

Last Sunday's Record - December 20 & 27

Offering: \$ 78,353.29

January 1, 2020

Requirements: \$1,360,261.00

Receipts: \$1,285,420.65

Lottie Moon Christmas Offering: \$41,526.62

Deacon of the Week

1/3 - Tommy Brewer

1/10 - George Hill

1/17 - Brad Henry

1/24 - Randy Chesney

1/31 - Ray Denton

Deacon's Breakfast

Sunday, January 24

8:00 a.m. Fellowship Hall

Sr. Adult Prayer Meeting and Luncheon

will resume on

Wednesday, January 20, 2021.

VOLUNTEER MINISTRY - January 3

Preschool Extended Session

Tyler and Amy Covington

LAUNCH

Jason and Caitlin Braud

Worship Welcome

Celeste Little Don and Donia Evans

Security Team 4

Van Goodman, Landry Adkins, Davis Miller,

Michael Thompson, Greg Monsour

Thank you to all the faithful givers of FBC!

As a reminder, you can mail your offering to

701 26th Avenue, Meridian, MS 39301,

*or give online through our **ShelbyNext** app*

*or through our website (**www.fbcmeridian.org**).*

WEEKLY CALENDAR

SUNDAY, January 3

10:30 - Morning Worship

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH FAMILY!

Please help us compile a directory of our church members! Simply take a picture of your family and email it to sherry@fbcmeridian.org (***.jpg. if possible**). Make sure that you include all your names and updated information (such as phone #s, addresses or email). *Watch for more details!*

Dr. Nathan VanHorn, Pastor

Rev. David Bishop, Associate Pastor for Music

Zach DePriest, Minister of Youth Caitlin Braud, Director of Children's Ministries

Dr. Raymon Leake, Pastor Emeritus

Rev. David McCubbin, Associate Pastor Emeritus

701 26th Avenue Meridian, MS 39301 601.484.4600 www.fbcmeridian.org

THE MESSENGER



FBCM

**First Baptist Church
Meridian**

January 3, 2021

Volume 93, Number 1

*Behold,
I make all
things new.*

Revelation 21:5

**May God bring you peace,
health and blessings in this**

NEW YEAR!

Do You See What I See?

One Pastor's Perspective

I keep coming back to the concept of perspective—not what we see, but how we see. Take the book of Job, for example. Righteous Job suffers incredible losses. People speculate about the reasons. Job repeatedly maintains his innocence, calling out to God for vindication and answers. Once God finally shows up (in a somewhat non-consoling manner, for the record), Job receives no real explanation for his suffering. And yet, Job responds, “I had heard reports about you, but now my eyes have seen you.” *Don't miss it.* Job is still on the ash heap suffering and mourning, his questions largely unanswered; but, whether or not it's enough *for us*, seeing God is enough for Job. Relational presence trumps propositional truth every time.

What does Job have to do with Christmas and New Year's Day? Quite a lot, actually.

Christmas is a visual season. Much of our traditional merriment is wrapped up in what we *see*. The decorations. The lights. The friends and family. The snow (well, not so much in MS, but I've heard rumors of snow elsewhere). The presents under the tree. The caravan of Magi following a star. The shepherds in the field seeing the heavenly host and the glory of the Lord. But all of the things we see at Christmas are meant to turn our attention to the greatest of all Christmas sights, the Lord of Glory who comes as a humble baby in a manger. The challenge of Christmas under normal circumstances is seeing the unadorned Christ child amidst all of our seasonal fanfare. This year, with so many of those things stripped away, perhaps we can lean in for a closer look.

Eight days after the birth of Christ—just one day more than the difference between Christmas and

New Year's Day—Jesus is taken to the Temple to be circumcised. Here, Luke introduces us to a righteous man named Simeon. Pay attention to the visual language. Luke tells us that he had been “**looking forward**” to Israel's consolation (*paraklesis*—“encouragement”). Luke adds, “It had been **revealed** to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not **see** death before he **saw** the Lord's Messiah” (Luke 2:26). When Simeon takes the baby Jesus in his arms, He rejoices: “Now, Master, you can dismiss your servant in peace, as you promised. For my **eyes** have **seen** your salvation” (Luke 2:29-30). He goes on to call Jesus “a **light** for **revelation** to the nations.”

Notice what Simeon did not see. The Romans were still in charge. Life expectancy was about thirty-five. Modern conveniences that we deem essential would have been regarded as ancient science fiction. The list goes on. But, however strangely, Simeon received overwhelming *paraklesis* from seeing Jesus—God's salvation, God's light. Like Job, the revelation he received surpassed the significance of whatever revelations were withheld.

In the grandest of ironies, I preached a sermon series at the outset of this year entitled “20/20 Vision.” Rather than seeing clearly, however, 2020 has been more like peering through a dense fog. I have wrestled with God in prayer and Bible study a good bit in recent weeks. “What do I speak from your Word to your people? How can I encourage the church as we navigate uncharted waters through which we cannot see in such divisive times?” Perhaps God's answer has been hiding in plain sight, staring at me through the Christmas story and inviting me to look back or lean in closer. ***Just show them Jesus. Do all that you can to make sure they see Jesus.***

Nathan VanHorn

Memorials...

Lottie Moon

In honor of: Mike and Janice Covert
Rose Ellen Reid Fonda Holladay
Lydia Sanders JoAnn Braddock
Blanche Harmon

2021 Deacon Candidates for Ordination

James May
Alan Lamar

Mark your calendars for
Sunday, January 17

Deacon Council-3:30 p.m.
Deacon Ordination - 5:00 p.m.

If you would like to place flowers in our sanctuary in memory or honor of someone or to commemorate a special occasion, the following dates are open:

February 14	June 13	July 18
February 28	June 20	August 8
May 2	June 27	September 5
May 30	July 4	November 28

Sympathies to...

John and Molly Ellis in the death
his mother, Louise Ellis.