



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH FAIRDALE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY / 2023



January 1 this year was on a Sunday. What a great way to bring in the new year by spending time in worship and fellowship. We also started our new Call to Worship - a time at the beginning of the service when we bring our hearts and minds into focus by reciting God's word and praying. For the next six months, we will be reciting Psalm 67 every Sunday morning together as a church.

This weekly repetition allows the words of the psalm to take root in our hearts. Maybe you will eventually memorize it and be able to quote it. Even if you don't know it word for word, the ideas will be firmly planted in your mind and the Holy Spirit will use it to recall God's truth to you during times of need. Allowing God's word to dwell within you will align your thoughts with God's thoughts, your heart with God's heart, your desires with God's desires.

The key theme of Psalm 67 is that all people would know and exalt God. It is a call

May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face to shine upon us,
that your way may be known on earth,
your saving power among all nations.

Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you!

Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide the nations upon earth.

Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you!

The earth has yielded its increase;
God, our God, shall bless us.
God shall bless us;
let all the ends of the earth fear him!

not just for the people of Israel to praise God, but for everyone - all nations, all peo-

ples, all the ends of the Earth - to lift up their voices and lives in worship to God. As we continue speaking the words of this psalm every Sunday, may it mold us to desire that same thing. May we look for ways to share the truth of the gospel with all people, both near and far.

You may consider a special donation for the Lottie Moon Christmas offering. You may decide to go with our team to Ecuador (January 15 is the deadline). You may make time to pray specifically for unreached people groups, missionaries and local pastors, or those in our church preparing to work among the nations. You may look for ways to share God's love with the many nations that we have right in our very own neighborhoods. However God is calling you specifically, may we all seek to share the truth of Jesus so that the nations may be glad!

Getting our Priorities Straight

Josh Greene
Pastor

Getting your priorities in order is one of the most satisfying things you can do! It feels so good to evaluate your life, identify what is most important, and then put into practice prioritizing those things. Churches, as well as individuals, need to get their priorities straight. The start to a new year is as good a time as ever!

This past Sunday, the first Sunday of 2023, I preached on this very idea. We looked at Hebrews 10 to see the striking emphasis on “us.” Three times in a row in this chapter God says “Let us” when referring to how the church is to be united. It is with this in mind that we then look to three priorities for you and us in 2023.

WORSHIP

One of our top priorities is to worship Christ together. Yes, we worship God 24/7, but the church meets regularly to worship together. This needs to be important to us, and we need to commit to it. For some it may be Sunday mornings. For some it may be a Sunday School class or small group Bible study. For some it may be getting involved in our Wednesday night services. Whatever it is, we want to encourage you to prioritize consistently meeting with your church family to worship!

WORK

One of our top priorities is to work hard together. Yes, we know that we are not saved by works. We know that we cannot earn anything with God. But we also know that after God saves us, He then empowers us to do good works. When we work for God, we worship Him. Our work becomes worship when work by faith for His

glory. Thankfully, our church has a reputation for working hard. There are many areas in our church where you can plug-in, get connected, and work hard. Food Pantry, Kitchen, Nursery, Cleaning, Serving, Teaching, Helping, etc. There is so much joy and reward in working hard together. “Strength in numbers” is a true motto for churches. We encourage you to prioritize working hard for and with your church!

WAR (PRAYER)

One of our top priorities is to pray together. People who pray faithfully are often referred to as ‘Prayer Warriors,’ and so I am using the term ‘war’ here. Jesus teaches us to be praying people. We have a Father in Heaven who hears and answers our prayers. We have a lot of opportunities to help you grow in praying. We totally understand that you may be new to this. You may not pray regularly. You may not pray out loud. You don’t feel comfortable with that. We get it. But we want to help you with it. There are multiple times throughout each week and month to meet together for prayer. We encourage you to prioritize praying with your church!

We don’t necessarily mean for these to be resolutions, but rather good healthy priorities for us all to recognize. May Jesus working in us help us live with our priorities in order!



BEING A CHURCH THAT PRAYS



With prayer being a priority for our church, we want to equip you with tools to strengthen your prayer life. Each month, this section of the newsletter will be dedicated to a specific prayer focus. There will be ideas for things to pray specifically and corresponding scriptures to help guide your prayers.

This month, let us pray for love and unity as a church.

Pray that we would:

- be unified in mind and thought. (1 Corinthians 1:10)
- be known by our love for one another. (John 13:35)
- bear with and forgive one another. (Colossians 3:13)
- be unified in Christ, regardless of worldly status. (Galatians 3:28)
- consider how to serve one another. (Philippians 2:3-4)
- find ways to encourage one another. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Memorial Stones: Reflecting on God's Work in Our Lives

Mary Catherine Anderson
Director of Nursery

My girls love hearing me talk about the past. Not necessarily world history or American history, but their history and the history of our family. They love to scroll through pictures of themselves as babies and listen as I tell them stories about first words, toddler antics, and precocious preschoolers. When I share about my life as a child, they like to poke fun at what they perceive as "ancient" technology (sometimes there's talk of dinosaurs?), but they still love hearing about what Marshall and I were like before we were a family. A desire to know who we are and where we come from is deeply rooted in all of us.

This has led me to think seriously about the history that I share with them. Certainly, I want to recall all the funny stories and sweet memories. I want them to understand that our family is enriched by their presence. I want them to know me not just as their mom, but as a sister and a daughter and a fully formed person. I want them to have stories to pass on to the kids in their own lives someday. But ultimately, what is the greatest thing I want them to know about the past?

In the book of Joshua, we find the people of God finally being delivered from the wilderness to the edge of the promised land. They just have to cross over the Jordan River and they will be in the land that God promised them over a generation ago. The Levites stood with the Ark of the Covenant in the river, the waters stopped, and the people walked across on dry ground.

After all the people passed over, the Lord commanded Joshua to have one man from each of the 12 tribes to take

a stone from the riverbed and bring it with them to their camp for the night. They were to set them up, and in the future, when their children asked what the stones meant, they were to tell the story of God drying up the waters "so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty, that you may fear the Lord your God forever" (Joshua 4:24).

Just like the Israelites, every time I talk to my kids about our lives in the past, I have a chance to point out God's faithfulness to our family. I can speak of His protection over us during medical scares. I can speak of His comfort during times of mourning and grief. I can speak of His generosity in giving us good things to enjoy. All of this is not just to give them warm, fuzzy feelings, but, as Joshua points out, to declare the glory of the Lord that they may know Him and fear Him.

January often has us looking ahead – what new routines or habits should I implement this year? Where do I need to add limits or cut back? How can I change and grow in the next year? These are wonderful things to do, but may I also challenge you to spend some time looking back. Search for the memorial stones in your own life and then use them to declare the majesties of our God to the people around you.



Opportunities to Serve

You've probably noticed, but our nursery is booming! Between 2020 and 2021, we had 20 babies born to members of our congregation, with even more due this spring. We always need nursery volunteers during Sunday and Wednesday services, but here are some other ways you can support our nursery ministry.

Pray! Please pray for the volunteers to be strengthened, joyful, and full of God's love as they work.

Give! We are currently remodeling a classroom to have 3 rooms available for nursery. We will need to furnish the new room and we are always in need of replacing older items.

Clean! While the nursery gets basic cleaning done weekly, it is still often in need of deep cleaning and organizing. Be on the lookout for a nursery cleaning day coming soon.

