

# 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  
Virtual Sunday School

Sunday at 11:00 AM  
Virtual Morning Worship

Friday @ Noon  
Virtual Prayer Gathering

### THE PEOPLE ARE IN THE STEEPLE!

In-Person Worship Resumes  
Sunday 7/11 @ 11 a.m.



### HERE'S THE CHURCH; HERE'S THE STEEPLE; OPEN THE DOORS AND SEE ALL THE PEOPLE!

Sardis is excited to resume in-person worship on Sunday, July 11th, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. As we prepare to gather in a more traditional way for the first time in more than 15 months, we want to offer details on what to expect, as well as our thought process in planning for what's ahead.

**Why July 11th?** The staff and leadership of the church have put significant thought into our reopening process. We appreciate your patience and support as we seek to make healthy, smart decisions. And we thank you for your continued support throughout this long process.

Safety was a top priority for us. By mid-May all staff members were vaccinated. Once we could safely gather together, we needed a few weeks to understand how to lead worship in physical space again, as well as consider how we'll continue to offer a virtual connection to at-home worship participants. Over the last few weeks, we have integrated a smaller choir back into worship. Also, out of an abundance of caution, we believed that waiting until 7/11 would provide one more window of opportunity to avoid any viral surges associated with Memorial Day and early summer travel. It's also given us a chance to ask about best practices from peer churches who are back to some form of in-person worship.

We also know that our homecoming is a big deal. We wanted plenty of time to make people aware of the kick-off, and we didn't want to compete with Mother's Day, Father's Day, graduations, and 4th of July. In addition, we have several extended staff vacations in June.

**What Should I Expect?** Our greeting one another, and being with one another is sacred! We see that as a vital component of worship. During July and August, our "formal" worship will be succinct: prayer time, a short message, and gathering elements (similar to our services the Sunday after Christmas), and we plan to leave more time for community fellowship. We know you are ready for Sardis people in 3D! In September, we'll transition back to a style more in keeping with our traditional format.

**Masks, Singing, Seating?** The great majority of our congregation is vaccinated. And we are grateful for that! But everyone is not. Additionally, we do not yet know when it will be safe for the children of our church to be vaccinated, and we want our environment to feel safe and welcoming to all of our folks, including our children and their families. Also please consider our community members who work in industries like funeral homes and nursing homes, which have higher-than-normal levels of exposure, as well as educators who work with unvaccinated students. And we do have members with vulnerable immune systems (continued on page 2)

## LET FREEDOM SING!

**SARDIS HYMN SING**

**Sunday, July 4th**

**10:00 AM**

**Sardis Baptist Picnic Shelter**

July 4th is a day to reflect on freedom. The coronavirus has certainly given us some perspective on this topic! Sunday, July 4th Sardis friends will celebrate the freedom to gather and sing together for the first time in more than 15 months. We'll meet in the picnic shelter at 10 AM for fellowship and food; a continental breakfast will be served. Worship will begin at 10:30, and will include a time of prayer, devotion, and lots of singing! Hilary will lead us in some Sardis favorites, including *Jesu, Jesu, Servant Song*, *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, and *A Mighty Fortress*, among others.

We will set up folding chairs and there will also be space to sit around the picnic tables, but feel free to bring your favorite camp chair if you prefer. This will be an informal celebration so come in comfortable clothes. Save your Sunday best for our return to the meetinghouse sanctuary the following week.





## SARDIS REOPENING (CONTINUED)

In order to be cautious, and to respect the feelings of our entire community, we request that everyone follow these guidelines:

- Please mask for all congregant gatherings
- Please be mindful of social distancing -- when possible, please keep your space, and try to share seating with members of your household
- Please be consistent in using hand sanitizer when you enter the building (We realize that COVID-19 is less likely to be transmitted by touching surfaces that have been contaminated by the virus. However, this practice will help prevent the spread of other illnesses such as colds and flu)
- We love hugs and handshakes...BUT...Remember, everyone is discerning their new levels of comfort. Ask your neighbors if they are okay with hugs and handshakes. And if they aren't, peace signs, fist bumps, and virtual hugs are always appropriate
- As formal worship concludes, please utilize our indoor and outdoor spaces to spread out and visit with one another
- For now, our choir and/or special musicians will lead us in anthems and hymns, but we will refrain from congregational singing indoors. (Singing requires greater airflow and increased spreading of aerosol droplets)

Please know we will continue to monitor recommendations for group gatherings and move as quickly as we can to resume all the familiarities of worship in as safe a way as possible. We have arranged the meetinghouse to provide adequate spacing for social distance. We anticipate that our seating arrangements may need to be altered after the first few Sundays pending attendance, accessibility, and comfort. We appreciate your patience and feedback as we find the best setup and work for continual improvement.

**Reservations?** No reservations needed. We expect that we can accommodate anyone who wants to come. In the event our attendance exceeds expectations, we will make necessary adjustments.

**Worship Care? Yes!** Sardis will offer worship care in July and August to our families. We are reaching out to parents to understand their needs, and to ensure a plan is in place.

**Virtual Church / Streaming?** Beginning Sunday 7/11, worship services will be livestreamed to the Sardis Baptist Facebook page, and the video will be available on Facebook and YouTube for viewing at a later time. Worship via Zoom will be temporarily discontinued once we return to in-person services (7/11). In the fall, once we have had an opportunity to evaluate our needs for in-person and virtual worship, the staff and diaconate will determine if additional streaming platforms are needed to supplement our existing connections.

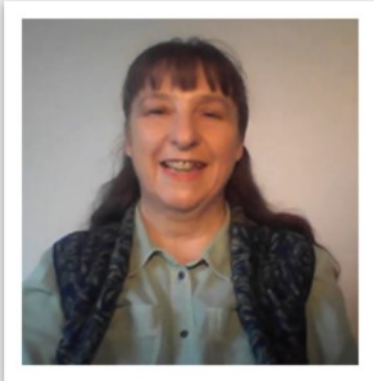
**We can't wait to see you in 3D!** These are exciting times for our community of faith, and we are eager to see what God has in store for us in the months to come!



Our Country, Our Citizens, Our Leaders • Migrants and Advocates, including Eastside Advocacy Group and Migrant Assistance Project • Students, Teachers and School Staff • Holly Almond, aunt of Jacqueline Stillerman • Askins Family: Rebecca, Jourdan, Joey, Brady, Samuel, Reese & Keely • Melissa Bowlin • Maria Byrd • 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 • Pat Dugar, friend of Marge Henderson • Ann & Randy Duncan, friends of Susan & Danny Phillips • 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 • Eugene Hill • Kathie & Marvin Jean • Karen, CBF Field Personnel and friend of Amanda Lewis • Charlie King, friend of Mark Wiebke • Robert & Catherine Marshall, family of Janette Grassi • John McKinney, friend of Donna Barger • Rachael Phipps, friend of Betty Gunz • Becky Proctor • Cheryl Rough, friend of Kristin Parker • Mala Reynolds • Gary Rowe, neighbor of Susan & Danny Phillips • Rolando, father of Tamara Prieyemski • Bob Rowland, Robin's father • Linda & Cameron Thomas • Deannie Tiddy, Jo's mother-in-law • Heather Robinson Weir, friend of Susan & Danny Phillips • Linda Robinson, friend of Susan and Danny Phillips • Julie White, friend of Marge Henderson • Katie Wiebke, daughter of Mark & Amy • Kelly Wise, friend of Melissa Bowlin

## *Sardis Friends:* **Dr. Ruth Gouldbourne**

Having a doctorate in Reformation History, Ruth Gouldbourne has spent much of her ministry in places imbued with history. Early in her career she was assistant minister at Bunyan Meeting in Bedford, England. The church was named for John Bunyan who



was a member and minister there in the 17th century. He is best known for authoring *Pilgrim's Progress*, one of the great novels of all time. The book helped to enhance and redefine worship for ordinary folk.

She became a tutor (That's "teacher" for we who speak the English of the United States!) at Bristol Baptist college, which is the oldest continuing Baptist College in the world, (founded 1679). It is while she was there that she completed her doctorate in Reformation History as she educated others in church history and doctrine. Dr. Gouldbourne was ordained at Bloomsbury Baptist in London. She returned to minister there again after her work in Bedford and Bristol. This is the church where she and our pastor Bob Stillerman met and worked together when he spent part of his theological training there.

She grew up in a Baptist manse in Edinburgh, Scotland and received her undergraduate degree in English and Linguistics. She is currently pastor of Grove Lane Church in Cheshire and celebrates her third anniversary with them on July 1st. (More about Grove Lane in a later issue. It's the church with which we have traded testimonies about our respective churches). Ruth is married to Ian and together they care for and love a "small and very pampered dog" who answers to the name of Maizie. They enjoy theater time together. Ruth also likes to read, especially "whodunits," sew, make doll houses, and attempt gardening.

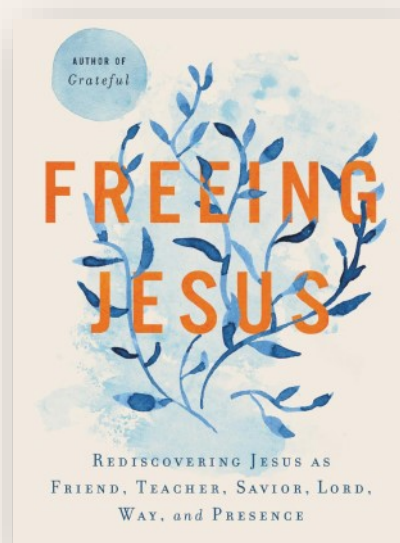
Sardis is looking forward to more cooperative ventures with Rev. Gouldbourne and the Grove Lane church. She has agreed to talk with the Sunday school class on women's opportunities and challenges in the British Isles.

## UPCOMING BOOK STUDY

*"Christianity did not begin with a confession. It began with an invitation into friendship, into creating a new community, into forming relationships based on love and service."*

The quote above is from the website of Diana Butler Bass ([dianabutlerbass.com](http://dianabutlerbass.com)), but it sounds like something that might be posted on Sardis Baptist social media! We expect her latest book is one many Sardis friends will want to read. She is an inspiring preacher, popular speaker, and an award-winning author. We will begin discussing *Freeing Jesus: Rediscovering Jesus as Friend, Teacher, Savior, Lord, Way, and Presence* on Sunday morning, July 18th. All interested are welcome to join the group in the large classroom space of the Education Building at 9:45 AM.

In this work of memoir and theology Diana Butler Bass describes how she's experienced Jesus differently at different times in her life. The book invites us to liberate Jesus from that which impedes our abilities to know him fully through the context of our lives in conversation with scripture.



## CHOIR UPDATE

The Sardis Baptist Chancel Choir will resume weekly rehearsals on Wednesday, August 18th at 7:30 PM. Although there will be no congregational singing for the time being, our Minister of Music, Hilary McIntyre, is working with choir members on solos, duets, trios and quartets for the months of July and August. We are excited to welcome choir members back to Sardis for live music in the sanctuary!







## The Golden Rule

### **Christianity**

In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.  
*Jesus, Matthew 7:12*

### **Judaism**

What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. This is the whole Torah; all the rest is commentary. Go and learn it.  
*Hillel, Talmud, Shabbath 31a*

### **Islam**

Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourself.  
*The Prophet Muhammad, Hadith*

### **Hinduism**

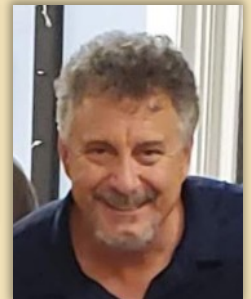
This is the sum of duty: do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you.  
*Mahabharata 5:1517*

### **Confucianism**

One word which sums up the basis of all good conduct... loving-kindness. Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself.  
*Confucius, Analects 15.23*

### **Buddhism**

Treat not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.  
*The Buddha, Udana-Varga 5.18*



Rev. Jonathan Eidson has written more than 60 devotions for Sardis friends since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic. Each week he relates scripture and faith to everyday events through glimpses into his own life. Often they reinforce lessons from the prior Sunday, helping us better apply scripture to daily living. During a time when staying connected to one another has been challenging due to circumstances, these devotions have helped bring us closer to Pastor Jonathan. If you haven't had the opportunity to read his weekly messages, you still can! They are all available online by clicking this link or entering this address in your web browser:

<https://www.dropbox.com/home/Devotionals%20-%20JE>