Shermont Baptist Church

November 2025 Newsletter

Senior Pastor: *Rev. Ryan Riley*

Associate Pastor: *Mr. Dylan Gary*

Music Director: *Mrs. Ellen Petty*

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Ryan's Reflections

I recently heard about a church from North Carolina that sent a mission team to a leper colony on the Caribbean Island of Tobago. The team met a lot of sad patients afflicted with leprosy. One memorable experience was a worship service they held in the campus chapel.

The lepers came in and took their seats on the pews, and the mission team led them in hymns. The pastor of the group was a man named Jack. He noticed there was one leper on the back row who was facing in the opposite direction. All the rest of the lepers were facing forward.

Jack announced, "We have time for one more hymn. Does anyone have a favorite?" About this time the leprous lady on the back row turned around and for the first time faced the song leader. Jack said that it was the most hideous site he had ever seen in a human being. She had no nose or lips. Her head was almost like a skull. When she raised her arm in the air, she had no hand. It was just a nub.

The leprous lady then said, "Could we sing 'Count Your Many Blessings'?" It was at that point the whole mission team experienced something they had never experienced before. Here was a lady, with relatively nothing to be thankful for, asking to sing "Count Your Many Blessings." At first, they couldn't even lead the song, and then they sang it with new meaning:

"When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed, When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,

Count your many blessings, name them one by one, And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.

Count your blessings, name them one by one, Count your blessings, see what God hath done."

If a leprous lady on the Island of Tobago had as her favorite song "Count Your Many Blessings," how much more should we not just sing the song, but do what it says?

We can't count high enough to list all our blessings, but we can point others to the One responsible for each blessing.

This Thanksgiving season, may we truly focus on the mercy, grace and goodness of our God, how He continues to bless us beyond measure, and may our hearts overflow with an attitude of gratitude for the God of our creation.

Counting my blessings alongside you,

Pastor Ryan

Notes from Ellen

I love the old hymn "Count Your Blessings".

Count your blessings, name them one by one; Count your blessings see what God has done. Count your blessings….name them one by one; Count your many blessings see what God has done.

You know sometimes it gets hard to stop and count our blessings. Life has pulled the rug out from under us and we get all "sappy" and have a pity party. Well maybe you don't…. but I confess that sometimes I do. It is in these times that God reminds us of WHO He is, and ALL He has done for us. No matter what we face; God knows all about it.

He promises to never leave us nor forsake us. **"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose". Romans 8:28.** Hallelujah!!!

The last verse of this hymn says:

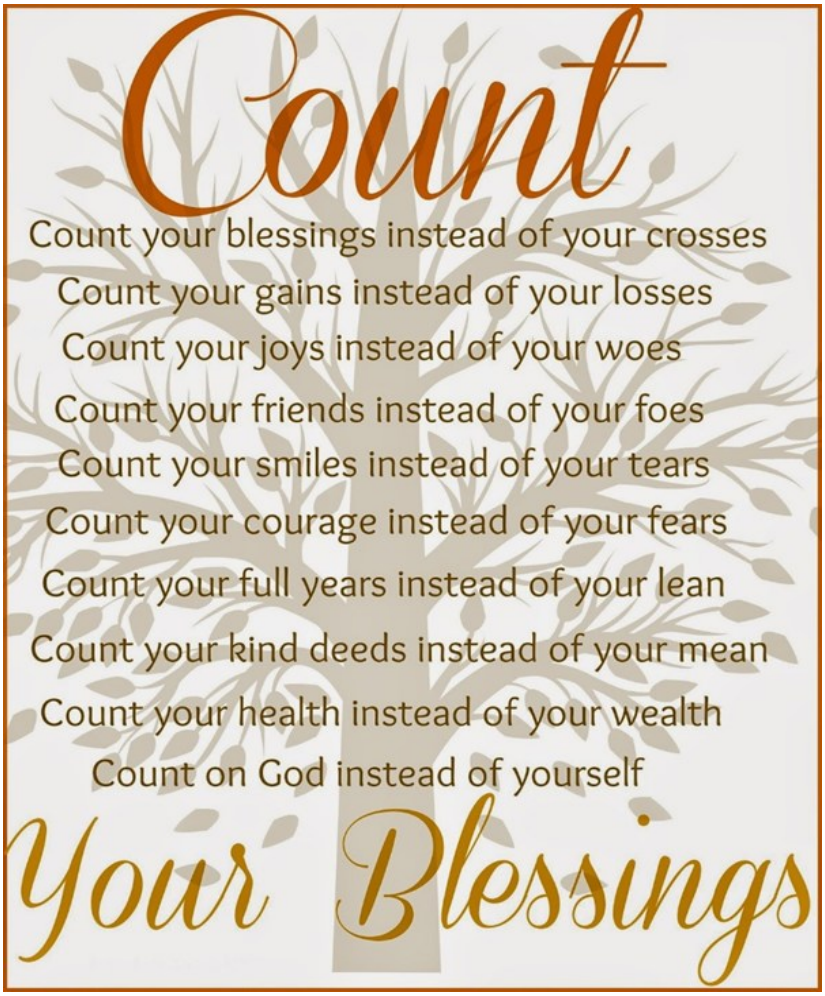
"So amid the conflict, whether great or small, Do not be discouraged, **God is over all**; Count your many blessings, angels will attend, Help and comfort give you to your journey's end."

So friends, let's remember to count our blessings! When we count our many blessings we will see ALL that God has done….and continues to do!

Happy Thanksgiving!

I am ….. Singing for Jesus,

Ellen



November Birthdays

Nov	3	Candice Speagle
Nov	6	Carolyn Harper
Nov	10	Mildred Bryant
Nov	12	Kim Barrett
Nov	15	Lilly Kapornyai
Nov	17	Sammy Burton
Nov	18	Colby Warren
Nov	19	Emily Ratliff
Nov	20	Harrison Alvis
Nov	22	Goldie Barbour
Nov	23	Cathy Barrett
Nov	24	Lynette Yarbrough
Nov	25	Frances Rice
Nov	27	Brett Pritchett
Nov	28	Seth Woodson
Nov	30	Danny Hankins, Jack Reece
		David Satterfield

Happy Birthday to All !

Library Spotlight—Shirley Dallas

In Late spring of this year, I checked out a book from our church library written by Sibella Giorello entitled ***The Clouds Roll Away.*** Little did I know that this was the third book in a series of five. Anxious to read more of her books, the library found nine more. Even though I read them out of sequence, I thoroughly enjoyed them. In fact, I plan to read them again in the order they were written, when they are no longer in great demand. Such a good read! The premise of the story is the main character grew up in a dysfunctional family; her father a judge and mother with mental disorders. But she is one smart cookie! She lands a job with the FBI that only lasts for a few years because she pushes the envelope and goes "rogue", out on her own, which eventually causes her to lose the job. There are five books in this series entitled:

1 ***The Stones Cry Out***
2 ***The Rivers Run Dry***
3 ***The Clouds Roll Away***
4 ***The Mountains Bow Down***
5 ***The Stars Shine Bright***

There are three books written when she becomes a private detective:

1 ***The Waves Break Gray***
2 ***The Moon Stands Still***
3 ***The Wind Will Howl***

There are four prequel books written during her teen-age years:

1 ***Stone And Spark***
2 ***Stone And Snow***
3 ***Stone And Sand***
4 ***Stone And Sunset***

In each of these books the character finds herself in dangerous situations and somehow there is always someone from her past who comes to her rescue, so she always lands on her feet. Of course, her rescuer becomes her love interest.

If you want to laugh, maybe shed a tear, read a good mystery and love story, check out these books by Sibella Giorello.

Shirley Dallas

From the Chairman's Desk

One of my favorite activities with James is sharing cartoons with him, including television and cinema, that I grew up watching. I was fortunate to grow up in an era when meaningful storytelling was combined with fantastic animation. Several Sundays ago, James and I spent the morning watching cartoons; one of the cartoons we watched was *The Prince of Egypt*. If you are not familiar with this animated film, it was produced by Dreamworks and tells the story of Moses from birth through the crossing of the Red Sea, providing a glimpse of the Hebrew people surviving Pharoah's attempt to recapture them after their escape from Egypt. One of my favorite parts of the film was the scene in which Aaron's staff turns into a serpent, consuming the two serpents conjured up by Pharoah's magicians. As I watched the scene unfold and listened to the song sung by the magicians, I asked myself why would God use the very creature that coaxed Adam and Eve into disobedience as symbol of His power? The answer to this question requires us to think like an Egyptian. In each Biblical account, we have to remember who God's audience was at that time.

During the rule of Pharoah, the Egyptians worshipped many gods and goddesses, even Pharoah himself was designated as a god on earth. However, the predominant god was the sun-god, Ra. Despite being the domineering god, Ra had an enemy named Appepa, the water snake of the Nile River. Therefore, by turning Aaron's staff into a snake, God is declaring that He is present and will quarrel with Pharoah for the release of His people. Throughout the remainder of the story, God continues to show His dominance over all of these "gods" as each plague represents one of the gods. Therefore, such an act by Moses and Aaron was extremely offensive to Pharoah as God declared Himself an enemy of Egypt.

The story of the Exodus mirrors what Christ does for those who choose to follow Him. Like the Israelites, we live in a broken world full of suffering and pain, slaves to our sinful nature as we consistently eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Like Pharaoh, there are times in which we think we are in control. We lose sight of who our God is and how we should consistently stand in awe the ability to approach His throne. This moment with Moses, Aaron, Pharoah and the magicians reminds us that we have no authority and that God is in control of the narrative. We must keep in mind the words of R.C. Sproul, "The very word 'authority' has within it the word 'author'. An author is someone who creates and possesses a particular work. Insofar as God is the foundation of all authority, He exercises the foundation because He is the author and owner of His creation. He is the foundation upon which all authority stands or falls." As we go out into the world, allow our God to work through us to exercise His authority. May we be the staff that is thrown down to display to the sinful world around us just who our God is and that He has come to save His creation by reconciling it back unto Himself.

Yours in Christ,

Colby Warren, **Chairman**

Outreach is one of the most potent ways for churches to extend the love and message of Christ beyond the church walls, reaching out to the local community and building relationships. The outreach/mission group consists of church members seeking a way to reach out into our community to show love tangibly and to exemplify being the hands and feet of God. We are always seeking new ideas! Outreach/ Missions consists of the entire church, so anytime you see that we are meeting, please join us!

Update on what took place during September & October:

1. September 23rd, a group of church members volunteered at God's Pit Crew assembling "Blessing Buckets." We had volunteers of all ages, with the youngest being 10 years old! Way to go, Lily Harper! It was a blessing to be a part of filling 1,000 buckets in approximately two hours! What a fantastic way to fellowship with individuals from different areas of the community.
2. Our **'Operation Christmas Child Shoe Boxes'** initiative is still ongoing. We appreciate all those who have taken a box, filled it, and returned it. Your continued participation is making a difference.
3. On October 17th, a group of individuals went to Chatham High School and fed the football team before their game. What an excellent opportunity to reach out and show love from our church. We never know how small gestures can make an impact on someone's life.
4. On October 24th, we had the opportunity to feed Tunstall High School's football team. Again, this was an great way to reach out to students in our community.

Looking at what is taking place in November and opportunities to be a part of in December.

1. Operation Christmas Child Shoe Boxes are due back by **Wednesday, November 19th.**
2. Operation Christmas Child Shoe Box dedication will be on **Sunday, November 23rd.**
3. On **Tuesday, November 25th**, during our Thanksgiving service, a love offering will be taken up for the Danville Pittsylvania Jail & Prison ministry. We will use the funds to buy Hershey bars or other items to distribute to the inmates and deputies.
4. A sign-up sheet is located by the nursery for volunteers ages 13 to 100 who would like to attend Charlotte's **Operation Christmas Child Distribution Center** on **Saturday, December 13th**. The volunteer time is from 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm. The church bus will depart the church at 10:15 am. There are 25 spots available!
5. The week of prayer for the **Lottie Moon Christmas offering is November 30th to December 7th, 2025**. Please keep this in your prayers as we will collect the Lottie Moon Christmas offering the entire month of December. Shermont's goal for 2025 is $15,000.00! This offering benefits our international missionaries.

Wow! Let's continue to pray for the outreach/mission ministry here at Shermont, as well as for our Pastor, leaders, and members. Together, we are all serving our risen Savior.

Thankful to serve our Savior,

Amanda Crews

"For where two or three gather together in my name, there am I with them."

Matthew 18:20 (NIV)

Student Ministry Update

In the 1500's Jesuits arrived in Japan with a goal to convert the Japanese to Jesus Christ. A small church grew out of their efforts, but they were soon met with resistance. In 1597, Toyotomi Hideyoshi believed that his rule was being threatened by Japan's decreasing nationalistic favor. Hideyoshi's outlaw of Christianity led to the arrest of 26 Christian men. After a monthlong winter march, these men were crucified on Nishizaka Hill.

A variety of ages were represented by these men. Louis Ibaraki was a mere 12 years old and died with a vision of himself flying from his cross into heaven. Anthony, just 13 years old, was crucified as his mother could do nothing but weep and watch. John of Goto was 19 years old and had taken his first Jesuit vows the morning of his execution. Paul Miki was 30 years old. It is recorded that he said, "The only reason why I am put to death is that I have been preaching the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ. I am very happy to die for such a cause." And as each of these 26 Christians suffered the excruciating pain of crucifixion, these martyrs prayed and praised together.
—Foxe's Voices of the Martyrs

We pray that no one must suffer what these men did, yet let us be diligent as parents and as the church to raise up young men and women (even in their youngest teen years) to be so bold and sure in their faith that they would be willing to suffer the same as these. The greatest tragedy is not that they would suffer such an early, earthly end but that they would stop just shy of the finish line.

"Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death."
Revelation 2:10-11

November Events

Thanksgiving Week

Please note that there will be no Wednesday night activities on Nov. 26. The church will be hosting a Thanksgiving Fellowship Meal on Tuesday, Nov. 25. We would love to have your family join us for dinner at 5:30 pm and the service at 7:00 pm.

In Christ,

Dylan