



THE WINDOW

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The Bible

I started reading the Bible in 1989. I was a new Christian. And I knew that I knew almost nothing about the Bible. At the time I could not have identified Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John as the first four books of the New Testament, much less told you that the word “gospel” means good news. Someone somewhere suggested that I begin with reading Mark’s gospel – the shortest of the four gospels. So, I read Mark’s gospel. When I finished Mark’s gospel, I thought, “I should read Mark again.” So, I did. And then I read Mark yet again. Once I sensed that I had Mark’s presentation of Jesus in my head (and, hopefully, my heart), I moved on to Matthew’s gospel. I read Matthew through several times. Then I read Luke’s gospel through several times. Then I read John’s gospel through several times. Once I sensed that I had a grasp on the New Testament gospels, I moved on to Paul’s letters. After spending considerable time with Paul, I moved on to the remaining New Testament documents. And eventually, I got to the Old Testament. I continue to read from the Bible daily.

I have been engaged in a love affair with the Bible for 31 years now. In fact, I was so fascinated with the biblical text that I decided to pursue advanced degrees as an avenue to understand it better. Though my PhD is in patristics (early Christian writings that emerged soon after the New Testament documents), I have two master’s degrees that focus on the New Testament and Christian origins. I can work with the original languages of the Bible – Hebrew, Aramaic (there is a small amount of Aramaic in the Old Testament), and, of course, Greek. In relation to early Christian literature then, the Bible is my first love.

As with most love affairs, this one has had its ups and downs. I have struggled with the reality that

this book I love was written long ago in a world far different than mine. What does it mean, I have asked through the years, that we do not have any of the originals of the documents in the Bible? That is, we do not have the actual letter that Paul wrote to the Romans. What we have are copies and copies of copies of Paul’s letter to the Romans. And no two copies are exactly the same. And this same dynamic applies to all 66 books of the Protestant Bible. The last sentence leads to another intriguing question: what does it mean that Catholics, Protestants, and Greek Orthodox Christians have different books in their Bibles? Furthermore, I have spent much time wrestling with issues of sexuality and gender as they relate to the ancient texts found in our Bible. Finally, what are the implications of our conviction that the Scriptures are inspired and of more authority than any other text or body of texts? These questions and more have perplexed me to varying degrees through the years.

Questions and all, the Bible saved my faith. I have shared with you about my dark year and a half of the soul. During this time, I considered abandoning Christianity all together. Thank God for the apostle Paul. During these dark days, I looked closely at what Paul claims. He claims that God raised Jesus from the dead and that through Jesus’ death we are put into right relationship with God. Paul claims that over 500 people saw the resurrected Christ in addition to the apostles. Paul claims that many of those 500 people were still alive in his day. These are incredible historical claims. Either Paul is right, or he is wrong. I decided and thank God I did, or our paths would never have crossed, that Paul was right. I have Jesus deep in my bones due to my reading of the Gospels and Paul. So deep that, even during dark days, I was able to

hold on. And I have not looked back since I exited that dark valley. Case closed – settled! Thanks be to God for *all* the writings, with *all* their complexity, found in the Bible.

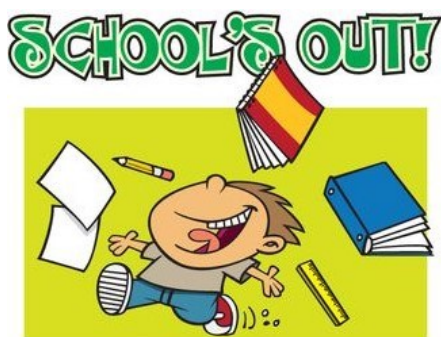
In light of my above comments about the Bible (Old and New Testaments) and out of obedience to my calling as a minister of the gospel of Jesus the Christ, I feel compelled to share with you that it causes me great pain when a public figure explicitly, and unabashedly, uses the Bible for selfish gain.

In Christ,

Trey

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship General Assembly June 25-26, 2020

The 2020 CBF General Assembly was originally scheduled to take place in Atlanta in late June. But due to the pandemic, the annual gathering will now be held virtually, June 25-26. Proclaimers are Rev. Dr. Paul Baxley, Executive Coordinator, CBF; and Rev. Mary Alice Birdwhistell, Senior Pastor, Calvary Baptist Church, Waco, TX. Plenary Speakers are Rev. Dr. Emmanuel McCall, Pastor-Emeritus, First Baptist Church, East Point, GA; and Jade and Shelah Acker, field personnel, serving in Kampala, Uganda. Register at cbf.net/general-assembly-2020.



By the time you read this, all schools in our community will have completed the 2019-2020 school year. And oh what a year it has been! Beginning around mid-March, students, teachers, staff, administrators, and parents had to quickly adapt to a virtual and/or at-home learning environment due to the coronavirus pandemic. We thank you for your every effort, and offer our prayer for a summer filled with rest and replenishment.



Worshiping Together June 14, 2020 The 2nd Sunday after Pentecost 11:00 am

Community
Romans 5:12-21
Rev. Dr. Trey Gilliam

Dedication of Luke Freeman
Son of Justin & Sarah Freeman
and
Recognition of High School Graduates

High School Graduate Recognition

On Sunday morning, June 14, we will recognize our high school graduates, giving thanks for their achievement, and offering our support for all that comes next in their lives.

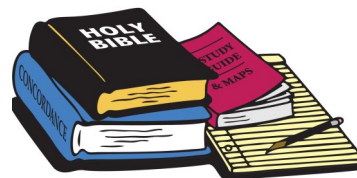


At left is Matty Grace Gilliam, daughter of Trey & Lou Ann Gilliam. She is a graduate of Ridgecroft School, and plans to attend Randolph-Macon College in Ashland, VA this fall.

Beside Matty Grace is Gracie Boswell, daughter of Greg and René Boswell. She is also a graduate of

Ridgecroft School, and plans to attend North Carolina State University.

Wednesday Adult Bible Study



Wednesdays from 6:00 to 7:00 pm.
Live-streamed on our church Facebook page.

Feeding Our Neighbors



The Ahoskie Food Pantry has accepted another opportunity to provide food for the hungry in our community. On Tuesdays, from 10 am to 4 pm (or until all boxes have been distributed), the Ahoskie Food Pantry will distribute food boxes at First Presbyterian

Church. We expect this ministry to continue from June through December.

Provided in light of the pandemic, this is a new program offered through the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to The Food Bank of the Albemarle, and Feeding America. The Ahoskie Food Pantry partners with the Food Bank of the Albemarle.

There are two specific ways you may help with this ministry.

1. Volunteers are needed to help with distribution. You'll be outside, and will need to wear closed-toe shoes. Sunscreen and a hat are encouraged. Masks will be provided, but you're welcome to bring your own.

2. If you know of persons who would benefit from this program but need someone to pick up a food box for them, please call the church office.

For more information, please speak with Rev. Thompson, or with Bill or Carolyn Arrington.

Worship Flowers

During this time of sheltering in place, persons who have signed up to provide worship flowers have the option of observing our usual practice, or using the lovely peace lily that one of our families provided. The choices have varied from Sunday to Sunday. At the appropriate time, please let the church office know of your preference. Here is the schedule for June and July.

June 14	Anita Thompson
June 21	Doug & Nancy Cobbs
June 28	Spencer & Dolores Matthews
July 5	Bill & Debbie Magette
July 12	Ernie & Austine Evans
July 19	Trey & Harriet Byrum
July 26	Don & LuAnn Joyner

Stewardship Options

Due to our current inability to meet in person, there have been questions about making electronic financial contributions to the church. While we do not have online giving, do you know that your bank can send a check to the church on your behalf?



You simply make arrangements with your bank and the bank will send the check for the amount you request each month or each week or whatever frequency you decide. We have a very small handful of people that do this now. Perhaps you would like to give this a try as well. However you give, please know our church is stronger due to your generosity.

In Sympathy

We offer our sympathy to the family of Margo Baker Samuel who died on Friday, June 5 in Melbourne, Australia. Margo and her husband, Sarosh, were involved in a head-on collision. Sarosh sustained injuries but is expected to make a full recovery.

Margo is the daughter of Woody & Beverly Baker, and granddaughter of Jean Parker and Mary Baker.



June 7, 2020

Weekly Need	\$ 9,130.28
Weekly Offering	\$ 11,063.18
Difference	\$ 1,932.90
YTD Needs	\$ 209,996.44
YTD Offerings	\$ 183,105.55
YTD Difference	\$ -26,890.89

Capital Campaign Weekly Total	\$ 390.00
Benevolence Weekly Total	\$ 150.00

Thank you for your generous gifts!

SERVING IN THE LOVE OF CHRIST

Week of June 14-20, 2020

Minister on Call

Rev. Anita Thompson, 395-0061

Deacons on Call

Gloria Freeman, 395-0370

Jim Wiggins, 287-9790

Sound System—June 14

James Early

Sanctuary Flowers— June 14

Anita Thompson

Food Pantry— June 19

Vicky Overman

Week of June 21-27

Minister on Call

Rev. Dr. Trey Gilliam, 398-7321

Deacons on Call

Frank Britt, 642-2087

Betty Joyner, 398-6104

Sound System—June 21

Henry Daniels

Floral Offering—June 21

Doug & Nancy Cobbs

Food Pantry – June 26

Kay Byrd & Vicky Overman



On Wednesday nights at 7:00 pm, our youth group (grades 6-12) meet virtually through Zoom under the leadership of Lou Ann Gilliam, assisted by Jamie Burns. Anyone who has not yet participated in these Zoom meetings is encouraged to send his/her email to Lou Ann at gillil@chowan.edu.

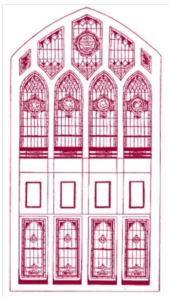
The FBC Ministers

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Anita Thompson, Associate Pastor

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The Window

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