



The Torch

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, CAPITOL HILL
2022 – FEBRUARY VOLUME 63 NUMBER 5

PASTOR'S PEN

I was asked by Senator Brenda Gilmore to be the minister of the day January 20, 2022. This involved my coming to do the opening prayer during for their session. I could also stay on the chamber floor the rest of the day as they conducted the business of making laws, etc. for the state of Tennessee. I appreciated the opportunity that Senator Gilmore gave me. Because of my concern for many of the actions these legislators have taken, and the matters that were before them even then, I pondered what should my prayer be. I even thought about scripting it out so that I could say what I felt needed to be said at that time.

This is not verbatim - I chose not to write it out - but the spirit of the prayer. My prayer mentioned that we are in the shadows of the day that we observed the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr (January 17 this year). Even as Dr. King is one of the most significant individuals in US history, and even the world, there are those who are trying to remove the teachings of his life from the history books because of their discomfort with the things he accomplished. But even if they don't like Dr. King, they should still embrace the principles for which he stands – that all people would be treated fairly and equally, and that all people have their value and worth.

I went further to mention that as I pray, I pray in the name of Jesus. I know there are those who do not embrace Jesus, but they could embrace his principles of respect for all people regardless of their race, economic status and gender; that he was always seeking to lift those who were the least of these. After I finished they did the pledge of allegiance to the American flag and some other recitation to the state of Tennessee.

I had hoped that my words would infiltrate some of their thinking and some of the decisions there are charged to make. I was hoping that they would have a different sensitivity regarding some of the legislation before them. I was hoping that as they were looking to redraw district lines that they would see the importance of balancing the districts so that more minorities and disadvantaged people would not be further marginalized by gerrymandering. I was hoping that they would understand the challenges of urban centers (Nashville and Memphis specifically) and that they need the resources that the state has to work to make a difference in those communities. (Many of the state legislators represent rural districts, though they make decisions on what happens with the large ones). My list goes on of what I hoped.

But that didn't happen. They maintained their course and continue in their efforts to make Tennessee a state that only caters to one set of people. But in that whole experience I was reminded of the fact that prayers are to God. Even as you do public prayers on behalf of people the prayers are to God. I cannot expect that because it is me that they will change. God will have to change their hearts. And until they choose to listen to God they will continue to do what they do. My prayer does not change. Just my remembering that my trust is in God and not the legislators for the state of Tennessee ([Proverbs 29:26](#), [Galatians 1:10](#), [1 John 5:14](#)).

Kelley M. Smith Jr

Pastor

DISCIPLESHIP MOMENT

Joining God at Work: Partnering with KMS Towers

“In his defense Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.” ~John 5:17

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

Since October, FBCCH has begun a more strategic and intentional approach to partnering with KMS Towers.* Previously, members have hosted events from Bingo nights to Christmas dinners, to Easter activities and more; all laying a foundation of trust. Now, God has opened a door for us to partner in new ways and we are excited!

Hear from our new Strategy Chair for Outreach, **Kimberly Covington**. God has been at work at KMS Towers through her and **Vicki Todd**. They began to provide a Virtual Worship experience every Sunday morning in the downstairs community room. From there, the vision is growing.

As the new Strategy Chair for Outreach, why did you decide to partner with KMS Towers?

Participating in spiritual outreach is very important to me because it affords me the opportunity to demonstrate what God has called all believers to do and that is to be active. I want to continue to grow in my relationship with Christ and serving at KMS helps me to emotionally and spiritually recharge.

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What are some of the activities that you have provided since October?

* Every Sunday morning at 10:00 am, we gather and watch the service on YouTube. We have snacks, coffee, and punch available.

* The Deacons provide communion/prayer on 1st Sundays. Residents look forward to this.

* For our church Anniversary, Bro. Paul Robertson provided meals for residents, and we were able to fellowship and celebrate 156 years of ministry as well.

* We had a Christmas luncheon (from Whitt's BBQ) with several games of Bingo and prizes. We had around 50-60 residents to come through and a good 20 or so to stay for Bingo, which was a hit!

What are your hopes for this rekindled partnership between FBCCH and KMS Towers?

My hope is that this partnership will provide the opportunity for others to experience the joy of God and the security that comes with having a relationship with God and FBCCH.

One of our newest members, Miss Key' Aira Stinson, connected with FBCCH by way of baptism; she attended a virtual service with her grandmother. The Youth ministry provided baptism prep classes and she was baptized on 12/19 and one of her family members joined that day as well. As a result, our Director of Children and Youth, Elder Albry Lockhart, prayerfully discerning how to serve the youth connected to the residents at the Towers.

How can members be praying for this outreach partnership?

* Pray that this partnership will allow us to follow Jesus' example by sharing the Love of God so others that do not recognize his greatness will develop a personal relationship, while strengthening others connection with the Lord.

* Pray and ask God if joining me as we partner with KMS Towers is a space where he's calling you to serve and use your gifts. This can include joining us on Sundays or volunteering for specific events. We have an upcoming February Event, "Just Because Day" and we would love for you to join us.

To join God and Kimberly at work, call Kimberly at 615-566-3196 or email Kimberly.bass@comcast.net.

**Kelly Miller Smith (KMS) Towers was built in 1981 under the leadership of Kelly Miller Smith Sr. who served as FBCCH pastor from 1951-1984. KMS Towers is a community for the elderly and persons with disabilities.*

MISSION AT YOUR DOORSTEP

“And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.” Luke 2:52

Community Care Strategy Team partners with Robert Churchwell Elementary

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

A big thank you to Sis. Miriam Currie for coordinating our 2021 Angel Tree. Because of the generosity of FBCCH members, we were able to provide Christmas gifts to 22 children.



To start a new semester, **FBCCH** hosted a luncheon for Robert Churchwell Elementary’s (RCW) 35 Teachers and Staff on January 14th, providing boxed lunches and drinks from Panera. Doing this allowed us to encourage and support their staff team, ensuring them of our support for their hard work and dedication. Please pay attention to our weekly announcements in the ‘Briefs from The Hill’ as more opportunities to partner with RCW arise.

Deacons of the Week for February 2022

Week of	Deacon	Phone#
6 th	Ernest Dismuke	(615) 876-3522
13 th	Emmitt Hayes	(615) 790-7312
20 th	Brian Wood	(615) 259-0623
27 th	Ronald McFarland, Sr.	(615) 331-0564



Justice Moment

*The Justice Moment is a project led by
Minister Janiece Williams, FBCCH Pastoral Intern*

A Christian's Duty to Vote: A Social Justice Imperative

"When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan." ~Proverbs 29:2

Submitted by Susan Mosley-Howard

Originally in the U.S., voting was limited to white male property owners, then was extended to black men (15th Amendment 1870), women (19th Amendment 1920), and ultimately broadened to other citizens via congressional action, like the 1924 Indian Citizenship Act, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. However, there has been a slow but steady erosion of the Civil Rights Act. Today we see an all-out assault. In 2013 in the *Shelby County v Holder* case, the Supreme Court ruled that section 4 of the Voting Rights Act was unconstitutional. This paved the way for states to unilaterally change voting laws. According to the Brennan Center for Justice, in 2021 alone there were about 19 states that enacted 33 laws making it harder for Americans to vote. The voter suppressing strategies of the 1950's and 1960's to which Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King referred in his speech "*Give Us the Ballot*" are alive and well. Dr. King stated in part, "...all types of conniving methods are still being used to prevent Negroes from becoming registered voters". So, should we be concerned about these issues as Christians?

God calls us to participate in all aspects of our earthly lives but especially in civic life by voting, engaging, serving, and interceding in prayer. In my opinion, there is no better example of faith-based civic engagement than that of the "black church" during the civil rights movement era. Using that example, and taking into account our current context, we can carve out a powerful path forward in terms of **voting**. First, we need to engage in a relationship with our government because God says we should. Romans 13 reminds us that God has instituted government as a means to uphold justice and keep the peace. Fulfilling our obligation to vote is one way to live-out that engagement. Second, we are to commit ourselves to being involved in selecting our leaders. Chapters 1 and 16 of Deuteronomy demonstrate this important obligation. We cannot be complacent or passive. We share in the responsibility of maintaining justice and righteousness. This is a part of our honoring the God we serve and being his hands and feet in this world (Mathew 28:18-20). Third, we need to do good and care for others. Titus 3:1 reminds us of this. Isaiah 1:17 also offers a moral imperative to learn to do right, seek justice and encourage the oppressed. Fourth, we need to remember that we are the salt of the earth and light of the world (Matthew 5:13-15). The way this world develops is, in part, our responsibility and our doing. Being stewards of our homes, communities, nation, and culture, and engaging in the political process (VOTING) is part of being a good and Godly citizen. We owe it to God and each other to engage in the civic process, to vote, and pay attention to how the voting process is being exercised within our communities. Resist being lulled into silence, passivity, or complacency. Let's remain educated about our voting process, ensure that it remains inclusive, and be vigilant about protecting it. This is a higher calling, not a partisan agenda.

Obtain information on voting in Davidson County, from this link to the Davidson County Board of Elections. There are upcoming registration and absentee deadlines in February and March!

<https://www.nashville.gov/departments/elections>

Celebrating Black History Month 2022



African Attire

1st Sunday

Wear African Attire during worship service. Don't forget to take a picture and post on FaceBook!

Greek/HBCU

2nd Sunday

Represent your fraternity, sorority or HBCU in your favorite paraphernalia. Post a picture on FaceBook and tag FBCCH!

FBCCH History Makers

3rd Sunday

FBCCH will be recognizing our own History Makers - Church Members who have made an impact on the community. They are this year's trailblazers

Black Jeopardy

4th Sunday

FBCCH will be hosting its own virtual version of Black Jeopardy! Join us as we challenge your knowledge in black history. This is fun for the entire family with music, prizes and fellowship.

Keep a look out for additional information about this month's activities.

Nashvillians Gather for Annual Community Night

Hosted by Belmont's Office of Community Relations, Community Night provides an opportunity for members of the Nashville community to attend a night of Bruin basketball and family festivities.

5 PM Women's Basketball Game Tipoff
6 PM Complimentary hot dogs, chips & drinks served
7 PM Men's Basketball Game Tipoff

RSVP for FREE tickets, call 615.460.2255 and use the code COMMNIGHT22

Seating is limited

All guests please check in at the Community Night table which is located in the lower lobby on Belmont Blvd. (across from Circle K)

Belmont University's Annual Community Night

February 17th
Curb Event Center



February 2022 Readings and Sunday School Lessons

<u>DAY</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>SCRIPTURE</u>
	Nathan Condemns Davie	
Monday, January 31 st	“David’s Sin with Bathsheba”	2 Samuel 11:1-13
Tuesday, February 1 st	“David Murders Bathsheba’s Husband”	2 Samuel 11:14-27
Wednesday, February 2 nd	“Walk in the Light”	1 John 1:5-10
Thursday, February 3 rd	“Create in Me a Clean Heart”	Psalms 51:1-14
Friday, February 4 th	“Redemption through Repentance”	Psalms 32
Saturday, February 5 th	“Christ, the Sacrifice for Our Sins”	1 John 2:1-11
Sunday, February 6 th	“Nathan Tells a Pointed Parable”	2 Samuel 12:1-9, 13-15
Adult: Speaking Truth to Power	Youth: Truth to Power	Children: Turning Around
	Ezra Seeks God’s Law	
Monday, February 7 th	“God’s Law Is Perfect”	Psalms 19
Tuesday, February 8 th	“Meditate Continuously on the Law”	Joshua 1:1-9
Wednesday, February 9 th	“Obey God’s Commandments”	1 John 3:18-24
Thursday, February 10 th	“Teach Me Your Statues”	Psalms 119:1-16
Friday, February 11 th	“How I Love Your Law!”	Psalms 119:97-112
Saturday, February 12 th	“The King’s Letter to Ezra”	Ezra 7:11-22
Sunday, February 13 th	“Ezra Leads the Exiles Home”	Ezra 7:1-10, 23-26
Adult: Restoring Law and Order	Youth: Law and Order	Children: Teaching the Truth
	Bildad Misunderstands God/s Justice	
Monday, February 14 th	“Job Suffers Sinlessly”	Job 1:8-11, 13-22
Tuesday, February 15 th	“Habakkuk Struggles to See Justice”	Habakkuk 1:12-17
Wednesday, February 16 th	“Suffering for Doing Right”	1 Peter 2:20-25
Thursday, February 17 th	“God Is in the Storm”	Psalms 29
Friday, February 18 th	“Remove This Cup from Me”	Mark 14:32-42
Saturday, February 19 th	“God Speaks from the Whirlwind”	Job 38:1-11
Sunday, February 20 th	“God’s Justice Is Unfathomable”	Job 8:1-10, 20-22
Adult: Enduring False Charges	Youth: False Charges	Children: Bad Things Happen
	Serving A Just God	
Monday, February 21 st	“Abraham Pleads for Justice”	Genesis 18:20-33
Tuesday, February 22 nd	“Trust in God’s Coming Justice”	Psalms 37:1-11
Wednesday, February 23 rd	“The Lord Loves Justice”	Psalms 37:21-28, 34-40
Thursday, February 24 th	“Righteousness, Peace, and Joy”	Romans 14:13-23
Friday, February 25 th	“Jesus Demonstrates God’s Justice”	Matthew 12:1-13
Saturday, February 26 th	“Job Cries for a Redeemer”	Job 19:23-29
Sunday, February 27 th	“Job’s Fortunes Are Restored”	Job 42:1-11
Adult: Hope For Justice	Youth: Humble Obedience	Children: The One in Charge
	Babylonian Captivity Ends	
Monday, February 28 th	“Prepare the Way of the Lord”	Isaiah 40:1-11
Tuesday, March 1 st	“Being God’s Instrument”	Isaiah 45:1-10
Wednesday, March 2 nd	“God Will Provide for Every Need”	Philippians 4:10-19

MINISTRY OF STEWARDSHIP MANAGEMENT

Sermon Digests

“This is God’s House”

3rd Sunday of Advent

156th Church Anniversary

December Pastor Kelly M. Smith, Jr.

12 [Ezra 6:16-18](#)

Submitted by: Adrienne Fancher

The celebration described in Ezra marked a milestone for the Israelites. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Solomon’s temple – the symbol of God’s presence among God’s people – to demoralize the people. Cyrus conquered the Babylonians and gave Israel the resources to re-build the temple, but it took 20 years to complete. This dedication was a celebration that brought together priests and exiles.

FBCCH started as 20 people under Pastor Nelson Merry, and it survived church splits, a fire, and 5 years of exile at a high school. It has not been easy, but the church is more than a building, and the temple was not the only place to find God. The Israelites understood that God’s house was a place for community and worship. We understand that God’s house belongs to God.

Point 1-God’s house is a place of joy.

In 515 B.C., they worshipped God in a spirit of joy. We can identify with the Israelites: with an incomplete structure, we can see what God can do. Worshipping with joy is important! We are a people of faith; it is important for us to have a spirit of joy. *Happiness* is a temporary external experience based on what happens to you. *Joy* is an internal experience based on the gift of salvation – it is permanent regardless of circumstances.

Point 2-God’s house is a place of sacrifice.

Animal sacrifice demonstrated the Israelites’ dedication to God. Sacrifice is giving something valuable to us. We must be willing to move out of a place of comfort. God wants us to know what we can gain through sacrifice. We all know that someone sacrificed for us to be where we are today, and we sacrifice for others. Sacrifice is not about what we give up; it is about the SPIRIT of giving. Some give time, some give talents, and some give treasure to enable others to do what needs to be done

Point-3 God’s house is a place of service.

After the service of dedication, the Israelites put the priests and Levites back in charge. We have a beautiful place to call our own where we can praise God *and* go forth to serve: to make a difference! Make sure we are dedicated to serve – not just ‘busy-ness’, but to do what God has called us to do to advance the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. Jesus came because He had service to do: to heal the sick, to feed the hungry, to give salvation to all of us – TO GIVE LIFE!

We are called to give what God gifted us to do.

“The Extraordinary Gift”

4th Sunday of Advent

December Pastor Kelly M. Smith, Jr.

19 [John 3:16](#)

Submitted by: Kathy Harrell

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”.

This is perhaps the most familiar passage in the New Testament, and maybe in the Bible. During a conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus, Jesus tells this Pharisee about the extraordinary gift God has given – the gift of Jesus Christ himself. Born in less than ordinary circumstances in a manger to a poor, unwed mother, the whole story of Jesus does not look like it would have a happy ending. Some may suggest that the ‘gift giving’ started with the Magi’s gifts to Jesus; in reality, it reflects the gift that God gave to us-Jesus Christ. We often see how the less than ordinary turns out to be extra-ordinary.

Point 1- It is an extraordinary gift because it is given through God’s love. We can get no better gifts than those that come from God. Love is easy to say, but hard to fully comprehend, especially as it pertains to how God loves us. God’s *AGAPE* love for us is given without looking for anything in return. No sin is too bad and no deed is too good to keep us from God’s love. With Agape love, God is saying ‘I am going to love you and there is nothing you can do about it’. Thank God continuously for His unequivocal love in our gift of Jesus Christ!

Point 2- It is an extraordinary gift because it is given so we can choose to believe. This sounds easier than it is. Some feel that just saying they believe is all that is required. But believing means giving Jesus Christ control over your life. When we believe, we do things differently because we have been transformed by the power and influence of Jesus being in us. This difference of having Jesus Christ *in* us is seen in the ways we live, act, speak, love, and bless others. Our purpose is to share the extraordinary gift of Christ with everyone; then they too may be transformed.

Point 3- It is an extraordinary gift because it is given to give eternal life. As the apostle John writes ... ‘whoever believes in Him will not perish but will have eternal life’. Jesus had previously told Nicodemus that He/Jesus would never perish but would have eternal life. Now that Jesus was put to death, all hope was surely lost. But we know that we serve a living God who keeps His word. Jesus’ death was only temporary, it was not the end of Jesus’ story! It was just a part of His eternal life story.

December
26

“The God Who Sees Me”
Elder Albry Lockhart
[Genesis 16:13](#)
Submitted by: Beverly M. Brown

Context: (Gen 9:7-17 ESV) It was God who took the initiative to make a covenant with Noah. God's single promise to Noah was that there would never again be a rainstorm causing a FLOOD that would cover the entire Earth, and He signed His promise with a rainbow. Just as He promises to be with Sarah, Hagar, Abraham, & Ishmael.

Elder Lockhart cited several examples of how God/Christ Jesus shows up in abuse or in having our needs unmet. No matter what, God/Christ Jesus sees us. The other example included Sarah seen as property and her despise for Hagar even though she contributed to her own situation of her impatience in not waiting for God to provide the blessing He had promised Sarah and Abraham. This is what society also does when ‘we’ become impatient.

As a result, we learn from our scripture:

Point 1- We must realize God sees each person wholly/entirely or completely.

He does not see His people as they may appear or present themselves; but He sees each person definitively. He even sees the things that are hidden. He sees and really ‘*gets us*’. God sees us like an ultraviolet light to uncover what we cannot see with the naked eye.

Point 2- God see’s us vigilantly – where you are and where you are going.

God sees all and everything that concerns His children. God tells Hagar to go back and be submissive to Sarah. God knew that would make Hagar vulnerable; but, He also knew He would be there to protect her from danger. Because of God/Christ Jesus vigilance over the lives of all humankind, He protects and can keep one safe. God let Hagar, Sarah, Ishmael, and us know that He loves each of us, despite our individual human deficits.

Point 3 - God sees us individually and not based upon favoritism.

He blesses us even when others may try to oppress one’s spirit; no matter your skeletons, short comings, or being a slave. He sees us and still blesses us – worthy or not, sinner or not - with a love that is immeasurable.

Amen, Amen, & Amen.

January
2

“The Mark of a Year”
Pastor Kelly M. Smith, Jr.
[Isaiah 6:1-8](#)
Submitted by: Deborah Luter

Many of us felt that the year 2022 could not come soon enough. We struggled through 2021. Actually, it has been almost two whole years of struggle. We figure that in 2022 things are going to change. But many of the things that challenged us in 2021 don’t follow calendars. We didn’t go to bed New Year’s Eve and wake up New Year’s Day with everything being better. There are things that must happen to make it a better year. The new year is controlled by how we approach the year. There are things that will happen because of our being connected with God.

Isaiah says it was the year that ‘King Uzziah died that I saw the Lord’...; but what really marked his year was the experience he had in the Temple.

Point 1-Mark it as the year we see God staying in the midst of our situation.

Times were hard for Isaiah and the people of Israel. Uzziah who was a good king had died. Ahaz who was a bad king was on the throne. Enemies around Isaiah began to strengthen in power. Isaiah comes into the Temple and had an experience that was like none he had had before. Isaiah saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up... Though times had changed, and the situation was rough, God showed Isaiah that HE was still there in the midst of it all. We need to see that as being our saving grace. Just to know that God is there matters. God’s presence tells us that all hope is not lost.

Point 2-Mark it as the year we see counterproductive strongholds broken.

Every genuine encounter with God ought to cause us to feel differently. We don’t come into God’s presence and leave the same way. Isaiah saw the Lord which caused him to make the assessment of his own unworthiness to be in the presence of the Lord. Isaiah seems to have some strongholds in his life that kept him from being who it is God needed him to be.

Point 3-Mark it as the year we see ourselves recommitting to the Lord.

Life has a way of knocking us down or out of our groove. When we start on our life’s journey, we have high hopes and pure ambitions. But this chapter in Isaiah should remind us how God can work. Look at the process. God shows us. God fixes us. We need not forget that God blesses us to bless others. Isaiah was asked the question by God who can I send, who will go for me? Isaiah responded, here I am . Send me. Send me to be your hands, feet, heart, love.

We don’t know what the future of 2022 holds, but we do know who holds the future.....Amen

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.

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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: fbccch13@gmail.com.