

sardis signposts

baptist church

a spiritually progressive community of faith

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

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

9:45 AM
Sunday School

11:00 AM
Morning Worship

ASCENSION SUNDAY

Ascension Sunday is May 24th this year. This is the day we remember the stories in Luke and Acts of Jesus' post resurrection departure from Earth into the presence of God in Heaven. This isn't a story from our history books, but an allegory representing Jesus as Emmanuel—God with us. *"And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age," (Matthew 28:20b)*



GATHERED WHILE SCATTERED

We miss seeing you in person,
but are grateful for the technology
that has enabled us to gather
while we are scattered!
Following are our weekly virtual
opportunities. Stay tuned to
emails from Sardis Baptist to learn
about additional special events.

Sunday Worship
11:00 AM on Zoom

Sunday School
9:45 AM on Zoom

Monday Devotionals
Facebook and Email

Tuesday Tunes
Facebook and Email

Sardis Academy
Wednesday Evenings
7:00 PM on Zoom

Friday Prayers
Fridays at Noon on Zoom

PENTECOST

Sunday, May 31st is Pentecost. According to Acts, this is day that followers of Jesus' way, gathered together in Jerusalem, were filled with the Holy Spirit. They heard sounds of rushing winds, saw flames of fire, and began to speak in unfamiliar languages. Others in Jerusalem, of diverse backgrounds, heard the noise and came to see. They were amazed that these Galileans were speaking in their native tongues. Many were baptized into the movement that day. They devoted themselves to the teachings and fellowship of the apostles and the spread the message. This was the beginning of what we now call Christianity. Prior to Pentecost, there were followers of Jesus, but no organized movement.

Think of the symbolism of the language of this story. The rushing wind is invisible, yet powerful, like the Holy Spirit. Fire has the ability to illuminate and incinerate. We follow spiritual pathways in hopes of enlightenment, as well as to deliver us from the evils we've encountered along the way. The multilingual miracle of Pentecost represents our calling to be in community with all people—those who look, speak, and believe like us and those who don't. It challenges us to examine our biases against those who do not share our language, system of beliefs, and culture.

"There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus," (Galatians 3:28).

I LIFT UP MINE EYES...

Rev. Bob Stillerman

What a church family to be a part of! Given all of the isolation, stress, and anxiety brought on by the COVID-19 crisis, it would have been really easy for our community to disconnect from one another, and shelter in place spiritually, as well as physically, until this all blows over. But that wouldn't be Sardis, would it?!

Your spirit (or that thing we like to call the Holy Spirit) has been persistent! You've learned new technology. You've refused to be distracted by passwords, Zoom-bombers, and technical glitches. You've actually been more present than before the crisis began – attendance for worship and other activities is up, stewardship in all forms (tithe, talent, and time) remains consistent, and you are finding creative ways to minister to our community: Goodness Groceries, meal deliveries, donations to the Migrant Assistance Project, and member care in virtual forms, just to name a few.

And Holy Week. Wow! We didn't get to have our soup supper, join in person with our Sardis Road neighbors, greet the Easter Sunrise on the labyrinth, make a mad dash to IHOP, adorn our cross with fresh-cut flowers, or sing the Hallelujah chorus. And yet still, STILL, your gathered-but-scattered worship exuded all the joy and hope of an Easter people.

Perhaps now, more than ever, we as a congregation have an opportunity to experience resurrection on a consistent basis. In these uncertain times, we have to use our resolve, our creativity, and most of all, our communal love, to breathe new life into our faith practices. On Maundy Thursday, Jesus reminded the disciples that even though he wouldn't be present physically much longer, his spirit would be present whenever folks shared hospitality in his name. And when the stone was rolled away, Jesus reminded Mary, that even though he was going somewhere else, she (and me and you and all the others, too!) now had the ability to engage community through the same divine spirit he invoked in his time on earth. And even long after the Jerusalem temple fell, people carved out sacred spaces for gathering in their homes.

COVID-19 may have robbed us, even if only temporarily, of our standard and familiar faith practices. But it can never rob us of the familiar spirit, that thing that helps us build new pathways of connecting to the divine and to one another.

Thanks to each of you, for all that you have done and will do in the weeks to come, to ensure sacred, connected, open spaces (virtual and physical) for this community to gather and be Sardis.

With continued Easter Hope,
Bob



"Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness."

~ Desmond Tutu ~

In a recent Sardis Academy session, we discussed practicing lament and learned the value of sharing sadness, anger, grief and frustration in making space for hope. *Hope prevails even in the darkest times, if only we pursue it.* The coronavirus has led to a world full of people living in fear and frustration, but it has also presented new opportunities for us to find hope in unexpected places.

For decades habits of overconsumption have led to exploitation of Mother Earth. Industries have polluted the atmosphere; chemical and plastic products have poisoned waterways; logging and agriculture have destroyed rainforests; greenhouse gas emissions have led to global warming, and the list could go on. Coronavirus has forced us to reduce our consumption habits, and Mother Earth is responding (charlotteobserver.com/news/coronavirus/article241987531.html). Residents of Punjab, in Northern India, report that air quality has improved so much that they can see the Himalayas from their homes for the first time in decades; the canals in Venice, Italy are clear enough for marine wildlife to be seen through the normally murky waters; satellite images show visibly significant drops in air pollution in cities across the globe (theguardian.com/environment/2020/mar/23/coronavirus-pandemic-leading-to-huge-drop-in-air-pollution). The sudden shift in our industrial activity has provided impromptu opportunity for humans to recognize and accept our role in the environmental crisis. *Hope prevails even in the darkest times, if only we pursue it.*

Opportunities abound for us to pursue hope these days! During these stressful and unprecedented times, many of us are feeling anxious and depressed. One way to help ourselves is to help others. A middle-school robotics team decided to use their ingenuity to make face shields for medical workers. When they learned of a group of doctors traveling to the Navajo Nation to help those infected with COVID-19, the group of 6 kids (13-14 years old) worked through the night using 3-D printers at their homes to make enough shields for all 30 members of the medical team (kindspring.org/story/view/php?sid=184283). A residential property owner in Brooklyn waived rent payments for hundreds of tenants last month, saying he did not want residents to stress about how they would pay rent during this pandemic. (www.nytimes.com/2020/04/03/nyregion/coronavirus-nyc-landlord-mario-salerno.html). These and other stories of kindness and generosity in the news are heartwarming: people offering to run errands for at-risk neighbors, gift cards donated to grocery clerks and delivery drivers in thanksgiving for their often overlooked importance, bands of cheering residents thanking and encouraging healthcare workers during shift change, stimulus money paid forward to others in need, and another list that could go on. *Hope prevails even in the darkest times, if only we pursue it.*

Hope is essential during crisis, but something we should work to sustain everyday. Life is unpredictable and hardships should be expected, but happiness through them and beyond them is more likely when we pursue hope.

Kathryn Kreutzer

THANK YOU GRACIAS

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!

We are grateful to Tim Moore for leading an April Sardis Academy series virtually. "Faith & Wisdom in Times of Societal Crisis" was interesting, informative, and especially appropriate during these troublesome times.

Thank you to our Fellowship Team who has continued to be of service throughout our stay-at-home orders. They've provided meals to various Sardis friends as well as to the nurses, physicians and other staff members at CareRing's low-cost clinic: Melissa Bowlin, Billie Hutchison, Debbie Kidd, Alcie Kreutzer, Kathryn Kreutzer, Jean Lawrence, Bob Stillerman, and Amy Wiebke.

We had a fantastic time playing virtual trivia! We are grateful to Bennett Henkel and Amanda Lewis for hosting us. Congratulations to Team Stillerman! They donated their prize to Sardis Baptist's Goodness Groceries mission project.

We are grateful to Jim Owen and Danny Phillips for pressure washing the Sardis Baptist Prayer labyrinth. It looks fantastic!

Words cannot convey our gratitude to Chris Mair and Jim Owen for the work they do as Sardis Baptist co-treasurers.

We appreciate all who have worked to enable us to see one another face-to-face during the month of April: Melissa Bowlin, Tillie Duncan, Jonathan Eidson, Bennett Henkel, Irena Hramenkova, Amanda Lewis, Debbie Kidd, Kathryn Kreutzer, Hilary McIntyre, Tim Moore, Kristin Parker, and Bob Stillerman. Sardis Baptist is thankful to each one of you for signing in and participating as vital members of our virtual church.

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!

PRAYER

HANDWASHING PRAYER

By Rabbi Joseph Meszler

**As I take up my hands
to wash them and
reassure my heart,
I pray for healing and wholeness
for the whole world.**

**I remember that every life
is unique and of infinite value:
from those living
on the most remote part of the globe
to those in our cities
to our neighbors and family members.
Let me use my hands for good
to help bring love
and compassion to others.
"Let us lift up
our hearts and hands
to the Eternal." (Lam 3:41)
Amen.**

SARDIS PRAYER LIST

All essential workers who are on the frontlines fighting this disease, and those keeping us healthy and safe ■ *All who are impacted by domestic violence* ■ **Fay Alderman** ■ **Charles Almond**, grandfather of Jacqueline Stillerman ■ **Jourdan Askins**, son-in-law of Jo Tiddy ■ **Judy Blevins**, friend of Kristin Parker ■ **Gaye Booth**, friend of Ellen Dillard and Marge Fowler ■ **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** ■ **Janie Harris** ■ **Gennelle Hall**, Mother of Jessica Wallace (Bullies 2 the Rescue) ■ **Eric, Peyton, and Ted**, nephews of Janie Harris ■ **Joanne Henkel**, Bennett's grand-mother ■ **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 ■ **Bobbie**, Katie Mata's grandmother ■ **Rachael Phipps**, friend of Betty Gunz ■ **Mala Reynolds** ■ **Bob Rowland**, Robin's father ■ **John Simpson** ■ **Catherine (Kitty) Tate**, sister of Becky Proctor ■ **Barbea Tripp**, sister of Melissa Bowlin ■ **Susan Tuttle**, friend of Phillips ■ **Heather Robinson Weir**, friend of Susan Phillips ■ **Katie Wiebke**, daughter of Mark & Amy

Congratulations to Dr. Anna Sieges-Beal! She was honored with the Gardener-Webb President's Early Career Award in recognition for her productivity in scholarship, creative discovery, instruction, and service.



SARDIS GRADUATES



Joey Askins' dream and life goal is to design ships for the United States Navy. He is excited to have been accepted by Virginia Tech, where he plans to study engineering. He awaits graduation from Southwest Onslow High School. Frequently on the A-B Honor Roll, he has been inducted into the National Honor Society and into the National Society of High School Scholars. His interests are varied; his favorite classes have been in history, particularly the World War II era, and in technology.

Outside the classroom, Joey enjoys tae kwon do, in which he holds a green belt. He has been working at Domino's Pizza during his senior year. In addition to creating pizza, he enjoys cooking at home, creating his own recipes. In his down time, Joey likes to read – history, of course. But he also enjoys reading AND writing fan fiction (using popular characters already created and putting them in new situations).

Joey's family includes his parents Jourdan and Rebecca and his siblings Brady, Samuel, Reece, and Keely. His maternal grandparents are Jo and Mike Tiddy.

Lauren Clark, daughter of Greg and Deborah Clark, is graduating this spring from NC State University. Lauren majored in Social Work and, when she graduates, plans to intern with Vintage Church, her church in Raleigh. There, Lauren will be working with the College Ministry, with local non-profits that the church works with, and she will be helping to launch a foster care and adoption ministry.

Some of Lauren's favorite memories from her college years include driving to the beach at midnight with friends during her freshman year, ordering pizza to the library during finals, hosting community group in her home, and playing intramural soccer and basketball. We are extremely proud of Lauren and will continue to support her with our thoughts and prayers as she moves into this next phase of life.

Lauren's family includes parents Greg and Deborah and sister Brittany.

Matthew Mosley-Mair has been named a Chancellor Scholar for Appalachian State University. The scholarship is merit-based and awarded to academically competitive high school seniors. Matthew will be graduating from the East Mecklenburg High School IB program where he is in the top 5% of his class. He was selected as a junior marshal. At present he intends to study political science, but is also attracted to statistics and math. He wants to continue to nurture his interest in music as well.

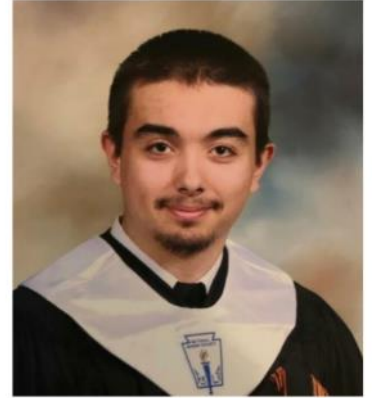
Music is an absorbing interest; he is a member of the Chamber Choir at East. Some of his favorite memories of high school will be having acted in the yearly musicals presented by East students. He has enjoyed the roles he played in *Shrek, the Musical*; *Anything Goes*; and *Rent*. Fortunately, East's musical for this school year (*Rent*) was performed in February before the health-related closing of Mecklenburg schools. In the area of sports, Matthew is most interested in soccer and has played recreational soccer with the Charlotte Juniors.

Included in his family are parents Chris Mair and Elizabeth Mosley and brother Jackson. His maternal grandmother is also a Sardis member, Barbara Mosley.

Reid Sigmon has been an important part of Sardis Baptist for a long time. Though it's not been a typical senior year for him, we celebrate Reid's graduation from Providence High School. While at Providence, Reid was a part of the Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC) for all four years.

Next fall, Reid will be attending Appalachian State University. He'll be continuing to follow the ROTC path. Go Mountaineers! Congratulations Reid! We thank you for being a part of Sardis and we celebrate your accomplishments.

Reid's family includes his parents David & Krista Sigmon and his brother Grey.



MISSIONS & MORE

COMMUNITY LINK

Community Link works to enable individuals and families to obtain and sustain safe, decent and affordable housing. They support clients every step of the way from homelessness to housing through three programs: Financial Literacy, Homeless to Housing, and Asset Building/Homeownership. Sardis Baptist was in the midst of "suitcase drive" in support of Community Link's "Homeless to Housing" program when our stay-in-place orders were given. We won't allow Covid-19 to thwart our efforts! Please continue to collect new or gently used suitcases, duffels, backpacks and tote bags. As soon as we are able to gather again, we will schedule a date for you to drop your donations at the church.



GOODNESS GROCERIES

Sardis Baptist Church has made a meaningful difference in the lives of students from Charlotte Secondary School throughout the stay-at-home order. We have made four grocery deliveries to stock a school food pantry for food-insecure families, and are currently collecting funds for a fifth delivery. Approximately 60% of CSS students qualified for free and reduced lunch before the recent economic downturn. That number has likely increased. Thank you for your continued support!



MINISTRY PLAN

The work of Sardis Baptist Church has continued throughout the Covid-19 crisis. Although we are not currently using our meetinghouse as a gathering place, we continue to be good stewards of our people and property! Our Ministry Plan allows us to do so. It also supports other nonprofit organizations doing the work of the church at large. Annually our trustees create a Ministry Plan budget which designates financial gifts for a number of ministry partners, including HOPE Chapel, Baptist Peace Fellowship, Crisis Assistance, and others.



BENEVOLENCE:

Our Benevolence Fund supports individuals and families who are struggling financially. Sardis benevolence distributions are approved by our Board of Deacons and have supported those needing assistance for medical bills, housing, utilities, transportation, and maintaining health insurance coverage.



[Offerings to any of the above mentioned efforts may be made by clicking here to access the Sardis Baptist PayPal page.](#)
[Please designate where you want your offering applied.](#)
[Undesignated offerings will applied to our Ministry Plan.](#)

WE ARE SARDIS BAPTIST

During the month of May, we will offer Sardis folks an opportunity to be acquainted (or reacquainted) with the phrase you see on our sign: Sardis Baptist Church, a Spiritually Progressive Community of Faith.

Join Bob Stillerman on Wednesdays at 7 p.m. via Zoom for a lighthearted, informative, and collaborative discussion of what makes us the Sardis-kind-of-Baptists. All are welcome!

May 6th - Baptist History: A Refresher

Contrary to popular belief, Baptist is not a four-letter word, it's actually seven. We'll spend some time reviewing (and reclaiming!) the historical roots of our denominational tradition, as well as its core theological tenets.

May 13th - Can You Dance, and Are There Snakes?!

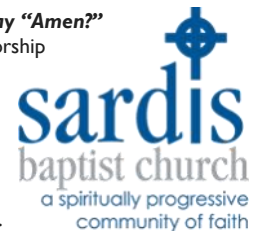
We'll spend some time thinking about what it means to be the community of faith we call Sardis Baptist Church...In other words, what's the Sardis spin on being Baptist?

May 20th - Can I Clap My Hands, and Say "Amen?"

We'll discuss how our style of corporate worship reflects the tenets of our faith.

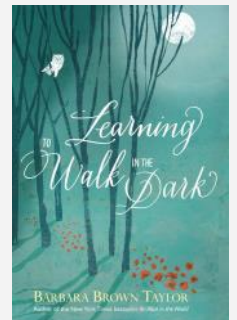
May 27th - Who Writes the Checks?

We'll provide an overview of the church's administrative structure, and how we collectively determine the ongoing mission and purpose of our faith community.



Learning to Walk in the Dark

What can we learn about the ways of God when we cannot see the way ahead? When we are lost, alone, frightened, not in control? When the world around us seems to have descended into darkness? The Adult Sunday School is beginning a book study in May: "Learning to Walk in the Dark," by Barbara Brown Taylor. The class meets on Sunday mornings at 9:45 AM on Zoom. Anyone is welcome to join.



Blood donations save lives, and right now blood centers are in critical need of donors. Many blood drives have been cancelled due to the risk of spreading Covid 19 at gatherings. Donation Centers will remain open as an essential business throughout the stay-at-home orders. If you are healthy and not in a high-risk category for complications from the coronavirus, we encourage you to contact a local, not-for-profit blood donation center to make an appointment:

[OneBlood.org / 888.936.6283](https://www.oneblood.org/)
[RedCross.org / 704.376.1661](https://www.redcross.org/)



Prayer Garden

Sardis Baptist Church is located on a piece of property that is lovely any time of year, but the stay-at-home orders have kept us away during this beautiful season of Spring. Please visit our grounds virtually. Take an introspective walk through our labyrinth using this link:

youtube.com/watch?v=jnHPhXBP7Iw

Help Requested

The natural beauty of Sardis Baptist continues through Mary Jane Osborne. She requested that Lenten Roses from her home garden be transplanted to the Sardis Baptist Prayer Garden. We are grateful to her daughter, Anna Midgett, for fulfilling her request. They were planted at the end of April, and need water daily until the roots take to the soil. Please contact the church office if you are willing to join a rotation of Sardis friends to assist with watering.



CareRing

The Fellowship Team is finding ways to share the gift of good food with our community. On Wednesday, April 29th, the team prepared a homemade lunch for the administrators and healthcare workers at CareRing, a low-cost medical clinic offering much-needed care to people with modest resources in the Charlotte region. (The picture to the right includes Rev. Bob Stillerman and Dr. Don Jonas, Executive Director of CareRing in front of their building).

Earlier in the month, members of the team delivered Easter meals to Sardis friends who live alone and do not have family members nearby. Over the coming weeks they'll continue to look for small ways to offer gratitude and connection for neighbors that are working hard to keep us safe in uncertain times. Contact the church office if you would like to participate in upcoming efforts: 704.362.0811 or info@SardisBaptistCharlotte.org.

