

sardis signposts baptist church

a spiritually progressive community of faith

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

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday at 9:45 AM
Sunday School

Sunday at 11:00 AM
Morning Worship

Sardis Vision 360 ~ Weekend Retreat

The culminating event of *Phase Two* of the *Visioning Process* will be the **Sardis Vision 360 Retreat**. On Friday evening (September 29th) we'll gather off-campus for food, fun and fellowship to kick-off the weekend. Saturday (September 30th), we'll convene to spend the day together (location to be determined). Our sessions will be facilitated by Rev. David Brown, the consultant who is guiding us through the visioning and transition processes. He'll present findings from the *Listening Sessions* held earlier in the month, and will share highlights of demographic data he's collected to help Sardis shape our engagement with the community. On Sunday morning, David will lead a session during the Sunday School hour to help us synthesize Saturday's discernment into actionable steps as we move into *Phase Three* of the *Visioning Process*. David will also be welcomed into the pulpit as our guest proclaimer on Sunday morning.

This is an exciting time in the life of Sardis Baptist Church, and we hope you'll plan to be a part of this formative weekend! The focus of our discussions will help us identify what we love about our church today, as well as what we want to love about our church tomorrow. The retreat will be a time to celebrate, clarify, and commit to the unfolding identity and mission of Sardis. This weekend will help us develop a foundation that will undergird the rest of the visioning process.

Additional details about specific retreat plans will be shared in weekly Sardis Happenings emails and during Sunday morning announcements.

It's not too late to register for a Congregational Listening Session! Sessions will provide opportunities for everyone to gather in small groups for guided feedback with David Brown. The primary goal is to uncover common themes, joys, and concerns related to the ongoing life of our congregation. Please email the church at info@SardisBaptistCharlotte.org to let us know which session you'd like to attend:

- ▶ Wednesday, 9/6 @ 6:45 PM
- ▶ Sunday 9/10 @ 9:45 AM
- ▶ Sunday, 9/10 @ Noon
- ▶ Thursday, 9/14 @ 8:00 AM



ANIMAL BLESSING

Sunday, September 17th @ 11 AM
Sardis Picnic Pavilion

Worship on Sunday, September 17th may feel a little wild compared to what we are used to! Worship will be held outside, and we invite you to bring your pets for a blessing.

The service is an opportunity to recognize and give thanks for every animal in our biosphere. All animals, insects and even micro-organisms play a role in our ecosystem, and we'll give thanks for them all. Our pets have a special place in our lives and will have a special place in this service. Pet companions model unconditional love and affection. For many people, they provide companionship that is unavailable elsewhere. The service will offer a chance for each family's pet to receive a blessing (continued on page 7).

Sardis People:

MINISTRY TEAM - HOW GOD BROUGHT US TO THIS MOMENT

Change and possibility are coming to Sardis. During the month of September, the ministerial staff will be proclaimers. In keeping with our visioning process which includes “how God brought us to this moment,” here is a little glimpse into how Kathryn, Hilary, Jonathan and Tillie became involved with the church which meets at Sardis.

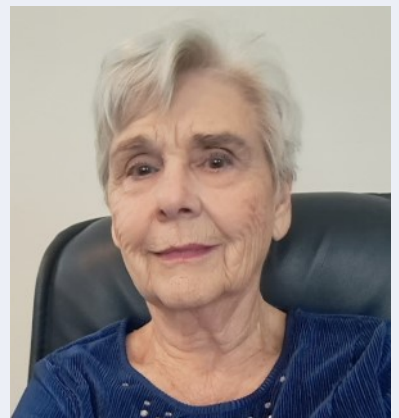
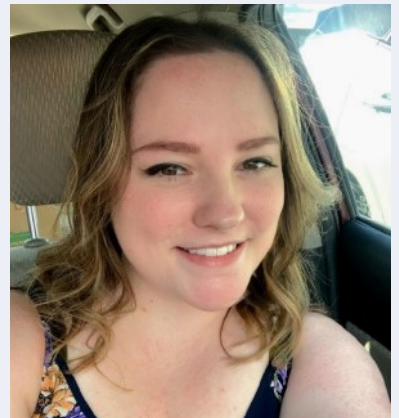
Pregnant with Kaleb and being mother to toddler Dylan, Kathryn began looking for a church in which to rear her family. She had grown up and been confirmed in the Episcopal church. Having friends who attended Candlewyck Baptist, she also joined them on youth trips and other activities there. Kris Hawkins invited her to Sardis. A few Sundays of attendance convinced her that this was a church with possibility. And Sardis found a member with possibility. The private school in which Kathryn had been teaching closed in the after-effects of the 2008 recession. Kathryn enjoyed her time “off,” and working with graphic design, but was ready to rejoin the job market at just the right time for Sardis.

Hilary met Hannah Lingafelt at Governor’s School (choral music) during the summer after her sophomore year at the Northwest School of the Arts. A couple of years later they became roommates at Appalachian University. Hannah, hearing through her Millbrook music minister mother that Sardis was looking for a minister of music, told Hilary of the possibility. Hilary had just graduated from Florida State with a master’s degree in vocal performance. Her musical education included classes in conducting, and Hilary had been a choir member “forever” in the Methodist church in which she grew up. The possibilities of Sardis and of Hilary matched up.

When Jonathan was in college, he helped to chaperone a youth lock-in at his home church. As he was ice-skating with the teens, he saw the adults with them sitting on the sidelines. In a moment of insight and calling, he realized that he would be a youth minister. He attended Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary where he received an M. Div/with Languages. While there, he began an association with Raleigh First Baptist becoming part-time youth minister and after graduation full time youth/college minister. With a move to Charlotte, Jonathan became interim youth minister at Park Road. One Sunday he visited Sardis and thought, “How fun it would be to be at Sardis.” God’s possibilities opened up a way to make that insight a reality.

Tillie was half-time missions minister at Pritchard Baptist Church when the possibility of becoming a pastor opened up with Sardis looking for a half-time pastor. Magay had given birth to triplets and Tim asked Sardis to consider making him half-time and calling a half time associate, giving him more time to be at home. Tillie had always felt a call to ministry and after a specific call to pastoral ministry enrolled in seminary in mid-life. Though age and gender sometimes encounter difficulty, God’s possibilities always amaze!

~ Rev. Tillie Duncan



WHY DO WE SING THOSE OLD HYMNS? An Introduction to Hymnody

~ Hilary Kearns McIntyre ~



"Hymnus est laus Dei cum cantico; canticum autem exultationis de aeternis habita, prorumpens in vocem."

(A hymn is the praise of God with song; a song is the exultation of the mind dwelling on eternal things, bursting forth in the voice.)

~ St. Thomas Aquinas, from the introduction to his commentary on the Psalms ~

As a musician, possibly the most important part of worship for me has always been music. I grew up in the United Methodist church and my earliest musical memories are of standing on the pews on Sunday morning, looking over at the hymnal held up by my grandmother or grandfather and trying to follow the shapes on the page that I knew told the grown ups what notes to sing.

I was extremely lucky, the choir director at the time was an exceptional musician and educator who made it a point to teach us kids how to read music while singing in the children's choir. Starting in Pre-K, we would come to church every Wednesday afternoon, sit on the risers in the choir room, and she would explain the difference between basic quarter notes (one beat of sound), slightly longer half notes (two beats), and long whole notes (four beats). She taught us Solfege (Do Re Mi Fa Sol La Ti Do), how to take "milkshake breaths" to sing those long musical phrases, and even took us on field trips to Tony's Ice Cream in Gastonia, NC, so we could really feel how much effort it took to suck up those thick milkshakes through a straw! Many of my first songs were hymns-- "Jesus Loves Me, This I Know" and "Jesus Loves the Little Children," and hymnody, the composition and singing of hymns, is a key aspect of my experience of Christianity.

Over the next several months, I will be writing "deep dives" for some of the most famous hymns, but what even is a hymn?

The word hymn derives from the Greek word *hymnos* meaning "song of praise," and many religions, not just Christianity, incorporate hymn-singing into their worship. Some of the earliest extant examples of hymns originate from the ancient cultures of Egypt, Canaan, India, China, Iran, and Greece. The earliest Christian hymns derive from the Book of Psalms and various Canticles written in the Bible. These early hymns could be accompanied by harps, lyres, lutes, or sung a cappella (unaccompanied). In fact, the term a cappella literally translates from Italian to "in the chapel."

In the October edition of signposts, I'll continue to share about the history of hymnody from the Middle Ages to the Modern Era.



SEPTEMBER PRAYER LIST

Our condolences are with the Adam, Tammy, Hank, and Curtis, who recently lost a member of their family. Bud Taylor, their family dog died at the end of August.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

• Ken Abbott, friend of June Ross • Rita Akers, friend of the Phillips • Charles Almond, grandfather of Jacqueline Stillerman • Holly Almond, aunt of Jacqueline Stillerman • Melissa Bowlin • Mark & Cheryl Bradbury, friends of Jonathan Eidson • Mark Bryant, friend of Mark Wiebke • Maria Byrd • Celia, friend of Amy Wiebke • Elzene Corbett, Janet Beltzhoover's mother • Nancy Darnell • Rae Deicke, friend of Jean Lawrence • Ron Demme • Betsy Cadle DePaul • Dusty Detterman, daughter of June Ross • Jan Dougherty, friend of Kreutzer family • Luke Duncan, son of Tillie • Amelia Eidson, Jonathan's mother • Ed Gash • Mildred Gragg, mother of Billie Hutchison • Mary Moon Guerrant, Kathryn Kreutzer's mother • Janie Harris • Rod Hawk, father of Tammy Taylor • Kathie & Marvin Jean • Jen Kaminska, friend of the Kreutzer family • Ann Macguire, sister of Rev. Ruth Gouldbourne (Grove Lane) • Robert Marshall, grandson of Janette Grassi • Rex Nordeen, cousin of Tillie Duncan • Frank Phillips, brother of Danny Phillips • Vicki Phillips, niece of Shannon Duncan • Rachel, Kendarius, and Mekhi Phipps, friends of Betty Gunz • Pam Poston • Mala Reynolds • Tony Rivers, friend of the Taylor family • June Ross • Bob Rowland, Robin's father • Pamela Schwartz, former staff of St. Stephen UMC • Sarah Simpson, friend of John Simpson • Tanya Stevensen, daughter of June Ross • Stillerman Family • Reggie Warren, friend of Becky Proctor's • Kelly Wise, friend of Melissa Bowlin • Katie Wiebke, daughter of Mark & Amy

TRAVELING MERCIES

• Askins Family (Rebecca, Jourdan, Joey, Brady, Samuel, Reece, Keely) • Leon Fisher • Karen, friend of Amanda Lewis • June Ross



I LIFT UP MINE EYES...

Rev. Bob Stillerman

Several years ago, I joined a cohort of ministry peers called Clergy in Community. At our initial meeting, we were invited to share photos of our current ministry context. As I was packing up my office last week, I found the photos I shared in 2019. Though some of the images are a bit stilled (they are all prepandemic), they reveal the timeless charm of Sardis.

"Doing/Being Church" isn't stodgy. Or boring. Or pretentious. Or rigid. Or predictable. Or even cool for that matter. I believe "Doing/Being Church" is living into our wonderful weirdness and Sardis-y silliness!!! Sardis is joyful. Quirky. Thoughtful. Inviting. Approachable. Lovable. Authentic. Intentional. And lots of other adjectives that invite you to kick your shoes off.

Look at this collage of photos. The untrained eye might see a collection of goofballs. But the observant eye will also see a people who are not only having fun, but are also expressing thoughtful, highly intellectual pursuits, engaging in loving relationships, and seeking progressive avenues for spiritual growth and provocative worship. And a longing for a more just world that begins with a micro gospel.

We have a pastor emerita named Tillie! Note the "a." Since its inception, Sardis has affirmed the calling of ALL whom God sends. We found the face of Jesus in a Cheeto, and we continue to insist that it's an expanse of imagery, not a contraction, that reveals the divine. You can't read it in the picture, but a banner in the meetinghouse reads, "Serve the Lord with Gladness." We leave weekly worship with a goal to be the church gathered then scattered then re-gathered.

We bless squirrels. And English Bulldogs in tutus. And any other critter you've got. And we take seriously the prayer concerns of our friends, human, furry, and four-legged alike. A labyrinth serves as a 24/7 space of reflection, and it's the first place we greet the Easter news. Don't be fooled – the IHOP crowd worked hard, thought hard, and even rose early for their breakfast!

Slim the skeleton isn't a gimmick. She's part of Camp Sardis, an abbreviated VBS. But she reinforces our belief in science, and our desire to use the gifts God has given us to bring healing to our neighbors. We're also never too old for a snack, or for Tang, or to be childlike in our wonder for all that Creation is, and the God who shaped her.

We incorporate the gifts of our community, especially art, into our lived worship. Advent ornaments reflect our 30th anniversary and the beauty of our Creation Window. Communion is important, too. It's not a Last Supper, it's a First Dinner. We re-live that experience every year. And yes, we take Last Supper photos, because who wouldn't!?

At Sardis, your children can run free. And dream big. And when they miss a Sunday, Pastor Jonathan still sends home doughnuts. They'll also learn that ministers come in all forms, and there are two particular ministers, Hilary and Kathryn, who will love them very much. Kids have their fingerprints all over this place! And here, they are considered artwork.

And Sardis sings. And plays. Irena and the Chancel Choir are divine. Their music is a gift. But who says that hard work can't also be joyful? This group is decorated in every sense. Their



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Cantata is even better than their Christmas garb.










Sardis, you don't have to worry about whether you will "Do/Be Church right," because you ARE Church. In the years ahead, I hope you'll never lose the sweet and quirky Spirit that defines you. Because the world needs your Spirit. And people in this city need to have a place where worship reflects their humanity. That's justice. And that's gospel. And that's real.

Your Spirit has enhanced the lives of our family immeasurably. Know that it follows us wherever we go. And know that we will always be Sardis-y. It's the only way to be!

With all our love,
Bob, Jacqueline, Mary Allen, Lucy,
and Josephine.



September

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 Clergy Group Meeting 	2
3 Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost 9:45 AM Sunday Morning Discussion Group 11:00 AM Worship Rev. Tillie Duncan	4 	5 The Garden Preschool — 9:15 AM to 1:15 PM Sardis Piano Academy — 3:15 PM to 8:45 PM 	6 4:00 PM Staff Meeting 6:30 PM Listening Session 7:30 PM Choir Practice	7  CWS Leadership Team	8	9
10 Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost 9:45 AM Listening Session 11:00 AM Worship Rev. Jonathan Eidson Called Conference Following Worship Noon Listening Session	11 The Garden Preschool — 9:15 AM to 1:15 PM Sardis Piano Academy — 3:15 PM to 8:45 PM 	12 6:15 PM Plastic Ocean Project Eastway Regional Recreation Center	13 4:00 PM Staff Meeting 7:30 PM Choir Practice	14 8:00 AM Listening Session 12:30 Church / 1:00 Restaurant G3 Lunch @ Lang Van 	15 Clergy Group Meeting	16
17 Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost 9:45 AM Sunday Morning Discussion Group 11:00 AM Animal Blessing Hilary McIntyre 	18 The Garden Preschool — 9:15 AM to 1:15 PM Sardis Piano Academy — 3:15 PM to 8:45 PM	19	20 4:00 PM Staff Meeting 7:30 PM Choir Practice 	21	22	23
24 Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost 9:45 AM Sunday Morning Discussion Group 11:00 AM Worship Kathryn Kreutzer	25 The Garden Preschool — 9:15 AM to 1:15 PM Sardis Piano Academy — 3:15 PM to 8:45 PM	26	27 4:00 PM Staff Meeting 7:30 PM Choir Practice	28	29 Vision 360 Retreat Kickoff Dinner 	30 Vision 360 Retreat

AUGUST HIGHLIGHTS



Friends from St. Martin's Episcopal Church Visit the Sardis Labyrinth



Rev. Bob Stillerman, Surrounded by Memoirs of Eight Great Years!

G3 Luncheon ~ September 14th

G3 will gather for lunch this month at Lang Van Vietnamese Restaurant on Thursday, September 14th. Those who would like to carpool will gather in the meetinghouse parking lot at 12:30; others meet at the restaurant at 1:00 PM. It's located at 3019 Shamrock Drive in Charlotte. Lang Van is a family-owned restaurant owned by Dan Nguyen and Tuyen Tran. They are known throughout the city for delicious Vietnamese cuisine as well as Nguyen's memory. If you have been in before she will remember you as well as your order!

Please let Ellen Dillard know if you will be joining the group on September 14th: (704) 301-4330 or ejdcharlotte@gmail.com.



CALLED CHURCH CONFERENCE September 10th ~ Following Worship

Please plan to stay after worship on Sunday, September 10th for a brief church conference. Members of our boards have recruited a team of Sardis congregants to begin the search for an interim pastor. Ellen Dillard, Luther Fisher, and Robin Rowland have agreed to serve on this important team. During the conference, our moderator will call for a vote of approval. The candidates will be presented as a slate. We hope you will plan to attend.

Some of you have registered for a Listening Session with David Brown on the same day at noon. We do not anticipate interference with the schedule. Our order of worship for that Sunday will be adjusted in order to respect your time.

