

the Vision

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF SHALLOTTE | JANUARY 2025

Happy New Year

Is Now the Time to Build a Bridge

Think briefly about everything we have been through the past several years. A pandemic, political wrangling, cultural battles, and many other diversions. Pastor Shane Pruitt, as part of the Who's Your One campaign, notes all of these distractions have taken away from focusing on sharing the Good News with our lost friends, neighbors, and family members. He notes that with much of that behind us, now is the time to refocus and renew our mission to GO and proclaim Jesus to the lost.

Living here in Brunswick County means we do not need to Go far to find the lost. Last year you listened when Pastor Bob proclaimed we need to expect the crowd and be ready to serve the crowd. Thousands of new neighbors are surrounding us, and many more will soon be arriving.

So it's easy, right? All we have to do is GO and meet our new neighbors, and instantly tell them about Jesus. But just how comfortable are we doing that simple task? I mean do we feel at ease, or on edge? It is as simple as starting a conversation, yet we may still feel ill-prepared to tell others about their path to a heavenly home. Are we going to build a bridge to Jesus, or will we blow it and burn a bridge?

Rest easy help is on the way.

On January 25th, a team from the Baptist Convention of North Carolina is coming to First Baptist Church of Shallotte to teach us how to have impactful discussions and provide conversation tools to help us feel comfortable telling others about our Savior Jesus Christ. You are invited to join us and brothers and sisters from churches in Brunswick, New Hanover, and Columbus Counties for that training session.

Now your first assignment is to go to the church website to register. A light breakfast will be served at 8:30 a.m., lunch will be provided during a question and answer session as we conclude the training event. In addition, child care will be provided for children up to three years of age.

If you have questions or thoughts you want to present, please reach out to Don Evans, Rob Michel, Judy Michel, Tom Powell, Carol Powell, Bill Suttles, Larry Thompson, Brad Way, or Kelly Way; all members of your Community Connections Team.

See You January 25th

Don Evans

Church Events

- **Jan 1st — Office Closed**
- **Jan 5th 6p— The Forge Family Movie Night**
- **Jan 8th 6:15p— New Disciplelife Series Starts**
- **Jan 11th 8-10a— Cars & Coffee**
- **Jan 12th @ 6p—Quarterly Ministry Meeting**
- **Jan 13th 6:30-8:30p— Ladies' Ministry Meeting**
Dinner Provided
- **Jan 20th 6:30-8:30p— Men's Ministry Meeting**
Dinner Provided; Speaker Charles White
- **Jan 25th 9a-12p— Gospel Conversations Training**
ncbaptist.org/gospelconversations

Relieving Stress and Anxiety in 2025

2024 is behind us.

We sweated through a contentious election, continuing wars and escalations of world conflicts, and rising inflation. Drones trolled New Jersey, Hurricane Helene devastated Western North Carolina, and Venezuelan gangs brazenly infiltrated our cities.

And that's just a few things that gave us stress in 2024.

And maybe personally you suffered loss, struggled financially, or wrestled with illness. If 2024 made you feel more anxious than usual, you're not alone.

Rising anxiety

Psychiatry.org reported that U.S. adults were feeling increasingly anxious in 2024. Up to May, 43% of adults said they felt more anxious than they did the previous year, up from 37% in 2023 and 32% in 2022.

"Living in a world of constant news of global and local turmoil, some anxiety is natural and expected," said APA President Petros Levounis. "But what stands out here is that Americans are reporting more anxious feelings than in past years."

Why is that? One reason is overexposure. The fact is bad things are always happening in the world. But now, with social media and round-the-clock news cycles, we are constantly inundated with negative news. And the more we feel that situations are out of control, the more we are anxious and stressed out.

God knows how you feel

The good news is, God knows exactly how you feel.

The Bible confronts our anxiety, worry, and stress head-on. Much of our anxiety and stress, the Bible says, can be relieved with a right perspective. More faith and less fear is the key.

For instance, Jesus taught that remembering God's sovereignty alleviates our worry. He acknowledged that we worry about material things, like clothes and food, so He said, "Don't worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Isn't life more than food and the body more than clothing?" (Matt. 6:25).

The phrase "don't worry" is more literally, "stop worrying!" Jesus knows you and I tend to worry, and He commands us stop it and trust God instead.

Faith is the great stress-reliever, so cultivating your faith is the best way to combat stress and anxiety in 2025 (Prov. 3:5-6).

How do we do that?

Faith instead of stress

The Apostle Paul gives us pointers. At the conclusion of his letter to the Philippians, Paul offers some very practical advice for relieving our anxiety and stress, especially when it comes to things that we cannot control.

- **Foster fellowship (Phil. 4:2-3)**

Paul reminded two ladies in the church in Philippi to "agree in the Lord." Apparently, they were bickering, giving each other and their congregation stress. Paul

addressed this head-on with a simple reminder: Agree to agree on what matters most, and what you disagree about will recede into insignificance.

Broken relationships can contribute to the stress caused by external problems. Our anxiety levels increase when our relationships are strained. But Christian relationships should be different due to one key factor. What we agree on matters more than anything we disagree about. We are followers of Christ, and our mutual fellowship in the Lord matters more than our personal disagreements.

- **Cultivate joy (Phil 4:4-5)**

Joy is not a feeling. It's an attitude, and we can choose joy rather than anxiety.

We experience Christian joy when we choose to "rejoice in the Lord always" rather than focus on the circumstances. That is, we choose to cultivate joy by focusing on who God is, His presence in our lives, and actively put our faith in Him.

How do we cultivate joy? Paul answers that next.

- **Practice prayer (Phil. 4:6-7)**

Paul commands "don't worry about anything." More literally, "be anxious about nothing." But instead, he says, offset your anxiety with prayer. "Pray about everything."

Prayer is not just asking God for stuff. Prayer is talking to your Creator about your problems, stress, and anxiety. It's aligning your thoughts with His and your purpose with His. It's staying in touch with the One who can handle all of your problems. And it fortifies your faith, because prayer is always an act of faith. Prayer sustains your perspective and honors God's role in your life.

It's hard to be anxious about circumstances and simultaneously give them to the Father (1 Peter 5:7).

But notice, this is a practice, an ongoing decision we make every time we feel anxious or stressed. We take it to God in prayer. The greater the stress, the more the prayer.

And then God replaces our anxiety with His inexplicable peace (4:7).

- **Think intentionally (Phil. 4:8-9)**

How we think and what we believe always dictates how we behave. That's why the Bible continually reminds us to be intentional about our thoughts and where we focus our minds (Rom. 12:1-2, Col. 3:2).

And dwelling on negative things—like the disasters in the world, or inflation, or war, or the ways people mistreat you, or the uncertainties of tomorrow—produces anxiety and stress. Such faulty thinking also shows a lack of faith in God.

continued on next page...



DEACON OF THE WEEK

JACE MYERS

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Jan 5th-11th



MARK VARNUM

(910) 842-3076

[markmonicaandgirls\[at\]mc.net](mailto:markmonicaandgirls[at]mc.net)

Jan 12th-18th



JEFF HOPKINS

(828) 964-3904

mrhopj88@gmail.com

Jan 19th-25th



DREW SELLERS

(910) 619-1819

ndsellers@gmail.com

Jan 26th-Feb 1st



NEW TO THE FAMILY



DOUGLAS & ERIN ANDERSON

Joined November 10th

...continued

Relieving Stress and Anxiety in 2025

So the Bible reminds us to intentionally cultivate thoughts that strengthen faith and defeat worry (Matt. 6:33-34). If you are letting worldly thoughts or rampant negativity fester in your mind, intentionally exchange those thoughts with faith and with God's Word. Get into His Word and remind yourself that, no matter what happens, He is in charge.

Then, Paul teaches, you will experience the peace of God's presence as you set your mind on Him (Phil. 4:9).

- **Choose contentment (Phil. 4:11)**

Last, Paul simply says to choose to be content. Like joy, being content is not a feeling. It's a choice.

Paul says it took him a while, but he "learned to be content" no matter the circumstances. Why? How could he do that? And how can we do it when our world simmers constantly with discontent, strife, and anxiety?

He did that by fostering fellowship with other believers, by cultivating joy despite the

circumstances, by practicing prayer at all times, and by controlling his thoughts so that he focused on trusting God no matter what.

As you go into 2025, and when anxiety threatens to hamper your faith and steal your joy, remember these things.

"Stop worrying" and trust God instead. You will never be able to control all of your circumstances, but you can always choose how you respond.

In His Grace,
Pastor Bob

GOSPEL CONVERSATIONS TRAINING
PRAYERFUL, RELATIONAL, INTENTIONAL

SATURDAY, JANUARY 25TH | 9AM - 12PM

NCBAPTIST.ORG/GOSPELCONVERSATIONS

The banner features a dark brown background with white and teal text. On the right, there are two overlapping speech bubble icons. Below the text, there is a photograph of a person's hands holding an open Bible and a glass of water. A small logo is visible in the bottom left corner of the banner area.

Go Team Ministry Needs You

The Go Team is looking for anyone who would like to help in this ministry. Go Team prays for our members and sends out birthday cards to members over the age of 80, anniversary cards to married couples who have been married over 50 years, as well as get well cards and cards of support. We meet once a month. If you would like to help out in this ministry, please contact Gloria Blanton at 910-612-1963 or the church office at 910-754-4048.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF SHALLOTTE

LOVE GOD. LOVE ONE ANOTHER. LOVE THE WORLD.

4486 Main Street
Shalotte, NC 28470

910.754.4048
thefbcs.com

Office Hours:

M-Th 9am—3pm
Closed Friday

Sunday School—9:45am
Worship—11:00am



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Happy New Year

Daily Bible Reading Plan	1/1/2025	Psalms 148; Genesis 1-2; Ephesians 1	1/17/2025	Genesis 32-33; Matthew 11; Psalms 131
	1/2/2025	Genesis 3-4; Ephesians 2	1/18/2025	Genesis 34; Matthew 12; Psalms 64
	1/3/2025	Genesis 5-6; Psalms 12; Ephesians 3	1/19/2025	Genesis 35; Matthew 13
	1/4/2025	Genesis 7-8; Ephesians 4	1/20/2025	Genesis 36; Matthew 14
	1/5/2025	Psalms 8; Genesis 9-10; Ephesians 5	1/21/2025	Genesis 37-38; Matthew 15
	1/6/2025	Genesis 11-13; Ephesians 6	1/22/2025	Genesis 39-40; Matthew 16
	1/7/2025	Genesis 14-15; Psalms 47; Matthew 1	1/23/2025	Genesis 41; Psalms 40; Matthew 17
	1/8/2025	Genesis 16-18; Matthew 2	1/24/2025	Genesis 42; Matthew 18
	1/9/2025	Psalms 11; Genesis 19-20; Matthew 3	1/25/2025	Genesis 43-44; Matthew 19
	1/10/2025	Genesis 21-23; Matthew 4	1/26/2025	Genesis 45-46; Matthew 20
	1/11/2025	Genesis 24; Matthew 5	1/27/2025	Genesis 47; Matthew 21
	1/12/2025	Genesis 25; Matthew 6; Psalms 127	1/28/2025	Genesis 48-49; Matthew 22
	1/13/2025	Genesis 26-27; Matthew 7	1/29/2025	Genesis 50; Exodus 1; Matthew 23
	1/14/2025	Genesis 28-29; Matthew 8	1/30/2025	Exodus 2-3; Matthew 24
	1/15/2025	Genesis 30; Matthew 9	1/31/2025	Exodus 4; Matthew 25
	1/16/2025	Genesis 31; Matthew 10		