

FROM BRIDGE STREET

News & Updates From Our Church



Keep Christ the Center of Christmas

BY PASTOR ERIC TRUESDALE

We have once again come to the season to celebrate the birth of Christ. You will hear the music, see the lights, decorations, trees, and all the other things associated wherever you go. I sat at the hospital yesterday and heard two ladies talking. As they departed, one said to the other, "Happy Holidays." I thought about how many times I have heard people say it. I don't mean the days before Thanksgiving, but this was after Thanksgiving, as we can sum Thanksgiving and Christmas together as a holiday. However, as believers, the key to the lights, trees, stars, music, and cheer is Christ.

Colossians 1:17-18 states, "17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. 18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence". This verse reminds believers that He is first; all things are united through Him. At the end of verse 18, Paul says He may have preeminence in all things. Paul means that he holds first place in all things and places Him above all else.

Christ may not be that important to many that you come in contact with; some may deny Him completely (this is why many don't say Merry Christmas). However, there would be no holiday to celebrate if it was not for His birth. No scripture places a date on Jesus's birth, and there is no way to know the exact day. However, the church chose December 25th because it was nine months after the crucifixion in the 4th century.

So, what can you do to keep Christ at the center? Next time someone says Happy Holidays, x-mas (even my spellcheck knows x-mas is incorrect and tried to change it), or something else taking Christ out, respond simply out of love and say Merry Christmas. The meaning of merry is happiness and good cheer. I celebrate Christmas because He brings me joy and happiness.



FALL FESTIVAL/ CHILI COOK-OFF

BY PASTOR ERIC TRUESDALE

The church had its first fall festival and chili cookoff on November 5th. It was a great time of fellowship with one another. We had ten pots of chili with an array of recipes. We invited members of restaurants in our community to judge the chili for us. The judges awarded Barbara Powell first place, Tommy and Helen Doyle second, and Jenny Swofford third. There was great participation and enough food for everyone to enjoy.

In addition, we hosted several other activities for all ages. We had a cakewalk for people to win their favorite desserts, games, and bounce houses for the children. Peddlers Porch was kind enough to donate door prizes to be given out to people who registered when they arrived.

To conclude the event, we had Trunk of Blessing. We had over 20 people participate in handing out candy to our children and youth. Each trunk was unique and had a different theme for everyone to enjoy. It was a great success because of the fantastic fellowship. We plan to host the fall festival each fall and the chili cookoff in the winter months.



From front to back,
Tommy Doyle
Barbra Powell, Helen Doyle, and Jenny Swofford,
Tracy, Mohammad, Aileen, Eric, and Ertha



Baptism

We baptized four people: Debbie England, Rhea Ridgeway, Alyssa Rucker, and Charlie Rucker. Debbie and Rhea had already accepted the Lord but wanted to join the church, so they were baptized to become church members. Alyssa and Charlie made a confession of faith and wanted to be baptized in the Lord. We also welcomed Randy and Susan Rucker as members.

Parsonage

So, as I am writing this, we are waiting for the inspector to finish the inspection of the patronage. If everything goes according to His will, we will move into the parsonage on Tuesday. After many months of work, prayer, support, and guidance, the day has finally come. We are so excited to be in town and better able to serve the church and town. It is also a blessing to celebrate Christmas in the parsonage. We are very thankful to the church family for your support as we have been on this journey. However, we are most grateful to God for allowing us to serve First Baptist. I want to share a verse of scripture that has become our verse through this time and has been adopted for the house. 2 Samuel 7:29 "29 Now therefore, let it please You to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue before You forever; for You, O Lord God, have spoken it, and with Your blessing let the house of Your servant be blessed forever". This is our prayer as we serve First Baptist and the community.



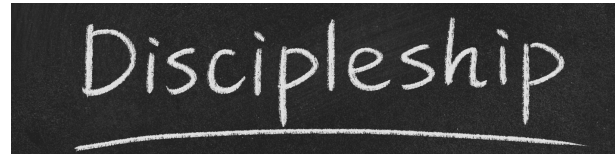
SMALL GROUPS COMING

BY ERIC TRUESDALE

Small groups in the church help us as individuals to foster a more intimate relationship with Christ and other believers. Unlike corporate worship, it allows individuals to come together and build personal relationships around one another in Christ. Small groups also encourage accountability and more profound learning possibilities.

Small groups are essential as a church as they allow the church to grow disciples. In my time here, I have heard different concerns from people concerning discipleship issues. It may be things concerning children, how to develop themselves as believers, and how to reach people for Christ in the world around them. These things can be preached in corporate worship and should be; however, the issues come with applying them and having a discussion on them in a small setting.

How do small groups work? They are usually no larger than 16 people as it allows for more intimate discussion. When we look at Jesus' core followers, we have the twelve disciples and, in some cases, a few others who join in. It was the perfect size for Jesus to be intimate with His followers. There will be a topic that we will study or critical concepts. It can be done through a curriculum or the Bible itself. It is also usually done in a personal setting. Someone is willing to open their home for people to come in and participate.



As Jesus taught His disciples in small settings like the parables and other things, it served to grow them in their knowledge of His mission. That is what the focus of small groups will be here. It will be to grow us in a more intimate relationship with the Lord, to know Him better, and to serve Him better. Some believe that salvation is the finish line when salvation is the starting line.

Small groups are not a one-and-done thing and will be something we will do throughout the year and years to follow. As believers, we should always seek ways to nurture and grow our relationship with Christ.

We will begin this new ministry in the new year. I hope that you will take part in it with our church family.



Why I Selected This Image

This image was chosen because of its powerful representation of small groups.

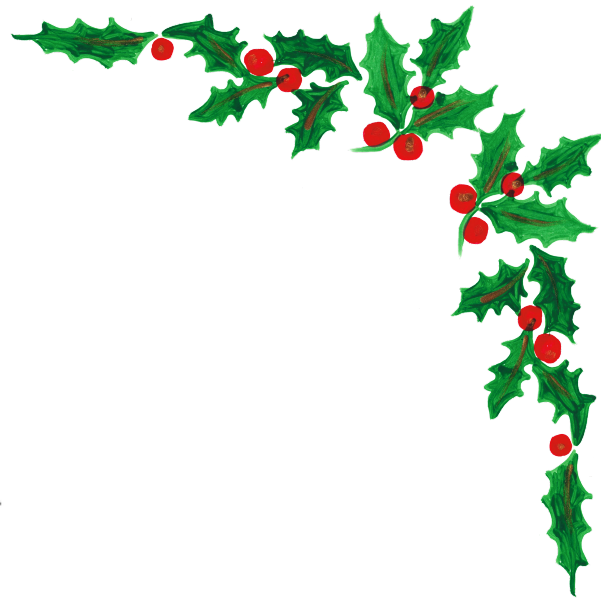
As a school of fish swim together in harmony towards their destination, the church should also align themselves in unity towards Christ.

First Baptist



St. Matthews

Building Bridges for Christ
Let all that you do be done with love.
1 Corinthians 16:14



December 2023

Upcoming Events

3rd- 10 -Lottie Moon Week of Prayer
5th- Trustees Meeting- 5 pm
9th-Town of St. Matthews Parade
13th- Golden Group lunch at Ocean View -12 pm
17th- Christmas Program 5:30 pm
24th- Christmas Eve night service- 5 pm
22nd, 25th, and 26th- The Church office will be closed for Christmas.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

2nd-Sheldon Ledwell
8th- Jennifer Holeman
9th- Linda Bryant
12th- Sallie Prickett
14th- Joel Grubb
14th-Mary Snow Thornton
22nd- McKenzie Golden
24th Sheryl Jeffcoat
26th-Mary K Thornton
27th-Davis Holeman

Please note that all birthdays and anniversaries are pulled from ChurchTrac. If your information is not listed, we do not have it in the system. So please update it in Churchtrac or contact the church office for help.



*Building bridges for Christ in
St. Matthews and the world!*

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