

# Symbols

OF OUR FAITH



**Personal Reflections on  
The Symbols of First Baptist Church  
Greenville, South Carolina**

**By Pamela Burgess Shucker**

# SYMBOLS OF OUR FAITH



## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this book to Dr. Hardy S. Clemons whose inspired and loving gifts guided First Baptist Church Greenville during the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Thank you, Hardy, for nurturing and ripening us as a body of witnesses for God's love incarnated in Christ Jesus, to accept our roles as fellow ministers in missions and ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century world.



### WORSHIP AND SYMBOLS

As the initial faint organ notes sound, a hushed congregation attunes expectantly. Another Sunday morning worship at First Baptist Church Greenville, South Carolina, begins. The voices of the FBCG Sanctuary Choir float these lyrics softly through the sanctuary:

Surely the Lord is in this place.  
This is none other than the house of God.  
This is none other than the house of God,  
And this is the gate of heaven.<sup>1</sup>

Most often I feel I am not simply coming “to church,” but to *worship* when entering a service of this congregation. Here one is invited to seek encounter with the Sacred, the Mystery, the very presence of God. “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever,” declares the first question’s answer in *The Presbyterian Shorter Catechism*.<sup>2</sup> The intended purpose of life on Earth is to worship God.

The whirlwind called *life* is hostile toward the Sacred. Life leaves little time or energy for worship, the reason for its creation. Church services and religious practices offer a respite and a gateway to the Sacred, but they are not what one seeks. The experience sought is *worship*: awareness and honor of God’s presence in one’s life.

Hoping to evoke a worshipful experience, one practices religion. These practices are *exoteric*, external. One hopes for an *esoteric experience*, the internal point of directly experiencing the Sacred. “Without direct experience of the sacred, religion eventually becomes formalized, and [we] lose faith. . . . Religion provides a language and tradition in which seekers can feel safe enough to experience spiritual contact by themselves. . . .”<sup>3</sup> The late Dr. Theron Price, a member of First Baptist Greenville and a Religion professor at Furman University who spoke from FBCG’s pulpit many times, used to say, “I come to church and worship, no matter what goes on in the service.”

Although worshippers come to church to find God, each must individually experience the Holy, the Sacred. The exoteric practices of religion provide an aperture, an opening of the heart for God’s entrance. They offer an environment that encourages the worshipper to move through observance into Mystery.

Each pilgrim experiences a unique awakening through a one-on-one encounter with the Holy. It might be a nudge or a life-changing explosion. However this awakening happens, true worship inspires wonder, awe, and mystery, and from that point on, life is different. Mystery enters, and life lived before and life lived after divides into two parts. The person is changed. He or she is a new creation.

Varied contributions enrich these moments of true worship. One may tell the story, another writes the poem. One may sing the song; another paints the picture or creates the three-dimensional. The artist in each person works from a heart overflowing, recreating awareness of the Sacred in life, and communicating the significance of a moment on the spiritual journey. Christina Baldwin has written that the artist “...reactivates our sense of miracle and invites us to pause again, squatting over the sidewalk cracks, to ponder the lives of ants and stars.”<sup>4</sup> Artists whose contributions deepen our worship cause us to ponder the presence of God in our own lives.

Through the centuries, other denominations have taken pleasure in symbolic representations of worship more extensively than the Baptist tradition has. Although often surrounded by stained glass images, many Baptists have not explored the depths of meaning to be found in these depictions. Religious art symbolizes or re-creates an experience. Like words, symbols can recall and invite; they become a valuable communication tool.



Throughout recorded human history, beginning with cave dwellers' pictographs, visual images have communicated entire concepts, instantly invoking a memory or communicating a thought. Leonardo da Vinci's painting of "The Last Supper" recreates an experience that would take many words to communicate. Likewise, in First Baptist's Remembrance Garden, visitors not only gaze upon, but also touch Charlie Pate's magnificent sculpture of "The Good Samaritan." The statue re-creating this time-honored parable breathes depth to its meaning in ways few words could ever do.

The first visual artist was God. Genesis relates God's creation of the Earth and its inhabitants. The Psalmist frequently acknowledges the visual symbols of God's glory and love.

"The heavens tell of the glory of God.  
The skies display his marvelous craftsmanship.  
Day after day they continue to speak;  
    night after night they make him known.  
They speak without a sound or word;  
    their voice is silent to the skies  
    yet their message has gone out to all the Earth  
    and their words to all the world."

*Psalms 19:1-4, New Living Translation*

A variety of media throughout First Baptist Greenville evidence the value of visual symbols as enhancing elements for worship. This book discusses some of the most prominent of these images, unique expressions of the attempt to worship God as First Baptist Church Greenville, South Carolina, at the beginning of the new millennium. Dr. Hardy Clemons, senior minister for the last decade of the 1900's led this congregation with the theme of "each member a minister." He reflected on the enrichment of symbols in worship, "They remind us that our job is to minister, not to be the most successful business in town."

My own worship experiences delve into new dimensions amid these visual re-creations of God's loving presence on Earth. I invite each reader to spend time absorbing the depths of these images, allowing them to engage you. The mystery of the Sacred is not to be explained; it is to be pondered. May you live life's sacred and joyful journey pondering the myriad symbolic expressions of God's love, listening carefully for the sound of sandaled feet accompanying you.





## **THE SANCTUARY OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH GREENVILLE**

Considerable thought and planning preceded the creation of the dramatic worship space that is the sanctuary of First Baptist Greenville. Naturalness and simplicity offer a welcoming experience in contrast to the more typical formality of many Baptist churches. Baptist beliefs and flexible use of the space influenced many design decisions

Approaching the sanctuary from terraces and steps outside the building invites the worshipper into the narthex. These areas offer opportunity to prepare for a worship experience. The external doors open to a narthex, a large gathering space presenting the first glimpse of the informal yet stately emphasis: tile floors and brick walls lighted by large skylights. The church steeple crowned by a simple cross appears through the skylights.

The lowered ceiling and lighting at the sanctuary doors remind the person entering that they approach worship space. Inside the sanctuary the ceiling soars to 60 feet, drawing attention to the symbolic tree carved in light oak, which arches from the pulpit area and extends like tree branches across the ceiling. To me, this tree symbolizes First Baptist members' desire to grow and bear fruit through worshipping God.

Baptist worship services have typically emphasized the spoken word, and thus the pulpit is front and centered. The riser area is multi-functional, used for orchestra, choirs, dramatic productions, children's sermons, and communion. The sanctuary table where communion is conducted remains in place most Sundays to hold the lighted candle and open Bible. As worship begins, both of these items are processed in by children who serve as acolytes.

The sanctuary's physical arrangement always suggests to me a reinforcement of the "each member a minister" theme. Pews sloping frontward form a semi-circle flowing toward the center and divided by aisles also curving toward the focal point. The choir area and the balcony integrate into this arrangement with minimal separation, giving the impression of one body of faith worshipping together. This design, which allows views of fellow worshippers, enhances the atmosphere of community and mutual ministry, equality, and openness. It reflects a strong sense of flow in worship and among the congregation. The design also subtly reminds worshippers of the gentle hillsides on which Christ first spoke to his followers.

Acoustics in such a spacious room, used both for music and spoken word, required compromise and adjustment. A delicately regulated sound system, minimal carpet, and cushions aid the balance.

The massive pipes of the church's organ offer visual beauty as well as their intended purpose as musical instruments. The pipes and choir area balance the baptistry, which is on the same level as the pulpit, emphasizing baptism's central focus in Baptist worship. As a reminder of the risen Christ, a simple wooden cross hangs above the baptistry.

Church member Cathie Powell once wrote, "To me the message that is being sent to those who enter [First Baptist] to worship, is that God is high and holy, but because of His grace He is reachable not only directly but through His people. All are welcome here. There is a formality because no one comes to God's presence casually, but there is no stiffness. A sense of naturalness pervades the space, inviting the worshipper to 'come as you are' with no pretense. There is a sense of joy and love, from God and His people, in this place."<sup>5</sup>





## **THE ARCHITECTURAL TREE**

The focal point of the sanctuary rises behind the pulpit, arcs across the lofty ceiling, and forms a light wood silhouette of a sheltering tree. This architectural element symbolically illustrates the church growing up to God and out into the world. The roots, grounded in the congregation, anchor the trunk and limbs, while the ministry continuously reaches out and beyond, to God and to others. The thesis subtly stated by the architecture of the sanctuary echoes First Baptist's extensive outreach into the Greenville community and into the global community through its missions programs and varied ministries.

In her sermon, *Nurturing a Radical Life*, on February 11, 2001, Michelle McClendon described this distinctive insignia of the First Baptist sanctuary: "We gather in this sanctuary to worship under the shade of a symbolic tree. It offers cover, safety, and protection; it facilitates our worship. We gather here Sunday by Sunday, under its outstretched branches, to find strength for the journey, solace for our pain, and challenge for our service."

In a visual parable, the tree proclaims the mission of First Baptist Greenville to all who worship beneath its arms: love extended to others in response to God's love.

## THE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS

Willet Stained Glass Studios, Inc., of Philadelphia, PA, designed and created First Baptist Church's magnificent hand-painted, leaded stained glass windows. Each window's colored glass pieces are held together with lead came and exquisitely painted in intricately detailed original compositions commissioned for the church. According to a Willet spokesperson, each window designed by their company is done for a specific space and for the individual congregation.

Their creation process replicates the work of medieval glass artists. The finest mouth-blown, imported and domestic glass, with all its glorious irregularities, imparts a quality to the completed paintings that bring them to life. Following the painting by a glass artist, each composition is fired in a kiln several times to render the colors fadeless. Marguerite Gaudin designed most of First Baptist Greenville's windows, with the Champions of Faith windows being completed by Eric Sundean, following Ms. Gaudin's death. The artist Colum Sharkey designed the sanctuary's "Come Unto Me" window.

Willet Studios is the largest organization of its kind and has crafted windows throughout America and in thirteen foreign countries. Originally founded by William Willet in 1898, the present studio continues with the founder's son and grandson maintaining the family's tradition.

As cathedrals and churches through the ages illustrate, the synthesis of color and form resulting from stained glass, imparts an atmosphere of peace and beauty that is conducive to prayer and meditation.

Through these reverential depictions of God's love expressed on Earth, the interplay of light, color, and silent symbol meld with the worshipper and immeasurably intensify the experience of worship.



## THE SANCTUARY CORNERSTONE

On Easter Sunday, 1984, First Baptist Church celebrated the first worship in its present sanctuary. Members dedicated a cornerstone located at the sanctuary's central entrance door. The cornerstone ceremony, held May 27, 1984, celebrated the important history of First Baptist. Dr. Loulie Latimer Owens Pettigrew, the church historian and daughter of Dr. Leon Latimer, pastor from 1934-1952, filled the cornerstone with objects reminiscent of the church's influential past. These symbolic objects represent the important history of First Baptist Church, a legacy passed on from the members in 1984 to tomorrow's members, perhaps those on the church roll in 2084.

A modern language Bible

A pictorial history of Greenville

*A Century of Progress Being the History of the First Baptist Church, Greenville, South Carolina*  
by Dr. Robert Norman Daniel (Greenville, SC: First Baptist Church, 1957)

*A Brief History of the First Baptist Church* by Dr. J. Glenwood Clayton

Bulletins, church rolls, directories, brochures, records, pew rent lists (dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century)

Handmade brick and piece of molding from second building, on McBee Avenue

A medallion reproducing the seal of Furman University

A replica of the seal of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Personal pledges of members signed at the sanctuary dedication service, 1984

Personal items from five of the church's pastors:

Dr. Leon Latimer – sermons and cuff links

Dr. Dotson Nelson, Jr. – an alarm watch

Dr. L.D. Johnson – an award

Dr. James G. Stertz – a paperweight

Dr. C. David Matthews – sermons and a pen

Copies of *The Baptist Courier*

Copy of the *Greenville News-Piedmont* of that date

Copies of the church minutes

Copy of *The South Carolina Baptist Annual*

Copies of the First Baptist Church *News*, worship bulletins, brochures

First Baptist Church 1979 cookbook *My Cup Runneth Over*

Pictures and videotapes



The original 1826 sanctuary.



## WORSHIP AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH GREENVILLE

Worship at First Baptist combines traditional Baptist Free Church heritage and the rich experiences of the greater Church of Jesus Christ. Thematic focus centers around the Common Lectionary, an ecumenical schedule of passages balanced between the Old and New Testament scriptures. These lessons create the backdrop for the liturgical cycle known as the Church Year. Ornamental ecclesiastical hangings or vestments called *paraments* are often displayed in the sanctuary to visually state the season of the Church Year through their color. The monogram displayed on the cloths covering the sanctuary table and the pulpit banner is a simple gold cross that is encircled by a gold crown.

Knowledge of the Church Year calendar enhances worship at First Baptist. Although not rigidly followed, this cycle usually provides the framework for each Sunday's worship. Gina M. Brock, in her sermon on November 26, 2000, entitled *Tell Me the Story*, explained the philosophy behind observing this calendar:

The church year begins with the first Sunday in Advent and walks through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and the birth of the Christian Church. So, we live out Jesus' entire life and the birth of the Church in one year.... I love watching the colors change on the pulpit and the communion table as the seasons change. I love seeing the Advent banners go up. This all points me to the story we tell-that "God so loved the world he sent his only begotten son; that whosoever believeth on him may not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

[The last Sunday of November] is the last Sunday in the Church year, Christ the King Sunday. It's meant to be a culmination of all the Sundays of the church year from Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany into Lent and Easter and through Pentecost and Ordinary Time. I feel that the whole idea of [this day] is like reading the last page of the story. And then next week, we flip the book back over to the beginning and read the story all over again. I always feel like someone needs to close this service with 'the end' and open next week's service with 'once upon a time...' because we're telling a story.

## THE CHURCH YEAR CALENDAR

*The Season of Advent* – The four Sundays prior to Christmas, designated the Sundays of Advent, anticipate the period of expectant preparation for the coming of Christ. *Purple*, the color of royalty and penitence, hangs in celebration of this time of contemplation.

*The Season of Christmas* – This season begins on Christmas and continues for one or two Sundays from December 25 to January 5, designated as Sundays after Christmas. These twelve days of Christmas celebrate the joyous fulfillment of the Advent promise. *White* paraments hang during Christmas denoting purity and indicating the most significant seasons of the Christian year.

*The Season of Epiphany* – This period begins January 6, Epiphany, and continues to Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. Epiphany, meaning *revealing moment*, remembers the wise men and the revelation of Christ to the world. Sundays during this period become the Sundays after Epiphany, signified by *green*, for growth.

*The Season of Lent* - Lent begins six Sundays before Easter, designated as Sundays of Lent, of which the sixth may be Passion Sunday and Palm Sunday combined. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, determined by being 40 days prior to Easter not counting Sundays. Lent for Christians is the period of penitence and preparation for the death and resurrection of Christ. *Purple* represents the traditional liturgical time of repentance and displays during Lent.

*The Season of Easter* – The crowning season of the Church Year begins with Easter and includes six other Sundays before Pentecost, designated as the Sundays of Easter. The sixth Sunday of Easter is *Ascension Sunday*. Easter is a time of the highest joy and celebration in the risen Christ, and it is commemorated with the color *white* for purity.

*The Season of Pentecost* – Fifty days after Easter, this Sunday commemorates the gift of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of the Christian church. Red recalls the Pentecostal tongues of fire of the Holy Spirit on the disciples, followed by their intensified zeal. *Red* cloths appear on Pentecost Sunday.

*The Season of Ordinary Time* - *Trinity Sunday* follows Pentecost and begins the *Season After Pentecost*, also called *The Season of Ordinary Time*, and continues until Advent. The Sundays in this season are designated as Sundays after Pentecost. *White* paraments commemorate Trinity Sunday with the other Sundays celebrated with *green*. During the summer, First Baptist substitutes *red* for *green*.

*Christ the King Sunday* completes the cycle of the Church Year and occurs the last Sunday before Advent. *White* paraments commemorate Christ as the King.

The structure for the remainder of this book will follow the Church Year Calendar.



## THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH YEAR



### THE SEASON OF ADVENT

The Season of Advent in the Christian calendar anticipates a time of expectancy and new beginnings, celebrated through Christ's birth and the birth of the new Church year. Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas and emphasizes the concepts of hope, joy, love, and peace.

### THE ADVENT BANNERS

The Season of Advent at First Baptist Church centers on these four concepts visually represented by banners hung in the area of the architectural tree behind the pulpit. The four banners, one added each week, announce the weekly Advent emphasis of Hope, Joy, Love, and Peace. The symbolic banners are the original design of artist Charlie Pate. Pate's vision for each banner was of human symbolic forms, not abstractions, to represent the emphasized concept and to easily be recognized by a child. Kathy Atkinson led teams of church members in artfully choosing light and dark fabrics, which they cut and sewed to create the amazing detail. As a backdrop for the image, the brilliant light of the Christmas star illuminates each silhouette.



**HOPE** is the concept the apostle Paul in the New Testament terms the mark of a Christian. Dr. Hardy Clemons in a sermon at First Baptist defined hope as “an eternal element of faith, a partnership with God which is *inspiration*: God breathing life into me, the kernel of hope which changes me from the inside out.” **Hope** depicted in this banner emanates from three wise men riding on camels. The decision of the wise men to follow the bright star was indeed a hope-filled one, a potentially life-changing decision to discover a new king and to seek a new life. The double star shines brilliant rays of light, illuminating kingly riders who eagerly follow its glow.

**JOY** is the emotion I most associate with Christmas, joy which reflects in a child’s eyes the delicious anticipation of the season. What must have been the joy of the angels whose task it was to herald the Messiah’s birth! The **JOY** banner portrays this feeling through one angel, trumpet held high, announcing in bursts of joyful melody the gift above all gifts. The backdrop of brilliant light, echoing the starlight of the **HOPE** banner, illumines angel, wings, and trumpet.



The love of God, parents, a child, and families all cumulatively blend in the **LOVE** banner. Joseph stands by Mary; the Christ child bundled on her lap. Each figure is half-lit from the starburst rays of light behind them. Joseph’s hand rises as protectively as his stance, guarding his human treasure. He stands a step back, in seeming awe. Mary looks prayerfully toward the child she holds. A halo of light surrounds the child’s head, partially illuminating his face and blankets. The Christ child’s hand reaches up, open, toward the world. This banner exquisitely portrays the awesome Christian miracle celebrated as Christmas: the wonder of God’s love coming to Earth as a baby.

The cry of “**PEACE** be unto you!” seems to be heard by three shepherds, accompanied by three sheep, in the final Advent banner. The shepherds peer skyward toward the brilliant light illuminating everything in its path, casting shadows behind. Incredulity, awe, amazement reflect in their back-tilted stance. Halted and immobile, they listen expectantly. The light offered peace, but at this moment peace is not what they feel! Jesus promised, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives.” (John 14:27). Because they listen and heed the words of the angels, Jesus’ promised peace follows them. The angels’ directions lead them to life’s greatest gift: God’s love expressed through a child in a manger.





### **THE ADVENT WREATH**

During the Christmas season a wreath with five candles surrounded by greenery rests on the First Baptist sanctuary table. The greenery recalls the natural world, so much a part of Jesus' life on Earth. The four purple candles, the traditional liturgical color for Advent, surround the white candle in the center, lit on Christmas Day, and signifying Christ's purity. Each of the candles represents a Sunday prior to Christmas and celebrates one Advent concept: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.



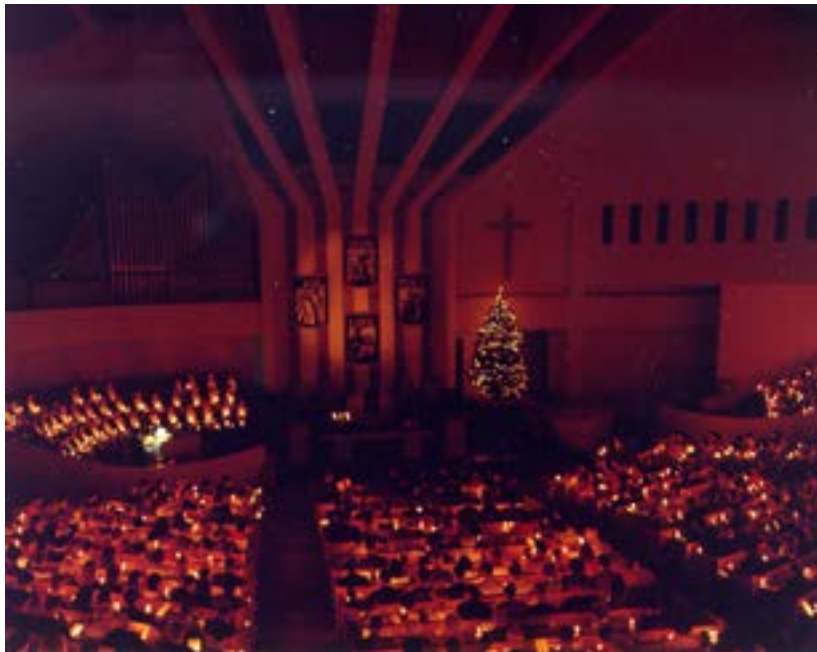
### **THE CHRISMON TREE**

Several First Baptist Greenville traditions symbolize the holiness of the Christmas season. In the 1980's the women of the church began the project of creating *Chrismons* for the large tree in the temporary sanctuary. The word *Chrismon* combines *Christ and monogram* and becomes a monogram for Christ. These symbols appeared during the early Christian era when it was dangerous to be a follower of Jesus.

They became secret signs to avoid exposing Christians to foes. Christians found their way to worship services by following these secret signs. These symbols when made into ornaments decorating a Christmas tree, create a *Chrismon tree*. The ornaments are white, the liturgical color for Christmas, and refer to the Lord's purity and perfection. Gold embroidery refers to His majesty and glory. The tiny white lights on the tree symbolize Christ as "the light of the world."

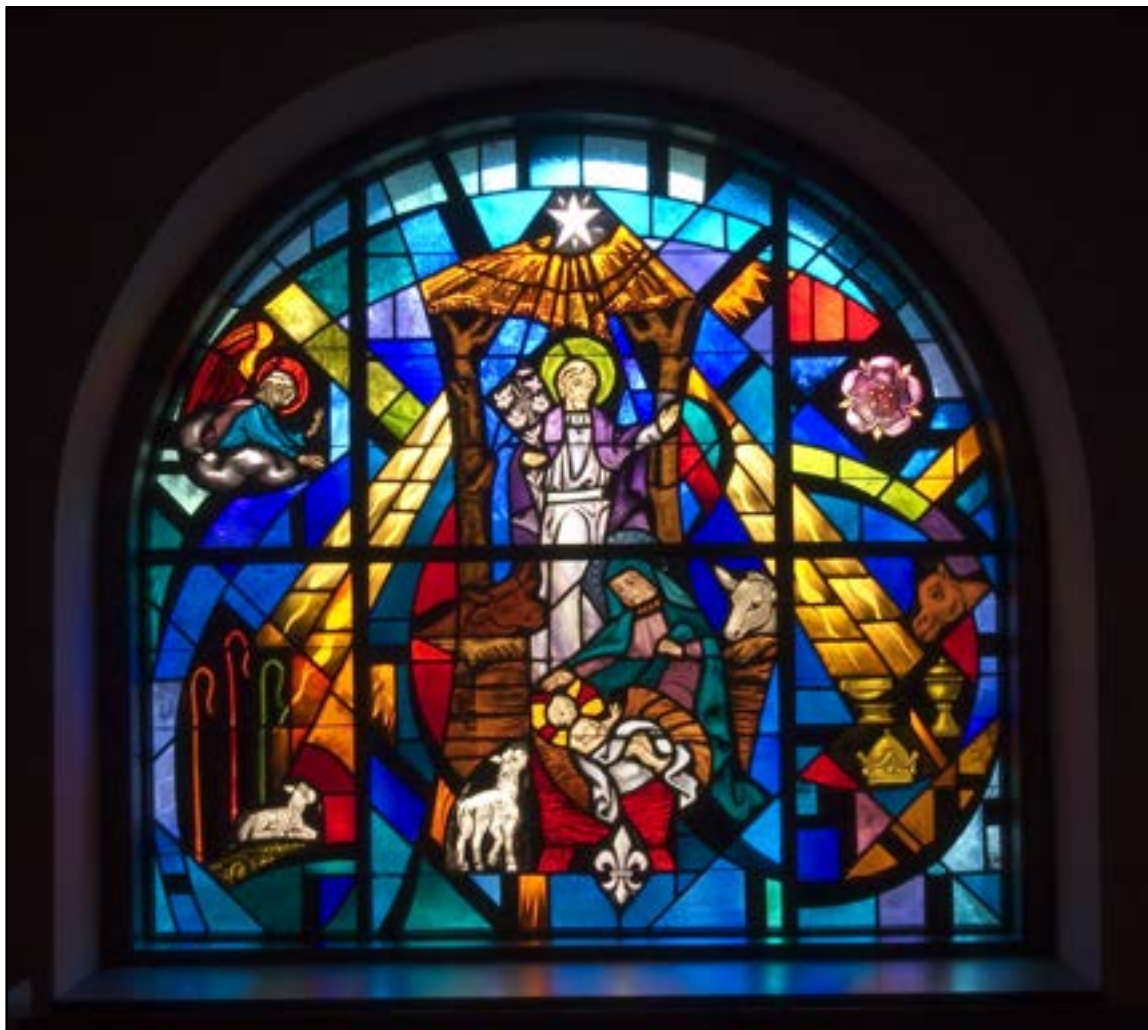
Mrs. Harry W. Spencer of the Lutheran Church of Ascension in Danville, Virginia originated the Chrismon tree. She wrote of the idea, "It occurred to me that by using these early symbols of our faith to decorate the tree, we would bring out distinctly the real reason we celebrate this day of the year."<sup>6</sup> The idea spread throughout the United States and the world in a few years. This sign language of Christian faith adds silently, but immeasurably to the holiness of First Baptist worship during the Christmas season.

Some of the ornaments on this tree include: the dove representing the Holy Spirit, the Latin cross, the eternity symbol of triangle and circle intertwined, the Celtic Cross, several monograms for Christ (the open Bible, the oil lamp, the star, the butterfly) and the interwoven circle for the Trinity. In the last few years, new ornaments joined the older ones to fill the huge tree that now graces the sanctuary pulpit area during the Christmas season.



## THE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

Light is one of the most prominent symbols in Christian tradition and represents Christ bringing the light of God's love into a world of darkness. The First Baptist Candlelight service is always a special and much anticipated event. During the worship, previously selected members of all ages read scripture passages concerning Christ's birth. The scripture readings alternate with the congregational singing of Christmas carols and the Sanctuary Choir's performance of various seasonal anthems. The finale is a darkened sanctuary gradually becoming illuminated by the passing of the light of the Advent candle. The minister first lights one candle from the Advent wreath candles and then lights a candle held by each deacon. The deacons each then pass the light to participants, who light the candle of the person beside them. With shared candlelight as the only illumination in the sanctuary, the congregation sings *Silent Night* accompanied by guitar, the original presentation of this carol.



## THE CHRISTMAS WINDOW

The three stained glass windows at the rear of the sanctuary commemorate three pivotal events in the life of the Christian church and point toward three of the major celebration seasons of the church year: Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost.

Viewed from inside the sanctuary, on the left, is The Christmas Window. This window represents the Nativity, or birth of Jesus. Trees support the rough, sloping roof of the stable in Bethlehem, illuminated by rays from the star that led the wise men to Baby Jesus. Joseph stands watch, his protective staff bursting into bloom with a lily, the symbol of purity and often used to represent Mary. Mary kneels beside the straw-filled manger in which the infant Jesus lies. On each of their heads rests a halo with the nimbus, the symbol of holiness. Christ's nimbus includes the red cross denoting victory, but is also a reminder of his ultimate purpose. Animals gather around the family. An angel guards and blesses from the clouds on the upper left, and on the lower left, three staffs and a lone sheep represent the shepherds to whom the angels first told the Good News. In the lower right corner, three gifts and the head of a camel signify the wise men's visit and offerings. At the upper right is the heraldic rose, symbol of the Messiah. Below the manger is a fleur-de-lis, a symbol of the Holy Trinity and also used as a symbol of the Virgin Mary. The partial rising sun signifies Christ, the light to the darkened world.

The Christmas Window honors three people who grew up in this church, and was given by their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Irving T. Welling. The honorees are Irving T. Welling, III; Robert N. Welling; and Lyl Welling Parker.

## THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF CHRIST

Historians think Christ lived for approximately thirty-three years, ministering and teaching in the Judean countryside for perhaps three of those years. After his resurrection, Jesus' followers continued his work by telling others of his plan for God's Kingdom on Earth. As numbers of believers multiplied, they bonded together for worship, fellowship and ministry to each other and to others. Even all these centuries after Christ first commissioned Peter, "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18a), the traditions of worship, fellowship and ministry continue. First Baptist Greenville celebrates the life and work of Christ through many of its symbols and activities.



### THE "COME UNTO ME" WINDOW

In a sermon subtitled, "Lessons in Stained Glass," senior minister Jeff Rogers observed, "This window is one of the features of this room that makes me say that the art and the architecture of this place will proclaim the gospel even if the preacher fails to." A message of community inclusiveness extends from this large stained glass window dominating the left side of the room, portraying one of Jesus' best-known sayings. Mothers brought children to the Lord for his blessing, but the disciples, thinking Jesus had more demanding needs on his time, tried to stop them. Jesus responded, "Let the children come to me and do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs." (Matthew 19:14)

Dr. Rogers used the "Come Unto Me" window for this sermon's backdrop on January 27, 2002, and commented on the colors of the windows throughout the sanctuary. "Byzantine thinking gave us all this blue," he said. "Byzantine art was highly stylized, highly formal and highly symbolic; and blue was the color of heaven and royalty."

Then he proceeded to point out that the babies, the children and some of the other common folk in the "Come Unto Me" window are the ones wearing blue. He called it a "very un-Byzantine and very Baptist window. In its use of blue, it portrays the democratization of the church, of the state and of holiness itself."

This magnificent stained glass representation shows "children" of all ages coming to Jesus' welcoming figure, seated under trees with hands stretched out in love and welcome. In his sermon, Dr. Rogers pointed to two of the children in particular who are standing at the ready—one little girl holding up

a bouquet of flowers to Jesus and the other, perhaps more familiar, the little boy holding a basket with five loaves and two fishes.

But not all are ready or willing to come. Even the unwilling personality appears. “There’s this other little girl,” he said. “She’s not even in one of the central three panels. She’s easy to miss. She is not one of the eager, excited children. She’s hanging back. Everyone else has his or her back turned to her. She is sucking the thumb on her left hand, and her right hand is holding on to her mother. She’s easy for us to miss.

If this is a ‘Come Unto Me’ window, we understand it is also a ‘Go Unto Them’ window.”

Another child in green appears on the far right. Pulling in the opposite direction of Christ, this youngster wishes instead, as many do, to follow his own interests, depicted here by the butterfly and the flowers. Dr. Rogers called this boy “the strong-willed child who simply will not come even when he is being dragged.”

Dr. Rogers concluded his January sermon: “Whether we are front and center, prepared, or whether we are standing timidly to the side, or even pulling away, Jesus says ‘come unto me;’ and Jesus says to us that even when they will not come, our mission is to go to them.”

This window’s dedication reads:

“Come Unto Me”  
Matthew 11:28 Matthew 19:14  
“In Loving Celebration  
of  
First Baptist Church  
‘GOD’S People in this Place’”

Two First Baptist families dedicated the “Come Unto Me” window on May 31, 1992. Their dedications read:

In Honor to  
GOD with Love and Appreciation  
for  
Effie Cason Scott           Eva Rigdon Mitchell  
Olon Elbert Scott           William Avery Mitchell  
by  
Patricia Scott Mitchell    William Avery Mitchell, Jr.  
William Avery Mitchell, III

\* \* \* \*

In Memory of  
Helen Keeter Horton Hunt  
Loving Daughter, Mother, Sister and Friend  
by  
The Ernest Milton Horton, Jr. Family

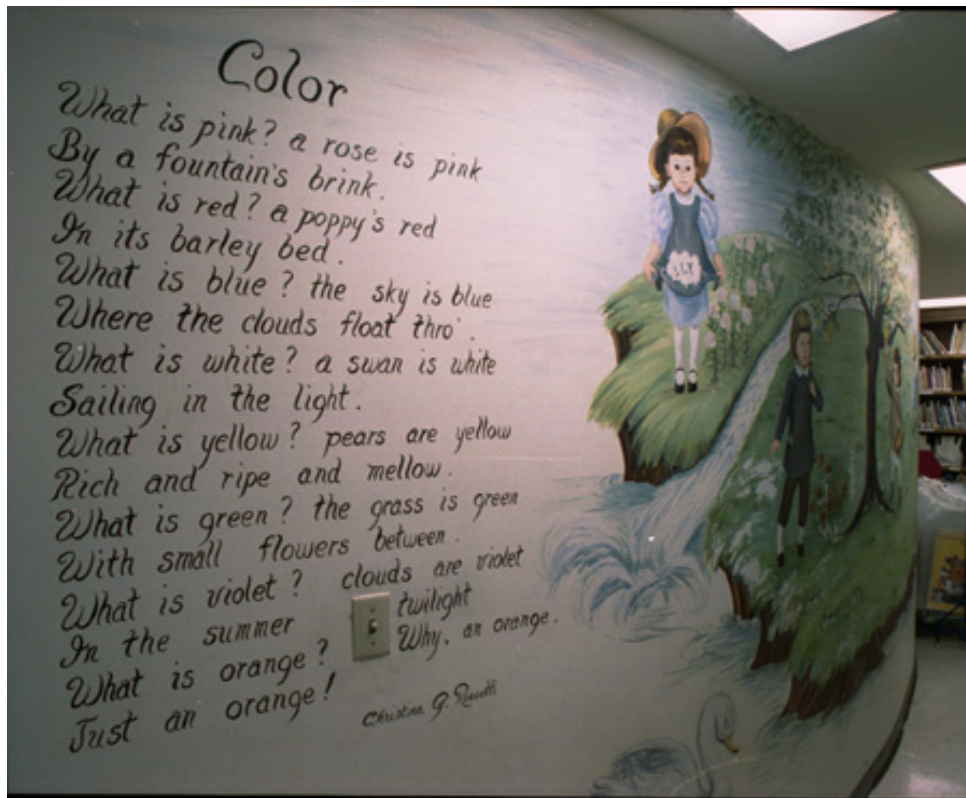


## **THE FOOD BASKET**

The basket of food located beneath the “Come Unto Me” window in the sanctuary is a symbol of commitment to feed the hungry, not one day of the week, not one season of the year, but every day there is hunger. In each main entrance of First Baptist Greenville there are baskets for collecting non-perishable food and other items requested for the mission project of each month. In addition, an envelope in each Sunday School Class collects an offering for this purpose. Long-time member and teacher Schaefer B. Kendrick was among the first to challenge FBCG with this on-going ministry, and members continue weekly to accept his challenge to feed the hungry.

The basket dedication reads:

Schaefer B. Kendrick 1916-1994  
“I was hungry and you fed me.”  
Matthew 25:35



## THE FIRST BAPTIST KINDERGARTEN MURAL

Following the example of Christ, First Baptist remains dedicated to the youngest members of the church family. Several areas symbolize this concern visually.

What symbolically represents the 50-year-old highly respected First Baptist Church Kindergarten? The real symbols are the many successful adults who began their schooling there.

However, upon moving to this new building in 1974, Grace Whiteside, the original teacher and then director, commissioned a painting to combine love for children, poetry, books, and learning. This mural, painted on the wall of what was then the Kindergarten Office, welcomed and comforted many children. Appropriately, this area is now the Kindergarten library. The mural remains, a tribute to all the wonder in a child's life, and a reminder to adults to savor, value, and treasure every child.



## THE NOAH'S ARK NURSERY MURAL

Floor to ceiling color-filled walls of animals, freshly escaped from Noah's Ark, greet the eye level of the smallest to the tallest in the church's nursery area. Venerable Noah smiles with inner wisdom as his much relieved and ever patient wife hugs a donkey, watching the parade in amazement. A daughter-in-law releases a white dove to fly away with the good news of solid ground and sunny blue skies, also relinquishing

the incredible experience of living in the ark. The ark itself rests in its rocky harbor, and the rainbow symbolically curves toward heaven.

Although originally intended as a one-wall mural, "it took on a life of its own," declared the mural's artist Charlie Pate. He said that the painting was conceived as a weekend project with Noah, Mrs. Noah, and seven animals. But as the project continued, "I would find five other animals and think this one would be neat." As the mural emerged, some of the original animals, such as a large elephant, were painted out and now some of the smallest insects capture the most attention. Charlie's own family even took part in the painting, rendering some of the smaller animals and bugs.

The captivating representation stretched over months, and the mural now creeps through the entire First Baptist nursery entrance, continuing down the hall and leading children to their rooms as they follow the baby animals. Many parents have gratefully praised the mural's power as they have witnessed how calling attention to the inviting animals can turn their child's cries of separation anxiety into smiles of calm. No scary animals or scary experiences wait here!

Pate said he knew from the beginning that he wanted a gentle scene with Noah and his wife's faces expressing thankfulness and awe. As a visible lesson, this creation of love often becomes the communicator of love. Teachers of all levels bring their classes to view a portion, or the entire message, of God's promise of caring love.

## THE CARPENTER CHAPEL

The Carpenter Chapel, whose two focal points are the stained glass windows called “The Inviting Christ” and “The Acts of Christian Mercy,” bears the name of Blanche Owen Carpenter, a highly active member of First Baptist and the Greenville community for many years. Blanche’s family chose to honor her memory and service through completing this intimately holy space. Blanche’s dedicated life influenced hundreds of young married couples as she taught in the Carson Sunday School Class and as she began a young women’s Spiritual Growth Group, later named for member Margaret Allen Aiesi. The Bible in the Carpenter Chapel also honors Blanche, given by Ned and Marie Clay.



### “THE INVITING CHRIST”

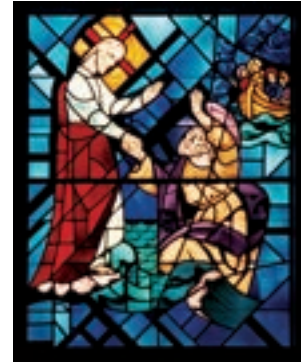
The floor to ceiling stained glass window wall facing the corner of Faris and Cleveland honors The First Baptist Sunday School teachers. Named “The Inviting Christ,” the standing Messiah dominates the center, holding out his arms to all and saying, “Come to me, all ye that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you....” (Matthew 11:28-29a)

The yoke appears beneath his feet along with the Greek letters Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. This monogram for Christ refers to his being the beginning and the end. Eight panels surround his upright figure, each depicting an experience in Christ’s life when he summoned people to come to him.



Viewed from inside the chapel, on the top row, on Jesus' right, the first picture is the Samaritan Woman at the Well (John 4). Jesus is asking her for a drink of water in order to reveal his identity to her, as the one who offers Living Water. The scene demonstrates Jesus' compassion and sensitivity.

Next to this picture, Peter, walking on water toward Jesus, begins to sink and cries for help (Matt.14). He grasps Jesus' outstretched hand as the other disciples watch in dismay from their boat, pitching precariously in the churning water. The rescuing power of Christ is displayed here.



In the top row, right, Jesus puts mud on the blind man's eyes to restore his sight (Mark 8, John 9). The man's kneeling form reaches toward Jesus' robe as Jesus' hand touches the man's unseeing eyes, creating the invitation not only to see life more abundantly, but to see life through Jesus' eyes. Even the mud at his feet which Jesus uses, symbolizes the miraculous healing powers of faith in the Master's hands.

Next to the blind man's healing is Jesus inviting the children to come unto him (Matt.19, Mark 10, and Luke 18). What child, when hearing this story, has not thrilled at the thought of being encircled by Jesus' outstretched, comforting arms? As symbolized here, he continues to instill faith and trust in those who follow him.



In the bottom row, beginning at Christ's right, Jesus participates with the bride and groom in the Cana wedding feast, while a servant pours wine that Jesus created from water (John 2). This scene celebrates relationships and families.

Next is a representation of Jesus' welcoming hand extended to the boy who shared his loaves and fishes. In the scriptural story, Jesus multiplied the boy's contribution to feed thousands (John 6). As the hungry hordes look on, Jesus holds one loaf and lifts his eyes to heaven, thanking God for the blessing of this lad's gift. The young pre-teen holds his basket of other loaves and looks in wonder at what has happened to the lunch his mother prepared. Surrounding Jesus and the boy, baskets wait to collect the remaining food when all have eaten their fill. Here Jesus symbolically performs a nurturing role.



The lower right depicts the miracle that surely contributed to Jesus' death as his enemies realized Jesus' supreme power over death (John 11). Lazarus, restored to new life but still wrapped in burial cloths, emerges from the stacked-rock tomb, face ghostly white, and awaits Jesus' embrace. One of Lazarus' sisters kneels in wonder and prayer at Jesus' feet. The stone door to the tomb is pushed aside, unable to withstand Jesus' ability to give new life.

The last picture in the bottom right is Jesus healing the man at the pool of Bethesda, another miracle that increased the accusations against Jesus (John 5). He questioned the crippled man lying by the pool; "Do you want to be made well?" The man replied that he had no one to put him in the pool, perhaps assuming Jesus asked the question because of the common belief that healing occurred for the first person to enter the water following an angel's disturbance of it. But Jesus simply said, "Stand up, take your mat and walk." The man, crippled for 38 years, had the courage and the faith to try, and he walked. Later criticized for carrying his mat on the Sabbath, the healed man identified Jesus as the one he obeyed, further angering the Jewish leaders and increasing their desire to do away with Jesus. As portrayed in this stained glass, Jesus' willing sacrifice for the healing of others foreshadows his ultimate gift on the cross.



These eight scenes visually and symbolically demonstrate Jesus' loving invitation to follow him. In each of these depictions, the artist halos Jesus' head with a red cross on gold, a nimbus. The cross haunts Jesus' life, even as he performs miracles and extends invitations. Through the symbol of the nimbus, the artist presages what is to come, never letting this fact of Christ's ultimate sacrifice escape awareness. To the Christian believer, however, the gold nimbus can also symbolize Christ's ultimate glory: death followed by his conquering resurrection, victory, and reign.



### **“THE ACTS OF CHRISTIAN MERCY” WINDOW**

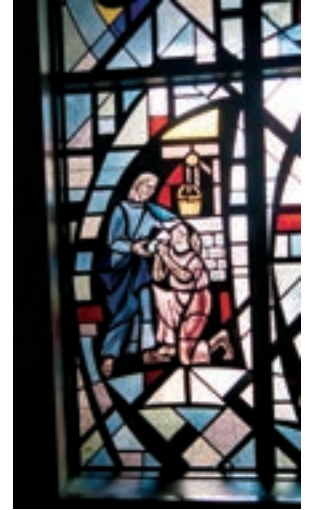
The window facing Faris Road bases its symbolic interpretation on Jesus’ words to his apostles found in Matthew 25:35-36. Each frame depicts an action that, Christ said, when done for others by his followers, was really done for him. Most of the figures in the window lack defining age, social class, or gender traits, and thus acknowledge Jesus’ inclusive ways. Jesus extends the call to follow and serve him to each person equally because all equally need his freely offered and healing love.

Six panels compose the window. Following the scriptural order, the pictures begin the story at the top left, then move each time to the picture directly below:



### **“I was hungry and you fed me,”**

A follower holds a bowl of bread in one hand with a spoon in the other, having just filled the waiting bowl of a kneeling person. Another person looks on inquisitively, seeming determined to understand why this follower of Christ shows mercy.



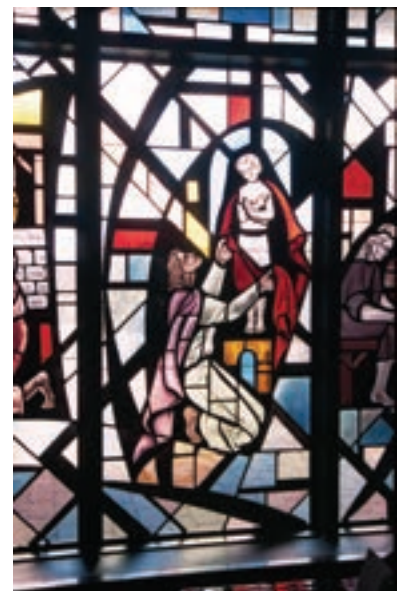
### **“...thirsty and you gave me a drink;”**

Beside a stone well with its bucket drawn to the top, one person’s arm gently encircles the other, offering a filled glass. The thirsty one kneels and accepts the gift, eyes closed in gratitude.



### **“...I was a stranger and you received me in your homes,”**

One person stoops with caring face and extends arms to a tired and forlorn traveler, whose few possessions rest in a cloth hung from a stick slung over the shoulder.

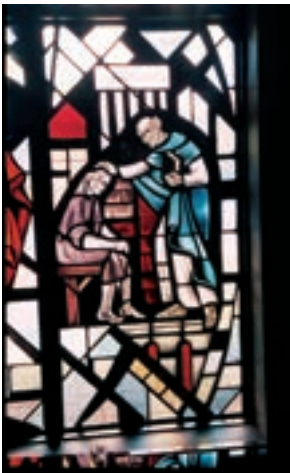


### **“...naked and you clothed me;”**

A person kneels before a child, draping a beautiful scarlet cloth around the child’s unclothed body. The giver is barefoot, perhaps further demonstrating the extent of the person’s own sacrifice.

## **“I was sick and you took care of me,”**

One person brings a bouquet of colorful, fresh flowers in one hand and a draped book in the other hand and delivers the gifts to another whose face bears a haggard expression and whose body is lying on a bed covered only by a white sheet.



## **“... in prison and you visited me.”**

Viewed through the opening of a cave-like stone structure, an older person, holding a Bible in one hand, gently places his other hand on the bowed head of a much younger individual. The barred window above their heads suggests a jail, and the young prisoner remains seated on a rough wooden bench.

“The Acts of Christian Mercy,” window honors several devoted members of First Baptist Greenville. The dedications read:

*To His Glory and in Honor of Nancy and Heyward Morgan by their Children*

\*\*\*\*\*

*In Loving Memory of Isabel Easley Asbury and Abner Darden Asbury, Jr.  
by their Daughter Mary Asbury Cobb*

\*\*\*\*\*

*To the Glory of God and In Memory of Wade H. Bryant*

## **THE BIBLICAL GARDEN**

Growing alongside the covered arcade from the education wing to the music suite is a Biblical Garden given by Elizabeth Chalker as a memorial to her husband, Randy Chalker. This plot was developed with plantings that have a Biblical reference. Some inclusions are a fig tree, a Judas (redbud) tree, as well as dogwoods and pistachio trees. Lily of the Valley, anemone, and narcissus bulbs along with a pomegranate shrub, bloom seasonally.



### **THE WEDDING BANNER**

The First Baptist wedding banner displays the traditional Christian wedding symbol. The wedding symbol derives from the ancient Greek monogram for Christ, the letters Chi and Rho superimposed upon each other, universally known as the Christogram. The cross is the reminder of God's love for his creation through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. The two circles, or rings, represent the joining of two lives. As the symbol suggests, this union promises to be eternal and centered in the abiding presence of the love of God. Above the wedding symbol, rendered in gold for eternity and on a white background for purity, flies the outline of a blue dove of peace and the celebratory word, *Rejoice*.

Long time member Rachel Kerns created this banner for the wedding of her son Jerry Kerns to First Baptist minister, Dr. Donna Forrester



## THE SEASON OF LENT

In recent years Protestant churches have increasingly emphasized the period prior to Christ's death called Lent, historically a time for personal reflection and renewal of the soul. First Baptist begins this season with an Ash Wednesday Service in which participants receive on their foreheads a mark of the cross, made with the ashes of the previous year's burnt palm leaves. This act symbolically invites the participant to make a personal response toward Christ's suffering and death. Worship during the Lenten season typically commemorates Christ's purposeful choice of the sacrifice of his life. With full knowledge of what was ahead and having warned his disciples many times, still, "He set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51).

Dr. Donna Forrester discusses Lent and Ash Wednesday:

Christians call this **ASH WEDNESDAY** because believers traditionally had ashes imposed on their foreheads on the Wednesday before the first Sunday in Lent as a public sign of penitence and preparation.

LENT is a term that refers to the lengthening of days, the growth from winter to spring, darkness to light, from the cold to the warmth. It is also a season of growth and development, not only for the slumbering earth, but for the "slumbering" church as well. The claims of Lent upon the Christian consciousness are ancient and great, providing as they do a unique season of disciplined introspection and Easter expectation, a season which continues to fascinate and intimidate both the faithful and the curious. Lent is our chance each year to get ready for Holy Week and Easter, recognizing as we do that these celebrations require much more than a few hours' preparation or notice.

It is important that we approach this season with openness to the Spirit of God and with ourselves laid bare before God. What we believe about the cross and the resurrection makes the thought of half-hearted celebrations in this season an anathema, if not blasphemy. Let us approach the throne of grace as the sinners we are, in humility and openness. Let us take a Lenten journey of introspection and growth, that we might prepare ourselves to more fully celebrate this holy and blessed season. We are an Easter people. Let us prepare to meet our Lord and journey with him on that sacrificial road that leads to the resurrection.<sup>7</sup>

During the Palm Sunday service, the Sunday prior to Easter, children lead the opening processional into the sanctuary carrying palm branches, re-enacting the people's response to Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem.



## THE CROSS

High on the right side of the front sanctuary wall there hangs a simple wooden cross, which is often spotlighted. In past Lenten seasons, a crown of thorns has sometimes adorned this cross, recalling one of the indignities Christ suffered at the time of his crucifixion. This cross is not a crucifix, as in many churches. It is an empty cross, signifying that Jesus rose again and lived among his followers. This church celebrates and remembers that he lives today in the hearts of those who honor his name.

## THE LORD'S SUPPER ELEMENTS

The Gospels tell of the Jewish Festival of Passover in which Jesus shared a meal with his disciples the night before his crucifixion. Communion, or The Lord's Supper, which is observed among other times on the Maundy Thursday of Holy Week, recalls this meal and the sacrifice of Christ's body and blood. The sanctuary table holds a pottery goblet and plate into which the elements of the meal are poured and placed. First Baptist offers this celebration to all who wish to participate, not just to members, emphasizing it is the *Lord's table*, not one belonging to the church.

Good Friday, before Easter Sunday, is the day solemnized by Christ's crucifixion and burial. Although it is the day of his death, it is *good* because of what follows. During this time the sanctuary is stripped bare of paraments, symbolizing emptiness and mourning.



## THE SEASON OF EASTER

Easter Sunday, which begins the preeminent festival season of the Christian church, celebrates the distinguishing Christian belief in Christ's resurrection following his crucifixion and burial. The Easter banner adorns the sanctuary backdrop on this special Sunday.

### THE EASTER BANNER

The **EASTER** banner represents the dawning of new life through the Risen Christ. Christ stands in pure white robe with a royal purple shawl over his shoulder, his arms stretch horizontally, hands open, as his body forms the shape of a cross. A white halo encircles his head. Symbolically, he offers himself and his love to all those who will come to him and follow his teachings. In the background, blue, gray, and white washes of color spread ethereal light. Under his feet, which seemingly rest on top of a mountain, there is placed a yoke, reminiscent of Christ's invitation to his followers: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me" (Matthew 11:29).



Artist Charlie Pate also designed this banner, which was then translated into fabric by Kathy Atkinson and a team of church members.

### THE EASTER WINDOW

A permanent symbol of Easter and the Resurrection illuminates one of the three sanctuary Nave windows. The middle window portrays Christ's resurrection celebrated as Easter by Christians.

At the moment depicted, the three women who came to the tomb with spices to anoint Jesus' body, find instead an empty tomb and an angel, vacant burial cloths in hand, who joyfully announces Christ's resurrection to them. Bewilderment and amazement highlight their upturned faces, each illumined by a halo of holy light. In the distance appears the hill of Calvary with three crosses. At the upper left are unleavened bread, a chalice, and grapes, recalling the Last Supper. At the lower left a bursting pomegranate symbolizes resurrection, suggesting Christ bursting from the tomb. In the lower right the mythical phoenix represents immortality because when old, it sets fire to its nest and rises from the ashes rejuvenated. A partial sunburst depicted in the window not only suggests the Easter sunrise scenario but also Christ as light to the world. In the top right is a butterfly whose metamorphosis provides yet another image of resurrection and transformation into new life. Traditionally the butterfly life cycle parallels new birth into Christ: the caterpillar, or larval stage, represents life on Earth; the chrysalis, or pupa stage, equates to the grave; and the emergent adult butterfly ascends as with angel wings toward the heavens.



Mrs. John A. Ellison gave this window in loving memory of her husband, John Allen Ellison, long-time member of First Baptist and highly respected businessman in the Greenville community.



### **“THE LAMB OF GOD” WINDOW**

High on the back wall of the sanctuary, and also visible from outside in the vestibule, another faceted, stained glass window glows as a symbolic reminder of Christ’s sacrifice. It is the “The Lamb of God” window and commemorates Grace Whiteside, the longtime teacher and director of First Baptist Kindergarten. The adjoining plaque describes her as “one who greatly loved and cared about the children, the little lambs, of this church.”

This window, best viewed from the pulpit area, symbolically depicts John the Baptist’s response upon first seeing Jesus, “Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). It also traditionally refers to a passage in Revelations 5 in which The Lamb, although slain, is the creature worthy to come and take the scroll on which God’s word is written. Jesus symbolically represents the Lamb of God slain for our sins, offered in place of the traditional ancient Hebrew Passover offering of a paschal lamb.

The shepherd’s crook carried in the front leg of the Lamb recalls Jesus’ words regarding himself, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” (John 10:11).

The banner attached to the staff is the characteristic symbol of Christian victory, the red cross resting on a white background. A nimbus encircles the head of the Lamb, a radiant golden halo bursting from him into streaks of light refracting throughout the glorious composition. In the above photograph, sunlight also reflects off the adjoining wall, extending the image and symbol.

Many speakers from our pulpit have commented on the inspiration they receive from this window.

The dedication, on August 11, 1985, reads: *Lamb of God Window, In Devotion to Grace Walker Whiteside and in Honor of Nancy Carol Whiteside and Marcia Whiteside Walton By James D. Whiteside*

## THE SEASON OF PENTECOST

In his teachings to his disciples following his resurrection, Christ told them to remain in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit came to them. (Acts 1: 4). The Pentecost Season celebrates this gift of the Holy Spirit, or The Comforter, to these first followers, and to Christ's followers today.

### THE PENTECOST WINDOW

The Nave window on the right depicts Pentecost. The Pentecost celebration bridges the Old Testament Hebrew traditions with the New Testament ones

established by Jesus and his disciples. The followers celebrated the traditional Jewish Festival of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit anointed them. In this stained glass depiction, Jesus' disciples, both male and female, experience the descent of the Holy Spirit: "And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind...Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them" (Acts 2:2-4). The tongues of fire flame above the halo of each disciple.

At the top of the composite, the white dove, symbol of the Holy Spirit, descends with seven flames, perhaps symbolizing the seven gifts of the Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, godliness, and holy fear. In Old Testament times, these gifts were given only to kings (Isaiah 11:2). Could the Pentecost experience be the Holy Spirit of Christ the King now sharing these gifts with all followers? Could the disciples be experiencing the fulfillment of Joel's prophesy (Joel 2:28)? The pillar around which all gather, represents the church and Christ, the pillar of faith. The pillar may also appear as a symbol of Jesus' scourging before his death while bound to a courtyard pillar. Peter, the disciple who witnessed Jesus' trial and denied knowing him, here clings to this structure. Christ later forgave and commissioned Peter, entrusting him with the keys of the Kingdom. Under this depiction is the cross with crossed keys, the signature symbol of the disciple Peter.

At the bottom left glows the seven-tongued holy fire of Pentecost. The other three corner symbols come from the Old Testament. At the upper left are the tablets of the law representing the rules given to Moses for keeping holy days, the festival of Pentecost among them. At the upper right is the fire sent from heaven to ignite Elijah's sacrifice, signifying God's preeminence over all other gods. At the lower right rests a sheaf of wheat and a scroll, symbolizing the traditional Pentecost feast when Jewish law commanded an offering of the first fruits of the harvest to the Lord.

*This window was given by: The Don Franklin Bolt Family in gratitude for The Ministry of First Baptist Church.*





## THE TRINITY AND THE ROTUNDA TRINITY CARPET

With this gift of the Holy Spirit given to Christ's followers, emerged the concept of The Trinity: God in three personas as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. *Trinity Sunday* occurs the Sunday after Pentecost and honors this concept.

A rug on the first level of the rotunda, the three-story heart of the First Baptist educational building, offers a visual symbol of the Trinity, a Triquetra and Circle icon. Looking down from above, the pattern of the carpet is clearly visible. The outer layering circles range from shades of dark and royal blue, to light blue, interspersed with a gold ring. The center is a gold three-pointed triangular figure called a triquetra, formed from interlocking fish-shaped ovals. This symbol is used to express the triune nature of God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The ovals' interweaving reflects the unity of the Trinity.

The family of James and Grace Whiteside donated this entrance carpet. Mrs. Whiteside was the director and the first teacher of First Baptist Kindergarten. Each day, as the children await carpool pick-up sitting on and around this beautiful carpet, they sit unaware of this educator who so indelibly imprinted the lives of kindergartners at First Baptist.

## THE SEASON OF ORDINARY TIME IN THE CHURCH'S MISSION

Continuing the church year, the Sundays following Trinity Sunday are non-festival, or The Season of Ordinary Time. During these periods, as during all time given to each believer, the mission of the church continues: extending sacrificial love and service to other members of creation in the name of God and his son, Christ Jesus. Various missions and ministries evidence this focused belief of the congregation and staff of First Baptist Church.





## **THE BELL TOWER**

The tower that houses the Carillon at First Baptist was given in memory of Charles Ezra Daniel, 1895-1964, First Baptist member and Greenville philanthropist who enhanced both the church and the Greenville community through his progressive contributions.

Van Bergen Bellfoundries, Inc. of Charleston, South Carolina, coordinated the design and casting of the First Baptist bells in this tower at the Paccard Fonderie de Cloches in Annecy-le-Vieux, France.





## THE ADVENT BELLS

In 1996, “to the glory of God,” David and Barbara McMaster gave the original bells in the First Baptist Church Carillon. The Advent Bells derive their names from the four concepts celebrated during Advent. Each is tuned to a note and inscribed with the concept name, a symbol, and a scripture.

**LOVE** — Note C, inscribed with a cross, weighs 4,641 pounds,

“THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE” I CORINTHIANS 13:13.

**JOY** — The F bell, inscribed with a star, weighs 1,992 pounds,

“GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY” LUKE 2:10.

**HOPE** — The G bell, inscribed with a rose, weighs 1,418 pounds,

“THAT YE MAY ABOUND IN HOPE” ROMANS 15:13.

**PEACE** — The A bell, inscribed with a lily, weighs 998 pounds,

“PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU” JOHN 14:27.

Each bell is cast of bronze consisting of 78% pure copper and 22% pure block tin. Each bell is tuned to the system of equal temperament based on A=440 cycles. A retroactive clapper system fits each bell, so that each peals forth God’s praises. The specially designed system enables the clapper to move up with the bell for the best possible musical effect. The bells may also be struck by an exterior clapper system. A microprocessor clock system and a custom remote station provide control of the bells. The Advent Bells are the heaviest “swinging peal” of bells in the Southeast.

The bells provide the following ringing:

- A Celebration Peal consisting of four bells swinging at their own rate of speed.
- The Hour Strike preceded by the traditional Westminster Chime Sequence.
- The Funeral Toll.

## THE BELL CARILLON

A gift from Tom and Sherry Atkinson completed the steeple bell carillon in 1999. The beautiful sounds of the bell carillon recall for me the Psalmist's admonition, "Worship the Lord in holy splendor" (Psalms 29:2).

With the addition of fifteen more bells, a computer time clock called a Renaissance control system, allows for the automatic playing of hymn melodies on a daily basis. The bells can also be played from the organ console.

The largest of the additional bells is the A#3 bell which weighs 844 pounds. Named the **GRACE** bell and located on the Cleveland St. side of the steeple, this bell bears the inscription:

"GRACE - Amazing Grace! How Sweet the Sound!" on one side, and

"First Baptist Church, Greenville, South Carolina, 1999" on the other side.

Since playing hymns is the primary purpose of this carillon, the donors designated a specific hymn for each of the fifteen new bells. These hymns as well as the weight of the additional bells is as follows:

Bell	Weight	Hymn
A#3	844	Amazing Grace! How Sweet the Sound
B3	760	Dear Lord and Father of Mankind
C4	645	O God, Our Help in Ages Past
C#4	546	Great Is Thy Faithfulness
D4	458	To God Be the Glory
D#4	402	Grace Greater Than Our Sin
E4	398	When I Survey the Wondrous Cross
F4	347	Blest Be the Tie that Binds
F#4	230	My Faith Looks Up to Thee
G4	259	Joy to the World
G#4	237	O Perfect Love
A4	208	I Need Thee Every Hour
A#4	193	Abide with Me
B4	171	Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee
C5	148	Love Divine, All Loves Excelling



## CHAMPIONS OF FAITH SANCTUARY WINDOWS

No person stands alone as an individual; each human composition blends influences and experiences of other lives, both past and present. This synthesis resounds most significantly in the faith journey. First Baptist Greenville sanctuary's high east windows honor the journeys and contributions of those who greatly influenced Christianity and the present Baptist denomination.

Each of the eighteen windows celebrates one past Champion of Faith, reflecting the major contributions of that person through visual symbols. The champions chosen for commemoration represent foundations laid by hosts of others who courageously withstood countless tests of faith.

Viewed from inside the sanctuary from left to right, three categories delineate the Champions of Faith:

Biblical Characters (7); Historical Figures in Christianity (8); Baptist Leaders (3)

The dedication celebration of the windows occurred on December 13, 1992. The individual donors and dedications are listed below alongside a brief description of each window.



### ABRAHAM AND SARAH

*Given in Memory of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Huntington Eskew and Mr. and Mrs. Robert William Wood by Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Wood.*

As depicted in the first of the Champions of Faith windows, Abraham and Sarah stand close together, one of his hands resting on her shoulder and the other holding his staff. His feet, poised beside hers, follow God's command: "So Abram went..., he and his wife, and all that he had" (Genesis 13:1). His dark eyes seem to search expectantly, watchful, aware, listening. Her eyes are closed in faith and prayer.

Abraham and Sarah are ordinary people for their time, but ones who step out in extraordinary faith, through which humanity for all time, not just the Hebrew people, becomes the priceless heirs.

### MOSES

*Given in Honor of Dorothy and Laura Bryan by their Parents, Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Bryan, Jr.*

The window depicting Moses displays great energy and vibrancy. It depicts an old man with white hair and beard; eyes cast downward and hand gesturing upward. He holds the tablets with the Ten Commandments carved upon them. White clouds above him and fire beside him recall the guidance of God during the Exodus as well as the burning bush that was instrumental in his initial calling.

Moses, like Abraham and Sarah, represent important champions of faith for all three major religions of the Western world: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.





## DAVID

*Given in Loving Memory of David Frontis Watson, M. D.*

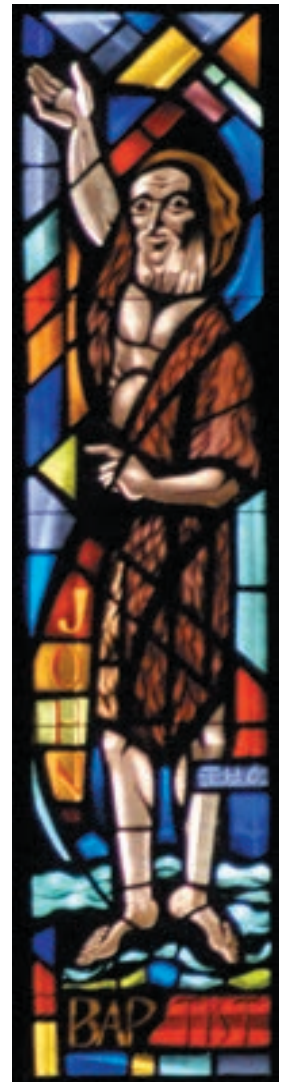
This First Baptist window brings together an excellent composite of David's life. In kingly robes of white with golden collar and crown, he sits on a golden throne. In his lap rests his harp symbolizing his poetry and song. From his feet three lambs look up to him in trust, recalling for us his shepherd boyhood. His hand is raised, two fingers pointing upward in the Latin benediction gesture conveying the blessing of God. Symbolically this gesture indicates the hand of God upon him.

The symbols over his head anticipate Christ coming from the Davidic bloodline. The monogram for Christ, Chi and Rho, make up the first two letters of the Greek word for Christ. The Christmas (Heraldic) Rose superimposed on the monogram symbolizes the Nativity, Christ's birth as Messiah.

## JOHN THE BAPTIST

*Given in Memory of Evelyn Boggs Jameson  
and Mary Boggs Clain  
by Frances Boggs Sheppard*

The stained glass picture of John the Baptist dresses him in rough brown animal skins, as described in the Gospels. His feet in water recall the reason for his name; his call to repentance included baptism with water. As he gestures upward, his startled expression depicts the intensity of his insurgent message. His staff terminates in a cross that is lacking one cross-arm, symbolizing that the crucifixion had not occurred during the time of John's ministry.





## PETER

*Given in Honor of Bill and Mignon Jeffords  
and Bob and Vivian Wynn and in Memory  
of Bethelyn Wynn by Baxter and Paula Wynn*

Peter's window shows a barefoot man in a rough robe; his eyes look up in humility. In his right hand are the gold and silver keys to the Kingdom, and the Church on which it is built. His left palm opens downward displaying the oldest symbol of God the Father, emphasizing the power and blessing of God upon Peter. An inverted Cross rises over his head, recalling both Christ's crucifixion and his own, which he requested to be inverted because he was unworthy to be crucified in the same way his Lord had been, and so that he might look toward Heaven.

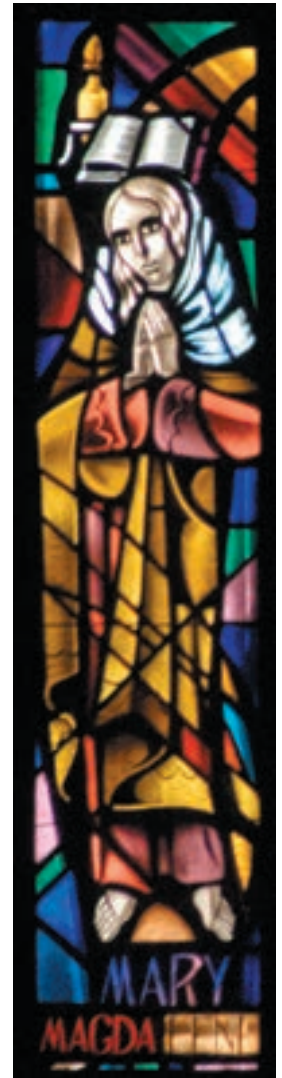
Of the original twelve apostles selected by Jesus, First Baptist Greenville commemorates only one, Simon Peter. The first disciple chosen according to all four Gospels, Peter is the undisputed leader and spokesman of the group. As the Gospels develop Jesus' ministry, Peter emerges as a complex character of varying strengths and weaknesses.

## MARY MAGDALENE

*Given in Memory of Bony Hampton Peace, Kr.*

Mary Magdalene, close friend and follower of Jesus, is one of three women celebrated as First Baptist Champions of Faith. Mary is the only figure in the windows in a position of worship. She kneels reverently, head bowed and hands folded in simple but beautiful adoration of the one she followed, dearly loved, and worshipped during their life together. Her colorful robe enfolds her, but reveals her feet, bare for worship. The symbol over her head is the bottle of precious ointment of spikenard with which tradition says she anointed Christ, symbolizing his Kingship and foreshadowing his death.

Through the centuries the person Mary Magdalene, also became integrated with the sinful woman who anointed Jesus with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair (Luke 7:36-50). Although this woman is unnamed in Luke's gospel, iconographers through the centuries gave this distinctive role to Mary Magdalene. The heraldic symbol of her sainthood contains a white ointment pot with gold cover, displayed on black for mourning and purple for penitence. Silver teardrops also sprinkle this background. The First Baptist window incorporates this symbol.



## PAUL

*Given with Love and Appreciation to Our Parents,  
Henderson Paul Clary and Grace Powell Clary,  
Wilbur Wade McMaster and Pauline Markland McMaster  
by David and Barbara McMaster*

The First Baptist window devoted to Paul reveals a very serious expression on a man clad in robe and sandals. He wears a cape for travel. In both hands he holds a large sword, blade pointed upward, depicting his having God's Sword of Truth. Over his head rests a cross and open book, his traditional saintly symbols.

Paul: where today would Christianity be without Paul? One certainty is that it would not be the same! Christianity's greatest missionary, first theologian, and writer of nearly one-half of the New Testament, but above all, Paul was, as he described himself, "a man in Christ," uniquely prepared and committed for the task he accepted as his God-appointed life's work.



## AUGUSTINE

*Given in Gratitude for Augustine, Who Provided the  
First Spiritual Autobiography  
Emphasizing a Theology of the Trinity  
and of Sovereign Grace*

The stained glass depiction of Augustine presents him dressed in purple robes befitting a bishop and around his neck hangs a gold-fringed white stole embroidered with a gold cross. He wears sandals over purple socks. The Bible he holds open has a scarlet cover embroidered also with a gold cross, while in the other hand a golden quill is poised, representing his influential writing. With a very mournful expression he looks up to the symbol over his head, a gold shield with the word VERITAS, meaning *truth*. Sunrays illumine this symbol. At his feet rests his heraldic saintly symbol, a red heart with crossed arrows behind it, topped with a flame. I believe this signifies his repentance and intense zeal and devotion to Christ, his heart aflame for God.

Aurelius Augustinus is ranked first among the early fathers of the Christian church. His influence permeated both Roman Catholic and Protestant theology, continuing that influence today. His most important writings include his *Confessions*, an account of his life struggles for truth, and *The City of God*, a defense of Christianity.

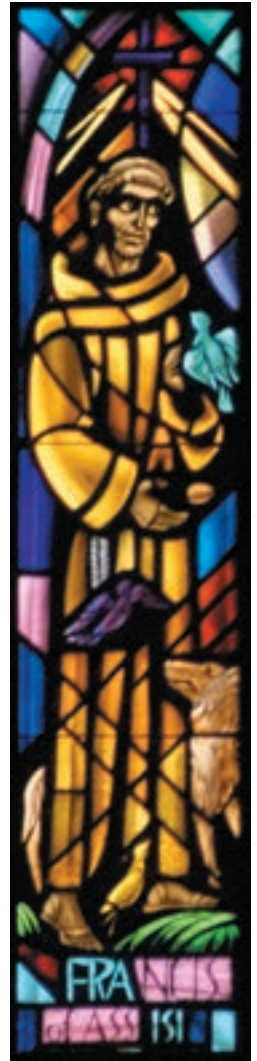


## ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

*Given in Honor of Dr. and Mrs. Lucius Moore Cline, Jr.  
by their Children  
Dr. and Mrs. Lucius M. Cline III,  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Ray,  
Mr. Charles D. and Dr. Carol Cline Stilwell*

Appropriately, the First Baptist stained glass recreates Francis of Assisi characteristically tending his animal friends, Gubbio, a wolf he tamed, and birds, to which he preached sermons. His characteristic stigmata shows on his foot and a Latin cross glows over his head. Tied with the rope belt of the servant-monk, his robe, usually brown, here gleams in brilliant yellow, the color of the sunrays that his simple life cast on others.

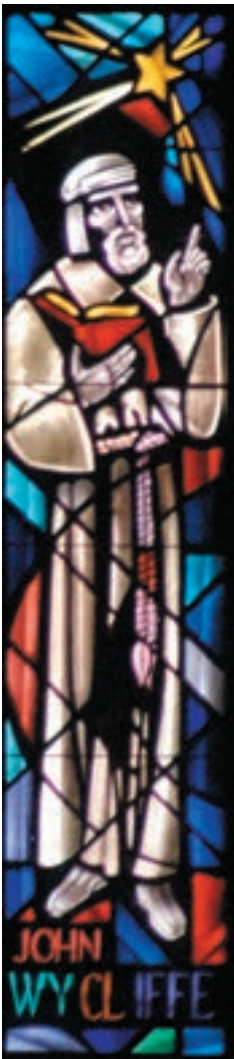
The Catholic Church gave Francis sainthood only two years after his death, as the patron saint of animals; and in 1980, he became the patron saint of ecology.



## JOHN WYCLIFFE

*Given in Memory of Mr. and Mrs. David L.  
Chamblin  
by Ann Chamblin Leverett and Elizabeth L.  
Chamblin*

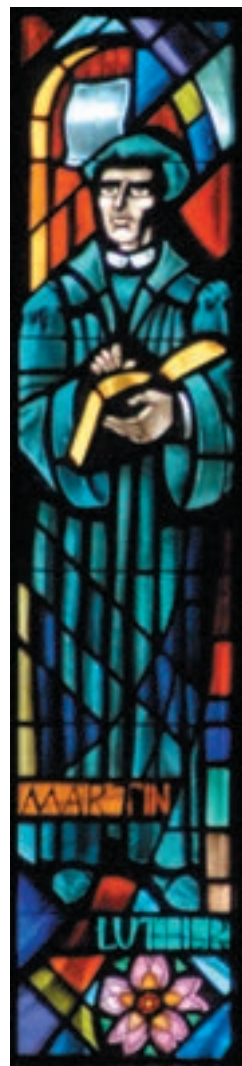
The Champions of Faith window depicts early church leader John Wycliffe in white robes with a white head ornament signifying purity. His finger points upward in what I interpret as a gesture of judgment against the corruption of the Church. In his other hand he holds an open Bible, signifying the authority he gave to scripture and his production of the first English translation of the entire Bible. He wears the rope belt characteristic of service to others, but over his head shines the Star of the East, traditionally signifying guidance of the King, recalling Wycliffe's important contributions to the growth of spiritual freedom.



## MARTIN LUTHER

*Given in Gratitude for the Contributions of Martin Luther,  
Father of the Protestant Reformation  
Affirming the Priesthood of All Believers*

In the First Baptist windows, Martin Luther is depicted in the scholarly robes, tam, and soft foot covering of a University professor. His hand holds an open Bible that he translated into the language of the people. Behind him a white paper tacked to a brown door, recalls his *Ninety-Five Theses* posted on the Castle church at Wittenberg, which historians mark as the beginning of the Protestant Reformation against the Catholic Church. At his feet blooms the Heraldic Rose with a heart and cross in the center, his seal and a traditional symbol of the Messiah.

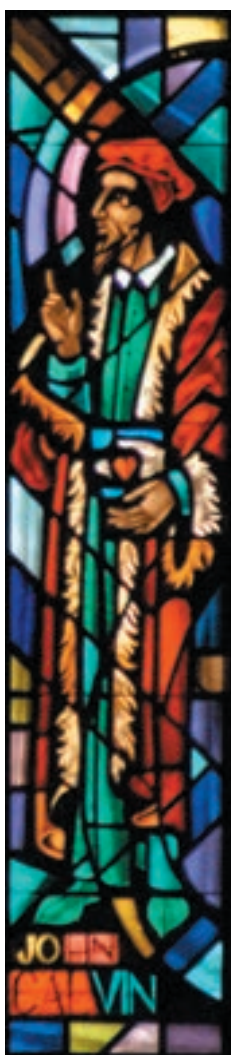


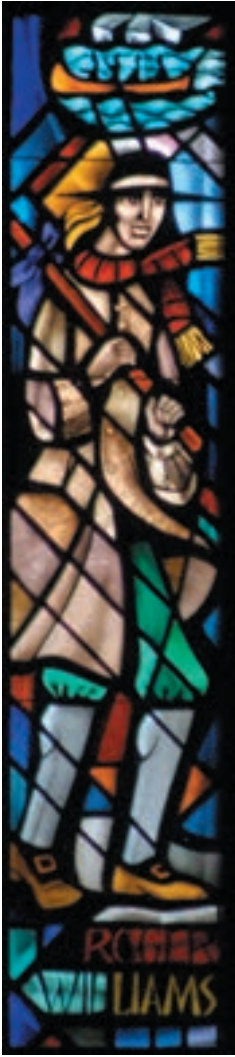
## JOHN CALVIN

*Given in Memory of Abner Darden Asbury, Jr.  
by His Wife, Isabel Easley Asbury*

The Champions of Faith window portrays Calvin in an elaborate professorial, red gown fringed in gold, with an academic tam on his head. One finger points up as if teaching, while the other hand holds his family coat of arms: a blue background on which a gold heart rests on an open hand.

John Calvin became a leader in the Protestant reformation, and many of the tenets held today by Protestants come from Calvin's writings. Those works advocate the concept of predestination, along with the motivation to missions and to the Christian life.





## ROGER WILLIAMS

*Given in Memory of my Mother, Grace M. Ervin and  
my Brother, Roger W. Ervin  
by Mrs. Marion E. Johnson*

Roger Williams, in the First Baptist windows, tramps in rough pilgrim, winter garb with coat, hat, and scarf, and a hobo pack over his shoulder. He appears as he lived his life, migrating from one colony to another in his cause for democracy, equality, and religious tolerance. Over his head docks a canoe carrying four people dressed in the simple Puritan clothing, recalling his immigration to America and his friendship with and advocacy for Native Americans. His dress and intense facial expression relay the unwavering dedication with which he approached his life and his beliefs.

During roughly the same time period that John Milton wrote epic poetry and John Bunyan wrote illegal sermons and allegories about the Christian journey, Roger Williams lived and preached for religious freedom in defiance against the Anglican Church of England. He founded Rhode Island as a colony based on equal rights and religious freedom and established the first Baptist church in America.

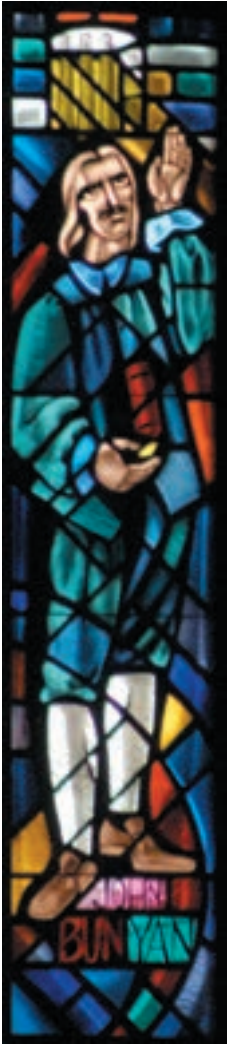
## JOHN MILTON

*Given in Honor to God  
and with Abiding Love for their Children,  
Dr. James Thomas Atkinson, Jr.,  
Mrs. Tara Atkinson Hays, Mr. Paul Benson Atkinson  
by Dr. and Mrs. James Thomas Atkinson*

Milton's inclusion in First Baptist's windows reflects the enormous influence of his poetry on Christian beliefs. The composite portrays him seated with unseeing eyes cast upward toward a recalled vision of himself dressed in Puritan black. As he writes with a quill, a page lies open on his lap. Brown wood shutters on the right symbolize the blindness with which he finished his life, poetry, and career.

John Milton, one of the most learned Englishmen of his day, originally prepared for a ministerial career, but the conflict between the Puritan and Anglican church beliefs and his increasing ability and desire to write, caused him to choose a writing career instead. His two best-known epic poems are *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*.



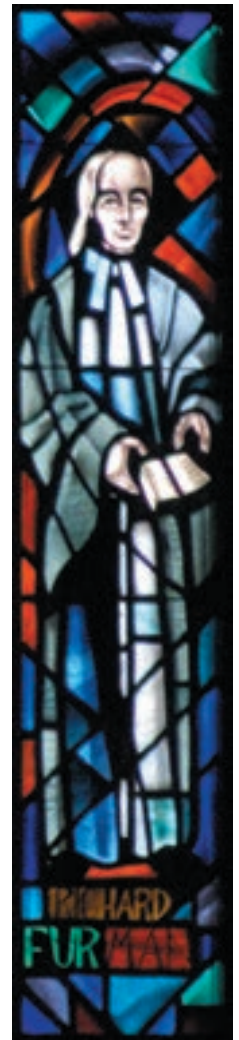


## JOHN BUNYAN

*Given in Memory of our Daughter, Mary Ann Edwards Westney  
by Mr. and Mrs. Royce Edwards*

The John Bunyan window at First Baptist reflects a man in pilgrim's dress, left hand raised, accepting his commission. His head and eyes look up as if listening to a Divine voice. Overhead ominously looms a barred window, representing the jail cell in which he spent 12 years of his life for preaching the gospel, but a light streams through it in shafts falling on him. His right hand holds a piece of gold metal from his tinker's trade and a book representing his writing.

*The Pilgrim's Progress* has been translated into more than 100 languages. Written from his jail cell, the book clearly shows John Bunyan to be a captivating storyteller and shrewd observer of life.

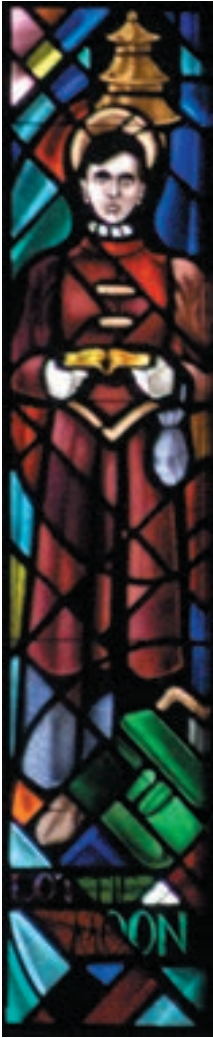


## RICHARD FURMAN

*Given by The Furman Family*

Dr. Richard Furman appears in the window in 19<sup>th</sup> Century ministerial robes. He holds an open book symbolizing his zeal for and influence on the education of Baptist ministers. In this window his face appears intense, yet humble, open to leading and learning.

Through the commemoration of Richard Furman, for whom Furman University is named, the Champions of Faith Windows circle home to South Carolina and First Baptist Church. Devout in his religious beliefs, Furman stood with the Patriots during the Revolutionary War and strongly supported the movement to disestablish a state church in South Carolina. As a member of the state constitutional convention in 1790, he affirmed separation of church and state.



## LOTTIE MOON

*Given in Memory of Marie Long Harrison  
by Her Loving Family*

Lottie Moon, the Virginia Baptist woman who gave her life sharing Christ's love with the Chinese people, is still a maverick as one of only three faith *heroine* windows at First Baptist. In this depiction, she wears the traditional Chinese dress, which she adopted in her latter years of service. She holds an open Bible and carries a money purse, representing the enormous influence she had on missions' offerings. Over her head is a gold symbol of the Chinese culture.

At four feet, three inches, Charlotte Diggs Moon was a giant of a woman whose name became synonymous with Baptist missions. As one of the first women sent by the Foreign Missions Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, she was for many years the lone Baptist missionary in China.

## HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK

*Given in Memory of Mr. and Mrs. Jesse E. Whatley  
by Jack and Carolyn Whatley Dennis*

The window celebrating the influence of Harry Emerson Fosdick figuratively juxtaposes the modern world with the ancient one. Fosdick stands dressed in 20<sup>th</sup> century male business attire. The book under one arm recalls his primary life-role as a teacher and in the pulpit. The other hand raised with finger pointing upward indicates his primary focus of pointing people to God.

According to Dr. Hardy Clemons, the "atomic ichthus" above Fosdick's head is a fusion of the First Century sign of the fish superimposed on top of the atomic eclipse. Clemons said this image symbolizes today's Christian calling to live out the ancient foundations of the Hebrew-Christian faith amid the complexities and challenges of the contemporary world. For a church such as First Baptist Greenville, rooted since 1831 in the Charleston Tradition of Baptist life, Dr. Fosdick is indeed one of the Champions of Faith.





## THE STEWARDSHIP TAPESTRY

In Matthew 13:32 Jesus says, “[A mustard seed] is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown, it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.” The First Baptist tapestry, which began as the small seed for a stewardship theme in 1996, grew to become a central symbol of First Baptist Greenville at this time in its history.

The tapestry often hangs prominently centered behind the pulpit. Created from individual pieces of fabric donated by church members, the tapestry symbolizes the weaving together of the lives of the church members to be the body of Christ at First Baptist. The pieces sewn into the present composition by artist Ellen Kochansky, a textile artist in Pickens, SC, became a powerful visual symbol and reminder of who this church desires to be. As members contributed fabric, each also included a story telling the reason they chose their particular piece. The collected stories comprise another publication called *Weaving Our Lives Together: Stories from Our Tapestry*. Originally placed on the sanctuary table at Pledge Sunday, these stories and fabric pieces reveal an intimate view of who First Baptist Church members were, are, and hope to be as a body of believers. The frontispiece of that book describes that hope:

“May this book

...help you to recall the joy you felt when you first saw the finished tapestry woven from all the individual pieces of cloth into such a magnificent work of art and a moving symbol of faith.  
....help you to feel a sense of belonging in this community of faith as we continue to weave our lives together with God and God’s people.”



## **THE OFFERING PLATES**

As First Baptist planned the move into the present sanctuary, Dr. Lucius M. Cline, Jr., offered to use his woodworking skills to create the offering plates as his gift to the church to which he and his wife had belonged for more than 40 years. Each plate is hand-turned on a lathe from a single block of mahogany, finished with a hand-carved rim design.

A physician by profession, Dr. Cline enjoyed as hobbies the more intricate details of woodworking and the making of wooden furniture. Although his three children did not share his passion for woodworking, each of them had a hand in completing the plates.

Months of planning on paper preceded the woodwork. He first sketched each plate to insure the accuracy of his design, including a delicate hand-carved motif on the rims, the pattern of each coming from the natural world he loved. Each plate began as a rectangular piece of mahogany much larger than its finished diameter. After he had turned the wood on his lathe and arrived at the shape he desired, the whole family completed them by hand-carving the rim design. Dr. Cline and his three children each hand-carved a group of three plates using the design he selected for them.

Dr. and Mrs. Cline's children are Dr. Lucius M. Cline, III, Margaret Ann Cline Ray, and Dr. Carol Ellen Cline Stilwell.

Although Dr. Cline and his wife, Margaret Ellen, have died, they remain an integral part of First Baptist worship each Sunday as their family's loving contribution of offering plates pass through the congregation collecting others' gifts.

## THE WOMAN'S MISSIONARY UNION QUILT

In 1988 the Woman's Missionary Union, an auxiliary of the Southern Baptist Convention, celebrated its centennial. To commemorate the century, First Baptist WMU created the beautiful quilt that hangs in the lower level of the rotunda. WMU members composed squares around the motto "GO FORWARD" and the theme words GO, PRAY, GIVE.

The quilt celebrates both local and global missions with squares representing various emphases. Among them are the Great Commission (Mat. 28:19-20), offerings, women missionaries, churches, the steps in GA's, and families. Missions organizations of the day also were represented in various squares.

Some of those groups, as they were then named, include Girls in Action, Girls Auxiliary (GA's), Royal Ambassadors (RA's), Big A Club, Sunbeams, Mission Friends and Baptist Women.



WMU began in 1888 partially as a result of Lottie Moon's ministry in China. As one of the first women appointed by what was then known as the Foreign Mission Board, Miss Moon realized the need for churches to understand and give support to global missions work through prayer and offerings. As a result, many churches began mission organizations for women. In a monthly general meeting, Baptist women gathered to pray for missions and missionaries, to study missions work, to hear missionaries on furlough speak, and to complete service projects.

Although FBCG is now disassociated from the Southern Baptist Convention, women's circles, smaller groups which are divided by age or interest, continue to meet each month although the format varies widely from circle to circle. Our missions emphases currently take the form of local involvement like the Neighborhood Partnership with Haynie-Sirrine, Viola Street, and Open Heart Church, and global involvement with

organizations like the Alliance of Baptist and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. FBCG even adopted CBF missionaries Kim and Marc Wyatt in Toronto, Canada, as a direct way of supporting the ongoing work of missionaries. Thus Baptist women through WMU continue to provide an army of support for missions and have done so for more than 100 years.

The Women's Missionary Union quilt expresses the members' love for missions through the many months and many loving stitches required to complete it. Following the individual efforts, church member Helen Smith undertook the completed synthesis as she discovered artists to sew the squares to one another, add the border, quilt, and frame it. Today in the first level of the rotunda, a main entrance for First Baptist's continuing missions study and work, this lovely quilt celebrates more than 100 years of Baptist missions emphasis.



## **THE REMEMBRANCE GARDEN**

We go from here remembering the path our Savior trod,  
That we might have abundant life and know the love of God.  
If pain or darkness be our lot, with him, we will not fear;  
For resurrection joy and light are drawing ever near.

By Donna M. Forrester<sup>8</sup>

In 2000, First Baptist Church developed a peaceful and lovely Remembrance Garden on the Cleveland Street side of the sanctuary. The garden and columbarium offer continued caring even after death for members and their families who share the fellowship of First Baptist Church Greenville. The columbarium provides niches for permanent interment of cremated remains, and plaques for memorialization. For those who especially love First Baptist and have a sense of closeness to it, the garden extends hallowed ground, sacred to the memory of those who have been a part of its story.

Dr. Hardy Clemons, senior minister from 1988 to 2000 spoke at The Remembrance Garden Dedication Ceremony, April 16, 2000. Excerpts from his comments follow:

It is especially appropriate that we gather here on Passion Sunday, the major day in all the Christian year when we are aware of the crucifixion, death, and burial of our Lord, Jesus the Christ.

For the first time in its long and distinguished history our beloved church is capable of shepherding our people all the way through the totality of our life cycles. Now, we have the capacity to lovingly place the remains of our loved ones in this columbarium, so aptly set in the beauty of this magnificent garden. We can walk through these vintage gates, which have come from the old church downtown, into the presence of this Remembrance Garden...and, all the while, we can hear these glorious bells, which sing out the melody of the good news of God to a world where harmony is at a premium.

I am here today because I believe in resurrection.



*The dedication plaque reads:  
The Good Samaritan  
By Charlie Pate  
Dedicated to the missions,  
ministries, and stewardship  
of giving through First  
Baptist Church, Greenville.  
Cast of metal gifts of the  
congregation.  
Placed in honor of "Giving  
Because We Care."  
August 29, 1999*

## **THE GOOD SAMARITAN STATUE**

One of the best known of Jesus' parables defines the concept of ministry to others. It is the story of the man robbed and beaten who is cared for and saved, not by the religious leaders who purposely pass by on the other side of the road, but by the outcast Samaritan. A statue in the Remembrance Garden powerfully re-creates the essence of this story, which is found in Luke 10:30-35.

For the 1997 Stewardship emphasis "Giving Because We Care," church members donated metal objects chosen for their personal significance, each accompanied by a story concerning the selection. The stories form a collection archived in the church Media Center, and the resulting statue melded these individual gifts into what now stands as the fitting centerpiece of First Baptist Greenville's Remembrance Garden.

Artist Charlie Pate, who served as the project's sculptor, said of this creation, "I wanted it to be a ministering piece of art, one which could be walked around, low enough for a child to view." Pate chose to depict the particular scene from the parable of the injured man resting in the lap of the Samaritan. He knew his sculpture must convey the compassion of the Samaritan as well as the condition of the beaten man, broken and disfigured.

He worked in clay, whose moisture adds weight and keeps the work from immediately hardening. One morning during the initial sculpting, Pate discovered that the underlying armature had cracked and bent under the weight of the clay. He had to break the work down and begin again. Instead of interpreting this as a disaster, he views it as providential intervention because he felt the new pose showed more compassion. This was Pate's first venture into sculpture, but he said the statue is now a personal favorite.

This visual interpretation hopefully symbolizes our church's intention to serve the needs of others in whatever form those needs appear.



### **THE GARDEN GATES**

The exquisite wrought iron gates leading into the entrances of the Remembrance Garden bridge the previous century of First Baptist Greenville to the present one. These gates remained at Downtown Baptist Church on W. McBee Avenue, First Baptist Greenville's second location of worship, when the congregation built the Cleveland Street facility. As parts of Downtown Baptist underwent renovation into condominiums in 2000, Dan and Katherine Joyner, lifetime members who worshipped in both buildings, made possible the use of the gates for the entrances to the new garden. Dan fondly remembers as a child swinging on these gates with now deceased member Wade Hampton Bryant. These beautiful heirlooms fittingly pinion the past with the present as they provide entrance to this peaceful garden.

### **CONCLUSION**

First Baptist Church Greenville invites worshippers to seek the awesome presence of God surrounding all of life. We recognize, however, that some places enhance spiritual awareness and alertness to Mystery's presence. Through the reverent symbols surrounding the worshipper and even throughout the building and grounds known as First Baptist Greenville, the congregation that gathers at this place seeks to create one of those places through which the mystery of the spiritual can emerge most discernibly. Through its eminent and blessed history, and its reverent and faithful present, we hope those who worship with this church will journey into the future with increased desire for relationship with God and for service to fellow life on this Earth. Worship and service remain the purpose for Creation and for First Baptist Church Greenville.

## IN APPRECIATION

I want to express my sincerest appreciation to the many friends who enabled me to create this book as a gift to First Baptist Church Greenville. Without their varied ways of support, I could not have done it.

Church member and Production Committee Chairman Bill Dunlap and Bill Robertson photographed the many pictures I wanted to include, often humoring some of my more questionable requests. Bill Dunlap spent hours digitizing and recording these pictures into CD format.

Sue Poss used her tremendous gifts expressed through graphic design to make my written words into a book. Thanks for enabling others to read these words!

Not being a Biblical scholar or historian myself, I depended greatly on those who are. My appreciation extends to those who first undertook the task, selecting and sharing with the church members through Wednesday Night talks, the histories of the 18 Champions of Faith depicted in the Sanctuary windows. These scholars were most generous in offering me their original research to begin my accounts. Thanks to:

Dr. Francis W. Bonner, Dr. J. Glen Clayton, Mrs. Ardelle Clemons, Dr. Hardy S. Clemons, Dr. Archie V. Huff, Dr. Merwyn S. Johnson, Mrs. Sarah G. Manly, Dr. James M. Pitts, and Dr. T. C. Smith.

So many people gave innumerable hours finding the inevitable typos, mistakes, and better ways of expressing thoughts. My grateful thanks to these who shepherded my editing: Rod McClendon's editing was superb, along with Mary Wylie's, whose long personal history at FBCG also provided invaluable information; Bonnie Neely and Nelle Burgess, my life-long cheerleaders; Janice Johnson, who made available the history of the stained glass windows from their inception; Dr. Glen Adkins who originally mentioned the idea for this book and who gave much support; Zeb Morton who encouraged the initial phases.

Dale Marshall, the Assistant Librarian at Willet Studios, spent hours researching and writing up the stained glass window construction history.

Greenville artist Charlie Pate graciously interviewed with me about the beautiful pieces he created for the church and shared his own feelings about their creation.

Thanks to the anonymous donors who realized the need for a record of the symbols and paid for the printing and production of this attempt to begin that process.

Always, "to God be the glory" as First Baptist Church Greenville continues its second century of missions and ministry.

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### (Endnotes)

<sup>1</sup> Genesis 28:17, KJV and music by Paul Langston.

<sup>2</sup> *The Book of Confession, Presbyterian Church (USA)* (New York: The Office of the General Assembly, 1983), 7.001.

<sup>3</sup> Christina Baldwin, *Life's Companion, Journal Writing as a Spiritual Quest* (New York: Bantam Books, 1990), 87.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>5</sup> Cathie Powell, *Architectural/Acoustical Project* (unpublished manuscript, March 17, 1994).

<sup>6</sup> Mabel Stewart Boyter, *The Symbolism of the Chrismons Tree* (Dayton, OH: The Lorenz Corporation, 1978).

<sup>7</sup> Donna Forrester, adapted from John Hewett's column in *Highlights* First Baptist Church, Asheville, NC.

<sup>8</sup> Donna M. Forrester, *First Baptist Church Remembrance Garden* brochure (Greenville, SC: First Baptist Church, 2000).

Scripture quotations are derived from the New Revised Standard Version, except where indicated or where the scripture version is included as part of a direct quotation or citation.