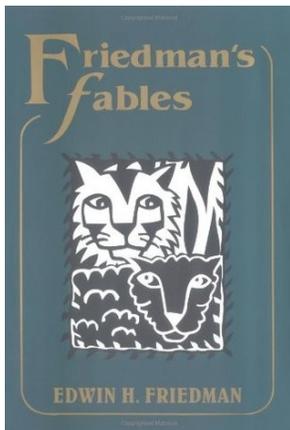


# God Centered Growth

First Baptist Church of Norton

February 13, 2018  
Volume 1, Issue No. 7

## From the Pastor's Heart



As most of you know this Wednesday (Ash Wednesday) marks the beginning of Lent. Lent is usually observed in a way that you can replicate the 40 days Jesus was in the desert being tempted. Some people add a new discipline to their lives, like Bible study, daily prayer, maybe adding visitation, while others take things away, like certain foods, fasting, no more soda, smoking, etc. When I think of Lent, I start to think of a fable I read as a young man. If you have ever read *Friedman's Fables* then you will know the story I am talking about. The title of the fable is "The Bridge". In this fable, a man makes a decision about his life and decides to go in that direction, giving everything up in his life to go toward his goals. During his journey he comes to a bridge, while crossing the bridge he sees another man walking from the opposite side. When they get close enough to each other, the man hands him two ropes which are tied around his waist and he jumps off the bridge. The man has to stop his journey to keep this other man from falling. He tries to pull him up but he isn't strong enough. Then, he tries to get the man to climb up the rope back to the bridge but he refuses. Finally the man on the bridge gives the dangling man an ultimatum, they either work together to get the other man back on the bridge or he lets go of the rope. He waits for a response, but the man doesn't reply, so the man on the bridge says "I accept your decision" and lets go of the rope.

I come to this story because we all have or have had something, someone, or some idea holding us back from our goals as Christians. There is something in our life that we just can't give up for God. It could be a judgmental attitude, taking the Lord's name in vain, it could be things you aren't willing to admit. What we often don't fully understand is that God's majesty can't truly be revealed until we put him first. I would like to encourage you, don't let these things hold you back from a wonderful relationship with Christ. Don't let them keep you from him.

Now in reference to people, you need to understand that you can't hold the rope on your own and people must take responsibility for themselves. I don't want you to think I am saying "give up on people" because I am not. God must be present with us when we are holding this rope, He can give us the strength and the words to say to help pull them back up. We must get on our knees and pray for them, while allowing God to do the work. We don't save people, God does. You letting go of the rope with people, allows God to take over. Love, Mark

### Prayer requests from Sunday:

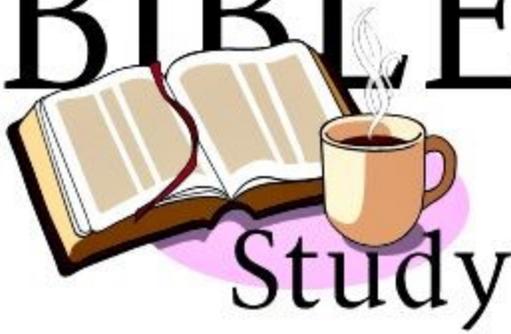
- Beverly Viers is recovering from a stroke.
- Those impacted by the flooding include Jean Spradlin and Neil & Beth Walker's business.
- Bob Hobbs, Kathy Osborne's brother-in-law, will have a heart catheterization this week.
- Tammie Sturgill
- Two members of Rue Gembach's family
- The week of Feb. 11-18 is Focus on WMU (Women's Missionary Union)

### A Praise:

- Shane and Amber Burke won their custody case to adopt Jenna!

COME JOIN OUR

# BIBLE



Everyone knows the story of Jonah and, of course, the great fish. It is a fascinating story whose popularity has remained strong with the young and old alike. The story we remember from childhood takes on a different meaning when we reread it as adults. As children, the “whale” seems to steal the show. As adults, however, we realize the main character is not the great fish or even Jonah, it is God.

The story of Jonah is not just a great, old story. It is very relevant to our struggles today – obedience to God, loving others without condition, God’s mercy to us and to others.

You are invited to dive deeper into the story of Jonah on Wednesdays in March beginning at 6:30 pm (4 weeks). The study is entitled: **Jonah, Reluctant Prophet, Merciful God.** Study books are available for \$6. (They are not required but will be very helpful). Leigh Clark will be the facilitator.

If you are interested in participating, a sign-up sheet will be available at the church next Sunday. You can also contact Leigh via email at [lgclark4@yahoo.com](mailto:lgclark4@yahoo.com).

Won’t you join us for a wonderful time of fellowship and study? Come! Better yet, invite someone to come with you!

**The deadline to order books is Sunday, February 18.**



- Ash Wednesday service will be held at 4 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 14, in the Chapel of All Faiths on the UVa-Wise campus. The BCM will have a part in this service. Everyone is invited.
- Practice for the Easter Cantata “Redeemed” is at 6 p.m. every Sunday. All are welcome.
- Beginning in March, the church will gather for a fellowship meal the first Sunday of every month. A regular potluck will alternate with a fundraiser meal. Please mark your calendars and plan to join us. Details about the meals will be forthcoming each month.



## BCM Meals and Bible Study

Mark and the students meet at 6 p.m. to prepare dinner. If you would like to help cook or contribute food, please let Mark know the Sunday before the meeting. They usually have around 20 students.

- ◆ Feb. 13: taco soup and bingo
- ◆ Feb. 20: enchiladas with toppings, refried beans (Diane—chicken enchiladas)
- ◆ Feb. 27: breakfast for dinner.

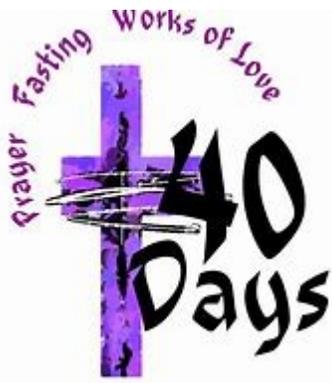
## Baptist Collegiate Ministry

The Baptist Collegiate Ministries (BCM) is located in a building adjacent to The University of Virginia's College at Wise campus. As a part of the Virginia Baptist Collegiate Ministry, the mission of the UVA-Wise BCM is building community, making disciples for Christ, and developing Christian leaders. BCM has been a part of collegiate ministry at UVA-Wise since 1958.

Membership in UVA-Wise BCM simply requires a willingness to participate, Baptist affiliation is not necessary. Annually, less than one-third of active BCM members are Baptist.

The BCM facility is open and available to students throughout each day and evening, and includes a prayer room, conference/meeting room, library/resource room, and a fully-equipped kitchen. Weekly opportunities include a home-cooked fellowship meal and Bible study every Tuesday evening.

For more information please contact the director, Pastor Mark Dixon ([mjd8f@uvawise.edu](mailto:mjd8f@uvawise.edu)) or BCM student president Ahliyah Gavin ([acg4r@uvawise.edu](mailto:acg4r@uvawise.edu)).



Wednesday is Valentine's Day, and it's also Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent.

Lent is a season of forty days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday. Lent comes from the Anglo Saxon word *lencten*, which means "spring." The forty days represents the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, enduring the temptation of Satan and preparing to begin his ministry.

Lent is a time of repentance, fasting and preparation for the coming of Easter. It is a time of self-examination and reflection. In the early church, Lent was a time to prepare new converts for baptism. Today, Christians focus on their relationship with God, often choosing to give up something or to volunteer and give of themselves for others.

Sundays in Lent are not counted in the forty days because each Sunday represents a "mini-Easter" and the reverent spirit of Lent is tempered with joyful anticipation of the Resurrection. (from umc.org)



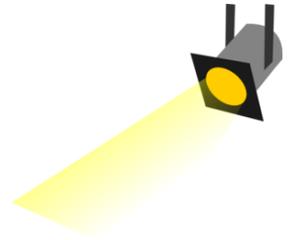
*Congratulations to Shane Burke*

and his Eastside High School one-act play team!

They recently won their **fourth** consecutive IA state theatre title for "The Spirit of Life." Individual acting

awards were also earned by Elizabeth Mann, Kailey Kyle and Sarah Burke.

Shane is assisted in coaching the team by Heather Marchant. We're so proud of you!



*Feb. 18 ~ Chris & Penny Stidham*

*Feb. 27 ~ David & Luann Walker*

**As you pray this week,  
please remember the  
following.**

David & Jewell Ball  
Libby Bowman  
Gail Buchanan  
Jim Campbell  
Dottie Chittester  
Virginia Collins  
Linda Cooke  
Tim Cox  
Jill Dixon  
Rhonda Elliott  
Emma Harrod  
Alana Hash  
Sue Hobbs  
Elee Large  
Maddie Lewis  
Rhonda Moody  
Eugene Mullins  
Tracy Ott  
Donna Owens  
Roberta Owens  
Wilma Redman  
Leah Riley  
Duke Riner  
Margaret Riner  
Bea Simmons  
Phyllis Still  
Glenn & Marilyn Teasley  
Joseph Thomas  
Beverly Viers  
Susan Gillenwater Wells  
Brenda Whitaker  
Little Ed Withrow  
Our country's leaders  
First responders, volunteers  
Armed Services men and women  
Missionaries  
Nursing home patients



Please send prayer requests to  
[lindawellswalker@yahoo.com](mailto:lindawellswalker@yahoo.com)

## February Birthdays

2 ~ Clay Spradlin  
3 ~ Darionna Mooney  
4 ~ Freddie Bradley  
8 ~ Linda Walker  
9 ~ Penny Stidham  
12 ~ Jim Campbell  
16 ~ Hannah Fleming  
18 ~ Chastity Riner  
22 ~ Emily Adams, Chris Mullins, Mary K. Mullins  
26 ~ Joanne Kennedy, Neil Walker



Please make this correction in your church directory.

Sam Pugh  
~~850 Highland Ave NW~~  
556 Alexandria Circle  
Norton, VA 24273



*Do you love to bake? Are you  
known for your spaghetti sauce or  
chicken casserole? Please consider  
making something to share at the*

*BCM dinner. College students love home-  
cooked food. Some of the UVa-Wise  
students live far away and only go  
home a couple of times each semester.  
Let's show them some love!*



**First Baptist Church of Norton** gives anyone the chance to come together and worship with like-minded congregants as members of a strong, loving community. Whether you're looking for peace of mind, a way to give back, or simply want to be a part of a loving family — First Baptist Church of Norton welcomes you. Join our community, and start your journey to God-centered growth with us!

### How to join FBC Norton

- Baptism—You desire to express faith in Christ through baptism.
- Transfer—You wish to transfer membership from another church.
- Statement of Faith—You are a baptized believer and come on statement of faith.
- Watch Care—You would like to be connected to our church family without official membership.

### Deacons

Charlene Bates, 276-219-4251, charlenebates715@yahoo.com

Nancy Cox, 276-393-7010, ncox161@gmail.com

Marty Hagy, 276-219-9949, martyhagy@gmail.com

Phyllis Still, 276-679-0987, pwstill1@verizon.net

Linda Walker, 276-870-4889, lindawellswalker@yahoo.com

### Contact Us

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Rev. Mark J. Dixon, Jr.  
mjd8f@uvawise.edu  
Phone: 276-393-9882

Visit us on the web at  
[www.fbcnorton.com](http://www.fbcnorton.com) or  
connect with us on  
Facebook.

Or better yet, come and visit  
us in person!



This newsletter is published every Tuesday morning on the church's web page. Please send news, photos, and announcements to [cornettdiane@gmail.com](mailto:cornettdiane@gmail.com).