

Flat Springs Baptist Church

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Exciting Sunday School News

Our SS numbers were **bussin'**! What an amazing day celebrating Commitment Sunday with 172 in attendance. Yes, I said 172. This number represents 33 visitors!

Moving forward, we must note our work continues. Here are a few tips to build on:

- Easter is April 9th. Please remind your **FRANS** (friends, relatives, associates, and neighbors) to come and enjoy our cantata.
- No denying, we have built some momentum. We should implement our inviting nature and make SS sound appealing to potential members.
- Be sure to write, email or call our visitors and thank them for attending Commitment Sunday.
- Seek an accountability partner. Make attending SS a priority.
- Remember the 3 **E's**: **E**nergy, **E**xcitement, and **E**nthusiasm.
- May we continue to practice theses actions for the remainder of the church year!

Thanks for your support of SS. Your commitment is not unnoticed.



**Deacon of
the Month - Tom Luck**

Baptist Men's BREAKFAST

April 16th
8 am

Sunday School & Worship Attendance for March 2022


Date	Sunday School	Worship Service
3/5/22	109	144
3/12/22	97	109
3/19/22	94	133
3/26/22	172	266

Easter

April 2nd Palm Sunday



April 6th 7:00 pm Maundy Thursday Service

April 9 th	9:00	Sunday School	
	10:00	Morning Worship	

April 10th Church Office Closed - Easter Monday

News from Baptist Men

The Baptist Men's ministry is a mission arm of Flat Springs Baptist Church. One of our important mission projects is the building of handicap ramps for those in need in our community.

Why a Handicap Ministry?

- It mirrors the example Jesus gives us in scripture. Meeting a person's physical need as a means of opening the door to address their spiritual needs.
- It meets the need of the handicap family member and other family members who are their primary caregivers. If the handicap person is confined to a nursing home because the family can not physically get them in and out of their home, all members suffer.
- It is not a ministry that meets just a current time need. As our population continues to age, this ministry will be needed more and more.
- It is a ministry that all age groups can be involved.
- It does not require a great deal of money to get started.
- There is minimal upfront cost. Church members already own most tools needed.
- It is a ministry that reaches beyond the walls of the Church. This service assists Church members as well as community members.
- It is visible to others in the community which may open doors to share the Gospel.
- You will bless others as well as yourself!

If you know someone that needs a ramp or if you would like to help or join our ministry, please contact Fedd Walker at 919-895-8651.

Message from Pastor Gary

Dear Friends,

It is literally impossible to express to you how wonderful you made my last Sunday. I really can't think of anything you could have done differently. All the outward expressions of love: the generous gifts you showered us with, the naming of the building!! Are you kidding me! Never have Lunette and I felt more genuine love and care than we did on March 26th, 2023. The meal and the fellowship was so sweet! To have 170 in Sunday School and then to have 266 in our morning worship, that was so amazing. The kind words, the hugs, the tears, the laughter all combined to make our last Sunday as pastor and pastor wife one of the most special days of our lives!!

I thank God that our church is such a loving and caring fellowship of believers. God has blessed us in such a powerful way to face the days ahead. The transitional interim will be exactly what we need to do in order to prepare the way for the next chapter in pastoral leadership.

1. We will examine the success and failures of our past to learn from them as we go with God into our future.
2. We will concretely examine our mission in this community and beyond to understand exactly what God is calling us to do in the next 3 to 5 years.
3. We will look at how we find, develop, train, and follow the leadership of our church.
4. We will examine all the ministries that are around us and see where and how we will connect with them going forward to better fulfill God's call to make disciples here and to the uttermost parts of the world.
5. And finally, we will take all the work of the 4 areas mentioned above and we will form:
 - a. The community profile (what is happening in Deep River and where is God moving),
 - b. Our church profile (what are our gifts and what are we being led by God to be and do),
 - c. And our pastor profile, (who is the person God is preparing who can join us and lead us in reaching our community by being the church God has made us to be!

My final challenges as your pastor:

1. Love each other as you do now. Do not allow things in the church or out of the church to cause us to form groups or be divisive. The pandemic was hard, and we didn't do everything perfectly, but our church was not torn apart by it, and for that I am most thankful. I thank God because I don't believe there is any major division in our church today. We aren't perfect and we will have disagreement but during my 18 years, we have "agreed to disagree agreeably!" Keep doing that. In 2023, the church must be quick to forgive and slow to anger!
2. Don't forsake the assembling of ourselves together! Showing up on Sundays and Wednesdays is so important. I am so glad we had over 30 children at the egg hunt on the 25th (great job Children's committee)! I was equally excited that we had 17 youth at our youth meeting on the 26th (great job Youth Committee)! and I was so excited that on the 22nd, our Wednesday night crowd was buzzing (great job

- Wednesday night leaders)! During the interim period, it is my prayer that our church will continue to grow and continue to be wide open for the cause of the gospel! It always feels better when the church is full of worshippers on Sundays. The devil has convinced the culture that Sunday is no longer a sacred time, and church, we must not listen to this lie from the devil. I understand the challenges when you have small children and all the cultural activities are scheduled on the Lord's day. I don't have an easy answer. I know some watch our services on line now on the occasions they have to miss church and that is good. In love I simply must say, church services are the most important thing that happens on Sunday! Families need to worship together and children need to be taught that worshipping God is the most important thing we can do on the Lord's day. This teaching must be done by words and example! I know it is hard and so regret our society has dishonored our Lord by scheduling over top of the one time a week the church, the entire church, come together to proclaim and love and worship for our God! It is the 4th commandment in the 10 commandments by the way!
3. Pray without ceasing. If we don't sincerely pray, then the decisions we make as individuals and as a church will be made without God's direction. That will be a disaster! Pray for God to use you during this interim period. Pray for our church and all the ministries we have going on now and in the future. Pray for the deacons and the personnel committee as they look for other staff positions to be filled and lead our church during the interim time. Pray for the Transitional Interim we are going to call soon. Pray for the search committee that will be formed a few months from now. And finally, pray for the pastor that God is preparing for our church. Pray that God will speak clearly when the time is right to both the pastor and the church!
 4. This one may sound a little strange, but hear me out. I hope the next pastor is a better pastor than I was. I am not trying to sound like I am putting myself down. I am looking to the future. Jesus said to his disciples, "greater things than I have done, you will do!" (John 14:12) I want our church to not get stuck on anything we have done or on anything someone has done. Instead, I want us to build on what has been done and continue our journey upward to the high calling of God Almighty! Don't let the words, "Well Gary said, or Gary did it this way" come out of your mouth! Listen intently for the calling of God to direct our path. Trust that God will bring a new pastor with an entirely different set of skills than I have, and will preach as the Lord leads that pastor with their own style and way. We don't listen for what the preacher says or how the preacher says it, we listen for God and when two or three are gathered together in God's name, God is in the middle of that!
 5. Finally, don't stop! There will continue to be challenges and there will be times that most all of us will want to say, "I quit!" Please don't quit. We have a wonderful church because you are a part of it and we need everyone! If you have quit attending, and somehow you read this article, please come back. You will be welcomed, I promise! (Cont'd next page)

Cont'd This world is in a mess and more than anything in the USA, we need the church to be as strong as it possibly can be! We have all heard that a chain is only as strong as it's weakest link. Hang in there Flat Springs Baptist, the best is yet to be!

Thank you once again from the bottom of my heart. The greatest privilege I have experienced in ministry has been to be the pastor at Flat Springs Baptist Church. Please know that

I will pray for this church everyday and if you need me please don't hesitate to call, my number is 919-356-4565. I leave with you this great truth for all who are born again believers: "The best is yet to be!"

Your Pastor, (at the time I wrote this)

Gary

MISSION
POSSIBLE

Notes from Flat Springs Baptist Church WMU

Spring is blooming with opportunities to give and to serve and to learn.



Food Round-Up for Baptist Children's Homes of NC

This annual drive has begun. Historically, during the month of April, Flat Springs responds by collecting gift cards from Food Lion, Lowe's Food, and Walmart to enable the cottage leaders to shop for specific needs. The statewide goal is to collect for 700,000 meals and snacks, providing for a year. You can drop gift card donations in the offering plate, the church office, or by handing them to Stephanie.

NC Missions Conference - April 14-15

Deadline: Contact Stephanie by April 5th.

Ladies wanting to attend the conference at Hickory Grove Baptist Church in Charlotte, let Stephanie know so that space can be reserved. Friday (optional) opens the Conference with a box dinner, and the programs and break-out sessions roll all day on Saturday. On Friday, the main speaker is Lee Strobel, the former award winning journalist and Atheist known for conversion experience and book "The Case for Christ." On Saturday, the main speaker is ladies-favorite, Sheila Walsh. This conference is sponsored by Baptists on Mission. Cost is \$20.00 - \$28.00. This is TIME SENSITIVE.

WMU-NC Missions Conference - April 28-29

Deadline: Contact Stephanie as soon as possible

The 2023 theme *IGNITE!* is inspired by John 1:5 "*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*" Guest speakers include Julie Busler, Oklahoma President of WMU and the national president of WMU, Connie Dixon.

Musicians will be Russell and Kristi Johnson of Conway, SC – whom we know from Caswell Ladies Retreats. The cost for Saturday is \$40.00.

Fall Ladies Retreat at Caswell on September 22-24

Seven (7) bed spaces remain available for the with keynote speaker and friend Phyllis Elvington. The cost per lady is \$185 for this conference (not \$195).

2023 Mother's Day Offering

Anticipate the collection in May for Atrium Health **Wake Forest Baptist Hospital**. The offering helps patients who "fall between the cracks" of assistance. These are patients who have too much to qualify for government assistance or charity care programs, but do not have enough to pay the medical bills. Every dollar of every gift helps patients pay these bills.

SHOE DONATION DROP OFF

Anticipate a shoe donation of new and gently used shoes is scheduled on July 24th at Jonesboro Heights Baptist Church. Our association is partnering with the Powell River Baptist Association for a shoe fair in Jonesville, Virginia. To donate, Flat Springs will collect until July 23rd. As you are spring cleaning, please hang on to shoes you don't donate locally. Go ahead and place shoe size on outside of the shoes (write with a Sharpie on shoe bottoms), remove all tags from shoes, tie pair together. Collection bins will be out in our Atrium by mid-June.

Forgiving What You Can't Forget

There is still time to sign up for the opportunity to discover what the Bible says about forgiveness and how to find the peace that comes from embracing it.

This study is tentatively set to begin in May after our Financial Peace Program is completed at the end of April. This study is not only to encourage those that are struggling with forgiveness, but also as a tool for us to encourage and help others.

This video Bible study with bestselling author and teacher Lysa TerKeurst (video streaming included) is for those of you who have been hurt by others, who feel stuck in a cycle of unresolved pain. Forgiveness is a major part of the Christian faith. We know God commands us to forgive each other. But, apart from simply saying the words "I forgive you" - many of us have unanswered questions about it: How does it work? On our minds, souls, circumstances—what is actually happening

when we forgive? Why is it so important, and what is the difference between forgiveness and simply moving on? When should I forgive, and are their exceptions? How can I find healing for myself, even if my act of forgiveness doesn't seem to change the person who hurt me?

These are just some of the questions explored in this six-session video Bible study. Lysa will walk with you on a step-by-step process—through biblical answers, deep empathy, and the therapeutic insight that comes from her personal experiences—toward the grace of forgiveness and the freedom from the pain of past wrongs.

Sign up sheet in the Atrium

Thank you for your prayers and support

Judith Nance – Discipleship