

THE MESSENGER

FEBRUARY 2023

FROM THE TRANSITIONAL PASTOR



By the time you receive this newsletter, we will be half way through a series of presentations on “The Church and LGBTQ” (assuming winter weather cooperates!). Thank you for attending in such good numbers, and for your willingness to listen attentively as we survey a considerable number of challenging subjects. The sessions are being videoed both for the benefit of those who cannot attend and for those of us who may wish to revisit them.

In the meantime, Lent is almost upon us. I invite you to participate in our Ash Wednesday service (February 22). The service will feature music, readings, a meditation on Ash Wednesday, and the imposition of ashes. Over my years in ministry, I’ve learned folk of many kinds respond well to an invitation to attend an Ash Wednesday service. Some simply want to see what it’s all about, others hope for a meaningful experience, at least a few wish to practice repentance, and almost all appreciate an invitation. Perhaps it’s never occurred to you to invite someone to be your guest at an Ash Wednesday service. Ash Wednesday 2023 provides an excellent opportunity for you to do so.

Keep the Committee on Committees in your prayers. The committee members have begun the task of putting together a nine member pastor search committee for the congregation’s consideration. Pray that God grants them the strength and wisdom required, as they go about this important work.

Mike



A LOVE STORY...

By Ray Lloyd

Gretta was a student in the Carver School of Missions and Social Work in Louisville, KY. I was a student at Southern Seminary. In the Fall of 1952 an area church was conducting a revival. Gretta was in a trio and I in a male quartet that were asked to provide the special music. After the revival the seven of us went to Howard Johnson's for ice cream. I took a fancy toward the soprano: she was pretty, very personable, and boy, could she sing!! Our first date was the Male-Manual Football Game (back then, Louisville's two leading high schools) on Thanksgiving Day. The romance began to evolve rapidly. In the summer of 1953, I proposed; She said "Yes!" Her Pop said yes. Gretta had dropped out of school for a year to work as an Associate in the BSU Department of the Georgia Baptist Convention. No Computers or Smart Phones then, so we talked by phone about once a week, as our love increased and she was planning the wedding. It took place in her home church on Dec. 21, 1953, with my father officiating, assisted by Gretta's college pastor. As we settled down in Louisville, I entered Grad School and Gretta began working on her Ph.T. degree (Putting Hubby Through) at the Louisville and Jefferson County Children's Home as a Social Case Worker and completed her MRE degree at Carver School. This Yankee had come South and found the sweetest Georgia Peach in the world. She is still just as sweet. We both have felt through the years that the Lord brought us together.

Music (traditional church music, the great classics, opera) was, and has always been a major factor in our love story. It was present in our home (LPs, CDs, Tapes, personal vocal and piano), our churches, our entertainment, our extra-circular activity. We followed a pattern of family devotions at breakfast beginning at Day 1. Even after the Lord blessed us with wonderful children, we rose early enough to read the Bible, the daily devotion and have prayer together, before I took them to school. It is the way we still begin the day.

Gretta has been a wonderful co-laborer for the Lord all through the years, carrying her share of church responsibility (Missions leader, in churches, associations, state conventions; Sunday School teacher; Choir member/soloist; Bible Drill leader). Whenever I was invited to preach a trial sermon in view of a call, I asked that Gretta be invited to sing. I knew that if she sang, they would call me just to get her!!!

It has been a wonderful journey, now in our 70th year together, in wonderful churches, with a very wonderful gifted lady, and together we have enjoyed serving our most wonderful Lord, as He has led.



FINANCIAL UPDATE

By Josh Gibson, Administrative Coordinator

Summary of Operational Budget Income / Expenses through December 2022

	September	October	November	December
Income	\$36,108.73	\$25,667.61	\$39,351.33	\$53,094.94
Expenses	\$36,958.54	\$26,097.44	\$23,891.41	\$31,355.45
Net Income	\$849.81	\$429.83	\$15,459.92	\$21,739.49
YTD	\$16,883.76	\$17,494.54	\$2,034.62	\$19,704.87

Items of Interest

- **Online Giving** is simple and convenient, and you do not have to set up a Realm account to give online. Visit: <https://onrealm.org/fbcjeff/give/now> to initiate an online gift today!
- **Designated Benevolence Fund total** (as of 1/24/2023) = \$0.00
- **Forward in Faith Capital Campaign:** Updated through January 24 (*pledge period is September 1, 2018 – August 31, 2023*):
 - Total campaign pledges = \$318,250.00
 - Total pledge gifts received = **\$273,813.50**
 - Total pledges outstanding = \$44,436.50
 - Fund balance = \$13,341.19
- **Our Forward in Faith Capital Campaign comes to a close in 7 months.**

Contribution Statements

- **If we have your email address on file in Realm, you should have received your 2022 contribution statement electronically.** A hard copy of your statement can be provided upon request. If we do not have your email address, a hard copy of your statement will arrive in the mail. If you have questions about your contribution statement, contact Josh via email (jgibson@fbcjeff.org) or call the church office.

DEACONS' MEETING SUMMARY

By Heidi Thomas, Deacon Chair

The Deacons held their monthly meeting on January 18, 2023 in the Agape SS at 4:00 p.m. Eight deacons were present. Pastor Mike Smith joined the meeting and stated he will be finalizing prayer material within a week or so to be used in conjunction with the Covenant that was approved by the Church. He stated the team that is looking at options for the church building have met twice. The Boy Scouts will start holding their meetings at the Church and he suggested this would be an opportunity for interacting with young people. The church has approved the formation of a pastor search team. It will include nine members to be nominated by the Committee on Committees. He also spoke about the Youth Sunday School Class which meets on Sunday afternoon. He was very complimentary of the class and encouraged everyone to support and promote it.

The ESL Class continues meeting with six Hispanic individuals, two from Japan, and 11 teachers under the leadership of Carey and Shirley Herring. During Shirley Herring's rehabilitation, Jim and Charlie Wilson are coordinating the classes.

The Deacons were asked to contact their families to remind them of the session scheduled on Sunday, January 22, 2023, on LGBTQ.

The CHURCH and LGBTQ

Dr. Mike Smith will lead **FOUR** presentations on *The Church and LGBTQ* in the Fellowship Hall on the following Sundays:

January 22

January 29

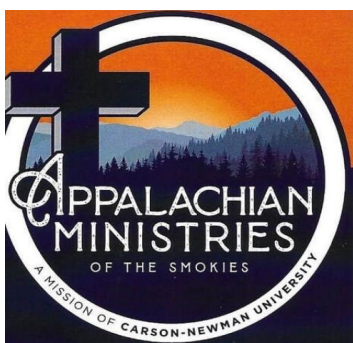
February 5

February 12

There will be pizza and beverages provided immediately following morning worship, and the presentation will begin once the meal has been completed.

No Reservations are Required

The presentations will be recorded but not live streamed. For more information, contact the church office at (865) 475-3826.



"Souper Bowl of Caring is an opportunity for your family, friends, church, etc. to take an enormous step in preventing hunger."

A.M.O.S. will be accepting financial donations and canned soups through February 12, 2023. To learn more about Souper Bowl of Caring, you may contact A.M.O.S.: (865)-475-5611 or go to www.souperbowl.org.

Please mail all donations to A.M.O.S. at
P.O. Box C-N 71904, Jefferson City, TN 37760.



Join us for
Ash Wednesday Worship
February 22, 6:00pm
Fellowship Hall

HYMN HIGHLIGHT

By Nnette Measels, Interim Minister of Music

The season of Lent, beginning on Ash Wednesday, February 22, calls us to anticipate Jesus' final trip to Jerusalem, His journey to the cross and ultimately His glorious resurrection. Lent calls us to individual and corporate repentance, accountability, and preparation. We follow Christ who says, "Take up your cross." We follow Christ who bids us come and die. We follow Christ who summons us to new life.*

As we look toward our Ash Wednesday service, I invite you to reflect on the hymn text, "I Take the Cross of Jesus Christ", #168, *Celebrating Grace Hymnal*, written by R. G. Huff, 2006, and answer the question, "Am I truly willing to deny self, take up the cross, and give Christ my all"?

I take the cross of Jesus Christ
In ashes on my face
This ancient symbol made in dust
Reminds me of His grace
I beg for mercy from my Lord
To cleanse me deep within
I know myself my faulty life
My tendency toward sin

O cross of ashes speak again
In ways I understand
Speak forth repentance let me know
Forgiveness from Your hand
Have mercy on us Lord we pray
Look deep within and find
Our hearts made whole our thoughts made pure
Our eyes no longer blind

This cross of ashes on my brow
Reminds me life is brief
From dust I came to dust I go
Through sorrow pain and grief
These forty days are set aside
For those who share the call
To take the cross deny themselves
And give to Christ their all

*Paraphrases Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*. Trans. R. H. Fuller, New York: Macmillan Co., 1959, p. 79.



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LUKE 14:12-14

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OUR MISSION

As a community shaped by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, we are called to worship God, share the Good News, foster spiritual growth and meet the needs of hurting people.

SUNDAY WORSHIP TIMES

9:30am Sunday Bible Studies

10:45am Worship Service

CONTACT INFO

(865) 475-3826; (865) 262-9026 (Fax)

Church Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday, 8:30am to 4:30pm

Find us at www.fbcjeff.org or follow us online on *Facebook* and *YouTube*

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DEACONS & MINISTER OF THE WEEK

February 5: Carolyn Blevins and Jim Wilson/ Josh Gibson

February 12: Susan Garber and Carey Herring / Chad Hartsock

February 19: John Burton and Ann Porter / Nenette Measels

February 26: Pam Hester and Heidi Thomas / Josh Gibson

