



a spiritually progressive community of faith

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

VIRTUAL WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday at 9:45 AM
Virtual Sunday School

Sunday at 11:00 AM
Virtual Morning Worship

Friday @ Noon
Virtual Prayer Gathering

TRADITION OF THE JESSE TREE

"A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord." ~ Isaiah 11:1-2

Jesse was the father of King David, and in the scripture verse above, the shoot represents David, from whom Jesus was a descendant. The branch, with wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge and the fear of the Lord represents Jesus.

A branch is a sign of new beginnings, and Jesus was the beginning of the Christian Church. The tradition of the Jesse Tree is a way to proceed through Advent while remembering the lineage of Jesus from the beginning of creation. Each day during Advent, a story from the Bible is read, and an accompanying ornament is placed on the tree. An apple ornament may be used to represent the Garden of Eden story, or a colorful jacket ornament may be hung to represent Joseph's coat of many colors.

Members of our Worship Development Team have put branches of a Jesse Tree just outside the entrance to the Sardis Baptist sanctuary. Robin Rowland, Susan Phillips, and Janette Grassi have all contributed handmade ornaments. Each week during Advent, we will share one of their ornaments with you, and encourage you to make some of your own. Simple instructions will be included in our weekly emails, or you can find many simple and creative ideas online. We invite you to stop by the church to admire the tree and to hang ornaments of your own.



PPE for CHRISTMAS

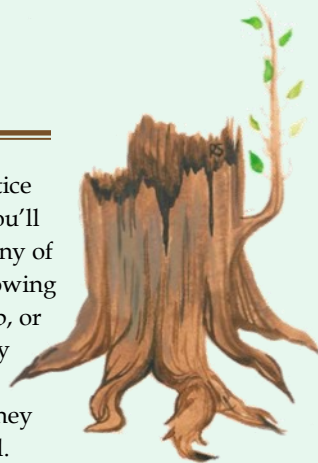


Rev. Bob Stillerman is a member of "Clergy in Community," a cohort of pastors who gathers regularly to collaborate for the purpose of enhancing the services they provide to their congregations and communities. Through this group, Bob has become friends with Rev. Louis Tillman, senior pastor of St. Philip's Lutheran Church in East Baltimore, Maryland. Located in an economically depressed area, St. Philip's strives to serve its congregation as well as its surrounding neighborhood. The population is comprised of mostly low-income and minority residents, and has been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. St. Philip's has lost more than 20 active members to death from COVID-19. Church neighbors have a difficult time securing items necessary to help protect themselves and their families, e.g. face masks, hand sanitizer, grocery staples, etc. Businesses in the neighborhood have gouged prices on protective equipment and groceries, and many residents do not have the ability to travel to other areas to obtain affordable supplies. Rev. Louis reported to Bob that face masks in the area are selling for \$50 apiece; a gallon of milk costs \$8. (Continued on page 3.)

I LIFT UP MINE EYES...

Rev. Bob Stillerman

If you walk around our campus, you'll notice a few tree stumps. If you look carefully, you'll also notice that in the warmer months, many of these stumps have shoots or "suckers" growing out of them. If you like a manicured stump, or if you like a lawn without too much unruly brush and growth, you probably have a negative opinion of these pesky shoots – they are something to be removed not nurtured.



It's ironic that Isaiah 11 uses the image of a shoot to describe Israel's messiah. From a pesky, skinny, green twig, growing out of a dilapidated stump, God's gonna restore the Davidic line. Translation: God's gonna remind us that something we think has little value actually has lots of it. As a matter of fact, the whole of God's story is using ordinary people (often times people whom the world discards) to accomplish extraordinary things.

If we aren't in a rush to dismiss Jesse's shoot, we'll actually find a poignant metaphor. Imagine a mighty oak felled by time, and withered to a stump. This tree has experienced all that life can offer, not to mention significant trauma. The odds of such a tree creating new life are minimal. The tree must summon energy to sprout the new sucker, endurance and attentiveness to allow the sucker to seek sunlight, and eventually durability to harden in order that the tender shoot can survive wintry elements.

God has the potential to turn stumps into mighty oaks! Advent is a season for waiting and trusting. Advent is the time to celebrate little shoots, and imagine the tall, shady trees they will become.

In the weeks ahead, we invite you to join us in a quest for rootedness in God. We'll feed our tender shoots with ancient stories and familiar songs in the hopes of creating new energy. Perhaps this energy will transform our spirits into mighty oaks.

This year's Chrismon Tree will be a Jesse Tree, featuring ornaments that represent the many women and men who have shaped our faith story, and who bear witness to God's presence in the world. Sardis friends are encouraged to contribute ornaments to this living story. (See the cover page for additional details.)

Each Sunday the homilies will explore our roots in Jesse's stump. We'll hear about people who listened to God's call on their lives, and inspire us to wait on the Christchild with hope, peace, joy, and love.

Additionally, an Advent calendar (available Sunday 11/29) will feature sheroes and heroes of our faith.

Let's dig in!

JESSE, FATHER OF KING DAVID



Jesse was invited to a barbeque that would put him in the history books. As he was a leading elder of the city of Bethlehem, it would not be thought strange that Samuel would invite him to attend an event in which sacrifices would be made to God. It was, however, a subterfuge to begin proceedings to seat a new king on the throne of Israel. As Jesse and seven of his sons participated in the ritual, it became clear to Samuel that none of those present fit the bill. "You got any more sons?" asked Sam. "My youngest son is out watching the herd of sheep," Jesse replied. David was sent for and he was anointed as the next king of Israel. Much happened before his commission was fulfilled, however.

Jesse was a well-to-do farmer and a patriot. Three of his sons spent time in the army of Saul, defending Israel against her enemies. He sent David to the encampment with food for his brothers, as well as cheeses from his farm for the commanding officers. It was on one of these trips David made to take food to his brothers that he encountered Goliath in battle.

In addition to eight sons, Jesse had two daughters. He was the son of Obed, making him a grandson of the Moabite Ruth and her Jewish husband Boaz.

"A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." (Is. 11:1) Christians think metaphorically of Jesus being the outgrowth referred to in this verse. By the time of Isaiah's writing, there were no more kings descended from David, but the prophet assures that the Davidic line has not ended. The Jesse tree is based on the genealogy of Jesus found in Matthew, and there are various artistic interpretations of Jesus' family tree, linking him to the Davidic line of kings as well as to the great patriarchal fathers of Israel.





Message from Hilary

As we all know, this Advent season is going to be a little different than in years past, but that does not mean that we can't make it special in its own right.

Throughout the Advent season, the Sardis Baptist Choir will be bringing beautiful music to our worship services, culminating in a special Christmas Anthem on December 20. Preparations are being made as we speak to create a virtual musical experience that is worthy of our Sardis Baptist Choir, so we hope you will enjoy this offering when it is completed!

Leading up to the 20th, we will have guest musicians, and minister of music Hilary Kearns McIntyre will be sharing songs on Facebook each week to prepare for our Christmas Eve broadcast, so watch your email for all important posts and updates!

CHRISTMAS EVE BY CANDLELIGHT

We invite you to celebrate the coming of the Christ Child on Christmas Eve. This year's service will be prerecorded in order for you watch the annual candlelight service with your family at the time most convenient for you. As in years past, we will sing carols and read the stories Jesus' birth. A video link will be emailed to our distribution list, as well as posted on our social media pages.



ST. PHILIPS PPE

(continued from cover)

The Social Action committee of St. Philip's has launched a community action task force with a vision of "Radical Wellness in the Season of Covid-19." The goal is to provide necessary PPE to people in the neighborhood, and will require assistance from outside of their community. Sardis Baptist Church would like to help.



Each year during Advent, we offer you the opportunity to honor or memorialize loved ones. Under normal circumstances, we collect funds for poinsettias to adorn our sanctuary, and we share the names of honorees on Christmas Eve. This year, since Covid-19 prevents us from gathering safely in our sanctuary, the funds we collect will be used to support the PPE fund at St. Philip's. If you wish to honor / memorialize loved ones, please provide the following information to the church:

- 1—Your Name
- 2—Is this an honorarium or memorial?
- 3—List the full name of the person(s) to be recognized
- 4—Amount of donation (for reference, the cost of our poinsettias in 2019 were \$15 apiece).

Your options for sending this information follow:

- Mail the above details along with payment to the church office, 5811 Sardis Rd / Charlotte, NC 28270
- Email the above details to the church office, info@SardisBaptistCharlotte.org, and submit payment via our secure PayPal page, <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/SardisBaptistChurch>.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY SARDIS BAPTIST CHURCH

This month we recognize the 32nd birthday of our church home. Let's give thanks for the blessings Sardis has bestowed on friends and neighbors through the years, and pray for many continued years of service.





I-Spy Nature Walk
Charlotte Wildlife Stewards



Master of ceremonies, Bennet Henkel, is back on our schedule! He will host Sardis friends for some fierce but friendly rounds of holiday trivia. Save the date! The games begin at 7 PM on Thursday, December 10th. We'll gather in a Sardis Zoom room. Login details will be shared through our email distribution list. Get ready by jogging your holiday movie and music memories!

Thursday, December 10th @ 7 PM



Thanksgiving GladLibs

Our Friday prayer group the day after Thanksgiving was a little different! Instead of MadLibs, we played GladLibs to come up with a fun, yet meaningful Thanksgiving prayer. Fill in your own words below!

God, there are a few places, one's called Rutherfordton, another is called Hanging Rock State Park, and another is my bed, and each one makes my heart beat just a little bit faster. I know that you are part of creation when I see birds and their habits, waterfalls, and interesting people. Thank you!

And God, you have provided us with a full table: chocolate and pizza make every day better, especially when there is dressing! And don't get me started on pecan pie, cranberry salad, and ham. I know you've had a hand in all the potato casserole I've eaten. It just gets better and better.

And God, have I mentioned all the people you've put in my life, people who bring light into the world? There's Grandma Washburn, who never gave up and sang no matter what. And there's Melissa Bowlin, who lets me know she cares everyday. And how could I forget my mother, Ruth, who imparted her love of nature. For the many saints in our lives, living and past, we say thanks!

There's little things too, God, like teddy bears, gumdrops, family text chat, the corny humor of grandchildren, and visits from neighborhood children. All these things we seem to take for granted. Forgive us God, when we seem too busy to pay attention. This evening, we want to tell you that we notice, God. And we are grateful. Amen.