



**FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH OF CHRIST**
NURTURE. LOVE. SERVE. ALL.



"Girl With Balloon," or "There is Always Hope," Banksy, Original mural on Waterloo Bridge in South Bank, London, created in 2002, photo from 2004. Banksy is perhaps the most famous street artist in the world. This is the first of a series of stencil murals around London with the same theme.

The Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
August 29, 2021

Welcome to worship this morning with the First Baptist Church of Christ. We are thrilled to be back worshipping in our sanctuary after a year outside of our building. As we gather this morning know that we are committed to everyone's safety and comfort as we create sacred space and time together.

Things to Know

- Masks are required at all times during worship, when moving through the building, and when with children. Each Sunday school class is making its own decisions regarding masks in class.
- Available pews have cushions in them. Unavailable pews have the cushions removed.
- Please keep social distance by avoiding gathering in groups before and after the service.
- Be mindful of others. Err on the side of caution out of respect for those who are abiding by stricter practices.
- If you have any questions or concerns, please find an usher.

For Those With Children

Thank you for bringing a child to worship! Take a deep breath and know they are welcome here. Parents with infants are more than welcome to remain in the sanctuary, or ushers can direct you down the back stairs to a comfortable room with sound from the sanctuary so all can still hear the service. A nursery is provided for children younger than 3. Preschoolers (age 3-kindergarten) are invited to leave after "Let the Children Come" for our W.O.W. (Working on Worship) experience in the Seekers' classroom.

For Those with Special Needs

Thank you for joining us for worship! We love our historic buildings, but know they can be a challenge for those with mobility needs. Know that we are committed to doing all we can to make this space welcoming to everyone. Reserved seating for those in wheel chairs and those sitting with them is found near the elevator, and is marked with signs on the walls and on the back of the pews. Please don't hesitate to ask an usher for assistance. Large print bulletins are available at both entrances. If you have special hearing needs, please ask one of the ushers to bring you a hearing assistance device from the sound booth in the back, or feel free to go back there and get one. An accessible restroom is located up one floor across from the office. If you, or someone with you, requires special assistance for any reason, please find a minister or an usher.

THE OFFERING OF PRAISE

The Sounding of the Hour

Anne Armstrong

Billy Dickison, Acolyte

Prelude

"Joyous Procession"
Anne Armstrong, organ

Garry Cornell

The Call to Worship

Phoebe Capps

Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of God's power.

For our struggle is not against mere mortals, but against all the powers of this present darkness.

So we take up the whole armor of God, that we may be able to stand firm in love.

We put the belt of truth around our waist, and the breastplate of righteousness.

As shoes we wear whatever will allow us to proclaim God's peace.

We take the shield of faith, the helmet of healing and wholeness, and the sword of the Spirit.

So that we would proclaim the mystery of God's love with boldness.

Praise be to the One in whom we know this mystery, in whom we find this boldness, from whom we receive our strength.

From Ephesians 6:10-20

*The Hymn of Praise 418

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

EIN' FESTE BURG

**A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;
Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great, and, armed with cruel hate,
on earth is not his equal.**

**Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing,
Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing.
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabbaoth, His name, from age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.**

**And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God has willed, His truth to triumph through us.
The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure;
One little word shall fell him.**

**That word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him who with us sideth.
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;
The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still,
His kingdom is forever.**

*The Invocation Phoebe Capps

*The Gloria Patri 705 Glory Be to the Father GLORIA PATRI

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen.**

The Words of Welcome Stanley L. Roberts

"Let the Children Come" JD Granade

Children in 3K-K are invited to W.O.W., a preschool worship experience! We will meet with the W.O.W. Shepherds at the end of "Let the Children Come". Parents, please come pick up your children immediately after worship. The shepherds this week are Rebecca Pursiful and Zoie Thompson

THE OFFERING OF GIFTS

*The Hymn of Offertory 71 Be Thou My Vision SLANE

**Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art:
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.**

**Be Thou my wisdom and Thou my true word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord:
Thou my soul's shelter, and Thou my high tower,
Raise Thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.**

**Riches I heed not, nor vain empty praise,
Thou mine inheritance, now and always:
Thou and Thou only first in my heart,
High King of heaven, my treasure Thou art.**

**High King of heaven, my victory won,
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heav'n's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.**

The Offertory Prayer

Doug Thompson
Deacon of the Week

The Offertory Anthem

“God of Grace and God of Glory”
The Chancel Choir

Paul T. Langston

God of grace and God of glory,
On Thy people pour Thy power;
Crown Thine ancient church's story,
Bring her bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
For the facing of this hour,
For the facing of this hour.

Lo! the hosts of evil round us
Scorn Thy Christ, assail His ways!
Fears and doubts too long have bound us
Free our hearts to faith and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
For the living of these days,
For the living of these days.

Set our feet on lofty place;
Gird our lives that they may be
Armored with all Christ-like graces
In the fight to set all free.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
That we fail not man not Thee!
That we fail not man nor Thee!

Text: Harry Emerson Fosdick, 1930

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God, for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.**

THE OFFERING OF THE WORD

The First Lesson

Psalm 111

Cindy Fuller

Praise the LORD!
I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart,
in the company of the upright, in the congregation.
Great are the works of the LORD,
studied by all who delight in them.
Full of honor and majesty is his work,
and his righteousness endures forever.
He has gained renown by his wonderful deeds;
the LORD is gracious and merciful.
He provides food for those who fear him;
he is ever mindful of his covenant.
He has shown his people the power of his works,
in giving them the heritage of the nations.
The works of his hands are faithful and just;
all his precepts are trustworthy.
They are established forever and ever,
to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.
He sent redemption to his people;
he has commanded his covenant forever.
Holy and awesome is his name.
The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
all those who practice it have a good understanding.
His praise endures forever.

For the Word of God in Holy Scripture,

Thanks be to God

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespassed against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever, Amen.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

For the Word of God in Holy Scripture,

Thanks be to God

Last in the series: Love Letters to the Church

THE OFFERING OF THE COMMITMENT

*The Hymn of Commitment 63 Lead On, O King Eternal

LANCHASIRE

**Lead on, O King Eternal, the day of march has come;
Henceforth in fields of conquest Thy tents shall be our home:
Through days of preparation Thy grace has made us strong,
And now, O King Eternal, we lift our battle song.**

**Lead on, O King Eternal, till sin's fierce war shall cease,
And holiness shall whisper the sweet amen of peace;
For not with swords' loud clashing, or roll of stirring drums;
With deeds of love and mercy the heavenly kingdom comes.**

**Lead on, O King Eternal, we follow, not with fears;
For gladness breaks like morning where'er Thy face appears;
Thy cross is lifted o'er us; we journey in its light:
The crown awaits the conquest; lead on, O God of might.**

*The Spoken Benediction

Scott Dickison

*The Congregational Response 481 Go to the World!
(stanza 4)

SINE NOMINE

**Go to the world! Go as the ones I send,
For I am with you 'til the age shall end,
When all the hosts of glory cry "Amen."
Alleluia! Alleluia!**

Postlude

"O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing"
Anne Armstrong, organ

arr. Douglas Wagner



Our Life Together

Sunday, August 29

9:45 am Sunday school
 11:00 am Worship

Tuesday, August 31

7:00 pm Personnel Committee

Wednesday, September 1

3:00 pm Open Time in youth room
and for children
 4:45 pm Youth and Children
Worship Arts Workshops
 5:00 pm Youth Choir
 5:30 pm Family Dinner
 6:00 pm Children's Choir
 6:15 pm Youth "Unplugged"
 6:30 pm Choir Practice
 6:30 pm Adult Bible Study
 6:45 pm Flex time for children

Sunday, September 5

9:45 am Sunday school
 11:00 am Worship with Communion
 6:30 pm Ice cream social

Deacons of the Week

August 26- September 1 Doug Thompson

THE RECORD SPEAKS

Date:	7/31/2021
Budget to Date	\$377,697
Contributions	\$316,783
Expenses	\$320,990
Missions	\$31,704
	-\$35,911

August Birthdays

August 30 Gary Mosely
 August 31 Sophia Tribble

September Birthdays

September 1 Linda Midkiff
 September 1 Marty Sleas
 September 3 Sandra Duyck
 September 4 Oby Brown
 September 4 Jack Davis
 September 4 Dexter Jones
 September 5 Carolyn Jones

Condolences

We grieve with the family of **Exelle Chambers** in her death on July 16.

We grieve with the family of **Angel Vazquez** in his death on July 31.

We grieve with Sandra and the Adams family in the death of **Stan Adams** on August 14.

Save the Date

Wednesday, September 8: ESL classes resume

Saturday, September 18: Welcome to FBCX Gathering

Saturday, September 25: Women's Retreat at Claystone Park

Wednesday Night Suppers: Please make reservations

We are excited to once again offer supper as part of our Wednesday night schedule. Providing our meals this fall will be Evette Goolsby of E.G. Catering. Evette will offer a monthly rotation of delicious meals (see full menu on the side). The cost will be \$6 per plate. To help streamline our logistics this fall, there will be no discount for child plates or families.

To help us know how much food to provide, we also ask that meals be reserved. You can do this by following the link in the Highlites, or calling the church office. You can also set up a recurring reservation. We encourage as many who can to pay through the church's online giving/payment portal.

Adult Bible Study in September: Studies in Job

Join us for Bible study every Wednesday night at 6:30pm, starting September 1. During the month of September we'll follow along with the sermon emphasis and take a closer look at the Book of Job. Arguably among the greatest pieces of world literature, biblical or otherwise, Job explores universal questions of suffering and grief: Why do we suffer? What is the purpose of suffering? Is there a purpose to suffering? Is God good? Is God just? How are we to respond to suffering in our own life, in the lives of others? Job offers no definitive answers, but instead honors the faithfulness of the questions themselves, and so we will too.

We will gather in the fellowship hall, or you

can join us virtually on Zoom following a link in the weekly email.

Sanctuary Flowers

The following dates are open for providing flowers for Sunday worship: September 12, 19, 26; October 3, 17, 24, 31; November 7, 14; and December 5 and 26. If you're interested and have questions about the process, Mary Leonard will be happy to answer any questions you may have. Please contact her at 478-745-3866 home, 478-737-4171 cell, or michael.leonard1@cox.net. To reserve a date, click [here](#). There, choose a date, check the boxes, click Submit and Sign Up (bottom of page). On the next page (Sign Me Up), fill out the boxes and click Sign Up Now. Shortly, a confirmation email will be sent to you, and another about a week before your date. Mary can also do this for you; just let her know.

September Sermon Series: A Sufferer's Wisdom: Studies in Job

Ellen Davis writes that the book of Job provides more than just a theology of suffering, but "the theology of a sufferer". Suffering is something with which we all have become acquainted in new ways over the past year and a half. Not only have we all been touched in some way by the wide-scale suffering of this ongoing pandemic, but we have become keenly aware of the sufferings of others. Over these four weeks we will engage the Bible's great exploration of suffering, and reflect on the light that can only be revealed in darkness.

Ice Cream Social

Sunday, September 5



Youth

Wednesdays starting September 1

Youth are welcome to come to church as soon as they get out of school. As students trickle in at different times, there will be space to do homework and activities to unwind. When children start their worship arts class, youth have the option to help with the children or work on a church project. Youth choir starts before dinner, and all youth will gather together again in the youth room after dinner.

Wednesday Schedule

3:00—4:45 pm open time in youth room for homework and rest

4:45—5:30 pm Help with children's activities or church project

5:00-5:45 pm Youth choir

5:30 pm—Dinner

6:15-7:30 pm—Youth "Unplugged"

Youth choir—it's back!

Starts September 1st 5:00-5:45 pm

Meet in the choir room and come to dinner after.

Children

New Wednesday schedule starting this fall!

3:00-4:45 pm—Koinonia Corner (open time in the children's center beginning after school for homework, rest, and play)

4:45-5:30 pm—Worship Arts Workshops (exploring different creative outlets every few weeks)

5:30-6:00 pm—Family Dinner

6:00-6:45 pm—Children's Choir

6:45-7:30 pm—Flex Time (may include missions, discipleship, play, or whatever else the children may need that week)

See the church Highlites or children's ministry newsletter for more details!

Wednesday Night Church

One of the cornerstones of our weekly rhythms that we have most missed is Wednesday Night Church. While these gatherings will look different from years past (both due to Covid precautions and exciting new planned opportunities for children and youth), we look forward to restarting this midweek time of fellowship, mission, and ministry. *Because supper will be less centralized than normal, we will have an abbreviated time for announcements and our Deacon Report from 6:15-6:30pm.*

Wednesday Night Supper 5:30-6:30pm

We are excited to offer supper as part of our Wednesday night schedule. Providing our meals this fall will be Evette Goolsby of E. G. Catering. Evette will offer a monthly rotation of delicious meals. The cost will be \$6 per plate. To help streamline our logistics this fall, there will be no discount for child plates or families.

Reservations:

To help us know how much food to provide, we will also ask that meals be reserved. You can do this by following a link in the weekly email or calling the church office. You can also set up a recurring reservation. We encourage as many who can to pay through the church's online giving/payment portal.

Precautions:

In an effort to reduce possible exposure, all meals will be boxed, "take-out style," to allow folks to eat at different places around the building should they choose. Tables will be prepared in the fellowship hall, the annex to the fellowship hall, and just outside the fellowship hall on High Pl. We ask that only family groups eat together, and the exterior doors will be kept open as much as possible to improve ventilation. Meals may also be eaten elsewhere outside or around the building.

Adult Bible Study 6:30-7:15pm

Adult Bible Study, too, will resume September 1. We will once again meet in the fellowship hall, but will also offer a hybrid option on Zoom.



Women's Retreat

The Women's Retreat planning team has decided to cancel our plans to stay in St. Simons. We are saddened to go another year without a weekend away together at the beach, but we are excited about the plans we have made in its place.

We will "get away" for a day retreat at Lake Tobesofkee. For those who are interested, camping together the night before will be an option. Beginning at 9:00am, we will gather for a few Women's Retreat traditions. Sharon McWhorter will lead us as she shares her experience with contemplative prayer and guides us through the practice. We will share communion and lunch, with an open afternoon to spend as you'd like. Registration Information is in the Highlites.

When: Saturday, September 25th

With the option of camping Friday night

Where: Lake Tobesofkee at Claystone Park

Cost: \$20 + \$3 admission fee



Now. Here. This.
What We Didn't Read

I hope you have enjoyed this extended look at Paul's Letter to the Ephesians as much as I have. If conversations and exchanges I've had with many of you are any indication, this great "love letter to the church" has been just what we've needed over the past month as we continue to return from summer and from the ongoing pandemic.

Of course, it would be impossible to cover the entire text of Paul's letter in just five weeks of sermons. The passages I've chosen are representative of the letter as a whole, with one glaring omission that I think is important to point out.

While Ephesians contains some of the most beautiful and profound verses in all of Paul's letters, it also contains some of the most disappointing and dangerous.

Starting in chapter five, verse 21, and extending through chapter 6, verse 9 (just before where our passage starts today), Paul gives instructions on the "Christian household," which is modeled after similar Greco-Roman "household codes." In it, he lays out a hierarchical ideal for the family and the community, with married, property owning men at the top, and everyone falling in line beneath them.

"Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord," he begins, "For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Savior. Just as the church is subject to

Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands."

"Husbands," he continues, "love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word." He goes on to say that husbands should love their wives "as they do their own bodies," just as the church is the "body of Christ," very nearly suggesting that the wife's body belongs to the husband.

And this continues down the line. Children are to "obey their parents in the Lord," and slaves, in his ignominious climax, are to "obey their masters with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as you obey Christ." For their part, masters are encouraged to "stop threatening" their slaves (suggesting that they had a practice of doing so), for they all serve the same "master in heaven."

It would be hard to overstate the trauma these words of the apostle have caused through the generations, in the church and the world. They've given scriptural backing to systems of oppression to women and people of color, and spiritual cover for domestic violence and abuse. The self-giving, life-affirming love of Christ Paul describes throughout the rest of the letter is contorted to bless the domineering and violent power structures of the surrounding world.

So, to borrow from Paul elsewhere, "what, then, are we to say about these things?"

Well, for starters, we remember that not all scripture is gospel. There are simply some

passages that fall short of God's dream of restoration and wholeness for all people and all things. Put another way, there are some things that we could argue are "biblical" that simply are not "gospel," slavery perhaps being chief among them.

Second, we remember that Paul was human, and a product of his time. His role in growing the church and spreading the gospel is unmatched in Christian history. But not even he was able to completely escape the dominant worldviews of his time. In this way he is a perfect example of the great struggle of our conflicted humanity, that the same person who is able to write some of the most liberating words in all of scripture--

"There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus."

"So if anyone is in Christ there is a new creation,"

"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, nor angles, or rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the Love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord,"

--is capable, too, of telling slaves to obey their master as if he were Christ.

In fact, when we embrace the context in which Paul was writing, we're able to see

that while his message falls short of the gospel, in its time it was actually subversive in the way it held power to account! Roman culture would not have so limited the sovereignty of the husband over his wife or masters over their slaves.

And finally, for now, reading these texts is a helpful, if not painful reminder of the stakes of scriptural interpretation. In remembering the ways these texts have been, and continue to be used to oppress, harm, and abuse, we're offered an opportunity to confess the ways our tradition has failed the vulnerable among us, which itself is a critical spiritual discipline.

To take it a step closer, we're also given an opportunity to confront the ways we use scripture more broadly in our own lives. Are we using it to "build up love," as Paul puts it in Ephesians? Are we using it to find new and creative ways to give of what we have generously and seek the welfare of our city? Or are we using it to protect what is ours, confirm our assumptions, or bless our prejudices?

It's easier to take the path of least resistance and just skip these passages entirely. But there's so much to gain by taking the bumpier road of confronting them, seeking to understand them, acknowledging the pain they have caused, and committing to do better.

In fact, when we do this, we may find the gospel was there all along.

SHD

Signs of the Season

The paraments of the pulpit and the communion table are visible reminders of the current season of the church year. Ordinary Time begins after Pentecost and ends with Advent. During this season, we celebrate the "ordinary events" of our Christian lives. The liturgical color for this season is green, symbolizing life, freshness, and hope.



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Mrs. Harriet Eason
VICE CHAIR OF DEACONS

Rev. JD Granade
ASSOCIATE PASTOR FOR CHILDREN
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Mr. Joe Johnson
FINANCE & HR ADMINISTRATOR

Mr. Bradley Lott
FACILITIES MANAGER

Ms. Suzy McCullough
CHAIR OF CHURCH COUNCIL

Mrs. Connie Pursiful
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Dr. Stanley L. Roberts
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Rev. Kelsey Stillwell
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