



Shermont Baptist Church

January 2026 Newsletter



Senior Pastor: *Rev. Ryan Riley*

Associate Pastor: *Mr. Dylan Gary*

Music Director: *Mrs. Ellen Petty*

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Ryan's Reflections

Dr. Bryant Kirkland, pastor of 5th Ave. Pres. Church in NY was traveling to do a series of sermons on the west coast. He needed time on that 3-hour flight to study and prepare, so he buckled down and let everyone near him feel the tension. His body language said, "Don't bother me, I'm a busy man with places to go and work to do."

A young woman and a baby slipped into the seat next to him. He knew it was going to be difficult, so he kept a straight face and looked very Presbyterian. It lasted 6 minutes. Pretty soon this little boy began fussing around. "Man, man," he cooed up at him. He couldn't resist.

He put his sermon back into his briefcase, picked him up and just loved him all the way across the country. When they landed in LA his mother said to him, "Thank you for doing that. He lost his father not long ago. He hasn't had a man to muss him up like that and love him. Thank you so much."

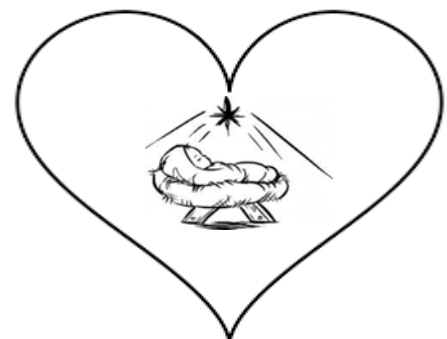
And Dr. Kirkland says he realized as he got off the plane and pushed into the crowd just how much joy and peace that little boy had brought into his own heart when he was least prepared for it to happen. Sometimes a child can do that; get into a heart that has been locked up tight for years and bring peace.

As we begin this new year, may we allow the baby born in Bethlehem so long ago to get into our hearts, no matter how locked up we might be, and may He bring the peace we so desperately need. Our lives, our relationships, our everything is better when we allow Him to "Have Thy Own Way, Lord" in us.

Let's start this new year not focused on various resolutions we might forget or fail to keep, but on the only solution to our problems: Jesus. Let's allow Him to bring us such peace that we simply cannot contain it, but must share Him with all those we encounter. As another song reminds us, "Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with us."

Thankful for the Christ Child, for Shermont, and for the privilege of serving alongside you,

Pastor Ryan



I want to shout out a huge **THANK YOU** to our Shermont Choir for the sacrifice of your time and your talent for our Christmas cantata; **"Behold Our God"**! Your commitment to practice and the extra time it took was so appreciated by this choir director, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

THANK YOU also to Stephanie Ellis and the **Kidz Praise** choir for your **"Jesus Music"** cantata!!! I love that the seeds of God's love, His power and glory, are being sown in the hearts of our children through the precious gift of music. Praise the Lord!

I know we just finished Christmas; but I'm excited about the Easter music I've been working on, and pray God will once again fill the choir so we can continue to bring Him glory! Hallelujah!

Oh my2026 is here WHAT!?!?! That came fast!!!

Honestly, I can't wait to see all that God has planned for us. It's just exciting to be in ministry and see God work in our lives and in our church family. It's not always easy, but knowing God is with us every step of the way makes it easier to follow and trust His will. So here we come 2026! God, you have this!!! Lead....we will follow!

Easter Choir Kick-off Dinner


Tuesday, January 27th 5:30 pm

If you are interested in singing with us this Easter, please let me know, and I'll have a book and CD ready for you!

We would LOVE to have you join us!

I am
Singing for Jesus,

Ellen



The LORD bless thee,
and keep thee:
The LORD make his face
shine upon thee,
and be gracious unto thee:
The LORD lift up his
countenance upon thee,
and give thee peace.
Numbers 6:24-26

Have a Blessed & Happy New Year

January Birthdays

Jan 2	Kirby Ford, Holly Harper	Jan 17	Denise Saunders
Jan 3	Sarah Gentry, David Holley	Jan 18	Colby Martin
Jan 4	Stephen Harper, Sheila Hutson	Jan 20	Jettia Riddle
Jan 5	Matthew Kapornyai	Jan 22	Anita Tuck
Jan 7	Turner Curtis	Jan 23	Helen Dalton, Bill Wilson
Jan 8	Bill Law	Jan 24	Dylan Gary
Jan 10	Tom Widener	Jan 25	Robert Agee
Jan 12	Aaron Riley, Ryan Riley, Carter Speagle	Jan 26	Mary Adkins, Mike Wyatt
Jan 14	Carolyn Grace, Richard Gunn	Jan 27	Roger Ruis
		Jan 31	Teresa Wilkerson

Happy Birthday to All!

Library Spotlight—Becky Boyd

The Mark of the King by Jocelyn Green

In 1719, after the death of her client, midwife Julianne Chevalier is unjustly imprisoned in Paris and branded. The black fleur-de-lys on her shoulder, and shorn hair, mark her as a criminal beyond redemption and full of shame.

She was forced into marriage to a convict and transported to what is known today as the French Quarter in New Orleans. The colony is a primitive place with many hardships, dangers, and cruelties. Through God's amazing grace and love, she overcomes her struggles in the new land and in her heart.

I loved this book! Definitely one of my new favorite authors for Christian historical fiction, along with Laura Frantz, Jody Hedlund, and Gabrielle Meyer.

If you have any suggestions, please let someone on the library committee know!

Happy reading!

Becky Boyd



I was recently listening to one of my favorite podcasts entitled *Diary of a CEO*. The guest on this particular episode was Simon Sinek, a popular author and business leadership developer. The discussion between Sinek and the host of the podcast was centered around artificial intelligence (“AI”) and the future of our society with such technology at our fingertips. As I listened, Sinek explained how we are a “result driven” people, stating that we like to use phrases such as “it’s about the journey, not the destination”; however, our society focuses on the end product more so than the means by which we arrived at the product. Sinek went on to say that he was excited for the possibilities which AI possesses, but he feared that our society may lose its humanity and ability for self-development. Sinek explained that our personal growth stems from our ability to navigate and manage difficult events and occurrences. Sinek shared that such events make us more resilient and allow us to learn how to solve future problems. In essence, AI may provide the result but does not provide the tools we need to actually address problems in the future.

In listening to Sinek’s perspective, I immediately thought about the modern church. We often tout that all one has to do for salvation is make a public profession of faith, praying the sinner’s prayer and accepting Jesus into our hearts. This narrow perspective, while accurate, causes us to focus on the result and forgo the journey that is the Christian faith.

James 1:2-4 reads, *“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”* Moreover, **Colossians 2:6-7** states, *“So then, just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him and establish in the faith, just as you were taught, overflowing with thankfulness.”* Clearly, in reading these passages, we see that the Christian walk should not simply be about making a public profession, but we should view our journey as one in which we seek continual growth; moreover, for us to grow, we have to traverse through the difficult times, finding God’s glory in each moment and allowing us to see what we should learn from our Creator.

As we prepare for the new year, let us realize that we will face trials and tribulations. However, we have to keep the message of our Father in our hearts, recognizing that He will use those trying times to shape and mold us into better images of Him. We are meant to reflect Him into this fallen world, so let us be thankful for all moments that come into our journey this year. Let us faithfully embark on the journey that will provide us with the result our God desires.



Yours in Christ,

Colby Warren, Chairman



What a blessing 2025 has been! Your prayers, giving, help, and support have made these accomplishments possible. We are grateful for your vital role in our journey, and your support truly makes a difference.

Operation Christmas Child was a meaningful success at our church, with our members packing and sending 120 shoeboxes to Samaritan's Purse. Praise God for this impactful outreach!

We had eight people go to Charlotte's distribution center for the final inspection of boxes before they head out to their destinations. This was such a humbling experience, and what a way to be in the Christmas spirit when you are there looking around and seeing all those boxes that will one day reach their destination and touch the lives with tangible items, but most importantly, hearing about our Savior for the first time.

Thanksgiving Love offering for the Good News bags (Agape) was truly humbling. The total Love offering collected was \$820.00! This money was used to purchase 504 Hershey bars and 10 Bibles for the jail. Let's continue to pray for the inmates and the officers who work with them daily, trusting that God will work through these efforts.

The Lottie Moon Christmas goal was set for \$15,000.00. We do not have a final total at this time, but this will be shared soon. The Lottie Moon Christmas offering is vital for enabling missionaries to share the gospel worldwide. What a blessing that is!

Let's continue to pray for our own missionaries, Ross & Erin Riley, and their family, as they travel back to Africa on January 5th, 2026, in obedience to God's calling on their lives. What a blessing it has been to have them back with us at Shermont and to hear firsthand what it is like to serve in Africa and the impact they have had on others by sharing the gospel with people who might otherwise never have heard of our Savior's love! Ross, Erin, Macey, Ezra, Jude, & Hazel, you all are loved and prayed for daily!

Celebrating the true meaning of the season with each of you!

Amanda Crews

**“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son,
that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”**

John 3:16

Student Ministry Update

With the start of 2026, I am excited to announce **The Berean Club**! Studies continue to show that taking notes has a direct link to improved learning and recall. Students can take advantage of these benefits when it comes to the Sunday sermons. We want students to emulate the Bereans in Acts 17:11 who diligently examined the Scriptures based on what Paul taught.

We also want to reward students who choose to develop the habit of taking notes during the sermon. The following are some of the ways we plan to accomplish this:

Weekly

Students can show me their sermon notes each Sunday to receive a *Berean Ticket* which may be redeemed on Sunday mornings or Wednesday nights for a prize out of the *Berean Box*.

Monthly

On the first Sunday of each month, students who consistently took notes during the previous month will be entered into a *Monthly Raffle* for prizes such as gift cards, books, church merch, and other meaningful rewards.

Quarterly

At the end of each quarter, students who demonstrated the highest consistency in note-taking and reflection will be recognized, receive a *Title*, and will gain a seat at the *Shirt Design Table*.

Annually

Students who have taken notes 75% of the year will be inducted into **The Berean Club**. Members will be recognized on the first Sunday of the new year and will receive a *Note-taking Kit* and a *Berean Club Shirt*. Additionally, the title *Berean Champion* will be awarded to the student who demonstrated the highest overall consistency in note-taking and reflection throughout the year. The *Berean Champion* will also receive a *Study Bible*.

Rules:

Approved Note-taking Formats

Students may take notes on the provided *Note-taking Form* or in a personal notebook, journal, or digital device.

Standard of Engagement

Submitted notes must demonstrate attentive listening and thoughtful reflection on the sermon. Notes must show meaningful effort appropriate to the student's grade level.

Submission Deadline

All *Notes* must be shown to the student pastor by the Wednesday after the sermon in order to receive credit. All *Reflection Forms* must be turned in by the last Wednesday of the month to receive credit. Late submissions will not be counted unless otherwise approved by the student pastor.

Make-up Option for Absences

If a student misses a Sunday, they may watch the sermon online and submit the corresponding notes by the designated deadline.

Parental Oversight

Parents may encourage their students in note-taking but may not complete notes on behalf of the student.

Review Process

Notes and Reflection Forms will not be collected permanently. They will be reviewed by the student pastor for credit and then returned to the student.

Participant Eligibility

The Berean Club is open to students in grades 4-12.

Tickets & Raffles

Students are responsible for keeping their own *Berean Box Tickets*. Lost tickets cannot be replaced. *Raffle* entries will be tracked and calculated by youth leaders.

Guests

Guests are welcome to participate weekly but are not eligible for monthly, quarterly, or annual awards unless they attend regularly.



In Christ,

Dylan