

Dear Canton First Baptist Church Family,

It has been my privilege to serve you as financial secretary for a year now! Thank you for being an awesome church family.

In preparation for year-end reporting, all gifts must be received in the church office physically by December 31st, or if being mailed, must be postmarked by December 31. Since the 31st is a Sunday, please plan ahead if you are mailing a year-end gift. I will be producing a final 2023 giving statement for tax purposes the second week of January.

I will be out of the office from Dec 15th through January 1st (celebrating my daughter's college graduation and our 30th wedding anniversary), so please feel free to contact me prior to Dec 15th if you have any questions!

Thank you,  
Faith



*Breath of*  
**HEAVEN**  
*Christmas Cantata*

**Presented by the Sanctuary Choir**  
**Sunday, December 17 @ 11:00**

JOIN US FOR  
**HANGING OF THE GREEN**

SUNDAY,  
NOVEMBER  
26<sup>TH</sup>  
@ 11:00 AM

Canton First Baptist Ch.  
208 Academy Street  
Canton, NC 28716

**LOTTIE MOON**  
CHRISTMAS OFFERING

*Providing financial support to missionaries  
as they share the gospel overseas.*

**Ingathering Dec 3**

Canton First Kidz & Youth will present:  
**One Starry Night**  
Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup> @ 11:00 am

Christmas Breakfast Potluck

Sunday, Dec. 17<sup>th</sup>  
@ 9:00 am

Fellowship Hall

# The Witness

208 Academy Street • Canton, North Carolina 28716  
Office: 828.648.2367 • cantonfirst@gmail.com

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WE ARE HERE FOR *you*

## Seasons Greeting

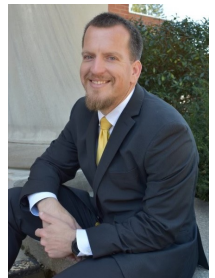
We are quickly heading into the holiday season. With Thanksgiving next week and Christmas hot on its heels, you know very well that our church will be a busy place. With so many reasons to celebrate what God is doing in our church and our world, though, busy does not have to mean hectic. We can busy ourselves with joy!

As we consider the reasons we have for which to be thankful, we can let joy build generosity in our souls. As we anticipate the celebration of the coming of Christ to this earth, advent can remind us of the joy of anticipation. As we sing and listen to the sounds of Christmas through the cantata and other special programs, we can make and appreciate a joyful noise. As we give cheerfully to the work of the church we can be joyful participants in the Kingdom of God. Eventually, once Christmas Eve arrives, we can let the joy of the birth of our savior wash over us in celebration twice in one day, Christmas Eve being on a Sunday this year.

So, yes, we are going to be busy. But, is there not something special about this kind of busy? We are about to be busy with the work and celebration of a God who saves, and that is a kind of busy for which I will gladly volunteer. Will you?

Thanks in advance for including Canton-FBC in your Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations this year.

Your Pastor, Rev. Dr. Court Greene



## Christmas Poinsettia Memorials



For your gift of \$20, we will list your "in memory of" and "in honor of" gifts in the Memorial Bulletin in December. Your gifts support the beautiful decorations in our church during the holiday season and provides poinsettias delivered by the deacons to members unable to attend. Please fill out this form and return it to the office, drop it in the offering plate, or place in your envelope with the donation.

Yes, I would like a memorial/honorarium:

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_  
By: \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_  
By: \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_  
By: \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_  
By: \_\_\_\_\_

Packet: 0

Non Presorted Labels

0

Canton First Baptist Church  
828.648.2367 www.canton-fbc.org  
208 Academy Street  
Canton NC 28716

USPS 906-880  
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Canton, NC 28716





As we enter another holiday season, the twinkling lights, festive decorations, and familiar carols remind us that something extraordinary is about to unfold—the celebration of the birth of our Savior. If you're like me, in the midst of the busyness and excitement, it can be easy to lose perspective of the profound significance of relationships during the seasons of Advent and Christmas.

The season of Advent marks our anticipation of Christ's coming. This season serves as a poignant reminder of God's desire to be in a relationship with us. The gospels proclaim the fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah, declaring: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us")." (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23). In the birth of Jesus, God made a bold statement: He wants to be with us, and He's willing to walk alongside us in our earthly journey.

As we navigate the complexities of this season, we are invited to ponder the magnitude of this divine declaration. God, in His infinite love, bridged the gap between divinity and humanity by sending His Son to dwell among us. The incarnation of Christ serves as a testament to the depth of God's longing for relationship. Our God, the great creator of all things, who spoke into existence an essentially infinite cosmos too great for us to comprehend, does not remain distant. Instead, He entered into the messiness of human existence, embracing both our joys and sorrows. He continues to work in this way for each of us today.

Each year, as we light the candles on the Advent wreath, each candle represents a different point of focus of our preparation for Christ's arrival—hope, peace, joy, and love. These principles are tightly woven into the fabric of our relationship with Christ, and serve as the foundation for meaningful connections with others.

Christmas serves as the overture of this divine desire for relationship, culminating with the pain and triumph of Easter. This gift is not one-sided, and our response to God's invitation is crucial. Just as God took the first step in establishing a relationship with us through the birth of His Son, we are called to respond in kind. Just as those present in the stable, we bear witness today to God's desire to be among us as we serve alongside one another in various ways, proclaiming the Good News through our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service. The Christmas season beckons us to cultivate relationships grounded in love, compassion, and understanding. It challenges us to extend a hand of friendship, forgiveness, and reconciliation to those around us.

In embracing the gift of relationship during Advent and Christmas, we have another profound opportunity to reflect the Heart of God. As we exchange gifts and share meals with loved ones, let the true spirit of the season shine through—the joy of being in relationship with one another, as God desires to be in relationship with each of us. May this season be a time of deepening connections, spreading love, and rejoicing in the divine truth that God is indeed with us.

Blessings!

*Rev. James Markey*



## Experience God with Canton First

- Sunday: November 26, 2023: HANGING OF THE GREEN  
 9:15 Choir Practice in the Sanctuary  
 9:30 Walk through of Hanging of the Green  
 10:00 Sunday School Adults-FH, Children - 3rd Floor  
 11:00 Worship in-person, Facebook, YouTube & WPTL
- Monday 3:30 Staff Meeting
- Wednesday 6:00 Adult Bible Study Resumes-Exodus  
 7:00 Adult Choir Practice 🎵🎵
- Saturday 1:45 JOY Club LEAVES Crestview Farmer's Daughter & Christmas Lights in Bristol \$65 (see Lowell or Sandra)
- Sunday: December 3, 2023: Ingathering Lottie Christmas Offering  
 9:45 Sunday School Adults-FH, Children - 3rd Floor  
 11:00 Worship in-person, Facebook, YouTube & WPTL  
 4 to 6 CCCM Christmas Party—Family Hosts arrive at 3:30
- Monday 3:30 Staff Meeting
- Tuesday 10:00 Jean Teague WMU—Fellowship Hall  
 11:30 Christmas Luncheon at Crestview  
 6:00 Deacon Christmas supper @ Southern Porch
- Wednesday 6:00 Adult Bible Study-Exodus  
 7:00 Adult Choir Practice 🎵🎵
- Thursday 10:00 Blue Ridge Mtn. Quilters—Fellowship Hall  
 4 to 6 Community Kitchen—See Cathy Walsh  
 6:00 Canton Christmas Parade
- Sunday: December 10, 2023: Children's Christmas Program  
 9:30 Children walk through the Christmas Program  
 9:45 Sunday School Adults-FH, Children - 3rd Floor  
 11:00 Worship in-person, Facebook, YouTube & WPTL  
 12:00 First Kidz—Happy Birthday Jesus Party - FH
- Monday 10:00 Blood Mobile—Fellowship Hall  
 3:30 Staff Meeting
- Wednesday 6:00 Adult Bible Study-Exodus  
 7:00 Adult Choir Practice 🎵🎵
- Sunday: December 17, 2023: Cantata  
 9:00 Christmas Breakfast—Fellowship Hall  
 10:00 Choir Practice/Mic Check in Sanctuary  
 10:00 Sunday School Adults-FH, Children - 3rd Floor  
 11:00 Worship in-person, Facebook, YouTube & WPTL
- Monday 3:30 Staff Meeting
- Wednesday 6:00 Adult Bible Study-Exodus  
 NO CHOIR Practice until first of the year
- Sunday: December 24, 2023: Christmas Eve  
 9:45 Sunday School Adults-FH, Children - 3rd Floor  
 11:00 Worship in-person, Facebook, YouTube & WPTL  
 8:00 Christmas Eve Service—Communion
- Monday MERRY CHRISTMAS!!  
 Church Office Closed this week. No weekly Services

Growing up, Daddy would gather my sisters and I (and Mama) around as he read Luke 2:1-14 every Christmas Eve night. Today, MANY years have gone by, but as I was preparing for this newsletter, I read this again and reminded myself that it is not by mistake that Caesar Augustus ordered a census to be taken and that David with Mary had to travel to Bethlehem. Not by accident did Mary go into labor (No wonder she went into labor, the distance from Nazareth to Bethlehem is roughly 90 miles. Non-stop walking would take a person approximately 34 hours). I read that the birth of Jesus was announced by an angel appearing in the sky to the shepherds who were tending their flocks nearby in a field. The angel told them that a Savior had been born in Bethlehem and that He was the Messiah. The angel also told them how to find the Baby, and that they would find him wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. I pondered on this that God's plans are unexpected most of the time. Why lowly Shepherds? Why would God choose someone that doesn't necessarily have an education or a specific talent? They weren't most likely the richest ones in Bethlehem. They probably didn't get invited to fancy parties and celebrations. They were an unlikely bunch to be addressed by a heavenly angel that gave specific instruction for them to carry out His will. Nope, no mistake about any of this! God knew that the Shepherds wouldn't question their "assignment". They wouldn't hesitate if this Angel was telling them the truth; a truth about the Messiah that they had heard about from childhood stories. Instead they responded with faith and obedience. I have realized since being asked to be the Children and Youth Director that we should be open to God's call and to respond with humility and trust. Like the shepherds God's message is for everyone, not just the influential, "equipped", and powerful people. Will you respond to His call like the shepherds; without hesitation or questioning?

I have thoroughly enjoyed having school lunch with some of our kiddos. (School lunch isn't that bad!) It has been pretty tasty, or maybe it's because of the company. *Pictured are Foster, Isabella, Madi, her friend Hadley.*



*Susan Davis*

