

the Vision

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF SHALLOTTE
DECEMBER 2020

LOTTIE MOON CHRISTMAS OFFERING A Great *Multitude* + You Rev. 7:9

OUR 2020 CHURCH GOAL IS \$6,500.

*YOUR GENEROSITY TRANSFORMS
LIVES AROUND THE WORLD.*

The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering provides missionaries the services they need to live among the unreached peoples they serve.

*YOUR GENEROSITY TAKES THE
GOSPEL TO THE UNREACHED.*

Provides audio and visual Gospel films and recordings, oral and deaf learning tools and other technology/media to people around the world.

*YOUR GENEROSITY TRAINS
NATIONALS TO MULTIPLY
DISCIPLES.*

Training national church planters in evangelism, discipleship and biblical strategies is key to empowering more partners and bringing Christ's salvation to where it is most desperately needed.

*YOUR GENEROSITY MEETS
TANGIBLE NEEDS.*

Agricultural needs, job training, medical needs and refugee care provided by LMCO is life changing in unreached communities.

Will you join us in ensuring those without Christ continue to hear the gospel message through your IMB missionaries?

Lottie Moon Christmas Cards

Drop your Christmas cards (for church members) off at the church and make a donation to Lottie Moon in place of the postage you would have paid. There is a display set up in the back of the Family Life Center. Just leave your cards in the basket and drop the donation in the box. Don't forget to check the table for your Christmas cards Sunday if you worship in-person or during regular office hours.

Church Events

- Dec 6th @ 11am
Parent/Child Dedication
- Dec 6th @ 11am
Brunswick Baptist Association
Toy Store Love Offering
- Dec 6th @ 6pm—Hanging of the
Greens *(in person & live streaming)*
- Dec 13th @ 11am—“Joy to the
World”—Celebration Choir
Christmas Program
- Dec 13th @ 6pm—“Christmas in
Song”—All Christmas Music
- Dec 16th by 3pm
Angel Tree Gifts Due
- Dec 20th @ 11am
Celebrate Lord's Supper
- Dec 23rd-25th
Church Office Closed
- Dec 24th @ 5:30pm—Christmas
Eve Service *(in person & live streaming)*

If We Practice Precautions, Does That Mean We Don't Trust God?

2020 has yielded an odd situation. Christians are pitted against Christians, often in the same church, over whether practicing precautions shows a lack of faith. Are we being fearful and lack faith if we practice Covid precautions? Would it show a greater faith if we cut the cords that separate the chairs and call everyone back into worship? Or, if we wear masks, does that show a lack of faith? After all, God will protect us from this virus, right?

In short, does the practice of precautions imply we don't trust God?

When we turn to the Bible, we see no contradiction between practicing precautions and exercising faith. Or between trusting in God's protection and applying common sense solutions. And, you'll notice, in the Bible the application of common sense is never considered a lack of faith (1 Tim. 5:23) but disobedience to God's Word always is (1 Sam. 15:20-24). That is, faith requires obedience.

And Christmas gives us a good example.

Joseph was an ordinary Jewish man who lived the uneventful life of a carpenter in a small, backwater Galilean town called Nazareth. We are introduced to this young man when his whole life is still a sunrise on the horizon. He is daydreaming about a home with Mary, the family they would have, and a business he would build. Then he finds out Mary is pregnant, and he is pressed to make the hardest decision of his life before his life is hardly hitting a pace. And that's when we are told one seminal fact about him, the character trait that guides his decisions and decides his actions. He was a "righteous man" (Matt. 1:19).

That means he was a man of faith, trusted God, and wanted to do what God wanted him to do. But so far, trusting God resulted in fairly predictable outcomes. Do what God asks, and God provides. Marriage, business, family. It was all going according to plan.

But suddenly, God requires Joseph to practice a risky faith. That is, to truly believe God and do what God asks. That's what real faith is—trusting God when the outcomes are not so predictable, and He requires obedience to do what you have not done before.

And Joseph steps up. He shows he is, in fact, a man of faith. He accepts Mary's pregnancy, and off to Bethlehem they go. Jesus is born and raised in the small town for two years, concluded by the arrival of the Magi.

And Joseph probably thought that, from here on out, faith would become predictable again.



Hardly.

Twice in the story God reveals to Joseph through an angel that conditions were dangerous for the child. Not a pandemic, but politics. And God again commands Joseph to act in faith and do what Joseph would not naturally choose to do. Take evasive action. So Joseph travels routes that protect him and his family, and he even takes them to Egypt until the threat passes (Matt. 2:12, 13-15).

In other words, Joseph takes precautions, and the Bible never implies that doing so shows a lack of faith. Quite the opposite. Joseph takes precautions precisely because he is a man of faith.

Now, you might say, well, sure, if an angel showed up in my dreams it would be easy for me, too. But that misses the point. The reason that we are told he was a "righteous man," a man of faith, is to prepare us for what he is going to be asked to do. First, to accept Mary as his wife. Then to take precautions. Protecting his family doesn't show fear. It shows faith.

And it wasn't easy. Joseph had not heard about this in Hebrew school. These were not predictable outcomes. God was asking Joseph to do something against human nature, something unmanly, uncomfortable, inconvenient, and maybe even embarrassing. Run. And he had to have enough faith to do it.

A man of lesser faith might have sat around and wondered if that was really an angel in his dream. If God really wanted him to sprint through the desert to Egypt. If hiding on back roads was really being faithful.

And a man of lesser faith would have said, if I run, everyone will think I don't trust God. So I'll stay, and God will protect me and my family. After all, that's God's job, right?

Not really. Not that way. See, the Bible explicitly warns Christians not to "test the Lord your God," using a word that can

continued on page 3....



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mean “tempt” (Deut. 6:16). It means that you are not to presume of God what you want Him to do, calling it “faith” when in fact it is just pride. Another version of this is trying to force God into proving His promises are true by doing things that He has not told us to do (Matt. 4:7). That, by the way, is the reason Jesus never performed miracles on demand. It’s not God’s job to obey us. It’s our job to obey Him.

But what about all those times that God says for us to trust Him,

that He will protect us? All true. But here’s the thing. God decides what qualifies as faith at the moment and for that occasion. Sometimes it’s fight, sometimes it’s flee. But it’s always God’s will. It’s always obedience (1 Sam. 15:20-24). And putting ourselves in a bad situation and then expecting God to get us out of it is not exercising faith.

I think that the pandemic has stretched our faith, and I hope it has strengthened our faith and our relationships. But let’s

remember that we all have in common a desire to trust God for the present and for the future. We have in common our faith in Christ.

And the measure of our faith is not whether we practice pandemic precautions. Obedience is. Even when it is uncomfortable or inconvenient.

Have a blessed, safe, and joyful Christmas!

With Love in Christ,
Pastor Bob and Kim

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

James 1:17

Bags of Hope

What comes about when you mix the ‘Bags of Hope’ mission with the Angel Tree ministry? Yes, an opportunity to love on our friends and to share the awesome good news that a Savior was born on Christmas Day.

On Friday, December 18th we will be delivering food boxes, groceries, and a special treat to our widows, to families who need something special at Christmas, and to the families of the Angel Tree children.

To carry out this Mission in the name of our Father we will need many (many!) volunteer drivers. Drivers to deliver to the individual

families who will be receiving a food box and “Bags of Hope” – we have nearly 90 some families to deliver to – so we need you!!

If you can come out to share the special love of the Christmas season, please contact

Don Evans 910-880-9242 / Priscilla Evans 949-433-5903 / or Pastor Michael Borton 910-231-9060



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF SHALLOTTE

LOVE GOD. LOVE ONE ANOTHER. LOVE THE WORLD.

4486 Main Street
Shallotte, NC 28470

910.754.4048
fbcshallotte.org

Office Hours:

M-Th 9am—3pm
Closed Friday

Sunday School—Online
Worship—11:00am



Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
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Shallotte, NC

Read the Bible Beginning to End Reading Plan

1-Year Plan. It is important to understand the fullness of God's message to the churches, and a great way of doing this is reading the Old and New Testaments simultaneously. This plan, which can be completed in one calendar year, does just that. Readings from both Testaments are included from the beginning and although each reading does not contain both Testaments, the two are read effectively.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> 12/1 Ezekiel 40-41; 2 Peter 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 12/14 Joel; Revelation 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 12/27 Zechariah 1-4;
Revelation 18 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12/2 Ezekiel 42-44; 1 John 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 12/15 Amos 1-3; Revelation 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> 12/28 Zechariah 5-8;
Revelation 19 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12/3 Ezekiel 45-46; 1 John 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 12/16 Amos 4-6; Revelation 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> 12/29 Zechariah 9-12;
Revelation 20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12/4 Ezekiel 47-48; 1 John 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 12/17 Amos 7-9; Revelation 8 | <input type="checkbox"/> 12/30 Zechariah 13-14;
Revelation 21 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12/5 Daniel 1-2; 1 John 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 12/18 Obadiah; Revelation 9 | <input type="checkbox"/> 12/31 Malachi 1-4;
Revelation 22 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12/6 Daniel 3-4; 1 John 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 12/19 Jonah; Revelation 10 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12/7 Daniel 5-7; 2 John 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 12/20 Micah 1-3; Revelation 11 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12/8 Daniel 8-10; 3 John 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 12/21 Micah 4-5; Revelation 12 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12/9 Daniel 11-12; Jude 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 12/22 Micah 6-7; Revelation 13 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12/10 Hosea 1-4; Revelation 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 12/23 Nahum; Revelation 14 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12/11 Hosea 5-8; Revelation 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 12/24 Habakkuk; Revelation 15 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12/12 Hosea 9-11; Revelation 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 12/25 Zephaniah; Revelation 16 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12/13 Hosea 12-14; Revelation 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 12/26 Haggai; Revelation 17 | |