



THE BUILDER

The Newsletter of the First Baptist Church of Dunn, N.C.

April 2021 Issue



FROM
THE
PASTOR



A year has passed since we entered the wilderness between Egypt and the Promised Land. Some may say it has been a year since we were carted off to Babylon. Last year, 10 of us gathered to broadcast our services on the internet and the radio. We assumed that the restrictions would pass in only a few weeks and we'd be back to the normal by May. Now it is a year later, and we are still under the caution flag.

This morning I watched birds at the feeder and thought of how it reminded me of church right now. Only a few were perched there getting to eat, feasting on the grain and Sunflower seeds. There were others sitting and watching them from a distance. It reminded me that it is good that we have been able to tune in and watch, worshipping from where we were so that we were safe during the pandemic, but watching others feast is not the same as joining them at the table. Smelling the food cooking is not the same as actually tasting it. It has been good to worship by way of electronic media, but it isn't the same. This year has made more of us long for the fellowship of the faith community.

As some of you know, I have a habit of asking God, "What are you showing me?" and what I have seen this year has been revealing. I don't think God sent COVID to punish us---but I do think God permitted it knowing it could transform us if we are willing to allow God to come closer to us. I am still in the process of discerning. I don't have all the answers God has for me. Yet there are things I've discovered so far that have helped me to grow closer to God and to appreciate the church more. For starters, this last year has reminded me how little we are in control and how much we need God's care every day to survive. This year has exposed our arrogance. Like those in the wilderness, we need Mana. Like those in Babylon, we need hope; we need to be together in worship celebrating that we are God's beloved family, relying on God as a faith community, listening for the Spirit to lead us.

When the Children of Israel were in both the wilderness and Babylon, something in them changed. Their dependance on God grew. Their faith became a treasure. The freedom to worship became precious. I long for when we can physically gather in full throated praise. I long for when we can be together in the safety of sanctuary. My hope is that this past year has taught us, above everything else, that nurturing our relationship with God is the most important thing any of us can do; I hope we never take these things for granted.

I am so thankful to those who have assisted in providing worship and Sunday school lessons this last year. Thanks to those willing to share their talents, we have not missed a single Sunday without special music. This year has only heightened my appreciation for our staff and volunteers. Also, I am grateful for our Deacon Leadership in shouldering the tough decisions on how and when to gather. Thanks to their wisdom and guidance, we have not missed a week of church. I am thankful for those who have helped support the ministry of the church by remembering our mission in their giving. We have remained on solid footing in uncertain times because you have remained faithful. We have been able to continue helping others in many ways due to your support. To all of you I want to say, "Thank you!"

Another thing this year has reminded me is how much we need to appreciate all the blessing God has given us. Let us be thankful. Let us be open to what God is showing us. May we be filled with mercy and grace. May we be reminded not to take a single day for granted. *Len*



**NEW MUSIC
MINISTER**

We are excited to introduce Kathryn Godwin Wise to First Baptist Church as our new Minister of Music! Kathryn is no stranger to First Baptist. She is the granddaughter of Laney Kittrell who led music and sang in our choir for many years. Her mother, Doris, grew up at First Baptist. Following graduation from Meredith College, Kathryn sang in our choir for a while before becoming the Choir Director at Erwin United Methodist Church in 2010. With a Bachelor of Arts in Music and Voice, Kathryn brings both training and experience. She is humbled that God has led her in this direction and is eager to discover how God will further utilize her gift of music as she shares her journey of faith with us.

Kathryn will begin her tenure with us April 11. We look forward to how God will bless us through her passion for church music. As we welcome Kathryn to our staff, we are thankful that God has led us together. Please be in prayer for Kathryn and her family as they make the transition to First Baptist.