



# *Highlights*

November -December 2017



## A Parable Church

Of all the genres of Scripture, I find Jesus' parables the most fascinating. They appear, at first, to be unassuming little lessons about everyday life, composed as they are of ordinary characters and situations—laborers working in a vineyard, a woman leavening a batch of dough, a sower going out to sow. But, in fact, they're more like revelatory riddles,

full of captivating wonders and plot twists. Encountering a parable is as surprising and disorienting as looking at oneself in a funhouse mirror. They're designed to puzzle and disturb us. As scholar C. H. Dodd said, parables "tease the mind into active thought."

We've truly understood a parable when it stuns us. More often, a parable only hits home after a progression of discovery. We begin with reactions like, "There's no way this can be true." Then, "Perhaps, it's true." And finally, "My God, it's true!" Parables function like old Polaroid snapshots that, through gradual exposure to light, reveal the very character and presence of God. They really are little peeks into the kingdom of God.

As we're shaped by the parables, we begin to recognize ourselves in them, and eventually, we embody them. We become living parables, giving the world glimpses of who God is and what God is like by the way we live. Our faith grows like a mustard seed, at first in small and seemingly insignificant ways, but then with rapid speed, like a weed in a summer garden (Mark 4:30-32). We begin searching for truth with urgency, sweeping the house and leaving no couch unturned, just like the woman who lost a coin (Luke 15:8-10). We naturally spread the word of God everywhere, like the reckless farmer who went out to sow, and who threw good seed without concern for where it might land (Matthew 13:3-23).

But I wonder if Jesus intends the whole congregation to have the same effect on people. Following this logic, how might it open our imaginations to think about our whole church in this way—as a living parable.

A "parable church" is one that provides captivating glimpses of God's kingdom that are at once both baffling and revelatory. Through its mission and ministries, such a church gives the watching world a demonstration of reality from God's point of view. In a parable church, marginalized people are given places of honor (Luke 14:7-14), returning sinners are not

only forgiven but celebrated (Luke 15:11-32), people sell all they have to keep the treasures found here (Matthew 13:44-46), and Jesus appears again and again in the most unlikely people (Matthew 25:31-46).

Just as Jesus' parables tend to work like wormholes (if you like physics), or "wrinkles in time" (if you like Madeleine L'Engle), a parable church is always "turning the world upside down" (Acts 17:6). With a capacity to be bewildered by our own encounters with God, we also become acclimated to God's way of seeing the universe. The catch is, those who continue seeing from a human point of view think we're strange.

Let this be one of our primary tasks as a parable church—to be regarded as strange, unique, extraordinary, or, better yet, disorienting (at least, at first). Then, when the watching world happens upon the parables, they will say, "I've met people like this before." Who knows? Maybe they, too, will catch a glimpse of the treasures we've found here, and sell all they have for a better view.

— Mack Dennis

### *All Saints' Sunday*

*November 5 - 11:00 a.m.*

This annual service will be a remembrance of those loved ones who have died and a celebration of the promise of eternal life. The experience includes the lighting of candles, speaking the names of those being remembered, baptism, and communion. Music will be offered by the Adult Choir and special guests, the *La Vie String Quartet* from Nashville, TN.



# Advent at First Baptist

## **Hanging of the Green**

**December 3 • 7:00 p.m. • Sanctuary**

This beloved service of preparing the church sanctuary for the season includes the hanging of wreaths and garland, the procession of poinsettias, trimming the Chrismon tree, and bringing “White Christmas” gifts for the community. Carol singing will be accompanied by the FBCA Orchestra and the annual Advent reception follows in the atrium.

## **Asheville Youth Choirs Holiday Concert**

**Sunday, December 10 • 7:00 p.m. • Sanctuary**

This joyful and energetic concert will be presented by the four ensembles of the Asheville Youth Choirs (AYC): Prelude Choir (grades K-2), Concert Choir (grades 3-6), the Middle School Chorale and the High School Chorale. AYC are community choirs for children and teenagers sponsored by the Academy for the Arts at First Baptist Church.

## **Christ’s Light in Us**

**Sunday, December 17 • 7:00 p.m. • Sanctuary**

The Adult Choir and String Orchestra will offer a concert of carols composed and arranged by living composers. These exquisite, contemporary pieces will express the light of Christ as alive and active in the world today through our faithful living. Included will be works by John Rutter, Dan Forrest, Shawn Kirchner, John Leavitt and a commissioned string orchestration by Kim Andre Arnesen of his celebrated choral composition, *His Light in Us*.

## **Family Christmas Eve Service**

**Sunday, December 24 • 11:00 a.m. • Sanctuary**

Our entire congregation is invited to join us for this family-friendly worship service. This service for children and families will usher in the wonder of Christmas through interactive storytelling, carols, and communion. No childcare will be offered as we invite infants, preschoolers, and children to participate in this service.

## **Traditional Christmas Eve Service**

**Sunday, December 24 • 6:00 p.m. • Sanctuary**

The traditions of carols, choral music, communion and candlelight combine to create a holy welcoming of the Christ Child. Beautiful music will be sung by the Adult Choir and a Christmas Eve message will be offered by Mack Dennis.

## **Lessons and Carols**

**Sunday, December 24 • 9:00 p.m. • Chapel**

This service of seven scriptural lessons recounts the story of God’s relationship to humanity, culminating in the coming of Jesus at Christmas. Communion and candlelight make this service a unique experience on this holy night. Piano, string and vocal music will be offered by the Sorrells family, beginning at 8:45 p.m. with a prelude of carols.

# WEDNESDAYS for Adults

## **Chapel Bible Study: *Lived Theology: Sacred Stories of Everyday Life***

**November 1, 8, 15 • 6:00 p.m. • Chapel • Led by Tommy Bratton**

In the overlooked moments and routines of our day, we can become aware of God's presence in surprising ways. How do we embrace the sacred in the ordinary and the ordinary in the sacred? How do we live our theology alone and in community? How do we bring together spirituality and religion? In these three weeks, we will consider the actions of God in our embodied, lived experiences of our daily lives.

## **Managing Grief in Our Community of Faith**

**November 1, 8, 15, 21, 29 • 6:00 p.m. • SC208 • Led by Leah Brown**

Grief and loss are difficult subjects to talk about, yet in the past year, many of us have been faced with the pain caused by the death of a friend or family member. Leah Brown will facilitate this series on grief. Please contact Leah Brown at 828.252.4781 or lbrown@fbca.net to register.

## **Celtic Evening Liturgy**

**November 21, 29, December 6 • 6:00 p.m. • Chapel**

As we enter the holiday seasons, it is important for us to pause and give thanks. Too often, in our rush, we forget that we are beloved children of God (and so is everyone else). We get distracted by the sights and sounds of the seasons and the demands on our time and energy. We even miss out on the simple and abundant gifts God gives us.

You are invited to come and gather with us for a Celtic Evening Liturgy, an expression of worship that draws on ancient Christian practices, and includes liturgical elements drawn from the rich, contemplative traditions of our faith. This service invites you to enter into a place of prayer, preparation, and reflection. The atmosphere is one of stillness and peace.

- **Live with Gratitude** - November 21 (Wednesday on Tuesday)
- **Worship Fully** - November 29
- **Love All** - December 6

The Celtic Evening Liturgy is a wonderful opportunity to invite a friend, family member, or acquaintance to join you. This service is intended to be inclusive and welcoming of all people. We invite you to this experience, hoping it will allow you a deeper place of spiritual attentiveness, a place where you experience God in your midst.



# Folk Advent Service

Wednesday, December 13  
6:00 p.m. • Dining Room



This year's Folk Advent Service once again celebrates the Advent season with a look back to simpler days and times. Join the set of a live radio variety show featuring bluegrass musicians Midnight Plowboys, readers theater, storytelling, and loads of fun comes to life.

Our Wednesday evening fellowship meal will begin at 5:00 p.m. in the gym. The menu is barbecue, Brunswick stew, corn on the cob, baked beans, and butterscotch pound cake.

Following the Folk Advent Service, the Nativity Exhibit will be open for a preview in the dining room.



## Advent Lovefeast

Wednesday, December 20 • 6:00 p.m. • Dining Room

The Advent Lovefeast is a beloved tradition that is an integral part of our Advent celebrations. Join us for this warm and inviting service of candles, carols, and community. As we gather around the tables and share light finger foods in the dining room, we will tell stories, sing Christmas carols, and enjoy the traditional Moravian buns and hot chocolate, followed by the lighting of our candles of love and faith. Enjoy hot cider and the cello ensemble beginning at 5:15 p.m. in the Atrium. **No Wednesday night meal.**

## Advent Devotional Guide

The word Advent comes from the Latin word *adventus*, which means “coming” or “arrival.” Advent includes the four weeks prior to Christmas and is a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the coming of Christ into the world, by both remembering the birth of Jesus and anticipating the ways in which the Spirit of Christ continues to come to us. Advent is also the beginning of the Christian Year, a time to reflect, to prepare, and to begin again. Because Advent begins with waiting, it is counter-cultural, granting value to patience, anticipation and peace, while everyone around seems to be rushing around, exhausted and stressed.

Many of us find a devotion guide helpful during this season to keep us mindful of what matters most during this season. Check in the media center if you are looking for a devotion to guide you during Advent and Christmas. If you have questions or want more ideas, please contact Tommy Bratton.



# ADVENT CONSPIRACY

## Giving Locally

### Crossroads After School Program

More than 30 First Baptist Church volunteers welcome 22 at-risk children from Jones and Claxton elementary schools each Wednesday to an afternoon of play, snacks, tutoring, and chapel. Our volunteers and staff support these K-3rd graders in shaping their hearts, minds, and spirits. The children will spend the year of Wednesdays with us and end their studies in May 2018. Across the coming year, opportunities for fellowship and learning will be offered to parents and caregivers of our students. Your gifts through Advent Conspiracy will fund clothing, shoes, coats, school supplies as well as Christmas gifts for the family, and the end of year celebration.



*He first came to Crossroads as a kindergartener. I wonder what he thought of this big place filled with strange people. I wonder what he thought of me. But, year after year, we played and read and prayed the Lord's Prayer. He left every Wednesday with a full stomach and a smile. Four years later, he finished 3rd grade reading on grade level after being behind for years. What a wonderful little miracle unfolding between his school and our church.*

— CAP Tutor



## Giving Nationally

### Hurricane Relief

Our nation was rocked by four named Hurricane's this past fall; Harvey, Irma; Maria; and Nate. Each one seemed to target its own victims, from Texas to the Caribbean. Our church will be sending a team to do hands-on work in early January. However, one of the biggest needs is ongoing funding for organizations like the Red Cross or Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. These organizations put people on the ground. One hundred percent of your gift designated to either of these organizations will go to help with the marathon recovery efforts in all of these areas. If you want to target your gifts to a local church, read on the next page as we help rebuild Puerto Rico



## Giving Internationally

### Haiti Clinic

Jenny Jenkins email begins with “tentlady.” This modern-day tentmaker missionary hails from our church and has ministered in Haiti since 2010. Her primary focus remains hosting 16 or more health clinics and health education groups each year. However, as relationships have deepened, Jenny has discovered needs for housing, teacher training, and small business skills. In 2016, a group related to Jenny’s work rebuilt Mt. Sinai Baptist Church. First Baptist Church of Asheville sends at least one medical/dental/vision team each year. In the course of that work, Jenny has identified the need for a clinic to be located in the remote area near the Mt. Sinai church. It will move dental and medical procedures done in small sheds to an indoor facility and eliminate the three hours teams spend each day coming and going to this area. The cost for the initial phase is \$75,000. FBCA wants to be a part in giving this gift to the people of Haiti. Jenny recalls Isaiah’s words, “Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert” (43:18-19). Give to help us do this new thing!

*Each day, a throng of people fills the meeting place seeking assistance from a dentist or doctor or optometrist or pharmacist. Some will wait all day for their turn. Why do I come to Haiti? To see how eyes downcast with disease, indifference, deference or detachment light up with relief, engagement and hope as we share our God-given skills and resources that you at First Baptist Church have helped to provide.*

— Lisa Barnett, FBCA Pharmacist

*I am especially excited about the prospect of a permanent clinic near the Mt Sinai Church in the rural mountains of Haiti. Having served there under difficult circumstances (hauling the entire team and clinic equipment/supplies in flat-bed trucks to and from the site, working outdoors, etc), I know what a huge impact this could have. For most of the population there these mission team mobile clinics are their only access to health care. What a blessing it would be to improve the quality of life in this neglected corner of God’s world.*

— Bob Busey, FBCA Dentist

### Helping Puerto Rico Rebuild

Jesus Garcia is the pastor of Iglesia Bautista de Metrópolis in Carolina, Puerto Rico, a congregation that partners with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF). After Hurricane Maria, Pastor Garcia and his congregation have been caring for the needs of the communities most affected and in need of assistance. The needs of the people there are ever changing but the church itself is functioning as a hub to host volunteers and is helping its community recover from the hurricane devastation. Our gifts will be shared with the church based on the needs of the community there in Carolina, Puerto Rico, and its surrounding communities.



## Parent and Child Dedication

Earlier this fall we were able to participate with the Jones family in their parent and child dedication. When we share a parent and child dedication at First Baptist, we give families and our church family an opportunity to covenant to raise our children in the ways of Jesus.

It's important for parents to promise to share the stories of faith and the love of God with their sons and daughters. But it's also important for us, as their church family, to remember the promises we make at these dedications. As you pass children in the hallway, share a table with them on Wednesday night, sit behind them in worship, remember these words you affirm each time we have a dedication and look for was to live them out.

***Will you promise to love these children and their parents, to model for them the grace of Jesus Christ, and to be for them a community of blessing? Will you promise to love them and pray for them, to surround them with your encouragement and support, and to be for them a community that teaches and lives the ways of Jesus Christ?***

Here are some simple ways you can live these promises with and for our children and their parents:

- Learn a child's name and call them by it next time you see them.
- Make a point to greet children and families during sharing peace.
- Find ways to serve in our children's ministry (worship care, VBS, Bible Study, etc.)
- Hold a door or offer to carry a bag for young parents coming into church.
- Offer words of encouragement and lots of smiles to our families as they worship, share dinner, and participate in the life of our church.



**1st – 6th graders • CB 221**

**Preschool/Kindergarten • CB 303**

**Childcare is provided for children under age 3**



Agapekids is a time for preschoolers and children to participate in missions, and faith development.

During November and December our children will focus on loving others through a storybook series and through mission projects to serve others in our church and community. Contact Amy Stertz at 828.252.4781 for more information.

## Family Christmas Eve Service

**Sunday, December 24 • 11:00 a.m. • Sanctuary**

Our entire congregation is invited to join us for this family-friendly worship service. This service for children and families will usher in the wonder of Christmas through interactive storytelling, carols, and communion. No childcare will be offered as we invite infants, preschoolers, and children to participate in this service.



**ASHEVILLE PINBALL MUSEUM**  
November 12: 4:30-6:15 p.m., \$10/person

NOVEMBER 19  
**STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING**

**YOUTH CHRISTMAS PARTY**  
HOST: The Welmaker Family  
**DECEMBER 8: 6-8 PM**  
Youth should all bring a dessert or drink and a \$5 white elephant gift.

'tis the season  
**COLLEGE STUDENT CHRISTMAS LUNCH PARTY**  
.....  
Sunday, December 17  
Following Worship  
12:00 - 2:00 p.m.

**COLLEGE STUDENT-LED WORSHIP SERVICE**  
**December 31, 2017 @11:00 AM**

**STUDENT SKI TRIP**  
YOUNG ADULT  
WINTERPLACE, W.V. JAN 5-7



ORGAN CONCERT

# Bach's Lunch

**Tate Addis, organist**

November 7 and December 5 - 12:05-12:35 p.m. - Sanctuary  
*Box lunches available for \$5 following the concert.*

Sponsored by the Academy for the Arts at First Baptist Church of Asheville

A promotional graphic for an organ concert. On the left is a portrait of Tate Addis, a man with glasses and a beard, wearing a suit and tie. To the right, the text 'ORGAN CONCERT' is in a small, black, sans-serif font. Below it, 'Bach's Lunch' is written in a large, elegant, red cursive font. Underneath that, 'Tate Addis, organist' is in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Further down, the dates and times are listed: 'November 7 and December 5 - 12:05-12:35 p.m. - Sanctuary'. A line of text below that says 'Box lunches available for \$5 following the concert.' in a smaller, italicized font. At the bottom, it says 'Sponsored by the Academy for the Arts at First Baptist Church of Asheville'.

## New History Team

First Baptist has a new History Team, under the Collaborative ministry umbrella of Communications and Outreach. Rev. Leah Brown is our staff liaison. We have two goals for this year. First, create an Archives Policy, to specify what records and artifacts the church wants to retain, where the Archives might best be kept, and how they will be used. Second, begin an Oral History Project, which will, among other things, consist of video interviews of certain members, former pastors, etc. This should prove an invaluable resource for future historians.



Did you know the church has an Archives Room? It's downstairs in MB107, where records and artifacts are stored under lock and key. Our goal is eventually to make these accessible to historians and other researchers. For years, team members Elaine Matheson and daughters Lynn and Janet have worked countless hours cataloging and filing several cabinets' worth of material. We want to build on their good work, to ensure these vital records are protected well for future generations.

Our team consists of, in no particular order, Jess Chapman, Wayne Jewsbury, Mike Lewis, Elaine Matheson, Lynn Matheson, Larry Rhodes, Mark Green, and myself. Luann Nelson and Mary Green serve as "adjunct" members. If you want to be part of this team, please let me know.

— Wayne Caldwell, Church Historian  
owlhead38@gmail.com

## Jubilee Luncheons

**Tuesdays, November 21 and December 19 • 11:00 a.m.**

All Senior Adults are invited to join us for fellowship, entertainment, and a delicious meal. The cost is \$3 for the meal and first-time guests eat free! Contact Leah Brown at 828.252.4781 or lbrown@fbca.net for more information.

- November 21: Asheville Middle School Band (Dining Room)
- December 19: Lelia Lattimore, harpist (Crocker Auditorium)

Senior Adult & Prime Time

# Christmas Brunch

Saturday, December 2  
9:30 a.m. - Dining Room

Please make plans now to attend our annual Christmas celebration! Bring your favorite brunch goodies to share. Don't forget to invite a friend. Contact Leah Brown at lbrown@fbca.net or 828.252.4781 for more information.

## Smoke on the Mountain: SANDERS FAMILY CHRISTMAS

Southern Appalachian Repertory Theatre

Saturday, December 16 • 1:30 p.m. • Meet in Atrium Parking Lot

**\$20 per person (tickets are non-refundable)**

Sanders Family Christmas is the sequel to Connie Ray and Alan Bailey's wildly successful bluegrass gospel musical *Smoke on the Mountain*. It's December 24, 1941, and America is going to war. So is Dennis Sanders, of the Sanders Family Singers. Join Pastor Mervin Oglethorpe and the rest of the Sanders family as they send Dennis off with hilarious and touching stories and twenty-five Southern Gospel Christmas favorites.

Join us for a wonderful afternoon of entertainment at SART in Mars Hill, NC. We will leave the church from the Atrium Parking Lot at 1:30 p.m. The cost of your ticket and transportation is \$20 per person and is non-refundable. Please contact Leah Brown at 828.252.4781 to reserve your seat!

## A Look Back . . .

Our Senior Adult and Prime Time group enjoyed time away at Bonclarken Retreat Center in Flat Rock for our annual Fall Retreat! We explored the theme *Good God! It's Time for Some Whole Tending* with Eddie Morgan during our group sessions and worship. This retreat time allows people to develop and deepen friendships during our study and fellowship time. For more information about ministry to people over 60, contact Leah Brown at lbrown@fbca.net or 828.252.4781.



# White Christmas Food Ministry

For many decades, our church has collected food gifts to help create meals for area families in need during the Christmas season. This sharing of love is known as our White Christmas ministry. We hope you can be a part of this traditional ministry by securing the food items according to the Bible Study Class assignments below. We will begin collecting food gifts during the Hanging of the Green service on Sunday evening, **December 3**, and will continue until the delivery on Sunday, **December 17**. This year our goal is to prepare and deliver 80 food gift packages to neighbors in our community.



Class Name	Food Items per Class Member
Agape	4 10.5-oz. cans soup, 2 15-oz. cans peas, and 1 \$5 Ingles Gift Card for fresh oranges
Alpha, Loyalty, Fellowship	2 18-oz. jars jelly and 1 40-48-oz. bottle canola oil
Catacombs	5 15-oz. can pasta (spaghettios, ravioli, etc.) and 3 7.25-oz. boxes macaroni & cheese
Children & Preschool	3 15-oz. cans fruit and 1 large (14-18 oz.) box nutritional dry cereal
Contemplative	4 14.5-oz. cans green beans and 3 7.25-oz. boxes macaroni & cheese
Pilgrims	5 14.5-oz. cans green beans and 3 7.25-oz. boxes macaroni & cheese
Faith, Basics, Friendship	5 10.5-oz. cans soup and 1 40-48-oz. bottle canola oil
General Officers & Ministers	6 10.5-oz. cans soup and 1 large (14-18 oz.) box nutritional dry cereal
IBD	3 15-oz. cans peas, 4 5-oz. cans tuna and 1 40-oz. box Bisquick
Journey	3 15-oz. cans fruit, 3 15-oz. cans corn, 4 5-oz. cans tuna
Joy & Gideon-Keystone	2 24-oz. cans beef stew and 2 40-48-oz. bottle canola oil
Life	4 14.5-oz. cans green beans and 4 7.25-oz. boxes macaroni & cheese
Mark	6 16-oz. boxes dry pasta and 3 7.25-oz. boxes macaroni & cheese
New Testament	2 24-oz. cans beef stew and 1 \$5 Ingles Gift Card for fresh oranges
Garden Group	4 14.5 oz. cans green beans and 4 7.25-oz. boxes macaroni & cheese
Polaris, Karis, First Shine	2 18-oz. jars jelly and 1 large (14-18 oz.) box nutritional dry cereal
Sojourners	4 5-oz. cans tuna and 1 \$5 Ingles Gift Card for fresh oranges
Proclaimers	2 24-oz. beef stew and 1 \$5 Ingles Gift Card for fresh oranges
Rehoboth	4 24-oz. jars pasta sauce
Seekers	4 6-oz. cans chicken and 1 \$5 Ingles Gift Card for fresh oranges
Shared Leadership	3 7.25-oz. boxes macaroni & cheese and 1 \$5 Ingles Gift Card for fresh oranges
Singles Connection	2 15-oz. cans corn and 3 24-oz. cans beef stew
Stephen	1 24-oz. can beef stew and 2 40-oz. boxes Bisquick
James Body of Christ	4 15-oz. cans corn and 4 6-oz. cans chicken
Youth (10th-12th)	4 15-oz. cans fruit and 4 5-oz. cans tuna
Youth (7th-9th)	3 15-oz. cans pasta (spaghettios, ravioli, etc.) and 5 6-oz. can chicken

## First Baptist Church of Asheville

Freedom. Friendship. Faith.

5 Oak Street, Asheville, NC 28801 • 828.252.4781 • www.fbca.net

Child Development Center: 828.252.3234 • Fax: 828.254.2302

**Sunday Worship:** 11:00 a.m. Sanctuary • 9:45 a.m. Bible Study for all ages

### Minister on Call

A minister is on call 24/7 to support you in times of need. To contact the minister on call, dial 828.252.4781.

The deacon of the week can be reached through the church office or by contacting the minister on call.