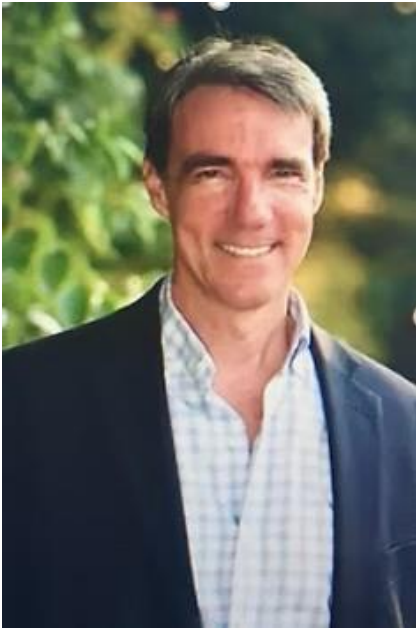


<h1>Welcome to the Worship of God</h1>	
<i>We invite you to silence your electronic devices so we can fully share this time together.</i> <i>An asterisk (*) invites the congregation to stand as you are able.</i>	
September 14, 2025	<i>Ten-Thirty in the Morning</i>
<i>Today’s alter flowers are placed in loving memory and honor of Ken Sanford.</i>	
Gathering Music	Delbridge Narron
Greeting and Our Life Together	Rev. Lee Gray
*Passing of the Peace	Congregation
Preparing Our Hearts for Worship	Trip Rogers, guitar
<i>Little Wing</i>	Jimi Hendrix
<i>Entrance of the Christ Candle – Hailey McCombs</i>	
Call To Worship	J. Noel Lance and Congregation
Leader: Come, beloved of God, for we are often restless and hurried, forgetting where we are and whose we are.	
People: We return to the Father who waits with open arms, inviting us to stop, to listen, and to be restored.	
Leader: Like the younger son, we sometimes run too far, too fast, chasing voices that cannot satisfy.	
People: Yet God’s voice calls us home, reminding us to slow down and find our true life in Him.	
Leader: Like the elder son, we sometimes linger in resentment, missing the joy of the Father’s feast.	
People: Yet God’s grace invites us in, to share the table, to celebrate mercy, and to be renewed.	
Leader: This is the house of our merciful God.	
People: Here we will listen. Here we will pause. Here we will be embraced by the love that never lets us go.	
Leader: Come, let us worship the One who welcomes us home.	
All: We come with open hearts, ready to slow down, to listen, and to be found in God’s love.	
Prayer of Submission	J. Noel Lance
*Hymn Of Praise, No. 16	<i>Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing</i>
Chalice Hymnal	NETTLETON
Moments with the Younger Church	Rev. Kheresa Harmon
The Church at Prayer	Rev. Harmon
Current Prayer Concerns	
Mary Jo Breckenridge, Carl Phillips, Joe Trull	
The Lord’s Prayer	
Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.	
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.	
Give us this day our daily bread.	
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.	
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:	
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.	
Amen.	

*Offertory Hymn No. 566	<i>Be Still, My Soul</i>
Chalice Hymnal	FINLANDIA
Offertory Prayer	Marc Cardella
Offertory	Chancel Choir
<i>Psalms 139</i>	Allen Pote
*Doxology	TALLIS’ CANON
<i>Praise God from whom all blessings flow.</i> <i>Praise God all creatures here below.</i> <i>Praise God above, ye heavenly host.</i> <i>Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.</i>	
Scripture Reading	Russell, Stacey, Addison, Alex Norris
Luke 15: 11-32	
	
Then Jesus said, “There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the wealth that will belong to me.’ So he divided his assets between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant region, and there he squandered his wealth in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that region, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that region, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, and no one gave him anything. But when he came to his senses he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.” So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate, for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate. Now his elder son was in the field, and as he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf because he has got him back safe and sound.’ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command, yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your assets with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’ Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’”	
Leader: This is the written Word of God, for the people of God	
People: Those who have ears to hear, let them hear.	

Song of Reflection	Trip Rogers, guitar	
<i>Sound of the Speed of Loneliness</i>	John Prine	
Message	<i>“The Speed of Recognition”</i>	Rev. Lee Gray
Song of Commitment	Trip Rogers, guitar and Congregation	
<i>Be Thou My Vision</i>	arr. Trip Rogers	
High King of Heaven, my victory won, May I reach Heaven's joys, O bright Heav'ns Sun! Heart of my heart, whatever befall, Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.		
Introduction of Dr. Don Gordon, D. Min	James Laney	
Commissioning	Rev. Gray	
Postlude	J. Noel Lance	
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We are excited to present Dr. Don Gordon as our Interim Minister to serve until a new pastor is called for St. John’s Baptist. Don was recommended to us by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina and has served as our Transition Guide advising the Pastor Search Team since May of this year.

Don’s background and interests are varied and intriguing. After earning a B.S. in mathematics from Campbell University and doing graduate work in math at N.C. State, Don felt a call to ministry. He then earned a Master of Divinity with Languages from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and began 30 years of service as a full-time church minister, serving as a senior minister for 23 of those years. While serving as a senior minister, Don earned a Doctor of Ministry from Columbia Theological Seminary. Since his retirement from full-time ministry in 2018, Don has served as interim minister in three North Carolina churches.

In addition to his work as a pastor, Don is a writer and an environmentalist. He is the author of three books—*A Concise History of North Carolina Baptists*, *Prayers of a Pastor*, and *Psalms for Children*—and editor of a fourth, *Elevating Preaching 2009: A Collection of Elevating Sermons*. He is also the founder and CEO of C3-Christians Caring for Creation, a non-profit organization calling Christians to embrace our role as stewards of creation.

Don has been a faithful alumnus of Campbell University, serving the University as member of the Board of Trustees, member of the Presidential Board of Advisors, and member of the Board of Ministers. He has been active in serving the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and YMCA in a number of different roles and is a member of the Board of Directors of Good Faith Media, a non-profit organization offering reflection and resources at the intersection of faith, culture, and democracy through an inclusive Christian lens.

Don is the father of three daughters and has six grandchildren. He is engaged to be married soon and loves pickleball, exercise, and reading good books.

Don begins September 14 and will typically be in the church office on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. His schedule may vary depending on meetings or events he needs to attend at other times. We have called Don in a part-time capacity, about 18-20 hours per week on average. He will not be responsible for all of the duties of a full-time Senior Minister.

When you see Don, please welcome him to St. John’s!



OUR LIFE TOGETHER

OurBridge for Kids School Supply Drive Ends Tomorrow

The Women of the Church are sponsoring a collection of school supplies and gently used or new school uniforms for our ministry partner ourBridge for Kids from now through September 15. Our Bridge for Kids provides resources and out-of-school programs specifically designed for immigrant and refugee children and their families. Their goal is to address the social service gaps and help newly arrived children and their families adapt, develop a sense of belonging, and thrive in Charlotte. Place your donated items inside the bins in the Giving Nook in the Main Entrance Lobby. We are collecting the following items for the age and size range of K-8:

• Backpacks

• Binders, folders notebooks, and lined paper

• Dry erase markers, crayons, colored pencils, pens and pencil cases


• White, navy or red polo shirts

• Khaki or navy pants and shorts

I was a stranger and you welcomed me” Matthew 25:35. Help us extend a loving hand to these children as a new school year starts!


Church-wide Meeting

We received 133 wonderful and thoughtful responses to our Survey to define your wishes for our next Senior Minister! This was a great response. The next step is a congregational meeting in Broach Hall on September 21, after worship. A simple lunch will be provided, and we ask that you reserve a spot, so we know how many to expect. During this interactive meeting, we will present the Survey results and discuss in table groups to allow all a chance to participate, and to further refine any input on key priorities for the Search Team. Childcare with a separate kids’ lunch will be provided. Please note on your reservation how many children will attend. **Please reserve your spot by Sept. 15.**



Rise Against Hunger – September 28

We’re coming together to pack 15,000 meals for families in need around the world! Partnering with Rise Against Hunger, an international humanitarian organization, we’re joining a global movement to end hunger by empowering communities, nourishing lives, and responding to emergencies. Since its founding, Rise Against Hunger has packaged and distributed over 600 million meals to countries worldwide. This is a unique, family-friendly way to make a real impact — join us and be part of something bigger! Register Today by visiting [stjohnsbaptistchurch.org/rise25](http://stjohnsbaptistchurch.org/rise25) or scanning the QR Code!




On the Way

On the Way will go to House of Pizza on Thursday September 25 at 11:00 am. In addition to pizza, their menu includes salads, sandwiches, and pasta. We will meet at the restaurant 3640 Central Ave. Please email Lee Gray [LGray@sjcharlotte.org](mailto:LGray@sjcharlotte.org) if you plan to participate.

Charlotte CROP Hunger Walk

October 19, 1:00 - 4:00 pm at Providence Baptist Church, 4921 Randolph Road 1:00 Registration and activities including bounce house, CWS Kit packing, and more! 2:00 Walk in the neighborhood or walk on the church track, followed by a treat!



Donate or sign up for your walk today!

St. John’s Baptist Church

300 Hawthorne Lane

Charlotte, North Carolina 28204

704.333.5428 | [www.stjohnsbaptistchurch.org](http://www.stjohnsbaptistchurch.org)

The St. John’s Pulpit

Worship: September 21, 2025

Scripture: Psalm 30

Message Title: "A Thankful Heart"


Proclaimer: Dr. Don Gordon, D. Min

This Week at St. John’s

Sun., Sept. 14	9:15 am	Sunday School
	10:30 am	Worship (Sanctuary)
	10:30 am	Together in Christ International Ministries (Chapel)
	11:45 am	Women of the Church Luncheon (Broach Hall)
Mon., Sept. 15	11:00 am	Faith Journey Book Study (Lounge)
Tues., Sept. 16	8:00 am	Finance Resource Team (Zoom)
	10:00 am	Sandwich Ministry (Lounge)
	10:00 am	Staff Meeting/Worship Planning (Conference Room)
Wed., Sept. 17	5:45 pm	Handbell Rehearsal (Handbell Suite)
	7:15 pm	Choir Rehearsal (Choir Suite)
Thurs., Sept. 18	10:00 am	Women of the Church Spiritual Growth Team (Prayer Room)
Fri., Sept. 19	8:00 pm	Eastway AA (Lasater Hall)
Sat., Sept. 20	6:30 am	Benton Basketball (Gym)
	1:00 pm	NAMI: Breaking Barriers (Lasater Hall)
	8:00 pm	Together We Rise NA (Lasater Hall)

Membership and Ministry

If you would like information about the church or on how you can become a member of St. John's, please call the church office (704.333.5428), or fill out one of the “For Our Guests” cards found on the back of the pew and place it in the offering plate. You can also scan the included QR code to fill out the guest card online. One of our ministers will be happy to reach out to you and answer any questions you may have. Visit our website to find out more information regarding the many ministry opportunities available in the life of St. John's.



Ministers

Every participant in God’s Servant Church

Equipping Ministers

Minister for Congregational Care .....Rev. Lee Gray

Minister for Children and Their Families..... Rev. Kheresa Harmon

Minister for Worship and Music.....J. Noel Lance

Church Staff

Stratus Custodians.....Pray & Thomas Chanwal

Weekday School Assistant Director.....Kristina Hartzell

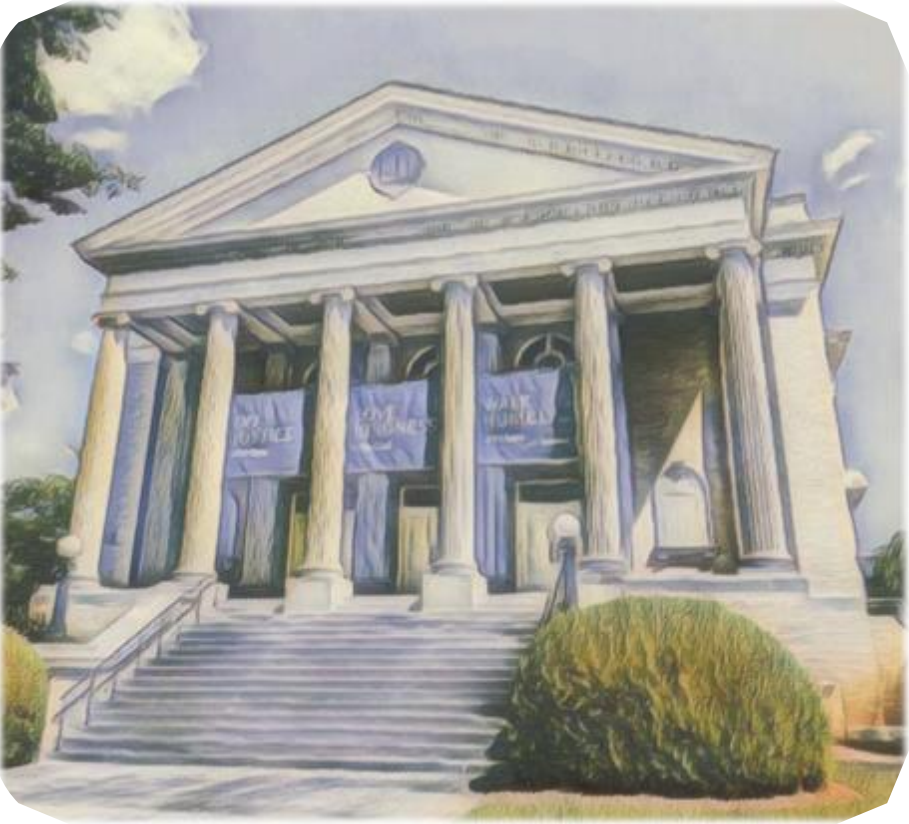
Church Administrator..... Amanda Morrison

Weekday School Director.....Lydia Olmsted

Custodial/Maintenance Associate.....Herb Parrott

Children’s Music Director .....Chloe Salmeron

Media Coordinator.....Liza Tindall



Sunday, September 14, 2025

10:30 AM Worship

St. John’s Baptist Church