

# **sardis** **signposts** baptist church

a spiritually progressive community of faith

5811 Sardis Road / Charlotte, NC 28270 / 704.362.0811  
[SardisBaptistCharlotte.org](http://SardisBaptistCharlotte.org)

## VIRTUAL WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday at 9:45 AM  
Sunday School

Sunday at 11:00 AM  
Morning Worship

Friday @ Noon  
Virtual Prayer Gathering

## INTERCONTINENTAL WORSHIP

### Charlotte, NC ↔ Cheadle Hulme, Manchester England

Grove Lane Baptist Church and Sardis Baptist Church will meet in a joint worship service on August 15, 2021. Rev. Bob Stillerman will be the proclaimer for the day; Rev. Dr. Ruth Gouldbourne will lead the intercessory prayer and share eucharistic words. Each congregation will gather in their usual meeting space. Sardis will meet at their usual worship time of 11:00 AM; Grove Lane's congregation will meet in the afternoon rather than the morning hours in order to sync the time difference between England and the United States. The two congregations will be connected by Zoom.

Grove Lane is located in Cheadle Hulme, Greater Manchester region of England, in the county of Cheshire. The church was established in 1840, about 50 years before the Baptist Union of Great Britain came into being. It is "run on the true Baptist principle that every member has an equal say. We have the community, justice, the world, and the love of God at our heart." They advocate for justice, fairness, liberty and equality.

The church is active in the community. They host a Toddler Group three days a week for toddlers and their caregivers. A Day Centre provides daycare for the elderly who may have restricted mobility or who are alone most of the day. In addition there are regularly scheduled meetings for youngsters. The Six One Fivers is a group for ages 5-9; the Net brings together ages 9-12; and the Youth Group focuses on those 12 years and above. The emphasis of these programs is "self-development, exploration, and relationships." Leaders are volunteers who come from the church and from the surrounding community. (At present these groups are not meeting due to Covid restrictions; the church meets on Zoom for worship; a hopeful resumption of gathering is September.)

Rev. Dr. Ruth Gouldbourne is the pastor of Grove Lane. She will soon celebrate her third year anniversary with them. The church is associated with the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Northwest Baptist Association, the Progressive Christianity Network of Britain and Affirm (a network of Baptist Churches who are welcoming and affirming).



Sardis Baptist Church is hosting a school supply drive throughout the month of August. Supplies collected will be donated to economically disadvantaged students of Charlotte Secondary School, with whom we have partnered for our ongoing Goodness Groceries campaign. A list of needed supplies is below. Donations may be dropped off in the church vestibule on Sunday mornings, or left during the week in the covered plastic bin located outside the doors to the meetinghouse.

- Backpacks
- Lunch Bags
- Highlighters
- Index Cards
- Pens
- Pencils
- Erasers
- Sharpeners
- Pocket Folders
- 3-Ring Binders
- Dividers
- Graph Paper
- Composition Notebooks
- Loose Leaf Notebook Paper

If you prefer to make a financial contribution to this effort, please notate "school supplies" with your payment. Sardis will use funds collected to supplement items dropped off at the church.

## I LIFT UP MINE EYES...

Rev. Bob Stillerman

**BACK AT IT.** So...we're back. Well, it's not like we were ever away. But we're back. Back to gathering for worship in person. Back to doing many of the things that are so familiar to us. Back to being Sardis in 3-D.

It's strange though. In March of 2020, we kind of flicked off the light switch, and our world slowed down. And fast! Every routine we could imagine was either altered, eliminated, or paused. As the "switch" flips back on, the normalcy and rhythms of our routines, and the energy it takes to sustain those routines, has been slower to return. It's SO nice that the world is open again, but did it really require SO much of our energy the last go-round?!

Maybe this interim period is a really good metaphor for the not-yet that will someday-be? As Christians, we do faith God's fruitful future, even in the messiness and uncertainty of the present.

I often think about Shakespeare in the times where I long for order and ease. Iambic pentameter provides a beautiful cadence, but even in perfect form, the rhyme cannot conceal the choppiness of life's joys and sorrows. We don't live our life in iambic pentameter; we live it in a free-flowing, wonderfully-messy, wonderfully-unpredictable prose. Thanks be to God!

All of this is to say: be patient. Sardis is gonna be Sardis again, and we're gonna be us again. It just might not happen as quickly as we want it to.

In the interim, here are some things we can work on (all together) to build energy, joy, momentum, and spirit in our community.

**Be present.** Sure, come often and in-person if you can. But physical presence and being present aren't the same thing. Being present means telling others that they matter by expressing our connectedness. Text, call, write, Tweet, Tik-Tok, send carrier-pigeons...do the small things to check in on one another. There's life-giving bread in these practices.

**Reclaim social media.** Yes, when used irresponsibly, social media can rot minds and polarize communities. But I would remind you that social media has also helped us greet and welcome new friends into our community. I'd also remind you that we're working hard to change the narrative by posting content (and lots of it!) that envisions and promotes a world of equity, justice, and peace. Not to mention God's creative presence. If you'll engage with Sardis social media channels, you'll increase our awareness and our broader community health.

**Dream.** This community can be ANYTHING we want it to be. And YOU, that's right, YOU, have autonomy, giftedness, and permission to make that happen. Share your voices, your gifts, and your ideas with us. We may just generate some much-needed kingdom-moments.

**Pray.** Yes, pray. God's presence hasn't gone anywhere. But I think our awareness of God's presence, and reticence to engage God's presence affects our energy. Praying, be it silently, out loud, or with our acts of service and kindness, offers a chance to give voice to our joys, hopes, and concerns. And when we use our voices, when we engage our Creator, we begin to better understand our calling.

We've got this, Sardis! And even better, God's got us. May we experience the joy of "being back" in the days and weeks to come!



## Sardis People: Luther Fisher



During the more restrictive days of the pandemic, Luther Fisher began looking for something different in church, something smaller and more progressive, some place with diversity in thought. Sardis Road being one of his regular travel routes, he noticed the Sardis Baptist Church sign and looked us up. He joined our electronic services and concluded that he had found what he was looking for. He is the first in our community to ask for and receive membership via the Internet.

One of five sons, Luther began life in Indiana (the cities of Anderson and Kokomo); his family moved to Charlotte where he graduated from Independence High School. He attended North Carolina State and the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, from which he earned a B.S. in chemistry. Doing paralegal work in the real estate industry, Luther is a title abstractor. He does title research for various law firms and other entities who need that done.

As a fun sideline, Luther is a mobile DJ, "spinning" music at birthday parties, weddings, pool parties. Hopefully that sideline will begin to pick up again if the virus can be kept at bay. He likes to play basketball, read, and watch movies during leisure time. One of his favorite genres is sci-fi. He also likes horror movies and enjoys reading non-fiction.

Luther is married to Natalie. They have two teenage children, Liliana and Nathan. Natalie's parents are also a part of his household. Natalie's father was a Church of Christ pastor before moving to Charlotte from Japan.



## BEACH RETREAT



### CBFNC YOUTH

What is it and when? I'm glad you asked! The CBF Fall Beach Retreat is a retreat for middle and high school youth. It is the weekend of September 24 – 26. This year's theme is "Restore Life" and we'll be considering Nehemiah 8:10.

"Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This is sacred to our Lord.

Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

Our retreat leader is Tori Crook, a student at Yale Divinity School and our musicians are Scott England & Band.

Here's the surprising part! The retreat participation cost is \$0.00! (You only have to pay if you sign-up but don't show-up.) We need to know if you want to go so sign-up yourself and friends by Sunday, August 15! Check with J Swizz if you need details.

## 3 QUESTIONS Congregational Survey



It's been quite a summer! We're resuming in-person activities and learning how to be Sardis Baptist Church in a post-pandemic (at least changed-pandemic) world. The experience is both exhilarating and jarring – it's not like we can just flip a light switch and resume operations as normal. We are a changed people, and we'll need to be intentional about aligning and implementing our Sardis spirit in a new world.

We need your help. Change, at the least the positive, life-giving, transformative kind of change we hope for, can't happen in a vacuum. We need to know what you are thinking, feeling, and experiencing in August of 2021. Please help us by answering three questions as honestly and openly as you can. [Click here for quick access to the survey, or you may look for a link in the weekly Sardis Happenings email.](#)

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE



- Our Country, Our Citizens, Our Leaders • Migrants and Advocates, including Eastside Advocacy Group and Migrant Assistance Project • Holly Almond, aunt of Jacqueline Stillerman • Annie, sister of Amanda Lewis
- Askins Family: Rebecca, Jourdan, Joey, Brady, Samuel, Reese & Keely • Melissa Bowlin • Maria Byrd • Friends & Family of Terry Byrd, father of Joey • Carol, friend of Tillie Duncan • Pat Chowning, friend of Marge Henderson
- Sonny Cole, brother of Marge Henderson • Linda Cook • Elzene Corbett, Janet Beltzhoover's mother • Becky Crisco, friend of Marge Henderson • Nancy Darnell • Ron Demme • Pat Dukar, friend of Marge Henderson • Larry and Amelia Eidson, Jonathan's parents • Joe Gragg, brother of Billie Hutchison • Janette Grassi • Gennelle Hall, Jessica Wallace's mother (Bullies 2 the Rescue) • Larry & Donna Harrill • Shareen, niece of Janie Harris • Friends and Family of Landon Heisler • Eugene Hill • Billie Hutchison • Lindsay Jackson & Connor Steward, daughter of Kristin Parker • Kathie & Marvin Jean • Karen, CBF Field Personnel and friend of Amanda Lewis • Charlie King, friend of Mark Wiebke • Cheryl Landers, friend of Susan Phillips and Tillie Duncan • Lela, relative of Tillie Duncan • Robert & Catherine Marshall, family of Janette Grassi • Friends & Family of Helen McCall • John McKinney, friend of Donna Barger • Rachael Phipps, friend of Betty Gunz • Becky Proctor • Friends & Family of Dawn Ramsey, relative of Susan Phillips • Cheryl Raugh, friend of Kristin Parker • Mala Reynolds • Rolando, father of Tamara Prieyemski • Friends & Family of Matias Rosado • Becca Rose, granddaughter of Tillie Duncan • Bob Rowland, Robin's father • Tanya Stevensen, daughter of June Ross • Lucy Stillerman • Linda & Cameron Thomas • Deannie Tiddy, Jo's mother-in-law • Family & Friends of Linda Robinson, friend of Susan & Danny Phillips • Julie White, friend of Marge Henderson • Katie Wiebke, daughter of Mark & Amy • Kelly Wise, friend of Melissa Bowlin





LET FREEDOM SING  
JULY 4, 2021

## CHILD DEDICATION

**Please join us for a special service of  
child dedication for the Mata family on  
Sunday, August 22nd at 11:00 AM.**

*We give thanks to God for the gift of  
the lives of our children that have been  
entrusted to us. We pledge ourselves to love  
them, care for them, and to provide them  
with an environment in which they have  
opportunities to play, work, search, study,  
learn, serve, and be, as God intends.*

## Deepest Condolences

*May the friends and families of those whose loved  
ones have died feel comforted by our prayers.*

*Terry Byrd, beloved father of Joey Byrd*

*Helen McCall, charter member of Sardis Baptist Church*

*Dawn Ramsey, relative of Susan Phillips*

*Linda Robinson, friend of Susan Phillips*

