



The Torch

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER 2023 – JANUARY VOLUME 66 NUMBER 4

Pastor's Pen

Sunday, January 1, 2023 I mentioned that I intend to retire by the end of this calendar year, December 31, 2023. One of the greatest joys I've ever had in my life has been to serve as pastor of First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill. This church has been a part of my DNA literally since I was born. So many life markers have been associated with this church. I was baptized as a Christian in this church, licensed and ordained as a minister of the Gospel here and served in my first pastoral staff position here. To come home and pastor this church goes beyond my wildest dreams and expectation. To date, it has been over 12 great years and I believe we have come a long way in that time span.

Yet, Ecclesiastes 3: 1 states, *“To everything there is a season. And a time for every purpose under heaven.”* Retirement is something I have mentioned in several contexts here at the church. I believe this is the right season for First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill, as well as for me. I am excited about the possibilities God is affording us in the next season for each of us.

Whenever there is any transition of leadership there is a lot of work that is needed to facilitate the process going well. There will be a lot of planning, preparing, and I hope most of all, praying. Over the next several weeks the Ministry of Stewardship Management (MSM) Council will be pulling information together to bring to the church body to help make this process as effective as possible. The MSM Council understands fully the importance of keeping the congregation in the loop on where the church is in the process. They will let the church know when the congregation will need to vote on a pastoral search committee, and to hear and vote on various other matters between now and the time a new pastor is recommended. Stay tuned to the Torch and the weekly communications for pertinent information. Additionally, when information is requested or questionnaires sent, please take time to respond fully and promptly.

It is my hope that over the course of this year the members of First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill will work together to help move the church in the direction that God needs the church to move in finding a successor and aiding our efforts to continue with our vision of building, restoring, and revitalizing lives through Jesus Christ. Too often when there are pastoral searches Satan sees the church as vulnerable and takes the opportunity to try to create confusion and dissention within the congregation. This does not have to happen, and we will have to fight against it. I personally am going to do everything I can to make sure that the process is smooth and unencumbered as we seek the next pastor to lead this flock. Our doing this together will go a long way to ensure the vitality, relevance, and influence that our church has on Nashville, the state of Tennessee, and the Nation.

This year I am declaring is our year of revival. We will seek to create and recreate whatever will aid us in being the church God needs us to be. We will find the vitality, energy and courage to press on to the mark of the high calling in Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:14).

Kelly M. Smith Jr.

Pastor

DISCIPLESHIP MOMENT

Trusting God in the New Year

"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilder and streams in the wasteland." ~ Isaiah 43:19

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

2023 is here! Welcoming a new year can be exciting, scary, and reflective. As I've reflected on my 2022, I'm grateful for the lessons I've learned and how I'm becoming more of who I desire to be before God and others. I met several goals and continue to be a work in progress with others. Overall, I have no complaints. I'm simply grateful to continue moving forward in grace.

With a new year, many of us are making resolutions that include eating healthier, exercising, losing weight, spending time with God, travel, saving, investing, quality time with family and friends, etc. Many of us have hopes and dreams that we want to see manifested this year. We are trusting God to come through according to what we read about God's promises found in scripture. Even if we are wavering in our faith regarding Gods' promises, I hope we are still open to trusting God this year.

I don't know about you, but I'm nervously excited about what this year will bring. I'm allowing myself to hope and trust that in 2023, God will be faithful and do a new thing. I'm not sure what the new thing will be, but I'm open to seeing how God will show up for me and others. As I hope, I reflect on my own growth in learning to trust God and God's faithfulness. It sure was a journey of ups/downs, disappointments, and moments of sheer delight and joy but eventually I learned to trust God intimately.

Knowing and trusting someone at an intimate level takes time and is a maturation process; it does not happen overnight AND it is tested and tried. I don't know when I arrived at the place that I just knew that God could be trusted, but I know that after allowing Jesus to be Lord, and not just Savior, of my life I was very intentional about spending time in God's Word and prayer. For a season, I chose not to date so God could have priority in my heart, time, and schedule. I often think of the fruit borne in that season. That fruit

couldn't be manufactured or engineered, it had to grow from the root! In that season, I made knowing God my #1 priority and spent hours lost in God's Word.

At one point I had to make myself do my homework first before I could read scripture. Lol. Now I know that was a particular season of my life and even though I haven't quite had a season like that since, I believe that helped to root me in God as my faith became my own; I no longer needed to live on the faith of my parents or spiritual leaders. It was a daily choice to trust God's character and with every new situation or challenge, I again had to choose to trust God. As Proverbs 3:5- 6 says, I learned to trust God learned not to lean on my own understanding. It wasn't always easy, but 25 years later, I can testify that it was worth it!

2 Peter 3:18 admonishes us to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Growth takes time. Growth takes place when we are planted in good soil and adequately watered. Growth takes place when we have oxygen. Growth takes place when we receive sunshine. As disciples of Jesus Christ, let us be intentional about creating space for our spiritual growth. Even with the demands of family and life, growth can still occur as you create the space to meet the living God and learn how to trust.

God longs to be in a loving relationship with each of us and desires for us to trust that love. Trust grows as your experience with God proves God's trustworthiness and faithfulness. So, as we welcome 2023, may we trust God with the new year. May we trust God to do a new thing and may we anticipate the new. My prayer for each of you is that you will know the gift of God, in Jesus, and let him meet with you in scripture and prayer (John 4:10). You will be amazed that He is more excited about having you say yes to His invitation than you are. Trust God anew for the best that 2023 will have to offer you!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Congregational Care



Dear First Baptist Church Capitol Hill Family,

A heartfelt Thank You for your love and support for me and my family during the illness and loss of my nephew Chris Robinson. The cards, phone calls and prayers were so uplifting.

Again, I am so blessed to be a part of such a caring family. I love you all!

Esther Wright

Dear First Baptist Church Capitol Hill,

“Thank you” is not enough to express our appreciation for all the prayers, services, positive thoughts, and gifts sent our way over the past several months. Know that we received them – and continue to be lifted.

May each of you feel God’s bountiful blessings now and in this new year.

Jane Fort & Sekou Fort Writes

To: My Pastor and Church Family

Words cannot express the gratitude and appreciation for adding Chester to the Church's Hall of Faith. Thank you for recognizing his dedication, services, commitment and endurances. He truly loved First Baptist.

I am, quite simply, blessed beyond belief by the kind and loving consideration you have given me.

I could not have made it without you. I appreciate you more than words can say. Thank you is such a simple phrase, but there's a world of meaning and appreciation in it.

My heartfelt wish is May God bless and strengthen you each and every day.

Love,
Florence Crawford

Deacons of the Week for January 2023

| Week of | Deacon | Phone# |
|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| 1 st | Carol Boone | 615.851.1527 |
| 8 th | Adrienne Fancher | 615.255.8033 |
| 15 th | Martin Currie | 615.832.9662 |
| 22 nd | Terry Deas | 919.523.6949 |
| 29 th | Beverly Brown | 615.391.3737 |

Prayer Request/Sick & Shut-in List

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

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

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

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

Sis. Maggie Roper
 Riverview Health and Rehab
 1600 West Claiborne Ave.
 Greenwood, MS 38930

BIRTHDAYS

JANUARY

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

FEBRUARY

2 Valinda Burks
 Geri Easley
 3 Sabrina Daughtdrill
 4 Wesley Currie
 Kourtlyn 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 Falcon II
 17 Hortensia McFarland
 18 Tammye Hawkins
 19 George Hill
 21 Kendra Deas
 22 Andreana Brevard
 Patricia Lane
 23 Kenneth Cory
 Chyann Haskins
 24 Christopher Beard
 25 Myshia L. Deaderick
 26 Kathleen Wilkinson
 27 Christopher Demonbreum
 Rachel Walker
 28 Naomi Blair

MARCH

1 Dwight Lewis
 Jamal Robinson
 3 DeJuan Foster
 Candice Telfort
 4 Tondreana Chandler
 5 Tiffany Gray
 Venoris Johnson
 Gerald Schrader
 6 Sebastian Daughtdrill
 Taura McKnight Cheatham
 Lynn Stewart
 7 Keshona Cox
 9 Susan Mosley-Howard
 10 Jonishay Acklin
 Taylor Gentry
 11 Doris Dismuke
 13 Kyras Cruson
 14 Willie M. Magee
 Taylor McFarland
 20 Sharanda Smith
 22 Scotty Robinson
 23 Kimberly Alexander
 24 Miriam Currie
 Frankie Jackson
 25 Lyndsey Bass-Covington
 Retha Buchanan
 26 Tequila Johnson
 27 Esther Caudle
 James Chandler Jr.
 29 David Ewing
 William Ewing Sr.
 30 Erica Adderly
 31 John Howse

| <u>DAY</u> | <u>TOPIC</u> | <u>SCRIPTURE</u> |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Sunday, January 1 st | “A Call to Walk Faithfully” | 2 Chronicles 7:12-22 |
| Monday, January 2 nd | “God Will Make a Way” | Isaiah 43:14-28 |
| Tuesday, January 3 rd | “Dry Bones Shall Live” | Ezekiel 37:15-28 |
| Wednesday, January 4 th | “Israel Will Be God’s People” | Ezekiel 37:15-28 |
| Thursday, January 5 th | “God’s Restoring Love” | Hosea 11 |
| Friday, January 6 th | “Stand Firm in the Spirit” | 2 Thessalonians 2:3-15 |
| Saturday, January 7 th | “The Lord Is a Faithful Protector” | 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5, 13-17 |
| Sunday, January 8 th | “God Restores His People” | Isaiah 43:1-13 |
| Monday, January 9 th | “The Lord Is My Shepherd” | Psalms 23 |
| Tuesday, January 10 th | “Guided by God’s Word” | Psalms 119:81-96 |
| Wednesday, January 11 th | “Trust and Acknowledge the Lord” | Proverbs 3:1-15 |
| Thursday, January 12 th | “Tested Faith” | 1 Peter 1:3-12 |
| Friday, January 13 th | “God’s Word Endures” | 1 Peter 1:3-12 |
| Saturday, January 14 th | “God Guides and Refines” | Isaiah 48:1-11 |
| Sunday, January 15 th | “God Leads and Directs” | Isaiah 48:12-22 |
| Monday, January 16 th | “Passing from Death to Life” | 1 John 3:14-24 |
| Tuesday, January 17 th | “You Are Light in the Lord” | Ephesians 5:1-10 |
| Wednesday, January 18 th | “Christ Will Shine upon You” | Ephesians 5:11-20 |
| Thursday, January 19 th | “God’s Word Lights My Path” | Psalms 119:97-112 |
| Friday, January 20 th | “Your Light Has Come” | Isaiah 60:1-8 |
| Saturday, January 21 st | “Jesus, the Light of the World” | John 8:12-20 |
| Sunday, January 22 nd | “Joy in Obeying God” | Isaiah 58:1-14 |
| Monday, January 23 rd | “Christ Has Come in the Flesh” | 1 John 4:1-8 |
| Tuesday, January 24 th | “God’s Love Is Revealed among Us” | 1 John 4:9-21 |
| Wednesday, January 25 th | “The Testimony in Our Hearts” | 1 John 5:10-21 |
| Thursday, January 26 th | “God Will go with You” | Exodus 33:12-23 |
| Friday, January 27 th | “The Lord, Merciful and Gracious” | Exodus 34:5-17 |
| Saturday, January 28 th | “God Is Near despite Adversity” | Joel 1:1-4, 14-20 |
| Sunday, January 29 th | “God Will Pour Out the Spirit” | Joel 2:18-31 |
| Monday, January 30 th | “The Last Will Be First” | Matthew 20:1, 6-16 |
| Tuesday, January 31 st | “God, Teach and Guide Me” | Psalms 25:1-15 |
| Wednesday, February 1 st | “How Majestic Is God’s Name” | Psalms 8 |
| Thursday, February 2 nd | “God Will Build You a House” | 2 Samuel 7:1, 4-17 |
| Friday, February 3 rd | “Who Am I before God?” | 2 Samuel 7:18-29 |
| Saturday, February 4 th | “God Confounds the Wise” | 1 Corinthians 1:18-24 |
| Sunday, February 5 th | “God Chooses the Lowly and Despised” | 1 Corinthians 1:25-31 |

MINISTRY OF STEWARDSHIP MANAGEMENT

November 13
“If it Ain’t Broke, Break It”
Mark 11:13-14
Rev. Stephen John Thurston II
Submitted by Adrienne Fancher

Pastor’s 12th Anniversary Celebration

There are a multitude of miracles by the Master in the Scriptures. This one seems to be not from the Mercy of the Master, but from the Wrath. Jesus is hungry. He sees a fig tree that appears to be bearing but is barren. This story is confusing: the tree had life – why would Jesus break something that was not broken? Perhaps you have taken your car to the shop for one problem. A diagnostic exam identifies four more issues for preventive maintenance. Sometimes addressing an issue early prevents catastrophic problems later. How will we know that something needs to be fixed if it appears to be functioning?

Jesus shows us a 4-step process.

1. Jesus engages in Observation.

Jesus stays with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus on the way to Jerusalem. Yet somehow Jesus did not have food for the rest of the journey. Of all the trees in the field, Jesus observes one that has leaves which imply that it has fruit. Observation of vegetation caused a detour from the destination to avoid starvation. From a distance, we see the trappings of success, prosperity, and potential.

2. Jesus moves from Observation to Investigation.

The investigation revealed that the tree lacked substance. Jesus expects Fruit of the Spirit from us: generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control... We have mastered church membership, but we fail in discipleship. Churches today are coddling the churched instead of reaching the unchurched. If we have leaves, we ought to have fruit!

3. Jesus is led to Frustration.

Jesus is frustrated by the deception of the tree. We make promises but don’t deliver. Our actions or lack thereof frustrate Jesus. How can there be no change in us after years in the Body of Christ? We classify as Christians, and then we don’t act Christlike. What are we going to break or change?

4. Jesus proceeds to Eradication.

Sometimes we must break what’s working to move to what’s next. Jesus curses only the tree, not the ground that provides nutrients to sustain life. Maybe this tree had to die because it was acting outside of its season. What destiny have you missed because you didn’t wait for your season? Are you frustrating someone else’s future because you won’t get out of the way or stayed beyond your season?

Not bearing fruit? Then what is your season?

November 20
“The Complexity of Simple Requests”
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
Pastor Kelly M. Smith Jr.
Submitted by: Kathy Harrell

Let’s keep it simple! We often refer to “Jesus Wept” as the shortest verse in the Bible, but the Christian faith has many requests that are quite simple. Jesus takes the 10 commandments from the Old Testament and narrows them down to two simple statements:” ...”love the Lord your God...and love your neighbor as yourself”.

In our scripture, the apostle Paul is speaking to new Christians in a fairly new church. He kept his message direct and simple by letting them know that God desires us to (1) rejoice always, (2) pray continually, and (3) always give thanks. The New Testament is replete with simple requests, so why do we find them so hard to embrace?

Point 1- The simple requests are complex because they require sincere worship.

The three requests that Paul mentions are all expectations in worship... *rejoice, pray, and give thanks.* To get all that we can spiritually gain from worship, we must remove our personal obstacles and present ourselves as naked in the presence of the Lord. We can’t sincerely rejoice because we carry too much old baggage. We can’t sincerely pray because it may lay too much to bare about ourselves. And we can’t sincerely give thanks because our expectations/prayers have not been met (as we wanted). The sincerest worship should not only stimulate our mind, but it must also stir our soul!

Point 2- The simple requests are complex because they require personal transformation.

Transformation simply means to change. For us to change, we have to not only do things differently, but we must change how we feel about what we do. Many people are resistant to change. They offer excuses of: “I like who I am”, or “things have worked for me this far, why should I change?”, or even “I’m too old to change.” Each of these ‘reasons’ must be changed.

Point 3- The simple requests are complex because they require spiritual discipline.

Spiritual discipline requires us to have a deeper dive into our faith commitment. It is not built on circumstances of what went right and what didn’t go right. It is a continuous learning and loving journey that requires worshipping the Lord at all times. The scripture says, “rejoice always”. Regardless of what we may be going through, we need the intenseness of faith whereby we always rejoice in the love, grace, and mercy of God.

**“A Glimpse of Hope”
First Sunday of Advent**

Hebrews 11:1-2; 12:1-3

**November
27**

Dr. Arroll N. Martin

Submitted by: Beverly M. Brown

Rev./Dr. Martin shared a historical perspective of Hebrew Chapters 11 & 12 and a reflection of the four candles of advent which includes prophet of hope (purple candle), faith (purple candle) of Bethlehem which represents King David, Shepherd of Joy (pink candle) and candle of Peace – Christ Jesus (purple candle) which represents purity and light. Faith is sure of what is hope for but not seen. NIV states faith is sure of what we hope for and of what we do not see.

Story of Andrew was shared as associated with him suffering from thirst and dehydration finally finding a bottle of water of how to prime a hand pump and to refill the bottle once the pump is primed and he has consumed some water and to fill the bottle place it back for the next traveler who may be having the similar experience as Andrew. It took faith to follow the instructions to prime the pump versus just drinking the bottle of water he had found. A map was available to guide him on his way and that took faith as well to follow the map he found in the same cabin where the bottle of water was found.

Faith requires action versus a wish. Faith means if a new job, new car, new house, and new relationship is desired it will require action versus a wish where the individual may do nothing, yet, expect something to happen. Jesus Christ is our Captain, a finisher, author of faith, and has established a blue print for what faith looks like in action. No matter the outcome in faith in Jesus Christ it will produce a far better hopeful outcome and results. He cited a retiring carpenter who built a last shabby home and did know it was going to be a gift to him from his boss based upon his many years of quality service to the company.

The meaning of all of these stories is about being excellent and always perform at your peak performance and blessing will follow and will be far greater than one could image. Hope can always be found in Jesus Christ, which includes kindness, love, faith, because God allowed His Son Jesus Christ to die on the cross for each of us to have access to salvation and eternal life.

Another scripture cited was James 2:18 and evidence in society appear in four ways such as being real, via a test, via a demonstration, and via a documentary; but true power, hope, and faith in Jesus Christ that makes the real difference.

Amen, Amen, Amen.

**“Finding Christmas in the Minor Keys”
Second Sunday of Advent**

Matthew 1:18-25

**December
4**

Pastor Kelly Miller Smith Jr.

Submitted by: Deborah Luter

Music and Christmas go hand in hand. Everywhere you go between now and December 25th you will hear lively Christmas music. Many Christmas songs are in major keys. But there are those Christmas songs which are in minor keys. O Come, O Come Emmanuel; We Three Kings of Orient Are (Beethoven 5th).

It only took 4 verses to tell how Joseph’s world was turned upside down. But we know that the back story had to be longer than 4 verses. Those were the minor keys. But we are still able to find Christmas in them.

Point 1- We can find Christmas in the minor keys when we listen to the message God sends.

Listen to the message over the music. There are a lot of things in this world that would put things in the minor key. And for some that is all there is to hear. But even in the minor key situations of life there is a message that God sends. God is not blocked from speaking just because of the minor keys. As a matter of fact we may hear from God more clearly at those times when life is somber. We have to know how to weed out the other tones and listen to God.

Point 2- We can find Christmas in the minor keys when we know that God is with us.

As Joseph was wrestling with what to do, the message from the angel should give him the reassurance that he needed. The angel told Joseph that the baby to be born will fulfill the Old Testament prophesy, and that he will be called Emmanuel, and the name Emmanuel means God with us. What a blessing to know that when we are going through the minor key side of life that we are not going through it by ourselves.

Point 3-We can find Christmas in the minor keys when we allow the minor keys to be our voice but not our destiny.

We should not negate the feelings of Joseph. Even as God has purpose for him it does not change the narrative of what he was possibly feeling. We should not be in denial about what we feel and what is happening in the world around us. So that should certainly not be the final word for us. People don’t “fake” depression. They fake being okay.

But no matter what key our lives may be in, it does not have to be our destiny. Look at the story of Jesus. His destiny took him beyond the troubles of the world to be the savior of the world. So His situation moved from a minor key to what was certainly a major key accomplishment.

First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill

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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.