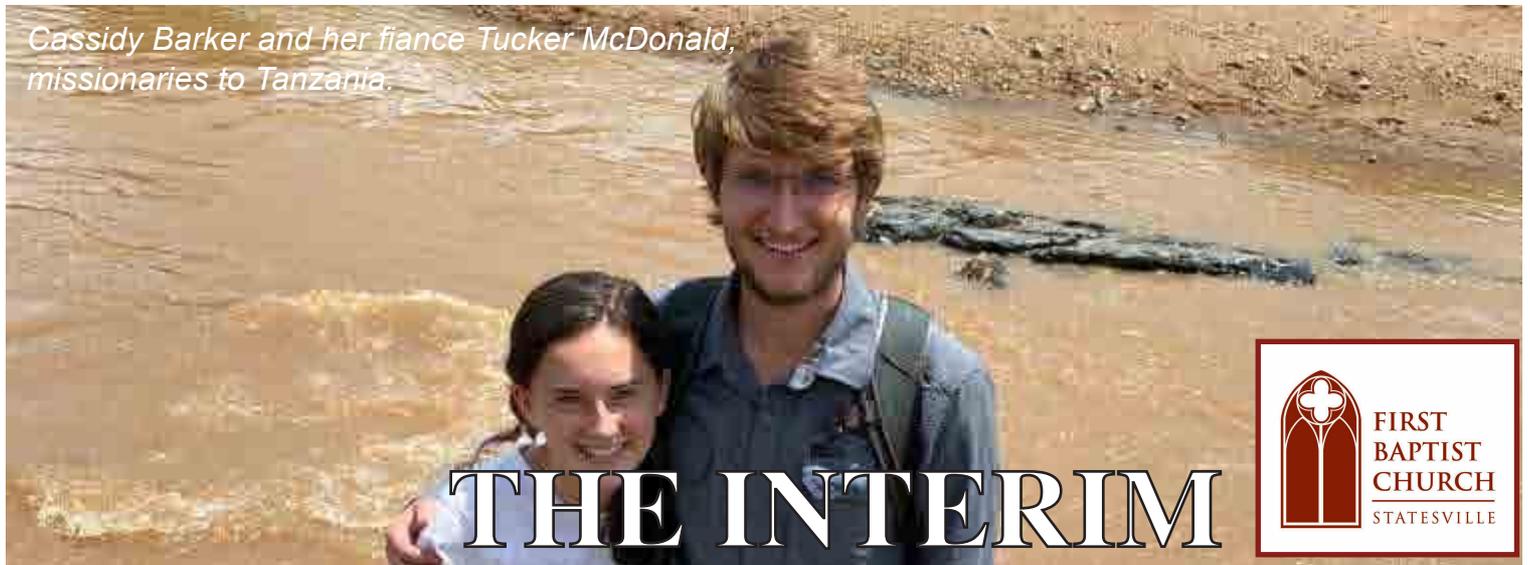


*Cassidy Barker and her fiance Tucker McDonald,
missionaries to Tanzania.*



Volume 79 Issue 25

December 4, 2022

From the Pastor...

Whoever made up the phrase, “slow as Christmas,” must have been a child. When we’re young, Christmas seems like it takes forever to get here. The closer it gets; the more time seems to slow down. Christmas Eve is especially long. As a child I’d lay in bed, just waiting and wishing for daylight to finally come.

For most adults, Christmas flies by fast. There is hardly enough time to decorate, cook, shop, wrap and entertain. The closer Christmas gets, the faster the time goes and the longer our lists seem to get. When Christmas Eve gets here, we fall into our beds exhausted. We wish the daylight might delay for just a while so we could get just a little more sleep.

Whether you’d rather Christmas speed up or slow down, I hope you will be present in each moment. This is a special time of year, and it deserves our attention. It is good to reflect on Christ’s birth and to enjoy friends and family. It is also good to remember that highs and lows are normal this time of year.

I often use a Wednesday evening to ask folks to share their favorite Christmas memories. I love hearing the stories of Christmases gone by. Every once and a while, however, someone will say, “This is my best Christmas and I’m making a memory right now!” I love that attitude.

One way to make Christmas better is to lower your expectations and raise your awareness. Expectations often lead to stress and create unrealistic ideas of what Christmas is really about. Awareness, however, opens us to God’s presence in and around us. It lets us see that there are many blessings right here and now.

I hope you will join us for our special Advent and Christmas programming. I encourage you to take Christmas as it comes – knowing that sorrow and joy are both a part of this season. Wherever you find yourself, remember that Christmas is about Emmanuel – God with us! Whether Christmas flies by or drags on, hold onto Christ.

Nolan



Schedule

Sunday, December 4

7:00 a.m. Sunday School Lesson

Uploaded to YouTube & Facebook

9:00 a.m. Sunday School

10:00 a.m. Worship - Sanctuary & Live Stream

Monday, December 5

8:30 a.m. Pickle Ball

Wednesday, December 7

8:30 a.m. Pickle Ball

Thursday, December 8

1:00 p.m. Clothes Closet

Saturday, December 10

8:30 a.m. White Christmas

Sunday, December 11

7:00 a.m. Sunday School Lesson

Uploaded to YouTube & Facebook

9:00 a.m. Sunday School

10:00 a.m. Worship - Sanctuary & Live Stream

Monday, December 12

8:30 a.m. Pickle Ball

Wednesday, December 14

8:30 a.m. Pickle Ball

2:30 p.m. Wonderful Wed. After School Program

5:15 p.m. Wednesday Evening Meal

6:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study

6:00 p.m. Music & Missions

7:00 p.m. Sanctuary Choir Practice

Thursday, December 15

1:00 p.m. Clothes Closet

Church Staff Directory

Dr. Nelson Granade.....Senior Minister
 Mr. James Martin.....Minister of Music & Worship
 Rev. Melissa Wilson.....Minister of Children & Youth
 Mrs. Elizabeth Kilby.....Minister of Young Families & Missions
 Mr. Eddie Wiseman.....Accompanist / Music Assistant

OFFICE HOURS: 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM Mon - Thur, 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM Fri
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A Message from Minister of Young Families & Missions Elizabeth Kilby

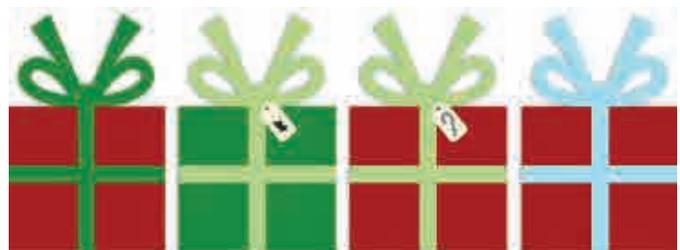
We are so excited about our White Christmas event which is just around the corner on Saturday, December 10, 8:30-11:00 a.m. If you would like to volunteer please come to the Family Life Center at 8:00 a.m. Volunteer parking is in the upper lot.

Thank you for those who have already shopped for our families, given donations and prayed for this ministry. This is such a joint effort to love our community. I am reminded so clearly that these are not just names on a paper but people that we are in community with on a daily basis!

Don't forget our advent videos. They are posted weekly on our website. Please make sure you are listening to the goodness our ministers have prepared for you.

Choosing to be merry all the holiday season for God is so good! Many thoughts and prayers!

Elizabeth



Spiritual Statistics

Weeks of November 20 & 27, 2022

	11/20	11/27
Live Stream Views.	11	30
In-Person.	120	105
Sunday School.	105	85

Financial Statistics

	November	Year-to-Date
Giving Goal	73,460.00	148,803.00
Budget Receipts	124,696.00	201,017.00
Goals Met	51,236.00	52,214.00
Alms	1,000.00	1,753.00
Designated	18,494.00	21,717.00

An Update from Cassidy Barker, Missionary to Tanzania

Greetings family, friends, and supporters from Tarime, Tanzania! The past two months have been quite hectic and full of work, but we are so thankful that the Lord has granted us the sufficient grace to continue our ministry here. We are now fairly well-established members of this community. Most of our neighbors know us by name, and we have started discipleship groups, which many of them attend weekly. We also travel frequently to the surrounding villages, where we visit people in their homes, pray for them and share the gospel with them.

The past couple of months have definitely been very busy. I have gotten to know many of my neighbors here in Tarime, and I visit their homes often. Many young women in the area have joined a discipleship group that I help to lead alongside my fellow Doto. Our hope is that this group will continue to grow and multiply into other groups. I have faced a couple of issues in trying to lead this group. The biggest issue is that several of these women attend a church where the pastor sells things like oil, water, and salt to make money. In the church services, many people are manipulated to buy these things and to give offerings that they can't afford. Those who attend churches like this often believe that the pastor has special access to God. Therefore, they listen to him in hopes that he will pray for them. The church's actions are clearly very corrupt, but we are slowly working to show these women that they have access to God through Christ. He is the only Mediator we need. Please pray that God will give me the words to say to help these women understand His desire for a deep, personal relationship with them. I have also had the joy of starting a children's group with Doto. Every Monday night we go to one of our neighbor's houses to teach, sing, and pray with the children in the area while the adults have a married couples discipleship group. The children love to participate, answer discussion questions, and ask some interesting questions of their own (like "what kind of shoes was Moses wearing when God told him to take them off?") Through this group, we hope to give children a solid foundation of their faith. Sadly, the mother of two children who attend group recently passed away. These two children have an older sister named Sophy who is 17 years old. About a year ago, Sophy had a stroke and was paralyzed. Over time, she has started to regain her mobility, but this recent tragedy will likely be exceptionally difficult for her given her circumstances. Sophy hopes to go back to school one day, but many people are pushing her to get married. Many fathers in Tanzania force their daughters to get married at an incredibly young age so that they can receive the bride price. We have come to visit her a couple of times since her mother's death to share God's Word with her and to pray for comfort during this tragedy, and pray she might have the opportunity to continue her education.

I have personally been doing very well, although I certainly do miss my family and friends back home. Recently, God has been teaching me that He truly is sufficient. At times, it can be easy to focus on my own ability to love and serve God. However, the truth is that God is the One who enables me to follow and obey Him. Each day by His grace, He gives me the strength to move forward and continue loving the people of Tarime. Although I have my struggles and weaknesses, there is nothing I lack that God's grace cannot give me.

In the coming weeks, we will continue to train people to lead new small groups and to evangelize to their friends and neighbors. We pray that God will continue to bless our efforts and open new doors for the Gospel. We are going to continue to do weekly travels to villages to do outreach and teach God's Word. This Sunday, we hope to rejoice with the Church community here as we welcome Tabitha into the community as a baptized and renewed believer in Christ! We pray that more witch doctors will be moved by God's Spirit as Tabitha's testimony spreads among them. We are unspeakably grateful for God's work here and can't wait to see what He plans for the ministry here in the coming months!





On Wednesday, November 30, we assembled bean soup kits for Iredell Christian Ministries and made yard signs to spread Christmas cheer.



Announcements

Christmas at FBC

White Christmas
Saturday, December 10
8:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m.

Youth Christmas Party
Sunday, December 11
5:00-7:00 p.m.

Sanctuary Choir Christmas Cantata
& Cookie Social
Sunday, December 18
6:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve Service
Saturday, December 24
4:00 p.m.

Christmas Morning Worship
Sunday, December 25
10:00 a.m.
(no Sunday school)

Church Office Closed
Monday, December 26
& Tuesday, December 27



Wednesday Evening Menus

December 7
Shepherds Pie

December 14
Tacos

No reservation is needed.