



Dear Blacknall family,

What is the church? In this Ephesians text, Paul helps us frame our hopes for our life together at Blacknall. Three metaphors, strung together and jumbled up in typical Pauline style, set before us a powerful vision of the Church of Jesus Christ. The first, *citizenship*, speaks of our relationship with one another as those who share a certain identity as members of the same *polis*, or city. In a world dominated by Roman law, this metaphor relied on the remarkable reach of Roman order to convey

Consequently you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Ephesians 2:19

an alternative, more powerful binding agent. As strong as the Roman presence was, Paul is saying that our citizenship in the kingdom of God binds Christians even more closely, calls forth an even greater loyalty, to *our* "Caesar", Jesus Christ. This is at the heart of the oldest Christian acclamation, "Jesus is Lord!" (The Roman rulers and their surrogates understood rightly that this was a treasonous act; that is one of the reasons why persecution came to those early followers of Jesus.) That faithfulness to Christ is worked out in a loyalty to one another, who through him have been brought together under the flag of the commonwealth of the Kingdom of God.

The second metaphor is *family*, a more intimate picture, surely, than citizenship. Paul must have recognized the scandalous family portrait he was painting. Jews and Gentiles

part of the same family? "Surely not," his audience cries. But most assuredly, yes! They say blood is thicker than water; history validates the observation, time and again. What might it mean to affirm that Christ's blood, shed for us, binds us together, through the impartation of his righteousness, and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, adopts us into his family? So much so that his bloodline now flows through us?

The third metaphor is *temple*, which for Paul was the most dramatic and potent image of the three. Together, as his people, we form the Holy of Holies where Christ's sacrificial death is best remembered, and where his presence dwells. Yes, the Holy Spirit indwells believers as individuals, but the purpose of that indwelling is to draw us together in common worship of and witness to the One who has overcome every obstacle in reconciling us to our Father, and, of course, to one another.

All of which serves as a reminder and a challenge as we welcome (back) students and new members and visitors. In these postmodern times, the character of our Christian community will say more about our relationship with Christ than our most carefully reasoned apologetics. The fact is that people will sense Christ through us and our interactions with one another before they understand him. Will they have the sense that we are a community that reflects his welcoming grace, because we share a gratitude born of a common indebtedness to the One who has made us, together, the very habitation and embodiment, however imperfect, of his presence? What more powerful - and lovely - witness is there?

Together in Christ,
Allan

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 Tanner Lowe - Duke Divinity School Intern



About the Newsletter

The Blacknall Newsletter is a bi-monthly publication featuring articles written by members of our community. **Interested in submitting a piece for the November/December Newsletter?** Contact Mary Grimm, Communications Coordinator (mgrimm@blacknall.org).

Welcome Ali & Mary!



Ali Shoenfelt is Blacknall's new Administrative Associate! Ali and her family have been at Blacknall since 2008.

During the week, you'll find her in the Church Office. Welcome to this new role, Ali! We are grateful for you and your service to the church.



Mary Grimm is Blacknall's new Communications Coordinator! Mary has lived in Durham for the past six years and attends Trinity Avenue Presbyterian Church with her husband, Tommy, and new baby, Naomi.

Congo Comes to Durham!

Betsy Poole



Please welcome Noé and Bethany Kasali and their two young daughters Joy (2 years) and Anna (7 months). The Kasali family will be part of our Blacknall family in Durham for three months this fall, beginning the end of August.

When Blacknall embarked on our “Deep Common Journey” with Congo Initiative four years ago, we knew that not many from Blacknall would actually get to travel to Congo. Indeed, fewer than ten have gotten to go to Congo, but many have remained interested and wondering how to get involved. We created “Congo Ambassadors” as a way to enable members to get to know our brothers and sisters from Congo and connect to the Congo Initiative ministry.

Join in Blacknall's Deep Common Journey with Congo Initiative by welcoming the Kasali family to Durham. Invite them into your home for a meal or to share in a fun activity!

Noé has just finished a Masters in Counseling at Wheaton and plans to provide counseling services in Beni, Congo, when they return in December. He looks forward to auditing a class at Duke Divinity in pastoral theology, as well as being involved in Reality Ministries and worship and music while in Durham. Originally from Wisconsin, Bethany looks forward to getting to know Blacknall

women, getting involved in WBS and serving ministries, as well as working on her French.

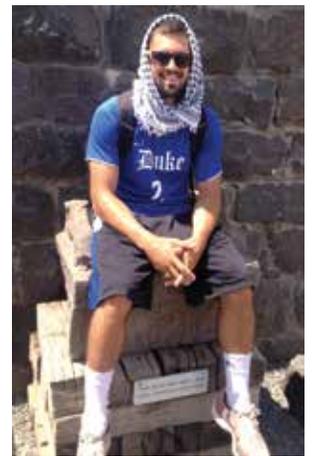
If you're interested in hosting a meal for the Kasali family as a way to share in our journey with Congo Initiative, please sign up on Blacknall's website or on CCB.

Thanks to Mark and Sherbie Skeen for hosting the Kasalies in their home for the first six weeks, another Blacknall family for providing an apartment in Trinity Park the second half of their stay, and another family for providing a minivan! Many thanks to Kim Dunderdale, Barb and Mike Eyster, Alex Hartemink, Susie Meghdadpur, Cory Pikaart, Betsy Poole, and Miles Travis, for leading the welcome team.

Blacknall Fellows

Logan Dahms

I served as a Blacknall Missions Fellow in Israel and Palestine in the summer of 2013, spending about four weeks with the sports ministry organization Athletes in Action. A dozen American basketball players, including myself, were placed on various professional basketball teams within the Palestinian Basketball Federation, with whom we practiced, played, and lived for the majority of our time in the country. Headquartered in Bethlehem about a mile from the spot on which tradition maintains Jesus was born, our group also ran children's basketball clinics, taught at a local VBS, and presented our testimony to crowds of basketball fans.



One of my favorite parts of the experience was the expertise of our “Rabbi” tour director, John Farwell, who utilized traditional Hebrew teaching techniques to not just tell, but also show, Biblical truth from its original perspective as we travelled the Holy Land. I have never read the Bible the same way since. Surely there are few places on earth as saturated in religion and yet as hungry for truth, shalom, and God's love as modern-day Israel and Palestine.

Are you interested in short term missions? Become a Blacknall Fellow! Learn more on Blacknall's website or contact Rachel and Craig Frey (frey@nmsi.org).

Listening Tour

Mark Paulson

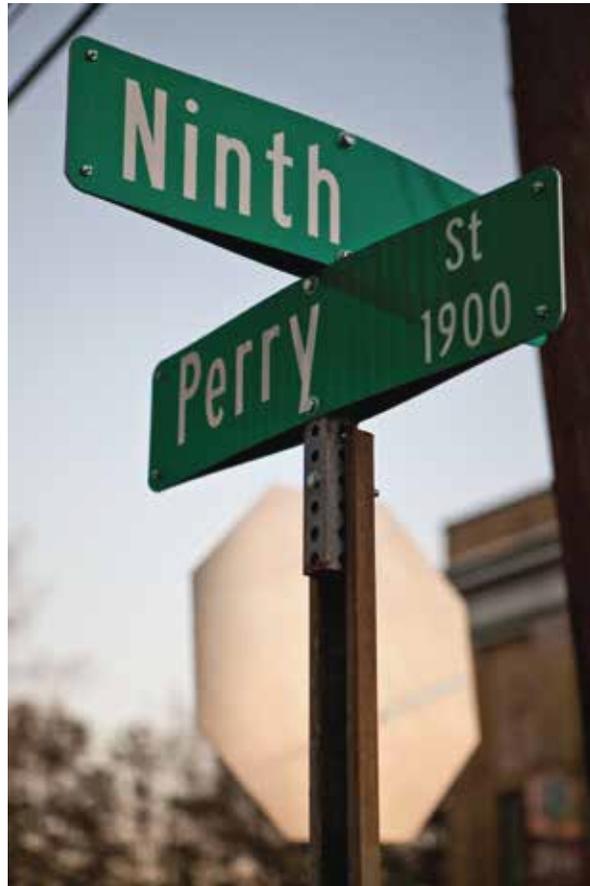
Over the past five years, Blacknall has welcomed many new members, attenders and staff who are invested and eager to participate in the life of the church - and we are grateful beyond measure! The Ninth Street neighborhood has exploded with new development and Duke and UNC continue to deliver hundreds of newcomers to our doorstep each year.

As a way to engage the wider vision of the church, the session has tasked a team to embark on a “listening tour,” to gather stories of where God is at work in individuals, in our church family and in our wider community and the world. We also hope this will help our Blacknall family listen well and together to discern what invitations the Lord has for us for the future.

To facilitate thoughtful conversation, the task force is setting up a multi-channel approach to engage as many people as possible. We want to create opportunity for each of us to think, pray, reflect and talk about our faith and our community of faith, as well as listen to God as a community for what He may be asking of us for the future. To accomplish this, we will have three sets of activities:

Sermon Series & Sunday School Class

Allan and Dave will begin a sermon series on nine principles which guide our theology and ministries at Blacknall. This series will be paired with a Sunday School class led by Matt



As we approach our 100th Anniversary in 2016, let's lean into the future together; celebrate God's goodness and listen well to how and where the Lord may be leading.

Bridges in the Fellowship Hall entitled, “The Cross at Perry and Iredell.”

Congregational Survey

We will offer a survey with questions from leaders of our various ministries (evangelism, youth, local ministries, etc) with questions that are specific to those ministries. Delivered both in print and via our website later this fall, we hope the survey feedback will help our ministries be as effective as possible.

Group Conversations

We will be providing opportunities to take part in discussion sessions later this fall, which, in a similar fashion to our 2006 conversations, will allow thought and discussion around a few general questions.

Over the past twenty years, we have embarked on similar exercises, but usually such undertakings have been tied to a capital campaign, a pastor search or denominational issues. None of these purposes is an immediate motivation for this effort, but we certainly want to be listening for wider themes and inspired vision.

As we approach our 100th Anniversary in 2016, let's lean into the future together, celebrate God's goodness and listen well to how and where the Lord may be leading.

Committee Members: Mark Paulson – Chairman, Matt Bridges, Bill Francis, Xiaomin Fu, Michele Haller, Jonathan Hilliard, Lauren Holahan, and Betsy Poole.

*What do you think? Blacknall wants to know!
Look for a survey available this fall.*

Summer Snapshots

Children & Youth



The Great Escape

The greatest thing about The Great Escape is not what it has to offer; it's what you learn from experiences you have there. The fun activities and sermons are tools that you use to help strengthen your relationship with other people and with Christ, but how you use those tools is up to you.
- Hope Mutter



Girls' Discovery Week

At Blacknall's first ever Girls' Discovery Week, third through fifth grade girls began the day with a Bible study and worship time and then set out for a day of discovery. They rode horses, swam, wrote stories, spent time with our LCs, cleaned houses, and hiked by the Eno. Every day was different and provided an opportunity for each girl to try something different that challenged her, and most of all helped her to grow spiritually by learning more about who she is and who God is calling her to be. - Traci Hoover



Vacation Bible School

- 500** Squares of tissue paper cut for crafts
- 92** Children
- 68** Volunteers
- 26** Blue squares on the Community room floor where kids spread out to play games
- 12** Artificial Christmas trees to create a forest
- 5** Bible Verses memorized
- 3** "Campfires" in the church
- 1** Successful VBS!

I loved VBS! Just to be with all those little people was so refreshing. I loved the music and know the children did also. I base this on my grandson, Cameron, who still sings the songs we learned. He will carry those melodies in his heart and head forever.
- Ray Wilkins



Summer Story Stations

Traci Hoover

Play, Taste, See, Dance

In Children's Ministry at Blacknall we desire to create ways for all of us, together with children, to engage meaningfully with scripture. This summer we offered an amazing opportunity for that to happen. Guided by our beautiful wall mural and the foundation of stories available in our children's worship centers, we found ways to create, play, listen, pray, imagine, taste, see, and dance with the stories of the Old Testament. The Elementary Hallway was transformed into a multisensory engagement with the stories, and all members were invited to come and literally taste and see how God's love has pursued us from the very beginning of time!

Endless Creativity

Six rooms on the hallway became spaces for engagement with a different story each week. The Story Rooms held the story for that week, drawn from our children's worship liturgy of Old Testament stories. People of all ages had the opportunity to work together with a story often under the direction of the child who already knew it! The Senses Response Room created a place where the story could be experienced by all the senses – you could hear the trumpet blast from Mount Sinai when God called Moses up. You could feel the sand the Israelites wandered through for 40 long years. You could even smell the animals on Noah's Ark or lie under the stars and consider God's promises to Abraham! In our Rest and Reflection Room you could rest under the broom tree just as Elijah did, listen to the sound of the rocking boat as Noah and his family must have, or imagine sheltering from a sandstorm as perhaps Jacob did. In the Prayer Room, opportunities abounded to pray in different ways, all of which connected with the story. You could bundle your prayers and place them on a camel's back. You could weave a rainbow ribbon of prayer through a fence from Noah's Ark. You could clip your prayers to a ladder for angels. In the Art Response Room everyone could create a connection to what God was saying in the story. Whether it was a rainbow promise or a

heart-shaped reminder of God's care and direction, the creativity was endless! Perhaps the most favored room was Taste and See. Each week food appeared (or sometimes didn't) that told us about the story. Whether it was luscious fresh fruit and vegetables reminiscent of Eden, tasty manna again and again, or the flat and crisp bread of Passover, everyone especially enjoyed tasting the story.

Engaging Questions

The hope for this summer's Story Stations was that those who participated would walk away with something to talk further about with a child or with another friend. The engagements on the hallway laid a foundation for more thought and meaningful conversation to happen outside of the church walls. Questions like: Just why did it happen that way? How was God present there? Wouldn't you get tired of forty years of manna? And hopefully, how do I know God better now?

If you missed it this summer, there's rumor that there may be a sequel next summer! Stay tuned. . . .



At the beginning of the summer, it just felt like too much work and too much responsibility to go find kids with whom to do the stations. But by the end of the summer I realized that I could just sidle up and join another family. It started because I just wanted to sit and talk to Sarah Patten, then Nisrene. And then Jonathan and Coltrane. Granted, I probably did more talking than learning, BUT it allowed me to be a part of the experience. And of course families were super welcoming. Even as an introvert, I found it to be a great easy way to connect! I welcome other single people to sidle up, too. Not creepy at all. :)
– Margot Hausmann

Prayer at Blacknall

Martha Carlough

Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.
- Ephesians 6:18

Prayers are not always – in the crude, factual sense of the word – granted. This is not because prayer is a weaker kind of causality but because it is a stronger kind. When prayer “works” at all it is unlimited by space and time. - CS Lewis

When we pray - alone with an early morning cup of coffee warming our hands, around a dinner table holding the hands of people we love, or gathered in the parlor or sanctuary on our knees – we embrace the truth of our God who desires relationship with us, who waits patiently to hear from us, and who invites us into the story of

Praying

It doesn't have to be the blue iris; it could be weeds in a vacant lot or a few small stones. Just pay attention then patch

a few words together and don't try to make them elaborate; this isn't a contest but the doorway

into thanks and a silence in which another voice may speak.

- Mary Oliver

of creation and the fellowship of the Trinity. There is ample evidence in Scripture of different ways to pray - psalms of praise with a harp and lyre, the structured Lord's prayer taught by Christ to the disciples, Mary and Martha praying for their brother Lazarus's healing, ecstatic outbursts, and quiet hillside meditation times. All have their place. At any time or location, whatever the state of our hearts and minds, we are invited to share, through the Holy Spirit, in that relationship that the Son has with the Father. What a gift!

When we pray for and with each other we join the larger body of Christ in the world recognizing that we are not in this alone. Sometimes we are privileged to be a part of change through prayer; God in his wisdom is ultimately the steward of this. But much more, we are changed by prayer, in our living, loving working, worshiping selves. Please join us in praying for and with our particular body of Christ. Start with thanks and praise over that morning cup of coffee (which I am always thankful for...). Other opportunities to connect in prayer at Blacknall are listed below.

Tuesday Morning Intercessory Prayer

7:30 a.m. | Tuesdays | Blacknall

This team lifts up confidential prayer requests on behalf of the congregation. Contact: Jan Smart (jsmart@nc.rr.com)

Saturday Morning Prayers for Renewal

8 a.m. | Saturdays | Sanctuary

This group prays for the church and its ministries in the sanctuary at Blacknall and then heads to Whole Foods for breakfast. Contact: Vincent and Jane Stubbs (Vincentstubbs3@aol.com)

Sunday Supper & Prayers for Outreach

6-7:30 p.m. | 2nd Sunday | Fellowship Hall

This new format includes a simple supper followed by prayer, usually split into groups: Congo Initiative (monthly prayer guide for Congo Initiative available), International Ministries, and Durham/Campus Ministries. There is a quarterly Celebration Dinner where we learn more about the great work going on among our missionaries and outreach groups! Look for the quarterly prayer guide posted on the Blacknall website. Contact: Susie Meghdadpour (susmeg@gmail.com) or David Dunderdale (ddunderdale@blacknall.org)

Communion & Prayers for Healing Service

6:30-7:30 p.m. | 3rd Sunday | Sanctuary

This is a special time to be together for a brief devotion/meditation, communion and prayer. Childcare is provided.

Praying the Psalms

5:30 p.m. | Tuesdays | Sanctuary

The Young Adults Sunday School class has been gathering to pray through the Psalms together. This will continue through the fall as a Table Talk offering on Wednesdays. Contact: Amy Whisenand (Amy.whisenand@duke.edu)

Officers in Prayer

7:30-8:30 p.m. | 5th Mondays | Blacknall

The Deacons and Elders of Blacknall will gather on 5th Mondays (when there is not a Monday night session or diaconate meeting) for corporate prayer for the concerns of the church, with a focus on what God is doing within Blacknall (pastors, staff, programs) and the needs of the congregation. Contact: Clerk of session, Sherbie Skeen (sherbieskeen@gmail.com), Martha Carlough (marthacarlough@gmail.com) or one of the pastors.

Sunday Service Prayer Teams

8:30 & 11 a.m. | Sundays | Sanctuary

Two volunteers are available after the 8:30 and 11 a.m. service to be at the front of the sanctuary for prayer for anyone with a need. If you'd like to be a part of this ministry, please contact Sherbie Skeen (sherbieskeen@gmail.com) or Martha Carlough (marthacarlough@gmail.com).

Elder Prayer Ministry

Elders are each assigned a group of 10-15 members and regular attenders (either individuals or families) each year to reach out to and faithfully pray for. The hope is that this connection will deepen our relationships with each other and be a listening ear and “check in” person.

Blacknall Prayer Chain

An e-mail prayer chain is sent out to deacons, elders and others who are on the list. Prayer requests submitted through the church office are also distributed this way. Contact: Karen Simons (klsimons@nc.rr.com)

Monthly Prayer Guide for International Missionaries

This prayer guide is for international missionaries supported by Blacknall. Created by Vincent and Jane Stubbs (with support of the International Ministries Team), it is available in the narthex every month.

ON THE HORIZON

Table Talk - Each fall, Blacknall hosts an educational series on Wednesday evenings featuring dinner, fellowship, and learning programs for all ages. This is a highlight of Blacknall's life together! For a full list of courses, pick up a brochure in the Foyer or online (www.blacknall.org). September 23 - November 11, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. Contact: Karl Umble (karl.umble@gmail.com).

Fall Women's Retreat - Come join us for worship, play, thoughtful teaching, solitude, and great conversation at Valle Crucis Conference Center. Jessica Leep Fick, writer and evangelist for InterVarsity Christian Fellowship will guide us and Angie Hong will lead us in worship. Start the weekend with peaceful rest by attending the optional Quiet Day on October 22. Register on the website (www.blacknall.org)! Anyone who registers before October 6 is entered to win beautiful prizes, from hand-knitted socks to a colorful lap quilt. Contact: Tana O'Keeffe (okeetana@gmail.com)

Men's Bible Study - Men of all ages are invited to the weekly Monday Morning Men (M3) small group. The first meeting this season is Monday, September 14 from 6:30-7:30 a.m. in the parlor. Bagels and coffee will be served. The group discussion is about the sermon from the previous Sunday morning, so preparation is minimal. Contact: Peter Lima (atpeterlima70@gmail.com).

Beans and Barn Dance - Warm up your chili crock pots and break out your dancing shoes! It's time for the Annual Beans & Barn Dance on Sunday, October 18, at Camp Chestnut Ridge. Expect fun for the whole family! Look for more information coming soon in the bulletin and on the website.



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