

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF SHALLOTTE

LOVE GOD. LOVE ONE ANOTHER. LOVE THE WORLD.

4486 Main Street
Shallotte, NC 28470
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thefbcs.com

Office Hours:
M-Th 9am-3pm
Closed Monday

Sunday School-9:45am
Worship-11am



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Permit No 318
Shallotte, NC

{Name}
Or Current Resident
{Street Address}
{City} {State} {Zip}

DAILY BIBLE READING PLAN

3/1/25	Leviticus 24-25; 1 John 4	3/17/25	Numbers 25; John 7
3/2/25	1 John 5; Leviticus 26-27	3/18/25	Numbers 26; John 8
3/3/25	Numbers 1-2; Psalms 68	3/19/25	Numbers 27; John 9
3/4/25	Numbers 3-4; Psalms 134	3/20/25	Numbers 28; John 10
3/5/25	Numbers 5-6; Psalms 61	3/21/25	Numbers 29; John 11
3/6/25	Numbers 7; Psalms 99	3/22/25	Numbers 30; John 12
3/7/25	Numbers 8-10; 2 Timothy 1	3/23/25	Numbers 31; John 13
3/8/25	Numbers 11-12; 2 Timothy 2	3/24/25	Numbers 32; John 14
3/9/25	Numbers 13-14; 2 Timothy 3	3/25/25	Numbers 33; John 15
3/10/25	Numbers 15-16; 2 Timothy 4	3/26/25	Numbers 34; John 16
3/11/25	Numbers 17-18; John 1	3/27/25	Numbers 35-36; John 17
3/12/25	Numbers 19-20; Psalms 90; John 2	3/28/25	Deuteronomy 1; John 18
3/13/25	Psalms 135; Numbers 21; John 3	3/29/25	Deuteronomy 2; John 19; Psalms 22
3/14/25	Numbers 22; John 4	3/30/25	Deuteronomy 3; Psalms 133; John 20
3/15/25	Numbers 23; John 5	3/31/25	Deuteronomy 4; John 21
3/16/25	Numbers 24; John 6		

the Vision

Monthly Newsletter of First Baptist Church of Shallotte | March 2025

Annie Armstrong Easter Offering

We invite you to join us this season of prayer March 2-9, 2025. In addition to prayer, your generosity in giving to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering makes an eternal impact. When you give directly to this offering, 100 percent of your gifts support missionaries in North America.

Our Church Goal is \$8,800



"What a glorious thing it is to be a co-worker with God in winning the world for Christ."
Annie Armstrong

Church Events

- Mar 8th 8-10a - Cars & Coffee
- Mar 9th 11a -Baptism
- Mar 10th 6:30-8:30p-Ladies' Ministry Meeting; Dinner Provided
- Mar 17th 6:30-8:30p -Men's Ministry Meeting; Dinner Provided
- Mar 30th 11a-First Kids Choir Easter Program & BBQ Lunch Fundraiser to Support Kenya Mission Trip

FIVE YEARS LATER: REFLECTIONS ON THE PANDEMIC, WHAT WE LEARNED, AND WHAT HAS CHANGED

It's been five years.

On Saturday, March 14, 2020, I met with the Deacons. Until that month, most of us had never heard of a Coronavirus or been alive for a pandemic. But there we were, making one of the most difficult decisions we would ever make.

These circumstances were not only new, but they were also unprecedented. We prayed, talked, and reasoned. We eventually concluded that for the health and well-being of our congregation, all ages and stages of life, it would be best to temporarily move our worship services to our online platform. At the time, and as we announced, we thought it would be for two weeks. Maybe a little longer.

Boy, were we wrong.

Five Years Later

What transpired over the next year is difficult to capture in a column. But now, five years down the road, I want to review and reflect with you on that season, how it changed what we do, and what we learned.

It was a defining moment, a season that would impact all of us and reshape many of our basic behaviors, and our attitudes, in life, family, work, church—just about everything.

Here are a few takeaways for me from my time as your Pastor during Covid.

- **God prepares us before we even know it.**

God prepares us, sometimes when we are not even aware we need preparing. And when the soil is fertile is often when God prepares us for the desert.

The first stage of Strategy 2019 was to upgrade the technology in our Worship Center. Online streaming was a relatively new idea at the time, but our team and our staff caught that vision and advocated for cameras capable of quality streaming. And wisely so.

We internally tested the streaming at the beginning of 2020. And on February 9, we began live streaming our services.



And four weeks later, we moved our services to our online platform.

God prepared us for that, not only for our benefit, but for other churches as well. The same technology that facilitates our streaming also enabled our wonderful IT folks to help some of our sister churches to provide recordings of sermons and distribute them to their congregations.

Had we not listened to God in 2019, we would have been unprepared and scrambling in 2020.

But even so, sometimes we are not as prepared as we think we are.

- **Consistent discipleship today prepares us for tomorrow.**

The pandemic tested the strength of our discipleship. And it quickly became clear. An abundance of Christians were woefully unprepared to live for Christ if they could not meet for church.

People drifted. People dropped out. People took sides. People changed churches. People replaced church participation with other activities, as if church participation was a hobby and not a commitment.

That's what distinguishes churchgoers from disciples. But our season of the pandemic illuminated the unsettling truth that the churchgoers were more legion than we had thought. So, when we returned from the pandemic, we implemented significant changes.

We launched our D4 groups, and we shifted to The Gospel Project for the Sunday School curriculum. Then we fortified our family ministries and crafted a position for an Associate Pastor for Family Life and Discipleship. These—along with other adjustments—were all intentional steps born of our awareness that we needed to make biblical discipleship the core of our ministries.

We are not in the business of making churchgoers. We build disciples who can live faithfully for Jesus in whatever season of servanthood we find ourselves.

And if you can't make it to the four walls of the church building, your commitment to being a follower of Christ should not waver or wane. So, we will always be cultivating intentional discipleship at FBCS.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3....



...continued from page 2
Five years later: Reflections on the pandemic, what we learned, and what has changed

- **The government is ready and willing to interfere.**

Living in a nation with the Constitutional protections we enjoy may sometimes be a liability. We are easily lulled into complacency.

The pandemic proved that the secular government will look for reasons to interfere with public worship. Thankfully, our local government and law enforcement officials were mostly hands-off. When we were planning to re-gather outdoors, I called the Chief of Police to let him know. He assured me that, no matter what Gov. Cooper said, we would not see any interference from the local police. He kept his word.

But many churches in NC and other states did not fare as well. The news was full of stories of government interference. I know Pastors who were astonished to see patrol cars arrive to shut down their outdoor gatherings when the law was so clearly on the side of the church. Thankfully, in the long run, those churches and Pastors were mostly vindicated.

But the lesson here is, sadly, the government can be quite cavalier about our Constitutional protections. Imagine a future administration that creates a Department of Religious Compliance designed to monitor the Pastor's sermons. Imagine Pastors threatened with arrest or even the closure of the church if they do not sign documents affirming government approved ideologies. Imagine a hand on a switch ready to shut off the power or the internet of any church that doesn't comply with the state's rules for religious engagement.

If the pandemic taught us anything, it's that these scenarios may not be that hard to imagine.

Should we have refused to suspend services? That's not really the point. The point is that it should be the decision of the church without government interference.

This, by the way, is the reason you should be intentionally, faithfully, and diligently growing as a disciple of Jesus. Because one day your personal walk with Christ may be tested again in the furnace of isolation.

- **Christians will sacrifice biblical unity for politics.**

If there was ever a time to rally around local church leadership and to foster local church fellowship, the pandemic was that time. Many Christians rose to the occasion. But many were derailed by the angry public discourse boiling all around us.

If we are growing as disciples of Jesus, we will foster unity. We will stand apart as citizens of heaven in an increasingly hostile world. May we always fight for the unity of the body of Christ.

What about you now?

So, it's been five years. What has changed in your walk with Christ? Did you discover weaknesses in your discipleship? Are you intentionally cultivating a stronger walk and a more robust discipleship?

The pandemic was an exceptional season. A pandemic may not happen again in our lifetime. But something like it might. And it could be something worse. If your walk with Christ gauges your preparation for serving Christ apart from the four walls of the church, how are you doing?

With love in Christ,
Pastor Bob

DEACON OF THE WEEK

3/3 - 3/8

ROB MICHEL

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3/9 - 3/15

DOUG WARD

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3/16 - 3/22

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3/23 - 3/29

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3/30 - 4/5

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