

CALENDER OF EVENTS

Wednesday, January 24

12 Noon – 1:00 pm Prayer Meeting/Bible Study/Rev. Johnathan Bryson
Chapel Class/Bring a bag lunch if you so desire
5:15 pm Family First Feast/Pastor Dwayne
Menu: Breakfast for Dinner: Sausage/Hashbrown casserole/Fruit Cups/
Honey Bun Cake/Coffee/Tea Water
7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, January 28

9:45 am Sunday School
11:00 am Worship/Dwayne Burks
5:00 pm The Chosen – Chapel Class

Wednesday, January 31

12:00 Noon – 1:00 pm
Prayer Meeting & Bible Study in the Chapel
Rev. Johnathan Bryson
5:15 pm Family First Feast/Pastor Dwayne
Menu: BBQ Sandwich/Slaw/Hush Puppies/Banana Pudding/
Coffee/Tea/Water
7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal



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The Builder

First Baptist Church of Gastonia

Volume XIII Number 4

Week of January 28, 2024

Grace: Meeting God Halfway
By: Art Frymyer, Jr.

There's a story that is told of a man who kept praying to win the lottery. Every night he would get on his knees and pray to God, "Lord, let me win the lottery." One time when he was praying, the heavens opened, and the man heard a booming voice from heaven saying "Meet me halfway. Buy a ticket!"

That is of course a joke, but it serves to illustrate a point. God doesn't ask us to do it all, but he does ask us to make a token effort. In 2 Kings chapter 5 we find that Elisha tells Naaman to go wash in the river Jordan seven times and he will be healed of leprosy. It wasn't some Herculean effort to bathe in the river. God didn't ask him to move mountains. It was a simple task which served no purpose whatsoever. Water wouldn't cure leprosy and everyone knew it. The task was pointless, except to prove that Naaman was willing to submit to what God asked of him. Naaman washed in the river seven times and was cured of his leprosy.

In the parable of the prodigal son, the father looked out and saw his wayward son coming home. He didn't wait on the son to make it home and ask to be a servant. He ran out to meet his son, welcoming him home as his son, putting a robe and a ring on him, signifying his status as family. And the Father today will come out to meet you. You don't have to make it all the way home on your own. You don't have to live a perfect life before you can be a Christian. Romans 10:9 says "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." We're not asked to move mountains. We're not asked to perform the Herculean task of living a perfect life. Simply believe on the Lord Jesus, and confess him with your mouth, and you will be saved. That's the promise of God's grace to you and me.

Matthew 6:33 says "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." It doesn't say "you have to find God". It says SEEK. Make an effort. Show God you're tired of running, and you are ready to come home. He'll come out to meet you and welcome you as His child. He wants to extend His grace to you in full. Just let Him see you making an effort to come home. He'll take it from there.

(Continued on page 2, column 1)

First Baptist Church, Gastonia North Carolina

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A place to belong, a place to become, a place to bear witness
Gastonia NC 28054 -Mailing: PO Box 6298, Gastonia NC 28054-6018

Church E-Mail: fbcogastonia@gmail.com

Church Website: www.fbcgastonia.org

Worship Greeters

January: Bill and Julia Blalock
and Scott Irvin
February: Patti Black, Art Queen

Welcome

Happy Birthday

January 25 -February 4

29- Mark Rouse
30 – Abby Robinson
31 – Robbie Elmore
Fred Jones

3- Madison Watson
4 – Ryan Carson
Jay Gerhart

**EMAIL ADDRESSES/PHONE
NUMBERS
FOR OUR PASTORS**

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Senior Pastor

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704-860-2957

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Associate Pastor

jbrysonfbc@gmail.com

704-840-0710

MEMORIALS

In Memory of: Betty Jones

By: Frances Rhodes,
Sharon Rhodes

In Memory of: Phil Lindsay

Frances Rhodes, Sharon Rhodes

In Memory of: Billy Stafford
Son of Margaret Stafford

By: Frances Rhodes,
Sharon Rhodes

In Memory of: Lois Withers

By: Gene & Dianne Barber,
Newt, Sally, Alexandria &
Katherine Baxter, Amy Cathey,
Robert & Sian Harris III, Don &
Lil Lanier, Mike & Nancy Lynch,
Frances Rhodes, Sharon Rhodes,
David Taylor

(continued from front page)

Absolutely! Naaman made a commitment to find a cure for his leprosy. He loaded up his wagons with wealth befitting a king, and went to buy a cure from Elisha. He tried to give Elisha the gold. That's commitment. But he wasn't healed until he performed the proscribed task of washing 7 times in the Jordan. That's surrender.

Same with us today. We can go to church 6 times a week, give all we have to feed the poor, stand on the street corner in sackcloth and ashes, and it won't do one bit of good if it comes out of a sense of commitment to God. God wants us to surrender to his will. He wants us to look to him. He wants us to depend on him. That's surrender. We might move mountains with our faith, heal the sick, and cast out demons, but if it isn't God telling us to do it, what good is it? But if we say, "Lord, I believe. Help thou mine unbelief" that's surrender. That's meeting God halfway. He'll work out the unbelief by his power and his grace.

Art Frymyer is an old and dear friend who always makes me think. I've invited him to share some of his writings with us from time to time.

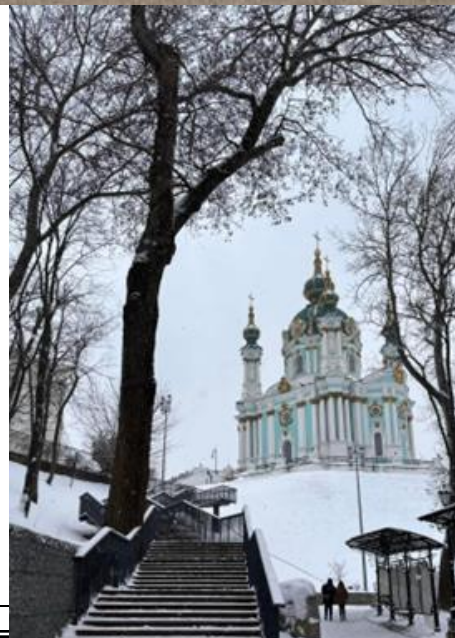
Pastor Dwayne



Ukraine Update From Rev. Dump Harper

It's truly a beautiful time to be in Kyiv and awesome things are happening at Viddykh. We just hired our country director and we are currently looking for office space to rent. We are so excited about the opportunity we have to impact the lives of hundreds of thousands of teens in Ukraine during this extremely difficult time. Thank all of you that are supporting us for allowing us to begin to tackle this huge task.

Be sure to mark your calendars. Dump is scheduled to be with us again on Sunday March 3 at 11 am!!



Thanks to our own Allie Grant (age 8) for penning this song lyric and incorporating them into a lovely drawing.



Jeus Died
on the cross
for ure sins
for his mom
merry had hem
in a manger every one
lensend to hem
Back to life and he care
New it was hem

BACK PACK MINISTRY

Monetary donations are needed to buy the items that are needed. We have 9 families which includes 37 people. It takes approximately \$300-\$400 per month to feed these families. Your donations will be greatly appreciated.

The historic Christian doctrine of the divinity of Christ does not simply mean that Jesus is like God. It is far more radical than that it means that God is like Jesus. In other words, the doctrines of the incarnation and deity of Christ are meant to tell us that we cannot start with a predetermined, set in stone idea of God derived from the rest of the Bible and then extend that to Jesus. Jesus is not meant to merely fit into those predetermined categories. He is intended to explore them, transform them, alter them forever, and bring us to a new evolutionary level in our understanding of God. An old definition of God does not define Jesus. The experience of God in Jesus requires a brand-new definition and understanding of God.

Elton Trueblood

"To say that I am made in the image of God is to say that love is the reason for my existence: for God is love."

Thomas Merton