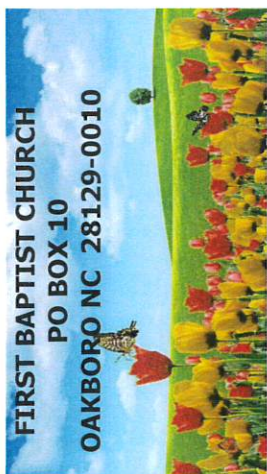


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FIRST BAPTIST  
OAKBORO

The Communicator

VOL. XXXVI No. 5

May 2025

*Happy Mother's Day*



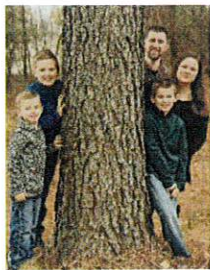
Listen, my son,  
to your father's instruction  
and do not forsake  
your mother's teaching.  
They will be a garland  
to grace your head and  
a chain to adorn your neck.

Proverbs 1:8-9

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322 N Main Street  
Oakboro, NC 28129  
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I started pastoring in 2008, just before Noah was born. One of the theological/pastoral interests I've had since leaving the starting blocks in ministry has been apologetics. That word comes from the Greek word *apologia*, which means to offer a verbal defense of something. Essentially, apologetics is the intellectual discipline of being able to offer a verbal defense of the Christian faith. To put that another way, it is developing the ability to explain to someone else not only why you believe, but why they should believe too. More than even that, it is about defending the Christian faith both negatively, in terms of countering arguments against it, and positively, in terms of giving sound arguments in favor of it.

Getting started in ministry when I did put me squarely in one of the great heydays of Christian apologetics. In the wake of 9/11 less than a decade earlier, there was a great reaction to that world-changing event against all forms of organized religion, but especially against Christianity. Just two years before I started pastoring, when I was still in seminary, famous atheist, Richard Dawkins, published his magnum opus against the Christian faith, *The God Delusion*. It had an enormous cultural impact. It was at the front edge of a wave of secularism that swept through Western culture like a tidal wave.

In many ways it hit a church that was completely unprepared for it. Many believers thought there was going to be a great turning toward the church in the wake of 9/11 since all the churches were filled to capacity in those first few weeks after the attack. But then the momentum shifted entirely in the other direction.

We started hearing agonizing reports about the rapid rise of the “nones,” a group of people who were ostensibly secular in their outlook. Many prominent atheists found themselves in high demand, making lots of money on books and speaking events, and cheered endlessly on the Internet which was also starting to really hit its stride with the release of the first iPhone in 2008.

Year after year the number of people claiming to have no religious identification or commitment rose. Churches saw their membership rolls ebb. The culture around us underwent an incredible secularization. Things that were once assumed were now forgotten and hated where they still existed. The culture began wholeheartedly embracing every progressive moral project that came along. The reaction against the traditional Christian morality that had characterized the moral imagination of our nation for decades was erased almost overnight.

The church's days were numbered, or so every gloating secularist you met on the street or on an Internet comment thread declared with glee. And, as far as what many believers could see, they were right.

But then something began to happen. The tide began to shift again.

This is a pretty recent shift, and demographers and sociologists are still trying to assess just how comprehensive it is and what it means, but the numbers are growing

harder and harder to ignore. Whereas the Millennial Generation and older members of Generation Z largely didn't want anything to do with the church or organized religion more generally, preferring instead a full-throated embrace of secularism, younger members of Generation Z and older members of Generation Alpha are trending hard in the other direction.

If you look for it, you'll fairly easily find more and more reports about people flooding back into churches across the world, but especially in the cultural West. This is especially pronounced in Europe right now, but it's happening here as well. Young people are hungry for something more substantial than secularism was able to offer. They have seen the emptiness of friends and family members who bought into secularism's canard, and don't want that. They have seen the results of the hard, incredibly intolerant morality of modern secularism and are searching eagerly for a tradition with structure, but more grace to it. They want real hope and the assurance that forgiveness is possible when they blow it.

Christianity offers all of this and more. And so they're coming. Some of them are coming back, but more of them are coming for the first time. To a certain degree, it is an act of rebellion against the previous generation, which means that in another generation, we'll likely see things shift back the other way again, but in the meantime, we are sitting at the front end of an incredible opportunity.

So, what's it going to take to capitalize on what lies ahead of us? Well, much of what we are already doing. Continuing to offer a solid, loving, Gospel-centered community will be a huge attraction point for young families looking to experience something real, and to see their kids raised in an environment that gives them a strong, moral, grace-filled foundation. It will take worshiping together with unity to keep our focus solely on Christ and advancing His kingdom. It will take lots and lots and lots of prayer. It will take serving eagerly and actively.

When you are in the church, you need to think like an owner, not a renter. This thing is yours, and if you don't actively invest in it and take care of it, it won't last. This means that folks who are further along on their journey with Jesus need to be active in pouring into those who aren't as far along. This can mean moving intentionally into teaching roles, yes, but it can also mean simply building good relationships where casual mentoring & discipling are happening on a regular basis.

What the church cannot be is simply a social setting even though it is certainly not less than that. It is a Gospel community where we can connect, grow, and reach out to expand God's kingdom alongside a group of people who are committed to doing the same with us. And if that sounds familiar, it should. God has made this church to be a people with whom anyone can connect to grow in Christ and reach out for His kingdom. We need to be ourselves—the selves God made us to be together. When we do that, we'll continue to see His kingdom grow. We'll continue to see disciples who make disciples made.

That's the goal. I can't wait to pursue even more of it with you in the days ahead of us!

*Pastor Jonathan*





**Reputation** is what folks think you are... **Personality** is what you seem to be... **Character** is what you really are...

This is clearly seen in our behavior... A fourth recognizable trait in our character is our forgiveness... that is treating someone as though they have never wronged you.

The Bible teaches that it is God who is the Author of forgiveness... and on this basis we are

#### **Commanded to forgive others...**

*"Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."* Ephes. 4:32

#### **Instructed to forgive and keep forgiving...**

*"Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. [4] 'And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him.'" Luke 17:3-4*

#### **Told that forgiveness brings joy and gratitude...**

*"For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little." Luke 7:47*

What does forgiveness look like... how can we recognize it? According to the Institute of Christian Conciliation, true forgiveness is when a person says:

1. I will not think about this incident.
2. I will not talk about this incident with anyone.
3. I will not bring this incident up and use it against you.
4. I will not allow this incident to come between us.
5. I will ask God what He is trying to teach me.

The Bible warns us that the lack of forgiveness ...

#### **Demonstrates hatred**

*[21] "You have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not commit murder' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' [22] "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell. [23] "Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, [24] leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering." Matthew 5:21-24*

*"Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him." 1 John 3:15*

#### **Hinders God's forgiveness**

*"Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions. [26] ["But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions."]* Mark 11:25-26

#### **Produces bitterness which destroys a person from within**

*"Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. [15] See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled"* Hebrews 12:14-15



### **Camp/Mission Project Fundraising**

**Camp Deposits – Tuition payments for camp are due *May 15*.**

**Bake Auction** – Is slated for Saturday, May 3 with a hot dog supper beginning at 5:00pm. Jeff Hinson with Hinson Auction House will be the Auctioneer! Raffle drawings during the night!

### **Events**

**Kickball Tournament:** FBO Student ministry sponsored a team for the [www.jointhefam.org](http://www.jointhefam.org) ministry kickball tournament, and they brought home First Place! Thank you to the Waits and Mullis families for providing snacks and coaching.



**May 9th:** Faith and Family Night at Kannapolis Cannon Ballers Baseball game. Christian music starts at 6:00 p.m. game at 7:00 p.m. **Please sign up!**

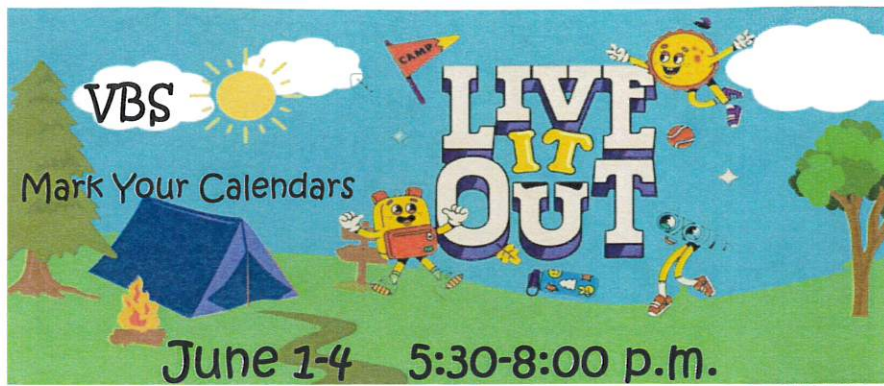
**May 21st:** End of School Year Party

**June 16-20:** Camp at Caswell

**June 25th-July 30th:** July Break (No Wednesday Church Activities)







If you can help in any capacity, please pick up a volunteer sign-up paper from the fellowship building entrance table, complete it and turn it in. Also, scan this QR Code to register the children.



In memory of **Cliff Edwards**,  
contributions were given to the Building Fund by:

Brooks & Jane Barnhardt  
Doug & Ann Burgess  
Kevin & Erica Floyd  
Bea & Kim Goodman  
Sue Greene  
Jean Little  
Tracy & Lisa Lowder  
Michael & Starla Thompson  
First Baptist Church of Oakboro  
Glenda Alcock  
Cynthia Goode  
Bonnye Woodlief  
Cheryl Bray

In memory of **Harold & Louise Floyd**, a donation was  
given toward the new church sign by Kevin & Erica Floyd.

The Blessed Assurance Sunday School Class made a contribution  
to the Building Fund in honor of **Bea Goodman**.

In honor of **Matt & Cooper Hudson**,  
a donation was given to the  
Building Fund by Kim & Bea Goodman.

IN YOUR  
HONOR



If you would like to donate to this year's scholarship fund, please mark an offering envelope "Scholarship" and drop into the offering plate during Sunday School or Worship. You also may go online at [www.fbcoakboro.org](http://www.fbcoakboro.org), click on "Partner with FBC" and follow the prompts, selecting "Scholarship." Your gifts will go directly and solely to the recipients selected for the awards by the Scholarship Committee.



We at FBO minister to those in our church family when there is a death in their family by providing a meal, usually following the service. Due to members of these groups passing, being in poor health, or for other reasons, our number has declined. We are inviting you to be a part of this important servant ministry of the church. Currently, there are 4 groups that serve on a rotating basis; you will not be obligated each time there is a funeral or memorial service.

Please email or call the church office to volunteer, or contact Rita Crisco or Betty Huneycutt.



**Charlotte, NC • Forest Hill Church**

**Saturday, October 25, 2025**

**Mother's Day Savings**

**Basic \$64 | Gold \$84**

**Savings Deadline: May 9, 2025**

A group of FBO ladies is going to this event. A sign-up sheet is available in the Fellowship Building entrance. See Angel Copple for more information.



## OUR RECORD OF GIVING

<b>Budget Goals – March</b> (March 30-Apr 27)	<b>33,350.30</b>
<b>Budget Receipts – March</b>	<b>30,208.05</b>
<b>Budget Goals – YTD</b>	<b>233,452.10</b>
<b>Budget Receipts – YTD</b>	<b>208,317.80</b>
<b>Budget Variance</b>	<b>-25,134.30</b>
<b>Special Offerings</b>	
Building Fund	<b>6,375.66</b>
Gathering Place	<b>571.00</b>
Annie Armstrong Offering (Total: \$600)	<b>340.00</b>
Youth Camp: Deposits	<b>900.00</b>
Youth Camp: Raffle	<b>3,420.00</b>
Youth Ministry Donations	<b>370.00</b>
Deacons	<b>45.00</b>
NC Children's Homes	<b>100.00</b>
Scholarship Fund	<b>500.00</b>
Yard Sale	<b>1,628.51</b>
Children & Preschool Ministry Donation	<b>120.00</b>
Children's Ministry (Sausage Biscuits)	<b>170.00</b>
Easter Lilies	<b>84.00</b>



Please meet our newest members, who joined FBO a few weeks ago. Speak to them, drop them a note, and get to know them.

### Josh & Chelsea Morton

Della, Catherine  
734 S Oak Ridge Rd  
Oakboro, NC 28129  
(980) 721-6894 – Josh  
(704) 996-5136 – Chelsea

**FREE For Everyone**  
**Register for FBO's**  
**Relay For Life Team**  
[www.relayforlife.org/stanlync](http://www.relayforlife.org/stanlync)  
**Find First Baptist Oakboro Team**  
**Click "Join"**  
 Next Meeting: May 4 at 3:00 p.m.

**We're ALL affected by cancer in some way!**

40 Years of Impact.

American Cancer Society



## HOPE Fellowship Happenings



On Thursday, *May 22*, as we travel to Calvary Church in Charlotte to attend a free pipe organ concert in their sanctuary, then enjoy a senior adult lunch for \$9 per person.

Also, please note that our annual Christmas show trip is scheduled for *November 16-19*. Carolina Opry and Greg Rowles' Legacy Theater are the 2 shows we'll attend. We're trying something a little different this year, as we plan to leave on Sunday afternoon, giving us 2 full days of shopping and relaxation, instead of traveling on Monday. Please stop by the table in the fellowship building entrance and pick up the informational flyer. As always, our events are not limited to senior adults. **EVERYONE** is welcome to come and go along.

PLEASE  
JOIN US FOR THE

**100th**

BIRTHDAY PARTY OF

**MAE  
BROOKS**

June 28, 2025  
 Drop in 10:00-12:00 AM  
 The Community Building at Oakboro Park  
 423 South Main Street, Oakboro, NC  
 In lieu of gifts, please consider  
 donations to Oakboro First Baptist  
 Church Building Fund