

# sardis signposts

baptist church

a spiritually progressive community of faith

5811 Sardis Road / Charlotte, NC 28270 / 704.362.0811  
SardisBaptistCharlotte.org

## SUNDAY SCHEDULE

9:45 AM  
Sunday School

11:00 AM  
Morning Worship

### PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE: MENTALLY ILL AND DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Kristin Parker, a member of Sardis Baptist Church, has been a paralegal at the Mecklenburg County Public Defender's Office for over 27 years. Although in her work she handles many different duties, her passion and a primary focus of hers is working with clients who are mentally ill and developmentally disabled. Kristin will lead our Sardis Academy session on Wednesday, March 11th, and will talk to us about the intersection of the mental health and court systems. We'll discuss ways in which society can work toward diverting the mentally ill and developmentally disabled from the court system.

Dinner will be served at 5:45 PM, followed by programming at 6:30. We hope you will join us for fellowship and this informative discussion.



**oneblood**   
Share your power.

Sardis Baptist held its first blood drive during November of 2019, and it was a success! Coordinators from the non-profit blood center told us they have held drives in much larger venues with a lower turnout. The blood donated from our last drive had the potential to help more than 30 patients! It just so happens that donating blood has surprising health benefits for donors as well. Check out this link for more information: **6 Surprising Health**

#### Benefits of Donating Blood,

[www.rasmussen.edu/degrees/health-sciences/blog/surprising-health-benefits-of-donating-blood/](http://www.rasmussen.edu/degrees/health-sciences/blog/surprising-health-benefits-of-donating-blood/)

Somewhere in the US alone, there is a patient in need of a blood transfusion every two seconds. Since blood cannot be produced synthetically, these patients rely on donors like us to meet the need. Our Missions Team is offering Sardis folks the opportunity to again change (even save) lives. Please invite friends and family members to donate as well.

#### OneBlood Drive

**Sardis Baptist Church**

**Sunday, March 15th**

**9:00 AM until Noon**



**North Carolina ranks in the top 10 of hungriest states in the US (loavesandfishes.org). One in seven North Carolinians (one in five NC children) struggle with hunger (feedingamerica.org). 35% of Mecklenburg County households with children have faced food insecurity during the past year (wfae.org).**

Bob Stillerman will lead a Sardis Academy session about food insecurity in Mecklenburg County on Wednesday, March 18th. Data has proven that upward mobility in Charlotte is difficult for those born into poverty, and we know that poverty and hunger are linked. Bob will discuss the inequities that lead to hunger, and we'll discuss ways that Sardis Baptist can contribute to the solutions. Dinner will be served at 5:45 PM followed by the discussion. Our Fellowship Team generally collects money to offset the cost of providing fellowship dinners. In lieu of payment, we'll ask for donations to support our Easter effort to feed hungry families of a local Title I school over their spring break. For more information, see "Goodness Groceries" on page 5.

## I LIFT UP MINE EYES...

Rev. Bob Stillerman

### The Season of Lent: Planting New Images of God

This morning, a cold, grey, rainy (and maybe even snowy!) Thursday in February, I stare out the window, looking at a majestic oak. Despite being laid bare by every element that winter can throw at it, this tree stands tall, its spine straight, its trunk undaunted, its roots dug in deep, its branches extending their affection. And some forty days from now, it will bear new life: luscious green leaves that will delight my senses, and shelter me from summer's heat, and serenade me in autumn with colors that have yet to be invented, or even imagined. Its resurrection is certain. And yet its certain resurrection brings me surprise, no matter how many times I see it.

I suppose I could lament the current season, just live in sorrow that summer's out of order, just imagine God's on leave till May. But my mind gets to wandering and wondering, and I can't help but think about that tree outside. On the surface, it appears my mighty oak is taking a beating, has been broken by the harsh elements around her, the ones that leave her so vulnerable and exposed. But she isn't vulnerable. She is protected. Somewhere, underneath the soil, all kinds of life-giving reactions are happening – God's getting busy with a restoration project. God is soil and sun penetrating through gray clouds, and rain, and even those pesky acorns we have to bend over and pick up. And God's is a future shaded by green leaves.

There's another empty tree I see, but it's not outside. It's the cross that hangs in our meetinghouse. And every Lenten season I feel a sense of dread. Must we expend **SO MUCH** energy on that wretched, barren tree, that tree which reminds us of our faults, and of the violence in our world, and of just how unaware we've been of God's presence among us? Must we make the cross a transaction, and use this season to pay our penance in order that we might earn the joy of Easter?

Well, no, actually, we mustn't. Because, just as the barren tree in February does not tell the whole story of the oak, the empty cross does not tell the whole story of God.

The season of Lent offers us an opportunity to be surprised, once more, by the new life God is creating, even in winter. Lent is not a time for despair or shame. Lent is a time to reawaken ourselves to the miraculous, transformative, hopeful, inclusive, affirming, unending grace God offers to help heal and (continued on back page)



Select members of BWIMNC (Baptist Women in Ministry of North Carolina) were recently asked to contribute to a special blog series entitled "Disruptive Women: The Strange and Wonderful Things that Happen When Women Minister." Rev. Tillie Duncan was invited to contribute.

## Disrupting the World's Power Structure

Shocked, I stood up, turned right, and walked up the aisle and out the doors of the chapel building on the seminary campus. It was the last decade of the twentieth century, and it was Women's Day, the celebration of which included a chapel address. The speaker was male, and his exhortations to women included the expected behavior held by some men: immaculate house, gourmet meals (on time!), perfect children. As the "sermon" progressed, the speaker began an intrusive foray into my bedroom. I was told in no uncertain terms what I should not wear when retiring for the night, with the implication that a "hootchy-kootchy" outfit was the approved sleeping apparel. I felt embarrassed and demeaned.

Second-hand information came to me that the next day that I was labeled in some classes as the feminist heretic on campus. I suppose that refusing to submissively sit and listen to instruction in how to fulfill a man's fantasies was somehow a rejection of the faith.

The interruption of a social order followed by a majority does produce some strange reactions. For those who perceive themselves as being more important, who are accustomed to being deferred to, accepting women as equals, rather than as attendants, seems like a breaking apart of the natural order.

A few people still become agitated over the issue of women in ministry. After a couple years of filling a supportive role in the missions ministry of a large church, I was called as missions minister when the man who had held that position moved to another church. The church had ordained women as deacons since the 1940's and had ordained at least one woman into church ministry, but, except for children's minister, had not had a woman on the ministerial staff. Shaken by this disruption of precedence, one of the male ministers on staff visited my office. He left after an hour of verbally assaulting me. His voice was quiet, calm and seemingly harmless. He began by condescendingly asking (continued on back page)





**IT TAKES MANY HANDS, FEET, HEARTS AND MINDS TO DO THE WORK OF SARDIS BAPTIST CHURCH. WE ARE GRATEFUL TO ALL OF YOU FOR THE VARIOUS WAYS YOU SUPPORT THE MINISTRIES OF THIS SPECIAL CHURCH!**

Thank you to the following people who served as worship leaders in February: Melissa Bowlin, Mark Brunton, Natasha Brunton, Deborah Clark, Greg Clark, Ellen Dillard, Jonathan Eidson, Janette Grassi, Marge Henderson, Bennett Henkel, Billie Hutchison, Hilary Kearns, Kathryn Kreutzer, Madison Kreutzer, Jim Owen, Howell Peterson, Susan Phillips, John Simpson, Bob Stillerman, and Joe Wall.

We appreciate the love and care shared with our youngest Sardis friends during worship care in February! Rachel Faulk, Lisa Kennedy, Alcie Kreutzer, Amanda Lewis, Kate Mata, June Ross, Jacqueline Stillerman, and Adam Taylor.

We are ever grateful to the hard-working group who began clearing overgrown brush and debris from an area behind the education building: Jim Owen, Howell Peterson, Danny Phillips, John Simpson, and Joe Wall.

Thank you to Amanda Lewis and Bennett Henkel for opening their home, and inviting Sardis friends in for lunch and an afternoon of games and an all-around good time!

We appreciate the work our Missions Team is doing to help us put worship into action! Melissa Bowlin, Deborah Clark, Greg Clark, Betty Gunz, Alcie Kreutzer, Madison Kreutzer, Hilary McIntyre, and Kristin Parker.

We are grateful to our Worship Development Team (and assistants) for helping to shape our *Images of God* theme for Lent: Jonathan Eidson, Janette Grassi, Betty Gunz, Kathryn Kreutzer, Hilary McIntyre, Amanda Lewis, Susan Phillips, Becky Proctor, Robin Rowland, Bob Stillerman, and Joe Wall.

Thank you to Janette Grassi, Susan Phillips, and John Simpson for the beautiful display of soul collages created to accompany our Lenten theme, and for the efforts they put into making worship a multi-sensory experience!

**WE WORK HARD TO ACKNOWLEDGE ALL THOSE WHO GIVE THEIR TIME, TALENTS, AND TITHES TO THE MINISTRIES OF SARDIS. YOU ARE A GENEROUS CONGREGATION! SOMETIMES WE FAIL TO OFFER PROPER GRATITUDE TO THE PERSONS WHO DESERVE IT MOST. WE OFFER SPECIAL THANKS FOR THOSE WHOSE GIFTS HAVE GONE UNNOTICED. WE ARE GRATEFUL!**

## SARDIS PRAYER REQUESTS

### CELEBRATIONS

Melissa Bowlin is happy to be driving again! Following two years of not being able to drive as a result of her accident, she is once again on the move. • Congratulations to Rachel Faulk on her new job! • We celebrate with the Sigmon Family as they welcome Marley, their new niece / cousin. • We celebrate first steps! Congratulations to Lucy Stillerman ☺

### CONDOLENCES

May the friends and families of those who have passed away be comforted by an outpouring of love as they grieve. • We offer condolences to friends and family of Mary Jane Osborne, and we give gratitude for a good and generous child of God, who offered friendship, love, hope and hours of gardening to Sardis Baptist Church. • David Kearns, cousin of Hilary McIntyre • Lucy, friend and neighbor of Ellen Dillard

### PETITIONS

Fay Alderman • Charles Almond, grandfather of Jacqueline Stillerman • Judy Blevins, friend of Kristin Parker • Gaye Booth, friend of Ellen Dillard and Marge Fowler • Barbea Bowlin, sister of Melissa • Jim Bowlin, Melissa's father • Melissa Bowlin • Margaret Branton, Amanda Lewis' grandmother • Don Brunton, father of Mark • Maria Byrd • "Coach," friend of Marge Fowler • Sonny Cole, Marge Fowler's brother • Ben Cooley, Ruthie's husband • Elzene Corbett, Janet Beltzhoover's mother • Nancy Darnell • Mollie Gilmore, granddaughter of Jim & Becky Owen • Betty Gunz • Gennelle Hall, Mother of Jessica Wallace (Bullies 2 the Rescue) • Joanne Henkel, Bennett's grandmother • Don Hill • Eugene Hill, Don's son • Harvie Hill, Kathryn Kreutzer's father • Karen — CBF North Africa Field Personnel • Mark Kearns, uncle of Hilary • Casey Leonhardt • Vicki Lewis, Amanda's aunt • Jose Mata, Sr., father of Jose • Rachael Phipps, friend of Betty Gunz • Mala Reynolds • Bob Rowland, Robin's father • Catherine (Kitty) Tate, sister of Becky Proctor • Vicki Thompson, sister of Melissa Bowlin • Susan Tuttle, friend of Phillips • Katie Wiebke, daughter of Mark & Amy



## SARDIS YOUTH UPDATE

Sardis youth are movers and shakers! They are involved in many things, and we thought you'd like to hear from them about activities they're involved with. Here's the buzz...

**Ryan Hawkins** is enjoying his freshman year at East Mecklenburg High School. He enjoys working out, and that has strengthened his skills for his sport of choice, baseball. He has been selected a member of the varsity baseball team. Practices and scrimmages are underway, and the official season begins in March.

**Alcie Kreutzer** is a high school junior at Charlotte Secondary School. She's also taking courses at Central Piedmont Community College through the dual enrollment program. She's serving as the Vice President of Student Government and was just selected to be a Junior Marshall for graduation. She's on the A honor roll and currently ranked first in her class! Alcie works several days a week as an employee and trainer at Chopt Creative Salad Co. In the Fall, she created a cross country club at CSS for middle and high school students. She's disappointed the season is over, but excited for next year.

**Madison Kreutzer** is a freshman in the IB program at East Mecklenburg High School. She is serving as president of the freshman class, where she works with other student officers to plan service and entertainment events. In her free time, she is training at CC & Co for aerial silks (performance in which the artist performs aerial acrobatics while hanging from suspended strips of fabric). She received her driving permit in September, and is looking forward to having her license later this year. She's applied for several jobs, but they've told her to reapply after her sweet 16. If you are aware of any part-time positions for teenagers, please let her know.

**Jackson Mosley-Mair** is a student at East Mecklenburg High School. He stays busy too! Jackson plays the cello for the East Mecklenburg orchestra, and performed in a recent concert. He recently got his license and is enjoying driving! He is preparing for his final year of high school and just signed up for senior classes.

**Matthew Mosley-Mair** has also been busy. He is a senior at East Mecklenburg High School. He recently committed to Appalachian State University as a Chancellor's Scholar! He is also involved in theatre, and recently performed in the EMHS production of RENT.

**Summer Rutherford** is a sophomore at East Mecklenburg High School. Like others in our youth group, she is excited to be driving now! She was recently hired as an employee of Chick-fil-A.



**Calling all parents of Sardis young'uns!! Let's have a discussion and dream about our ministry with children. Pastors Hilary and Jonathan invite parents and children to meet with us for a time of listening, dreaming and discussing the spiritual wants and needs of your families. We will use your input to chart the direction of our children's programming for the days ahead! Would you join us on Sunday, March 22 at 9:00 AM in the Education building? We will have childcare available! Please let one of us know if you are able to attend, [sardisjonathan@yahoo.com](mailto:sardisjonathan@yahoo.com) or [sardishilary@yahoo.com](mailto:sardishilary@yahoo.com).**



*Sardis youth enjoyed the 2020 Ski Retreat to Ghent, West Virginia for a weekend of skiing at Winterplace Ski Resort. Here are a few friends enjoying breakfast at an IHOP in West Virginia before heading home from a fun-filled weekend of fun, fellowship, and food: Jackson, Summer, Dave, Hilary, Yesenia, Madison and Stephanie.*

*Photo credited to Pastor J Swizzle.*





### **MARCH 1, 2020**

#### **Worship Care**

Rachel Faulk and Kate Mata

#### **Greeter / Vestibule Volunteer**

Mark Wiebke

#### **Ushers**

Lisa Kennedy, Amy, and Mark Wiebke

### **MARCH 8, 2020**

#### **Worship Care**

Deborah Clark and Betty Gunz

#### **Greeter / Vestibule Volunteer**

John Simpson

#### **Ushers**

Janette Grassi, June Ross, and John Simpson

### **MARCH 15, 2020**

#### **Worship Care**

Dave Kreutzer and Tammy Taylor

#### **Greeter / Vestibule Volunteer**

Marge Henderson

#### **Ushers**

Janie Harris, Kathryn Kreutzer, and Jean Lawrence

### **MARCH 22, 2020**

#### **Worship Care**

June Ross and Adam Taylor

#### **Greeter / Vestibule Volunteer**

Greg Clark

#### **Ushers**

Sarah Bowlin-Criss, Greg Clark, and Bennett Henkel

### **MARCH 29, 2020**

#### **Worship Care**

Sarah Bowlin-Criss and Amanda Lewis

#### **Greeter / Vestibule Volunteer**

Ron Demme

#### **Ushers**

Ron Demme, Valerie Rutherford, and Magay Shepard

## grocery *goodness* giveaway

*Traditionally, on the Christian holidays of Christmas and Easter we offer the opportunity to honor special people in our lives with visual reminders in worship of the love we have for them: poinsettias at Christmas and lilies at Easter. This year we are putting worship in action and honoring our loved ones a little differently. We invite you to purchase goodness groceries in lieu of lilies. The groceries will be donated to food insecure families that attend Charlotte Secondary School, a neighborhood charter school where 60% of students qualify for free and reduced lunch. Through donations, the school provides food for students during the week, however, weekends and holiday breaks are often times of hunger.*

*Our Missions Team will use the funds collected from goodness groceries to purchase non-perishable food items to feed food insecure students and their families over spring break. The cost for each bag is \$20. Order forms are available at the church.*



## SPRING CANTATA

On March 29<sup>th</sup> your Sardis Baptist Church Choir will present its annual Spring Cantata. In keeping with this year's Lenten theme, the cantata will be a collection of anthems representing different styles and cultural ideas of God. And, because the theme is informed by Sardis members' own ideas, there will be several congregational hymns woven throughout the program.

If you are musically inclined, please consider joining the choir on Wednesday nights at 7:30 PM as we prepare for this presentation. If you love music but don't consider yourself "choir-ready" you will still be able to join us in worship on the 29<sup>th</sup> as we sing our hymns. We look forward to sharing our music with all of you!

# Sardis Baptist Church — Calendar

# MARCH

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<b>1</b> 1st Sunday in Lent 9:45 AM Adult Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship Board Installation	<b>2</b> 	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 4:45 PM Staff Meeting 7:30 PM Choir Practice	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 
<b>8</b> 2nd Sunday in Lent 9:45 AM Adult Sunday School 11:00 AM Communion Worship Noon Deacon Meeting	<b>9</b> 	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 4:45 PM Staff Meeting 5:45 PM Fellowship Meal 6:30 PM Sardis Academy Kristin Parker Public Defender's Office 7:45 PM Choir Practice	<b>12</b> 	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> 3rd Sunday in Lent OneBlood Drive 9:00 AM—Noon 9:45 AM Adult Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship Noon Worship Development	<b>16</b> 	<b>17</b> St. Patrick's Day	<b>18</b> 4:45 PM Staff Meeting 5:45 PM Fellowship Meal 6:30 PM Sardis Academy Bob Stillerman 7:45 PM Choir Practice	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> 4th Sunday in Lent Community Link Luggage Dropoff 9:45 AM Adult Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship	<b>23</b> 	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 4:45 PM Staff Meeting 7:30 PM Choir Practice	<b>26</b>	<b>COMING IN APRIL:</b>  <b>April 4th @ 8 AM</b> Church Workday <b>April 5th @ 11 AM</b> Palm Sunday Worship <b>April 9th @ 6 PM</b> Maundy Thursday Supper <b>April 10th @ Noon</b> Good Friday at St. Stephen <b>April 12th — Easter Sunday</b> 6:30 AM—Sunrise Worship 7:15 AM—Breakfast @ IHOP 11:00 AM—Easter Worship <b>April 22nd @ 5:45 PM</b> Earth Day Celebration <b>April 26th @ 9 AM until Noon</b> Community Link Luggage Drop	
<b>29</b> 5th Sunday in Lent 9:45 AM Adult Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship / Cantata Guest Proclaimer: Rev. Anna Beal	<b>30</b> 	<b>31</b>				



The Sardis Baptist Board of Trustees, along with assistance from our treasurer, and input from our pastor, create a financial ministry plan each year to ensure that the use of church funds supports the covenant we've made to each other as a church family as well as local and global missions. The 2020 ministry plan is currently under development and will be presented to the congregation for review in late March. A church conference will be called for you to have an opportunity to ask questions and to vote whether you approve. The date of the conference will be determined later this month.



**Please join our Buildings & Grounds Team for a church workday on Saturday, April 4th beginning at 9:00 AM. Many hands make fast work! We have some Spring cleaning to do around the Sardis meetinghouse and grounds. Bring gloves and rakes. We plan to clean up yard debris, pull weeds, spread mulch, and spruce up some of our inside spaces as well. Bagels, fruit and coffee will be available to keep workers' energy tanks full throughout the morning. We hope you'll join the effort!**



We are thrilled with the work that has been done to maintain and beautify our meetinghouse. Our Trustees and Building & Grounds Team have coordinated and completed the following:

- The interior of the Education Building has been painted in its entirety.
- Seven rooms in the Main Building have been painted.
- All interior doors and door frames in the Main Building have been painted.
- All exterior windows and moldings on the Main Building have been painted.
- Wood moldings have been extended to all of the vestibule area.
- Water damage on the wall and by the front doors has been repaired and painted.
- All tile floors in both buildings have been refurbished.

There is more to come! The following projects are currently being scheduled:

- Our steeple and colonnade will be painted once drier conditions allow.
- Carpets in the Education Building will be replaced.
- Matching window coverings will be installed in both buildings.

## BENEVOLENCE FUND

Our Benevolence Fund is used to aid individuals or families in need. The fund is reserved for helping in situations where there are basic necessities that will not otherwise be met. Some examples of benevolence distributions in the past have helped with healthcare needs, assistance to a family following a fire, and living expenses for someone unable to work due to an accident. Distribution decisions are made by the Board of Deacons. If you would like to contribute to our Benevolence Fund, please make a notation on your payment.





# *Images of GOD*

Soul Collage is a **PROCESS** of **IMAGE**, **IMAGINATION**, and **INTUITION**, to bring **CONSCIOUS** awareness, all the parts of ourselves that live **WITHIN**, and **INFLUENCED** by the **OUTSIDE** world.



Janette Grassi and Susan Phillips, members of our Worship Development Team, have created a SoulCollage display in our sanctuary to accompany our Lenten theme, Images of God. A sampling of the SoulCollages on display are shown above. The artist for each of these is John Simpson.

Our images of God are infinite! These represent only some of the ideas of one person. What does God look like in your mind's eye?

## **NEW IMAGES OF GOD**

(continued from page 2) restore a wintered and weary world. Yes, part of that story is in a cross, the choice of one person to so fully commit to God's call, even at the risk of certain death. But the cross is also a realization of all the unseen things God is doing to remake a barren tree into a thriving oak. The life of Jesus, God in our midst, withstood the winter of the world, because it was a tree rooted in fertile soil. For me, the Lenten season is about recognizing that we have a chance to be part of that fertile soil. It is the practice of being intentionally observant for all the ways God is working in the soil beneath a barren oak.

How can we do that? One way is to expand our imagery of God. If we can see God in a cross, and in a tree, and in the soil, we can see God in all sorts of places. In the season ahead, worship will be filled with activities that imagine God in both traditional and nontraditional ways. If we open ourselves to seeing God in new spaces and places, we might also find fertile soil, one where we are surprised again by the beauty, love, and warmth of an Easter oak.

## **DISRUPTING POWER**

(continued from page 2) me why I read my prayers in worship (prayers that I prayed as I wrote them and as I delivered them). Subsequent questions and comments were full of innuendo about my fitness for the job and my ability to fulfill it: The overseeing of a large budget, the marshaling of volunteers, the maintenance of several projects and proposals for new ones all came in for their share of a doubted accomplishment.

The disruption of the established order held more joy and promise than fear, however. Particularly the women of the church sensed a new day and rejoiced in it. To see a woman in the pulpit on a regular basis, even though in a minor role, was uplifting and affirming to them. They felt their full acceptance by God in a new and powerful way. And their support gave me the confidence to move to another church, as I accepted a pastoral role. To a church in which the disruptive presence of women in ministry was accepted as a mirror of the disruptive presence of Jesus whose life encourages us also to work at breaking apart the world's domination system, through whatever medium that system is expressed.