessions. The church directory is a big undertaking and we need all the help we can get.

If you are able to offer your time on either dates, please text or call Bronna Greer at 919-801-3000. Thank you to everyone willing to help make this project a success.

Sign up now for church directory photos

First Baptist will be conducting photography sessions for our new church directory on September 10 – 12 (Thur., Fri., & Sat.) on the second floor of the church in the Basic classroom.

To register, go to www.ucdir.com or use the QR code on the right. Click on the box to the right that states Photography Session Sign-up; our Church Code is NC640, the Password is photos640. Follow the prompts to schedule your family's appointment time. If your family consists of more than six members you will need to choose two time slots.

On August 9, a table will be set up in the vestibule after church with someone

to assist you in registering for your session if you choose not to register online.

We hope everyone can participate in making our directory complete. If you need any further information, you may

contact me at 919-801-3000.

Blessings,

Bronna Greer, Directory Coordinator



Organ Project is nearly fully funded

By Rev. Keeley Tarkington
Minister of Music

Over 29 years ago, the Organ Fund was established in hopes to install a new pipe organ in the First Baptist Church Sanctuary. Through God’s blessings, that hope is becoming a reality in 2027.

The church has been faithful to this project and your generosity has been incredible. Back in September 2025, we asked for financial lump-sum pledges or monthly pledges to ensure we had enough commitment from the church membership to contract with Cornell Zimmer Organ Builders to which you all responded by promising the remaining funds.

You all have remained faithful to your promised contributions and so many have given additionally from your hearts. We look forward to celebrating a fully funded project in the months ahead! When the church approved this project last fall, we needed to raise about 34% more to fully fund the project. Today, we only need a little under 10% more to be fully funded - approximately \$80,000.

As a reminder, all lump-sum pledged gifts are requested by the end of August 2026. All monthly pledged gifts should continue through March 2027.

If you did not pledge in 2025, but would like to give to cover any incidental costs that may occur or to account for pledges that are unable to be fulfilled, you are welcome to give as you feel led. We give thanks to the people of the past who had a vision. We give thanks to the people of the present who are making that vision a reality. We give thanks to God for all the ways that he has blessed us!



This rendering shows how the new organ will look in the church sanctuary.

Weekly Reports

Baptisms this Year.....	4	New Members.....	12
Worship Attendance			
Sunday, August 2.....	172	Sunday, July 26.....	198
Sunday School Attendance			
Sunday, August 2.....	114	Sunday, July 26.....	129
General Fund Giving			
Sunday, August 2.....	\$10,555	Sunday, July 26.....	\$25,676
2026 Weekly Needs.....	\$17,470		