



The Torch

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER 2023 – VOLUME 68 DECEMBER NUMBER 3

Pastor's Pen

December is shaping up to be a very significant month for First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill (FBCCH). It is the month of Advent. Advent is the first season of the Christian Calendar. It comprises the four Sundays which precede Christmas Day. This year Advent begins on December 3, 2023, and will end on Christmas Eve. Advent is the season we celebrate with anticipation the second coming of Jesus Christ ([Isaiah 9:2-6](#); [Hebrews 9:28](#)). FBCCH has an emphasis each Sunday on some aspect of that anticipation. This year we will place emphasis on hope, peace, joy, and love. We will offer a meditation, light the Advent Candle for each Sunday, and offer a prayer. Even as we do this during our morning Worship service, it is something that is often done at home as well. You should consider this as a part of the way you share this season with you family.

We will also observe our church's 158th Anniversary, Sunday, December 17, 2023, during our 10:00 a.m. Worship service. It is a tremendous honor that The Reverend Dr. Marcus D. Cosby will be our preacher for the service. He is one of the premier, anointed preachers of our time. He has preached for us many times before, and we welcome him back again. During the service we will honor 8 people who will be placed on our Wall of Faith ([1 Thessalonians 5:12-13](#)). We also recognize those who have been members for at least 50 years. Dinner will be served following the service. The anniversary committee, led by Sis. Marcia Mitchell and assisted by Sis. Erma Todd is working very hard to make this year's celebration something special. What will make it that much more special is for each of you to make the effort to be present for the service as we celebrate together our anniversary in worship as a church family.

Finally, (in more ways than one), at the beginning of this year I announced my retirement from pastoring First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill, to be effective December 31, 2023 (which numerically would be 123123). That day will be my last Sunday serving as your pastor. It would be a great sign of encouragement to me and to the church to see those of you who are able, to be present each Sunday in December. We should desire to end the year strong as a sign of our faithfulness to God. We should desire to end the year strong as a sign of our love for First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill. We should desire to end the year strong as a sign of our commitment to the church this year and beyond. Though there will be a pastoral transition in the very near future, there is no transition of the Christ who established the church and calls those who serve the church in many capacities and through various seasons ([Hebrews 13:8](#)). Your presence will make my joy complete ([Philippians 2:2-4](#)). A fellowship meal will be served following the service.

Kelly M. Smith Jr.

Pastor

ANNOUNCEMENTS

thank
you

Dear First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill Family,

I was notified from Meharry Medical College of a gift to the College designated for the Lloyd C. Elam, MD Endowed Scholarship Fund. I am indeed grateful for the generous donation. It is especially meaningful to me, and my family at this season of Thanksgiving.

Clara Elam



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH,
CAPITOL HILL
DR. KELLY M. SMITH JR., PASTOR

Celebrating
158th
Church
ANNIVERSARY

December 17, 2023
at 10:00 a.m.

Guest Preacher
Dr. Marcus D. Cosby, Senior Pastor
Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church
Houston, Texas

Watch live on
YouTube

900 NELSON MERRY STREET
NASHVILLE, TN 37203



NASHVILLE
MLK DAY
Gala

Benefiting IMF Community
Fund Education Reserve

INTERDENOMINATIONAL
IMF
FELLOWSHIP

\$20K Raised for TN HBCUs in 2023

Rev. Dr. Kelly Miller Smith
Keynote Speaker

ABC FISK MEHARRY TSU

JANUARY 11, 2024
CAL TURNER CENTER - GRAND BALLROOM
AT MEHARRY MEDICAL COLLEGE

DOORS OPEN 5:30PM
PROGRAM BEGINS @ 6PM

TICKETS ON SALE
OCTOBER 1, 2023
MLKDAYNASHVILLE.COM



JOIN
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
— CAPITOL HILL —

in celebration of
Kelly Miller Smith Jr.

13th 11:30 AM
JANUARY
2024

MILLENNIUM
MAXWELL HOUSE
HOTEL
2025 Rosa L Parks Blvd.
Nashville, TN 37228

Reserve your seat today
[www.firstbaptistcapitolhill.org/
KMSJrCelebration](http://www.firstbaptistcapitolhill.org/KMSJrCelebration)

A portion of the proceeds will
benefit the Kelly Miller Smith
Foundation

Celebrating
40 years of pastoral
ministry &
RETIREMENT
from First Baptist
Church, Capitol Hill

Greeting FBCCH Family & Friends!

We are gearing up for a grand celebration in honor of Pastor Kelly Miller Smith Jr, who has faithfully served as OUR pastor for 13 years. The Celebration will take place Saturday, January 13, 2024 at the Millenium Maxwell House Hotel located at 2025 Rosa L. Parks Boulevard, Nashville, TN 37228. Individual tickets are \$50 and there are opportunities for sponsorships. Additionally, we are gathering video tributes to compile a digital keepsake tribute for Pastor Smith!

For more information regarding the event, how to submit your video tribute and other opportunities to help make The Celebration a huge success visit:

www.FirstBaptistCapitolHill.org/KMSJrCelebration.

If you have questions, please email KMSJrCelebration@gmail.com.

DISCIPLESHIP MOMENT

Jehovah Nissi

“And Moses built an altar and named it, The LORD is my Banner.” ~Exodus 17:15

When hosting and planning parties, decorating is more than likely involved. Some hosts go all out with the décor—purchasing balloons, backdrops, center pieces, banners, etc. The intent of a banner is to state the occasion for the celebration. They are usually vibrant and attractive, effectively communicating what the host wants everyone to know about the special person and event. When we take pictures near the banner, we can be reminded for years to come of the event, even how we felt during the celebration.

Similarly, another meaning for a banner is a flag. Flags are usually hung in recognition of a special day or event. A flag represents an organization’s history and shared values. In battle, flags served as a rallying point when a formation was broken. Troops gathered around the flag to regroup, attack or retreat. Flags marked specific individuals, locations, and functions such as hospitals and ambulances. During times of war, flags have been raised but sometimes countries will use a different flag for battle than they do in peacetime.

During the time the Israelites wandered in the wilderness, one of the names Moses gave God was *Jehovah Nissi*, which means God is my banner; this story is found in Exodus 17:8-16. While wandering, the Israelites were attacked by the Amalekites. Moses asked Joshua to choose some men to go to war against the Amalekites and Moses would stand on top of the hill with the staff of the Lord in his hands. As Moses held up his arms, the Israelites were winning, but when his arms dropped, they were losing. Aaron and Hur held up his arms so he wouldn’t get tired, thus securing the victory for the Israelites.

The Lord commanded Moses to write the victory on a scroll to be remembered and to make sure Joshua hears of it. Moses did so and also built an altar there, which is where he named God, *Jehovah Nissi*. God, as banner, marked a rally point for future generations.

What does it mean for us that God is our banner? Again, a banner is usually hung at parties to let everyone know the occasion and to effectively communicate about the person and special event. Having God as our banner reminds us that we celebrate a God who is victorious! We celebrate God because of who God is and his character. When we face adversity, which we all will encounter, as we look to God, we learn that God is a present and faithful God. As we go through adversity, we are not alone. We celebrate God for never leaving nor forsaking us.

When we read about God’s character in scripture, those verses serve as our flag or rallying points that allow us to regroup and have a greater perspective about God and His activity in our lives. Scriptures like, *“But you have raised a banner for those who fear you—a rallying point in the face of attack. Now rescue your beloved people. Answer and save us by your power”* (Psalm 60:4-5 NLT). We can cling to verses that serve as a rally point and remind us that God is our banner, and to celebrate. When it seems like adversity is winning and we are feeling defeated and discouraged, like Aaron and Hur, God will hold us up and keep us steady.

Psalm 46:1 is one of those verses that always brings me great comfort as I am reminded that *“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”* Another verse from Song of Solomon 2:4 roots and anchors me as I read, *“Let him lead me to the banquet hall, and let his banner over me be love.”* I know the latter verse is about a love between a man and woman, but it has served as an allegory of God’s love for us. God always leads us to a feast of his goodness, graciousness, faithfulness, and kindness. There we can eat and be satisfied. We live this life under God’s amazing grace and love. How comforting to know that Jehovah Nissi has poured out His great love to us and because of that we are victorious in life and in death. What a gift to know we always have the victory!

Prayer Request/Sick & Shut-in List

Florence Crawford
290 South Orange Ave.
Apt. 211
Livingston, NJ 07039

Bro. Derrick McDaniel
Good Samaritan Health & Rehab
500 Hickory Hollow Terrace

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

Sis. Alice Smith Risby
Maple Cottage Assistant Living
101 Maple Drive
Hendersonville, TN 37075

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

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

3

BIRTHDAYS

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

JANUARY	
1	Elizabeth Davis
2	Gabriel Bryson
5	Kelando Townsend
6	Tamia McKnight Diane Robertson
7	Timarion Smith
9	Marshawn Miller
11	Karen Brown
14	Kathy Harrell Ronald McFarland Sr.
15	Nina Lockert Brooke McFarland
19	Janice Brown
20	Jesse Carter III Jessica Powell Sean Wood
21	Inez Crutchfield
22	Jason Robertson Diantay Westbrook
24	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	Evan Smith-Erving

FEBRUARY	
2	Valinda Burks Geri Easley
3	Sabrina Daughtdrill
4	Wesley Currie Kourtlynn Greene Jeffery Wood Sr.
6	Billie Calloway
7	Richard Ewing IV Constantine Fenderson
8	Benita Lynch
12	George Timothy Haynes II
14	Stephen Daniel
15	Ed Risby Jr. Lolita Slay
16	Johnny Allen Cornelia Cruson Gary Faulcon II
17	Hortensia 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

<u>DAY</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>SCRIPTURE</u>
<i>The Faith of Ruth</i>		
Friday, December 1	“God Honors Genuine Faith”	Acts 10:34-48
Saturday, December 2	“Naomi Becomes a Grandmother”	Ruth 4:13-22
Sunday, December 3	“Ruth’s Compassionate Faith”	Ruth 1:6-18, 22
<i>The Faith of David</i>		
Monday, December 4	“Faith Expressed through Courage”	Joshua 1:1-9
Tuesday, December 5	“David’s Son Came to Serve”	Matthew 20:25-34
Wednesday, December 6	“Ask in Prayer with Faith”	Matthew 2:18-22
Thursday, December 7	“Prophets speak God’s Word”	Psalm 27
Friday, December 8	“Rekindle God’s Gift and Stand Firm”	2 Timothy 1:3-14
Saturday, December 9	“Israel’s Wavering Faith”	1 Sameul 17:1, 3-4, 8, 20-30
Sunday, December 10	“Faith that God Will Act”	1 Samuel 17:31-37, 45, 48-50
<i>The Family of Faith</i>		
Monday, December 11	“Tamar’s Risk-taking Faith”	Genesis 38:6-11, 13-18, 24-26
Tuesday, December 12	“Rahab’s Faith”	Joshua 2:1-6, 8-16
Wednesday, December 13	“Patient Faith”	James 5:1-11
Thursday, December 14	“God’s Grave Overflowed”	1 Timothy 1:12-17
Friday, December 15	“Bathsheba’s Challenged Faith”	2 Samuel 11:1-5, 26-12:1, 4-7a, 15-16, 24
Saturday, December 16	“God, the Stronghold for the Oppressed”	Psalm 9:1-14
Sunday, December 17	“A Family Tree Characterized by Faith”	Matthew 1:1-17
<i>The Faith of Elizabeth and Mary</i>		
Monday, December 18	“Contentment in Every Situation”	Philippians 4:10-19
Tuesday, December 19	“God Is My Refuge”	Psalm 91:1-16
Wednesday, December 20	“The Lord Has Done Great Things!”	Joel 2:8-27
Thursday, December 21	“The Annunciation to Zechariah”	Luke 1:5-17
Friday, December 22	“Zechariah Doubts but Elizabeth Rejoices”	Luke 1:18-25
Saturday, December 23	“Believe!”	John 20:19, 24-29
Sunday, December 24	“Mary and Elizabeth Express Faith”	Luke 1:36-45, 56
<i>The Faith of the Wise Men</i>		
Monday, December 25	“Christ the Savior Is Born”	Matthew 1:18-25
Tuesday, December 26	“Mary’s Exultant Faith”	Luke 1:46-55
Wednesday, December 27	“Reject Abhorrent Imitations of Faith”	Deuteronomy 18:9-14
Thursday, December 28	“Make Disciples in Faith”	Matthew 28:16-20
Friday, December 29	“God’s Salvation for All the Earth”	Isaiah 49:1-6
Saturday, December 30	“Arise, Shine; Your Light Has Come”	Isaiah 60:1-6
Sunday, December 31	“Worship the King of the Jews”	Matthew 2:1-12

MINISTRY OF STEWARDSHIP MANAGEMENT

October
22

Year of Revival
“When Grace Finds You”
Jonah 3:1-3a
Rev. Joe Ella Darby
Submitted by: Beverly Brown

Rev. Darby shared a historical perspective of the selected scripture above. When human beings are disobedient to becoming disciples for Christ Jesus was compared to a child being insubordinate to a parent. Humankind was challenged to know the importance of being a disciple for God/Christ Jesus even if one does not always understand the reason for His guidance. God shapes an individual's choices; because, God/Christ Jesus has not changed His mission for society, His people, or the world. God/Christ Jesus invites His people to be obedient even when it is not a desired task just as He had for Jonah.

Point 1- Grace Confronts Disobedience: Jonah tried to hide from the tasks that God/Christ Jesus had for him; but he in the end fulfills the assignment in which God/Christ had created for him to fulfill. Moreover, those present were encouraged to listen, respond, and to implement the tasks and responsibilities God/Christ Jesus has designed for one's life and living. God/Christ Jesus grace prevented Jonah from dying. Empty people are not going to worship and use Covid-19 as an excuse not to attend in person worship when they are able.

Point 2- Grace Provides the Way of Redirection: God's grace saved Jonah from himself. Testimony can help others to be delivered. Jonah's repented to fulfill his purpose after being in a fish's stomach for three (3) days and three (3) nights. God's grace saves and contributed to His will being fulfilled. In redirection, we are to be witnesses for Jesus Christ. God's people are to redo their vows with Him. Example cited was Symone Biles taking a break and creating redirection for her to perform at a greater and higher level.

Point 3- Grace Skills us in Darkness: God forgets what we were in the mist of our storms. All of God/Christ Jesus people need love and not just church attendance. It is not enough to quote scripture and proclaim that God is the way for the world. Instead, we serve a risen savior who can and does mend broken people. She also shared that Pastor Smith says grace saves us and she reflected on Ian Dinkins mentioning that it is the small things that make a difference in life is one of the lessons that his dad Deacon Emeritus Richard Dinkins taught him. Finally, God/Christ Jesus grace holds us in a song when we decide to follow Him when we die to self.

Amen, Amen, Amen.

October
29

Year of Revival
“From Breakup to Makeup”
Acts 15:36-41, 2 Timothy 4:9-11
Pastor Smith
Submitted by: Sheila R. Littleton

Break ups don't just occur between lovers, but coworkers, friends, and even church folk. The challenge occurs with what you do after the breakup. Do you leave it or move to reconcile? You should always try to move from breakup to makeup. How do we find ourselves moving from breakup to make up?

In Acts 15, a decision was made to allow Gentiles to be part of the church, and there was a need to share this good news with the churches. Paul and Barnabas had a sharp disagreement about John Mark accompanying them for this purpose. Paul didn't want John Mark to join them, as he had abandoned them with their work in the past. Barnabas wanted John Mark with them, so they decided to go in separate directions.

In 2 Timothy 4, Paul is writing to Timothy and asking that he bring John Mark to him, because he is useful in his ministry. While in Acts, Paul didn't want John Mark with him. In 2 Timothy, he views him as useful in the ministry and wants him. It appears the relationship moved from breakup to makeup.

Point 1-We need to know that our breakup is not everyone's breakup. There may be reasons for your breakup, but it doesn't mean others have to breakup with that person. Even though Paul had issues with John Mark, it didn't mean that Barnabas had those issues. We need to allow people to work out their own issues.

Point 2- We need to look at the “isness” of a person. Paul wanted Timothy to bring John Mark with him because he viewed him as helpful in the ministry. Despite the issues that he had with John Mark in the past, now he views him as helpful. We need to look at who a person is now instead of who they were. We all have sinned and done things that are not consistent with Christianity.

Point 3- We need to keep ministry as our focus. Paul viewed Mark as helpful in his ministry. He was helpful to him in doing God's will and in doing what God called him to do. The ministry was greater than any difference between them. Christ died for us with the ultimate sacrifice.

November
5

Year of Revival
“What Gratitude Looks Like”
Colossians 3:12-17
Pastor Smith
Submitted by: Deborah Luter

Christians are expected to have attitudes of gratitude. What is gratitude? The root word for gratitude is the Latin word *gratis*, which means favor. When we show gratitude that means we are showing favor for something we have seen or experienced or to someone for who they are or what they have done. But it is more than just showing favor, it is doing it without cost. Meaning I am giving gratitude for something and not expecting anything in return.

This passage of scripture was written by the Apostle Paul, who wrote 13 books which are in our Bibles. But what is interesting is that this one is one of his four prison epistles- he wrote it while he was in jail. Jail is not often the place where you feel gratitude to anything or anybody.

Point 1-You show gratitude when you remember you are chosen. Look at how the Apostle Paul describes those to whom he is writing. He tells them they are chosen, they are holy, they are loved. He says this in light of what is written in verse 11. That alone should elicit gratitude. Paul, in this epistle, is saying you don't have to do anything special. Just accept Jesus Christ. You are already chosen.

Point 2-You show gratitude when you wear Christian virtues. Many of us like to wear clothes that make a statement, sometimes positive, sometimes negative. Paul says clothe yourself in compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, and forgiveness. And wrap it all up in love. These garments never go out of style. This is the style of gratitude.

Point 3-You show gratitude when you are guided by your heart. Paul said, let peace be in your heart. Let the Christ dwell in you. In other words, let what is inside of you guide what is outside of you. And what is inside should be constantly updated. The GPS system is a marvelous invention. Your heart needs to be your GPS system. But we cannot always rely on just what was put in some time ago. We need to be constantly updated.

Point 4-You show gratitude when you do it in the name of Jesus. We must show gratitude in the name of Jesus. That should be therapeutic for us. To be honest, there are times when our gratitude is squelched because we get in the way. We cannot be grateful because someone said something that may hurt our feelings. We cannot be grateful because we may be trying to portray another image. We cannot show we are grateful because we don't want folks to think we are weak. This is what happens when we try to do it in our own names. But when we think about the goodness of God, and all he has done, we cannot do it in our names, but we must do it in the name of Jesus.

Year of Revival
“Defeating the Enemies of Gratefulness”
November 12
1 Thessalonians 5:18
Pastor Smith
Submitted by: Adrienne Fancher

We must give praise to the Lord! Paul says “Be thankful in all circumstances...” Being grateful should be the Christian's strongest characteristic. We must distinguish between THANKFULNESS and GRATEFULNESS. We are thankful when someone does something for us or gives us a gift. Gratefulness is deeper: it flows from the heart. Gratitude is who we are. We teach children to be thankful. We are grateful though our Life experiences.

Enemies of Gratefulness try to prevent us from being grateful: Self-pity, Busyness (don't take time to appreciate the beauty of God's Creation), Comparison (don't count your blessings in comparison to others' blessings or downfalls), Jealousy, Fixed Expectations (can't be satisfied if blessings don't appear as expected), Entitlement Attitude (I deserve this), Holding to the past (past failures and disappointment block appreciation of today's blessings). We must defeat these enemies because we must be grateful.

Point 1- We must free gratefulness. We must allow ourselves to see the blessings to be grateful because they may not be what we expect. In Acts 3, the beggar at the Beautiful Gate did not get what he expected (money); instead, he was healed. In Jesus, some people did not get the warrior messiah they expected. Instead, they got a loving Messiah who came to fight powers and principalities. Be open to how God is blessing you!

Point 2- We must cultivate gratefulness. Cultivate means we must be engaged to make things happen to be grateful. We must be intentional about being grateful. Be grateful first – before you get up in the morning, Be grateful of simple pleasures: children playing, a meal, family and friends to communicate with. PRACTICE GRATEFULNESS. Actively remind yourself to be grateful.

Point 3. We must express gratefulness. Many Psalms are songs of gratitude for God being with us, even through adversity. When we articulate our gratitude, we make it real. We convince ourselves of our gratitude. We commit to our gratefulness: for God making a way, for blessing us. Expression does not require grand gesture. Just tell someone that you're grateful for the Goodness of the Lord.

Find ways to defeat the Enemies of the Gratefulness!

First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill

900 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

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Kelly M. Smith Jr.

Editor

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Sermon Digest Reporters

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Deborah Luter

Proofreaders

Evelyn Fancher

Lueatrice Green Lovett

Carole McDaniel

Deacons of the Week for December

Week of	Deacon	Phone#
3 rd	Terry Deas	(919) 523-6949
10 th	Ernest Dismuke	(615) 876-3522
17 th	Emmitt Hayes	(615) 790-7312
24 th	Brian Wood	(615) 259-0623
31 st	Adrienne Fancher	(615) 255-8033