



The Torch

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, CAPITOL HILL
NOVEMBER 2020 – VOLUME 62 NUMBER 2

PASTOR'S PEN

It is my fault. It is my fault that you are getting this edition of the Torch later than normal. It is our goal to get the Torch distributed by the first Sunday of each month. This month, I am shouldering the blame. It is not that I have not been thinking about what to write this month. I have had many different thoughts on what I should write. But the climate of the nation right now has caused me to pause longer and reflect deeper to discern what may be most relevant to say.

We have found that we have managed to navigate most things we have had to face in our lives. There are those who still have personal battles (things such as sickness, depression, illness of loved ones, employment issues, finance issues, loneliness, etc.) they are dealing with. But to have the overlay of the other things happening in this world and converging on us at this time is difficult for us to wrap our arms around. Yet that is part of where we find the beauty of our faith ([2 Corinthians 5:7](#)). It is knowing that even when things are beyond OUR control, God is still in control ([1 Chronicles 29:11 – 12](#)). God walks with us and guides us through the storms.

I am working really to try and not get too much anxiety about the election on Tuesday. I do not recall having this level of concern previously about a presidential election. This is keeping in mind that there was concern when Reagan was elected both times. There was a concern in 2000 with the “hanging chad” election (Bush and Gore). And of course, there was the anticipation of electing the first Black President 12 years ago. And then the election four years ago between Trump and Clinton. But even as much concern as there was for those elections, I don't recall ever hearing and having the stakes be this high. This election does not hinge simply on who I feel would be the best candidate to win, but really, will the nation have a detectable heartbeat when all of this is over.

This nation is not just divided; it is ruptured. Divided seems to suggest that it has a clearly defined split. You may divide a watermelon in half. You may divide an estate between different parties in a family. You may divide an orange by its sections. You can be divided along political party lines. But a rupture means that it has burst into several pieces that cannot easily be repaired, if at all. I don't believe that this election, regardless of who wins, will fix this. There is something deeper than the election that will need to be fixed – it is the soul of the nation ([Mark 8:36 – 37](#)). It needs to be willing to right the wrongs it has committed. These wrongs are against people that have been exploited and abused for the gain of others. It needs to respect all people regardless of race, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identification and any other “differences” that may exist. It needs to exam all systems and abolish any system that oppresses, marginalizes or discriminates. It needs to care for people so that people can be healthy, have access to resources and have opportunities to live full and fruitful lives. It is a very tall order. To want this is not asking for socialism; it is asking for human decency. This nation needs to think differently so we can have different results and create an environment to forge new relationships and heal others ([Romans 12:2](#)).

I am going to work really hard not to watch political news Monday and Tuesday. I am going to go to bed at a decent hour on Tuesday night. If it is God's will, I will get up Wednesday morning and see where things stand. I will work to not be anxious about the results ([Philippians 4:6 – 7](#)). But I will look to see, regardless of the outcome, what God has in store for us as we find a pathway forward ([Deuteronomy 31:8](#)). My trust is not in this political theater. My trust is in God. And I will work hard to act like it ([Psalm 40:4](#)).

Kelly M. Smith Jr.
Pastor

DISCIPLESHIP MOMENT

Grief, COVID, and the Holidays (Part I)

“Jesus Wept.” ~John 11:35

Submitted by Rev. Joe Ella Darby, Assistant to the Pastor for Discipleship

March, many of us were already rethinking our new year’s resolutions. And now, with November being upon us, we just want to pause and find space to breath and process all that has happened. Since March alone, we have experienced a global pandemic, to many national injustices to count, political instability, and then just life in general. Honestly, with everything happening in the news, I’ve had to stop and remember that we still face “regular” challenges that are non-COVID related, yet were exacerbated by COVID.

Now, as we are embarking on the holiday season that includes Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year’s, many of us are experiencing a range of emotions. For many, the holidays are festive and exciting; yet for some the holiday season is met with sadness and even dread as one considers celebrating in the absence of a loved one or celebrating alone. COVID has made preparing for the holidays particularly hard, especially if one cannot be with family due to various restrictions.

For the past 9 months, many of us are experiencing a sense of loss. I’ve read many social media posts stating things like not being able to vacation as planned, or not being able to buy a house, or even having to move due to a loss of a job or income as just one more thing “COVID” took. As I reflected on the posts and numerous conversations with different people, I was able to name those feelings of loss as grief.

I would like to use the definition of grief coined by Dr. Alan Wolfelt, who is an author, educator, grief counselor, and the Director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition. He defines grief as what we think and feel whenever something we value is harmed or taken away. What I like about this definition is that it allows our understanding of grief to expand, including losses others than death. We grieve all the time, yet too often we only consider grief in light of losing someone. And often times, experiencing grief of a loved one might be

more acceptable than say grieving the loss of a pet, or a vacation or grieving the decision of your college student not to come home for Thanksgiving. Our thoughts and feelings about loss makes up our grief journey. Grief is not an illness. Grief is natural, normal, and healthy. It’s healthy to grieve when we have received a not-so-favorable medical diagnosis, or to grieve a divorce, or to grieve when you and a friend grow apart, or to grieve when your dream of playing a sport is shattered by a leg injury.

Loss is loss and everyone grieves differently. I remind us of this as we go into the holiday season. Many of us are grieving and it is okay. Acknowledge your feelings. Own your feelings. Journal. Talk to someone you trust about your feelings. Go to therapy. Meditate on scripture that reminds you of god being with you as you grieve. I know I’ve been guilty of telling myself that I don’t have time to grieve, as I have too many tasks to complete. I need to keep my head in the game. However, I am still grieving even through my avoidance. There is no time limit on grief, and it has a way of being expressed, whether in healthy or unhealthy ways. One of the things I realized on my own grief journey is what I feared was mourning.

Mourning is the outward expression of the grief we experience inside. I don’t know about you but often times I have feared that if I actually mourned, I may not be able to “pull it back together”. Traditionally, funerals have been designed to help us mourn or express our grief. We have and give ourselves permission to cry, and even then, many of us hold back the tears because we are embarrassed. If one does not mourn, one cannot heal. Mourning doesn’t have to be in a public arena or just through tears, but it does have to be expressed outwardly. Mourning is a gift that frees and heals us. We will never be the same because loss changes us, but that change doesn’t have to be negative. Next month, we will discuss honoring and commemorating a loss by finding meaning in rituals.

MISSION AT YOUR DOORSTEP

*“All authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God”
(Romans 13:1)*

November 2020 - A Time for Thanksgiving

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

As you read this article, many of you have already voted, or are preparing to cast your vote in the general election for our next president. The Republican Senate, with a boycotted vote by the Democrats, this past week has sworn in a third conservative justice to the Supreme Court. One might begin to question if the scripture in Romans 13 is still relevant in the twenty-first century. Is Donald J. Trump truly God’s man for the time as affirmed by the Evangelical Christian coalition?

In the midst of rising Covid19 cases during the month of October, many view November with the heightened anxiety and expectation that the rule of the current administration will soon be coming to an end. If that becomes our reality, Thanksgiving will truly be a time of rejoicing for those who have been marginalized, left out, and victimized in this country, by a political climate that has polarized our country, state and cities.

When the apostle Paul wrote the book of Romans, two contrary views thus faced one another within the Christian communities. On the one hand, under the influence of Pauline missions, was the idea that the “ruling body”—i.e., the existing political order of the Roman Empire—was “from God...for your good” (Romans 13:1–4) and that Christians should be “subject to the governing authorities.” Another similar idea held by Paul (in 2 Thessalonians) was that the Roman state, through its legal order, “restrains” the downfall of the world that the Antichrist is attempting to bring about. On the other hand, and existing at the same time, was John’s apocalyptic identification of the imperial city of Rome with the great whore of Babylon (Revelation 17:3–7). Carter H. Lindburg, “The History of Church and State, The Church and the Roman Empire.” *Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Christianity/The-history-of-church-and-state>.

Thus, as Christians in the twenty-first century, we must use the spiritual gift of discernment, so that we are able to identify the truth and fruits of both individuals and institutions. We should not let one or two issues be the litmus test on how we cast our vote. We should also not be duped into following a leader or institution which have no redeeming moral qualities or values, because they espouse the doctrine which best appeals to our political consciousness.

It amazes me, well not really, that President Barak Obama can be called the Antichrist, and President Donald J. Trump can be viewed as God’s anointed, by those who profess a belief in the transforming and salvific power of Jesus of Nazareth. Late last year, Trump told Republican pollster and focus-group guru Frank Luntz that when the real-estate mogul has done something wrong, he tries to correct his error without getting God involved. "I am not sure I have," Trump said when asked if he'd ever asked God for forgiveness. "I just go on and try to do a better job from there. I don't think so," he said. "I think if I do something wrong, I think, I just try and make it right. I don't bring God into that picture. I don't." He would probably also say he has no need of salvation.

A time for thanksgiving. Let us be thankful that November 3, 2020 is near. Let us be thankful that we are surviving Covid19. Let us be thankful that God is still in control and showers us with blessings every day. Be sure and vote. In the USA, God can only place in the seat of power, those we the people vote for. Remember, the future of our democracy as we once knew it, depends on it.

Announcements from ABC-USA

New Volume Traces History of Black Baptist Church from Beginnings to Present Day

VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 10/21/20)—From its theological roots in the Radical Reformation of Europe and North America, the praise houses of slavery’s invisible institution, and the evolution of distinctively black denominations, the history of the Black Baptist Church unfolds in the newly released book “A History of the Black Baptist Church: I Don’t Feel No Ways Tired.”

The volume examines the following:

- the emergence of the Black Independent Church Movement and the historical development of the Black Church from its African origins
- social concerns that influenced the growth of the Black Baptist family of churches
- the strengths, potential threats and future of Black Baptists in a postmodern and post-denominational world.

The book will interest not only church historians and professors of church history and Baptist polity, but also clergy and laity interested in Black Baptist history and individuals involved with Baptist denominations and conventions.

Author The Rev. Dr. Wayne E. Croft Sr. is pastor of St. Paul’s Baptist Church, West Chester, Pa. Serving as the Jeremiah A. Wright Sr. associate professor of Homiletics and Liturgics at United Lutheran Seminary, Croft has more than 20 years of experience as a professor of Homiletics, Liturgics, and African American Baptist History and Polity. He has published several books, including “The Motif of Hope in African American Preaching during Slavery and the Post-Civil War Era: There’s a Bright Side Somewhere” (2017).

Book Examines Role of Bible, Constitution in Systemic Racial Injustice

VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 10/21/20)—The important and provocative book “With Liberty and Justice for Some: The Bible, the Constitution, and Racism in America” asserts that the two texts we count as sacred—the Bible and the Constitution—have not been merely impotent in eliminating racism but have been used to support and sustain white supremacy.

The book tackles the truths that the U.S. church has long held to be self-evident: that ours is one nation under God, that the U.S. Constitution is almost as infallible as the Holy Bible and that democracy and its principles of justice for all are sacrosanct and protected by both God and government. Yet history and headlines alike expose the fallacy of those assumptions, particularly when viewed in light of a national culture of systemic racial injustice and white supremacy.

Author Susan K. Williams Smith, M.Div., D.Min., examines how our foundational documents have failed people of color.

Smith is founder of Crazy Faith Ministries, which seeks to teach the concept of faith in ways that empower people. She has authored five books, including “Crazy Faith: Ordinary People, Extraordinary Lives” (Judson Press, 2009). She contributes to the Huffington Post and Washington Post. Her blog, “Candid Observations,” concentrates on the intersection of race, politics and religion. This former news reporter and talk show host makes her home in Gahanna, Ohio.

Founded in 1824, Judson Press is a publishing ministry of American Baptist Home Mission Societies, American Baptist Churches USA. It is committed to producing Christ-centered leadership resources for the transformation of individuals, congregations, communities and cultures.

GLORY SIGHTING

“Reprinted from Facebook: March 4, 2020”.

I didn't come home until 6am this morning. After the tornado, I spent last night assisting 10 homeless men at my mom's church, First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill. As part of the Room In The Inn Ministry, First Baptist regularly invites men to the church to spend the night, have a hot meal, wash clothes, shave, shower, and do anything else that might help ease their burden. I served as one of two Inn Keepers who spent the night with the men and tried to keep them as comfortable as possible-- an experience that has multiplied my gratitude tremendously. I listened to one of the men describe how he tried to survive the recent tornado. He heard the tornado sirens from his tent and when he finally peeked outside into the rain, he thought he heard a train barreling towards him. Turns out, a tornado makes train-like noises as it approaches. The tornado came right past him and he was tossed around his tent like a scrap of paper. He thought the world was ending and so, he prayed. First, he prayed for help and then, when he'd had too much, he prayed for a quick death. He was tearing up as he described this to me, waving his arms around with a red pack of cigarettes clutched in one hand. He was incredulous that he had survived! Rev. Arrol Martin told him that God had a plan for him. I reiterated that idea when he sought me out late last night, eager to talk about his recent miracle. He told me that his faith had quadrupled...that he knew he didn't survive for nothing, that he could push past his circumstances and get back on his feet. I believed him. And I was humbled by his simple gratitude for a place to sleep (in the church) that couldn't be easily blown away by the wind.

Update: Oct. 1, 2020.

This moment that I shared from March 4th still lives on in my memory because this man was literally a man who was clearly determined to change his circumstances. When I finally came to bed that night, I saw that he was still wide awake, on his phone. He could have been playing a computer game, but I don't think so. I think he was reading, seeking more knowledge. Either way, when I saw that he was still up, I got back up, opened my laptop and continued to work. I fell asleep like that, working on my play in another room. The next morning, the man donated half of his belongings to the church, saying he didn't want to carry anything that was going to weigh him down. I took that to mean that he needed to shed some things in order to achieve the major life changes he had planned. The same goes for all of us.

Submitted by SekouWrites
(Son of Jane Fort)

Deacons of the Week for November 2020

Week of	Deacon	Phone#
1 st	Derek Howard	(615) 318-6469
8 th	Carol Boone	(615) 851-1527
15 th	Pamela Wood	(615) 259-0623
22 nd	Martin Currie	(615) 832-9662
29 th	Beverly Brown	(615) 391-3737



COMMUNITY CARE ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Robert Churchwell Museum
Magnet Elementary School



Thank you for your interest in donating food bags for our students and families during the Thanksgiving holiday season.

Food Bag Items:

- 1 can of cranberry sauce ; 2 boxes of stuffing mix
- 2 boxes of instant mashed potatoes; 2 cans of green beans
- 2 boxes of cornbread mix; 2 packets or jars of gravy
- 1 dessert (cake or dessert mix with can of frosting)

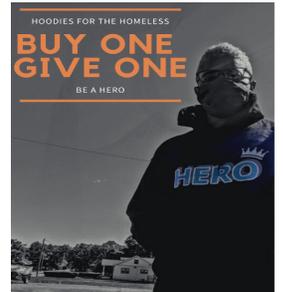
Optional: 3 cans of canned chicken or ham, OR \$15 gift card to either Kroger or Walmart for a turkey/ham

Please deliver your completed bag to Robert Churchwell Elementary on November 19th or 20th. Thank You!

[1625 Rosa Parks Blvd., Nashville, TN 37208](#)

For more information, please contact Sis. Kathy Harrell at kpharrell2@aol.com

Project Love Strong: I'm very grateful to have partnered with Project Love Strong, a local Black-owned nonprofit, for their 3rd annual *Hoodies for the Homeless* drive, which has already been covered by News Channel 5 and 92Q FM. FBCCH's Community Care Team has generously agreed to get involved as well. If you'd like to help us serve persons experiencing homelessness, please partner with us in one (or all) of the following ways.



- Make a monetary donation to Project Love Strong. Project Love Strong is a 501(c)3 tax deductible nonprofit. [Click Here to Donate](#)
- Purchase a HERO hoodie via my BUY ONE/GIVE ONE sale. Buy a hoodie for yourself and second hoodie will automatically be donated to Project Love Strong's *Hoodies for the Homeless* program. Price: \$65 plus shipping. [Click here to purchase your HERO hoodie](#). Purchase deadline: Thanksgiving Day 11/26/20.
- We would also like at least 10 volunteers to join us on the day of the event for this year's *Hoodies for the Homeless* drive to pass out hoodies and other essentials. The event day is Saturday, December 12th from 12noon - 2:00 p.m. at the War Memorial Plaza. Ideally, all of the volunteers will be wearing HERO hoodies to show up and show out as a team.
- If you have any questions, please contact me at 917.532.5640 or at sekou@sekouwrites.com

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

Ms. Ella Matambo
Macon, GA
(Friend of the Currie Family)

Bro. Derrick McDaniel
Good Samaritan Health & Reha
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. Bertha Taylor and
Bro. Willie Taylor
105 Valley Green Dr.
Antioch, TN 37013

Sis. Dorothy Vassall
4646 Skylark St NE
Lacey WA 98516

Bro. Walter Vincent
4824 Fairmeade Court
Nashville, TN 37218

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

B I R T H D A Y S

NOVEMBER

- 1 Jamal Buchannan
- 2 Kevin Copeland
- 3 Kamryn Cruson
Karmyn Cruson
Asalean Springfield
- 5 Terry Deas
- 7 Luke Molette
- 8 Jesse Carter
- 9 Evelyn Okediji
- 10 Robert Boone
Jeffrey Saintil
- 11 Alice Risby
- 15 Lois Shuttles
- 16 Clara Elam
Learotha Williams
- 17 Dawann Westbrook
- 18 Jasmine Easley
Ruth Higginbotham
- 19 William McDaniel
Christina Slay
- 20 Aaron Powell, Jr.
Spencer Washington, II
Rita Williams-Seay
- 21 Titus J. Woodson
- 22 Carol Boone
Adrienne Fancher
Howard Smith, Jr.
- 23 Skyler Washington
- 25 Jan M. Carter
Melody Neely
Allison Woodson
- 27 Dorothy Fort
- 30 Fanchetter D. Ennix

DECEMBER

- 1 Kayla Cruson
Gary Faulcon
- 2 Barbara Dougherty
- 3 Kelly Copeland
Deborah Luter
Ilee Wade
- 4 Linda Thompson
Torrie Washington
- 5 Ashley Glotta
- 7 Bernice Barnes
Tondrick Chandler
Vicki Todd-Stubbs
- 8 Corey Grimes
- 14 Brenda Duff
Nia Tolbert
- 15 Bettye Springfield
- 17 Leon Deaderick
Barry Hobbs
Myles Sidney
- 18 Vonda McDaniel
- 22 Ivan Davis, Jr.
- 23 Gloria T. Westbrook
- 24 Breanna Grimes
Cora Johnson
- 25 Valerie Robinson
- 31 Jacqueline Knight

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.
- 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

Christian Education

November 2020 Readings and Sunday School Lessons

Issues of Love

<u>DAY</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>SCRIPTURE</u>
Abiding Love		
Monday, November 2 nd	“God is Disappointed with Israel”	Isaiah 5:1-7
Tuesday, November 3 rd	“God Will Redeem Israel”	Isaiah 27:2-6
Wednesday, November 4 th	“Believers Continue God’s Work”	John 14:8-14
Thursday, November 5 th	“Jesus Freely Lays Down His Life”	John 10:11-18
Friday, November 6 th	“Facing the World as Jesus Did”	John 15:18-25
Saturday, November 7 th	“Jesus Fends to His Vineyard”	John 15:1-3
Sunday, November 8 th	“Always Love One Another”	John 15:4-17
Adult: The Love Connection	Youth: The Love Connection	Children: Bearing Fruit by Loving Others
Confident Love		
Monday, November 9 th	“An Example of Faith and Obedience	1 Thessalonians 2:1-10
Tuesday, November 10 th	“Then Darkness, Now Light”	Ephesians 5:8-16
Wednesday, November 11 th	“Live by the Light”	John 3:16-21
Thursday, November 12 th	“Children of God Love One Another”	1 John 2:28; 3:10
Friday, November 13 th	“Walking Faithfully in the Truth”	3 John:1-4
Saturday, November 14 th	“Imitate What is Good, Not Evil”	3 John: 9-12
Sunday, November 15 th	“Believe Jesus Christ, Love One Another”	1 John 3:11-24
Adult: Loving Others	Youth: True Love Beyond Just Words	Children: The Power of Love
Sharing Love		
Monday, November 16 th	“Preparing to Become a Deacon”	1 Timothy 3:8-13
Tuesday, November 17 th	“A Healing Ministry Grows the Church”	Acts 5:12-16
Wednesday, November 18 th	“A Church Sharing Plan is Enlarged”	Acts 6:1-7
Thursday, November 19 th	“Stephen’s Ministry is Opposed”	Acts 6:8-15
Friday, November 20 th	“Sharing All Lives Together”	Acts 2:42-47
Saturday, November 21 st	“Prayer for Boldness and Signs”	Acts 4:23-31
Sunday, November 22 nd	“Sharing All Possessions Challenges the Church”	Acts 4:32; 5:11
Adult: Sharing Love in Truth	Youth: Uncommon Sharing for the Common Good	Children: Sharing Love
Impartial Love		
Monday, November 23 rd	“Extending Mercy Is More Important Than Sacrifice”	Matthew 12:1-8
Tuesday, November 24 th	“Love One Another from the Heart”	1 Peter 1:17-23
Wednesday, November 25 th	“In Christ, Gentiles Share Abraham’s Faith”	Galatians 3:6-9, 13-14
Thursday, November 26 th	“The Faith of a Levite Mother Saves Moses”	Exodus 2:1-10
Friday, November 27 th	“Unexpressed Faith Has No Value”	James 2:14-17
Saturday, November 28 th	“Faith and Works Complement Each Other”	James 2:18-26
Sunday, November 29 th	“Disdain the Practice of Partiality”	James 2:1-13
Adult: A Community of Equals	Youth: Loving Without Distinction	Children: Considering How Others Feel

MINISTRY OF STEWARDSHIP MANAGEMENT

Sermon Digests

September
13

**“Recreating Community:
Becoming Like Children”**
(1st Sermon in Series)
Pastor Kelly M. Smith Jr.
Matthew 18:1-4

Submitted by: Adrienne Fancher

The Kingdom of God is about building community. COVID and politics are threatening to destroy community. Our faith ought to drive us to create community. Our current circumstances may force us to define community in a new way.

The disciples’ question in Verse 1 presumes they already have a place in the Kingdom, and it is just a matter of sorting out the hierarchy. Jesus flips the question to let them know that access to the Kingdom is not certain. Entry, not hierarchy, is the question. Jesus says that we must be born again and become like children.

Point 1. To recreate community, we must become vulnerable like children. We must be vulnerable to blessings and to harm or hurt. We don’t usually strive to be vulnerable; we usually try to protect ourselves from vulnerability. Jesus wants us to see the benefit in being open. Sometimes we need to listen to others rather than be defensive. Sometimes adversity helps us grow.

Dealing with Vulnerability:

~Trust your worthiness.

~Be genuine with who you are and honest about how you feel.

~Remove your walls.

~Know you can handle the outcome.

~Don’t give away your power.

Point 2. To recreate community, we must become needy like children. Neediness is sometimes necessary.

Some people are only needy and don’t contribute back.

There is a healthy neediness: we need others and they need us for caring and support. “No Man is an Island” [John Donne]: when one rejoices or suffers, we all rejoice or suffer. We cannot live life alone. The community allows us to make sure all needs are met. Understand the importance of sharing with each other. No one should have to face life’s circumstances alone.

Point 3. To recreate community, we must become humble like children. Give up your sense of importance.

Humility gets us where God wants us to go. It’s not who is the greatest: it’s who is the most humble. There is nothing “beneath” us. Don’t expect a light on what you do. Children are willing to help someone who has fallen – without arrogance.

When Jesus died, he demonstrated how to empty [open] ourselves. Being like children is not childish. Being connected as community is the only way we survive.

Come forth as a new creation – like children!

September
20

**“Recreating Community:
The Rescue Team”**
(2nd Sermon in Series)
Pastor Kelly M. Smith Jr.
Matthew 18:12-14

Submitted by: Kathy Harrell

Among the strengths of any community is how they support one another. This cohesion of support is shown in different ways; whether it is by words and deeds of encouragement, by our presence in good and difficult times, or by our excitement for one another. The community’s binding strength is shown by how we rescue those who are lost.

From our parable, Jesus is teaching us that not only is it those who are spiritually lost that are in need of rescuing, but also those who are struggling, misguided, broken, hurt, angry, victims of poor choices, and those who are caught up in other people or other things. The paradox is that sometimes we are the sheep who need help, and sometimes we are the shepherd, who helps others. Many times, it is both.

Point 1. In recreating community, the rescue team should know how to handle themselves in a crisis.

All lives matter. But it is those who are most in danger, those in immediate distress, that need rescuing. In those times when the shepherd is away, the community must be spiritually mature enough to be shepherds to one another and intentionally intervene in the lives of those who are in peril.

Point 2. In recreating community, the rescue team should work to turn ‘ifs’ into ‘whens’.

When we are *preventive*, we reduce the need to be *interventive*. It should not be ‘if’ we reach out and help others, it must be ‘when’ we reach out and help. We don’t know what may happen, ‘if’ we wait to rescue others; it is likely that someone’s situation may get worse. The community must always be about when we bring others back to Jesus Christ. When we bind together to help heal and restore, not just one, but every one of us who needs the rescuing love of Jesus Christ.

Point 3. In recreating community, the rescue team should be about God’s business.

No one should be outside the community. Even when we don’t want to care for others, we do it because God says go forth in his name. We are conduits for God’s business, and God’s mercy. We help others, not so they will help us in return, but because it is the business of God. We cannot let our humanness (what we want) block us from doing what God has compelled us to do for Him.

September
27

“Recreating Community: Reconciling Relationships”
(3rd Sermon in Series)
Pastor Kelly M. Smith, Jr.
Matthew 18:15-20

Submitted by: Beverly M. Brown

Several examples cited in the Sermon about the lack of reconciling relationships in community included the recent injustice verdict related to Brionna Taylor, the poor handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, the intimidation being projected toward or around protecting legal voting rights of citizens, and some of the imperfections found in the church. How can we restore and reconcile relationships? We must make places of worship a safe place, pray for and with each other, and confront and have a genuine desire to work hard to mend broken relationships.

The three (3) main points:

Point 1. We must do what is expected of the church.

The church is not to practice inequity; instead, the church, which are Gods’ people, must have the same or similar standards for all human beings. Behavioral conduct is to demonstrate the fruits of the spirit as demonstrated by Jesus in Galatians 5: 22-23. People watch humankind’s conduct and not just their words.

Point 2. We must look for a win-win.

The goal is to find a balance that leaves each other with dignity and respect for each other, the situation, and for others witnessing with the desire to become better disciples for Jesus Christ. Be an example of and for Christ Jesus.

Point 3. We must be like Jesus.

Actions, communications, and behavior are to be of love and true concern, and not designed to exploit others. The way to receive true reconciliation is to pray, allow God/Christ Jesus to guide our actions, and embrace each other with the love of Christ Jesus that can get His People and His Church to where He needs them to be and to allow the reconciling of relationships to occur. Amen, Amen, Amen.

October
4

“Recreating Community: The Importance of Presence”
(4th Sermon in Series)
Pastor Kelly M. Smith, Jr.
Matthew 18:19-20

Submitted by: Deborah Luter

Today is Loyalty Sunday. It is a time when we commit ourselves to the call and cause of Jesus Christ. We commit ourselves to his church and to his people. This is why it is imperative that those within the church community would be loyal to one another, even as we are loyal to Christ.

We know that presence has been very difficult to come by during this year. But that is the backbone of the church and we must still find a way.

Point 1. We must be present with each other.

Matthew writes about binding and loosing. Those were legal terms in the Jewish law, to bind was to restrict or prohibit. To loose was to permit and allow. To be present for each other means there are things we will not allow in the relationships and there are things we will allow. We will not allow any other agenda, but the agenda of Jesus Christ, to be in our midst. We will allow love to run rampant in the church. We will allow ourselves to go the extra mile to help others within the fellowship. We will pray for one another on a regular basis. We will allow for encouragement and support.

Point 2-We must discern who is not present with us.

We make a lot of assumptions as to who is there for us. One of our members sent an article to many of us that stated racism among white evangelical Christians is higher than non-religious people. In a recent conversation with representatives from the Governor’s office, Pastor Smith stated that “we don’t have anyone we can count on to be on our side and to go to bat for us”. Jesus tells those in the community that when you gather, regardless of the occasion, ...’I am here’.

Point 3-We must know that Christ is willing to be present.

Matthew, Chapter 1 tells us that Jesus shall be called “Emanuel, which means, God is with us.” In the very last chapter, Jesus said, and I will be with you, to the very end of the age. In the middle of the book he tells us that whenever two or three are gathered, there I am in the midst. In each part of these three verses it points us back to God. Wherever two or three are gathered in my name. Notice it doesn’t say where two or three agree in my name. He is not just there when we work things out, but he is there before we work things out. We are taught that he is omnipresent, meaning he is everywhere. We must learn to let him in and allow him to be present in our lives.

October
11

**“Recreating Community: Forgiving”
(5th Sermon in Series)
Pastor Kelly M. Smith, Jr.
Matthew 18:21-22**

Submitted by: Kathy Harrell

One of the most difficult expectations of us is that of forgiving. If it were not for grace, many of us would be tripped up about getting into heaven because of lack of forgiveness. Some of us have been hurt so badly that we don't have it is us to forgive. Even Michelle Obama found it unforgiveable for a certain 'someone' who had made threatening statements against her family. In our own lives, malicious offenses have been portrayed against us or our families that we say are unforgiveable.

The struggle for many of us is how do we within the Christian community forgive and specifically forgive those within the community? We should constantly be in the forgiving mode. Forgiving is a process. We need to dispel the myths that forgiving means we must forget, we must reconcile, or we must trust.

Point 1 – Forgiving is about freeing ourselves

You can never stop forgiving people. This is disheartening to people because of a misunderstanding of what forgiveness is about. It is not about the other person. It is removing the load off of you that someone else placed on you. It is about you releasing the burden of the pain someone has caused you. We only have control over ourselves. Our emotional healing is up to us, and not up to the one who injured us.

Point 2 – Forgiving is about reestablishing our value to the community. It is true that words may harm us; we cannot let them paralyze us. To advance the Kingdom of God, we cannot be side-lined by holding grudges. This limits our availability and compromises the gifts God has given us to share. We must work through our feelings, stay in the game, and be a valuable part of the community of believers.

Point 3 – Forgiving is about respecting that we have been forgiven.

Regardless of the context, all of us should forgive others, because God has forgiven us! Forgiving may not be easy, but it is possible. We all sin and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). We are only here today because of God's forgiveness, over and over and over again. The whole Christian faith was established for the sake of forgiveness. Let go, and let God...

October
18

**“Rescuing Community: Removing
Stumbling Blocks”
(6th Sermon in Series {Final})
Pastor Kelly M. Smith, Jr.
Matthew 18:6-10**

Submitted by: Kathy Harrell

A stumbling block causes us to hesitate, fall, misjudge, misunderstand, or hinders us from staying true to God's purpose for our lives. There are many ways that stumbling blocks can get in our way. Jesus tells us that there are natural stumbling blocks in the world, but we ourselves must not be one of them. We must do what we can to remove the rough paths in life for others. In a community, in some way, shape or form, we are all accountable for one another.

Point 1. We must remove the stumbling block of me and replace it with we.

In our Scripture, Jesus requires accountability in the community. We are all responsible to and for one another, especially to those who are most vulnerable or new to the faith. We must not do things that would cause others to slip; we are commanded to reach out and help. A strong faith community will help those who are weak. The journey is not just about 'me' as an individual, it is about 'we' overcoming life's trials together.

Point 2. We must remove the stumbling block of nature and replace it with nurture.

There is no way around preventing natural stumbling blocks of life. However, we must not be the cause of them. We must replace natural circumstances with nurturing circumstances. As we help restore each other in loving compassionate ways, our lives can remain balanced as we continue to grow in carrying out God's Will.

Point 3. We must remove the stumbling block of obstacles and replace them with opportunities.

Sometimes, our stumbling blocks are caused by our own choices. Our missteps and mistakes can also cause others to be misguided. We have to overcome our hurdles and replace them with opportunities which strengthen our faith. Those in our community who may be struggling, vulnerable, or misplaced, are looking to the strength and faith actions of the community to also help them remain strong in fulfilling God's plan for their lives.

First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill

625 Rosa L. Parks Boulevard at Nelson Merry Street | Nashville, TN 37203

www.firstbaptistcapitolhill.org

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.

Torch Staff

Editor-in-Chief	Kelly M. Smith Jr.
Editor	Conra G. Collier
Church History Editor	Bobby L. Lovett
Member Spotlight Editor	Sharanda Smith
Reporter-at-Large	Carole McDaniel
Chair, Ministry of Communication	Sharon Dixon Gentry

Sermon Digest Reporters

Beverly M. Brown	Susan Howard
Kathy Harrell	Sheila Littleton
Adrienne Fancher	Deborah Luter

Proofreaders

Evelyn Fancher
Lueatrice Green Lovett
Carole McDaniel

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.