

# sardis signposts

baptist church

a spiritually progressive community of faith

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

## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday at 9:45 AM  
Study Group

Sunday at 11:00 AM  
Morning Worship

### 31 Fun Facts to Celebrate 31 Fantastic Years

Irena Hramenkova has served as the pianist for Sardis Baptist Church for 31 years as of January 18th. If you've joined us in worship, you are already aware of her exceptional talents. In honor of this anniversary, we want to share some other interesting tidbits about her life and history. 1 Irena is a proud dual citizen of the United States and Russia. She was born and grew up in Moscow and still visits once a year. 2 Irena was visiting a friend in Washington, D.C. in December of 1991 when the Soviet Union collapsed. She decided to stay in the US! 3 In January of 1993, she came to Charlotte with a friend who ultimately introduced her to SBC, who was searching for a pianist. 4 Doug Aldrich (pastor at the time) and Bestelle Hill (volunteer choir director) sponsored Irena which enabled her to obtain a work visa. 5 In 2000, Irena was recognized by the State Department as a person of "Extraordinary Ability" which allowed her to receive her green card. She later earned citizenship. 6 Irena's favorite vacation spot is Sochi. Located on the Black Sea, it is a well-known summer beach resort, and the location of the 2014 Winter Olympics. 7 She'll quickly tell you that not ALL Russians love vodka! 8 Irena prefers red wine. 9 Caramel Soufflé is her favorite dessert. 10 Anatoly is the name of Irena's older half-brother. 11 She also has a younger sister named Elena, who has visited Sardis several times. 12 Maxim, Irena's nephew, lived with her in Charlotte from 1993 to 1998 while he attended school. 13 Maxim moved back to Russia, married, and lives in Siberia with his wife and children, who have also visited Sardis. 14 Irena loves cats, specifically Persians. 15 Her current animal companion is named Rucy, and the former was Ducky. 16 Rucy the kitten was a surprise gift received on a surprise visit several years ago from Maxim. 17 Irena has been teaching piano lessons in Charlotte since 1996. 18 She opened Sardis Piano Academy in 2008. 19 She currently teaches 22 students, some of whom have played for Sardis during worship. 20 Irena is an extremely talented and celebrated pianist! In fact, she is a six-time great-grand student of Ludwig van Beethoven himself! Ask to see the certificate in her studio. 21 Irena's piano teacher was her mother, also an accomplished musician. 22 As a young adult, Irena was the pianist for the Soviet National Gymnastics Team. She composed pieces for the team's floor exercises, that were later used by the World Gymnastics Federation. 23 Some of Irena's favorite composers to play are Russian: Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943) and Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893). 24 She also likes to play pieces from French composer, Frederic Chopin (1810-1849)... 25 and German composer, Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827). 26 She also has a fondness for contemporary pop music and jazz, which you may have heard in worship during preludes, offertories, and postludes. 27 Irena's favorite bands are the Bee Gees... 28 and the Beatles. 29 Her favorite singers include Tony Bennett... 30 Barbara Streisand... 31 and most of all, Frank Sinatra, whom she adores!



### JANUARY SARDIS ACADEMY **BAPTIST ?**

There are a nearly 100 different Baptist denominations just in North America, each distinct in their theological and doctrinal beliefs. A minority of Baptist denominations have boisterously asserted beliefs in the mainstream media that are not aligned with the majority. Unfortunately, people who are not aware of Baptist history and heritage are unaware of the diversity of beliefs among different denominations, and have come to associate the broad term "Baptist" with beliefs that they find offensive to the nature and character of the God of their understanding.

Negative associations with the name "Baptist" was a recurrent theme noted by David Brown during Listening Sessions in the fall of 2023. Some folks feel that the name "Baptist" is a barrier to potential visitors—one that some people are unlikely to cross. Others feel that having "Baptist" in our name is an important signpost pointing towards our identity. Consequently, our Sardis Academy sessions in January will offer an opportunity for the congregation to discuss these concerns collaboratively. We'll gather on two Wednesday evenings for dinner at 5:45 PM, followed by discussions beginning at 6:30 PM. Please save these dates: January 24th and January 31st. Rev. David Brown will facilitate the discussions.

Baptists of all denominations do share one thing in common: church polity. All Baptist churches follow a congregational church governance model where individual congregations are governed autonomously, free from the direct control of any other body. Should any recommendations result from our January Sardis Academy discussions, they will be presented to the entire congregation during a church conference to allow all members of Sardis an opportunity to have their voices heard.



## UPCOMING VOTE FOR TASK GROUPS

### Church Conference: January 7th @ Noon

At a church conference on November 26th, 2023, our congregation voted unanimously to approve the following mission statement: *Sardis Baptist Church is an inclusive, spiritually progressive community of faith that nurtures curiosity and open-mindedness. With a joyful and vibrant spirit, we aspire to listen and learn, to wrestle with doubt, to create authentic relationships, and to promote social consciousness so that all might experience the warmth and welcome of God.*

Now we are in the process of forming task groups that will help us determine specifically HOW Sardis Baptist will live into this mission. Sardis friends have been recruited to form three groups, explained below. On Sunday, January 7th, following worship, we will have a church conference. The volunteers for each task group will be presented as a slate for a congregational vote.

The first group will evaluate our **Systems & Structures**. This group will update our governing documents, evaluate our organizational model, and they will guide how to best utilize the gifts and resources of Sardis staff members. Nominations for Systems & Structures are Ellen Dillard, Debbie Kidd, Kathryn Kreutzer, Jim Owen, and Joe Wall.

The second group is the **Communication Crew**. They will focus on telling the Sardis story more effectively. This group will work with a third-party specialist to develop intentional plans for internal and external communication. Nominations for the Communication Crew are Melissa Bowlin, Amanda Lewis, Hilary McIntyre, Kristin Parker, and Daynette Snead Perez.

The third group, **Community Builders**, will explore ways to deepen internal relationships within Sardis and expand external relationships in the larger community. This group will also create a campus use plan to encourage intentional stewardship of our buildings and grounds. Nominations for Community Builders are Jose Cruz, Jonathan Eidson, Rachel Faulk, Betty Gunz, Jean Lawrence, Susan Phillips, Shannon Roberts, and Robin Rowland.

## Sardis People: Systems & Structures Task Group

For the coming months, our Sardis People column will introduce you to those who have been selected to serve on the Visioning Task Groups, beginning with Systems & Structures.

**ELLEN DILLARD** came to Sardis prior to the Covid hiatus. She visited for a Good Friday service and was inspired to join by learning that Sardis exemplified many qualities of her vision of church. Her background is in education (degree from Appalachian State in counseling), and she has held several positions in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system. Ellen recently retired from her position as administrative assistant at St. Stephen UMC, and is looking forward to having more time for her grandchildren, other family, and her Sardis family.

**DEBBIE KIDD** has spent most of her adult life serving various churches in various ministries: youth, music, associate pastor and in various other ministries: college campus ministry, hospital chaplain, and military chaplain. She also served as director of the AIDS Interfaith Network in Charlotte. Rev. Kidd retired as Lt. Col from the 145th Airlift Wing of the National Guard and has since enjoyed spending time at the beach and traveling to the British Isles.

**KATHRYN KREUTZER**, Minister of Congregational Support, is the staff representative on the Systems and Structure Team. She, too, has been an educator, and has taught in one of Charlotte's private schools. In between teaching jobs and prior to joining the Sardis staff, she owned and operated a desktop publishing company. The new thing that Kathryn has experienced this year is an "empty nest," her youngest child having entered college.

**JIM OWEN** has been worshipping at Sardis for more than 30 years, having become a member shortly after Sardis was constituted. Currently serving as Treasurer of the congregation, he has served as deacon and in numerous other leadership positions. A degree from Wake Forest University led to several years of teaching in Charlotte high schools. He has also owned and operated a painting business. Jim is an avid woodworker and enjoys creating handmade gifts for his grandchildren.

**JOE WALL'S** interest in courts ranges from the basketball court of his high school years to the United States Supreme Court, where he argued and filed documents in support of the N. C. apple industry. His education includes a law degree from UNC and an undergraduate degree from Duke University, interrupted by a couple years of serving in Uncle Sam's army. Joe is currently serving on the Board of Trustees at Sardis.



## Do You Have the Courage of Mary?

~ A Meditation by Betty Gunz ~

At the heart of the Christmas story is a teenager named Mary, chosen by a God who loves surprises and appearing where we least expect God to appear and telling us to do things we would never have thought to do on our own. The angel told Mary she was giving birth to a son and after considering it, she offered a welcoming womb for God's purposes. Not an altogether easy change for her but one she undertook anyway.

And now at Christmas again, here's a question for us. What new thing is waiting to be given birth by you in this Christmas season?

Our planet is in desperate need of a new direction. Climate change is reaching the point where alarm bells and sirens are going off, signaling the urgency of the need that we stop doing the things that are destroying the environment we live in.

What can we as individuals do? It will not surprise you that I have a suggestion. More like a plea. It will also not surprise you that my suggestion /plea is that we stop eating meat. Fossil fuel production and producing meat for human consumption are two of the major drivers of environmental destruction. And the closest one to us is producing meat for human consumption because we can stop that one. I could flood you with information at this point about rainforests being clear cut for cattle production and how much water it takes to produce a pound of chicken and water pollution from pig farms, but you can easily look that up for yourself. It was a book I read in 1982 (that's 41 years ago) that gave me the information and the connection to planet destruction. And I thought "Well if I could not destroy the planet and still enjoy eating why would I not do that?" So I stopped eating meat.

It's been a long journey since then (remember 41 years) and I wish I could say things have gotten better for the earth. You know they haven't, so before it's too late, I want to urge you to give some thought to birthing a big change this Christmas season. Have the courage Mary had. She asked questions. She knew this would be hard. She had seen girls stoned for less. But she did what she thought was right and the world was changed. We can do that too.

If anybody needs a place to talk or to find a companion for thinking about this, please feel free to contact me. Change is hard but easier when we hold hands along the way.



## JANUARY PRAYER LIST

### CONGRATULATIONS

- We joyfully welcome Alton Neal Hutchison, newborn son of Stacy and Aaron (son of Billie).
- We celebrate retirement with Ellen Dillard and share our best wishes for coming adventures!

### CONDOLENCES

- Janie Harris, former member of Sardis Baptist.
- Kathie Jean, member of Sardis Baptist
- Wes Long, cousin of Robin Rowland
- Greg Owen, relative of Jim Owen
- Reggie Warren, friend of Becky Proctor

### HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- Ken Abbott, friend of June Ross • Rita Akers, friend of the Phillips
- Clemmer Allison, friend of Alcie Kreutzer • Charles Almond, grandfather of Jacqueline Stillerman • Holly Almond, aunt of Jacqueline Stillerman
- Melissa Bowlin • Mark & Cheryl Bradbury, friends of Jonathan Eidson
- Maria Byrd • Murphy Clark, relative of Robin Rowland • Rae Deicke, friend of Jean Lawrence • Nela Demme, Ron's dog • Betsy Cadle DePaul
- Dusty Detterman, daughter of June Ross • Jack Dillard, friend of Ellen Dillard • Luke Duncan, son of Tillie • Amelia Eidson, Jonathan's mother
- Ethan, young friend of Shirley Lewis • Ed Gash • Mildred Gragg, mother of Billie Hutchison • Mary Moon Guerrant, mother of Kathryn Kreutzer
- Marvin Jean • Jen Kaminska, friend of the Kreutzer family • 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 • Bill Reynolds, son of Mala • Mala Reynolds
- Ryan Rich, friend of the Garden Preschool • Bob Rowland, Robin's father
- Pamela Schwartz, former staff of St. Stephen UMC • Ken Smith, friend of the Kreutzer's • Tanya Stevensen, daughter of June Ross • Eddie Waiters, husband of Doris • Katie Wiebke, daughter of Mark & Amy • Kelly Wise, friend of Melissa Bowlin

### TRAVELING MERCIES

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



# Sardis Baptist Church

# January

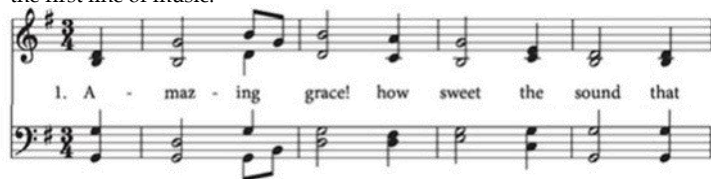
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3 The Garden Preschool — 9:15 AM to 1:15 PM Sardis Piano Academy — 3:15 PM to 8:45 PM 4:00 PM Staff Meeting 7:30 PM Choir Practice	4 Charlotte Wildlife Leadership Team	5 9:30 AM Clergy Group	6
7 Baptism of the Lord 9:45 AM Study Group 11:00 AM Worship 12:00 PM Church Conference	8	9 The Garden Preschool — 9:15 AM to 1:15 PM Sardis Piano Academy — 3:15 PM to 8:45 PM 7:00 PM Coyotes (presented by CWS)	10 4:00 PM Staff Meeting 7:30 PM Choir Practice	11	12	13
14 Second Sunday after Epiphany 9:45 AM Study Group 11:00 AM Worship	15 MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY I HAVE A DREAM	16 The Garden Preschool — 9:15 AM to 1:15 PM Sardis Piano Academy — 3:15 PM to 8:45 PM	17 4:00 PM Staff Development 6:00 PM Pastor Search Team 7:30 PM Choir Practice	18 Irena's Staff Anniversary 31 Years! 12:30 PM G3 Lunch Crepe Bistro	19 9:30 AM Clergy Group	20
21 Third Sunday after Epiphany 9:45 AM Study Group 11:00 AM Worship 1:30 PM Birdhouse Workshop (Charlotte Wildlife)	22	23 The Garden Preschool — 9:15 AM to 1:15 PM Sardis Piano Academy — 3:15 PM to 8:45 PM	24 4:00 PM Staff Meeting 5:45 PM Fellowship Dinner 6:30 PM Sardis Academy 7:30 PM Choir Practice	25	26 G3 will gather on Thursday, January 18th at Crepe Bistro, located at 1605 Galleria Blvd. Preview the menu on their website: <a href="http://www.crepebistroclt.com">www.crepebistroclt.com</a> . Let Ellen Dillard know if you plan to join the group: (704) 301-4330 or <a href="mailto:ejdcharlotte@gmail.com">ejdcharlotte@gmail.com</a> .	27
28 Fourth Sunday after Epiphany 9:45 AM Study Group 11:00 AM Worship	29	30 The Garden Preschool — 9:15 AM to 1:15 PM Sardis Piano Academy — 3:15 PM to 8:45 PM	31 4:00 PM Staff Meeting 5:45 PM Fellowship Dinner 6:30 PM Sardis Academy 7:30 PM Choir Practice	<div> <p><b>SARDIS ACADEMY</b></p> <p>The topic of our January Sardis Academy sessions is "Baptist" in our church name. This is an important topic for our congregation to examine collaboratively, so we hope you will plan to be here for the discussions on January 24th and 31st. Rev. David Brown will be our facilitator.</p> </div>		

# MUSICAL NOTATION

~ Hilary McIntyre, Minister of Music ~

Learning to read musical notation can seem like a daunting task—even if you’ve been around written music for your whole life, it can look like gibberish without the proper training. For the next month or so, I would like to start you on a crash course in learning to read music so that new hymns don’t seem so jarring.

Let’s use “Amazing Grace” as our example hymn. Below, you’ll see the first line of music.



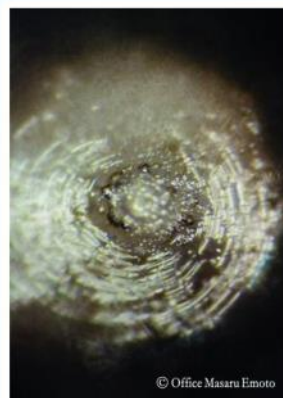
There are some notations here that are specific to hymnody, but most of what you see above is in modern, Western musical notation. The symbols,  $\text{C}$  and  $\text{F}$ , are called “clefs.” In general, the  $\text{C}$  or “treble clef” is read by higher pitched instruments and voices, think violins, flutes, soprano and alto voices. In hymnody, this is almost always the clef that holds the “melody,” the recognizable tune of the song. When reading a hymn, the easiest part to sing along with will be the soprano, the note that sits at the top of each group. Below, you’ll see the notes of the melody highlighted in yellow.



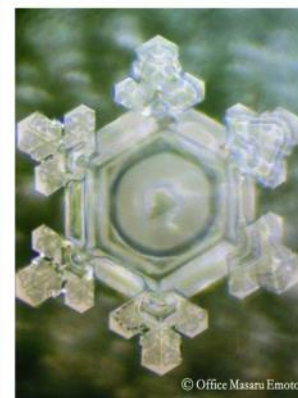
The next thing to keep an eye out for when learning to read hymns are the notes themselves. The shapes of the notes tell you how quickly or slowly you should sing them. This “ $\text{C}$ ” is called a “quarter note” and in musical terms it is considered one “beat” or unit of music. You can think of it in many ways as a single syllable. In the text above, the first beat of the song is a quarter note on the syllable “A-” of “Amazing.” When first learning to read notes, teachers will often have students say “ta” or count “1” for quarter notes. This “ $\text{C}$ ” is called a “half note” and it is two beats of music. In our word “A-maz-ing” the half note falls on the syllable with the most emphasis, the “-maz-.” Students learn this note as “ta-a,” “1-2” or “long note.” These “ $\text{C}$ ” are called “eighth notes” and they are quick notes that equal half of a beat. In “A-maz-ing” these two eighth notes make the lilting turn on the “-ing.” Students can read these as “ti-ti,” “1-and” or “quick note.” With just these three notes, we can now read the entire first line rhythmically, as follows: “ta ta-a ti-ti ta-a ta ta-a ta” or “short long-note quick-note long-note short long-note short long-note.”

The final piece in beginning to read music is using the staff—the five lines that the notes are placed on. Where the note sits on the staff tells us how high or low the note will be. When judging a note’s pitch, always look for the note “head,” the round part at the top or bottom. If the head is colored in, the note is quicker, if the head is empty or “open” then the note is longer. This “ $\text{C}$ ” is called a “whole note,” and it gets four beats all on its own, read “ta-a-a-a” or “very long note.” The placement of the head, whether near the top, middle, or bottom of the staff corresponds to how high or low in your voice the note will sound.

Look for more tips to come, but for now, I hope this simple guide will help when we inevitably sing an unfamiliar hymn tune in the near future.



“You Fool”



“Thank You”

# SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

~ Rev. Jonathan Eidson ~

In the midst of advent, I found myself ready for spiritual direction. As is his practice, my spiritual director began our session by reading a scripture passage, this one from Paul’s letter to the Philippians, 4:4-8. It says:

*<sup>4</sup>Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. <sup>5</sup>Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup>Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup>Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*

After silence, we discussed the passage. Are our thoughts important? My director mentioned the water experiments of Dr. Masaru Emoto. Dr. Emoto studied the molecular structure of water molecules. He found that water exposed to positive emotions froze in extraordinarily beautiful patterns while water exposed to negative emotions froze in ugly patterns. Among others, he used the words ‘peace, love, gratitude’ to express the positive emotions and ‘evil, you disgust me’ to express the negative.

It’s worth googling his name to watch a three-minute video to see his results. It made me wonder, “If words can do that to water, surely the thoughts behind the words are important. The thoughts of our minds guide us to action. Perhaps that’s why St. Francis of Assisi said, “Preach the gospel at all times and if necessary, use words.” I’ve also heard the following about thoughts, “The more we think them, the more we become them.” I think that is a variation of what Buddha said, “We are shaped by our thoughts. We become what we think.” What do you think?



**Magnificence in the Ordinary  
Ornament Making at the Phillips' Home  
December 5th, 2023**

## **YOUTHFUL SKI RETREAT**

**— J. Swizz Ski Pants with a Twist —**

I want to ask you some questions I asked several years ago. Are you youthful? Step one: Go look in the mirror. Do you see a youthful person looking back at you? If not, let's move on to step two. Take stock of your feelings. Do you *feel* youthful? If your answer was "Yes" to any of the three questions above, chances are you're ready to go skiing, tubing or van riding.

I am gauging interest from all of you about having another youthful ski trip. If you are interested, we'll let country roads take us home to West Virginia. While there, we'll have the opportunity for snow tubing and skiing at Winterplace Ski Resort. We would stay at the beautiful Pipestem State Park. (I know what you're thinking but ask anyone who stayed there on our previous trip, and they'll tell you it is amazing.)

I can only imagine you're asking yourself, "What do I need to do to be a part of this amazing adventure? It's pretty easy. Let J Swizz know immediately by email:

[sardisjonathan@yahoo.com](mailto:sardisjonathan@yahoo.com). I have to believe that if there had been snow tubes, skis and chairlifts in Jesus' earthly life, he'd have thrown on his youthful toga and taken a run down the mountain. Let's head for the hills!!



## **Charlotte Wildlife Stewards**

The Charlotte Wildlife Stewards will host two events at Sardis in January. Visit their website for details and a link to register: <https://charlottewildlife.org/upcoming-programs-and-events/>.

### **Tuesday, January 9th @ 7 PM—Coyotes**

Want to learn more about these shy, clever creatures? Join wildlife biologist, Rupert Medford, to hear the latest updates on North Carolina's coyote population. He'll discuss the impact coyotes have on native wildlife, habitats, and people.

### **Sunday, January 24th @ 2 PM—Build a Birdhouse**

Nesting season for bluebirds is just around the corner, and they will be house hunting soon! In this workshop, you will put together a pre-cut, pre-drilled bluebird house. Registration is required, and this events fills quickly.