



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

February 2024

FOLLOWING GOD PRAYERFULLY AND PASSIONATELY!

Check Your L.I.S.T.

During 2024 we are being reminded to “Check Your L.I.S.T.” in the church. L.I.S.T. stands for “Love one another, Invest in one another, and Serve one another... Together.” So, how is your L.I.S.T. going so far? This past month, we have been looking at the subject of love. We studied 1 Corinthians 13 during our Wednesday evening services to help us understand what the Bible teaches about love. We are approaching Easter, the greatest demonstration of God’s love ever known.

The preaching on Sunday mornings has been on stewardship, being a steward of truth, time, talent, and treasures. This is about investing the resources God provides! So now, let's consider “Invest in one another.” Moving from the subject of “Love” to “Invest,” what does it look like to love others and invest in them? This is why the Body of Christ is so important! We depend upon one another for our survival, just as a human body needs all its parts to function. And part of loving others is living sacrificially for the benefit of others. This means taking the time to see what the other person needs and investing our resources to demonstrate our love. Consider the Samaritan in Jesus’s parable (Luke 10:34-35). His love was not limited to just saying kind words or wishing the victim good luck. James 2:14-17 says

James 2:14-17 ^{LSB 14} *What use is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead by itself.*

The Samaritan in Jesus’s parable did not just feel sorry for the broken man, he did something about it. And that something cost him. Sometimes words are cheap. Loving one another can be messy, including using our private donkey, time, food and drink, and money. I heard a preacher say once that “you can give without loving but you cannot love without giving.” I like that.

So, where do you need to invest right now? Does someone need your resources financially, spiritually, physically, emotionally, or relationally? Ask the Lord to let you be the steward He created you to be! Watch as God produces good fruit that plants seeds in others so they will produce fruit as well! Invest in someone today, look at what God can do with the seeds He sows through you... the harvest is great!

So, will you “check your list” this year?

By His Grace!
Pastor Byron

Contact Pastor Byron at byron@fbcinverness.com

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Inverness, FL
34452

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550 Pleasant Grove Road
Inverness, FL 34452
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Worship Ministry



Playing Church?
Or Worship?

“Come, let’s worship and bow down; let’s kneel before the LORD our Maker. For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, the sheep under his care.” Psalm 95: 6-7, CSV

An old friend of mine, Rick, once started a church member’s training session with the following story:

“When I was young, I loved to play church with my friends. We would line chairs up in rows and pull out a cardboard box we used for the pulpit. Then the great debate began over who would preach and who would sing. The more aggressive kids wanted the up-front jobs while the quiet ones were happy to just sit and watch the “show”. Sometimes one of the kids would pretend to be the Holy Ghost walking around the chairs saying “Boo!”

If the leaders did a good job, we would play church for hours. However, if they were not entertaining enough, the kids in the chairs would soon get bored and go in search of more exciting recreation in the front yard. All in all, playing the church game was great fun and a delightful way to pass an afternoon.”

He ended the story with this statement: *“Playing church is, however, a pathetic and meaningless way to pass a lifetime.”*

Every Sunday, churches are filled with those who are simply “playing” games with God. They line up in rows to watch the “show”. If it is good enough, they stay and even come back occasionally. However, if it is not entertaining, they will drift off to play some other game in life.

We were created to worship God! Until we recognize that spiritual principle and learn how to practice true worship, we will never be completely satisfied. Only the presence of God can fill the emptiness of a soul. True worship invites Him to fill that emptiness with Himself. In fact, we were made to worship Him. Few of us understand the importance or the life-changing power of worship. Let’s look at one woman who was dramatically changed as the result of experiencing true worship. Her amazing story is found in **Luke 7:36-50**: *“Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee’s house and reclined at the table. When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee’s house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is--that she is a sinner.” Jesus answered him, “Simon, I have something to tell you.” “Tell me, teacher,” he said. “Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?” Simon replied, “I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled.” “You have judged correctly,” Jesus said. Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this*

Continued on Page 3.

Birthdays

Seeberg, Jack	3/1	Little, Mary	3/7	Stauffer, Mick	3/17
Perko, Nick	3/2	Little, Gene	3/9	Aldridge, Sharon	3/18
Plaisted, Bob	3/2	Strain, Nick	3/9	Rike, Bil)	3/19
Turner, Ken	3/2	Moye, Sarah	3/10	Cooper, Glenn	3/21
Dingler, Bonnie	3/3	Diaz, Deanna	3/11	Taylor, Carl	3/22
Johnson, Darrell	3/3	Rose, Hallie	3/11	Gregoire, Linda	3/25
Gormsen, Gary	3/4	Stalnaker, Sarah	3/11	Gregoire, Phil	3/25
Vaughn, Aaron	3/4	Howe, Willie	3/12	Lucy, James	3/26
Snyder, Jo	3/5	Miles, Diana	3/12	Mitchell, Yvonne	3/26
Cerny, Dallas	3/6	Kaufman, Florence	3/13	Maynor, Steven	3/28
Dunnigan, Damion	3/6	Becksmith, Taylor	3/15	Aldridge, Sam	3/29
Wilkins, Brian	3/6	Weston, David	3/15	Rushing, Nancy	3/31
Agee, Martha	3/7	Becksmith, Lawrence	3/16	Sukut, Joyce	3/31

Healthy Church Conference

Love●Invest●Serve●Together
Invest in God’s church by assessing the health of First Baptist Inverness at one of the two remaining sessions.
Sunday, March 3, 2024 in the Fellowship Hall from 12:00 pm—2:00 pm or Saturday, March 23rd from 10:00 am—12:00 pm.
A meal will be provided for the conference on March 3rd. Please RSVP for the meal so that we know how much food to prepare, and RSVP for childcare for On March 3rd and March 23rd by calling the church office at 352-726-1252.

Thank You Note

Dear FBI Church Family,
Thank you so much for your outpouring of support for us. We enjoyed getting to know you and serve the Lord at the church. We appreciate your prayers, cards, gifts, and most of all your friendship. Please keep in touch and continue praying for us in this next chapter of our ministry. Pastor Aaron is applying to be a hospital chaplain, and we are prayerfully planning to start a church plant in East Tennessee. Please call, e-mail, or text us if you would like to receive our monthly e-mail newsletter, which will include ministry updates and pictures.

Our contact information is:
2703 Valley Home Road
White Pine, TN 37890

Pastor Aaron's phone number: (865) 742-3605
Laura Beth's phone number (865) 742-4418
Our e-mail address: aaronandlauraauiler@gmail.com

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Aaron and Laura Beth Auiler and Family

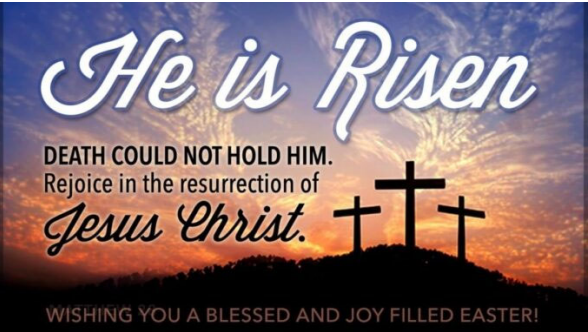
Easter



Journey to the Cross—March 27, 28, & 29

Journey to the Cross is an interactive experience detailing the last two days in the life of Jesus. Visitors will view the Last Supper, The Betrayal, and Peter’s Denial. You will be part of the crowd at Pilate’s Court, ceremonially pound a nail into a cross, and hear the Seven Last Words, ending with a grand presentation at the tomb. Your journey begins between 6:30 and 8:30 and will take about 40 minutes to complete.

Please watch the bulletin for details about our Easter Service on Sunday, March 31st.



Welcome To The Family

New Church Member
Belen “Cookie” Cortez
Rodney Gibson

Financial Updates

Giving January 2024	
Operating Revenue	\$47,382.80
Operating Expense	\$75,363.74
	-\$25,564.34

Memorials & Honors

In Memory of Ken Hall
For: Deacons’ Benevolence Fund
From: Albert & Marilyn Jordan
From: Flo Hayward

In Memory of John Clark (Dave Clark’s father)
For: Mailbox Bible Club
From: Ray & LaVerne Morrison

In Memory of Hope Schroeder
For: Mailbox Bible Club
From: Ray & LaVerne Morrison

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woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven--for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little." Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" Jesus said to the woman, "Your [faith](#) has saved you; go in peace." (NIV)

What a powerful passage of hope and complete transformation in the life of a woman just like you and me. Oh, her sins may be different from ours, but make no mistake; our hearts are just the same – bent toward sin and destruction. This woman found forgiveness and restoration – and so can we! Her story is a beautiful picture of the automatic response of a forgiven heart to the forgiving Father. She came, expecting to meet God (vs. 36) Jesus was the big news in town and the main topic of every conversation. He had healed the leper, given sight to the blind and raised the widow’s son right out of the coffin.

Everybody wanted Jesus at his or her party. Simon was an arrogant Pharisee who invited Jesus to his home for a feast. Jesus went, knowing that He would have an opportunity to minister to the Pharisees. But He also went, knowing that this woman would come seeking Him. God always responds to a seeking heart. Worship begins with a seeking heart. When we seek God, we must seek Him with our whole heart - a heart that is set on being in the presence of God. “Seek” literally means “to pursue, to chase or to hunt”.

An ancient tale from India describes a young man who was seeking God. He went to a wise old sage for help. "How can I find God?" he asked the old man. The old man took him to a nearby river where they waded into the deep water. Soon the water was up just under their chins. Suddenly the old man grabbed the young man by the neck and pushed him under the water, holding him down until he was flailing the water in desperation. Finally, the old man released him. The young seeker was coughing and gasping for air. Reaching the bank, he was furious! "What did that have to do with my finding God?" The old man asked him quietly, "While you were under the water what did you want more than anything else?" The young man thought for a moment and then answered, "I wanted air. I wanted air more than anything else!" The old man replied, "When you want God as much as you wanted air, you will find him." To pursue God means to long for Him with every fiber of our being. God promises to meet us in worship when we come seeking Him.

1 Chronicles 28: 9 - If you seek him, he will be found by you. (NKJV)

Jesus made Himself available to this woman, wanting to meet her need of forgiveness. He chose to go to this party knowing she would be there. Jesus waits for you. He longs to spend time with you. He created you out of love and a desire to be with you. When we come expecting to meet God, longing to be in His presence, then, we will begin to worship.

Ask yourself this question: What is keeping me from spending time alone with God?
Don’t wait another minute.
Make a commitment to seek God! Choose to:
Make an appointment with God.
Come - expecting Him to be there.
Understand that He will be waiting for you.
Refuse to let anything keep you from your time with God.

Contact Pastor John at john@fbcinverness.com

Biblical Counseling



The Problems of Evil and Suffering

(Adapted from “The Problem of Evil” by T. Madsen, MBTS)

All, or at least most Christians, would agree God is omni-perfect. Yet we all suffer. People from all walks of life suffer. Calamities strike on every side, and predators rape and pillage all over the world. How could an all-powerful, all-knowing, morally perfect God put up with such evil? We would do something if we had God’s power.

Why does He do nothing, observing the hideous spectacle? When answered on an emotional level, those questions suggest an unnerving conclusion. Maybe there is and never was a God. We must choose between ugly facts and the hidden God above. We cannot have both, and this is the most difficult challenge faced by any Christian.

The worst act that anyone can do is to reject the Son of God, yet even this choice falls under God’s sovereign control. On one occasion, having been rejected by His adversaries, Jesus accounts for their actions, assuring his disciples that even when sinners reject him, they conform to God’s sovereign will (Matt. 11:25-27).

Even when the Son of God dies at the hands of sinners, God does not let us go. Peter tells his audience, “Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross” (Acts 2:22-23). God claims complete control over the crucifixion of Jesus, and if he can ordain that event, he can ordain anything. Peter needed to make this point because the Acts of the Apostles will often tell of how the gospel advances in the teeth of violent, life-threatening opposition. The most consequential decision that people living today can make is whether or not to receive Christ and thus avoid the torments of hell.

In Romans 1:16-17, Paul says that God’s righteousness appears in the gospel, both as manifested wrath (vv. 18-32) against all sinners and as manifested justice, executed on the cross, and provided to all people for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. *This was to show God’s righteousness* because, in his divine forbearance, he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus (Rom. 3:21-26).

What matters to God is that we understand who he is and who he is coming to light in what he does in the whole drama of sin, fall, and redemption. But now, imagine what we would not know about God if the cross had never happened. In that case, we would not know about God’s fierce commitment to His holiness, manifested in his demand that sin be punished. We would not know how bad our sin looks to God since we would not see that the cross fits the size of our problem. We also would not know about God’s inexplicable love for us, manifested in the sending and giving of the Son of God. The point is not that God had no way of speaking to us on these matters. He always did. But saying and showing are two different things, and God wanted to show us who he is, more than simply telling us who he is. Accordingly, since the cross had to happen, sin had to happen, and with sin comes the suffering from which God promises to rescue us in the end.

The charge that there is no God hits hard because Christians also question God every time we suffer. Where is God when our loved ones die? Where is God when our dreams come to ruin when debts accumulate and when criminals break in and steal? Why does God let children get sold into sex slavery or get hooked on drugs? Why does God allow Hamas goons to scorch the Middle East, burning, pillaging, and raping their victims? When the pain of life gets personal, doubt falls on God’s knowledge, power, and motives. God says that he cares, but he has a strange way of showing it. The books of Job and Ecclesiastes sympathize with these emotions, indicating that God does indeed ‘get it.’ But the suffering goes on anyway.

Are you suffering? 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

Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child



Scripture

“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”
(Matthew 19:14, NIV)

Word

There’s a story in scripture about a time when the children wanted to run to Jesus, but the adults, thinking they were helping, kept them away from Him. When Jesus saw what was going on, He said, “Let them come to me!” Jesus loves children. He says that children are the example of faith and trust that we should follow. Like the children, we should always run to Him. We should always trust Him. We should always find safety in His loving arms.

It’s interesting that the scripture says “the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them.” This tells me that little children are always welcome in heaven, too. Those young ones who leave the earth before they are old enough to have an understanding of what it means to be saved are received with open arms.

Your donations allow us to pack shoeboxes that give these children a tangible gift and gives them an opportunity to learn about Jesus and The Greatest Gift of all!

I would like to share this list from Operation Christmas Child, it lists items that CANNOT be sent:

DO NOT INCLUDE:

Vaseline, scary items (things that will frighten a child rather than bring them joy, war-related items (such as toy soldiers, military vehicles, or camouflage); liquid paint sets or liquid glue; rubber balls with liquid filling; liquid lip glass, matches or fire starters; seeds, sand/rocks/shells gathered from nature; all types of food, candy or gum; medications or vitamins; toothpaste; nail polish; money or play money; baby powder; baking soda; razors; liquids or lotions; breakable items or glass containers; aerosol cans; used clothing or toys and unwrapped soap.

A donation suggestion booklet is available for you at the OCC table.

If you like to make things, we have many projects that are fun to put together and/or make. See me for further information or join us each Thursday at 12 noon for our weekly OCC Workday!

Sandy Watson
sandywatson44@gmail.com
863-261-3119

Daylight Saving Time



Don't forget to set your clocks ahead one hour before you go to bed on Saturday night March 9th.

Upward Soccer



Save The Date
Upward Soccer Banquet
Sunday, March 17th from 2:00 pm—4:00 pm
Please email upward@fbcinverness.com
or contact Coach Taylor at (352) 287-1910
or Coach Amber at (352) 464-3177
if you have questions

Mailbox Bible Club



MAILBOX BIBLE CLUB ACTIVITY REPORT **January 31, 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 183 lessons in January. We awarded certificates to 14 students for completing a series of lessons. Thankfully, one student informed us that they had accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior after they joined our club. We currently have 134 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.

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, Risen.

The anticipation of a long-awaited event is so exciting, right? Maybe it's the arrival of a new baby, time for that dream vacation, or being able to feast on a meal that you've spent all day preparing. Finally partaking of that which you've been looking forward to makes you feel like a child on Christmas morning!

Over the next 5 weeks, you will meet people filled with anticipation. Whether in a valley of dry bones, in the belly of a huge fish, in the thick of pain and grief, on the side of a Jerusalem road, or outside of Jesus's tomb, they were about to experience new life that awaited them on the other side.

They longed for the Promised One who would rescue the world from sin. Each story is filled with twists and turns that point to God's power over death.

As Easter nears, you will reflect on Jesus' death and resurrection. Death could not keep Jesus in the ground. He is too powerful! The power that raised Him is the same power that dwells within you! Because of Jesus' love and sacrifice, you can experience newness of life!

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 are currently part way through John chapter 5!

We would 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.

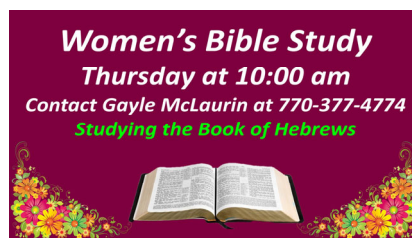
If you have a heart and a passion for the Children's Ministry, please contact Sarah Stalnaker for more information on ways you can help!

Following God Prayerfully and Passionately

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

childrensministry@fbcinverness.com

Women's Bible Study



The Bible Study meets Thursday mornings at 10:00 am in the Fellowship Hall.

In preparation for Journey to the Cross, the Women's Bible Study will meet March 14 and then will take a break. They will resume meeting on Thursday, April 11.

For more information or questions, please contact Gayle McLaurin at 770-377-4774 or

Women's Ministry



How do I love thee? Let me count the ways. February has been a month of love and I have been blessed in two specific areas. Our pastor has explained the "Love Chapter" in ways I had not considered before. The teaching on Wednesday night always brings scripture to life in a practical way. The second was our daily verse and prayer. God met me first with His love. I am so loved; so loved!! God also challenged me to love others. Included in this list were those that are not so lovable. I was challenged; so very challenged! (If you do not receive the daily prayer via email or a printed version, please call the church office.)

Our upcoming Ladies Tea is planned for May 4. Mark your calendars now! The decorating team is already hard at work to make a beautiful ambiance. Jo Woody is working on what God wants us to hear from Him! The food will be delightful. You are encouraged to bring your mothers, your daughters, your friends. (If per chance you have tea cups and/or pots you'd like to donate to use for our teas, would you let Jana know? 580-467-6106)

There will be new Bible studies coming soon. The basic topic will be mental health—releasing our anxiety to God. The title of the book being used as the basis for study is All Is Well with homework included for you to have a daily experience of searching the scripture for yourself and hearing from God in a personal way. The books are on sale often for \$5 so I will order at that time. Want one? Let me know. The main study will be on Thursday mornings. If you are interested in an evening study on this topic, please contact Jana for an alternate time. The decision has not been made yet, so your input is very important.

March is an exciting month. Spring is on its way! Easter is at the end of March this year when we celebrate the death, burial, and resurrection of our LORD and Savior Jesus Christ. Praise God for His love! Praise God for His salvation!

Single Mom University



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

The March Meetings are:

March 3: TOPIC: Strong Mental Health – Developing a Strong Support Team

March 17: TOPIC: Freedom from the Past – Navigating the Shame Vault

Ministry of Warmth



Greetings from the Ministry of Warmth!

I John 4:9—"This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only son into the world that we might live through Him." 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.

In preparation for Journey to the Cross, our last day to meet is March 14 and we will resume meeting April 11.

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

Annie Armstrong Easter Offering



Annie Armstrong Easter Offering and Week of Prayer March 3rd—10th

The FBC Inverness Goal is \$9,000.

Offering Envelopes and Prayer Guides will be in the bulletin on Sunday, March 3rd.

The Annie Armstrong Easter Offering (AAEO) is the primary way Southern Baptists fund missions in North

America. One hundred percent of gifts given to AAEO go to the field to support more than 2,900 missionary families serving across the United States and Canada. Gifts to the AAEO are used to train and resource missionaries in church planting and compassion ministries. Gifts are also used to create evangelism resources. New churches are being planted, hurts are being healed and lives are being transformed by the gospel because you give.