

the Vision

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF SHALLOTTE | DECEMBER 2023

MERRY
Christmas



Church Events

- Dec 3rd—FBCS Kids Perform “Angels Say What!?” , Parent/Child Dedication & Brunswick Baptist Assoc. Toy Store Offering
- Dec 10th—Celebrate the Lord’s Supper & Called Conference
- Dec 11th at 6:30pm—Ladies Ministry Meeting
- Dec 12th at 4:30pm—Men’s Ministry Oyster/ Hot Dog Roast
- Dec 14th at 10:30am—Bags of Hope Packing
- Dec 15th at 6:30pm—Angel Tree Dinner & Youth Christmas Party
- Dec 16th at 11am—Bags of Hope Distribution
- Dec 17th—“The Worship of Christmas” Presented by Celebration Choir
- Dec 21st & 25th — Office Closed
- Dec 24th at 10:30am—Worship Service (No Sunday School)
- Dec 24th at 5:30pm—Candlelight, Communion & Carols Service
- Dec 29th at 6pm—Youth “Son of God” Movie Night
- Dec 31st at 10:30am—Worship Service (No Sunday School), FBCS Kids Check In Launch

Dismantling Christmas in Bethlehem

Bethlehem, located in the West Bank, is predominantly Muslim. Angry over the war between Israel and Hamas, Bethlehem officials announced that they are “dismantling Christmas decorations installed several years ago in the city's neighborhoods and removing all festive appearances” of the Christmas season.

Due to the “situation in Palestine,” they said, people (meaning Muslims) are “sad, angry and upset. Our people in Gaza are being massacred and killed in cold blood.” In addition, they claimed that they were dismantling Christmas decorations in Bethlehem “in honor of the martyrs and in solidarity with our people in Gaza.”

In other words, to side with Muslim terrorists, they are kicking Christmas out of Bethlehem.

But why Christmas?

Oddly, Muslims grasp what many of today's secular Americans deny. Christmas is about Jesus.

Islam is an imperialist, violent religion. Their hatred of the Jews is ingrained in history. Their hatred of Christians is a product of their beliefs, and they have no reservations about acting on those beliefs. As a result, most Christians have left Bethlehem, which is ruled by the Muslim majority, who will seize any opportunity to destroy Christianity or any appearance of its existence.

Scholars report that the Christian population of Bethlehem has been in steady decline. In 1950, Christians made up over 80% of the local population. Today it's around 10%. Most Christians have fled the area due to persecution and religious harassment.

And that's what we can expect as Islam continues to spread throughout the Western world. To me, the dismantling of Christmas decorations by Muslims serves as a metaphor of what Muslims hope to do to Christianity and Judaism worldwide.

If anything, events since October 7 have exposed the true dominance of Islamic ideologies in our culture. Muslim activists and supporters have surfaced in higher education, government, and in the marketplace. Muslims and terrorist sympathizers are clogging the streets of major cities in the US and the UK, protesting Israel's response to Hamas' terrorist attacks.

This should make us shudder. But it also should remind us that, contrary to what we often hear, not all religions are alike, and we must clarify that at Christmas we celebrate the hope we have in Christ.

The difference Christmas makes

Contrasts between Christianity and Islam remind us why we need to remember that our hope is in Christ alone.

For instance, we don't believe in the same God.

The word “Allah” means “The God.” The god of Islam is impersonal and transcendent. This god does not introduce himself, fellowship with people, or show grace to sinners.

Unlike Christians, Muslims do not believe that God is revealed in three Persons. Muslims believe that the Christian claim that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy

Spirit are all equally the one true God is blasphemy and is punishable by death.

In short, Allah is a false god, and he is not the God of the Bible. The one true God came to us in Jesus Christ, to reveal His true nature, and to save us from our sins (Phil. 2:5-11). Muslims deny Christmas because they deny that Jesus is God.

But we know that our salvation hinges on this truth.

So, we don't believe in the same Jesus.

Muslims acknowledge Jesus, but not the same Jesus we find in the Bible. In the Koran, Jesus is a prophet like Muhammed, but a lesser prophet. Muslims rage that Jesus should not be worshipped, and that it is blasphemy to do so.

But we know that Jesus Christ is God, and our hope is in Him (Col. 1:15-20). We celebrate Christmas because God came to earth as a man, born into this world in the humblest of conditions. He chose to be merciful, and to let us know who He is and how much He loves us (John 3:16).

The god of Islam did not come to earth as a man, live a sinless life, die on a cross for our sins, or rise from the dead. Bethlehem is absent from Islam. But our God did all of that and at Christmas we celebrate His great work in birth, death, and resurrection (John 1:1-14).

Christmas is about hope

Islam is a religion without hope. And a religion without hope is consumed with death.

So, remember that Christmas is about the hope that we all have in Jesus Christ, and nowhere else (1 Peter 1:3). Whether a person lives in Gaza or in Shallotte, our God is the God of the Bible, the one true God who came into the world for us, so that we might have peace with God (Luke 2:14, Rom. 5:1).

The fact is, Muslims may be able to remove Christmas decorations, but they cannot dismantle Christmas. God came to us, in a place called Bethlehem, so we could know Him and be saved.

“Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord” (Luke 2:11).

Merry Christmas!

With Love in Christ,

Pastor Bob



Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

WEEK OF PRAYER

for International Missions

December 3-10, 2023

Southern Baptists observe a Week of Prayer for International Missions each year before the annual Lottie Moon Christmas Offering® emphasis. Will you join your heart with others to pray for missionaries around the world who are faithfully sharing the gospel?

Each day pray, we will reach the lost through:

Day 1—obedience

Day 2—innovation

Day 3—research

Day 4—partnerships

Day 5—church planting

Day 6—relationships

Day 7—discipleship

Day 8—commitment

ABOUT LOTTE MOON

Growing up in Virginia, Lottie Moon and her siblings chose to rebel against Christianity. At 18, Lottie followed Christ and was baptized. When she was 33, she sailed to China as a Southern Baptist missionary. She saw firsthand the world's greatest problem — LOSTNESS.

In letters to Southern Baptists in America, she pleaded for increasing prayer and giving. Her letters raised more support for missionaries to be sent to China. Every year, Southern Baptists collect the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering® where 100% of the gifts collected send and support missionaries.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

As a church body, FBCS, will join with other Baptists across the nation in prayer for International Missions and the season of giving to the offering.

The church goal for this year's offering is \$8,800. Giving envelopes will be available during the month of December. You can also give online or by scanning the QR code.



Deacon of the Week



DOUG WARD

(910) 512-1739
dgward@atmc.net
Dec 10th-16th



BOBBY DAVIS

(910) 540-2686
gritster2016@outlook.com
Dec 17th-23rd



KELLY HOLDEN

(910) 231-6053
seekellrun@atmc.net
Dec 24th-30th



DICKY CARICO

(336) 514-5379
auntieanne1820@atmc.net
Dec 31st - Jan 7th

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF SHALLOTTE

LOVE GOD. LOVE ONE ANOTHER. LOVE THE WORLD.

4486 Main Street
Shallotte, NC 28470

910.754.4048
fbcsballotte.org

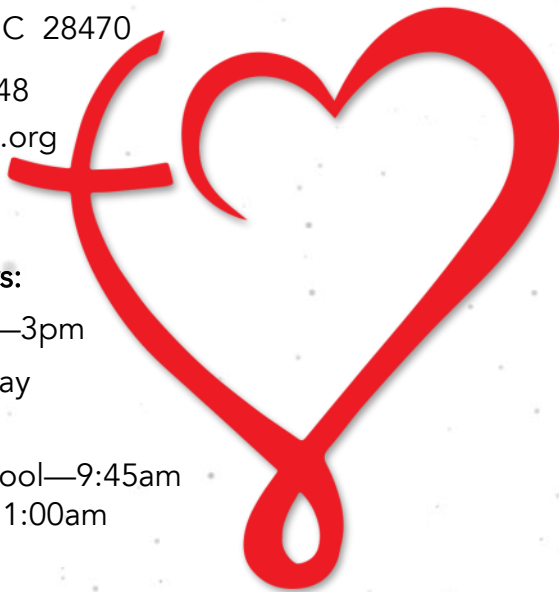
Office Hours:

M-Th 9am—3pm

Closed Friday

Sunday School—9:45am

Worship—11:00am



Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 318
Shallotte, NC

THE WORD OF GOD IN A YEAR

O send out thy light and thy truth! Let them lead me.

READ WITH FAMILY		DAY	READ IN SECRET		READ WITH FAMILY		DAY	READ IN SECRET	
1 Chronicles 29	2 Peter 3	1 st	Micah 6	Luke 15	2 Chronicles 19–20	Revelation 8	17 th	Zechariah 4	John 7
2 Chronicles 1	1 John 1	2 nd	Micah 7	Luke 16	2 Chronicles 21	Revelation 9	18 th	Zechariah 5	John 8
2 Chronicles 2	1 John 2	3 rd	Nahum 1	Luke 17	2 Chronicles 22–23	Revelation 10	19 th	Zechariah 6	John 9
2 Chronicles 3–4	1 John 3	4 th	Nahum 2	Luke 18	2 Chronicles 24	Revelation 11	20 th	Zechariah 7	John 10
2 Chronicles 5–6:11	1 John 4	5 th	Nahum 3	Luke 19	2 Chronicles 25	Revelation 12	21 st	Zechariah 8	John 11
2 Chronicles 6:12	1 John 5	6 th	Habakkuk 1	Luke 20	2 Chronicles 26	Revelation 13	22 nd	Zechariah 9	John 12
2 Chronicles 7	2 John	7 th	Habakkuk 2	Luke 21	2 Chronicles 27–28	Revelation 14	23 rd	Zechariah 10	John 13
2 Chronicles 8	3 John	8 th	Habakkuk 3	Luke 22	2 Chronicles 29	Revelation 15	24 th	Zechariah 11	John 14
2 Chronicles 9	Jude	9 th	Zephaniah 1	Luke 23	2 Chronicles 30	Revelation 16	25 th	Zechariah 12–13:1	John 15
2 Chronicles 10	Revelation 1	10 th	Zephaniah 2	Luke 24	2 Chronicles 31	Revelation 17	26 th	Zechariah 13:2	John 16
2 Chronicles 11–12	Revelation 2	11 th	Zephaniah 3	John 1	2 Chronicles 32	Revelation 18	27 th	Zechariah 14	John 17
2 Chronicles 13	Revelation 3	12 th	Haggai 1	John 2	2 Chronicles 33	Revelation 19	28 th	Malachi 1	John 18
2 Chronicles 14–15	Revelation 4	13 th	Haggai 2	John 3	2 Chronicles 34	Revelation 20	29 th	Malachi 2	John 19
2 Chronicles 16	Revelation 5	14 th	Zechariah 1	John 4	2 Chronicles 35	Revelation 21	30 th	Malachi 3	John 20
2 Chronicles 17	Revelation 6	15 th	Zechariah 2	John 5	2 Chronicles 36	Revelation 22	31 st	Malachi 4	John 21
2 Chronicles 18	Revelation 7	16 th	Zechariah 3	John 6					