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**FIRST BAPTIST**  
O A K B O R O

**The Communicator**

VOL. XXXIV No. 12

December 2023

**100%** of your gifts to the  
Lottie Moon Christmas  
Offering® enable gospel  
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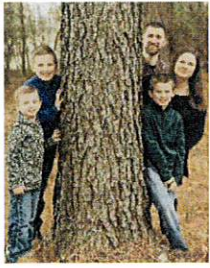
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OAKBORO NC 28129-0010

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED



My family came to visit over Thanksgiving week. It was good to see all of them. Because we are all spread out across the country, having my parents, my sister and her family, and us all in the same place at the same time is a pretty rare thing. Around here, that kind of gathering happens for most families once a month; maybe even once a week. We manage to achieve it maybe once a year. It's a good time to be together.

Having everyone at the house, though, is no small task. For weeks leading up to the day when everyone arrived, we were working to get the house ready for company. This wasn't just the normal tidying up either. We were getting projects done that had been in need of doing for years and for which we just never made the time and space amid the rest of the busyness of life.

In doing all of this work of preparing for their arrival, had just one of us tried to do all of the things on our own, it wouldn't have happened. It would have been a disaster. Whichever of us took on that load would have been wildly overburdened by it all. We wouldn't have had the skills to accomplish every task. Decision fatigue would have left us totally worn out. Trying to get all of our normal stuff done would have been a nightmare on top of all the extra stuff. It would have been bad on all fronts.

But working together like we did, while it was still a lot, we got it done. And we didn't even try to force everything through only on our own. We called in help from outside our immediate circle as well. We used all the resources available to us and were ready when they finally arrived. We were ready when their advent came.

Can you make a bit of an interpretive leap with me?

We're not getting ready for Jesus' birth any longer. That happened. A long time ago. We are still living with the wonderful consequences of its happening (which is why Christmas is such an important celebration), but it is over and done. This, however, does not mean Advent is meaningless for us. His first arrival is past, but His second arrival is imminent. And if He came to save sinners the first time—which we'll talk about this coming Sunday in the first part of our new Advent series—He's coming to judge them the second time.

I don't know about you, but the prospect of Jesus' coming for judgment makes me a little nervous to think about. Do I have everything ready for that? Are there places I'm overlooking but which He is going to see? Have I forgotten anything obvious? I have to get ready!

The season of Advent is about preparing for Jesus' arrival. In preparing to celebrate Jesus' first arrival, we are to give attention to preparing ourselves for His second. Yet this is not a getting ready process we are going to be able to get through entirely on our own. Thankfully, it was never meant to be experienced like that. It was meant to be something we do with help. It was meant to be something we accomplish in community. It was meant to be experienced with the church.

The community of First Baptist Oakboro exists to see people connect with God and each other to grow in Christ and reach out to expand the borders of His kingdom. A part of that mission is helping one another to be ready when Jesus returns. It means lovingly holding one another accountable for walking the path of Christ and staying away from sin. It means intentionally studying the Scriptures together so that we can be encouraged by that as a group. It means actively praying with and for each other and for our community and the world beyond our borders that the Gospel might be expanded through us to reach as much of it as God enables us to touch. It means sharing our lives and stories with one another so that we can grow from our shared experiences. It means all of this and more.

So, as we prepare to enter into this season of Advent together, what can you do to contribute to that process? How can you help someone else be more ready than they were before? Some of the members of our community have taken part in one such effort by contributing to our Advent devotion book. If you haven't already picked one up, make sure to stop by the church to get one for you and one to share. Let's use this great tool as a way to make sure that in this season of Advent, we really are all preparing for His coming together.

*Pastor Jonathan*

**Merry  
Christmas**

## OUR RECORD OF GIVING

Budget Goals – November	26,037.84
Budget Receipts – November	23,640.00
Budget Goals – YTD	84,622.98
Budget Receipts – YTD	77,835.00
Budget Variance	-6,787.98
<i>Special Offerings</i>	
Building Fund	6,200.00
NC Baptist Children's Homes	635.00
NC Missions	100.00
Youth Ministry Donation	120.00
Gathering Place	755.00
Deacons Offering	45.00
OCC Shoeboxes	360.00
Youth Camp	390.00
Children/Preschool Ministry Donation	100.00



### *In Memory*

*In memory of her parents, **Wilson & Aline Tarlton**,  
a donation was given to the Building Fund  
by Pamela Wellons.*

*In memory of **Bonnie Richardson**, contributions  
were given to the Building Fund by:  
Mary Nelms  
The First Baptist Oakboro Visiting Team  
(Jewell, Mary, Vera, Vickie, Linda)  
First Baptist, Oakboro*



### *In Honor*

*In honor of **Deb Tucker's birthday**,  
a contribution was given to the Building Fund by Jewell Parker.*

*The Blessed Assurance Sunday School class made a donation to the  
Building Fund in honor of **Louise Floyd**.*

*In honor of **Proverbs 31 Wannabes**, Mae Brooks gave a donation  
to the Building Fund.*

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LOTTIE MOON  
CHRISTMAS  
OFFERING®

Prayer Guides and  
Envelopes for the Lottie  
Moon Christmas Offering  
for International Missions

are located at the church entrances during December. Your gift is needed  
to continue the spread of the Gospel throughout the world.



### **HOPE Fellowship Happenings**

The Senior Adult Committee will meet at 5:00 p.m.  
on **January 3** to finalize the plans for January's  
outing on the 18<sup>th</sup>. Everyone that is available is  
welcome to join us. When plans are made, a sign-up  
sheet will be placed on the bulletin board for you to sign up.

Worship Ready

The Worship Choir  
Presents  
**COME  
WORSHIP**  
*the*  
**King!**

A 35-MINUTE WORSHIP READY  
**CHRISTMAS**

Arranged & Orchestrated by  
Russell Mauldin

Sunday, December 17  
10:00 a.m. Worship  
Credits to  
Sue C. Smith, Lee Black, Russell Mauldin  
& Johnathan Crumpton

Treat bags will be distributed afterward.

## SLOW AND STEADY



Can you feel it? Like really feel it? Can you see that it's happening even though it's sometimes hard to sense? You may ask what I am talking about. You might say "Feel what, Nate?" Feel something that's happening in our student ministry, and if we don't pause for a moment to see it, we might miss it. "What is it?" You might be asking in your head as you read this. Maybe this time with a little more frustration.

### It's Progress.

If you were at the last SWAG Night you might have picked up on it. If you are here for Wednesday Dinners, you can notice it. If you volunteer with our kids and preschoolers, you might notice it, too. If you packed shoeboxes with us, you might have noticed it. Our student ministry is progressing. Progressing how? With relationships, structure and discipleship. Do you know a student's name now that you didn't a year ago? That's Progress. Have you seen an adult get to know a student in any capacity? Progress. Have you seen facility or furniture upgrades to student spaces? Progress. Have you seen a student start to ask tough questions about life and faith? Progress.

God is moving slow and steady in our student ministries, and you as the church are making that difference. This week as we gather together, give thanks to God for that progress. If you're looking for ways to get involved in that progress for the first time or to continue your involvement, we've got more opportunities coming up. From going to Charlotte to process shoeboxes together, to more SWAG nights, to Prayer Partnerships to be announced soon. God is moving and progressing here. Scripture tells us to run the race with endurance. We're running well. Do we have more races to run? Absolutely. But let's keep running together.

**Nate**



December 9, 6:00-8:00 p.m. - Christmas Party  
 December 24 - Christmas Eve Service  
 December 20 & 27 - No Activities

Follow our youth ministry on Instagram @fboyouth



## Upcoming Events

### Sundays

9:00 Sunday School  
 10:00 Worship Service

### Wednesdays

5:30 Dinner @ The Gathering Place  
 6:30 Bible Study for all ages

**DECEMBER 6 - MISSIONS NIGHT**

**DECEMBER 13 - KIDS' CHRISTMAS PARTY**

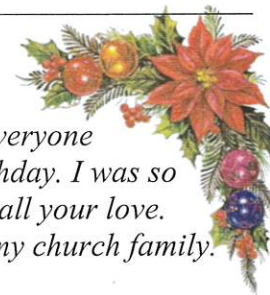
**DECEMBER 20 & 27 (NO ACTIVITIES)**



FBO has a date and time slot secured to go and process shoeboxes on Friday, **December 8**, from 7:00-10:00 p.m. All participants must be 13 and older. If you would like to join in this outreach ministry, please sign up on the sheet located in the fellowship building lobby.

## Thank You

*"Dear Church Family, I want to thank everyone who came out to help me celebrate my 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. I was so overwhelmed with the cards, gifts and most of all your love. You don't know how much I appreciate and love my church family. Love you all,"*  
 Bea Goodman

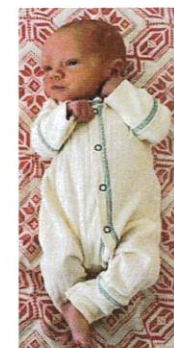


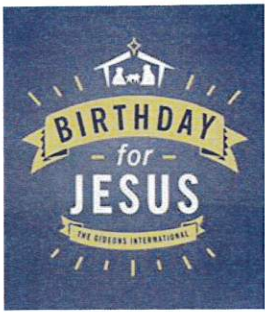
Proud grandparents Tracy & Lisa Lowder welcome new grandson

### Hank Elwin Esposito

to their growing family.

He was born November 13, weighing 6 pounds, 14 ounces and measuring 21 inches long. Matthew & Jordan are his parents, and Hank joins brother Abel and sister Hazel. Our best wishes go to this special family!





What a special time Christmas is as we celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords! *“And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”* John 1:14. This year The Gideons International have an opportunity for you to honor our Savior’s birth by sending one or more Bibles around the world through **“Birthday for Jesus.”**

It is very easy to participate in this opportunity. All you have to do is take one of the donation envelopes from the **Birthday for Jesus** display, fill out the envelope, and include the amount you wish to donate for Bibles in honor of Jesus’ birthday, then put your envelope in the church collection plate or basket. Inside the envelope you will find a decorative card that is yours to keep to hang on your Christmas tree as a reminder to pray for those who will receive a Bible from your gift. Your donation will provide for the placement and distribution of Bibles in some 200 countries throughout the world, and is tax deductible. It costs \$1.75 to place a New Testament, and \$5.00 will place one Bible.

Lives of men, women, boys, and girls are changed eternally through the Bibles that are placed, like a little brown-haired girl who met a Gideon named Teodor Popovici. Teodor has a heart to regularly take Bibles to orphanages in his country of Romania. It is estimated there are over 400,000 orphans living in orphanages in Romania due to the poor economic conditions. This little girl recognized Teodor as the one who had given Bibles out at her orphanage previously. She thanked Teodor and told him her Bible was a prized possession. She also told him that she had read her New Testament from cover to cover, every word of it. She also said that because of her Bible she was no longer an orphan, she had received Jesus Christ into her heart, and Jesus had adopted her into His family. He was her mommy and her daddy. Praise the Lord, she was now a member of the family of God.

Isaiah 55:11 tells us God’s Word does not return void. Every gift for Bibles counts, no matter the size. **Birthday for Jesus** collections by our church will be taken through December 31.

THANK YOU AND MAY GOD BLESS YOU AND YOUR FAMILY THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON.

STANLY SOUTH CAMP GIDEONS INTERNATIONAL



## Offering Envelopes

The Stewardship Committee will distribute the numbered offering envelope sets over the next few weeks. **UNLESS** you email or call the office to request one, those who give online will not be given a set. Also, contribution statements will be ready mid-January.



## Poinsettia Dedications

**\$12 each**

**Please sign up on one of the bulletin board sheets to place a poinsettia in honor or in memory of a loved one during Christmas.**

*WEST STANLY PLAYERS*  
PRESENTS  
**WICKED** CHRISTMAS CAROL  
Charles Dickens  
Bobby Keniston  
\$10 TICKETS  
DECEMBER 1 & 2.....7:00 PM  
DECEMBER 3.....2:30 PM  
West Stanly Players Theatre



- December**
- 1 Butch Poplin
  - 2 Harry Foster
  - 3 Kristen Beatty
  - 5 Jeff Chance
  - Presley Poplin
  - 15 Heather Copple
  - 18 Georgia Harvey
  - Barry Beatty
  - 25 Joyce Little
  - 28 Iris Mooney
  - Alex Mauney
  - 29 Betty Huneycutt
  - Shannon Chaney
  - 30 Case Smith
  - 31 Teresa Smith
  - Stephen Obie

- January**
- 2 Julie Poplin
  - Ann Burgess
  - 4 Jean Little

Please call or email the office with any changes to the birthday calendar.

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><b>Weekly Sunday Schedule</b>  <b>9:00 a.m. Sunday School (Live &amp; Zoom)</b>  <b>10:00 a.m. Worship</b></p>						
1st Sunday of Advent	8:30 a.m. Two or More Prayer			5:30 p.m. The Gathering Place <i>(please sign up)</i> 6:30 Bible Study for All Ages 7:30 Worship Choir Rehearsal	6:30 p.m. Deacons & Family Meal at Los Jacubes	11:00 a.m. HOPE Fellowship to Christmas in the Village - Historic Gold Hill - <i>(please sign up)</i>
2nd Sunday of Advent	8:30 a.m. Two or More Prayer			5:30 p.m. The Gathering Place <i>(please sign up)</i> 6:30 Business Meeting KIDS CHRISTMAS PARTY 7:30 Choir Rehearsal		7:00-10:00 p.m. Trip to Operation Christmas Child Distribution Warehouse
3rd Sunday of Advent	10:00 a.m. Worship Choir presents <b>COME WORSHIP the King!</b>	8:30 a.m. Two or More Prayer		NO ACTIVITIES OR SERVICES		6:00-8:00 p.m. Youth Christmas Party at Sissons
4th Sunday of Advent	5:00 p.m. <b>Christmas Eve Service</b>	8:30 a.m. Two or More Prayer		NO ACTIVITIES OR SERVICES		
NEW YEAR'S EVE						

YMCA in Fellowship Building

YMCA in Fellowship Building

