



The Torch

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, CAPITOL HILL
JANUARY 2021 – VOLUME 62 NUMBER 4

PASTOR'S PEN

If you are reading this it means that you have survived 2020. From natural disasters, to world-wide killer virus, to the persistence of injustices, to a grueling presidential election (that still has not come to an end), to a bombing here in Nashville, to many loved ones of whom lost over the past 12 months – it has been a rough year. The year 2020 (even with its extra day) was not like we were on a rough airplane flight that ended when we landed in 2021. We are still on this journey. But I believe that as people of faith we should not look at 2020 through the pain the year gave us and fear what 2021 will give us. There were some encouraging positives from 2020 and some hopeful prospects for 2021. Let me suggest some things we may wish to consider.

Positives from 2020 – Romans 8:28

- The blessing of technology. As we mature in age many of us look at technology with bane. We feel it is too much for us to comprehend. But look how technology blessed us last year. Though we were greatly isolated it kept us connected for worship, Bible study and zoom check-ins among other things. Think about how detached we would have been without it. God worked this out.
- The awakening on social justice matters. I am careful with this one because the issues to which we have awakened are not new. Police killings, healthcare disparities, wealth gap and systemic racism are some of things the nation should have been addressing for decades. Last year tore open the wounds. The change we saw with sports leagues and commercials allowing for social justice messaging was just window-dressing and marketing, but it doesn't scratch the surface of what needs to be done. It may start the conversation, and there are some places that are looking deeper into these ethical and moral issues. Pray the conversation does not end here.
- The power of the enfranchisement of people. We voted this past year in greater numbers than ever before. It is the fruit of those who fought hard, even some losing their lives, to make sure we could vote. This is not about who won (or lost). It is about the principle of what can happen when we allow people regardless of their differences to engage in civic, social and economic matters. It makes for a better nation.
- Human resiliency. Many times, when we hear of the trials and travails of people in previous generations we say, "I don't think I could have done that." In the future there will be those who will say that about those of us who have had to deal with all we have had to deal with over the past months (and counting). Though there are those who were lost in the struggle we see many more who have survived it. This reminds me that we are fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14). Because God is still in charge and because we are made in God's image, we have the capacity to handle anything that comes our way. Last year reminded us of this blessing.

Prospects for 2021 – (Proverbs 23:18)

- Affirm the importance of family and friends. One thing last year taught us is that our most valuable commodity is each other. Too often we have taken it for granted the value and importance of sharing with one another until we were not able to do it safely. We look forward to the time when it will be safe enough for us to be physically in each other's presence and to share in life events with one another.
- Live healthier lives. The COVID-19 had its greatest impact on people who had underlying health conditions. Some people have health conditions that are genetic and are unavoidable. Many, however, have conditions that we should have/could have/can control or moderate. We should not think that we can just wish things away or continue to "dodge bullets" simply because we made it through 2020. It is by the grace of God that we are still here, but God would love if we would do our part in helping out.
- Place importance on faith matters. Many of us were carried through last year (and most of our years) because we made our faith important to us. Worship, Sunday School, Bible study, prayer and meditation were things we did not because it was a routine for us, but because we believe in their sustaining power. Let us worship more fervently, study more intently, pray more intensely, love more graciously, help more intentionally.

Kelly M. Smith Jr.
Pastor

DISCIPLESHIP MOMENT

Maintaining Hope During Difficult Times: A Discipleship Journey

“So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline” ~ Colossians 3:12 MSG

Submitted by: Sis. Susan Mosley-Howard

From the beginning of First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill’s adoption of *“Moving from Membership to Discipleship”*, I have aspired to reflect the true tenets of its definition. In part, to be a disciple is to be obedient, study God’s Word and apply it daily, draw closer to Him, reach out, connect, equip, and be open to being “sent”. My journey has been filled with the usual successes and failures, and excitement and trepidation that come from the imperfections of the flesh pursuing the aspirations of the Spirit. But I didn’t fully appreciate the growth opportunities of the discipleship journey until this year. 2020 pushed all of us in ways we could never have predicted. I thought, surely God is using this time as a crash course in spiritual growth!

These past few months have been especially filled with a range of events and emotions. Excitement over the election, anxiety about the on-going pandemic, protests against social injustices, and ending with the Advent season with its reminders of hope, love, joy, and peace. As I reflected upon the year coming to an end, I asked myself: What have I learned? What have I agonized about? What can I do to challenge myself to be and do better? To be more Christ-like.

Hard Lesson Learned: I learned many hard lessons this year, however I wish to focus on my most recent “hard lesson learned”. You can discern much about what a person values, in part by examining with whom they choose to affiliate. Often in the business world, people select leaders (CEOs) who possess a certain level of competence and character. The leader typically reflects the vision and values of the company they lead and shows a commitment to its mission. That leader serves as an example for the staff and projects a good image for the company. For example, at First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill, under the banner of “following where faith leads”, our vision is that we “build, restore and revitalize lives through Jesus Christ”. Our Pastor, Rev. Dr. Kelly Miller Smith, Jr., and the greater church leadership reflect that vision in their decisions and actions.

Applying this to another context, we see in our nation that over 80 million people voted for Joe Biden and 74 million voted for Donald Trump to serve as president. The values and vision of our company (nation), as expressed in the preamble of our Constitution states that we created this republic or government in order to “*establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and spread the blessings of liberty to ourselves and to our posterity*”. The document goes on to say that our mission is to advance equality, democracy, liberty, and opportunity (pursuit of happiness)”

Agony: I asked myself the question: What does our selection or support of a leader say about our country? Although he was not the winner of the election, I for one, felt some despair at the realization that 74 million people believed Donald Trump was a good reflection of our nation. What does this say about how they view me, and others like me? But then I remembered the words of the Late U.S. Representative John Lewis of GA. ~ who said “Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble”.

[#goodtrouble.](#)

What Am I Called to Do?

2021 brings an opportunity to use a different mindset to deal with the realities we see around us and rely on the Word and example of Jesus Christ to make a difference. I challenge all of us to think about what messages our actions and decisions convey to our community and to the world. How can FBCCH continue to reflect our values, mission and tenets of faith? If we are aspiring to be “Disciples of Christ” and we have chosen Him as our “leader”, we should reflect his qualities and His mission. Colossians 3:12 reminds us that we should take on the clothing (qualities) of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, and I would add “good trouble”!

MISSION AT YOUR DOORSTEP

Submitted by Dr. Arrold N. Martin, Assistant to the Pastor, President, ABCOTS

If you're like most people, you've probably made a few resolutions for the coming year. Perhaps, you'll lose weight, exercise more, watch less television, or spend more time with God. The problem with resolutions is that they're only skin deep. You make a proclamation and then you use your willpower to try to fulfill it or make it happen. The Bible says that the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Although our intentions are good, we lack the wherewithal or persistence to stick with our new year's resolutions for the long haul and within days, weeks, or even months we're right back where we started.

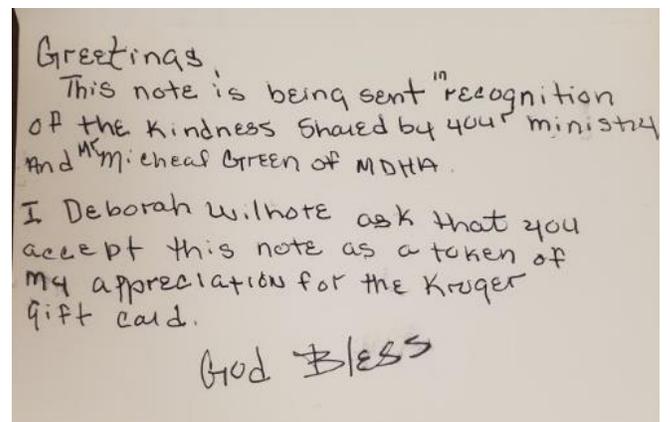
God knows that we are weak, but in our weakness, He is strong. It is in our own frailty and weakness that we surrender and turn the reins over to God. When we acknowledge our weaknesses and inability to change ourselves and turn our attention to God as the architect and molder of our lives as well as our hearts, we become the clay in God's loving and wise hands. Therefore, our resolutions must change from seeking after a desired outcome to seeking after God.

There are no short-cuts to spiritual maturity and an intimate relationship with the Lord. God said that you will see me and find me when you search for me with all your heart. If we really want to prosper, if we really want to change, if we really want God's best, and if we want God's good and perfect gifts, we'll need to "die to ourselves, pick up our cross, and follow Him." He will lead us in the right direction. And you'll find that the more you seek after God, the less these peripheral things will matter, for when we are full of God, there is not much room for anything false or fake.

"The Christian Mediator", Rhonda

Share the Warmth

Thank you to all who participated in our share the warmth program. Hats, gloves, scarves, and socks were shared with the students of Robert Churchwell Elementary School. Nine families and twenty children will receive new coats for the winter. Thank you for your generosity.



"And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices, God is pleased"
(Hebrews 13:16 NIV)

JANUARY NEWS AND EVENTS



First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill's

2020 Wall of Faith Inductees:

Sis. Clara Carpenter Elam
 Sis. Zelma "Duchess" Charlene Ewing
 Rev. Dr. Arrol N. Martin
 Sis. Ida Vivian Robinson Black
 Deacon Ben Edward Harris
 Trustee Carrie Rucker Hull

Please click here: [Wall of Faith Inductees](#) to view the inductees' biographical profiles.

Deacons of the Week for January 2021

Week of		Phone#
3 rd	Carole Boone	(615) 851-1527
10 th	Adrienne Fancher	(615) 255-8033
17 th	Martin Currie	(615) 390-9418
24 th	Beverly Brown	(615) 391-3737
31 st	Beverly Brown	(615) 391-3737

First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill History: Tennessee's State Colored Men's Convention (Part I of II)

Submitted by: Bobby Lovett, PhD. (10/08/2012; revised Dec. 5, 2020)

The American Civil War was winding down by late 1864, when the decisive battle of Nashville (Dec. 15-19, 1864) saw Gen. George H. Thomas' Union Army of the Cumberland (some 52,000 men including some 12,000 US Colored Troops (USCT) complete the final destruction of the Confederate Army of the Tennessee (38,000 men) under Gen. John B. Hood. The Rebel governor of Tennessee, Isham G. Harris, who had illegally led the illegal secession of Tennessee, soon fled to Mexico to avoid being tried and hanged for treason against the United States of America. Remnants of Gen. Hood's Rebel army disbanded near Tupelo (MS) on Jan. 15, 1865. Gen. Wm T. Sherman, with some 15,000 fugitive enslaved persons (men, women, and children) dogging his army's rear while aiding his march in every way they could, completed his infamous "March through Georgia" with the conquest of Savannah (GA) on Christmas Eve (1864). Sherman later awarded the most helpful of the blacks (spies, scouts, pioneer troops, cooks and foragers) some 60 acres of land and a mule. President Lincoln sent congratulations for both Thomas and Sherman and called for a national day of Thanksgiving. Most Negro and white soldiers who died in the battle of Nashville would be honorably interred on Gallatin Rd. in the Nashville National Cemetery (1866-).

Feb. 1865: the US Congress finally approved the proposal for the 13th Amendment to be sent to the states for ratification. The 13th Amendment (the first since 1804) would prohibit enslavement of human beings throughout the US and its Territories forever. Abraham Lincoln had pushed for this constitutional change to make sure no future US President could revoke his executive Emancipation Proclamation, Jan. 1, 1863). Lincoln exclaimed: "This [proposed amendment] is worth a King's ransom."

In Feb. 1865, the Tennessee Constitutional Convention approved the recommendation to revoke Rebel Gov. Isham G. Harris' secession ordinance. The delegates voted to recommend also to the voters the abolition of Slavery in Tennessee.

On March 5, 1865, Tennessee voters approved the measures, revoked the secession ordinance, and elected civilian governor Warren G. Brownlow (R). He was inaugurated on April 5, with a background of banners that proclaimed the recent Emancipation. Negroes and local Union Army generals were in the audience in the Capitol Building. During the construction (1845-1855) of the Tennessee Capitol Building the architects and engineers hired free and enslaved Negro laborers, others, and workers from the state prison in West Nashville (near today's I-265 overpass and Charlotte Ave). An early member of First Colored Baptist and a minister in his own right and organizer of the Edgefield Colored Baptist Mission of Nashville's First Baptist Church, George Dardis, who directed the East Nashville Baptist mission under the supervision of Rev. Merry, became the Porter for the Capitol facility. Dardis wrote the architectural history of the Building (1862).

Meanwhile, the Tennessee General Assembly voted to offer a reward for the capture of former governor Isham G. Harris to be held for trial of treason against the state and nation. Negroes held a parade and mass meeting to celebrate the March 5, 1865, Tennessee Emancipation. USCT regimental bands paraded. Elder Daniel Wadkins, Rev. Merry and others spoke at the churches and mass meetings.

Also in March 1865, the Confederate States of America, taking its last desperate breaths of life, authorized the recruitment of 200,000 armed Negro soldiers to match Lincoln's 200,000 USCT. Jeff Davis could raise only a few hundred slaves (one black soldier assigned to two white soldiers authorized to shoot the blacks if they attempted to escape to the Yankees).

Anyhow, it was too late for the bogus Confederacy: On April 4, 1865, Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's Union Army of the Potomac including 25,000 USCT took Petersburg (VA) and marched into Rebel capital, Richmond. Lincoln and Grant arranged for the USCT to be amongst the first Union troops to occupy the Rebel capital.

This action signaled the end of war, Rebellion, and treason. Vanderbilt University Professor of history R. J. Blackett, ed., *Thomas Morris Chester: Black Civil War Correspondent* (1989) describes the jubilant celebration of the Negro residents as the Union Army, USCT, and President Lincoln entered Richmond.

Confederates and neo-Confederates later would hide these facts from the history books and mis-educate adult citizens and school children. But Gen. Lee had warned Rebel president Jefferson Davis to evacuate Richmond (“get out of town”); they hurriedly boarded Lynchburg Railroad trains and fled with the treasury south toward North Carolina, Georgia and Florida—trying to escape “before the hanging begins” for treason against the USA. They were hoping to reach Mexico or Cuba to build a slave- based nation—a new “Cotton Kingdom.”

On April 9, 1865, Rebel army commanding Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia near Appomattox Courthouse—not far from Richmond. On the night of April 15, 1865, President Lincoln was shot in the back of the head by a Rebel sympathizer in a DC theater.

Word reached Nashville the next day, just as a victory parade started down 8th Ave. S. toward Fort Negley (2 miles south of the 1865 city limits at today’s Fort Negley & Chesnut Blvd.; a fort built by the Union Army (1862-1864) and some 2-3 thousand Negroes (slave and free) including men and women impressed from Sunday church services). Fort Negley is a tourist attraction recently opened by the Nashville mayors and councilmen as Fort Negley Center.

Vice President Andrew Johnson became the new US President. A delegation of Negro leaders led by John Mercer Langston gained an audience with the new president. Johnson impatiently listened to their request for equal treatment; but Johnson of East Tennessee did not like free “blacks” who asserted equality with “whites.”

Langston was President of the newly formed National Equal Rights League (NERL)—first

postwar US civil rights organization, 1864-1890. He was speaker for the first Emancipation Day Program held in the Tennessee Capitol Building, last Jan. 1, 1865. His daughter, Nettie De Ella Napier married Nashville’s Negro councilman James C. Napier.

Meanwhile, on May 10, 1865, based on expert intelligence from the local Negroes, the Army of the Cumberland cavalry units finally located and captured Jefferson Davis and entourage trying to sneak through Georgia. They shipped Jeff Davis to Nashville, where Gen. Thomas sent him to Gen. Grant and a prison in Washington, DC.

The notorious Gen. Nathan B. Forrest, whose men had massacred hundreds of Union soldiers, USCT, and women and children camped at Fort Pillow (April 12, 1864) tried to reach Mexico to join the new Rebel conspiracy, but was so disgusted about the failure of Davis and the Rebellion; he stopped; addressed his soldiers, and decided to surrender. His Memphis lawyers obtained a pardon for treason from President Andrew Johnson. However, Forrest did not repent by 1877, when he died of diabetes: he headed the KKK; gained a state contract to operate a brutal prison farm on Presidents Island (Memphis). He killed a Negro with an axe.

Meanwhile, in May 1865, when they felt assured the war was over, and that Negroes had contributed to Union victory, preservation of the Union, and end of Slavery, local Negro leaders sent out a call for all Tennessee counties to send Negro delegates to the first State Colored Men’s Convention to discuss the aftermath of the war and how to address Negro issues within Reconstruction programs and policies. Gen. Robert E. Lee, the slaveholding head of the Confederate Army soon applied for a pardon for treason, but the Secretary of State left the approved document on the table; it was not approved officially until the time of Congress and President Gerald R. Ford (R). The next US President, Jimmy Carter (D), from Georgia, approved the return all Confederate battle flags to the respective former Rebel States.

*(Continued on page 7)

Some 600,000 men (not to mention civilian casualties including slaves, free Negroes, and USCT) died for those “spoils of war!” Not until 2020 could citizens begin to remove honors, statues, memorials, and names on public facilities for Confederates and neo- Confederates who committed their lives and descendants’ worship to Slavery, disunion, Rebellion, celebratory events, display of Rebel flags, wearing Rebel uniforms, and outright evils as celebration of treason against the USA.

*Part II of “First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill History: Tennessee’s State Colored Men’s Convention” will post in the February Torch, 2021.

Prayer Request/Sick & Shut-in List

In order to keep our prayer list current, please let the church office know if you (or someone you know) have changed address or if someone should be added to or removed from the prayer list.

Deacon Richard Dinkins
Sis. Jan Jones Carter
Sis. Rosa Mimms
Major Alicia R. Bodie

Sis. Elizabeth Backus
Wesley Common
1110 Marshall Road #6220
Greenwood, SC 29646

Bro. Derrick McDaniel
Good Samaritan Health &
Rehab
500 Hickory Hollow Terrace
Antioch, TN 37013

Sis. Rose McDonald
111 N. Carolina Ave. #204
Lexington, NC 27292

Sis. Maggie Roper
Green Hills Health & Rehab
3939 Hillsboro Circle
Nashville, TN 37215

Sis. Dorothy Vassall
Morningside of Belmont
1710 Magnolia Blvd.
Nashville, TN 37212

Sis. Leslie Williams
2929 Old Franklin Rd
Nashville, TN 37013

B I R T H D A Y S

JANUARY

- 1 Elizabeth Davis
- 2 Gabriel Bryson
- 5 Kelando Townsend
- 6 Tamia C. McKnight
Diane Robertson
- 7 Timarion J. Smith
Betty Wilson
- 9 Bobby Lovett
- 11 Marshawn Miller
- 13 Karen Brown
- 14 Kathy Harrell
Ronald McFarland, Sr.
Becky Swanson
- 15 Nina Lockert
Brooke McFarland
- 20 Jessie Carter, III
Jessica Powell
Kathleen Wilkinson
Sean Wood
- 21 M. Inez Crutchfield
- 22 Jason Robertson
Diantay Powe Westbrook
- 24 Esq. Robert Greene
Lueatrice Lovett
Adrian Samuels
- 26 Evelyn Gaines-Guzman
Carole McDaniel
- 27 James Lowe, III
- 28 Noah Kirk
- 29 Hortense Jones
Lance Molette
- 31 Virginia W. McClain
Evan Smith-Erving

FEBRUARY

- 2 Valinda Burks
Geri Easley
- 3 Sabrina Daughtdrill
- 4 Wesley Currie
Kourtlynn Greene
Jeffery Wood, Sr.
- 6 Billie Calloway
- 7 Richard Ewing, IV
Constantine Fenderson
- 8 Benita Lynch
- 12 George Timothy Haynes, II
- 14 Stephen Daniel
- 15 Ed Risby, Jr.
Lolita Slay
- 16 Johnny Allen
Cornelia Cruson
Gary Faulcon, II
- 17 Hortensia H. McFarland
- 18 Tammye Hawkins
- 19 George Hill
- 21 Kendra Deas
- 22 Andreana Breveard
Patricia Lane
- 23 Kenneth Cory
Syelah Haskins
- 24 Christopher Beard
- 25 Myshia L. Deaderick
- 27 Christopher Demonbreum
- 28 Dwight Lewis

MARCH

- 1 Dwight Lewis
Jamal Robinson
- 3 DeJuan Foster
Candace Nunn
- 4 Tondreona Chandler
- 5 Vernoris Johnson
Gerald Schrader
- 6 Sebastian Daughtdrill
Tara McKnight Cheatham
Lynn Stewart
- 7 KeShona Chandler
Keshona Cox
- 9 Susan Mosely-Howard
- 10 Jonishay Acklin
Taylor Gentry
- 11 Doris Dismuke
- 12 Mai Olive Lusk
- 13 Kyrach Cruson
- 14 Willie M. Magee
Taylor McFarland
- 20 Marian Williams Patton
- 21 Sharanda Smith
- 23 Scotty Robinson
- 24 Miriam Currie
Frankie Jackson
- 25 Lyndsey Bass-Covington
Retha Buchanan
- 26 Tequila Johnson
- 27 Esther Caudle
James Chandler
Rosa Mimms
- 29 David Ewing
William Ewing, Sr.
- 30 Erica Adderly
- 31 John T. Howse

January 2021 Readings and Sunday School Lessons

<u>DAY</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>SCRIPTURE</u>
Called to Proclaim		
Friday, January 1 st	“Blessed and Chosen In Christ”	Ephesians 1:1-14
Saturday, January 2 nd	“Christ, head over All People/Things”	Ephesians 1:15-23
Sunday, January 3 rd	“In the Family Line of David”	Matthew 1:6b-15
Adult: An Amazing Ministry	Youth: Ministering to Those in Need	Children Topic: Desire God
Called to Significance		
Monday, January 4 th	“Called to Lead Israelites from Egypt”	Exodus 3:1-12
Tuesday, January 5 th	“Called to Deliver Israelites from Midianites”	Judges 6:11-16
Wednesday, January 6 th	“Called and cleansed for Ministry”	Isaiah 6:1-8
Thursday, January 7 th	“Single-mindedness Is Required to Follow Jesus”	Luke 9:57-62
Friday, January 8 th	“Repentance – the Goal of God’s Kindness”	Romans 2:1-11
Saturday, January 9 th	“Jesus Calls Peter to Ministry”	John 21:15-19
Sunday, January 10 th	“Don’t Be Afraid to Catch People”	Luke 5:1-11
Adult: The Ultimate Fish Story	Youth: Worthy of a Big Calling	Children: Follow Me
Called to Heal		
Monday, January 11 th	“Peace and Healing Will Come”	Isaiah 57:14-21
Tuesday, January 12 th	“Healed by Christ’s Wounds”	1 Peter 2:18-25
Wednesday, January 13 th	“A Canaanite Daughter is Healed by Her Mother’s Faith”	Matthew 15:21-28
Thursday, January 14 th	“Anoint the Sick with Oil and Prayer”	James 5:13-16
Friday, January 15 th	“A Woman is Healed by Her Faith”	Mark 5:21-34
Saturday, January 16 th	“The Sick Need a Physician”	Mark 2:13-17
Sunday, January 17 th	“Jesus Heals and Forgives the Paralytic”	Mark 2:1-12
Adult: Healing for the Whole Person	Youth: Going Out of Our Way for a Friend	Children: Seeking Help for Others
Called as the Intercessor		
Monday, January 18 th	“Prayer for Peter in Prison”	Acts 12:5-11
Tuesday, January 19 th	“Pray for a Successful Ministry”	Romans 15:22-23
Wednesday, January 20 th	Pray for Inner Strength and Power”	Ephesians 3:14-21
Thursday, January 21 st	Pray the Prayer of Our Lord”	Matthew 6:7-13
Friday, January 22 nd	“Pray for Your Abusers”	Luke 6:22-33
Saturday, January 23 rd	“Pray to Avoid Trials”	Luke 22:39-46
Sunday, January 24 th	“Jesus Prays for His Disciples”	John 17:13-24
Adult: Standing in the Gap	Youth: Standing in the Gap	Children: Stand Up and Walk
Prophecy Daughters		
Monday, January 25 th	“Jesus Supports Mary’s Choice”	Luke 10:38-42
Tuesday, January 26 th	“Jesus Responds to Sisters’ Call”	John 11:1-11
Wednesday, January 27 th	“Jesus Raises Lazarus; Mary Believes”	John 11:38-45
Thursday, January 28 th	“Women Carry Resurrection Message to the Apostles”	Luke 24:5-10
Friday, January 29 th	“Jesus Final Words and Ascension”	Luke 24:44-53
Saturday, January 30 th	“Simeon Sees the Impact of Jesus’ Ministry”	Luke 2:28-35
Sunday, January 31 st	“The Spirit Empowers Daughters to Prophecy”	Luke 2:36-38; Acts 2:16-21, 21:8-9
Adult: Women Speak Out	Youth: Daughters Who Speak Out	Children: Sisters Speak Out

MINISTRY OF STEWARDSHIP MANAGEMENT

Sermon Digests

November
22

“Thanks Worth Giving”
Pastor Kelly M. Smith, Jr.
Psalm 118:1

Submitted by: Beverly M. Brown

Every day is a day of thanksgiving. The gratitude is to say thank you. God/Christ Jesus’ people ought to always be in a posture of sincere thanksgiving for what God does for each of us and not superficial. Instead, one’s actions are to come from the depths of one’s heart; spending time with family, good health, and thanks needs to be for His mercifulness. God is a good God.

These are the three (3) major points:

Point 1. This thanks is worth giving because of the Lord’s limitlessness. God’s character is that He is the I AM that I AM. God has no boundaries or limits in the world as to what He can do. God does not function with limitations, obstacles, or restrictions for any human being. We can trust Him.

Point 2. The thanks is worth giving because of the Lord’s life lessons. We cannot tell it all in a moment and one sentence. Humankind must learn the lessons God wants His people to learn based upon the situations and circumstances they may encounter. The Lord is our light and salvation, no matter how long it takes. No weapons formed against us will be successful, the wages of sin is death and those who wait upon Lord will rise up like eagles with wings. Those present were prodded to know that with the Lord, we can do all things through the Lord that strengthens us (read Phillipian’s 4:13 & Psalm 23). One can always lean and depend upon the Lord.

Point 3. The thanks is worth giving because of the Lord’s Love. Everything He does for us is through the eyes of the love of God. He wants us to believe in what is being done and to contribute in a positive way. He wants society to truly love unconditionally with an agape love for each other (read Romans 8:38-39). An example of God’s demonstration of His love is the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ’s death on the cross for our sins and He rose from the dead on the 3rd day. His love is what allowed each of us to wake up this morning and His holding us in the palm of His hands as our savior. Amen, Amen, Amen.

November
29

“Above Ground Blessing”
Rev. Joe Ella Darby
Acts 17:22-28

Submitted by: Sheila Littleton

We can consider ourselves blessed to be above ground. Despite a pandemic, injustices, hurricanes, tornadoes, political unrest, and family challenges, we should consider ourselves blessed. There is a struggle to maintain hope, but God is a constant whom we can hold.

We are his offspring above ground. We make the most of living above ground by our choice to Live in God, Move in rhythm of his grace, and in our Being. In the scriptural text, Paul was distressed with the city of Athens because of all the idols. He noted an altar with an inscription to an unknown God, so he proclaimed the God they worshipped. God does not live in temples built by hands and does not need anything from us. For as verse 28 cites, “For in Him we live and move and have our being.”

Point 1. To Live in God, we recognize and acknowledge God is the reason we live. We have life and new mercies each day. People can appear religious and yet do not even know God if there is not a relationship. We should be fully alive to God’s purposes in our lives even in suffering. In suffering, we can find meaning and thank God for our relationship. We choose to stay alive to his purpose for our lives in spite of our circumstance.

Point 2. We choose to Move to the rhythm of God’s grace. Paul was forbidden to go to the province of Asia as he wanted but followed where God was leading. Each of us is given a measure of God’s grace. We should choose to say yes to God’s purpose for our life by allowing God to breathe life in us. We need to be open to God’s following and stay connected to move in rhythm of God’s grace. There are obstacles and barriers to our purpose to overcome such as sin. We will take detours, but God will work it out for our good.

Point 3. We must choose to Be. We have our being in God. We have a connection with a loving God, and it is our identity. We are loved, forgiven, protected, and comforted. There would be a difference in our lives if we believed we belonged to God. We manifest the presence of God as we strive to be who God says we are and live surrendered lives. Everyday Above Ground is a blessing. Let us steward that blessing well.

December
6

“Waymakers”
Pastor Kelly Miller Smith Jr.
Mark 1:1-8

Submitted by: Deborah Luter

John the Baptist was a way-maker for the coming of Jesus Christ. His mission is established at the beginning of the gospel of Mark. Waymakers are not the stars. They don't have the light shining on them. Their names may be seldom mentioned, and even forgotten. But their task is a crucial one for the advancement of the Kingdom of God.

We all have benefited from way-makers in our lives. Some have only been there for a moment to help us to get something done. Others for a season, and others for a lifetime. But way-makers are who make the difference. After Barack Obama was elected in 2008, he told John Lewis that it was because of him he was able to achieve. John once came within inches of losing his life simply to help people to gain the right to vote. Obama, though decades later, was the beneficiary of that progress.

Point 1-Way-makers are sent by God

Verse 2 states from the beginning that this is God's doing. God's sending is God's vested interest in what is going to happen. They must be God sent because the work is not for the faint of heart. Not always doing what is popular and fun. But it is critical for the advancement of the kingdom.

Point 2-Way-makers make the story the story

Look how Mark frames the gospel. The first verse states the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of God. But the very next verse jumps right into the story and mission of John the Baptist. John the Baptist sets the stage for Jesus' coming. Mark does not tell the story of the birth of Christ. He feels it is more important to tell the story of the one who was a way-maker for Jesus. He wanted to share the story of the one who was important in making a way for Jesus Christ to come on the scene.

Point 3-Way-makers manage the wilderness

When we think of the wilderness, we may think of it metaphorically as a place of trouble and disillusionment. People of color have many times spent generations in the wilderness. But it is there we were able to find ourselves and to find our strength and to find God. It was a place where our ancestors were able to find God. We can find God there as well. Waymakers cause a way to be made, not for their own purpose, but to help others achieve their dreams. We may not know who God is preparing right now to be a way-maker for us.

December
13

“But, Then I Went to Worship”
Pastor Smith's 10th Anniversary
Rev. Dr. Gina M. Stewart
Psalm 73:1-3

Submitted by: Adrienne Fancher

James Baldwin had an extraordinary way of deconstructing words: “to be Black and conscious in America is to be in a constant state of rage.” Baldwin's words are applicable to our current times. For people committed to working for Justice, there are forces working against us.

The contradiction between Faith and Reality appears when, some days, God just doesn't make sense. God's ways are not our ways. Some days we struggle to understand God's ways. We find ourselves in Faith-Crisis. A thinking person begins to question the contradictions. Asaph's confusion reflects the communal Faith-Crisis. Asaph was a worship leader who wrestled with the contradictions, but he was very clear about his conviction that God is Good!

Asaph confesses to nearly slipping in the face of the wicked flourishing while not acknowledging God. People question if God is aware of Injustice. Asaph's feelings are an internal struggle until he speaks publicly. He is aware that his frustration can harm the community, but his silence will not go unnoticed. The Silence does not resolve the Struggle!

When I went to worship, I discovered that Worship is not Reality-Denial, it is Reality-Adjusting. The hypocrisy of the church can be damaging. God works through imperfect people and imperfect churches.

Go to worship. Among the Faithful, something happens when you stop glancing at people, and you search for God. Take your eyes off the people and put them on God. Take your eyes off the problems and focus on the Problem-solver. When we go to worship, we get a different perspective.

Don't ever give up on going to worship!

First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill

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Kelly M. Smith Jr., Pastor

Our Mission

First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill is Building, Restoring, and Revitalizing lives through Jesus Christ.

Our Vision

Love God, Make Disciples, Serve Community

Looking for a Church Home?

If you are looking for a church home, we encourage you to come and visit us! There are several ways to become a member of FBCCH.

Baptism - when a person is willing to initially express a belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and is willing to live one's life according to His will. Baptism is the symbolic initiation into the Christian faith.

Christian Experience - when a person who has previously been a member of another church chooses to unite with FBCCH, believing this to be the place for one's spiritual nurturing. These people have already been baptized and have committed a faith relationship with Jesus Christ.

Watchcare - when a person wishes to have his or her membership with FBCCH while he or she is temporarily living in the city.

Associate - when a person who has a membership in another church wishes to have a membership in FBCCH.

Restoration - when a former member chooses to rejoin FBCCH.

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Scheduling Access to Church Buildings

To all groups needing entry and use of the church, sanctuary, and Ennix-Jones Center during the week, please call the church office at 615-255-8757 in advance of your event. This is to ensure personnel are available to allow entry and to have a record for security purposes. Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

Please send all electronic correspondence to: fbch13@gmail.com.