



Byron Brown
Lead Pastor

John Johnson
Worship & Administrative Pastor

Sarah Stalnaker, Tina Mansfield
& Anne Almand
Children's Ministry Team

Matt Pullen & Taylor Cernich
Youth Ministry Team

Debbie Jolly
Church Secretary

The HUB

A PUBLICATION OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF INVERNESS

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The HUB

April 2024

FOLLOWING GOD PRAYERFULLY AND PASSIONATELY!

“Do Not Cling to Me”

In the resurrection story, Jesus says something very curious to Mary Magdalene:
John 20:17 ^{ESV 17} Jesus said to her, “*Do not cling to me,*
Wait a minute! I thought God wanted us to cling to Him, to hang on to Him? Why would Jesus tell Mary to stop trying? Did He not care? Would touching Him damage her or Himself? Did He suddenly stop wanting physical contact? What is going on?

Then Jesus continues...
John 20:17 ^{ESV 17} Jesus said to her, “*Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father;*
Jesus is going back to the Father. Does that mean that Jesus is not ‘perfected’ yet or that He is still in the process of changing? Or is there something else happening to Him that He does not want Mary to touch, or see?

Now, look at the continuing verses...
John 20:17-18 ^{ESV 17} Jesus said to her, “*Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”* ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”—and that He had said these things to her.
Jesus instructs Mary to send a message, to encourage His disciples with the truth – they are family now. The plan is working, the truth is being revealed! Jesus is completing what He began, and His followers are going to enjoy the benefits of this new relationship.

So, why did Jesus tell Mary, “Do not cling to me?”
I believe it is because of the new relationship of Jesus with His followers. From this point on, and to the blessing of the many to follow, our relationship with Jesus is by faith and not by sight or touch.
Just a little over a week later, Jesus says to Thomas:
John 20:29 ^{ESV 29} Jesus said to him, “*Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”*
This is talking about you and me. We are the ones who must believe without being able to physically touch or see.

Jesus is not against Mary touching Him. His priority is that her faith be greater than her physical senses. How many times do we ask God for a sign? To just “show us the way.” I believe the cross and the empty tomb are the best “sign” we will ever receive! Jesus loves you; He died for you, He rose again for you, and you must respond in faith to know Him... no “sign” is greater than that! So, don’t settle for just clinging to Jesus. Don’t make your experiences more important than your Savior. “Easter faith” is a faith based upon the cross and resurrection. Believe in Him!

Because He Lives!
Pastor Byron

Contact Pastor Byron at byron@fbcinverness.com

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Worship Ministry



Worship Experience or Experiencing Worship?

Where Is Your Worship?

How many times have you found yourself sitting in a worship service, and yet somehow seem to be missing the “worship” part? The reasons are many and varied...

Tradition, i.e., “religious experience” is one of the main reasons people miss worship every Sunday. There are people who come to church on Sunday simply because it seems to be the right thing to do; surrendering to God in true worship never enters their minds. This is the group that comes to have their weekly “religious experience,” but they never experience God’s presence. Worship and coming to church are not the same thing. We all go to church, but what is your motive for being there? In **2 Timothy 2:19** we learn that God knows those who are His. He knows those who are there to worship Him, as opposed to those who are there to satisfy their religious attractions. Worship is a love relationship with our heavenly Father. But please don’t misunderstand; Sunday morning is not the only time we can enjoy that relationship. We can worship God anytime, anywhere, for any reason. The best reason is just because He’s God. We don’t have to wait for some miraculous event to occur before we worship God. As a matter of fact, we are free to worship Him before the miraculous occurs! We can bump our “worship schedule” and get on God’s worship schedule. David said in **Psalms 34:1**, “I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.” He doesn’t qualify the where, but he does let us know when and how often. He says “at all times” and “continually.” That’s it.

My prayer is that you will, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, raise your level of expectation and participation in the worship service from merely a religious experience to an experience of God’s holy presence. I challenge you this week to turn your heart to seek God’s face in worship. When you do, you will no longer sit in church for a religious fix, but rather standing or bowing to meet God and encounter His presence.

We strive to design our worship services in such a way that we are all ushered to the foot of His Throne. To a place where, in the midst of many, our worship is a personal, individual experience...

This experience is meant to be personal; it is meant to be a time and place where God meets us each face to face. This **should be** your reason for coming to church. Our gathering together should not be simply a “religious experience”, or because “that is what is expected”, or it’s “what we have always done”... Our worship should be – **IS** - deeply personal.

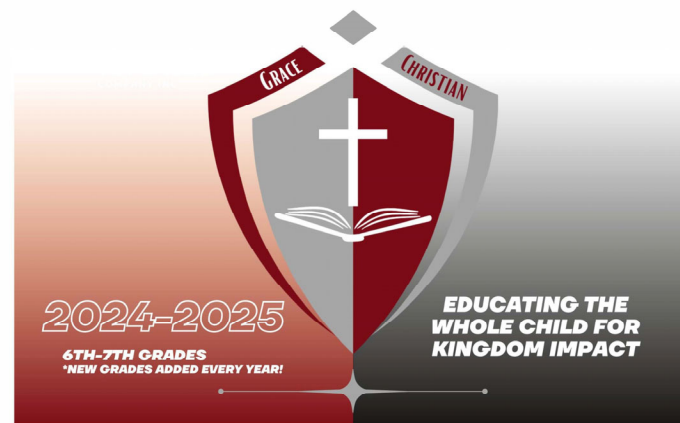
Continued on Page 3.

Birthdays

Allwood, Debi	4/1
Crosswhite, Lou Anne	4/2
Hill, Wayne	4/2
Snyder, Jean	4/2
Teegarden, Austin	4/2
Akins, Kaici	4/4
Gibson, Betty	4/4
Linley-Harris, Nancy	4/5
Chavez, Richard	4/6
Kehr, Noah	4/6
McGahey, Marjorie	4/6
Wear, Lory	4/8
Rollason, Linda	4/9
Sculthorpe, Rosie	4/10
Smith, Rodney	4/11
Honeycutt, Mike	4/14
Swartzfager, Hayley	4/14
Carter, Jacob	4/15
Foster, Tim	4/16
Phillips, Mark	4/16
Thomas, Amber	4/16
Dunnigan, Maleichi	4/19

Burkhart, Rob	4/20
Smith, Marilyn	4/20
White, Larry	4/20
Auiler, Samuel	4/21
Durrett, Ray	4/21
Winders, Hayley	4/21
Wilson, Matthew	4/22
Butzer, Eileen	4/23
Morelli, Jenny	4/23
Perdue, Helen	4/24
Portillo Castillo, Victoria	4/24
Boyles, Martha	4/26
Brady, Bailey	4/27
Leith, Barbara	4/27
Allen, JoEllen	4/28
Fricano, Ronda	4/28
Kaiser, Richard	4/28
Dileo, Zach	4/30
Johnson, Elliott	4/30
Pittman, Pam	4/30

Grace Christian School



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CHRIST-CENTERED
Developing compassionate servant-leaders for future Kingdom impact. Integrating biblical worldview while seeking to draw students into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

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Sparkling natural curiosity with a delightful education, that is discussion-based, using “living books,” narration, hands-on science labs, and art and music appreciation

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Implementing an individualized online math program under the direction of a math instructor, allowing each student to work at his own pace, insuring concept retention.

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**Grace Christian School
is a school ministry of
First Baptist Church
Inverness, FL.**

Financial Updates

Giving February 2024	
Operating Revenue	\$82,389.95
Operating Expense	\$67,721.50
	\$14,668.45

Giving Year to Date 2024	
Operating Revenue	\$146,189.35
Operating Expense	\$143,085.24
	\$ 3,104.11

Memorials & Honors

In Memory of Ken Hall
From: Paul Carter

For: Deacons' Benevolence Fund
From: Ruth Hooper

In Honor of Jerry & Suzanne McFarlin's 60th Anniversary
For: Mailbox Bible Club
From: Ray & LaVerne Register

Thank You Note

Thank you to our Church Family,
Lazaro and I thank you for the prayers, the offers of medical equipment, and chairs. Thank you for being the hearts and hands of Christ and for letting Lazaro see your testimony.
Carolyn Perez

Rainy Weather Option



To make it easier to unload passengers when it rains on Sunday mornings, we will begin unlocking the double doors by the church office. This will allow passengers to unload under the covered entry without getting wet. The doors will be unlocked at 8:30 am on Sundays when it rains. Please do not park under the covered entry.

Continued from Page 3.

As we gather together each week, I challenge us all to look at our motivations for our worship, and the ways we worship closely. Are we simply checking off the box that says *"I attended church this week"*, or are we coming with the expectation of giving our all, the best that we have for His glory as we meet our Glorious Redeemer face to face? Or as Oswald Chamber so eloquently penned, are we seeking to give our *"utmost for His highest"*?

"But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth"

John 4:23-24

Selah,
Pastor John

Citrus Pregnancy Center Fundraiser

Citrus Pregnancy Center's 2024

GREAT STORK RACE

WalkforLife

(April 27th)



Saturday, April 27, 2024
from 8:00 am – 11:00 am

Depot Pavilion: 300 Withlacoochee State Trail, Inverness, FL 34450

Check-in starts at 8:00 am • Walk starts at 9:00 am

Done and on your way on or before 11:00 am

A race to save lives by walking to raise support and awareness.

Join us for a FUN walk to raise money to help families in our community that are facing unplanned pregnancies!

This is a non-competitive, stroller to wheelchair event, so bring the whole family!

Great company, good exercise, and save lives!

Let's show our community that we care about preborn lives and their moms and dads!

Got www.cpcwalk.com to register as a walker or to donate.

Children's Ministry



Hello Church Family!

The classes, ranging from 2-3 year olds all the way up to 2nd grade, will be starting a new series, called, Transformed.

Think back on your faith journey. When did you first meet Jesus? How did you change after you decided to follow Him? Scripture tells us that when we are in Christ, we become new creations, completely transformed

(2 Corinthians 5:17). Paul us an excellent example of a life transformed by the Spirit! After his conversion, Paul was so different that people couldn't believe he was the same man. As you lead kids in discovering the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in this series, remember He wants to change you for His plans and purposes, each and every day.

Your transformation isn't a one-time thing. As life goes on and your faith grows, the transformation continues as the Spirit changes your way of thinking, helps you, and grows you for His good plans.

Read this series' Word of Wonder: Romans 12:2. God's plans are good; they are perfect.

What plans does God have for you? You might not feel ready for God's plans; you might not believe that you are the one He chose for this. Pause, be still, and allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you. Allow God to change your thinking. Allow the Spirit to transform you, little by little, day by day.

Maybe you're in a storm and need strength from God, or you don't feel like you can do whatever it is God has called you to do.

Where do you need the Spirit's transformative power in your life today?

Our 3rd-5th grade class is going a slightly different route and are focusing on growing in their own relationship with God! They are learning how to get into their bibles and study directly from the Word that God has given us! Currently they are taking their time and doing a study in the Gospel of John. Taking it chapter by chapter, verse by verse! We have taken a break from the Gospel of John and have been getting into Jesus's death and resurrection. Where it was prophesied in the Old Testament and what His death and resurrection truly means to us! We will be back in John starting next month!

Some exciting news to share as well! In less than 4 months VBS 2024 "The Great Jungle Journey" will be upon us!!

Join us in a world of wonder that will delight our senses while captivating our hearts and minds at THE GREAT JUNGLE JOURNEY: an epic cruise from Genesis to Revelation.

We will cruise through jungle rivers, making stops at seven ports of call along the way-each starting with a C. These represent seven key biblical events-the 7 C's of History.

SAVE THE DATE! JULY 8TH-JULY 12TH 2024



We would also like to invite you to be in prayer for the children to hear the message, our volunteers to teach the message, and most importantly, that we all keep Christ the center of our life.

If you have a heart and a passion for the Children's Ministry, please contact Sarah Stalnaker for more information on ways you can help!

Following God Prayerfully and Passionately
The Children's Ministry Leadership Team
Sarah Stalnaker Anne Almand Tina Mansfield

Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child



Project Overview

What is Operation Christmas Child?

Operation Christmas Child is a project of Samaritan's Purse, an international relief organization. Our mission is to provide local partners around the world with shoeboxes filled with small toys, hygiene items, and school supplies as a means of reaching out to children in their own communities with the Good

News of Jesus Christ. We ship these simple gifts outside the United States to children affected by war, poverty, natural disaster, famine, and disease.

Can I find out where my shoebox is sent?

Yes! You can discover the destination country of your shoebox gift by making your \$10 per shoebox suggested donation online. Activate your shoebox tracking label at samaritanspurse.org/activate or print your own label by donating on our Labels Landing Page.

Who started Operation Christmas Child?

The program was started in the United Kingdom in 1990 by Dave and Jill Cooke. Three years after this beginning, the Wales-based shoebox gift project merged in a partnership with Samaritan's Purse, allowing us to share 20 years of expertise in relief and aid work with the project, and expand the reach of the shoebox gifts to more than 28,000 children that year. Since 1993, Operation Christmas Child has delivered gift-filled shoeboxes to over 220 million children in more than 170 countries and territories.

Why shoebox gifts?

Shoebox gifts demonstrate God's love in a tangible way to children in need around the world. By partnering with the local church worldwide, each shoebox gift is a powerful tool for sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ.

What happens after my shoebox gift is delivered?

Local ministry partners distribute your gifts to children in their communities. After receiving shoebox gifts, many boys and girls are invited to enroll in The Greatest Journey, our 12-lesson discipleship program. Through the program, ministry partners are able to establish long-term, caring relationships with children and families, sharing the love of Jesus Christ. Learn more about how God is using Operation Christmas Child in the work of evangelism, discipleship, and the multiplication of believers.

Who delivers shoebox gifts?

Operation Christmas Child is a global program facilitated through hundreds of thousands of trained volunteers. Local believers in more than 170 countries deliver Operation Christmas Child shoebox gifts, present the Gospel, and facilitate our follow-up discipleship program, The Greatest Journey.

With this approach, local Christians who know the culture and language best are given effective resources with a solid biblical foundation to share the Gospel in their communities. We equip ministry partners—local pastors or church leaders—to be our volunteer representatives by providing thorough, detailed training for them to be able to facilitate a shoebox outreach event and present the Gospel.

Trained National Leadership Team members, ministry partners, and The Greatest Journey teachers are volunteer roles filled exclusively by these national Christians. To visit our Volunteer Network page.

Join us every Thursday for OCC workday at 12 noon.
Sandy Watson: sandywatson44@gmail.com or 863-261-3119.

Ministry of Warmth



Greetings from the Ministry of Warmth!

Psalm 145:9 The Lord is good to all; He has compassion on all He has made. (NIV)

Come and join us as we knit and crochet items for the Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes and for local ministries, reaching others with God's love.

We meet every Thursday afternoon 2:00—4:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Currently, we are on Easter break and will resume meeting April 11.

For more information or questions, please contact Willie Howe at 352-726-1252.

Kingdom Quilters



The Quilt Ministry meets in the Choir rehearsal room starting around 9:00 am until about 3:00 pm. The next scheduled meeting is Tuesday, April 16th. Contact Sharon Cignoni at 352-419-6305 with any questions.

Mailbox Bible Club



MAILBOX BIBLE CLUB ACTIVITY REPORT February 29, 2024

We are beginning the year 2024 with a new resolve to continue providing bible lessons by mail to anyone wanting to study God's Word. Since we depend on referrals from existing students, we are praying that God will stir the hearts of our students to refer many of their friends and family. This will be a year of growth since we dropped to our lowest number of active students as a result of the actions taken by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. We are praying for many more students will be enrolled by the end of this year.

Our team graded 189 lessons in January. We awarded certificates to 7 students for completing a series of lessons. Thankfully, three student informed us that they had accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior after they joined our club. We currently have 121 active students.

We are not permitted to send our prayer request forms with the lessons, so our prayer team is praying for the requests that may be written on the returning answer sheets.

Biblical Counseling



Same-Sex Marriage

God established governments to restrain evil and promote good (Rom. 13:1-17; 1 Pet. 2:13-17). Most states had laws limiting marriage to one man and one woman, supporting the Christian biblical definition of marriage (Gen. 2:24-25). Also, sex is designed by God to be experienced in a heterosexual and monogamous marriage. Same-sex sexual relationships are forbidden (Rom. 1:24-27). In 2015, the United States Supreme Court mandated that same-sex marriage be legalized in all fifty states, subverting not only God's purpose for governments but also His design and purpose for sex and marriage. What our culture says about marriage reflects what it thinks about sexual morality, sexual boundaries, and essential values.

Same-sex marriage is an offense to God and is no marriage at all. The Bible teaches that God designed sex to be experienced within the covenant of marriage between one man and one woman (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:24-25). Our Christian view is easily distinguished from the culturally unrestricted view, in which the sexual moral code has no limits. Scripture teaches that both male and female same-sex intercourse is forbidden and condemned (1 Cor. 6:9-11; Lev. 20:13). Our feelings of love do not trump biblical moral limits.

The Christian view of limiting sex within the lifelong covenant of marriage between one man and one woman is thought to be unjust. However, justice does not mean approving of whatever couples feel like doing. It is not unfair to uphold the biblical definition of marriage. Christians are called to share God's truth with gentle firmness. We are never to be unkind. When we are criticized for our stance on same-sex marriage, our correct response should be to love those who hate us and to pray for them (Matt. 5:44).

The church has taught that love is a necessary but not sufficient element for a marriage. While two people getting married should love each other, simply professing love for each other does not necessarily mean marriage is permitted. A man may no longer love his wife and profess love for another woman, and he may want to divorce his wife and marry the other woman. The church does not call these justifiable grounds for marriage. The church calls it adultery. Similarly, two people of the same sex may profess love for each other, but such expressions of love are not sufficient to justify marriage.

Have you experienced same-sex attraction? Have you been invited to a same-sex wedding? How did you respond? As a Christian, should you accept or decline the invitation? Would fears of the possible consequences influence your decision?

We can help. To learn more, contact our Biblical Counseling services:

Jim and Paula Johnson, Directors of Biblical Counseling
(904) 704-8260 / (904) 860-0986 / john525136@gmail.com
Pastor Byron Brown (352) 726-1252 / byron@fbcinverness.com

Single Mom University



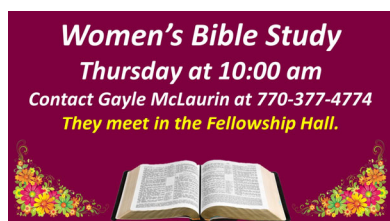
Single Mom University meets the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month at 9:00 am in Room 174B.

Sunday, April 7th Topic: Let's Learn How to Journal presented by Sandy Norrid. (The journal supplies will be provided.)

Sunday, April 21st Topic: Freedom from the Past – Breaking

Soul Ties. If you are a single mom who would like to join us, please contact Renie Deal at 727-421-2141.

Women's Bible Study



The Women meet for Bible Study on Thursday at 10:00 am in the Fellowship Hall. They took a brief break, but will begin meeting again on Thursday April 11th. Please contact Gayle McLaurin at 770-377-4774 for more information.

Women's Ministry



We've had a couple of intense storms come through the area recently. It made my heart beat a little faster and I became a little anxious. The storms of life can do the same thing. My anxious spirit keeps me from accomplishing all that God has for me to do and be. The storms of life can also cause me angst. Let's get together and study God's

Word to see what He says. Someone once said if God brings you to it, He will bring you through it. The prayers for April are also related to anxiety and other emotions that cause us to lose our focus on God.

The last session for Hebrews will be April 11. The mental health study will begin on April 17 at 10 AM in the Fellowship Hall.

The Ladies' Tea is fast approaching! May 4 at 11 AM until 1 PM is the date and time. You may sign-up beginning on April 7. This is a special time to invite family and friends to join you for a lovely celebration with great food and fellowship. Our speaker Jo Woody will bring us a fresh message from God as only Jo can. The deadline for registering will be April 30. Preschool daughters are welcome to come but if you want childcare, the last day to sign up is Sunday April 28.

Our mission opportunity for the tea will once again be the Royal Family Kids Camp. What an honor to be used by God to change the lives of these special children. This year they need twin sheet sets and mattress protectors. As always, if shopping is not your idea of fun, your monetary donations will be used to purchase these items.

Mission Team



Hello! Namaste! ¡Hola!

Did I catch your attention? Awesome! This is the Mission ministry here at First Baptist! I wanted to update everyone on some awesome things that will be happening in the coming months! We, as a team, after a lot of prayer and discussion are planning some mission trips!

The first one will be during the summer with a trip to Guatemala to help our missionary friends, Diego and Tina from Push the Rock! We will be working with the kids they teach and helping in other ways they may need!

There is also a Cuba trip! We've been doing this trip for the last few years and God has worked all around! While the plan was hopeful for June that won't be possible this year so please stay tuned! Contact Pastor Abel Áquila for more information!

Next we have a team going to India in September! For security reasons we can't say where but we, as a church, have an opportunity to sponsor an evangelistic meeting to over 5,000 people while the team is there! More details to come as the trip gets closer.

And last but not least, there will be a trip to the Dominican Republic in November! This trip focuses on helping women and children who have been rescued out of human trafficking circumstances. We will be getting more information as we get closer to the trip date!

These four trips seem far out but they will sneak up on us fast! First and foremost, please be in prayer for each and every one of them! For those who have a heart to go out, for those who are already out on the field, and for those who will be reached during these times! May God's grace be on each one of them!

~Mission Team

Mission Trip to Guatemala

Tentative Date: June 15-22, 2024

Tentative Cost: \$1,250.00 (The cost will depend on the price of the airplane tickets.)

The mission trip will be to work with Push The Rock Guatemala. Diego & Tina Barr are Sports Ministry Associates with Push The Rock Guatemala. They have given testimony at our church and Tina is the daughter of Wayne & Norma Jordan.

There will be a meeting for those interested in going on Sunday, April 7 in the Sanctuary after the Morning Worship Service. Please let Pastor Byron (byron@fbcinverness.com) know as soon as possible if you are interested in going on the Mission Trip.

Vision

Using the power of sports to impact the world for Jesus, one life at a time

Mission

We create life-changing experiences through sports by introducing people to Jesus and helping them live and play for Him.



www.pushtherock.org/global-impact/guatemala/