

# First Baptist News

*FBC Lumberton is a community of faith committed to living out the love of Christ by serving God and all people.*



## *Coming up this week. . .*

### **Sunday, December 10**

- 9:30 a.m. Sunday School
- 10:30 a.m. Worship (Sanctuary)
- 10:30 a.m. Worship Online
- 4:00 p.m. Advent Book Study Group (Conf. Rm.)
- 5:00 p.m. Memorial Service (Chapel)

### **Monday, December 11**

- 10:30 a.m. Staff Meeting (Conf. Rm.)
- 5:00 p.m. Friends of Jesus Christmas Party (Fellowship Hall)
- 6:30 p.m. Scouts Meeting

### **Tuesday, December 12**

- 7:00 a.m. Men's Prayer Group (Zoom)
- 9:30 a.m. ECM PreK Polar Express Day (Fellowship Hall)

### **Wednesday, December 13**

#### **No Wednesday Night Service**

- 8:00 a.m. ECM Christmas Breakfast (Fellowship Hall)
- 5:00 p.m. Youth Progressive Dinner
- 7:00 p.m. Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal

### **Thursday, December 14**

- Snr. Ads. to Lu Mil
- 11:00 a.m. Fun & Fellowship (Fellowship Hall)

### **Saturday, December 16**

- 10:30 a.m. Community Café, hosted by Bridge Class (Act. Bld.)

## Preparing for Sunday, December 10, 2023 The Second Sunday of Advent

**“Kindling the Flame of Peace”**  
Isaiah 40:1-11 (NLT)

Join us for Worship in-person at 10:30 am  
in the Sanctuary  
or online on Facebook Live  
[facebook.com/firstbaptistlumbertonnc](https://facebook.com/firstbaptistlumbertonnc)  
or online on YouTube  
[youtube.com/c/lumbertonfbc/](https://youtube.com/c/lumbertonfbc/)

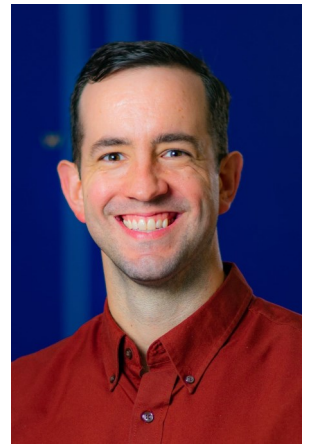
Join us Sunday evening at 5:00 pm in the  
Chapel for the Memorial Service. Please enter through  
the Chapel or the ECM Entrance.

This is a special service that is designed not only for  
those who have lost a loved one recently, but for anyone  
grieving a loss no matter how much time has passed. Dr.  
David Elks will be preaching.



## **A Note from the Pastor's Desk**

### ***December 2023***



I'll admit, I am one of those who look upon others who choose to play Christmas music or put up decorations before its time with a bit of Scrooge-like indignation. I am a staunch practitioner of the idea that I don't start engaging in Christmas activities until Thanksgiving has come and gone. I think part of it is out of spite (it's fun to be the antithesis to others sometimes no?), and part is because that is how my family always did it growing up. But as I have gotten older, a part of that has also been because I want to make sure I am giving each element of the year, each stage of life, and each celebration its due justice. Part of what makes Advent and Christmas so special is that it doesn't last all year long. There are the four Sundays before Christmas that comprise Advent (a word that means to "arrive" or "come") and there are the 12 days of Christmastide that begins with Christmas Day (Dec. 25th) and runs through Epiphany (Jan. 6). We have a set time in which we focus intentionally on this holiday season, and then we move on.

Now that is not to say that we can't carry the hope, peace, joy, and love of the season with us all year long. We certainly can desire to have the things of the season, to look back fondly on past celebrations as well as also look forward expectantly to another year of celebrating. I think this is one of the biggest lessons of the Advent and Christmas seasons. They teach us to be people who become good at waiting. The OT prophecies we hear during Advent reveal to us a people who were desperate for their situation in life to change. They were not just hopefully looking for the Messiah to show up, but in many ways, their lives desperately depended on his arrival. They saw no other way out of their circumstances, so they clung to the faithful hope that God would show up and change everything. And for us today, on this side of Jesus' ministry, death, and resurrection, we are now in our own situation of waiting and preparing. Waiting for God to fulfill all of the divine plans set in motion all those years ago, and hopefully preparing our hearts to greet the Lord whenever and however that day comes.

Let me stress that by preparing, I don't mean just making sure we "have ourselves right with the Lord" or "making sure we are saved", I mean that, plus more. The more being, are we preparing hearts to be more like Christ's heart? Are we conducting ourselves in such a way that when we see Jesus face to face for the first time, it is not hard to discern what he looks like because hopefully, we have seen glimpses of him all along in our living, and in the lives of others who call themselves Christians.

I am excited for yet another Advent and Christmas season to share with my family and friends, but even more than that, I am excited for the opportunity to once more be challenged by God. Challenged to wait with hope-filled expectation, challenged to wonder at the power of the incarnational peace and joy that comes through Christ, and to be inspired to live out the love of Christ in all the ways we can. I cannot think of a better way to live out the true meaning of this Advent and Christmas season!

In the Love of Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joshua Owens". The script is fluid and cursive.

Rev. Joshua K. Owens, *Senior Pastor*

# Advent at First Baptist

## Sunday, December 10 **Memorial Service**

Our annual Memorial Service will be held Sunday, December 10th at 5:00 pm in the Chapel. This is a special service that is designed not only for those who have lost a loved one recently, but for anyone grieving a loss no matter how much time has passed. Candles of Hope will be lit during the service and a crochet snowflake ornament will be available to those who have had a loved one pass away within the past year as a reminder of the blessings of God's presence and peace. Dr. David Elks will be preaching.

## Sunday, December 17 **Sanctuary Choir Cantata during 10:30 am Worship**

## Wednesday, December 20 **Spontaneous Nativity**

Our Spontaneous Nativity is a unique opportunity to hear the story of Christ's birth told in a unique way. It will be facilitated by children, and the best part is, no practice is required! All children are welcome to take part.

The program begins at 6, and any children who would like to participate are encouraged to arrive at 5:30. They will select their "parts" and will be guided by volunteers on how to prepare. The program will include the telling of the story, music, and an opportunity to hear the greatest story ever told.

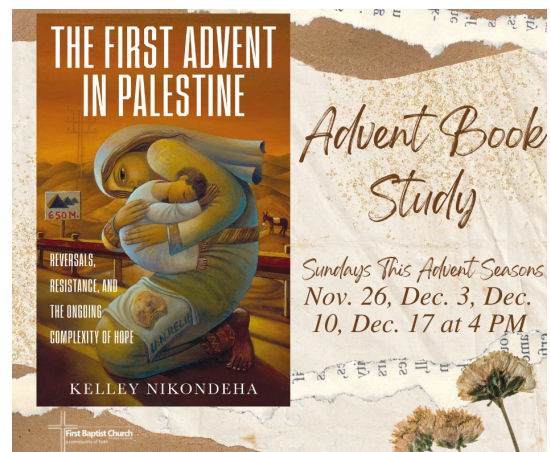
## Sunday, December 24 **Morning Worship & Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**

Worship with us at 10:30 am in the Sanctuary, on Facebook Live, or on YouTube. No Sunday School classes will meet. Our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will be held December 24 at 5:00 pm in the Sanctuary. During the Christmas Eve service, the Christ Candle will be lit, we'll sing carols, read the account of the birth of Jesus, and then share the light of Christ.



We will have an Advent Book Study Sundays at 4 pm in the conference room. We encourage you to purchase your copy of the book, "The First Advent in Palestine: Reversals, Resistance, and the Ongoing Complexity of Hope" by Kelly Nikondeha, in advance. It can be purchased on Amazon at

<https://a.co/d/2DeNgDa>.





## Ramblings From Our Associate Pastor

Since we are in the dizzyingly busy time of year between Thanksgiving and Christmas, it is a good time to take a breath, look around, and be thankful. It's my birthday week as well, so I'm in a bit of a reflective mood. Life, right now, is good.

I'm thankful for my beautiful, smart, hardworking wife who loves me regardless of my nonsense. I'm thankful for my super intelligent, creative, beautiful child who keeps life interesting and challenges me to see the world in unique ways. I'm thankful for a third woman in my life who is also beautiful but not that bright (my dog of course). I'm thankful that my father who taught me so much is still with us, even if I don't get to see him as often as I would like. I'm thankful for good friends, family, and dedicated friendly co-workers.

I'm thankful for our youth group and for all of the youth that came before them. They keep my brain young, even as the rest of me ages. I'm thankful for the people of this church, who truly do the heavy lifting through their giving of time and money to expand God's kingdom.

To state the obvious, I'm thankful for every teaching in words and action from the true Word of God, Jesus. There is plenty of uncertainty ahead for all of us in 2024. Be grateful for and hold tight to all you hold dear for there are no guarantees. Perhaps it is an overused expression, but the greatest present of the season is often the present itself.

Grace & Peace,

*Doug*

## Worship with Us

**606 N. Walnut Street**  
**[fbclumbertonnc.org](http://fbclumbertonnc.org)**

### Sundays

9:30 a.m.—Sunday School

10:30 a.m.—Worship

*In-person, Facebook Live, YouTube*

### Wednesdays

6:00 p.m.—Adult Bible Study,  
Children's Activities, Youth Doing Missions

*Adult Bible Study, Children's activities, and  
Youth Doing Missions will not meet  
December 13-27, 2023*

### Attention Youth:

Your Children Christmas Party gifts are due! If you have not finished your shopping, you will need to do so ASAP! If you are helping Saturday, please arrive by 9:30 am so we can set up and organize before families arrive. We hope to finish up around noon, then we need to put things away and clean up. Contact Doug for more info.



### **It's not too late to give to the Children's Christmas Party & Friends of Jesus Fund!**

#### **Children's Christmas Party**

**Date of Party: December 9th**

Beginning in October each year, we work with local schools to gather names of children in need. The Youth of First Baptist then invite these children to our annual Children's Christmas Party. The Youth and their families shop for necessities and a toy on the child's wish list, then send a ham home for the whole family. We hope to spend \$125.00 per child.

#### **FOJ Christmas Party**

**Date of Party: December 11th**

The Friends of Jesus Ministry is also accepting donations to buy gifts for their annual Christmas party.

***Please give early and generously to help make these ministry opportunities possible!***

### ***Coming Up:***

**Dec. 17** — Sanctuary Choir Cantata during 10:30 Worship

**Dec. 18** — Finance meeting at 5:45 pm in the Chapel. Deacons meeting at 7:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. New elected Deacons are invited to attend.

**Dec. 20** — Children's Spontaneous Nativity Program, 6 pm, Fellowship Hall. A reception for Helen Lawson's retirement will follow.

**Dec. 24** — No Sunday School. Worship will be held at 10:30 am in the Sanctuary.

**Dec. 24** — Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, 5 pm, Sanctuary

**Dec. 25** — Christmas Day!

**Dec. 25-27** — Offices & ECM closed

**Dec. 31** — No Sunday School. Worship will be held at 10:30 am in the Sanctuary.

**Jan. 1** — New Years Day! The offices & ECM will be closed.

**Jan. 2** — Baptist Women's Meeting, 11:45 am, Act. Bld.

**Jan. 8** — WMU Meeting, 11:45 am, Act. Bld.

**Jan. 11** — Fun & Fellowship, 11:00 am, Act. Bld.

**Jan. 12-16** — Youth Ski Trip

**Jan. 20** — Community Café (host needed)

### ***Give to First Baptist Church!***

***Contributions for 2023  
must be postmarked by  
December 31, 2023.***

Here are some ways to donate to our ministry:

- Give during Sunday worship.
- Give through our secure online portal at [fbclumbertonnc.org/give](https://fbclumbertonnc.org/give).
- Scan the QR code below.
- Send us your contribution by mail: 606 N. Walnut Street, Lumberton, NC 28358
- Text FBC606 to 73256 to give using your mobile device.



## **SING NOEL!**

A Carol Service  
by Hal H. Hopson



**Sunday, December 17, 2023  
presented by Sanctuary Choir**



## **CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE**

DECEMBER 24 AT 5 PM



### ***Servants this Sunday***

*Please enter for Worship at the Sanctuary.*

#### **9:30 Sunday School Entrance Greeters**

6th Street Ramp, 9:00—9:30 am (Handicap)

Barbara Andrews

ECM Entrance, 9:00 — 9:30 am (Handicap)

*Volunteer needed*

#### **10:30 Worship Entrance Greeters**

Sanctuary Vestibule 10:00—11:30 am

Ann and John Underwood

**Security Monitor** — Malcolm McLean

**Nursery** — Ashlynn Cox, Jenna Davis

**Extended Session** — Nancy Wagner

### **Person of the Week**

Send a card, letter, or other remembrance to our very special person this week.

*Thinking  
of you*

**Carolyn Sellars**  
516 1/2 E. 15th Street  
Lumberton, NC 28358

### **Contact Us...Our office hours vary!**

Kandace will be out of the office November 22-29. Her husband will have knee surgery on Nov. 27th and her kids are out of school for winter break. She will still be available by email (kandaceramsey@fbclumbertonnc.org). Please call the office to make sure someone is in the office before stopping by.

Office Phone: 910-739-4336

Website: [www.fbclumbertonnc.org](http://www.fbclumbertonnc.org)

General Email: [office@fbclumbertonnc.org](mailto:office@fbclumbertonnc.org)

Rev. Tim Little — Minister of Music and Facilities;  
[timlittle@fbclumbertonnc.org](mailto:timlittle@fbclumbertonnc.org)

Rev. Josh Owens — Senior Pastor;  
[jshowens@fbclumbertonnc.org](mailto:jshowens@fbclumbertonnc.org)

Mr. Len Power — Building Superintendent;  
[lenpower@fbclumbertonnc.org](mailto:lenpower@fbclumbertonnc.org)

Mrs. Kandace Ramsey — Administrative Assistant;  
[kandaceramsey@fbclumbertonnc.org](mailto:kandaceramsey@fbclumbertonnc.org)

Rev. Doug Reedy — Associate Pastor of Youth, Young Adults and Missions;  
[dougreedy@fbclumbertonnc.org](mailto:dougreedy@fbclumbertonnc.org)

### **Trinity Episcopal Church's Advent Noontime Concerts**

December 13 — Mark and Lynn Andersen  
Organ and Handbells

December 20 — Mary Carol Warwick  
Composer/Performer

Each concert begins at 12:00 noon and will be followed by a free luncheon in the Parish Hall.

### **Senior Adult Trip**

Dec. 14, 2023 \$10  
Bring \$ for Meal & Gift Shop



2023  
**FESTIVAL  
OF LIGHTS**

A few spaces for this trip remain!  
Contact Phyllis Gibson or the church office to sign up.



Altar  
Flowers  
*Reservations*

If you would like to place flowers in the Sanctuary in honor or in memory of a loved one, we currently have all Sundays available in rest of 2023 and for all of 2024. Call the church office to reserve a date. Once your date is reserved, we encourage you to contact your florist to arrange delivery of the flowers (most use Flowers by Billy—738-2279).