



The Missing Person

■ Roger Gilbert *Interim Pastor*

It is that time of year when we begin to see nativity scenes appearing on mantles, dining room tables, in front of churches, in store window fronts and in a variety of other locations. As a part of the annual Advent observance, some churches have live nativity dramas. Some of them are major productions. I know a man who annually displays something of a "museum" of nativity sets. Some of them are rare items from other countries. They are an amazing variety of sizes and range from very simple to complex and ornate. Some nativity scenes include only Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus. Others include Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, the shepherds, wise men, angels, donkeys, sheep and cows.

Of all the nativity scenes I have observed and all the nativity dramas I have witnessed, as best as I can remember, they have all left out one very important person. None of them have included John the Baptist! You may say that he doesn't belong there. After all, there is no record of his presence at the birth of Jesus. Besides that, the birth of Jesus is a wonderfully joyful event. John's stern appearance and his thundering preaching of judgment seem out of place around the manger in Bethlehem.

In the lectionary readings, however, John is always the focus of the second Sunday in Advent. Why do we need to hear about and think about John the Baptist at Christmas time? Consider what the gospels declare is John's role. He has come to prepare the way for Jesus. The summary statement of his preaching is "Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand." His bluntness didn't win him any favors with the authorities. Can't you just imagine the scene in which he pointed a boney finger at the Pharisees and Sadducees and called them "a brood of vipers" (Matthew 3:7). That is not a very welcoming statement! Why do we need John? John sensitizes us to the reality and consequences of our sin so that we will see our need for the grace and forgiveness experienced in Jesus. To put it another way, we need to hear the bad news before we can be ready for the good news.

Occasionally we hear of someone who, because of some neurological issue, is unable to feel pain. At first that may sound like a wonderful problem. Wouldn't it be great to never feel any pain? A closer look, however, reminds us that pain has a very important purpose. Pain is a signal that something is wrong. If you accidentally touch a hot stove you immediately jerk your hand back. You may get a slight burn. But if you felt no pain you might leave your hand on the stove and receive a horrible burn. Pain plays a very important role in that it signals that something is wrong and needs attention.

Maybe we don't need to include John the Baptist in our nativity scenes and dramas, but John belongs in the story of what God was and is doing in sending Jesus Christ as our savior. Before we welcome a savior we must know that we need a savior. John is still preparing the way.



Schedule

Sunday, December 7

8:30 a.m. Early Worship - FLC
 9:45 a.m. Sunday School for All Ages
 10:55 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary
 12:45 p.m. White Christmas Lunch & Gift Distribution

Monday, December 8

9:00 a.m. Prayer in Sanctuary
 10:00 a.m. Sewing Group
 12:00 p.m. Line Dancers - Gym

Tuesday, December 9

7:00 p.m. Men's Basketball - Gym

Wednesday, December 10

5:00 p.m. Family Night Meal (Lasagna, Tossed Salad, Garlic Bread, & Dessert)
 5:45 p.m. Adult Bible Study - FLC
 5:45 p.m. Children's & Student Activities
 7:00 p.m. Sanctuary Choir Practice

Thursday, December 11

7:30 p.m. Celtic Christmas Concert - New Life Fellowship Church
 8:00 p.m. Senior Basketball - Gym

Friday, December 12

12:00 p.m. Line Dancers - Gym
 7:30 p.m. Celtic Christmas Concert - New Life Fellowship Church

Saturday, December 13

6:00 p.m. Venture Student Progressive Dinner

Christian Sympathy

...is extended to the family and friends of Shelva Gordon in her death on November 21, 2014.

Christian Sympathy

...is extended to the family and friends of Frances Fincannon in her death on November 24, 2014.

Christian Sympathy

...is extended to Ellen White in the death of her brother-in-law Paul Hall on November 23, 2014.

Advent Celebrations

Sunday December 7, 2014
 White Christmas Celebration & Gift Distribution

Thursday & Friday, December 11 & 12
 Celtic Christmas Program
 7:30 p.m. New Life Christian Fellowship, Taylorsville

Tuesday, December 16
 Senior Adult Trip to Wohlfahrt Haus in Wytheville, Va

Sunday, December 21
 Christmas Choir Cantata "What Sweeter Music"
 6:00 p.m. Christmas Cantata - Sanctuary
 7:00 p.m. Cookie Fellowship - Adams Hall

Wednesday, December 24
 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
 4:00 p.m. ~ Sanctuary

Spiritual Statistics

Weeks of November 23 & 30, 2014

	11/23	11/30
Church in Bible Study	161	174
Church in Worship	258	244
8:30 a.m. service	98	82
10:55 a.m. service	160	162

Financial Statistics

Weeks of November 23 & 30

	11/23	11/30
Budget - Received	\$42,454.81	\$13,445.05
Alms	250.00	0.00
Designated - Received	3,863.50	823.00
Building Reserve - Received	50.00	40.00

International & Global Missions Offering

Global Missions - Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
 \$272.00

International Mission - Southern Baptist Convention
 \$10.00

TOTAL: \$282.00 GOAL: \$15,000

TOTAL GIVING WEEK OF 11/23/14 49,014.16

TOTAL GIVING WEEK OF 11/30/14 14,590.05

Budget for 2014-2015 865,070.00

Budget Received-Year to Date 149,903.17

Remaining in Budget - Unfunded 715,166.83

Designated Funds Received-Year to Date 15,281.14

Alms Received-Year to Date 1,278.78

Building Reserve-Year to Date 480.00

Total Giving-Year to Date 169,621.23

Church Staff Directory

Dr. Roger Gilbert.....Interim Pastor
 Mr. James Martin.....Minister of Music & Worship
 Mr. Landon Senn.....Minister of Students
 Ms. Melissa Wilson.....Minister of Children & Families
 Mr. Eddie Wiseman.....Accompanist / Music Assistant

OFFICE HOURS: 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM Mon - Fri Tel: 704-873-7231

THE INTERIM (USPS 581-800)

Published Every Two Weeks

by First Baptist Church, 815 Davie Avenue,
 Periodicals postage paid at Statesville, NC 28677

POSTMASTER: send address changes to: THE INTERIM
 First Baptist Church, 815 Davie Ave., Statesville, NC 28677-5310

Student Ministry

Winter Mission Retreat January 30 - February 1, 2015

All details about the WMR can be found by clicking the following link <http://www.venturestudents.org/2014/11/winter-mission-retreat-jan-30-feb-1.html>

Progressive Dinner Saturday, December 13

Please bring a no-more-than \$10.00 gender neutral gift for our gift exchange. We encourage everyone to either dress nice or wear your most tacky Christmas sweater. Prizes will be awarded to the best dressed and most tacky dressed. You can sign up by visiting venturestudents.org and clicking the link on the right.

Children's Ministry

Upcoming Events

December 5 - Parent's Night Out ~ 5:30-9:00 p.m.
This is a great opportunity to do some Christmas shopping, or to just relax with your spouse. Online registration will go up next week, so I can prepare for the number of Children.

December 7 - White Christmas

December 21 - Christmas Music Program (Kids will be singing!)

Look Up Lodge August 2-5, 2015

If you have not signed your child up for Look Up Lodge and they want to go, I need a \$40 deposit to secure their spot. If you have questions I would be happy to answer them. Children must currently be in the 2nd grade - 5th grade.

Injury alerts man to needs of others

The Statesville Record & Landmark featured Steve Kathman and the medical equipment ministry in the Tuesday, December 2, 2014 issue.

By Jim McNally

Steve Kathman played football and wrestled in high school and so was familiar with hard and fast landings. But when he slipped on some black ice 17 years ago, it was a whole new experience.

"I've never hit the ground that hard," he said.

It hurt, but he didn't think a lot of it until he told his boss at the delivery company where he worked. She told him to see a doctor because the injury would not be covered after a 24-hour period.

"I wasn't even thinking about going to the doctor," he said. "I didn't think there anything to it. It was just a fall, I thought."

X-rays revealed there was a bit more to it. Kathman was told that the injury, to his lower spine, would require surgery.

"I had two crushed discs," he recalled.

Still, he would probably have been long recovered from the injury by now except for the fact that the procedure was not performed properly.

"They said I needed another surgery," he said. "But in between the two surgeries, it got my nerve and the pain from that is still with me."

The result is that Kathman was forced to use a wheelchair and a cane to get around.

"But I don't dwell on that," he said.

Instead Kathman decided to help others in his condition or similar ones who may be in more dire financial circumstances.

He started what he calls, unceremoniously, a medical equipment ministry out of a room in the First Baptist Church complex on Davie Avenue in Statesville.

The ministry is now in its fourth year and Kathman said that a lot of its stock was depleted during the summer months.

"We're trying to build it back up," he said and explained that a story appearing in the R&L near the time of the program's start was helpful in bringing in donations of still usable wheelchairs, walkers, shower and toilet chairs and other types of equipment.

"That really cranked us up," he said. "And we could use another boost now."

The "we" about whom Kathman refers is just himself, his wife, Juliana, and his son, Brad.

The ministry has no budget because everything is done for free.

"If you need medical equipment and we have it," Kathman said, "we'll give it to you."

Kathman does ask that if the equipment is still in good enough condition when the person using it is through with it, that it be returned.

"We'll clean it, disinfect it and give it someone else," he said.

To make donations or find out how to get a needed item, call Steve Kathman at 704-397-7763.

Thanksgiving - Any Time

When the ballgames are over, the leaves are raked up, the family and guests are gone home, and the leftovers are put away—we can take a breather, give God our undivided attention, and give Him thanks—for who He is, what He has done, and what we can trust Him for in the future. One of my favorite "Thanksgiving Psalms" is Psalm 103. It begins, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy Name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. Who forgives all my iniquities; Who heals all my diseases; Who redeems my life from the pit; Who crowns me with love and compassion; Who satisfies my desires with good things so that my youth is renewed like the eagle's." (v. 1-5) Everything God has already blessed us with and all we are still trusting Him for can be wrapped up in these few verses. Thinking ahead to all the activity of this busy season, let's keep the momentum of Thanksgiving going by taking time to pray each day. Any time is a good time for remembering to give God thanks. Don't forget, our church prayer room is always available.

Thank you, Lord, that You remember that I am "dust" (Psalm 103:14)—weak, inept, and unable to live life without Your enabling, Your ability, and Your strength.

Your servant and your friend,
Ginny Stikeleather



815 Davie Avenue
Statesville, NC 28677

**Worship With Us Sunday 8:30 a.m. or 10:55 a.m.
Message By: Roger Gilbert**

Volume 71 Issue 25

December 7, 2014

Announcements

A Note of Appreciation From Carolyn Garner & Family

To the First Baptist Church Family,
I have a deep need to express my love and appreciation to our church family for all who came to the Gordon Hospice House during Walter's last days among us. How comforting it was to have all of you come and share in the time of visitation. The beautiful written expressions of your memories you shared with Walter will be a treasure for me embrace and cherish. The family and I felt the Holy Spirit loving us through all of you.

For all who made Walter's "home going celebration service" such a holy time we are thankful. 'Surely the presence of the Lord was in place.' This caused us to realize how very blessed we are to have our church family and friends with us during this difficult time. It is so important for all us to embrace one another more often in fellowship, for life is meant to spent loving God and loving one another (Matthew 22: 37-40). Again, we thanks everyone for your acts of love and your prayers during this last month.

Carolyn Garner & Family

Celtic Christmas **Thursday, December 11 & Friday, December 12** **7:30 p.m.**

You are invited to enjoy an evening concert of Celtic Christmas Music to bring joy to the heart and celebrate the season. The concert will be held at New Life Christian Fellowship Church at 46 Warren Road in Taylorsville (828-632-9589). This is a FREE concert, but tickets are required due to limited seating. Please contact James Martin for tickets at 704-873-7231, ext. 208 or e-mail jmartin@statesvillefbc.org.



Heaven, Hell, & Life After Death Bible Study Begins in January
Many in our society today live for instant gratification. Having fun is often the center of our world, and the thought of life after death is far from our minds. Today there are countless numbers of books written about heaven and hell. Yet still many wonder, what's the real truth about life after death? Why do we have to die? When a person dies, will he live again? What happens at the final judgment? In what way is death different for a believer than a nonbeliever? These are just some of the critical questions that will be answered in our six week Precept Bible Study beginning Tuesday, January 6, 6:00-8:00 p.m., and Wednesday, January 7, 9:30-11:30 a.m. Won't you join us? **NO HOMEWORK!** Please sign up at the Welcome Center by Sunday, December 21.

Inclement Weather Policy

Our church follows the Iredell-Statesville Schools policy for closings due to inclement weather. If the schools are closed, the church office is closed and all church activities for that day are canceled. You may check the church closing status by calling the church office and checking the recording (704-873-7231), checking our website (www.statesvillefbc.org), and checking the following TV stations (WBTV, Charlotte; WSOC-TV, Charlotte; WCNC-TV, Charlotte).



Worship Greeters **Sunday, December 7**

Chris Simon Jeff Templeton David Lewis
Chuck Heckel Jason Allen

Sunday, December 14

Eddy Sipe John Garland Shannon Ashley
Pat Rushton Nancy Garland

Acolytes **Sunday, December 7**

Rachel Estes & Sarah Estes
Sunday, December 14
Piper Lewis & Darbee Lewis

Coffee Rotation **Sunday, December 7**

Emanons Class
Sunday, December 14
Dan & Jean Mills

New Arrival!



Congratulations to Julie & O'Bryan Wellman on the birth of a daughter, Arianna, on December 3, 2014.

Holiday Schedule for The Interim

The next issue of The Interim will be published Sunday, January 4, 2015. Please have any submissions for that issue turned into Kayley Potter by Tuesday, December 30, 2014.

Operation Christmas Child **Charlotte Processing Center** **Friday, December 12, 2014**

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Please go to the Welcome Center and fill out a registration form if you have not already. We need all your information by Tuesday, December 9. We cannot guarantee a spot after that date. We will carpool so let us know if you can drive or need a ride