

What Will You Take With You?

These days when I think of homecoming I am met with a flood of nostalgia. It has been over 10 years since I have been home to 106 Second Street, Black Mountain, N.C. It was the homeplace for Joey, Ann, and me. The minute I drove down the street memories greeted me. Passing the house next to the vacant lot where we had our garden, I see a 3-year-old me running back home from visiting Mr. and Mrs. Thomas with a nickel in my pocket they'd given me. Long before I stepped onto the landing at the carport, where so many memories were waiting to welcome me, I felt loved and nurtured. Home was a safe place.

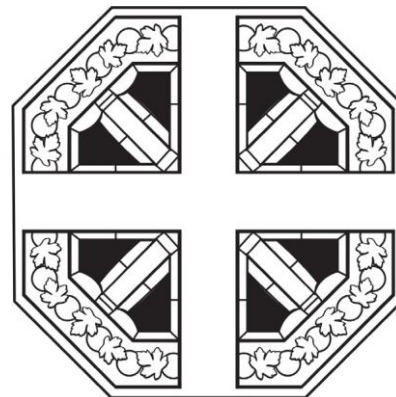
Someone else lives there now, the lot beside the house that was vacant for the first 65 years of my life now has a house covering up the ground where we once dug fox holes, tossed ball, and helped tend the garden. Driving by the house, things are not the same. They've changed the color, dug up all the shrubs and azalea's, dismantled the planter box where mom and dad raised lettuce and marigolds. Still, with all the changes, memories remain. New railing on the porch and fresh columns at the carport do not erase what happened there.

I share this because change is inevitable---yet the impact of the past does not lose its place in our lives. We can never go back to how things used to be. We are who we are because of what we have been through. Changes don't erase memories; in fact, they may do the opposite and help us appreciate what we had even as we see things are different. They can provide us with clarity.

Whenever we would go home for a visit, mom would ask us to bring a cooler and some Tupperware. She always cooked more than we could eat. She always wanted us to take back something to remind us of what we'd shared, to sustain us until the next visit home. Nowadays, I try to fix one of her dishes as a reminder of the blessings of my family. I call these memory meals. In so many ways, our Homecoming is this for me. Although it will be the first I have shared with you, I know that the memories from my own childhood will visit and I will be thankful for the faith community that nurtured me and welcomed me into the family of faith.

Homecoming is not just about nostalgia. It is also about vision, about taking something home with us that will draw us back to this place, that deep, heart longing to be reunited with the innocence of the past even as we live into the promised renewal of the future. It is my prayer that when you arrive you will sense the welcome of the Holy Spirit, that you will be flooded with wonderful memories of the past, and that when you leave---you will take with you a vision for the what is to come, a longing to embrace the future where you are welcomed into the place Jesus has prepared for us, a home where we have never been before, and yet have never left. That paradox of Christ behind us, Christ before us, Christ within us.

By: Dr. Len Keever



The Outlook

First Baptist Church Clayton

Show • Tell
Grow • Serve

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An Outreach Mission with Lasting Impact

By Rev. Stephanie Parker

Twenty years ago, the church stepped out in faith to serve an unmet need in the community – full-time, faith-centered childcare. As a result, the FBCC Child Development Center began in June 2006, providing a unique opportunity to care for children while also teaching them about Jesus. Many children have come through the doors since the center opened, and today, the FBCC CDC is looking ahead to continuing this mission in the Clayton community.

To work in childcare is a calling, where centers, naptime, changing tables, and circle time are the mission field. It is not easy work and takes a special person with patience and creativity to teach and care for little ones all day. After all, these teachers are caring for the most precious thing to families – their children. Families choosing to bring their children here do not do so lightly. The FBCC CDC has an important responsibility to provide a safe, loving, and Christ-centered environment for children and families to experience each time they come and go. Fulfilling this responsibility is something the church has committed to doing since the Center's founding.

The Center, created as a missions ministry of the church, operates as a separate function with all the proper accounting, reporting, and organizational structure of a business. Through the leadership of a Director and supervision of the church CDC Oversight Committee, the CDC has provided a space for children to learn and grow for two decades while maintaining proper regulations and requirements mandated by the State. One of the greatest ways we as the church can partner with the CDC is through our presence and prayers for the teachers, staff, and families.

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Outreach Mission *continued from page 1*

Demonstrating and investing in this level of care from the church extends an invitation to make this building a place they visit every Sunday, too, showing these families and their children that they matter and are welcomed here beyond center hours. As a result, through the years several CDC families have become regular attendees and members at the church.

During this time of Homecoming, we take a moment to honor the investment made in this important mission of the church. To mark this milestone, four of our resident artists – Maryanna Barnes, Susan Parker, Gloria Pleasant, and Glenda Toler – were commissioned to paint a beautiful mural inspired by the vision of the Center's director, Delá Turner. As you go to lunch today, please take a moment to view the beautiful mural as we celebrate the past and look to the future with hope for our CDC.



Able to Serve Dance is October 9, 2026

The Able to Serve Dance will be held Friday, October 9th in the Fellowship Hall from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. It is a night of food, fellowship, smiles, dancing, seeing old friends and meeting new ones!!

This fun-filled event for adults with disabilities is sponsored by Missions Outreach along with our WMU Groups and Baptist Men.

We hope you will join in the fun – both men and women!! If you would like to participate, please reach out to Terry in the church office to register or, you can reach out to Gwen Canady, Robin Little or Jackie Tarkington NO LATER than Friday, October 2nd. We hope to see you there!!

PRAYER CHAMPION FOR COOPER ACADEMY STUDENTS

Last week's Outlook contained information regarding the First Priority Club at Cooper Academy and how students in this club are learning how to share Jesus with their friends. One way we can support these students is to serve as a volunteer and attend the club meetings to encourage and build relationships with them. Another way of supporting the students is to pray for them in a formal capacity as a Prayer Champion. Serving as a Prayer Champion give you the opportunity to pray for specific weekly needs of the students who lead the First Priority Club meetings. As a Prayer Champion, you will pray for the student missionary team assigned to you. If you are willing to pray for these students, please complete the volunteer form found in the following link:

<https://form.everestwebdeals.co/?form=215c04f30d6933fa107ebc0f1bba8c38>

Thank you for your prayers!!

Church directory photography appointments still available

An additional day has been added for our photo shoots. The day is Tuesday, October 6th. You can go on-line to: www.ucdir.com Code: NC640 Password: photos540 OR, you can call Terry in the church office at 919-553-4161 or Bronna Greer at 919-801-3300 and one of them will get you scheduled.

If you are unable to have your photo taken at the church, but want to be included in the directory, please send a photo with the following information: name, address, phone and email. Please drop photo and info off in the church office.

World Communion Sunday -- October 4th

In recognition of this, we'd like to thank our High School Acteens for their hard work and dedication in polishing our communion serving pieces. Thank You Acteens!!!

