

THE INFORMER

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH SHELBY, NC



FEBRUARY 2021 | VOLUME 42, NO. 2

LOVE SHELBY

The early church in the Book of Acts saw the Lord draw them TOGETHER to study the Apostles teaching, to worship, to pray and to encourage one another. From that context of spiritual development, those first Christ Followers saw the Holy Spirit direct them and empower them to then go into their communities and share the love of Jesus far and wide! They were so successful at this sharing that before long their movement came to be known as "The Way." Jesus said, "I am the way" and those early believers lived to show their communities the way of compassion as they reached to their neighbors with his love! So much so that in the early 2nd C, *The Apology of Aristides* was written describing how those Christians loved their neighbors as themselves, including their enemies, and cared for people not in their group. The impression was that "this is a new people, and there is something divine in the midst of them."

Love Shelby Event
Dale Street Alley
Sunday, February 14
starting at 3 p.m.

At First Baptist Church, we are the next ones to live this way! So, plan now to come to the Dale Street Alley at the church on Sunday, February 14, at 3 p.m. and get started on 14 Days of Loving Our Cleveland County Neighbors! On this day, you will receive resources to help you to go and share Jesus' love in our community and you will toe the starting line as you hear a prayer of commissioning to "start" you on your way.

"LET'S GO LOVE OUR TOWN!"
Jeremiah 29:7

Weekly Calendar

Sundays

- 9:30 a.m. Morning Worship via Facebook LIVE
- 11 a.m. Morning Worship via Spectrum Cable Channel 9
- 6 p.m. FBC Youth at Outdoor Venue weather permitting

Watch Facebook for Adult and Children's Sunday school Lessons

[Note: Until further notice we will not have the Wednesday Take-Out Meals]

Feburary Calendar

Wednesday, February 3

- 6 p.m. FBC Kids *Together on Wednesdays Drive thru Packet and Treat Pick Up*
- 6 p.m. FBC Youth at Outdoor Venue or Zoom
- 6 p.m. Wednesday Bible Study Podcast: The Book of Acts

Wednesday, February 10

- 6 p.m. FBC Kids *Together on Wednesdays!* via Facebook
- 6 p.m. FBC Youth at Outdoor Venue or Zoom via Facebook
- 6 p.m. Wednesday Bible Study Podcast: The Book of Acts

Sunday, February 14

- 3 p.m. Love Shelby: 14 Days of Love Begins -- Dale Street

Wednesday, February 17-Ash Wednesday

- 6 p.m. FBC Kids *Together on Wednesdays* via Facebook
- 6 p.m. FBC Youth at Outdoor Venue or Zoom
- 6 p.m. Wednesday Bible Study Podcast: The Book of Acts
- 6:30 p.m. Budget and Finance Committee via Zoom

Sunday, February 21

- 9:30 a.m. Pastor Installation in Worship
- 7 p.m. Deacons Meeting via Zoom

Wednesday, February 24

- 6 p.m. FBC Kids *Together on Wednesdays* via Facebook
- 6 p.m. FBC Youth at Outdoor Venue or Zoom
- 6 p.m. Wednesday Bible Study Podcast: The Book of Acts

Sunday, February 28

- 9:30 a.m. Deacon Commissioning and Prayers in Worship
- 10:30 a.m. Virtual Church Conference following Worship on Facebook LIVE

Pastor's Corner

When I was a brand new believer, I became disproportionately interested in apologetics and evangelism. Partially, this interest was driven by my need to share Jesus with my father who was both a non-Christian and a really sharp lawyer. While studying up on conversations about Buddhism I read this story about two college roommates. One was an American Christian and the other was a Christian from Thailand. The American asked his roommate how he converted to Christianity. The Thai roommate told this story:



When I was a Buddhist I had these dreams where I was drowning in a lake. I cried out, "Help me," but Buddha would stand on the shore and shout to me, "Keep swimming. You must make it to shore yourself." One day a missionary came to my village and taught me about Jesus Christ. That night I had the same dream that I was drowning. Only this time, Jesus was standing on the shore. Again, I cried out, "Help me." This time, however, Jesus did not stay on the shore. He swam out to me, secured me in His arms, and brought me back to the shore so that I may live.

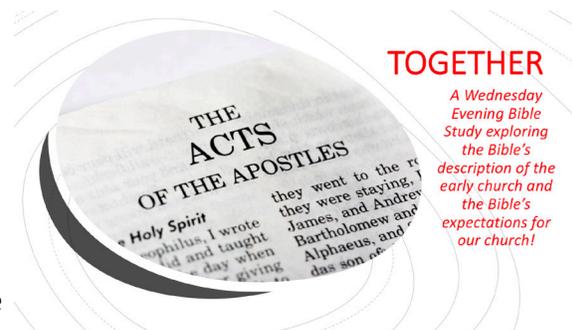
This story has always stuck with me concerning the difference between Jesus and religion (including Christian religiousness). Religion always shouts at us to work harder to save ourselves. It asks of us to be more moral, to be more clean, to be more prosperous, to be more spiritual, to do more justice, to accept more people...all in order to be truly justified before God. Jesus offers a different and unique way to life: believe in Him. Jesus swims out to the lake and picks us up. He lifts us into the lifeboat of Himself and helps us to live. And, by living in the safety of His salvation, we get the opportunity to swim around the lake and help save others: through moral living, through cleanliness, through prosperity, through spirituality, through justice, and through love.

In short, we don't work towards the cross. That is religion. We work from the cross. That is discipleship.

-Doug

Wednesday Bible Study Podcast/Facebook LIVE

Each Wednesday in February/March, watch for a Wednesday evening Bible Study in the Book of Acts as we are focusing on the theme Together in our study of what the Bible says about the Church!



Remembering Raven Guest

Prayers for the family of Raven Guest — FBC Maintenance Team member since 2004 -- whose funeral was January 1. We could count on Raven and we did count on Raven. He served well to care for our facilities. Raven had just sent a “thank you” card to our FBC Family the day of his death in which he wrote, “You have gone above and beyond and I am forever grateful. Thank you for the prayers and love!” He was quick to tell us how “First Baptist Church is the best!” We miss him. Thanks for your prayers for his wife, Cynthia, and their family.



Staff Anniversaries



Don Jones,
Maintenance Team Leader
February 4, 2015



Missy Smith,
Children and Family Pastor
February 1, 2016



Glenn Head
Bassist
February 2, 2020

Financial Snapshot 2020 Year end

God has provided for us during this past year though it has been overshadowed by pandemic. When we hear stories about the trials and difficulties of the year 2020, there are innumerable ways that FBC members have witnessed the Lord’s strength, wisdom, encouragement and providence to meet the challenges and help us through, even if limping and grieving. God never fails and you continue to bear witness to this Good News.

One of those areas of God’s encouragement in our church life this past year has been through the faithfulness of the FBC family to give of your financial resources to ensure that our Annual Ministry Plan can continue to reach out with Jesus’ love into our community. You have sensed God’s calling to be His Church in the heart of Cleveland County and you continue to live into that calling.

Here is a synopsis of our year end giving:

First Baptist Church Annual Ministry Plan Budget	
Budget Plan	\$1,203,047.04
Tithes and Offerings	\$1,194,323.13 (99%)
Deficit	-\$ 8,723.91

Total Receipts (with PPP)	\$1,338,713.37 (106%)
Total Expenses	\$1,074,792.30
Surplus	\$ 263,921.07

FBC Giving of Tithes and Offerings 2020 Compared to 2019

2019 Tithes and Offerings	\$1,192,179.59
2020 Tithes and Offerings	\$1,194,323.13
2020 exceeded 2019 by	\$ 2,143.54

Weekday Ministries Budget Surplus: \$78,868.32

This is a great report from a year of pandemic resulting from FBC Members faithful giving and ministerial management of covid-days expenditures. Your faithfulness in these ways positions us to live into 2021 to meet the challenges ahead -- so thank you for your commitment! In 2021, we will add a Worship Arts Pastor to our ministry team for which we will need to be prepared. In 2021, we are working with a deficit budget in Weekday Ministries due to our continuing recovery in our child care ministry because we reduced our enrollment in the early months of the pandemic to care for front-line workers’ families only. In 2021, we live in a world that still needs a Savior and a tithe of this surplus, as has been our practice in years gone by, will help us send missionaries into that world! All this being so, your faithfulness has been God’s encouragement to get 2021 started in a positive direction as we press-on to be His people in our community this year!

Planning Ahead - Pandemically Speaking

Several months ago, our Deacons established a Pandemic Task Force to assist them in processing information and recommendations for how we plan for the ministries of our church during these pandemic months. At the January Deacons Meeting, the Pandemic Task Force reported the following to our Deacons as they continue to prayerfully lead us into 2021.

Moving Forward

The Pandemic Task Force is meeting regularly to inform the Deacons of strategies for addressing how we can safely re-engage through face-to-face meetings. The task force is currently paying close attention to the following indicators to inform FBC's next steps in returning safely to f2f worship:

1. **Survey results** from our members which have given valuable insight into the approach our members are anticipating. We are thankful for the input we have received. (Synopsis below)
2. **Cleveland County positivity rate and case incidence:** In early January, over a 14 day period, our County had seen 1614 new cases which is 20% of our total for the pandemic period. We are looking to see this dangerous trend reverse.
3. **Vaccine rollout progress:** As more and more vaccine is distributed (which are showing 94-95% effectiveness) we move closer to area coverage and the beginning of "herd immunity." Local and state health officials are projecting the current spike in cases to peak in North Carolina mid-February.
4. **Next:** The aforementioned being so, the Task Force plans to meet again in late-February to reassess. This schedule will also allow for more time for progress in vaccine distribution.

[Synopsis of Recent Member Survey: (106 responses)]

- Personal responsibility for virus mitigation via the 3 W's is high among respondents.
- Most are watching for the following indicators to inform their decision to return: Pace of infection in our county, Vaccine roll-out progress, and advice from authorities.
- Most would be willing to return to a "filled sanctuary" after 6 months or more.
- 33% would be ready to return to a "¼ filled sanctuary" in 2-3 months; another 25% would be ready to return to a "1/4 filled sanctuary" in 4-6 months
- If we can have multiple service options with limited attendance, people are willing to begin returning in safe ways. Overflow rooms and multiple services are good options to encourage distancing and would be well received.
- In that 30% are ready to return at the first opportunity, still 20% will wait for a period before returning and 23% will wait quite a while before returning. This includes about 50% who say they would wait several weeks to return to Sunday School after we have returned to f2f worship.
- This data informs us to be ready to phase-in our return once the time is right with a limited number of attendees in the sanctuary practicing specified safety precautions.]

Quarterly Church Conference

*Sunday, February 28
10:30 a.m.*

On Sunday, February 28, following morning worship, we will have a Virtual Church Conference via Facebook LIVE. This will not be an in-person event. The following items will be some of the business we will address on the agenda. There will be an online ballot and a drive-through option for voting.

Some agenda items:

- Affirmation of Nominations for Guy Suttle to serve on the Budget and Finance Committee and Mary Campbell Farrow to serve on the Worship Arts Pastor Search Committee.
- Recommendation from Budget and Finance Committee and the Deacons to tithe the overage of our 2020 offerings to the Christmas Offering for Missions with half to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and half to the CBF Global Missions Offering.
- Approval of the Ministers' Housing Allowances

Thank you for planning to participate in this important decision-making process in the life of our church.

Ministry Action Opportunities

GWU Care Packages

Your Sunday school Class or small group can minister to the students at Gardner-Webb University by reaching out to the students who will be in isolation due to testing positive for COVID-19 or who will be quarantined due to contact tracing/awaiting test results. Snack bags go out to these students on Tuesday and Friday afternoons to give them encouragement. If your class is interested in making snack bags, please call Teresa Davis at 704-406-4277 or email her at tdavis@gardner-webb.edu and sign up for an available date.

SAMPLE PACKING ITEMS FOR STUDENT SNACK BAGS

Please Note: All items must be individually wrapped and no homemade items. One item each unless number specified:

Breakfast Bars

Little Debbie Snack Cakes (Various Kinds)

Rice Krispy Treats

Fruit Snacks

Lance Crackers

Gold Fish

Individual Packs of Cookies

Chips (individual size)

Candy (mini bars)

1-Gatorade

3- Bottles of Water

1 – Garbage Bag

A message of encouragement from our church

Feed the Hungry Fridays

We are in need of groups to sign up to provide bag lunches for our Friday Feed the Hungry Lunch Program. Groups that sign up are asked to provide bag lunches that include sandwiches, chips, and cookies. These will need to be delivered on the sign up day at 12 to the gym at First Baptist Church in Shelby.

You may sign up at the link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0549A8AE29A6F94-friday>

or contact me to sign up at 704-482-3472.

Thank you, Katie Harris-Greater

Cleveland County Baptist Association



Lent 2021

On February 17, the Season of Lent on the Christian calendar gets underway with Ash Wednesday. “Lent” means “springtime” and is the season of 40 days (excluding weekends) leading up to Easter. The 40 days are meant to recall Jesus’ 40 days in the wilderness where he modeled for us how to deal with temptation. These days are to be an encouragement for us to come in repentance before the Father in preparation for seeing Jesus go to the cross on Good Friday! How did Jesus show us how to deal with temptation/tests/trials you ask? Thanks for asking. Remember Matthew 4:1-11 and be sure to...

... **Read the Bible Daily:** “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” v. 4

...**Trust the Lord Whole-Heartedly:** “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” v. 7

...**Serve the Lord Only:** “For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’” v. 10

...**Resist Satan and His Evil Boldly:** “Jesus said to him, ‘Away from me, Satan!’” And, sure enough, the devil left Jesus as God’s messengers came to care for him.

During the Lenten Season, let Jesus show you the way as we follow in these, his steps, and live a life of repentance before the Lord.



Our New FBC Spring Playlist



Be sure to check our list of hymns and songs that will be the major part of our worship services through the month of April. These songs will help guide our worship gatherings towards love of God as expressed in love of neighbors. You will hear these songs shared in a variety of ways in our worship gathering. There will be arrangements each week on piano, organ, the hymns that are sung and special music offerings in different styles. We encourage you to like our playlist on Spotify through this link:

<https://linktr.ee/fbcshelby>

Sometimes we can lose sight of the ‘who, what, and why’ of worship. May we all refocus and make Jesus the center of our worship through these beautiful hymns and songs. Learn, like and love them!!

Hymns: How Great Thou Art, How Firm A Foundation, Fairest Lord Jesus, My Jesus I Love Thee, The Doxology, All Hail The Power of Jesus’ Name, Be Thou My Vision, Jesus Paid It All, Take My Life and Let It Be.

Spiritual Songs: Build My Life, In Christ Alone, Christ Be Magnified, His Mercy Is More, 10,000 Reasons, Jesus at the Center.

How to Disciple Our Youth During Covid

By Carol Ann

Our last big youth event together was the Valentine Banquet of 2020. A fun night with lots of laughter, hugs and togetherness where we supported our youth. I find it hard to believe that it is almost a year now since we have been together. Our youth are struggling during this time of Covid. Everything has changed- school, sports, and youth group. I miss seeing our youth sit and eat Wednesday night supper with different generations. They are missing interaction from you. Our youth are often far more anxious than they appear, their brains and emotions are in overdrive as they try to deal with the constant noise, fear and change. Every youth is trying to cope with fear, but without the maturity or experience of adults.



Even though we are not meeting in person, there are still wonderful opportunities to disciple our youth to help them live well as God's people in God's world. Pandemics don't stop God working in our world through our church.

Below are four ideas to help you consider ways to disciple young people during this time.

1. Pray with them

Our world is addicted to talking and guessing about information that does not exist. This is not the Christian life. In times of fear and worry, Christians cast their anxieties on God because he cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). Now is the time to help young people pray, to help them cast their worries on the Lord and put their trust on him instead of humanity. Use Scripture to teach them to pray. Pray with and for the young people in your life

2. Point them to our sovereign God

Our world swings between doomsday news and false hope. This is not the Christian life. The Lord God is sovereign and "our ever-present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1-7). Even though the "waters roar and foam" and "mountains fall into the heart of the sea," the Lord our God will never leave us or abandon us. He is our hiding place, our refuge, our strength. Now is the time to help young people know their God so they can walk humbly with him. Help them see that knowing Jesus is the best way to know God.

3. Teach them how to have faith

Our world is struggling to know who we should put our faith in, as leaders falter and experts disagree. This is not the Christian life. Christians put their trust in the Lord Jesus. We place our faith in a God who entered a world infected with sin. He loved sick people. He died alone, separated from God, so that he might provide a sick world with a real solution to sin. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die." (John 11:25-26). Constantly communicate that our strength as Christians is not the strength of our faith but who we have faith in. Communicate regularly that Christian faith is refined and strengthened in difficult times.

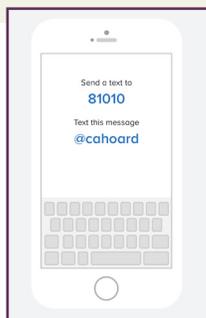
4. Empower them to care for others

Our world is scared and scared people often resort to selfishness to cope with life. This is not the Christian life. Fear is an appropriate emotion in this current time, but fear is not our master. The perfect love of Christ drives out fear (1 John 4:18). Fear of judgment and fear of the future is disempowered by the victory of Christ at the cross. The decrease in fear enables Christians of all ages to turn our focus to loving our neighbour. Let's lead our young people to courageously love their friends and family with words and action (1 John 3:18).

Starting February 14th, the youth will participate in LOVE SHELBY for 14 days. I challenged you to do these activities together as a family and lead by example.

Adapted from Youth Works by Ed Springer

We are still Zooming on Wednesdays and Sundays during these cold days! Watch your REMIND for updates. If you do not get the reminds sign up today!





FBC Kids' Parents on Mission to Show Love

We want to challenge all FBC Kids' parents and caregivers to do this special assignment the month of February for your children. Starting February 1, cut out hearts and place one on your child's door or somewhere special in their room before they wake up each morning in February. Write on the hearts the things that you see God doing in their lives or about them that will encourage them to know just how much you love them. By doing this you can remind them of the things you love about them but also tell them that God loves them too. Also plan to post this Bible verse somewhere and learn it as a family: *"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful."* Psalm 139:14. May God's love fill your home with the reminder of HIS love for you and your children this month.



Sunday School for FBC Kids

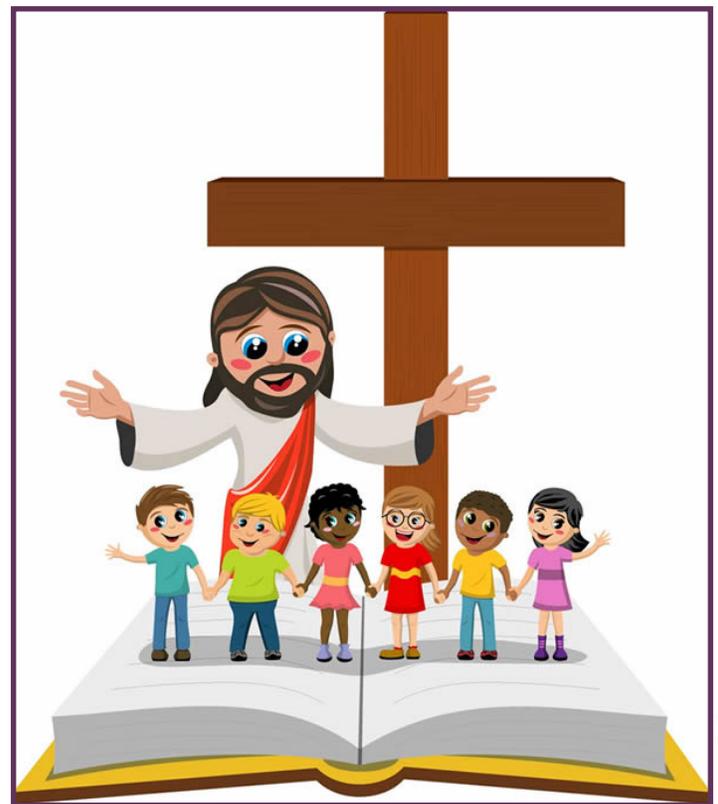
Who is Jesus Curriculum

This month we are starting a new curriculum designed by our intern Jennifer Jennings. The goal of this curriculum is to reveal the character of Jesus through concrete examples given by Jesus to his disciples. Based on the seven "I Am" statements from the Gospel of John, children will learn who Jesus says he is and how that is revealed in scripture. Each "I Am" statement will serve as the memory verse for the week and will be followed with a miracle/parable/teaching from one of the Gospels that illustrates that statement.

The Lessons for February are:

- Feb. 7 - Jesus is a child of God and so am I.
- Feb. 14 - Jesus knows what the Bible says.
- Feb. 21 - Jesus is the bread of life.
- Feb. 28 - Jesus is the light of the world.

The lessons will be posted on our Facebook page each Sunday and you can pick up your child's packet for the month in the alleyway on Wednesday February 3 at 6 p.m. **If you are unable to pick them up at that time you can get them in the breezeway at a later date.*



Together on Wednesdays:

FBC Kids will start back with our on Facebook Live for our Together on Wednesdays program in February. Please plan to drive thru the alleyway on **Wednesday, February 3 at 6 p.m.** to pick up a Yummy Hot Cocoa Bomb and your packets for Together on Wednesdays for the month of February. We look forward to seeing you then!!! **If you are unable to make it to pick up at that time you can get them from the Breezeway at a later time.*





FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Community + Compassion + Service

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Shelby, NC 28150

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STAFF DIRECTORY

Doug Hankins, Lead Pastor.....doug@fbcshelby.org
 Tony Tench, Executive Connections Pastor.....tony@fbcshelby.org
 Carol Ann Hoard, Youth and Intergenerational Pastor.....youth@fbcshelby.org
 Missy Smith, Children and Family Pastor.....children@fbcshelby.org
 Penny Corn, Weekday Ministry Director.....childcare@fbcshelby.org
 Emily Monroe, Worship Coordinator.....music@fbcshelby.org
 Donna Dryden, Financial Coordinator.....finance@fbcshelby.org
 Jene' Baxter, Operations Coordinator.....operations@fbcshelby.org
 Bruce Boyles, Chairman of Deacons.....deacons@fbcshelby.org

CHURCH INFORMATION

Office Hours: M-F 8:30 a.m. -5 p.m.
120 N Lafayette St, Shelby, NC 28150
(p) 704.482.3467 (f) 704.482.1137

Check out our website and blog:
www.fbcshelby.org
Wi-fi Password: FBSC-120NLaf

Find us on Facebook and Twitter!
@FBC_Shelby_NC



Remember, you can make your plans to give financially to the church online by going to the church website (www.fbcshelby.org) and clicking on this symbol at the bottom of the page or click on "Giving" at the top right corner of the homepage.