

FOCUS

FOCUS on what God is doing through First Baptist Church

Demonstrating the love of God

The handicap ramp crew gives the gift of freedom in the name of God.

Early on a sunny morning in November, by a pretty house at the end of a quiet street in a corner of Franklinton, pickup trucks, one after the other, drove up and maneuvered into parking spots along the road. A three-quarter-ton pickup arrived pulling a trailer marked "Washington Baptist Association." Men began spilling out of the trucks, tools in tow, and swung into action.

John Bowman cut away the house's existing porch railing. Dennis Robbins, Robbie Stringfield, and Donald Daniel set up the cutoff saw. The rest of the crew unloaded the frames that had been put together the day before by a small crew working in Richard McElveen's shop.

This was First Baptist Church's handicap ramp crew in action, adding one more to the approximately 200 handicap ramps they have built since 2009. The ramp projects are an important part of FBC's mission outreach. There are lots of projects that a group of handymen could do as mission projects; why major on handicap ramps?

Richard, the organizer and spokesman for the group, smiled when asked that question. Handicap ramps are "a necessity," he said simply. "The exit doors of houses are almost never on the same grade as the sidewalk, meaning that a wheelchair cannot negotiate the doorway. Any household resident, therefore, who must use a wheelchair can be effectively trapped in their own home, unable to get out. What if they must go to a doctor's appointment?" "Sometimes people call the volunteer fire department if they need to get out", said Ben Fussell, a member of the crew. "What if the house catches on fire? You hope the fire truck gets there fast....."

Ramps are a necessity, then, but even folks with enough money to buy the materials often find themselves unable to get one. It's a small job, and contractors aren't interested. "You can't go find somebody to do what we do," Richard says.

Back in 2009, the mission-oriented team of handy men decided this was a community need they could meet as a way of demonstrating the love of God. Homeowners are never charged for the work, even though the materials alone might cost a thousand dollars (a small bucket of screws costs \$75, a box of nails \$50). Expenses are covered through the church's **Acts 1:8 missions budget**, although many recipients and interested people in the community have often donated funds. The tools in the association's trailer include a lot of donated tools.

The labor, however, is always free. Richard, who scopes out all requests for assistance, says, "We don't talk money" with the people. And the crew's work is not limited to FBC church members. When they do one ramp in a neighborhood, "word gets around," he says, and other people in the neighborhood who need a ramp will contact them.

On that morning in November, 11 men (almost all older than 70) made quick work of the ramp. Richard noted that the men on the crew counted the project as a blessing for them too. Ben, taking a rare break from his labors, looked

around at the crew. "Look at these men," he said. They were lifting and digging and nailing. "Almost all past 70. Some are well past 70. It's something!" he marveled, "that they are still able to do this!"

Although nobody keeps careful track of the number of projects, Richard thinks they have done 20 ramps so far in 2023. That's 20 people, just this year, who have been given the gift of freedom.

As the song from the 1960s said, "Christ has no hands but your hands, To do his work today."

Article Written By: Pat Parish



In the middle left, Randy James digs a trench for the end of the ramp. In the bottom right, David Bieser installs a lower guard rail. At the bottom left is the chop saw crew: Dennis Robbins, Donald Daniel, and Robbie Stringfield. Top photo: crew standing on the finished ramp!



Richard McElveen, project organizer



But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."ACTS 1:8

THE PROMISE OF *Christmas*

Jake Roudkovski, Transitional Pastor
jaker@nobts.edu



THE CHRISTMAS SEASON IS MY FAVORITE ONE. WE HAVE NUMEROUS SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT THE MONTH OF DECEMBER TO HELP US ALL REMEMBER THAT CHRISTMAS IS ALL ABOUT JESUS. CARVE OUT TIME EACH DAY TO SPEND TIME WITH JESUS, ATTEND, AND INVITE OTHERS TO WORSHIP WITH US. CAN'T WAIT TO CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS AND THE NEW YEAR TOGETHER. -IN HIM, *Dr. Jake*

REV. JOEY MILLER, ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF PASTORAL CARE

✨ The Promise of Christmas ✨

*"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."
- Matthew 1:23*

As the Christmas season was approaching, Madeleine noticed that her little daughter was acting differently. Normally full of life, she just gazed at the Christmas tree in a quiet mood. She sat on the floor at length, having long conversations with her toy lion. She didn't run at the park and was never hungry. When Madeleine noticed swollen glands under the little one's armpit at bath time, they decided to have her checked out by her doctor. After the examination, the doctor looked over their heads and used big medical words. The couple stopped him. "What you are saying is that you think she has leukemia?" They knew the symptoms because the child of a friend of theirs had died of leukemia. The next stop was the hospital, where tests were run. Then, the long wait came during the holidays before they would get results.

During that time, all kinds of emotions came over Madeleine, including those from memories of when her mom read her stories from the Bible. One that especially came to mind was the story in Daniel of the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace because they refused to bow down to an idol. The amazing thing was that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego stood there unhurt and unharmed as they praised the Lord. King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and asked, "Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?" They answered, "True, O King." He replied, "But I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt, and the appearance of the fourth is like the Son of God." (Daniel 3:24-25)

It was then that she realized that God did not take them out of the fire. God was in the fire with the Hebrew children. Madeleine also realized that God would be with her and her family through this fiery medical crisis that they were in. That's why one of our favorite names for Jesus is Immanuel. We think of it mostly at Christmas because we sing the songs of Immanuel - God with us. It was the name the angel gave Jesus, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah. When Jesus was born, He came to be God with us. He's with us through the fires of life and with us through the floods of life. Madeleine was at peace knowing this great truth even before she found out that her little daughter did not have leukemia, only an infection. She had her Christmas promise of God's presence with her before she knew that her little girl would recover completely.

The next time we face a trial, a tragedy, or a time of testing, we can remember and rejoice over our Christmas promise - God came in Jesus, our Immanuel, to be with us and has promised never to leave us or forsake us. "Immanuel, Immanuel, His name is called Immanuel, God with us, revealed in us, His name is called Immanuel."

May your Christmas be filled with the love and grace of our Immanuel,

-Bro. Joey

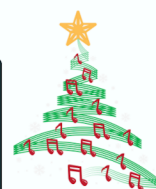
SAM ADULT 55+ CHRISTMAS EVENTS

- OUR DECEMBER FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEON IS SCHEDULED FOR **THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7TH, AT 10:30 A.M.** (NOTE THE DAY CHANGE). THE MENU WILL BE SOUPS AND SANDWICHES PROVIDED BY OUR SAM TEAM. LET'S CELEBRATE THIS WONDERFUL CHRISTMAS SEASON TOGETHER.
- OUR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CAROLING EVENT TAKES PLACE ON **WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20TH, AT 5:30 P.M.**, JOIN IN THE FUN AND MINISTRY AS WE BLESS OUR HOMEBOUND BY TAKING CHRISTMAS TO THEM.
- OUR ADULT CHOIR WILL JOIN THE HILLCREST CHOIR FOR OUR CHRISTMAS MUSICAL TO BE HELD AT FBC ON **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3RD, AT 6:00 P.M.** AND AT HILLCREST ON **DECEMBER 10TH, AT 6:00 P.M.**
- WE ARE ALSO LOOKING FOR A MATINEE MUSICAL DRAMA TO ATTEND BY BUS. STAY TUNED ON THAT ONE.

NURSING HOME WORSHIP SERVICES

WHAT A BLESSING IT IS TO SEE THE RESIDENTS JOIN IN THE WORSHIP. THEY ALWAYS EXPRESS THEIR APPRECIATION FOR THE BLESSINGS WE BRING. JOIN US FOR OUR DECEMBER SERVICES IF YOU CAN.

GOOD SAMARITAN - MONDAY, DECEMBER 4 @ 3:00 PM
HERITAGE MANOR - MONDAY, DECEMBER 18 @ 3:00 PM



FBC KIDS MINISTRY

In its most basic definition, the word advent means the arrival of a notable person, thing, or event. Depending on your age, each generation has been party to the advent of some life-changing events and inventions. Whether it was the automobile, television, rock-and-roll, or the internet, these arrivals changed the world. But none more so than the arrival of Jesus more than 2,000 years ago. Yet, every year, we don't stop everything and pause to remember the first airing of a television show or the first ever drive in a car. Those things may have changed the world, and they may have improved the quality of our lives in some way, but they weren't invented for us specifically and personally. A car – and I love cars – doesn't love me back. My wife doesn't want a relationship with me. And my phone wouldn't die for me. But my Jesus does and would. That's why the season of Christmas Advent is so precious, why the birth of Jesus is as relevant and important as it was generations ago. The arrival of Jesus as a newborn baby wasn't just an advent; it was The Advent. Advent officially begins this year on December 3rd. I hope your home will be filled with fun and laughter and moments of quiet reflection this Christmas season. I have prepared boxes for families with children to help intentionally set aside some time to exploring Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace through the perfect gift of God – his Son, Jesus.

- Kelly McElveen 



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6TH, FROM 5:30 P.M. – 6:30 P.M.: JOYFUL NOISE CHILDREN'S CHOIR SANCTUARY PRACTICE

We will begin our time in the Sanctuary rehearsing for our Christmas musical but will transition to an abbreviated Team KID meeting ending at 7 pm upstairs in the Children's Dept.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13TH FROM 5:30 P.M. – 7:00 P.M.: JOYFUL NOISE CHILDREN'S CHOIR & HALF NOTES PRESCHOOL CHOIR "DRESS" REHEARSAL

In lieu of our regular choir practice and Team KID meeting, all children will practice for our upcoming Christmas play. Although this is a "dress rehearsal," regular clothes are fine. Children not participating in the program, but in attendance, will be a part of the dress rehearsal audience.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17TH AT 6:00 PM: FBC KIDS JOYFUL NOISE AND HALF NOTES CHOIRS PRESENT THE COLORS OF CHRISTMAS

Be sure to invite your friends and family to come to worship with us as our Joyful Noise Choir, under the direction of Mrs. Ann Cowart, with assistance from Sophia Harrison, and our Half Notes Preschool Choir, under the direction of Mrs. Toni Tagueant and Mrs. Anita Reviere, share the biblical significance of the colors that mark the Christmas season around the world.

First – Sixth Graders should arrive upstairs in the Children's Bldg. dressed in Christmas attire at 5:30 p.m. Please be sure they have been to the restroom, aren't carrying anything extra with them (jackets, purses, etc.), and don't have any drinks, candy, or gum. Preschoolers should arrive similarly, in their costumes, downstairs in the Preschool Dept. between 5:30 p.m. and 5:45 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20TH: CHURCHWIDE CAROLING (NO TEAM KID ACTIVITIES)

Meeting in the Family Life Center, families will form groups and go caroling and bringing baskets to some of our homebound members. There are no other preschool or children's activities this evening, and children will travel and Carol in groups with their families. Consult your bulletin on December 17th for more specific information.

IMPORTANT INFO



December Wee Worship Volunteers



- 3rd: Cindy Knight
- 10th: Callie Moore
- 17th : Johnna Creel
- 24th : No Wee Worship
- 31st : Kelly McElveen



Last, but certainly not least, join me in wishing a **VERY Happy December Birthday** to these FBC Kids & Leaders:

- 1st: Sadie B.
- 9th: Mrs. Karen
- 14th: Clark Katherine H. & Chloe S.
- 15th: Nora Kate R.
- 18th: Elodie S.
- 31st: Mrs. Malinda



FBC Christmas Events

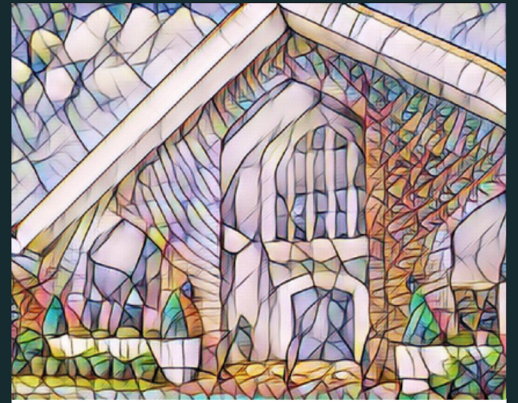
DECEMBER 3RD: CHRISTMAS CHANGES EVERYTHING, THE MUSICAL- 6:00 P.M. @ FBC
DECEMBER 10TH: CHRISTMAS CHANGES EVERYTHING, THE MUSICAL- 6:00 P.M. @ HILLCREST
DECEMBER 17TH: COLORS OF CHRISTMAS- CHILDREN'S MUSICAL @ 6:00 P.M.
DECEMBER 20TH: CHRISTMAS CAROLING

DECEMBER 24TH:

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES:
10:00 A.M.- VESPER SERVICE
4:00 P.M.- VESPER SERVICE
(WITHOUT CANDLES)
6:00 P.M.- VESPER SERVICE
(WITH CANDLES)

DECEMBER 31ST:

NEW YEARS EVE
NO EVENING SERVICES



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
Franklinton
(985) 839-3427 OFFICE

SERVICE TIMES

Sundays
Worship Services
8:15 a.m., 10:45 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.

Bible Study
9:30 a.m.

Choir Practice
4:30 p.m.

Wednesdays
Half Notes/Joyful Noise
Preschool & Children
Choir Practice
5:30 p.m.

Wednesday Night Supper
5:00 p.m.

Preschool, Children,
Youth Activities
6:00 p.m.

Ladies Bible Study
6:00 p.m.

Prayer Meeting
6:00 p.m.

[http://](http://www.fbcfranklinton.org)  **CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE AT**

[WWW.FBCFRANKLINTON.ORG](http://www.fbcfranklinton.org)

December Wednesday Night Suppers

6- GROUP A
HAMBURGERS

13 - GROUP B
FRIED CHICKEN

20- NO MEAL
CHRISTMAS CAROLING

27 - NO MEAL
NEW YEARS BREAK



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