The First Word

Parents' Night Out
December 12

"And on Earth, Peace"
December 14

Celebrators' Banquet
December 17

Candlelight and Communion Services
December 21

Church Office Closed
December 22-26

Glorifying God by developing fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ motivated by a love for God and a love for others.





From Pastor Jeff

The Story Behind the Song. Mark Lowry is best known as a singer and comedian who spent more than a decade as a regular fixture of Bill Gaither's vocal band. But years from now, when all is said and done, perhaps Lowry's most enduring legacy will be the beautiful little song that he wrote 30 years ago as a meditation for a Christmas program at his church.

In 1984, the leaders at Lowry's Nashville congregation asked him if he would be willing to write a musical for Advent. He gladly agreed. Inspiration came as Lowry focused his heart and mind on the wonder of Christmas. "I tried to picture Mary holding the baby Jesus on the first Christmas morning and wondered what she was thinking about that child," he says. "She knew He was special—the Virgin Birth was her first clue—but could she ever imagine all the things that He would do while He was here?" Soon, Lowry came up with a series of questions that he would like to ask Mary: "Did she know he would walk on water? Raise the dead? Give sight to the blind?" Lowry decided to use the questions as a monologue to be recited between the scenes of his musical. But the profundity of those questions lingered in his mind long after the church musical was done.

Six years later, harmonica virtuoso Buddy Greene supplied just the right music and "Mary, Did You Know?" was complete. Since then, Lowry and Greene's tune has become a modern classic. It has been recorded by many different artists. "I hear from a lot of people who have sung it in the church choir for Christmas and Easter programs," says Lowry. "When I wrote it, I felt there was something special there, but I never imagined how wide-reaching it would become." Maybe a fresh look at the words of Lowry's song can help you to meditate on the real reason for the Christmas season.

Mary did you know that your baby boy would some day walk on water? Mary did you know that your baby boy would save our sons and daughters? Did you know that your baby boy has come to make you new? This child that you've delivered, will soon deliver you.

Mary did you know that your baby boy would give sight to a blind man? Mary did you know that your baby boy would calm a storm with his hand? Did you know that your baby boy has walked where angels trod? And when you kiss your little baby, you have kissed the face of God.

The blind will see, the deaf will hear, the dead will live again. The lame will leap, the dumb will speak, the praises of the lamb---. Mary did you know that your baby boy is Lord of all creation? Mary did you know that your baby boy would one day rule the nations? Did you know that your baby boy is heaven's perfect Lamb? This sleeping child you're holding is the great—I AM.

On a personal note, let me take a little space and tell you once again what a blessing it is to serve as the pastor of this incredible First Baptist Family. Wendy and I count it an honor, a privilege and a wonderful source of joy to be a part of this precious church family. I am so thankful for you and for all that God is doing in and through our lives together in Him. My hope and prayer is that this Christmas season will be a joyful and meaningful one for you and for your family.



CHILDRen'S MINISTRY

LIKE us on Facebook @firstbaptist.childrensministry

Questions or Comments??

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Marsha lones

Children's Ministry Assistant

Mother's Morning Out/Moppets/General Paid Childcare mjanes@fbcfm.com

First Step Class

FBC's "new Christian" class for kids & at least one parent

> Next Opportunity: Sunday, January 11 11:00 a.m.

LIKE US!!

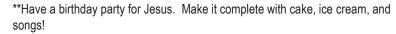
... on Facebook ...

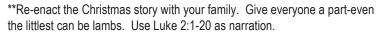
There are some fun "extras" including a great giveaway during December!



Celebrate & Build Traditions In December

Children of all ages love the holiday season. Make deliberate plans for special family times while keeping Christ in Christmas!!





**Wrap a gift for Jesus to put under the Christmas tree. Your gift might be an act of service, a donation to a Christian organization or some other way to show Christ's Love.

**Other ideas will be shared on the FBC Children's Ministry FACEBOOK page during the month!

Local Holiday Happenings

New to the area?? Looking for some fun December family activities??

Check out the Children's Ministry page on the church website for a special December section!!

PJ Day in Children's Ministry

Sunday, December 21

... keep your eyes and ears open for all the details ...

December Parents' Night Out

Friday, December 12 6:00-10:00 p.m.

Envelope registration required by NOON on December 8.

It's still FREE ... with a *twist.

There will be a \$10/child deposit that will be the **official sign-up format. If a family has three kids, there needs to be \$30 (check or cash) in the registration envelope. Checks should be made payable to First Baptist Church.

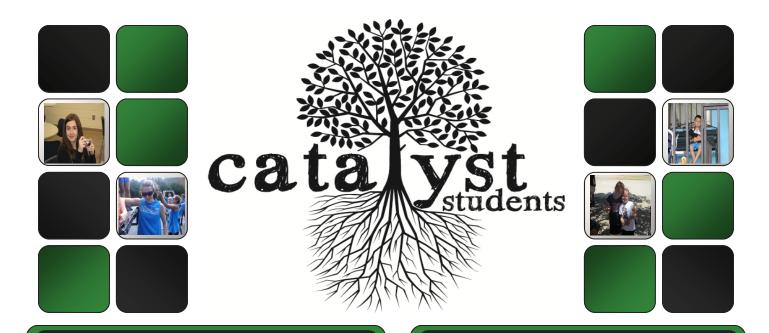
When children are checked in on the 12th, the money will be returned to parents at that time.

If a family needs to cancel their reservation, their money will be returned if <u>Natalie</u> receives that phone or email notification by NOON on the 12th.

If a family cancels later than noon or is a no-show, the deposit will not be returned and that money will be used to off-set the cost of staffing and food that has been prepared for those children.

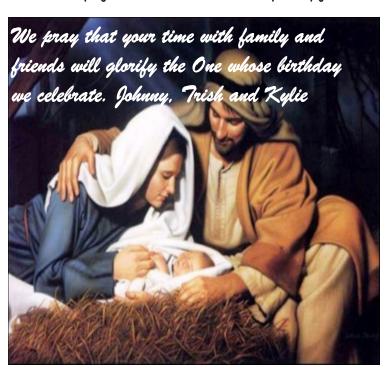
*This twist is being added due to the number of no-shows at previous events. In an effort to be good stewards of our resources, we will allow parents to help off-set costs if registered but not attending.

**Special envelopes for this purpose will be mailed to each family and also available at the Uptown & First World check-in areas.



Catalyst Christmas Fellowship

On Wednesday, December 10, 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m., we will gather in the Fellowship Hall for our annual Christmas Fellowship. We have a favorite Christmas food contest so make your favorite and we will have the judges sample it and award the Catalyst Baker of the Year. There will be all kinds of food and hot chocolate. We also have the best pajama contest so wear your pj's.



Sunday Night Live and 6:17

We will not have Sunday Night Live, 6:17 or Middle School D-Groups for the rest of the year. Stay tuned for information on the date we will resume in January.

11:00 Connect Group Leader

We are looking for a couple of Connect Group leaders to serve on Sunday mornings. If you are interested contact Johnny or Kylie.

Uprising Weekend

Uprising Weekend is January 16-18, 2015. John Lovell is our guest speaker again next year. The cost is \$65 for the first student in a family and \$50 for each additional student. Watch for details about sign-ups for this event. Remember, unchurched friends may attend at no cost. The theme for Uprising is Azimuth—Finding Direction for Life.



Adult Ministries

Experience It!

December Schedule

Dec 7 - Midweek Connection signup starts

Dec 12 - Parents' Night Out

De

Dec 20 - Angel Tree delivery

Dec 21 - Christmas Candlelight Services (5 & 6:30 p.m.)

Dec 14 - Adult Choir Christmas Presentation (5 & 7 p.m.) Dec 22 - 26 - Church office closed



2015 Midweek Connection Wednesday Classes

January 7 – March 25 (6:15 – 7:45 p.m.)

Sign up in the Worship Center foyer starting December 7

Classes include....

- 1. When God's Spirit Moves (Jim Cymbala) & Survey of the Holy Spirit Shannon Ford
- 2. Raising a Modern Day Knight Jeremy Keller
- 3. **Jeremiah 2—Precepts** (*Ladies*) Trish Caruso & Deborah Farrington
- 4. **Financial Peace University** Larry Ashworth & Andy Jones
- 5. You and Me Forever: Marriage in Light of Eternity Chris & Jamie Bailey
- 6. **Grief Share** Bill Mayes
- 7. **First Serve** Neely Potts
- *** Other classes TBD.



Christmas is rapidly approaching and what better way to spread our love and joy than giving a gift of love to a child.

Project Angel Tree is about making a needy child's Christmas happier.

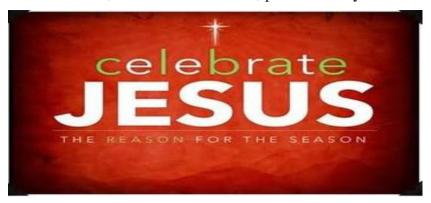
Please stop by the Angel Tree next to the Welcome Center to pick an angel from the Angel Tree. The Sundays to select Angel Tree angels are 12/7 and 12/14. An Angel Tree team will deliver the gifts on December 20.



Mary had a little Lamb, He came on Christmas night. She laid Him in a manger bed, This King of life and light.

He came to give us joy and peace; To take away our sin. He heals the sick and calms the storm and ushers justice in.

One day this Lamb will come again, More Lion than a Lamb; Defeat His foes, reward His own. Oh, praise the day He came!





Music ~ Celebrators ~ Media

Adult Worship Choir

- * Rehearsals are 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday nights. At 8:15 p.m. we begin rehearsal for the Christmas musical. Seasonal singers rehearse with the choir on Wednesdays from 8:15-9:00 p.m. for the Christmas musical. Contact Diane or Benny at the church if you are interested in being part of the choir.
- * Christmas Musical Information
 Wednesday, December 10, 7:00-9:00 p.m.—combined rehearsal with the wind ensemble
 Thursday, December 11, 7:00-9:00 p.m.—combined rehearsal with the wind ensemble and drama team
 Performances will be on Sunday, December 14, at 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.
 Free tickets are available at the Registration Center.
- * Candlelight services and communion will be held on Sunday, December 21, at 5:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. A benevolence offering will be collected at the close of each service.

 Free tickets are available at the Registration Center.
- * The handbells will perform on December 21 during the 8:15 service and during the Candlelight service.

CELEBRATORS' (Senior Adult) News

- * The Celebrator Choir meets on Mondays from 10:30 -11:30 a.m. in the Worship Center choir room. We would love for you to join us during this time of great music and fellowship. We will end on December 1 and resume on January 12.
- December 17: Celebrators' Christmas Banquet at 11:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Meal will be catered by Liz Hillie with entertainment by Joyful Harps. Tickets are \$10.00 per person; there is no charge for those 80 years and older. Tickets will be available at the Registration Center in the lobby December 7 and December 14.

Upcoming Events:

- * January 5: Senior Adult Choir Festival with Marty Parks in Spartanburg; sign up during Celebrator Choir. Only cost is your meal.
- * January 21: Luncheon, bring your favorite dish to share.
- * February 23-24: Celebrator Choir trip to Myrtle Beach for the State Senior Adult Choir Festival; sign up during Celebrator Choir. Cost is \$110.00/person.

Media News

Audio & Media Needs

~ Training will be provided for those willing to serve in the areas of audio, ProPresenter and camera. Contact Tim Gale (tim@tmgale.com), Bryan Tortter (btrotter@fbcfm.com) or Diane Dulin (ddulin@fbcfm.com).



On Mission

by Andrew Limbaugh



Pray and Go!

A few weeks ago we heard a message from Jim Cymbala about the importance of making our church and our homes "a house of prayer." In the message he shared the powerful testimony of how prayer brought his daughter from her rebellious lifestyle back to submission to the lordship of Christ.

Many of you responded on your connect cards by committing to give more time and attention to your prayer lives. We should pray for our friends, relatives, the sick, the incarcerated and a host of others. A portion of our prayer time should also be spent seeking how we can be effective in expanding the Kingdom. Expanding the Kingdom is a generic term used to describe a wide variety of actions we can take to help others start or progress in their journey to follow Christ.

In my men's group this past Wednesday we discussed a section of the book *All In* by Mark Batterson entitled "We Don't Get Credit for an Audit." Mark's appeal in this chapter is to get off the sidelines and get into the game. He suggests that too many who claim to be Christ followers are simply auditing this thing called "Christianity." They may pray and give so others can go. They may be faithful to the church and attend every Sunday. In this context Mark says, "...one mission trip is worth more than [hearing] fifty-two sermons." What he means is that it is better to go do something than to just sit and soak week after week.

As you pray please ask God what direction He would have you take to help reach others. FBCFM offers many opportunities to reach others in Fort Mill, our state and around the world. There are opportunities to help build buildings that will house schools that teach pastors and equip them to reach their own. There are opportunities to prayer walk, do door-to-door evangelism and help host campaigns. There are opportunities to work with children, youth and adults in almost any situation imaginable.

Below is a tentative list of some of the opportunities that will happen in 2015. As you pray ask God what He would have you do in 2015.

Nicaragua Spring
 VBS June 7-11
 Dillon/Mullins (VSO) June 21-26
 Catalyst Camp June 29-July 4

5. Brazil Late spring/early summer

6. Jamaica July
7. Belize (Youth) Summer
8. Victory Sports Camp July 6-10
9. Tucson, AZ (Youth) July 7-14
10. St. George (VSO) July 26-31

11. Nicaragua Late summer/Fall
12. Engage Fort Mill August 10-13
13. London Oct. or Nov.

by Amanda Furbeck www.worshipleader.com

One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple. Psalm 27:4, NIV.

Psalm 27 can be categorized as a psalm of trust. Throughout the psalm, the psalmist alludes to some pretty frightening circumstances, such as evil men advancing against him, an army coming to besiege him, and a war breaking out against him. But the psalmist places his trust not in himself or his own men, but in the Lord, using language that describes God as his stronghold, his light, and his salvation. He also expresses his hope for God to deliver him. But in the midst of all this trouble, the psalmist pictures worship at the temple.

The temple was the place where God came to dwell among His people—just imagine visiting church on Sunday and seeing the visible, tangible presence of God. What an incredible experience, to be in the presence of God in such a dramatic way. I often wonder what it was like? Did the Israelites feel frightened? Or amazed? Or loved? Or all of it?

And yet, Jesus said that where there are two or three are gathered in His name, He is there (Matthew 18:20). When we gather together in the name of Jesus, we are in the *very presence of God.* What a privilege, what a joy! Perhaps we, too, should approach worship services with that same fear of God, amazement, and feeling of love.

All too often, I approach my church service feeling a little tired and worn from a busy week, feeling over-extended in my bills, and stressed about a myriad of modern day life complications. Worship begins, and perhaps I think, oh not this song again, or this new song is just not in my key. I sip my coffee, waiting for a little energy to kick in. Maybe I'm dreading facing this person or that one, because they've put expectations on me that I don't like. Maybe life is just really hard and I don't have much left to give. I came to church to be filled and refueled, but what I feel is empty. Have you ever felt this way? That the church service, in spite of happy-clappy praise music or majestic hymns, just feels dry. I'm not getting what I need. What's wrong with this church?

Chances are, the problem is not the song choices, the band, the organ, or the volume. Most of the time, the problem is me. I am not prepared for worship. Whether I am the worship leader, the pastor, the praise team, or a soul in the pew, I need to prepare for worship.

Sometimes we forget that worship is not about what we GET, but about what we GIVE. In the Old Testament, the worshipers brought sacrifices to God—usually the best of their livestock or grain. We don't live under the sacrificial system in that way, but we still need to bring our best gifts to God when we come to worship: a heart that is open to the Lord, full of His praise, and fully prepared. Hebrews 13:15 speaks of a sacrifice of praise. Not just some leftover words, or a few strains of a song, but a sacrifice. Praise takes effort. It's ok if you don't *feel* like praising because He is still worthy of our worship. Our feelings don't change who God is or His worth. If I am more concerned about what I'm getting from worship than what I'm giving, I need to adjust my expectations and attitude about worship. We come together to worship and be with The Holy One, not hear the perfect songs in just the right keys or be inspired by a perfectly worded sermon.

If I want to truly experience the richness of worship, I need to practice! Musicians spend hours practicing scales, riffs, trills, and chord charts to offer beautiful music. It isn't unheard of for me to spend 15 hours of practice time on a 3 minute long offertory. But what are we doing about the condition of our hearts? We need to practice that, too. Nothing prepares a heart for worship like spending time alone with the Father. When have you escaped from the world and just spent time enjoying the Word of God? When have you spent a little time alone, enjoying a conversation with the Lord of Creation through prayer? Without regular, consistent time in our Bibles and on our knees, away from distractions, we are going to have a harder time experiencing God in worship. What about practicing worship at worship practice? After working out the musical details, why not spend time worshipping with the music for Sunday?

Worship requires effort, and when our energy is zapped, it is hard to get it together to worship the Lord. How would we be different at our services if we made sure we were well-rested the night before? If we planned and prepared for worship with as much enthusiasm as a rock concert or ball game? What if worship was not just something on our to do list, but a holy event that we, and our household, schedule our week around? What if, like the psalmist, we looked forward to being in God's presence more than anything else?

The psalmist longed to be in the presence of the Lord. He wanted to be where God was, seeking Him, worshipping Him, and being with Him. His longing was for God; his focus was not on how the temple priests could serve him but on how He could seek God. In times of trouble, he intentionally placed his confidence in God and looked forward to being in God's presence in the temple again. As Sunday nears, I ask myself, what am I doing to prepare my heart, my mind, my body, and my soul to worship and be in God's presence? How should I prepare so that I truly desire to spend time in God's presence, with God's people, giving Him the glory He deserves?

created for connection

Gräuplink

GroupLINK is Coming!

You have heard us mention that we really want you to be part of a Life Group. We think God has a plan to use other brothers and sisters in your life to grow you to be more like Him. Being part of the life-changing community offered in a Life Group can help you take that next spiritual step that God has for you.

Enter GroupLINK. It's like eHarmony for Life Groups! GroupLINK is a two-hour event designed to help connect those interested in Life Groups with a group. It's a night full of food, fun and friends that will hopefully end with you finding the right group to try out. We will eat, introduce the available groups, mingle a little and attempt to help you connect to the right group.

GroupLINK will be held on January 24th at 5th Quarter at Beef O' Brady's in Baxter from 5-7 p.m. You will need to RSVP to Angie Hayman so we can order the right amount of food and make sure we have enough babysitters for your sweet little kids! Sign-ups for GroupLINK will begin in January in the lobby, online, or on your Connect Card. So don't wait any longer! Now is your time to get connected and experience life-changing community!

IN OUR FELLOWSHIP

Welcome New Members



Leroy & Yvonne Smith



Adam & Ashlyn Howard



David & Ramona Mullet



Ben & Neely Potts



Luke & Joel Thronsen

The church office will be closed December 22-26 for the Christmas holiday.

Articles for the January *First Word* are due in the church office by December 12.

December Top 5 Ministry Opportunities

- 1. 11:00 Catalyst Connect Group Leaders
- 2. Link Team Members
- 3. Midweek Connection First World Teachers
- 4. First World 8:15 Service Volunteers
- 5. Host Team Greeters

More information about these positions is on the church's website and in the Worship Center lobby.

Stephen Ministry

The joy of Christmas can turn into a time of painful STEPHEN loneliness and emptiness for those who have suffered a loss or who are going through a difficult time, but help is

available. Our Stephen Ministers are ready to provide confidential, one-to-one Christian care. They will listen, care, encourage, pray with and for you, and support you through the holidays and as long as your need persists. If you or someone you know is hurting, find out more about Stephen Ministry by talking with one of our Stephen Leaders. Our Stephen Ministers are there to care!

Jerry Lape, 704-219-1626; Sam Treadaway, 803-802-3025 Ken Terry, 727-512-0920 Karen Morrow, 803-547-2051 Carolyn Lape, 704-989-0284 Tony Bishop, 803-548-4109 Hannah Bates, 704-644-9681

In Sympathy

Our fellowship of faith extends the deepest love and sympathy to the following who have lost loved ones during the past month:

Patty Snincak on the loss of her brother-in-law The family of Dylan Wright Mike Surratt on the loss of his father Georgia Kidd on the loss of her mother The family of Judi Goetz

Congratulations To:

Mark & Judy Alston on the birth of their grandson, Caleb Henry, on October 23. Parents are Chris & Sarah Alston.

Johnny & Trish Caruso on the birth of their grandson, Miller Graham, on October 27. Parents are Aaron & Carly Anderson.

December Deacons

Sunday, December 7 ~ David McWilliam & Brad Chatham

Sunday, December 14 ~ Michael Wright & Jeff Collins

Sunday, December 21 ~ Cam Johnson & Larry Ashworth

Sunday, December 28 ~ Scott Mingonet & Scott Motsinger

Regular Sunday Schedule

8:15 a.m. ~ Blended Worship

9:30 & 11:00 a.m. ~ Contemporary Worship/ABF and Serving Opportunities

Regular Wednesday Schedule

7:30 p.m. - Adult Choir/Wind Ensemble Rehearsal

December 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 6:00 Men's Prayer Group 9:30 Celebrators' Choir	2 9:30 Ladies' Bible Study 6:30 SM Supervision Groups 8:00 AA/Al-Anon	3 6:30 Pastor's Prayer Group	4 8:30 Pastoral Staff Prayer Mtg. 11:30 Truth Seekers Class Christmas Party 6:00 CM Volunteer Drop-in 8:00 AA	7:00 NA	6 11:00 FM Christmas Parade 11:30 Long ABF Class Trip 4:00 Handbell Performance at South Park Mall 5:30 Taggart/Davis ABF Christmas Party
7 4:30 Worship Team Christmas Party	8 6:00 Men's Prayer Group 6:30 MMO Christmas Fellowship 6:30 Drama Rehearsal	9 9:30 Ladies' Bible Study 10:30 Priscilla Group 6:30 Drama Rehearsal 8:00 AA/Al-Anon	10 6:30 Pastor's Prayer Group 6:00 GLOW to CAH 6:00 Catalyst Christmas Party 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	11 8:30 Pastoral Staff Prayer Mtg 7:00 Choir Dress Rehearsal 8:00 AA	12 9:30 MOPS 6:00 Parents' Night Out 7:00 NA	13 1:00 Neal Christmas Party 2:00 Piano Recital
14 11:00 Start Here Class 5:00 & 7:00 Christmas Music Program	15 6:00 Men's Prayer Group	16 9:30 Ladies' Bible Study 11:00 WOM Prayer Group 8:00 AA/Al-Anon	17 6:30 Pastor's Prayer Group 11:30 Celebrators' Christmas Banquet	18 8:30 Pastoral Staff Prayer Mtg 10:00 Stitches Group 8:00 AA	7:00 NA	20
21 5:00 & 6:30 Candlelight	22	Church	24 office closed ~ 22nd	25 Christmas Day	26	27
Services		8:00 AA/Al-Anon	office closed ~ 22fld	8:00 AA	7:00 NA	
28 3:00 Wedding	29	30 12:00 Carter ABF Lunch 8:00 AA/Al-Anon	31 New Year's Eve			



FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

Through October 31, 2014

We are celebrating God's faithfulness through His stewards within the First Baptist Family! We are so thankful for the many folks who week by week honor God with the first fruits of all that God has entrusted to them. Your continued faithfulness is making an eternal difference! Here's a quick financial snapshot through October 31,2014

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>	
Budget	\$ 1,987,728.30	\$ 1,987,728.30	
Budget Income	\$ 1,914,819.27	\$ 1,787,894.45	
Budget Spending	\$ 1,919,839.45	\$ 1,851,758.76	

Balance on Building Loan 10/31/2014 166,433.51

You can monitor your year-to-date gifts by going to the church website and clicking on "member login." Follow the instructions for creating a username/password if you don't have one.

Contact Karen in the church office if you need assistance.



The First Word

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Ralph Riley, Pastoral Care
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