



Our Venture Students pose for a picture before leaving for Look Up Lodge Sunday, June 21.

THE INTERIM



Volume 72 Issue 14

July 5, 2015

The Treasure of Freedom

■ Roger Gilbert *Interim Pastor*



This week our nation will celebrate one of the extraordinary steps forward—the Declaration of Independence. Independence Day on July 4th is a happy day across the nation, associated with patriotic music, cook outs, fireworks, and delightful times with family and friends. In the midst of all the festivities, do we pause to reflect on the true treasure of freedom?

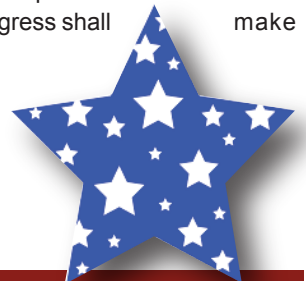
Freedom itself is rooted in the very nature of God. As the all-powerful creator of the universe, God could have made humans like robots who totally followed the intentions of the creator without giving rebellion a thought. I don't claim to understand all the ways of God, but I suspect that one of the reasons that we were made with the freedom to obey or disobey is that God wanted the human creation to be persons, not machines. Freedom is one of the marks of dignity.

History is a profound lesson in the danger of freedom. From almost the beginning, we humans have misused freedom, severely damaging ourselves and God's perfect creation. The consequences were and continue to be harsh. Let us never forget that genuine freedom carries with it an awesome responsibility. Let us also remember the teaching that was drilled into me when I was a child: "My freedom ends where your nose begins."

One dimension of freedom we cherish is religious freedom. Baptists have played a large part in the pursuit and preservation of freedom of religion. In the early 1600's, the state church was the norm in England and in numerous other countries. Here and there some people disagreed with the teachings and practices of the government funded and controlled church, but they were severely persecuted for their audacity. Thomas Helwys and John Smyth led a small group of followers to Amsterdam where they could with freedom follow the dictates of their faith and convictions. After a short time they returned to England and founded a church near London, a church that is recognized as the first Baptist church. Thomas Helwys wrote to King James I, declaring his conviction that the king does not have any authority over the relationship of a man with God. He declared that one's faith is "betwixt" a man and his God. The result was that Helwys spent the rest of his life in prison. Freedom is costly!

There were others, like the Puritans, who came to America to escape persecution and have the freedom of their conscience. Unfortunately, many of those who wanted freedom for themselves did not extend that same freedom to those who differed from them. It is at this point that Baptists made a huge contribution. Baptists dared to believe, teach and pursue freedom of religion for all, including those whose beliefs and practices differed from their own. They even said that since true faith is not something that can be dictated or coerced, one should be free to believe or not believe. One Baptist from Virginia, John Leland, drilled into his Virginian neighbor, James Madison, the importance of the constitution including a clear statement of religious freedom. The result was the First Amendment which states: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

There were strong objections to the first amendment. We can be very grateful that this revolutionary step forward was preserved. God help us to continue to respect and preserve this precious freedom. Let us also remember that to genuinely experience freedom, we must also respect and preserve the freedom of others. Even those whose beliefs and practices may be very different from our own.



Schedule

Sunday, July 5 ~ Judges 19-21

- 8:30 a.m. Early Worship - FLC
- 9:45 a.m. Sunday School for All Ages
- 10:55 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary
- 5:00 p.m. Venture Students

Monday, July 6 ~ Ruth 1-4

Church Office Closed

Tuesday, July 7 ~ 1 Samuel 1-3

- 6:00 p.m. Yoga - FLC
- 7:00 p.m. Men's Basketball - Gym

Wednesday, July 8 ~ 1 Samuel 4-8

- 5:30 p.m. Snacks - FLC
- 5:45 p.m. Leadership Training Course - Heritage Hall
- 6:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study - FLC
- 7:00 p.m. Sanctuary Choir Practice

Thursday, July 9 ~ 1 Samuel 9-12

- 8:00 p.m. Senior Basketball - Gym

Friday, July 10 ~ 1 Samuel 13-14

- 12:00 p.m. Line Dancers - Gym

Saturday, July 11 ~ 1 Samuel 15-17

Sunday, July 12 ~ Psalm 11, 1 Samuel 18-20, Psalm 59

- 8:30 a.m. Early Worship - FLC
- 9:45 a.m. Sunday School for All Ages
- 10:55 a.m. Worship in Sanctuary
- 5:00 p.m. Venture Students

Monday, July 13 ~ 1 Samuel 21-24

- 9:00 a.m. Prayer in Sanctuary
- 9:45 a.m. Applewhite Group
- 10:00 a.m. Sewing Group
- 12:00 p.m. Line Dancers - Gym

Tuesday, July 14 ~ Psalm 7, 27, 31, 34, 52

- 1:00 p.m. Red Cross Red Blood Drive - FLC
- 6:00 p.m. Yoga - FLC
- 7:00 p.m. Men's Basketball - Gym

Wednesday, July 15 ~ Psalm 56, 102, 140-142

- 5:30 p.m. Snacks - FLC
- 5:45 p.m. Leadership Training Course - Heritage Hall
- 6:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study - FLC
- 7:00 p.m. Sanctuary Choir Practice

Thursday, July 16 ~ 1 Samuel 25-27

- 8:00 p.m. Senior Basketball - Gym

Friday, July 17 ~ Psalm 17, 35, 54, 63

- 12:00 p.m. Line Dancers - Gym

Saturday, July 18 ~ Psalm 18 & 1 Samuel 28-31

Spiritual Statistics

Weeks of June 21 & 28, 2015

	6/21	6/28
Church in Bible Study	101	114
Church in Worship	191	206
8:30 a.m. service	57	74
10:55 a.m. service	134	132

Financial Statistics

Week of June 21 & 28, 2015

	6/21	6/28
Budget - Received	\$5,633.00	\$12,556.00
Alms	0.00	100.00
Designated - Received	460.00	295.00
Building Reserve - Received	25.00	50.00
TOTAL GIVING WEEK OF 6/21/15		6,118.00
TOTAL GIVING WEEK OF 6/28/15		13,001.00
Budget for 2014-2015		865,070.00
Budget Received-Year to Date		628,284.26
Remaining in Budget - Unfunded		236,785.74
Designated Funds Received-Year to Date		69,312.39
Alms Received-Year to Date		5,431.41
Building Reserve-Year to Date		8,922.00
Total Giving-Year to Date		712,050.06

Children & Student Ministries

VBS Work Day - Every Tuesday

If you (or your teen) want to help out with making decorations for VBS, just come to the church any Tuesday between now and the end of July. We will be working on VBS stuff all day!

VBS Registration

It is now time to register for VBS. I can't tell you how helpful it is to go ahead and register early! Be sure to share the post from the church's Facebook page to help spread the word. We would love for your children to invite their friends, this is an easy way to teach them about sharing the Gospel!

Venture Students

Venture Students will meet every Sunday night this summer from 5:00-7:00 p.m. Come out and enjoy some time of fun and fellowship. Senior High girls are meeting at Starbucks on Wednesday evening from 6:00 -7:00 p.m.

We are glad to have everyone back from Look Up Lodge! Be sure to register to help with VBS!

Church Staff Directory

Dr. Roger Gilbert.....	Interim Pastor
Mr. James Martin.....	Minister of Music & Worship
Ms. Melissa Wilson.....	Minister of Children & Families
Mr. Eddie Wiseman.....	Accompanist / Music Assistant

OFFICE HOURS: 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM Mon - Thur Tel: 704-873-7231

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A Message From Melissa Wilson

It is almost my favorite time of year again - Vacation Bible School!

"Hometown Nazareth – Where Jesus Was a Kid" will be our theme for this year's VBS Week, July 27-31. Children ages three (by August 31, 2014) through Grade 5 are invited to be a part of this great week.

Summer is a time when most people slow down and take vacations, but for children's ministry, it is when we shift into gear. Vacation Bible School is something that we plan for the whole year. In the fall, we select our curriculum and start browsing through Pinterest, dreaming of how we will decorate the church. In December, our starter kit arrives and we can start really making plans. In January, we sketch out our plan for decorating the church and decide what decorations we will order and what we can make.

In February, we start having craft days where we create the decorations and props that will be used the week of VBS. In March and April, we start ordering curriculum and supplies. By the time May comes around, we are in full blown VBS mode! We are thinking of who might serve as group leaders, making decorations, building sets, ordering supplies, and making multiple lists that continue to grow.

In June, we start registration and try to pull all the details into place. Once July arrives, it is time to train volunteers, finish decorating and enjoy VBS. With August comes clean-up, notes about what we can improve for the following year, and a deep sigh of relief for a wonderful week.

Vacation Bible School is a lot of work! I am so thankful for the people who partner with me to make this possible. Several of you have come to craft days and helped make papier maché pottery, cut out leaves for palm trees, or even help construct the main set. Some of you have been creating decorations at home, and I can't wait to see what you have created! Many of you have loaned or donated items that we can use as props, and it will make a huge difference in the overall look of Vacation Bible School.

I hope that you have been praying for our VBS and the children who will attend. All of this is an important part of Vacation Bible School. We need each prayer lifted up, item donated, and hour spent to make this a wonderful week for the children of our community. We could not transform this church into a Bible times village without your help!

At times it may seem like we go over the top with decorations, or that we put a lot of time and energy into just one week, and we do. We put in this time and energy because this one week may be what God uses to help a child place his or her faith in God. Vacation Bible School is a tool that God uses to share the good news of Jesus with children that we don't see every Sunday. And if only one child accepts the gift of salvation, or grows closer in their walk with Christ, it makes it all worthwhile!

I am thankful for the many ways the people of First Baptist Church have supported Vacation Bible School and I look forward to what God is going to accomplish this year. In order for Vacation Bible School to be a blessing to our community, I need your help. I still need people to serve the week of Vacation Bible School. I need group leaders who talk with the school children and walk them from station to station. They will have a little bit of group time each day, but the main teaching happens at one of the stations. I need group leaders who work with the preschool children, teaching them a Bible story, doing simple activities and taking them to their stations. I need helpers for each of these groups who partner with the leaders to keep the children safe while we are having fun.

I also need people who can help at dismissal or greet children as they arrive. There are many ways in which you can be of assistance during Vacation Bible School. Our Venture students are welcome to sign up as volunteers, but I need adults also! If you would like to be a group leader or assistant, you can sign up for that by following the link for VBS registration on our website, www.statesvillefbc.org. If you would like to volunteer, but are not sure about what job would be the best for you, I would love to talk with you!

We will have several training sessions for group leaders and assistants. Each leader or assistant needs to attend only one training session. Training sessions will be held on Wednesday, July 15 at 6:00 p.m.; Wednesday, July 22 at 6:00 p.m.; and Sunday, July 19 at 8:00 a.m. and noon.

I look forward to seeing what God will accomplish this year through Vacation Bible School!

Prayer Point: Hurry Up & Wait

How many of you enjoy waiting? Neither do I. I stand in front of the microwave and holler, "Hurry up!" We have been conditioned by our culture to expect what we want, when we want it. We don't have time to wait—we need it now! We don't even want to wait on God. When we pray, we expect Him to answer right away. After all, doesn't He know what we need before we ask? He should have the answer wrapped up and ready. To put it plainly: doesn't God realize that First Baptist Church needs a pastor—and we need one NOW? Why is He letting us wait? I don't know that anyone has the full answer to that question, least of all, me. But, as we read His Word, we see over and over that God has encouraged His children to WAIT:

Psalms 27:14, "WAIT for the Lord; be strong and take heart and WAIT for the Lord."

Psalms 37:7a,b "Be still before the Lord and WAIT PATIENTLY for Him; do not fret" (complain, ask Him to hurry up, or lose confidence in the search team).

Isaiah 49:23c "Then you will know that I am the Lord; those who hope in (WAIT for) Me will not be disappointed."

Jesus taught that we ought always to pray and never lose heart. (Luke 18:1). Let us follow the lead of Habakkuk, the prophet, who waited on God's revelation for Israel: "I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts; I will look to see what (God) will say to me, and what answer I am to give to this complaint." (Hab. 2:1)

Finally, always keep in mind Romans 8:28: "And we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose." (First Baptist Church, that's us!) Does God know exactly what we need? Does He always have the best in mind for us? Has He promised to supply our need according to His riches in Christ? If you can answer "Yes" to these questions you will be kept in perfect peace as we WAIT on His pastor. Remember, God is never late, but He's never early.

His servant and your friend,
Ginny Stikeleather



Message by: Dr. Roger Gilbert

Worship with us Sundays 8:30 a.m. or 10:55 a.m.

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Announcements

Christian Sympathy

...is extended to Andy Gabriel and the friends and family of Elsie Gabriel in her death on June 19, 2015.

Christian Sympathy

...is extended to the family and friends of Harry Wells in his death on June 26, 2015.

Eye Glasses Needed!

Our Belize Team is in need of eye glasses. These eye glasses can be new, used, prescription, or readers. Your donations will benefit the people of Cristo Rey, Belize. You may bring your donations to the church office Sunday mornings or Monday - Thursday, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. or Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Leadership Training Course Begins Wednesday, July 1 ~ 5:45 - 7:00 p.m. Heritage Hall

This class acclimates those who may be called to serve as Deacons at FBC with our teachings & expectations. Please sign up at the Welcome Center or call Kayley at 704-873-7231, ext. 201.

Applewhite Group Monday, July 13, 2015 9:45 - 11:00 a.m.

The Applewhite Group is planning a second time to go and lead a sing-a-long for the people at Statesville Place. We welcome anyone who would like to come sing with us. Meet at the church at 9:45 a.m. or meet us at Statesville Place at 10:00 a.m.

Precepts Bible Study Begins Tuesday, August 18 & Wednesday, August 19

It's time to "gear up" for Precept Bible Study once again. Led by Ginny Stikeleather and Caroline Bentley, Precept teaches you to study the Bible for yourself by learning how to dig out the deep truths contained in a verse, a passage, or an entire book. Last season we had 40 people enrolled; this fall we would like to double that number. We will be doing a pilot study of the book of Titus beginning Tuesday, August 18 and Wednesday, August 19 (Tuesday night and Wednesday morning--same class): "Titus: Developing Character And Integrity In The Midst Of A Society Which Has Lost Respect For God". This study contains three lessons, and will take only three weeks, ending on September 1st and 2nd.

Be sure to sign up in the Welcome Center as soon as possible so we can get the workbooks ordered. We look forward to a great time of studying God's Word together!

Worship Greeters Sunday, July 5

Chris Simon Jeff Templeton David Lewis
Chuck Heckel Jason Allen

Sunday, July 12

Eddy Sipe John Garland Shannon Ashley
Pat Rushton Nancy Garland

Acolytes Sunday, July 5

Emily Ashley & Mallory Reid

Sunday, July 12

William Simon & Georgiana Simon

Coffee Rotation Sunday, July 5

Emanons Class

Sunday, July 12

Melissa Wilson

New Arrival!

Congratulations to Amber and David Keller on the birth of a daughter, Amelia Grace, on June 19, 2015.

Jubilee Sunday Sunday, July 19, 2015

We will honor our members that have been members of FBC for 50 years or more and those members that are 90 and over. We will have a luncheon following the 11:00 worship service in the Family Life Center. We ask the congregation to please bring homemade desserts.

Red Cross Blood Drive Tuesday, July 14, 2015 1:00 - 5:30 p.m.

Family Life Center

To make an appointment, please go online to redcross-blood.org and enter keyword IMH.