



Family News

A Servant Community: Actively Faithful, Faithfully Active
 St. John's Baptist Church · 300 Hawthorne Lane · Charlotte, North Carolina

Vol. 76, No. 1 - January 2, 2018



*St. John's
 at Worship*

Sunday, January 7
*Epiphany Sunday/
 Baptism of the Lord*

Proclaimer:
 Rev. Dennis W. Foust, PhD

Homily:
Opening the Heavens

Scripture:
 Matthew 3:1-17



BAPTISM: A SYMBOL OF COMMITMENT

In our Baptist tradition, baptism is a symbolic ordinance. We baptize believers — individuals who have made a conscious choice to commit their lives to God through following Jesus. For some persons, this commitment is articulated as a confession of sin and acceptance of God's forgiveness expressed in Jesus Christ's death on the cross and his new life offered through the resurrection. For some persons, this commitment is articulated as an acceptance of God's love through forgiveness of sin, a humble expression of repentant living and a steadfast engagement in learning how the teachings and lifestyle practices of Jesus shape and form their life and their ministry as a disciple of Jesus in the world. Other explanations of this conscious commitment are also valid. As St. John's, we accept members from any faith tradition, and we affirm all modes of baptism without requiring re-baptism. Yet, one of the historic practices of baptists is baptism by immersion symbolizing a death and burial of self-focused living and a resurrection to walk in the new life offered to us by God in Jesus Christ. This tradition also proclaims a full immersion of our lives in our discipleship unto Jesus. The foundational element for us, in the life and ministry of St. John's, is that baptism is an external symbolic expression of an internal spiritual experience.

This Sunday, we will worship The Living God by focusing on the relationship of commitment between God and us. In Jesus Christ, God has expressed commitment to us. In our commitment to follow Jesus, as the Lord of our faith, we express our commitment to God.

Baptism is an invisible water mark which immerses us in this relationship of discipleship. This Sunday morning, we will celebrate the baptisms of Matt Collins, Matt Comer, Mason Gray and Mia McGuire. And, you will find a basin of baptismal waters on the communion table for you to retouch the waters of baptism as we begin this new year.



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RESOLVE FOR 2018: STEPPING FORWARD

As you establish your resolutions for 2018, here are eight questions to consider as you step forward in your life's pathways.

1. **Spiritual:** How is my commitment to God clarified as I follow Jesus and obey his teachings?
2. **Financial:** How do my financial goals and use of material resources support Jesus' teachings?
3. **Vocational:** How am I using my vocation to follow Jesus as a Minister in Daily Life?
4. **Family:** How am I offering the Presence of Christ in my family relationships?
5. **Physical:** How am I caring for my health, so I can influence the world with strength and vitality?
6. **Volunteering:** How am I investing my time to be involved in Jesus ministry of serving others?
7. **Social:** How am I expressing my commitment to follow the lifestyle of Jesus in my social life?
8. **Learning:** How am I continually learning and maturing in applying Jesus' teachings to my life and in the life of the world?

One of my resolutions, for 2018, is to offer the Presence of Christ with more intentionality in situations where people are being treated in ways that are inhumane or unjust. Jesus leads us to step forward against evil.

I recently learned this story from Bulgaria. In 1943, Nazis were rounding up tens of thousands of Jews to send them to the Treblinka extermination camp in Poland. On March 10, boxcars were loaded with 1,500 Jews from the city of Plovdiv. The bishop of Plovdiv, Metropolitan Kirill was followed by 300 church members as they showed up at the train station. Kirill pushed through the SS officers guarding the area. He and his congregation walked inside the boxcars. News spread throughout the city as hundreds of other residents of Plovdiv joined the church members. Kirill shouted to the Jews a passage of scripture from the Book of Ruth: "*Wherever you go, I will go! Wherever you lodge, I will lodge. Your people will be my people, and your God, my God!*" The next day, the Jews were freed and returned to their homes. That day influenced a deeper understanding within the Church in Bulgaria as to their role in the world. They stepped forward against evil and it made a difference. At the beginning of World War II, the Jewish population of Bulgaria was 48,000. At the end of the war, more than 50,000 Jews lived in Bulgaria; the only country under Nazi rule to end the war with more Jews than at the beginning.

Beloved, my prayer is that your trip to Jesus' manger this Christmas has stirred your spirit. As you move beyond Bethlehem, may you initiate resolve in 2018 to step forward against evil. Someone else's life may just depend upon your active faithfulness.

Shalom,
Dennis

Youth News from Lee

Sunday, January 7 & 14 - Sunday Night Live

Youth are on regular evening schedule from 5:00-7:30 pm. During choir, they will work on songs they will sing at Youth Sunday worship service on February 4. During our program time, we will watch and reflect upon the PBS documentary "A Class Divided." It talks about a classroom experiment conducted after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It also makes you think about how we group ourselves, classify others, and how we can make others feel excluded.



Monday, January 15 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Service Project

We will meet at the church at 10 am to go over to Hope Chapel and do a service project and serve hot dogs. If the weather is agreeable, we will finish putting the pavers down beside the outdoor walkway. If we have inclement weather, we will fix a closet door and do some painting inside Hope Chapel. We will return to the church at 1 pm.

January 19-21 - Youth ski trip to Winterplace -

Participants will receive an email this week with details for this trip.

From Allison

Nursery/2s: This class will be cared for in their room for Formation Hour and Worship Hour.

PreK/K: This class will remain in their classroom for Formation Hour and Worship Hour as they share a story together, make some art, and play together. This week, they'll learn about the Magi who came to visit Jesus when he was little.

Grades 1-5: These children will have Formation Class for the whole hour. They'll be learning about how Jesus was baptized, and they'll take a field trip to see where people are baptized in our church. They will join their families for worship where they'll get to see members of our church family be baptized.

Elementary Music - Kevin and I are in the process of finalizing our new structure for music for our elementary-aged children. We'll be focusing more on learning about hymns, using our hymnals, and having fun while doing both. We hope that a new approach will help our children be able to participate more fully in worship and come to love singing to God.

Save the Date - VBS will be June 11-15 this year. We'll be learning about the life of Jesus as we walk through the seasons of the church year together with stories and art. We hope to have registration open by February.

Financial Ministry Plan Pledge Report

Amount Received: \$851,306
Commitments Received: 178

If you have not turned in your Pledge Card to the church office, please do so as soon as possible.



Art • Poetry • Music: Celebrating Charlotte's Black Culture January 15, at 7:00 pm Friendship Missionary Baptist Church

Art • Poetry • Music: Celebrating Charlotte's Black Culture and the Life and Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is a powerful, collaborative concert by Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, Firebird Arts Alliance's Power of Song Project, Quentin Talley's OnQ Productions and Opera Carolina. Three-time Emmy Award winner Bluz, of Slam Charlotte, will perform along with the incredible Ocie Davis Quartet and the combined choirs of Opera Carolina Chorus, Winthrop University Chamber Singers, semi-professional choir VOX, the Charlotte Contemporary Ensemble and Friendship Missionary Baptist Church Choir. APM fuses music, spoken word and visual art with readings of Dr. King's iconic speeches. Join us for this community celebration of Dr. King's legacy, and Charlotte's African-American community.

Note to Sunday School Classes:



Please remember to take your used Sunday School literature and devotional materials to the Collection Room (corner room near Lasater Hall). These materials will be picked up by Tom and Martha Bryson to be re-used by one or more congregations who cannot afford to purchase new literature each quarter.

St. John's Winter Weather Closing Policy



Weekdays:

When the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools cancel school because of bad weather, all church activities, including meetings and Weekday School, will be canceled and the church office will be closed.

Sundays:

In the case of extreme weather conditions affecting Sundays, we will announce alterations/closings no later than 7:00 am Sunday through the following media:

- Automated greeting on church phone (704.333.5428)
- Church web site (www.stjohnsbaptistchurch.org)
- Facebook and Twitter
- E-mail to St. John's Family News list
- Local TV stations, including WBTV, WCNC, WSOC and Channel 14 News.

Leslie Lee and Steve Gretz in Concert



Saturday, January 13, at 7 pm

Leslie Lee and Steve Gretz join us again this winter as they swing through the South, sharing their beautiful gifts for music and lyrics, as well as words both thoughtful and entertaining! Join us in Lasater Hall for an evening of great music, lovely desserts, and a great, mid-winter evening! Donations will be accepted for hurricane relief in Zulueta, Cuba.

To All College Age Members of St. John's:

The Martha Miller and J.P. Hackney Trust Fund was created through the will of Mildred Hackney Smith, and provides grant money for St. John's members (or children of St. John's members) who plan to attend Furman University, Wake Forest University, or Wingate University.

If your plans for college next year include one of these three schools, you may wish to apply for one of the Hackney Grants. The deadline for application is March 1. For more information, contact the Chair of the Hackney Committee, Ken Raynor, at Ken@Raynorlawfirm.com.

Mental Health First Aid is an 8-hour course that teaches you how to help someone who may be experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge. The training helps you identify, understand and respond to signs of addictions and mental illnesses. There will be a training at St. John's on Tuesday, January 16, with Charlotte Family Housing staff. If you are interested in attending, please contact Jacquelyn in the church office (704-333-5428 ext. 11 or jmabee@sicharlotte.org).



St. John's Baptist Church
300 Hawthorne Lane - Charlotte NC 28204
704.333.5428-www.StJohnsBaptistChurch.org
Family News - a publication of St. John's Baptist Church

Ministers

Every participant in God's Servant Church

Equipping Ministers

Senior Minister..... Dennis Foust
 ext. 12 - dfoust@sjcharlotte.org
Associate Minister Martha Kearse
 ext. 13 - mkearse@sjcharlotte.org
Minister for Youth & Young Adults Lee Gray
 ext. 15 - lgray@sjcharlotte.org
Minister for Children & Their Families Allison Benfield
 ext. 18 - abenfield@sjcharlotte.org
Minister for Worship and Music..... Kevin Gray
 ext. 14 - kgray@sjcharlotte.org

Church Staff

Administrative Assistant..... Jacquelyn McAbee
 ext. 11 - jmcabee@sjcharlotte.org
Church Accountant Elaine Johnson
 ejohnson@sjcharlotte.org
Church Administrator..... Sandra Rogers
 ext. 20 - srogers@sjcharlotte.org
Organist..... Noel Lance
 nlance@sjcharlotte.org
Weekday School Director Lydia Olmsted
 ext. 39 - weekdayschool@sjcharlotte.org
Custodians James Ford, Chris Mullis, Debora Thon
 Office hours: Mon.-Thurs.: 8:30 am-4:30 pm; Fri.: 8:30 am-12:00 noon

Prayer Concerns & Celebrations

Libby Collier - Presbyterian; Betty Crenshaw - Pineville Rehab & Living Center; Emily Batts, Joe Ehrenberger, Phillip Fries, Cathy Hartsell, Carmen Howard, Chuck Jones, Jan Kerley & Betty Taylor - home

Sympathy to

Jerry Stephens and family in the death of her sister-in-law, Rosalie Crouch, on December 24; to the family of Maryanne Carnes, St. John's member, who passed away on December 28; and to the family of Marie Coble who passed away on January 1. A service to celebrate the life of Marie Coble will be held on Friday, January 5, at 2:00 pm in the Chapel of St. John's.

Sunday, January 7

Deacons: Linda Balentine, Jason Benton, Jordan Benton, Lynn Bishop, Maggie Bond, Leslie Bragg, Randy Brantley, Stan Brown, Minh Callaway, Teri Franklin

Tellers: James Laney, Susan King

Greeters: Main-Ed Turner, Eric McCombs; 5th St.-Linda Kerley, Susan King; Broach-Ashley Hogewood; Elevator- Marvin Carter

Ushers: Arnold Philemon, Marvin Carter, Bobbie Hahn, Bobbie & Don Hinson, Carol & Gene Poole

Financial Ministry Plan Report:

Week of Dec. 31: \$24,659
 Income through December 31: \$1,032,289
 2017 Ministry Plan Budget Goal: \$1,075,535



⇒ You can donate Ziploc Bags (quart and/or gallon) to be used in the kitchen. Any amount is appreciated. These may be left in the church office area.

Women of the Church need your donated Birthday Cards for men! One volunteer is also needed to help with this ministry in a coming month. Cards can be given to Patricia McCaskill or left in the church office for use in the Women of the Church birthday card ministry. Thank you!



Children and Youth Basketball Games & Results

6 & Under Co-Ed - 3:00 pm at St. John's
 8 & Under Boys - 2:00 pm at St. John's
 10 & Under Boys - 12:00 pm at St. John's
 10 & Under Girls - 10:00 am at St. John's
 12 & Under Boys - 11:00 am at St. John's
 12 & Under Girls - 1:30 pm at the Park Church
 14 & Under Boys - 11:00 am at First Baptist Matthews
 16 & Under Boys - 1:00 pm at First Baptist Charlotte
 18 & Under Boys - 10:30 am at Avondale Presbyterian
 18 & Under Girls - 10:30 am at Trinity Episcopal School

Calendar: January 7 - 13

Sunday, January 7

8:00Garrison Road Property meeting (Conference Room)
 9:00 5th/6th Grade Discipleship (Room 305)
 9:15Adult Sunday School (Classrooms)
 10:30Worship/Baptism (Sanctuary)
 5:00 Sunday Night Live (Gym/Lounge/Chapel/3rd Floor)

Monday, January 8

11:45 Faith Journey Book Study (Room 209)
 6:30 Young Voices of the Carolinas (Choir Room)
 6:30Ministries Deacon Panel (Conference Room)
 8:00 AA (Lasater Hall)

Tuesday, January 9

7:00 Tuesday Morning Men's Group (Lounge)
 10:00Staff meeting (Conference Room)
 1:00 Sandwich Ministry (Lounge)
 4:15 Young Voices of the Carolinas (Choir Room)
 5:15 SJBC Men's Basketball (Gym)
 6:00 Nat'l Alliance on Mental Illness Support Groups (Room 114 & 116)

Wednesday, January 10

6:30Benton Basketball (Gym)
 9:30 Yoga (Room 114)
 6:00 AA (Lasater Hall)
 6:00 Mission Resource Team (Conference Room)
 6:00 Women of the Church Board meeting(Lounge)
 7:15 Choir Rehearsal (Choir Room)

Thursday, January 11

10:00 Craft & Needle Ministry (Room 209)
 2:30 King's College (Broach Hall)

Friday, January 12

5:00 Room in the Inn (Lounge/Gym)
 8:00 AA (Lasater Hall)

Saturday, January 13

7:00Benton Basketball (Gym)
 10:00 Basketball games (Gym)
 7:00 Concert (Lasater Hall)

Complete calendar online:
www.StJohnsBaptistChurch.org

Ministers on Call:

January 1-7: Lee Gray 704-451-1309
 January 8-14: Allison Benfield 828-448-8412