

Teresa Martin and Denali hand out treats at the Trunk or Treat.



THE INTERIM



Volume 79 Issue 24

November 20, 2022

Counting Our Blessing at Thanksgiving By Nell Green, www.cbfblog.org

I Chronicles in the Old Testament offers this little tidbit about a man named Jabez. “Jabez was honored more than his brothers; and his mother named him Jabez, saying, “Because I bore him pain.” Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, “Oh that you would bless me and enlarge my border and that your hand might be with me, and that you would keep me from hurt and harm!” And God granted what he asked.”

Some years ago while serving overseas in Europe I began hearing about how this little story was impacting Christians stateside. I returned home for a short while and found in Christian bookstores, Prayer of Jabez devotionals, Prayer of Jabez coffee mugs, Prayer of Jabez wall plaques....you name it. Who among us does not want God to grant us honor, enlarge our holdings whether land or money, to keep us from all hurt and harm and for it to be obvious to those around us that God has favored us with divine presence and help? Here is the conundrum however: What about those who are not blessed with these things? Did God not desire these things for them? Did they not pray the right prayer so that God would hear and answer and grant what they asked as he did for Jabez? What about those who through no fault of their own have experienced harm and hurt....dare I say extreme harm and hurt? What of those who through no fault of their own not only do not have expanded territory but have no territory or what they had has been taken from them? What about those who think only of survival and wonder where God is and why God’s hand has not been with them? I have lived in and worked with people in some of the poorest areas of Africa. I have engaged with countless refugees and immigrants on their journeys to hopefully better places. I have listened to the harrowing stories of victims of human trafficking. What I learned from them is that blessing is not necessarily something we can lay our hands on. And while we surely offer expressions of gratitude for tangible things, it is the intangible that brings deeper joy, an unfathomable peace, and a more profound gratitude.

Christian theologian and minister, Charles Spurgeon in his sermon on the prayer of Jabez notes that many things we offer thanks for are transient blessings. In fact he calls them “inferior blessings.” For Spurgeon, wealth is a blessing but often at the expense of an indebtedness to God for his grace, for his love, and for contentment no matter what our financial circumstances. Earthly honor and fame is also transient. We all have sought at some point notoriety and we all enjoy experiencing places of honor. However, it is much better to be known and loved by God rather than humans. Of course we all

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Schedule

Sunday, November 20

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, November 21

8:30 a.m. Pickle Ball

Wednesday, November 23

8:30 a.m. Pickle Ball

Thursday, November 24

Happy Thanksgiving!
 Church Office Closed

Friday, November 25

Church Office Closed

Sunday, November 27

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

4:00 p.m. Amahl and the Night Visitors

Monday, November 28

8:30 a.m. Pickle Ball

Wednesday, November 30

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 1

1:00 p.m. Clothes Closet

Friday, December 2

6:00 p.m. Parents Night Out

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
 Tel: 704-873-7231

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A Message from Minister of Young Families & Missions Elizabeth Kilby

We had a wonderful Christmas Craft Day. Thank you for all who came out to this great event.

We are excited about passing out our White Christmas families this week. These gifts will be due back to the church on Sunday, December 4. We still would love you to volunteer on the day of White Christmas, Saturday, December 10, 8:30-11:00 a.m. Please let me know if you are able to attend. It is a great time together and to be with the community. Please continue to be in prayer for this event. If you feel led to contribute financially, please make contributions out to FBC and mark it White Christmas!

Thank you for all you do.
 Tis the season of love, joy, and hope.

Elizabeth



Spiritual Statistics

Weeks of November 6 & 13, 2022

	11/6	11/13
Live Stream Views.....	33	13
In-Person.....	136	121
Sunday School.....	111	85

Financial Statistics

	November	Year-to-Date
Giving Goal	73,460.00	148,803.00
Budget Receipts	41,534.00	117,855.00
Goals Met	(31,926.00)	(30,948.00)
Alms	1,000.00	1,753.00
Designated	6,359.00	9,582.00

Counting Our Blessings at Thanksgiving

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want for ourselves and our loved ones the blessing of health. Yet, a healthy soul is an eternal blessing. And during this time of Thanksgiving, one of the most frequently voiced expressions of gratitude will be for home and family. Yet brotherhood and sisterhood go far beyond those who share our DNA or shared our growing up years. Experiencing kinship to those who are in the midst of adversity, loneliness, hardship is a greater blessing. Experiencing the comfort and presence of God, our loving heavenly parent, is warmer than any fire burning in a hearth on Thanksgiving Day. When we are feeling grateful for how good our lives are and somehow sense that this sets us apart from those who are laid low, that is an imaginary blessing. Because in fact to be laid low and experience the valley, is to know what it means to cry out to God and realize that it is from God our salvation comes.

Gathered at our table this year will be one of our own children, and a few adopted children; those of us experiencing excellent health and some facing serious illness and surgery; some of us Christian, some of us Muslim and some of us not followers of any particular faith; Some of us fairly well off and some us living well below the poverty line; some of us enjoying safety and security, some of us in fear of being harmed again; some us with blood relatives living all around us, some of us with no family here at all. We will go around the table before we eat and each one offer up something for which we are grateful for this year. The purpose of this message was more for me than any of you who might be reading this. Because when it comes my turn I want to remember my transient blessings, but this year I do not want to forget to offer expressions of gratitude for the eternal blessings God has granted me.

In 1897 Johnson Oatman Jr wrote a hymn that will be sung in many churches during this Thanksgiving season. "Count Your Blessings" focuses on the eternal gifts of God rather than the transient.

I have adapted Oatman's verse into a prayer. Will you read and pray with me as we count our blessings?

When upon life's billows we are tempest-tossed,
When we are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Help us count our many blessings, name them one by one,
And we will be surprised at what You have done.

For those of us burdened with a load of care,
And the cross seems heavy we are called to bear;
Help us count our many blessings, every doubt will fly,
And we will keep singing as the days go by.

When we look at others with their lands and gold,
Let us remember Christ has promised His wealth untold;
Help us Count our many blessings—money cannot buy
Our reward in heaven, nor our home on high.

So, amid the conflict whether great or small,
Help us not be discouraged, You are over all;
Help us count our many blessings, angels will attend,
Help and comfort give us to our journey's end.

Help us count our blessings, name them one by one,
Help us count our blessings, see what God has done!
Help us count our blessings, name them one by one,
Help us count our many blessings, and see what You have done.

Amen!





Announcements

Happy Birthday

December 1

Tommy Alexander
Jean Crowder

December 3

Eleanor Deal
David Falter

December 4

Betty Colvert
Brenda Falter

December 5

Caylyn Sykes

December 7

Reg Brown
Thomas Tillery

December 9

Jennie Church
Maggie Church
Noah Eckliff
Mike Parker

December 10

Tonya Pardue

December 12

Katie Welborn

December 13

Sharron Parish

December 15

Jan Cashion
Ray Hunt

December 17

Melinda Induni
Jeri Koontz
Donna Workman

December 19

Katie Allen
William Barnard
Tim Tompkins

December 20

Pat Sain
Alexis Williams

December 23

Mary Jo Anderson

December 25

Bob Cashion
Gail Taylor

December 26

Eleanor Price

December 28

Kelli Palmer

December 29

Jake Buckner
Jane Wiseman

December 30

Mike Minnix

December 31

Gregg Whitson

Amahl and the Night Visitors

Sunday, November 27, 2022

4:00 p.m. - Sanctuary

On Sunday, November 27, the vocal students of Melody Beaty will present Amahl and the Night Visitors, by Gian Carlo Menotti. The performance will highlight the vocal talent of several area children and youth. Starring as Amahl is our own James Johnson. James has been studying with Melody for 3 years.

This is a beautiful Christmas opera about the journey of the three kings led by a star in search of the Christ child. Amahl brings the Christmas spirit to life as we witness what it truly means to give a selfless gift, his crutch which he needs to walk. Join us as we discover the importance of giving with a grateful servant's heart.

There is no charge to attend but cash donations would be greatly appreciated to help with expenses.

**A Note of Appreciation from
Meridzo Ministries**

Thank you for your very generous gift to help the many who have been devastated from the flooding. Your gift helps us minister to many families - from clean outs, supplies, meals, and beginning rebuilds. More important opportunities to love, encourage, pray with, and share Jesus. Thank you for being a part of loving people and sharing Jesus.

Blessings,
Meridzo Ministries

Parents Night Out

Friday, December 2, 2022 - 6:00 - 9:00 a.m.

Children (birth-Grade 5) are invited to an evening of fun with Melissa and Kristina. Children will enjoy dinner, crafts, movie, and recreation while parents enjoy an evening out. Cost is \$5.00/child.