



# The Torch

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER 2023 – VOLUME NOVEMBER NUMBER 2

## Pastor's Pen

I pondered on how to begin this Pastor's Pen. I pondered on if I should ask a "favor" of you. And then I backed away from it because I don't want this to be about me. I thought about an old [Corn Flakes commercial that said, "Taste it again, for the first time."](#) But I felt that might be a little corny (no pun intended). Then I thought about the importance of making a good impression (especially as we are preparing for a pastoral transition). But I think that is the wrong motive. And then I thought about shaming people (God won't bless you...) is an approach but that generally is not my style and mature Christians shouldn't require that. So, I figured we will just let God tell you straight up from God's word.

I am talking about each of our physical presence in church life. This should happen in our worship and study. It should happen in our sharing informally with one another. It should happen because we are called to be a congregation of people. It is about me being excited about physically coming to the place of worship, which symbolizes the presence of God and where we can feel in a different kind of way the Spirit of God. The Psalmist states, ["I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord." \(Psalm 122:1\).](#) Notice that the writer states this in the first-person plural – let us go. It is about the community rejoicing about coming to worship and sharing together.

The church was established for the purpose of people being with and for each other. [Acts 2:42, 46, 47 highlights the original intent of the church. 42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.](#) They learned together, fellowshiped together, and worshipped together. Not only was that exciting for them, but it made them stronger. And the church grew. A friend of mine mentioned to me recently as we were talking about my retiring, that the church must find a way to create community that meets people where they are. We are the church. We are the ones who need to make community happen. It starts with our willingness to come together, to see, and touch one another.

It is to remind us that our commitment to a faith in Jesus Christ is more than me getting the (my) Word. It is about me coming and being a blessing to others in other ways as well. [Hebrews 10:24–25](#) states: ***"24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."***

I took two of my grandsons to see the Titans play the Atlanta Falcons October 29. Over 68,000 showed up on a Sunday afternoon to see the game, that many thought the Titans would lose. But they went anyway. What they saw was something old (the Titans wearing the old Oilers' uniforms that the team wore when they were in Houston), something new (the first start of their rookie quarterback Will Levis), something borrowed (an all-star veteran wide-receiver in DeAndre Hopkins that has played for two other teams before the Titans) and something blue (the color of their uniforms, and of many of the fans in the stands – even I had on a blue Titans' cap). The Titans got a win that they were not expected to win. And people left rejoicing for the experience of being there.

What a joy it would be if people would come to FBCCH not sure what to expect each Sunday but coming with the faith that something good would happen. We are the church. We are the ones who need to make that happen. I have discovered that God never disappoints. And the value of our coming together is immeasurable. We do it for ourselves. We do it for others. We do it for God. Let's do for the sake of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

On our prayer call Friday, Miriam Currie made the plea for each of us to invite and encourage someone who has not been coming to come to Sunday morning worship. This is my plea as well. If you are physically able, I look to see you Sunday.

*Kelly M. Smith Jr.*  
*Pastor*



The poster features a dark blue background with a collage of people. The main title 'NASHVILLE MLK DAY' is in large white letters, with 'Gala' written in a red cursive font over it. Below the title, it says 'Benefiting IMF Community Fund Education Reserve'. The IMF logo is visible on the right. A yellow banner at the bottom of the poster contains the text '\$20K Raised for TN HBCUs in 2023' and logos for ABC University, Fisk University, Meharry Medical College, and TSU. The date 'JANUARY 11, 2024' is in large yellow letters, followed by the location 'CAL TURNER CENTER - GRAND BALLROOM AT MEHARRY MEDICAL COLLEGE'. At the bottom left, it says 'DOORS OPEN 5:30PM PROGRAM BEGINS @ 6PM'. At the bottom right, it says 'TICKETS ON SALE OCTOBER 1, 2023' and 'MLKDAYNASHVILLE.COM'. A photo of Rev. Dr. Kelly Miller Smith is on the left side of the poster.

**NASHVILLE**  
**MLK DAY**  
*Gala*  
Benefiting IMF Community Fund Education Reserve

IMF  
INTERDENOMINATIONAL  
FELLOWSHIP

**\$20K Raised for TN HBCUs in 2023**

ABC UNIVERSITY FISK UNIVERSITY MEHARRY MEDICAL COLLEGE 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

**Rev. Dr. Kelly Miller Smith**  
Keynote Speaker

# DISCIPLESHIP MOMENT

## Jehovah Tsidkenu

“In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called:  
The Lord Our Righteous Savior.” ~Jeremiah 23:6

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

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When I was in elementary school, I had a math teacher who accused me of cheating. Her reason...I got an answer right the wrong way. She made me go to the board and prove I knew how to work the problem. I completed the problem correctly, but my process was incorrect. She didn't understand how I got the right answer using a method that made sense to me because I couldn't understand her process. I couldn't reteach the process to her satisfaction, and this eventually led to a parent-teacher conference where my mother had to advocate for me.

I share this story because that experience scarred me. Often, I intuitively feel my “rightness” yet I'm unable to articulate my why; later it is revealed that I was right. Now, even as an adult, I struggle when I sense that I am right, and someone attempts to convince me I'm wrong. When this happens in relationship with others, it can cause me internal angst, and if I'm able to get out of my feelings, I can hear a small voice asking me “Is it more important to be right than be righteous?”

But let's be honest, many of us desire, and even like, to be right. Being right makes us feel good as that gives us status, influence, and can come with relational capital. We like when people look to us and consider us as men and women of integrity who have no guile. Being right is not necessarily a bad thing until are rightness is challenged or dismissed. When this happens, we may struggle and try to prove that we are right. Sometimes our attempt to prove our rightness looks like digging our heels in and standing firm unable to hear another point of view, sometimes we justify our rightness and become prideful, sometimes we manipulate a situation because we don't trust, and sometimes we take our toys and go home to remain right and retain a sense of power. When we act in ways that don't honor God, it's because it is more important being right than being righteous.

Now, you may ask, doesn't being righteous mean being right and doesn't God want us to be righteous?

Yes, it does and yes God does. God was called Jehovah Tsidkenu (Jeremiah 23:6) and in Hebrew that means being right, just, and declared innocent. In this verse, God was promising that one day a righteous king would reign wisely, do justice and be righteous in the land.

As Christians, we are to live out God's righteousness. When we live righteously, we don't live based on our own rightness, but we live in our right standing before God. We are declared innocent and made right because of the Lord and His power alone. Yes, we are to do what is right and strive to be right in our speech and conduct. But, when we hold tight to our own rightness, this has the danger of leading us to being self-righteous based on our performance and goodness. Romans 3:10 tells us “There is no one righteous, not even one.” And Isaiah 64:6 says our righteousness are as filthy rags. Ephesians 4:24-5:2 talks about our being clothed in Christ's righteousness and not our own. When we are clothed in Christ's righteousness, we don't have to prove our rightness, but we willingly trust the righteous King to reign wisely and make all things right because the Lord sees the full picture when we only see our part.

Though I like being right, over the years, God has deepened my appreciation of being found righteous in Him, so I don't have to claim rightness on my own. I am humbled when I am convicted of my own self-righteousness. I am encouraged when God invites me to repent and believe the good news. This reminds me that because of Christ, I can stand before God as a secure and beloved daughter without a need to claim my rightness even when it's dismissed or challenged.

We live righteous before God by honoring Jesus's work and allowing God to work His righteousness in us as the Holy Spirit convicts and guides us forward.

# 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

## BIRTHDAYS

NOVEMBER	
1	Jamal Buchanan
3	Kamryn Cruson Kamryn Cruson
5	Terry Deas
7	Luke Molette
9	Evelyn Okediji
10	Robert Boone Jeffrey Santil
11	Alice Smith Risby
15	Lois Suttles
16	Clara Elam
17	Dawann Westbrook
18	Jasmine Easley
20	Aaron Powell Jr. Spencer Washington II
21	Titus Wootson
22	Carol Boone Adrienne Fancher Howard Smith Jr.
23	Skyler Washington
24	Kevin Copeland
25	Mary Jan Carter Melody Neely Allison Wootson
30	Fanchetter Ennix

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	Bettye 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

<u>DAY</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>SCRIPTURE</u>
<b><i>What is Required for Salvation?</i></b>		
Wednesday, November 1	“My Help Comes from the Lord	Psalm 121
Thursday, November 2	“We Are All One Body”	1 Corinthians 12:12-20
Friday, November 3	“God Is Near to Anyone”	Acts 17:22-23
Saturday, November 4	“Salvation for All People”	Isaiah 56
Sunday, November 5	“Saved through the Grace of Jesus”	Acts 15:1-11
<b><i>Love Fulfills the Law</i></b>		
Monday, November 6	“Let Us Love One Another”	1 John 4:7-13
Tuesday, November 7	“Perfect Love Casts Out Fear”	1 John 4:14-21
Wednesday, November 8	“Love and Serve the Lord”	Deuteronomy 10:12-22
Thursday, November 9	“Faith Working through Love”	Galatians 5:1-6
Friday, November 10	“The Greatest Commandment Is Love”	Matthew 22:34-40
Saturday, November 11	“Loving Deeds”	Leviticus 19:11-18
Sunday, November 12	“Fulfill the Law through Love”	1 Corinthians 13:8-13; Romans 13:8-10
<b><i>Life in Christ Brings Freedom</i></b>		
Monday, November 13	“The Lord’s Spirit Brings Freedom”	2 Corinthians 3:12-18
Tuesday, November 14	“Judged by the Law of Liberty”	James 2:8-13
Wednesday, November 15	“Proclaim Liberty throughout the Land”	Leviticus 25:8-17
Thursday, November 16	“Jesus Announces Freedom and Release”	Luke 4:14-22
Friday, November 17	“God Provides and Comforts”	Psalm 23
Saturday, November 18	“Rooted and Built Up in Christ”	Colossians 2:6-15
Sunday, November 19	“Hold Fast to Christ”	Colossians 2:16-23
<b><i>Liberty, Not License</i></b>		
Monday, November 20	“Remember God’s Goodness”	Joshua 24:1-14
Tuesday, November 21	“Choose Whom You Will Serve”	Joshua 24:15-24
Wednesday, November 22	“Obey God Only”	Acts 5:27-32
Thursday, November 23	“The Perfect Law of Liberty”	James 1:19-27
Friday, November 24	“Walk at Liberty under God’s Precepts”	Psalm 119:41-56
Saturday, November 25	“Seek God’s Love above Knowledge”	1 Corinthians 8
Sunday, November 26	“Strength in the Lord”	1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1
<b><i>The Faith of Ruth</i></b>		
Monday, November 27	“Faith-based Friendship:	Proverbs 17:17-22
Tuesday, November 28	“Peter’s Test of Faith”	Matthew 26:31-35
Wednesday, November 29	“Hear God’s Voice”	Hebrews 3:7-19
Thursday, November 30	“Faith in Action”	Leviticus 19:30-37
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

# MINISTRY OF STEWARDSHIP MANAGEMENT

September  
24

*Year of Revival*  
“Difference Makers” (Part 3)  
*Luke 10:23-37*  
Pastor Smith

*Submitted by: Beverly Brown*

Pastor Smith provided a historical perspective of the selected scripture above. God/Christ Jesus expects each of us to make a difference for self and other persons we encounter in our lives. Those present and viewing online were encouraged to love one another sincerely with one's heart and soul. Finding a way to deal with life's issues and people may be difficult at times; however, it is necessary- even when it may be difficult.

**Point 1 - Difference Makers Take a Risk.** They are willing to do something in their neighborhood, community, and other appropriate places and situations - even when dealing with circumstances or persons that are like snakes. Prayer is one of the keys which can assist us to deal with treacherous behaviors/persons and it may mean staying out of the way of situations and persons that demonstrate harmful actions with one's encounter.

**Point 2 - Difference Makers Expand Boundaries.** People often limit their exposure and the environments in which they function. Those present and viewing online were encouraged to do differently and perform higher levels in different environments at the best of one's abilities. *Read Matthew 5:36-42.*

**Point 3 - Difference Makers Use God's Capacity.** With God's assistance, directions, and guidance, one can reach beyond an individual's capability and see other possibilities. *Read Matthew 19:26.* He gives and shows humankind the greater capacity of what is possible to see and witness with the naturally human eyes. He gives and reminds each of us that we can do all things through Christ and with Christ who gives us the strength do that and more. Amen, Amen, & Amen.

October  
1

*Year of Revival*  
“The Value of Loyal Gardeners”  
*“Luke 13:6-9”*  
Pastor Smith

*Submitted by: Deborah Luter*

Pastor Smith began by saying he always finds it a difficult challenge preaching from the book of Genesis because of all of what we would characterize today as disfunction. We see people in this story as the foundation upon which our faith and belief in God is based. And yet that is why we need to continue to preach from the book of Genesis. It demonstrates God's desire to use people who are much less than perfect. He went on to say as a matter of fact some of us would fit right in with this story of faith.

Jacob was guilty of the “one too many” syndrome. He crossed the line with his brother to the point where his brother vowed to kill him. That is when Rebecca, Jacob, and Esau's mother felt it was time for Jacob to leave.

**Point 1 - Your Bethel should be the place where you encounter God.** Jacob doesn't really discover God until his mother sent him to his uncle's house. There, as he lay his head, tired from the journey, God and angels came to him in a dream. There God spoke to him and gave him the promise of him becoming a great nation. Jacob had been relying on the faith of his fatherland not necessarily of his own. But when he was heading to his uncle's house he was tired and needed sleep. It is in the stillness of the moment, that he found the Lord. Sometimes we need to slow down to experience God.

**Point 2 - Your Bethel should be the place from which you cannot run.** Because of all the foolishness in Jacob's life he felt the need to run. He was running from his brother, father, and his past. But God needed to place something in his life that he could not run from and would anchor him no matter where he was. This was his Bethel. *Psalms 139:7-10.* Your Bethel should be there no matter what you are going through. Sometimes life throws us out of alignment. Some because we are the victims of circumstances. Others are self-inflicted. But no matter what the circumstances our Bethel should still be there. We need that anchor that keeps us connected with God.

**Point 3-Your Bethel should be the place where you are willing to make sacrifice.** Once Jacob discovered his Bethel he made a vow to the Lord of what he would do. He told the Lord that if he would watch over him, care for him, and give him safe passage to/from his uncle's place, then he would allow God to be his God and he would establish his Bethel and would give of his tithe to the Lord. If God is going to do all of these things then he would serve the Lord and sacrifice a tenth back to the Lord.

October  
8

*Year of Revival*  
“Cross This Jordan”  
*Joshua 1:1-3, 3:15-17*  
Rev. Joe Ella Darby

*Submitted by: Adrienne Fancher*

Ever found yourself in the liminal space between offering prayer and God answering? That space between what you know is to come and what has been? In those moments walking in faith, not by sight, it can be painful, but we can find our purpose. It is partly up to us where we choose to dwell: wallow in despair or understand that trouble don't last always. In front of our purpose lies the “Jordan” – the insurmountable obstacle – we must cross.

We are called to make a unique difference in the world. If those who came before us had failed to fulfill their purpose because they got lost in their pain, we would not enjoy the luxuries of progress today. God sees a purpose in you that you have not dreamed. How do we cross our Jordans (leadership transitions, homelessness) today?

**Point 1-Joshua says trust God's Promise!**

The promise that God makes to Joshua is to quell Joshua's anxieties. God has already promised us, so surely it will come to pass. The promise God made to Joshua stands firm today. If you are called to it, you are uniquely qualified to do it. God says: remember that I was with Moses from his infancy in the Nile through the wilderness – so shall I be with you. As Joshua saw God with Moses, we have people in our lives who we can witness God's Promise.

**Point 2-Joshua says trust the Position of God!**

God called Joshua to bring Israel into the Promised Land through the Jordan River. Imagine the anticipation of the people wandering in the wilderness, and yet, no one built a boat. It is a warning to us that those coming behind us will reap the benefit if we fail to answer the call. God knows what He called us to, and He knows what it will take to accomplish it. God has prepared you and positioned Himself: the priests carried the Ark ahead of the people and then waited in the middle of the river until all had crossed safely. God positions Himself in the middle of whatever is keeping you from your calling and waiting for you. Take a step of faith and watch God take two!

So many people allow Jordan to keep them from the Promised Land because they are afraid to cross it. Whatever Jordan you need to cross, God is in the middle of it. Don't let any Jordan stop you!

October  
15

*Year of Revival*  
“Time to Stand”  
*John 5:1-15*  
Pastor Smith

*Submitted by: Kathy Harrell*

Pastor Smith shared the fact that clergy receive inspirations for their sermons in many ways. The pastor's sermon for today was inspired when the alert and subsequent display on his watch screen read “Time to Stand”. It is indeed time to stand. Stand against injustice, stand for causes that help improve the quality of life, and stand for those who cannot stand for themselves.

Jesus heals a man sitting by a pool who had been sick for 38 years. *Pools* in our lives can include misery, despair, fear, hopelessness, sickness, anxiety, and depression. It makes no difference what pool you or a loved one may be sitting by...it is time to stand.

**Point 1-To stand means that we are willing to try.**

Jesus did not ask the man “do you want to be made well?”. To be made well means to be made whole. You must change your lifestyle, become responsible and accountable for yourself and your families. You have to work for a living and not be totally dependent on others to take care of you. Being whole means being engaged in the life of the church, tithing, and handling your money responsibly.

**Point 2-To stand means that we are willing to transition.**

When we work to become whole, the space where we were (our “pool”) is no longer reserved for us. Just as Jesus told this man, we too must pick up our mats and walk. We cannot be ashamed of whatever adversities we've had to overcome. Being whole shows others the healing power of Jesus Christ. It is that place that He brought us from, to the place that He's brought us to that matters. Don't be ashamed of your mat. Know that your mat is a blessing!

**Point 3-To stand means we are willing to transform.**

No where in scripture does it tell us that this man said so much as a Thank You to Jesus. Rather, he got caught up in his own fear when others said it was a sin to work on the Sabbath and carrying around a mat was considered work. Although this man was transitioned, he was not transformed. Transition changes our physical location, while transformation changes our emotional location. If nothing changes in your heart, there is no transformation.

Transformation will not let you remain silent. It will make you praise the Lord and say Thank You Jesus!

# First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill

900 Nelson Merry Street | Nashville, TN 37203

[www.firstbaptistcapitolhill.org](http://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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