



**BLACKNALL**  
MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

March | April 2016 Newsletter

Dear Blacknall family,

In the Old Testament, God commanded the Israelites to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem three times a year for festivals—Passover (March/April), Pentecost (50 days after Passover), and the Feast of Tabernacles (September/October). Passover and Tabernacles were week-long festivals.

If you lived close to Jerusalem, it might only take a day to walk to Jerusalem. But if you lived in Galilee like Jesus, it would take almost four days to walk to Jerusalem. To stay the whole week of Passover or Tabernacles would create a two week interruption to your life.

### Engaging Our Whole Selves

These pilgrimages were powerful shapers in the lives of the Jewish people. Not only did they gather in Jerusalem to worship the LORD but their whole selves were engaged—body, soul, and mind.

In the Feast of Tabernacles they would camp out in tents to remember their time in the wilderness. During Passover and the Feast of Unleavened bread they would remember the night when the Angel of Death “passed over” the Israelites and they would reenact their hurried exodus from Egypt by eating only unleavened bread.

Imagine the excitement of the children getting to camp out in tents with the whole family. Even today, the power of the Passover meal is obvious if you have ever participated in a Seder meal. These three annual pilgrimages must have been pivotal in helping the Israelites identify with,

and enter into, God’s story of love and redemption for Israel. How can we similarly connect with God’s story of redemption for us in Jesus Christ? How can our children get caught up in the wonder of our story? We do not have to make pilgrimages to Jerusalem (or Santiago or Pittsburgh, or anywhere else).

### Capturing Our Imagination

But I wonder if our experience of Lent can function as a pilgrimage for us? I wonder if in the practice of fasting we can engage our bodies as well as minds and spirits in this even greater story of God’s redemption of us in Jesus Christ. Can we find ways to invite our children into this pilgrimage of Lent that would capture their imaginations; a way that is more rooted in the story than an Easter Egg Hunt? Could we invite our children to fast with us in some manner so they feel with us the sorrow and suffering of Good Friday and the joyful celebration of Easter?

As we journey together towards Good Friday and Easter, I hope and pray that when we arrive we find we are caught up again in this Great Story. May that Story have its full sway in shaping us into the image of the central character of His Story, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.



David

Pastor David Dunderdale

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## About the Newsletter

Welcome to Blacknall's bi-monthly publication highlighting our life together! Each issue features stories, poems, and artwork created by our community. **Are you interested in submitting something for the May | June Newsletter?** Contact [Mary Grimm](#).

## Church Staff

Allan Poole - Pastor  
David Dunderdale - Pastor  
Dave Stuntz - Music Ministry  
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Beth Solie - Director of Preschool Children's Ministry  
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Tanner Lowe - Duke Divinity School Intern

*Cover Artwork - "The Feast of the Tabernacles" by Marc Chagall, 1916*

## Blacknall Book Blog

[blacknallbooks.wordpress.com](http://blacknallbooks.wordpress.com)

A book blog for children and family ministry to which all of us can contribute. This blog provides space to talk about what we're reading, how it brings us joy, and how it leads us to think about what is noble, right, pure, and lovely. **Would you like to write a review of a children's book or parenting book?** Contact: [Traci Hoover](#)



# The Alpha Marriage Class

## Too Good to be True

Kristin Stults

Before signing up for the Alpha Marriage Course (AMC), we had already decided to take some steps to improve our marriage. When our friends told us how amazing the course was, we decided it was silly not to participate. We are so glad we did. We look forward to our “date” every week, showing up for a lovely, home-made candlelit dinner with lots of time to talk before watching the video segments. The content of the course is very helpful. Although many of the concepts are familiar (listening, forgiveness, etc.) AMC provides a fun, positive environment in which to discuss these issues, and prioritize how to integrate them into your marriage. It is just the weekly boost we need to keep working toward our goals. Meanwhile, our kids are having fun downstairs together, being fed and entertained. The fact that it’s free makes it almost too good to be true! We are incredibly thankful that Blacknall is offering this course, and I hope we can help offer it to others in the future.

## An Astonishing Blessing

Kip & Sarah Coonley

For the past five Thursday evenings, we have dropped our children off for crafts and pizza, walked up the stairs to an amazing candlelit dinner for two, received effective teaching on building a strong marriage, and then been given the space and time to “go deeper.” We are already witnessing the fruits of the tools that it offers. The Alpha Marriage Course (AMC) has truly been an astonishing blessing to our entire family. Several Blacknall couples have generously given—with their time, cooking, and energy—a gift that is strengthening many marriages this

winter. The prayerful investment Blacknall has made in this program is evident. Every married couple, young or old, stands to benefit from this course. The format of AMC is so effective. We hope that it can become a regular offering at Blacknall and we look forward to being apart of the next AMC team. Thank you, Blacknall!

## A Tangible Gift

Christian Pikaart

Cory and I are overwhelmed by the efforts of our brothers and sisters who have brought this marriage course to fruition. The significance of their work is so evident—THEY are fighting for OUR marriage. The focused time together that Cory and I have enjoyed during the course has not always been the warm-and-fuzzy sort, but it has turned us back to the good work of marriage. Thank you, Blacknall, for this tangible gift to our family.

## The Best Kept Secret

Mike Kight

There were times during Jesus’ ministry when He told those He had miraculously healed to spread the news. But there were other times, like when He healed the leper as described in Mark 1:40-45, that He instructed them to tell no one. There was a reason why He did that, yet in my mind, He knows exactly who we are, right down to the core—He knew there was no way the leper would keep



## The Alpha Marriage Class (continued)

that secret. There are two ways to keep secrets—either tell no one or tell everyone, then tell them you were kidding. But what do you do when you have the best kept secret that you never wanted to be a secret? We’ve done everything short of shouting from the mountaintops, yet we’ve been told—“This is the best kept secret!” By now you should be on the edge of your seat, “For crying out loud, what’s the secret already?” It’s the Alpha Marriage Course.

The eight week Alpha Marriage Course (AMC) meets on Thursdays at Blacknall and we hear nothing but positive feedback from the participants. AMC is a well thought out, highly enjoyable, challenging video course that is ethically Christian-centered, yet open to all couples who have been married at least one year, Christian or not. It is presented by dedicated facilitators who help set the mood and the timing. The Fellowship Hall is not-so-magically transformed into a romantic setting, a sumptuous meal is provided, and child care is offered. Each couple has their own space for discussion of the topic, and it can easily stay between them, though in many ways it’s evident that they can be much like Jesus’ enthusiastic friend in Mark—they’re telling everyone in earshot. AMC challenges each couple to understand each other in new and eye-opening ways, often allowing an added depth to their marriage.

### Using Your Unique Gifts

Do you enjoy creating a romance ambiance, cooking meals, coordinating details, holding babies, welcoming couples, praying faithfully, or scrubbing dirty dishes (okay, maybe no one really enjoys that last one)? Then join the AMC team and be a witness to miracles! To volunteer or sign up for the next class, please contact [David Dunderdale](#). ■



# Care

# for Others



# Durham Crop Walk

Doug Koenig

**S**unday, March 20 marks the date of the 42nd Annual Durham Crop Walk. Did you know that Durham's Walk is usually the third largest in the country and has raised almost \$4 million? Join over 1,600 walkers to raise funds for the hungry. A quarter of all money raised stays in Durham (almost \$40,000 in 2015) and some of the ministries are the same ones Blacknall supports.

Rev. Jimmie Hawkins of Covenant Presbyterian Church in Durham says "Just as Jesus walked with the poor, the lonely, the sinful and the hurting, Jesus walks with us ... let's walk together" in this year's Crop Hunger Walk. Besides, it's fun to hang out with 2,000 like-minded others who love to raise funds for the hungry!

The Durham Walk is held over a 4.8 mile course in Durham and begins and ends at Duke Chapel. The Walk steps-off at 2:30 p.m. and shirts are available on-site for \$3. Wool E. Bull will be there, and usually Mayor Bill Bell and others share the fun. Crop Walks are sponsored by Church World Service and are held in many cities around the country each year, but no one else has the Durham Divas!

To join a group of Blacknall Walkers, email [Doug Koenig](mailto:Doug.Koenig@blacknall.org), sign up on the Durham Crop Walk [website](http://blacknall.org/cropwalk), or visit the Crop table in Blacknall's Lower Atrium on Sunday March 13.

# Daniel Remembers

Serena Whisenhunt



After falling to the stony floor, bruised and stung by grit-  
(Which I hit hard, hurled as I was through the opening),  
I froze and braced myself.  
I smelled the beasts before I turned and tensed.



I could not see, as overhead a stone had quickly, coldly fitted out the light.  
Beside my ear, a snarl, bone-chilling, stunned me like a lash unfurled.  
And then a terrifying nearby scuffle: one beast striking at another  
As they both, vying for me, clashed.  
Oh! the sounds of heavy falls, the spilling blood!  
The boundings! Leaps! And more—how many were there?—'round me:  
Pacing, stifling-pungent,  
Tangy-smelling cats,  
Preying rulers, forest beasts-  
Oh, they watched *invisibly*. Terror is the unseen eye of hunting hate.



Wait, though.  
*Wait.*  
My mind fastened on a fact:  
*Yet I'm here. I am alive.*  
Wonder grew and gathered like a cloud about me.  
*I am rescued. I am here.*  
*And He is too.*



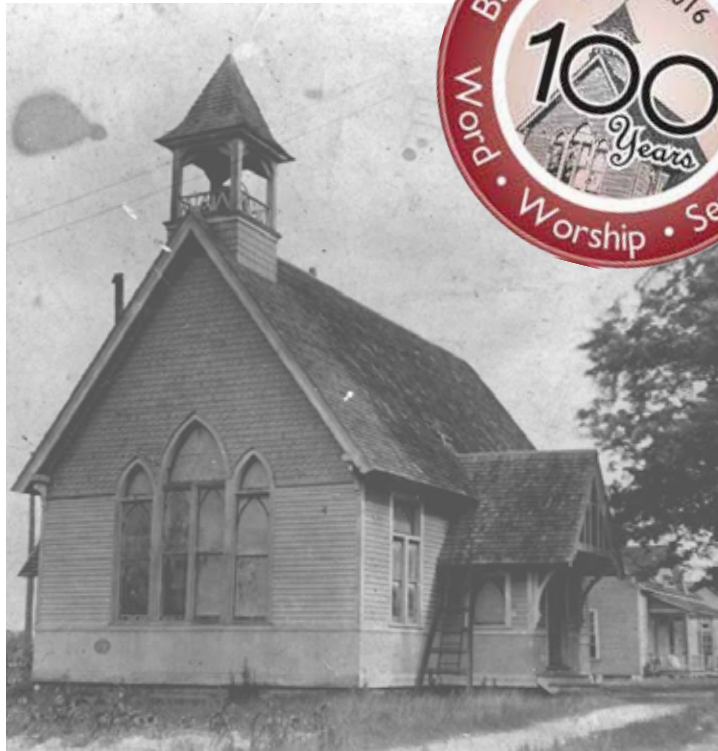
All night long the lions, famished, trembled,  
Sometimes snarling, sometimes stalking-still.  
I marveled at each whiff of reeking breath—and twice I felt the brush of fur.  
How near, I thought, how very near is death.

*But I am rescued. He is here.*

That fact grew, as palpably as peace flowed from his angel;  
Low throat-rumbles ebbed, as thunder when a storm subsides.  
Now was neither roar nor shriek.  
I could see, despite the velvet blackness of the pit, that  
God had shut the lions' mouths.  
First, the fear announced by all the din was gone;  
Then the sounds, disarmed,  
Were silent too.

Comforted, I rested and  
I waited for the dawn.





# A Century of Blessing

Brooklynne Travis

**T**he shelter and security of a home is a basic human need. Maybe that is why images of home are commonly used to describe our place of belonging with the Lord. In John 14, Jesus tells His disciples that He is going ahead to prepare a place for them in His father's house. Likewise, God often provides "homes" for us here on earth as well. As members of this community, He has blessed us with a home at Blacknall for 100 years! In this sense, perhaps there is no venture more appropriate as a symbol of our thanks than providing a home for others.

## ***Building a Home***

This summer, Blacknall will celebrate 100 years of blessings by partnering with Habitat for Humanity to build a home for a Durham family. The project should take roughly five months to complete, and our start date is Saturday, May 14. On that day we will have a kick-off event at 1203 Ivy Street, our project site. Mark your calendars now for a special time. We hope many of you will be present.

After the May 14 kick-off, our building days will be each Saturday and Wednesday, 8:30-11:30 a.m. and 12:30-3:30 p.m. In order to sign up, please visit the [Blacknall website](#) and view the Habitat announcement. You can also go directly to the Habitat website and find our project there.

If you are busy during the normal building hours, have a physical limitation, or an unnatural fear of hammers, there are many other ways to be involved. One big need is for volunteers to bring lunch for the workers at 11:30 each day. You can sign up to bring lunch, or for other tasks, on the Blacknall website.

## ***Praying & Giving***

Since children are not allowed to work as builders due to safety concerns, Ginny, Kaitlyn, and Emma Busch are coordinating a "Little House" project for families with little ones. Small bank houses will be available for families to put on their tables at home. These serve as reminders to

## A Century of Blessing (continued)

pray for the building of the house, and as a place for kids to collect coins for a special gift for the family moving into the home.

These are only a few of the ways to be involved as we celebrate our century of blessings. We hope the entire Blacknall community will be excited and engaged in this act of service, and through it we hope to experience anew the home God has given us. ■



# A Space for You

Donna McBrite

For all those who have struggled to find parking at Blacknall (and we know that is most of you), the wait is getting shorter! We are busy obtaining city approval and completing preliminary work to begin construction on the new parking lot. The lot will be located across the street on Iredell, adjacent to the parking lot currently used for Sunday morning parking.

The tentative plans call for 43 parking spaces, as well as bicycle racks for those choosing to ride to Blacknall and leave their car at home. The parking lot is slated to be ready in the fall. Stay tuned for parking updates in upcoming newsletters.

## Centennial Save the Date

### April

Sunday, April 21 - Tim Filston Guest Pastor

### May

Saturday, May 14 - Habitat House Kickoff  
Saturdays & Wednesdays May-Sept -  
Habitat House Building

### September

Ryan Moore Guest Pastor

### October

Habitat House Dedication  
Celebration of Music Weekend

### November

Griff Gatewood Guest Pastor



# Blacknall Middle School Spring Retreat



# International Saturday Suppers

Mike Kight

## ***Travel to Turkey***

If someone were to tell you that there was an oud in the church, would you relax or look for the nearest exit? An oud is a pear-shaped Turkish musical instrument with a fretless neck, an ancient ancestor to the modern guitar. At the last International Students, Inc. (ISI) Saturday Supper here in our fellowship hall, we heard the oud along with a small Turkish orchestra, and some rollicking music. I didn't understand a word of it, though Emre, a first-year economics student from Turkey, gave me a rundown of the lyrics—that was fun!



There were almost 200 people here from all over the world, learning about the country of Turkey. Did you know Ephesus was in Turkey? It still is! Our Turkish hosts for the evening explained its history, its culture, its music—and especially its wonderful food as prepared by our hosts. Even after dinner, our kitchen was a flurry of activity as Turkish coffee and dessert was prepared for everyone. If you know anything about Turkish coffee, you know what a huge undertaking that was for our gracious hosts.

## ***Connect with Students***

I am somewhat of an introvert and when my wife, Joyce, was asked to help coordinate Blacknall Church with ISI, it seemed foreboding to me. To my surprise, it has been anything but foreboding. I never know how the conversation will go, especially when meeting students for the first time, yet there always seems to be a way to connect. I'm absolutely certain that many times it is the result of answered prayer. God is no doubt involved. Often we fear any aspect of evangelism, but did you know that being the

Church in worship and just being there (wherever “there” is) is one of the best ways to evangelize?

## ***Experience God's Grace***

Our involvement means much more than merely hosting a table at these dinners. We helped deliver students to the church that evening. My charge, a first-year medical student who had been here for only four weeks, rode with me to the church. He expressed how impressed he was about how socially active we were, and how that would never take place in his home town in the People's Republic of China. That left an opening for discussion that led to the gospel, the very reason we are socially active. Students like this young fellow will take a new ethic back home, as well as an appreciation for how someone in this unfamiliar culture took the time to care for him. He will likely pass it on. With an understanding of God's good grace that we receive daily, how much more might we offer to this world in a similar situation?

For more information, please contact [Joyce Kight](#).





## Girls Discovery Week

June 27-30, 9-3 p.m.; Grades 3-5

Horseback riding, swimming, hiking, camping, creating, and storytelling. Every day provides a chance to try something new and learn about who God is calling her to be.

**More information  
& registration on  
our [website!](#)**

## Boys Discovery Days

June 14, 28, July 12, 26, August 16; 5-9 p.m.; Grades 3-5

A chance to fish, hike, camp, bake, make, and fellowship with one another. Each evening will include a serious consideration of scripture and how it relates to their lives.

## Summer Story Stations

Sundays beginning June 5, Sunday School hour

Create, play, listen, pray, imagine, and dance with the stories of the Old Testament. Walk away with something to talk further about with a child or another friend.

## Backyard Bible Adventures

Invite neighbors and friends to a time of singing, scripture memory, crafts, games and fun. A chance to care for and love children from Blacknall and beyond.

## Family Fun Nights

June 17, July 15, August 12

An evening for families to gather and talk, play games, watch a movie, and enjoy summertime snacks.

## Summer Playgroups

Fun & Fellowship

The Thursday morning Women's Bible Study group transforms into a playgroup on Thursday mornings in the summer, and welcomes all to come and join them!



# Easter Poem

Submitted by Caroline Raby  
Poem by Rev. Dr. Timothy Dudley-Smith

A purple robe, a crown of thorn,  
a reed in his right hand;  
before the soldiers' spite and scorn  
I see my Savior stand.

He bears between the Roman guard  
the weight of all our woe;  
a stumbling figure bowed and scarred  
I see my Savior go.

Fast to the cross's spreading span,  
high in the sunlit air,  
all the unnumbered sins of man  
I see my Savior bear.

He hangs, by whom the world was made,  
beneath the darkened sky;  
the everlasting ransom paid,  
I see my Savior die.

He shares on high his Father's throne,  
who once in mercy came;  
for all his love to sinners shown  
I sing my Savior's Name.



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