

Ferguson Avenue Baptist Church

10050 Ferguson Avenue Savannah, Georgia 31406

Where Christ Is Exalted and the Fellowship Is Exciting

FABC Elders

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Scan this QR code and download our app to your favorite device.



Announcements

Poinsettias

If you would like to donate a poinsettia to honor or commemorate a loved one, and to beautifully decorate the sanctuary, please email dawn@fabchurch.com. You may put your \$20 for each plant in a marked offering envelope and place in the offering box in the foyer.

Special Called Meeting

There is a Special Called Members' Meeting this afternoon at 5:30 p.m. for our Deacon Election. Nominees are Eric Horton, Napoleon Martin, Taylor Pelton, and Michael Walker. Members, please plan to come! This will be followed by Evening Worship at 6:00 p.m.

Two Caroling Opportunities

The church is going Christmas Caroling to homes of our more elderly folks and everyone is invited! If you'd like to join us, we're loading up the bus on Monday, **December 15**, and Wednesday, **December 17**, at 5:30 p.m. There are no regular Wednesday activities on December 17.

Life Line Screening

These folks will be using our Fellowship Hall for their health screening tests this Thursday, **December 18**. We still have a few vouchers for free tests. See Dawn in the office if you would like one of these vouchers.

Senior Adult Bible Study

Because Life Line will be in the Fellowship Hall, the Senior Saints will meet for Bible Study in the piano overflow space.

Christmas Cantata Presentation

The Adult Choir will present *Light of Christ, Born for Us* on Sunday, **December 21**, at 6:00 p.m. Please join us!

Christmas Eve Service

Our Annual Christmas Eve Communion service is Wednesday, **December 24**, at 5:00 p.m. Come and worship!

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship Luke 2:8-11 Pew Bible p. 857

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Greeting

(When singing begins, please make your way to your seats and sing along!)

Good Christian men, rejoice with heart and soul and voice; Now ye hear of endless bliss: Jesus Christ was born for this! He has opened heaven's door, and man is blest forevermore. Christ was born for this, Christ was born for this!

Prayer of Praise

Hymn #95, bulletin p. 7

"While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks"

Prayer of General Confession Bob Dimmitt 1 John 4:9-11 Pew Bible p. 1023

Hymn #99, bulletin p. 8

"Angels from the Realms of Glory"

Scripture Reading Luke 2:21-35 Howard Ernst Pew Bible pp. 857-858

Hymn, bulletin p. 9

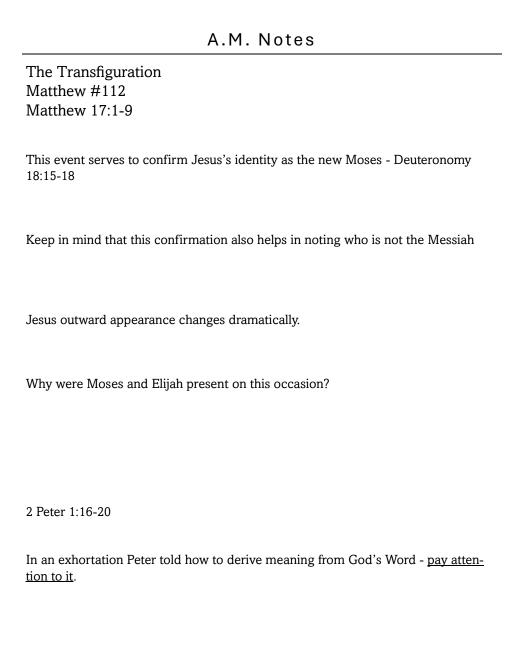
"Exult in the Savior's Birth"

Message Bob Dimmitt

The Transfiguration Matthew #112 Matthew 17:1-9, Pew Bible p. 822

Hymn, bulletin p. 10

"Christmas Doxology"



The Word of God is a more reliable verification of the teachings about the Person, atonement, and second coming of Christ than even the genuine firsthand experi-

1 John 3:2-3

ences of the apostles themselves

Jesus is the prophet like Moses: Deuteronomy 18:15-19

- 1. The Prophet must be Jewish, and Jesus' heritage was from the tribe of Judah.
- 2. Both were shepherds
- 3. Both were sent to bring salvation after 400 years of apparent inactivity from God
- 4. Both fasted for 40 days and nights
- 5. Both spent time in Egypt as children
- 6. Both were born at a time when evil kings pronounced death to all Jewish baby boys in the area
- 7. Both were called by God to lead and save
- 8. Both did miracles to testify to their God-given authority
- 9. Both instituted a covenant of blood that brought salvation for many
- 10. Both were given God's public stamp of approval with an audible voice from heaven
- 11. Both gave up great riches to lead a humble life of service and poverty
- 12. Both were initially rejected by the Jews
- 13. Both were criticized by their own families
- 14. Both were willing to sacrifice their own lives for the sake of those they were leading, and to pay for the sins of their people
- 15. Both miraculously provided people with bread to eat
- 16. Both were accepted by Gentiles
- 17. Under Moses, all those who believed him followed the instructions and put the sacrificial blood on their doors and were saved from death. Under Jesus, all those who appropriate his sacrificial blood, shed for us to save us from the power of death have entered into the faith community of those who follow Him.
- 18. Seven weeks (50 days) after the Exodus, the Israelites waited upon God to receive the Torah. Seven weeks (50 days) after the resurrection, the disciples waited as Jesus instructed them to receive the Holy Spirit

¹⁵ "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—¹⁶ just as you desired of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.' ¹⁷ And the LORD said to me, 'They are right in what they have spoken. ¹⁸ I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. ¹⁹ And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him."

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Christmas Time Office Closed

The office will be closed Wednesday, **December 24** and Thursday, **December 25**, for Christmas.

New Year's Eve Game Night

Wednesday, **December 31**, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Activities will include, but not be limited to, a Cornhole Tournament and a Chili Cook-off!

Office Closed New Year's Day

The Church Office will be closed Thursday, **January 1**.

New Member's Class

James Bannerman defines the Church this way: "The Bible is a communication from God to the Church, telling them of truths and doctrines, through the right appreciation of which they may be fashioned into a spiritual society, with divinely authorized powers and ordinances and office bearers, - an outward and public witness for God on the earth, and an instrument for the edification of the people of Christ." Tom will be teaching a New Member's Class in January. If you are a new member, considering being a member, or would like to know how important membership is please attend the New Member's Class. We will meet in the gym 9:30-10:15 am for four weeks starting **January 4**.

Old Savannah City Mission CHICKEN!

The free food from the Old Savannah City Mission is no longer available to us. It is with great gratitude to God for His undeserved mercy and grace that Tom was

able to have this access for the last year or so. The food has been as free as God's grace, and we want to thank God for His many blessings. If you would like to share how God used the food to bless your family and others, please come Sunday evening, January 18, to our evening worship to celebrate how far and wide God blessed His people over the last 14 months. We should always remember to thank God for His undeserved mercy and grace.

Job Opportunity!

The Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America organization is building a team in Savannah and is hiring pro-life people to work for them. If you are interested, scan the qr code in the ad to the right, or on the posters in the hallways.



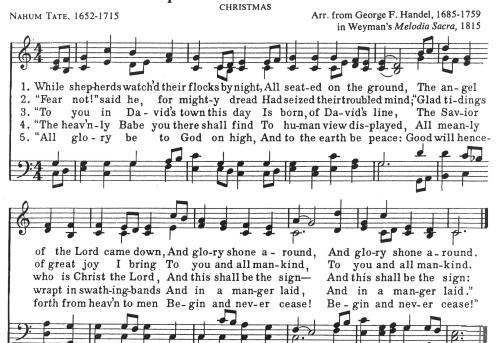
Important Upcoming Events

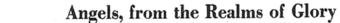


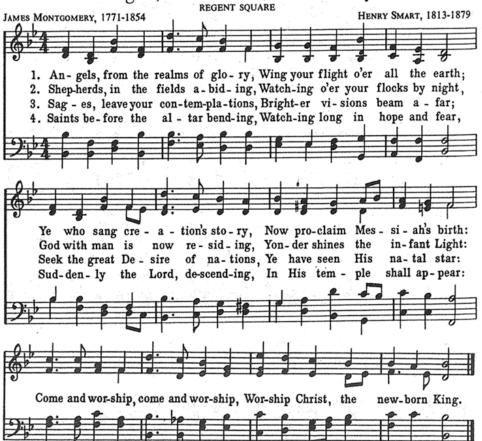
Special Called Members' Meeting: Deacon Election	5:30 p.m.
Christmas Caroling	5:30 p.m.
Joy Class Christmas Party; covered dish and gift excha	ange 11:00 a.m.
Christmas Caroling (No other Wednesday Activities	s) 5:30 p.m.
Life Line Screening in Fellowship Hall	
Cantata: Light of Christ, Born for Us	6:00 p.m.
Christmas Eve: Office Closed	
Christmas Eve Communion Service	5:00 p.m.
Christmas Day: Office Closed	
New Year's Eve Game Night	7:00 to 9:00 p.m.
	Christmas Caroling Joy Class Christmas Party; covered dish and gift excha Christmas Caroling (No other Wednesday Activities Life Line Screening in Fellowship Hall Cantata: Light of Christ, Born for Us Christmas Eve: Office Closed Christmas Eve Communion Service Christmas Day: Office Closed

January:

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1	New Year's Day: Office Closed	
3	Lunch at Old Savannah City Mission	11:00 a.m.
4	Kendra Stanford sharing in Evening Worship	6:00 p.m.
4	Deacon Ordination during Evening Worship	6:00 p.m.
6	Women's Bible Study begins	TBA
6	Elders' Meeting	7:00 p.m.
7	Wednesday Night activities resume	5:30 p.m.
13	Joy Class resumes	9:00 a.m.
13	Deacons' Meeting	7:00 p.m.
16	WOL Ladies' Night Out	TBA
18	Quarterly Members' Meeting	TBA
24	Pig Roast at Low Country Soil, Townsend	1:00 p.m.
31	Men's 5th Saturday Breakfast	7:15 a.m.







Exult in the Savior's Birth



Christmas Doxology



Articles

Marriage is a Steel Trap

By Darryl Dash

The date was 1990. I was a newly engaged seminary student. Just a few weeks earlier, I'd proposed to Char, and she'd accepted. We were planning our wedding which was going to take place just a few months later.

I sat in the seminary classroom near the back. The subject: marriage counselling. The professor: a Christian counsellor. Notebook open, pen in hand, I couldn't wait to learn about the journey I was about to begin.

I wasn't prepared for what he said.

"Marriage is a steel trap," he said.

I looked up, not sure if I was hearing him correctly.

The professor continued to explain. He'd enjoyed a good first marriage that ended with his wife's death. Since then, he'd remarried & found that his second marriage was a lot harder. In the first year of his second marriage, he found himself thinking that he'd made a terrible mistake. He knew divorce was not an option, but he found himself thinking of ways to escape.

But he couldn't. Marriage was a steel trap. You can get into it, but it doesn't easily let you go.

They stayed together and struggled. As they did, he found that marriage got easier. He learned to love his new wife. He began to enjoy their marriage. It was still hard and still required work, but being trapped together taught them to love each other, and they began to grow their relationship.

"Marriage is the hardest, most challenging relationship you'll ever have," he explained. "It will demand everything from you and more. No relationship will frustrate you and challenge you as much as your marriage."

I gulped as he continued.

"But marriage is also the most joyful and rewarding relationship you'll ever enjoy," he said. "You will find a depth of relationship in your marriage that you won't find anywhere else."

I was young. Like most young couples, I saw the upside of marriage. On one level, I knew that marriage would be challenging, but I didn't really think it would be *that* hard.

The professor's words that day were harsh, probably a little harsher than the words that I'd use to describe marriage. But they were helpful. Marriage sometimes does feel like a trap. Every couple will go through periods in which the only thing that binds them together are the vows they made to each other, vows which can't be easily broken.

Couples who keep those vows, even when those vows feel like a trap, often find that something beautiful happens as they endure the hardship. Things get better. They learn to love each other. God grows beautiful things in what looks like a garden of clay if we stick with it long enough and keep our promises even when we don't feel like it.

I was scared as I heard that professor talk that day. But his words helped me prepare for the part of the marriage vows I hadn't taken quite as seriously: not just the better but the worse, not just for richer but also in poorer, not just in health but also in sickness. I'm grateful for his words.

Marriage is costly, but part of the beauty of marriage is what can happen when we pay that price. I almost wish that every starry-eyed couple could sit in that class and hear how hard marriage can be, and yet what happens when we persist in that hardship and see God grow something beautiful. �

The Darkness of Individualism

By David Garner

The soul has eyes, and it's always staring at something. Part of what it means to be made in the image of God means that we're gazers. The question isn't, "Is my heart staring at something?" It's, "What is my heart staring at right now?" At the broadest level, there are really three basic directions for gazers. And each direction has an effect on the soul.

First, we can stare up at the triune God—the Father of lights (James 1:17), the Son as the light and life of men (John 1:4), and the Spirit as the illuminator of our hearts and minds (Eph. 1:18; Rom. 12:2). Our God can fill our eyes with light because he radiates his own truth, love, and beauty into our mirroring world, which can do nothing but reflect God's light back to him. God is, as John Calvin put it in the first chapter of his Institutes, an "endless flood of light." When we stare at him, we grow brighter.

Second, we can turn our chins down and stare at ourselves. This is an ancient and secret form of idolatry that often eludes our culture. But the reason we have trouble seeing it is that it's so pervasive. As the saying goes, a fish never sees the water in which it swims. But the water is there. Our culture is immersed with and addled by self-worship. As Matthew Roberts wrote in his book <u>Pride: Identity and the Worship of Self</u>, we have turned "the free self" into an idol. We think our desires define us. "To look inside our own hearts," he wrote, "and ascribe to the desires that we find there the power to define our very being, is surely Pride in a most elevated sense" (p. 46). And this darkening pride leads to blindness—the absence of light.

This is also bound up with the Western secular "virtue" of individualism, something which Robert Bellah and his colleagues feared (back in 1985!) was spreading like a cancer in American culture (Habits of the Heart, p. xlviii). Their fear was well founded. We have put far too much weight on the individual. Bellah wrote nearly forty years ago, "The self must be maintained as the intuitive center of the wants and impulses that define right action, and as the unimpeachable evaluator of the good or bad feelings by which the utility of our acts can be calculated and the depth of their self-expression intuited" (p. 78). Individuals discerning their greatest wants? We hardly ever know what we truly want, let alone what we should want; we need God's word to tell us. Individuals defining right actions and evaluating feelings? God does that for us in Scripture; what are we trying to do?

Individuals hoping to figure out who they are in isolation from God? Have we not yet learned that this is doomed to futility? Individualism puts us at the center of the universe. The gravitational pull required for that position will crush us. Praise God that we live in a God-centered universe! When we leave behind our idolatrous individualism and stare at him, we grow brighter. When we stare at ourselves, we go dim.

Third, we can stare horizontally out at the world and the things in it (Rom. 1:22-23). Scripture defines this sort of soul-gazing as idolatry, which leads to the darkening of the heart (Rom. 1:21). When we think of idolatry, we might first turn to physical images, such as those represented in the Hindu religion. The missiologist J.H. Bayinck ministered to many people from a Hindu background. He had a front row seat to the idolatry, just as Paul did in Athens (Acts 17). And just as Paul found uncertainty and confusion in Athens (in their altar dedication to an unknown God; Acts 17:23), Bayinck found uncertainty and confusion in Indian religion. He wrote, "The Indian people have been deeply impressed by what they consider the perpetual war between the powers of order and chaos. The gods, or devas, are the defenders of harmony and order; the demons are the creators of chaos. ... There is not a very clear distinction between the gods and the demons. Some of the gods seem to possess the characteristics of both; they are creators of wealth and prosperity and at the same time demolishing powers. At times they destroy the world which they built" (p. 41). Can such gods do anything but cause fear and uncertainty to rise in darkened hearts? Maybe that's what prompted Bavinck to write elsewhere, "man seems to flee from the same gods whose communion he seeks and whose blessing he craves" (p. 24). We run both towards and away from idols, as if our hearts can't see clearly.

But Eastern religions don't hold exclusive rights to idols. In addition to the idol of self, the West has plenty of others: comfort, money, fame, and sex perhaps the most prominent. These are the temporary and ever-dying pleasures we gaze upon. But they don't fill us with light and life. They don't ever deliver on their promises. They disappoint because they are unable to offer what we most long for: the God of glory. When we stare at the idol of self, we dim. Likewise, when we stare at things in the world, all goes dark.

And so we turn again in the first direction: not down (at ourselves) or out (at things in the world), but up. When we look up, we see the self-giving God of glory. When we look up, we find—with great relief—a God who shows us what we most long for and offers it by grace to those who seek him. When we look up, we see Christ on the cross, given for our reconciliation. But we also see Christ ascended, glorified for our eternal hope. It's in him that we find our purpose and meaning, our sense of belonging and worth. The moments of our days are the measures of his majesty. His light always finds a way to us. It shines in our darkness, a darkness that cannot overcome it (John 1:5).

My friends, God is worthy of our gazing. May we look up today, and find joy in knowing we are looking homeward, toward life and light everlasting. Yes, the Sovereign Lord of creation and our redemption—this "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5b). �

Missionary of the Week

Chatham Transitional Ministries Savannah, Georgia



MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM

CHATHAM TRANSITIONAL MINISTRIES

P.O. Box 15261, Savannah, GA 31416 | 912.480.5068 | ctmga.life

THE PEOPLE WHO WALKED IN DARKNESS HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT. ISAIAH 9:2

The autumn of 2021 found Samuel living in his parents' shed, in active addiction, wandering around aimlessly looking for his next high. "Finally," said Samuel, "a little bit of light reached my mind." That's when he asked for help, and his journey into sobriety began. He found refuge at Recovery Place in Savannah, and spent six months trying various recovery meetings. But not one gave him satisfactory answers. One day Samuel saw CTM's Lorie Irish pull up in the ministry van. "What's this ministry about?" he asked her. Lorie's response was, "It's all about Jesus!" Samuel thought that sounded worth trying.

So he joined CTM and found it ministered to him in many wonderful ways that he hadn't even dreamed of. CTM got Samuel connected with a wide range of help, including a local dentist who fixed his teeth, and local employers who were willing to give him a chance. He now



works as a head cook in two local restaurants. "It's been 3 1/2 years of seeing the mercy of the Lord," says Samuel.

When Samuel met Kristi in June of 2025, she also was looking for a way out of active addiction. Samuel told her that he knew people who could help. So Kristi began attending CTM meetings as well. "Lorie goes above and beyond to help people. She basically gives her all. CTM helped me to get back on my feet," says

THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS WHO LABOR WITH LOVE TO PROVIDE CTM WITH BIBLE STUDY LUNCHES AND HOMEMADE COOKIES!

WE LOVE YOU MORE THAN COOKIES!

Kristi, "and I'm learning how to live a sober life."

As they grew to know one another through CTM activities, Samuel and Kristi quickly fell in love. Following counsel with a pastor from the church they've been attending, they were joined in marriage in September, where Steve, CTM's chairman of the board, gave away the bride. Kristi has since then been baptized, and joined Samuel in church membership. CTM wishes Samuel and Kristi all God's blessing in their marriage and in their commitment to Christ and His church!



Looking for ways to be involved in the work of CTM? Consider these opportunities:

- * Commit to pray for CTM, its staff, and participants.
- * **Attend** a Bible Study. Call Lorie for details of where and when @ **912.480.5068**.
- * Volunteer for CTM. Call Lorie (above) or Barbara @ 912.306.9876 for options.
- * Become a financial partner by contributing to the operational costs of CTM. Use the QR code on the left to donate, or send a check to the address below.
- * **Provide a job** for a CTM program participant. We continually need new work options, and would love to talk to you about opportunities.

Nursery December 14 Babies:

Lynn Ernst, Jeanie Groover, Beth Lewis Toddlers:

Michael & Karrie Walker Preschoolers:

Avalon DeLoach, Stacey Kelly

Nursery December 21 Babies:

Eleanor Bowden, Mary Fowler, Kay Stanford, Linnea Posner **Toddlers:**

Deborah Focht, Tricia Morris
Preschoolers:
Taylor & Courtney Pelton

Right Now Media

If you would like a free subscription to Right Now Media use this link:

https://app.rightnowmedia.org/join/fabchurchga or scan this QR code:



If you have any questions concerning the message from today, or are interested in obtaining information about church membership, please see any of the pastors after the service, drop a note in the offering plate indicating your desire to talk with a pastor, or call the church office.



Video and audio recordings of the messages are available for listening or downloading from

www.fabchurch.com/sermons



Today

Coffee Fellowship 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Morning Worship 10:30 a.m. Special Called Members' Meeting: Deacon Election 5:30 p.m. **Evening Worship** 6:00 p.m.

Monday

Christmas Caroling 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday

Christmas Caroling 5:30 p.m.

Thursday

Senior Adult Bible Study: Isaiah (piano overflow room) 10:00 a.m.

Hearing assistance devices for services in the sanctuary are available on request at the sound booth.

Lockup Deacons for December:

Rick Zittrouer, Reggie Brown

Sunday School Classes and Descriptions

Adult

The Law of Moses:

Survey of 613 Laws Fellowship Hall: Bob Dimmitt

Romans video series:

W. Robert Godfrey, Ligonier Youth House: Steve Posner Gym Overhang: Union with Christ Tom Keller

Children and Students

Babies Room 3: Kay Stanford, Saundra Bridges Toddlers Room 24: Donna Martin, Deborah Focht Pre-K Room 25: Dustin & Emily Herb K. 1st and 2nd Grade Room 28: John & Pam Humphrey Room 202: Ric Zittrouer, Richie Mills 3rd-6th Grade Boys 3rd-6th Grade Girls Room 204: Mary Ann Fowler, Amy Horton

Youth Guys & Girls Room 206: Bobby DeLoach, Shawn Champion,

Avalon DeLoach 16