

Blacknall Missions



Alpha-In-The-Hood

Kick-off night: Week of January 10, 2010

Course period: Weeks of January 17-March 25

Location: Various homes in Durham and Chapel Hill

Time: Various nights (Sunday-Thursday), 6:30-9:00pm

Cost: No charge

Alpha Website: www.blacknall.org/alpha2010

Email: alpha@blacknall.org

Alpha Team Contacts: Mary Mathew & David Dunderdale

Thinking about attending Alpha? Visit our website today and sign-up using our online registration form. We would love to have you join us!

Thinking and praying about inviting someone to Alpha? Now is the time to ask! Talk with them about the course and personally invite them to attend. Hand them a printed invitation and/or mail them a link to our website. Who knows how the Holy Spirit will work?

Still don't know what Alpha is? Explore our website, or ask someone on the Alpha team. The Alpha course is used worldwide to help people explore the Christian faith. Visit www.alphausa.org to learn more about the course and how God has worked through it in peoples' lives.

Wondering if there is any way you can help? The answer is yes! We need volunteers to help with logistics (e.g. meal preparation, transportation, leading worship) A host home in South Durham is needed. Email us or visit our website and complete an online volunteer form. Most importantly, join us in prayer for the course and for those who will attend. God is on the move!

Monthly Calendar

Sunday

8:30 & 11:00 AM Worship
9:30-11:15 Library Open
9:45 AM Sunday School
5:00 PM International Missions
(1st Sun even months)

6:00 PM BYG Time (Youth Group)
6:30 PM Communion & Prayers
(3rd Sun)
6:30 PM Prayers/ Missionaries (1st Sun)

Monday

7:00 AM Outreach Comm. (2nd Mon)
11:30 AM International Wives
Cooking Class
7:00 PM Community Outreach
Comm. (1st Mon)
5:00 PM Finance Comm.(3rd Mon)
7:30 PM Diaconate (1st & 3rd Mon)
Session (2nd & 4th Mon)
Family Life Comm. (1st Mon)

Tuesday

8:00 PM Building & Property (1st Mon)
Congregational Care (1st Mon)
Hospitality Comm. (1st Mon)
7:30 PM Worship Comm. (1st Tues)
7:30 PM Personnel Comm. (3rd Tues)

Wednesday

6:45 AM Men's Bible Study
10:30 AM LCs (Seniors Ministry)
5:30 PM TableTalk
7:45 PM Choir
7:30 PM Cornerstone
(Youth Bible Study)

Thursday

8:00 AM Prayers for Renewal
7:00 PM Narcotics Anonymous
(Community Room)

Saturday

7:00 PM Narcotics Anonymous
(Community Room)

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1902 PERRY STREET
DURHAM, NC 27705
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Church Staff

Allan Poole - Pastor

David Dunderdale - Pastor

Dave Stuntz - Music Ministry

Amy Rowell - Children's Ministry - Elementary

Beth Solie - Children's Ministry - Preschool

Brad Turnage - Director Youth Ministries

Caroline Inazu - Middle School Youth Ministry

Margaret Frothingham - Congregational Care

Diane Beacham - Finance

Dare Nicholson - Associate Office Admin.

Jan Smart - Associate Office Admin.

Terry Simpson - Facilities Manager

Evan Cate - Duke Divinity Intern

Amanda Leahy - Duke Divinity Intern

David Sittser - Duke Divinity Intern

Email: churchoffice@blacknall.org
Web Site: www.blacknall.org

December
2009

Blacknall

Memorial Presbyterian Church



"On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him." Matthew 2.11

The question came again the other day: "Why do we kneel for confession at Blacknall? I have never been in a church where we do that!" I think I mumbled something about embodied worship, that just as we stand to sing God's praise, it is also appropriate to kneel in recognition of Christ's Lordship as we confess our sins before our loving Savior.

Nothing wrong with that answer, I suppose. But my answer could have been much much richer. I could, for example, have answered a question with a question, to wit: "Why do you think that, from his earliest days, those who recognized Jesus for who he was knelt before him?" Those stargazing philosophers, the magi of Matthew 2, came from far away places, knowing Israel's story and the promise of a messiah only through their study of the heavens and a few prophetic rumors. Eyes turned upward, minds full of arcane astrological speculations, they witnessed the rising of the kingly Jupiter in Aries, the constellation of the Jews, and, in Abrahamic fashion, took the risk of faith, coming - eventually - to the bedside of the Baby. There, as Fulton Sheen describes it, "Though coming from a land that worshiped the stars, they surrendered that religion as they fell down and worshiped Him Who made the stars." (Nicely put, Bishop.)

After that Baby's cruel execution some thirty-three years later, the apostle Paul, a most unlikely prospect for an Alpha program, nevertheless fell to the ground, unhorsed by his encounter with the risen Jesus. Perhaps he was remembering his own dramatic shift of allegiances embodied in his dusty Damascus obeisance when he reminded the Philippians some years later, that "at the name of Jesus every knee would bow...."

One last scene, from Revelation. John is exiled to a cave on Patmos, dreaming a waking dream. He is stunned by the appearance of "the Son of Man". John tells us that he "fell at his feet as though dead," only to be reassured by Jesus: "Do not be afraid. I am alive, and I hold the keys to death and hell."

So, yes, we kneel when we confess our sins; but even more, we kneel because He alone is worthy of our worship. He rises above all pretenders, earthly and not. And he is still speaking from his exalted place, speaking words of assurance and comfort. "Everything that can defeat you has been defeated. You are mine."

The Baby whose birth we celebrate on December 25 is Lord of all. Remember that, and, in the remembering, if you happen to be undone and fall on your face, you might stand a chance of actually celebrating this crazy season in the way you were meant to. We would be in good, good company.

Merry Christmas!

Allan

Blacknall Family Announcements

Christmas Season Schedule

Sunday, December 6
Service of Lessons and Carols
9:30 and 11:00am worship

We will enjoy music with a chamber orchestra, gorgeous choral singing, lots of congregational participation, all of it built around selected Scripture readings (by 11 readers). This is a wonderful way to be reminded of the enormity of God's plan as expressed in the Incarnation. Invite a friend!

Thursday, December 10
Women's Bible Study Brunch
9:15 – 11:30am

All women are welcome to come, worship, share, and enjoy good food and fellowship. Bible study will resume on January 14, 2010.

Sunday, December 13
Carols and Cocoa
6:30 – 7:30pm

Join this Christmas songfest with refreshments to follow. Here's your chance to sing most every carol and seasonal favorite you can think of! We will begin in the sanctuary with carols, then move into the fellowship hall for a few more favorites, capping the evening with cocoa and cookies. No childcare - this is for the entire family. Bring a friend!

Sunday, December 20
Worship on the Longest Night
6:30 – 7:30pm

Perhaps this has been a difficult year for you or you are having a hard time getting into the 'spirit' of the season. We will gather for prayerful worship of Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, who is with us even on this the (symbolically) longest and darkest night of year. Childcare for infants thru 2nd grade.

Thursday, December 24
Christmas Eve Services

5:30 and 7:30pm
 Childcare available through age 4. Would your children like to be included to play/sing? Contact Dave Stuntz

Friday & Monday, December 25, 28
Holidays –Church Office Closed

Sunday, December 27
9:45am

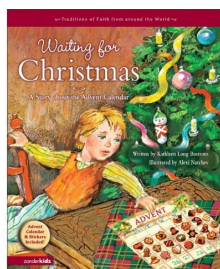
Everyone is invited to our Christmastide reception during the Sunday school hour. The Guild needs your help to bring food (leftover goodies from Christmas day are welcome), prepare punch, make coffee, bring something special for the children, set-up during 8:30 service/ put-away during 11:00 service. Sign-up in the lower atrium on Dec. 6 & 13.

Welcome new members!

The Session examined and welcomed the following new members into our fellowship: Mark Bullock, Jonathan & Emily Cox, Frank & Melissa DiSilvestro, Samantha Fisher, John & Virginia Greene, Rebecca Gurney, Gregg & Tisha Johnson, Josh & Kelly Leim, Jonathan & Amy Lett, Nadia Libbus, Fabian & Keri Linares, Brad & Jill Murphy, Aaron & Sara Patten, and Emily Timmons.

Our Library — Good Reads for Advent

Advent is a wonderful time to approach the Christmas story from all different directions. We have a wealth of many Christmas storybooks that are perfect for Advent reading for little ones as well as adult Advent reflections. Our prayer is that each book will help you and your family experience the miracle of God with us this Christmas. A sampling of Advent and Christmas reading:



Waiting for Christmas by Kathleen Bostrom
 Young Gerhard was impatient for Christmas to come, so his mother helped her young son count the days on a calendar of cookies. When he grew up, Gerhard became a printer and turned his fond memories into the first commercial Advent calendar.

Mary's First Christmas by Walter Wangerin
 Listen as Mary tells five-year-old Jesus of the first Christmas — of his own birth and the remarkable

events that surrounded it. A moving story in four parts, to be read in one sitting or over the course of four nights.

One Wintry Night by Ruth Bell Graham
 Caught in a sudden snowstorm, a young boy takes refuge in a cabin. The mountain woman living there passes the snowbound hours telling the whole panorama of God's involvement in human history from creation to the resurrection.

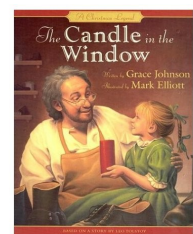
The Very First Christmas by Paul L. Maier
 When Christopher insists he only wants real bedtime stories, his mother tells the amazing and miraculous story of Jesus' birth. Along the way, Christopher learns the answers to some challenging questions about the Christmas story. And all the answers are right from the Bible.

If You're Missing Baby Jesus by Jean Gietzen
 A family discovers that the nativity set they bought came with two baby Jesus figurines. The mother cajoles the store owner into putting a sign on the shelf: "If you're missing Baby Jesus, call 7162." On Christmas eve, someone calls — trusting that it was God's sign for her.

Three Wise Women of Christmas by Dandi Daley Mackall
 This picture book tells the Christmas story through three faithful women of God — Elizabeth, Mary and Anna. Each woman tells her part in the Christmas story, weaving them into the whole beautiful narrative.

Memories of the Manger by Michelle Adams
 An old dove shares with all of the other barn animals the miraculous night Jesus was born and expresses her true appreciation for God's greatest gift.

What Happened to Merry Christmas? by Robert Baker
 This book shows children that Christmas is everywhere we look, particularly in the Christian home. In the Advent wreath, the star on the Christmas tree, the nativity set, and even the gifts under the tree, what we see at Christmas reminds us of our anticipation, preparation, and celebration.



The Candle in the Window: A Christmas Legend by Grace Johnson
 This retelling of Tolstoy's timeless story focuses on a German cobbler who no longer celebrates Christmas. But when he receives a series of needy visitors, he discovers that where love is, there God is also.

The gifts of God from the people of God . . .			
2009 weekly Budget	\$22,043	YTD Budget	\$1,058,064
Tithes & Offerings 11/29	\$16,856	YTD Income	\$907,127
		YTD Expenses	\$1,013,931
Covenant Campaign Total Borrowed			\$1,100,000
Covenant Campaign Loan Balance 11/24			\$24,937

Year-End Giving – As you are considering year-end financial gifts, please take these Blacknall deadlines into consideration:

In order to be counted as a contribution in the year 2009, checks mailed to Blacknall must be postmarked by **December 31** in order to comply with IRS regulations. Any gifts brought to the church office must be received by noon **Thursday, December 31**. Checks brought to the office in January 2010 that are dated December 2009 will be considered a 2010 gift to the church.

The church is equipped to receive gifts of stock. Information on how to transfer stock to Blacknall is available from Rick Every, Treasurer (489-9733). It is very important that you notify Rick no later than **Monday, December 21, in order to allow sufficient time for the transfer and sale of the donated stocks.**

Requests for reimbursements from Blacknall for 2009 expenses need to be turned in to the church office no later than **Monday, December 21**. It is most important that all 2009 expenses be reimbursed in 2009.

Blacknall Substantiation Letters for 2009 Offering Gifts and Covenant Campaign Pledges and Gifts

Blacknall is required by the IRS to keep a record of any single gift of \$250 or more. For gifts less than \$250, your cancelled checks are your documentation.

We will mail out letters of substantiation for 2009 contributions before mid-February. If you contributed to the Covenant Campaign, you will receive two letters: one for the operating budget and one for the Covenant Campaign. These letters are only for your records; they do not need to be sent to the IRS as an attachment to your tax papers.

Please notify Diane Beacham as soon as possible if one of your letters is incorrect, by calling the church office at 286-5586.

Youth Spotlight

Upcoming Youth Events

Sunday, December 6, 6pm

Christmas Party

This will be our last BYG Time of the year.* Come and join us for food and hot chocolate as we celebrate the true meaning of Christmas!

Sunday, December 13, 6:30pm

Carols and Cocoa

The youth are invited to join the congregation for this event in the sanctuary.

Sunday, December 20, 6pm

Christmas Movie Night

Come join us in the youth room for snacks and a movie.

Middle Schoolers Mark Your Calendars

July 28 — August 2

The Great Escape is only a few months away so plan on joining us for the most fun you'll have this summer! Registration information will be available in the early spring.

* BYG Time will start up again on January 10, 2010.