

Blacknall

Memorial Presbyterian Church



1902 Perry Street . Durham, NC 27705 . 919-286-5586 . www.blacknall.org

January / February
2011

Letter from the Pastor

Dear Blacknall family,

In a novel I was reading on a veerry long flight to Phoenix recently my imagination was stirred by this exchange.

“So are you an atheist?”

“Not exactly. That sounds too much like an actual philosophy....”

“An agnostic?”

“That’s closer, I suppose. But even calling yourself an agnostic implies that you have sifted the evidence....”

“I agree. Saying you can’t decide is a kind of deciding. But what do you call yourself then?”

“Perhaps I would call myself an ‘apatheist,’ someone who just hasn’t put much thought into the question.”

I like that new word, “apatheist.” I wonder how many of our friends would fit the category? Our academies are suspicious of the trustworthiness of close reasoning; our culture is repulsed by anything that sounds vaguely moralistic or judgmental. And universal truth claims are ... um... universally discounted.

And yet in the past two weeks I have had two wonderful conversations with people inquiring about the Christian faith. Those conversations, along with other observations, have me wondering if, in spite of the deep suspicions of our times, the Holy Spirit is, as is his wont, stirring up hearts and minds in pursuit of something more.

These are exciting times to be believers in Jesus Christ, and to be participants in his mission. And nothing vitalizes us more as believers or as church than taking Christ at his word and trusting him to bring fruit from our less-than-perfect efforts to invite others to follow him. But we are not immune to the threats to our reputation and intellect. We wonder, “What will people think of me?” or “Do I really know enough to engage someone in a conversation about Christ?”

The answers to those questions are “Who knows?” and “Probably not.” Perfect.

But while our times are unique in some ways, they are not fundamentally different in the challenges that Christians have always faced. The truth is that your neighbors and colleagues are still creatures made in the image of God, however marred that image may be. And even though they may be “apatheists” they are still constructed to resonate to the truth of Jesus Christ.

Is your own conviction suffering from the deep cold of winter? Why not invite a friend to accompany you to one of the four homes where Alpha is being offered? You might be surprised to find that you too may spring to life in a fresh way.

For Christ and his glory,

Allan

In this issue:

(click on link to take you to specific page)

[Focus on Giving...](#) 2

[Library News...](#) 3

[Youth Schedule...](#) 3
[Fun events coming up!](#)

[Blacknall Happenings...](#) 4
[Mark your calendars!](#)

[Finances...](#) 5
[Budget](#)

[Happening NOW...](#) 5
[Alpha & Inquirers class](#)

[Final Notes...](#) 5
[Inclement Weather & CCB](#)

Focus on Giving

by Joe Bohn

Tithes and offerings fund our mission in its complete scope – making an impact for the Kingdom of God in our local congregation, our surrounding community, and around the world.

Much of what is given is used to support our direct work in and around Durham. However, a significant portion is also given to partner organizations and ministries. You can consider this a tithe of our total budget (although it is actually 26% of our total budget this year).

We plan to use this space in future newsletters to discuss how this giving makes a difference. In this issue, we will focus on another aspect of our corporate giving. A special tithe of \$300,000 was set aside as part of our Covenant Campaign. From that total, \$175,000 has already been utilized and made a difference in the following ways:

Overseas missions \$100,000 given in 2005 & 2006:

- [Christ School, Bundibugyo, Uganda](#) - Used to build two dorms; one for girls and one for boys
- [Evangel Hospital, Jos, Nigeria](#) - Maternity ward upgrade and repairs

Local Causes \$75,000 given 2007 - 2010:

- [Samaritan Health Center*](#) - \$30,000 - Construction of Health Center
- [Durham Rescue Mission*](#) - \$25,000 - Funded a study for significant improvements to men's campus
- [Pregnancy Support Services*](#) - \$8,500 - Updating computer equipment
- [Walltown Children's Theatre](#) - \$11,500 - Special flooring for rehearsals

How are these gifts advancing the Kingdom of God?

In response to the gift to Christ School, Kevin Bartkovich wrote: "Thank you for the incredible news! We reached a low point in the finances of Christ School this month. As a result, we have been praying in the last two weeks for the Lord to provide for the short-term and long-term needs at Christ School, so this is an amazing answer. We are so impressed by the faithfulness of the Blacknall family. And it means so much to us that such a sizeable gift comes from our own church family.

This is the largest, single gift ever given to Christ School.... Thank you again, and many thanks to our Blacknall family for following the Lord's leading. We love all of you dearly, and we depend on your support and your prayers."



Chris Garrett responded on behalf of the Samaritan Health Center: "Started by faith, Samaritan Health Center was brought to life by Blacknall's initial gift. In two years we have seen over 1,500 patients and shared the love and mercy of Christ with them. Thank you for your vital partnership!"

Bev Truxton with Evangel Hospital wrote in an email: "The maternity ward renovations are essentially completed.... Let me express again our deep appreciation to the church for your support of this project. It is like working in a new building, so refreshing and honoring to God. It is a real asset to the ministry of the hospital. TO GOD BE THE GLORY. We pray that many will find the Lord in this 'new' ward."



Ernie and Gail Mills speaking for the Durham Rescue Mission said: "Blacknall was very gracious to set aside \$25,000, from the tithe on your Covenant Campaign, to give to the Mission to enable us to do a Feasibility Study to determine if we were in a position to raise money to build a multi-purpose building on our men's campus. We are pleased to report that the study did show that we have the capability of raising the needed funds and so far have raised 68% of the goal for Phase One of the total project. We hope to break ground in late 2011 or early 2012."

* Gifts to these organizations have been given in addition to regular support these ministries receive from our annual budget.

Library News

Start the new year with a new commitment to reading, even if it's just a few pages a day. Whether you need to be encouraged or challenged, informed or entertained, consider some of our newest titles as an invitation to rediscover the joy of reading.

The Land Between: Finding God in Difficult Transitions

by Jeff Manion

Loss of a job, divorce, a troubling diagnosis... life's toughest transitions often take our eyes off the Lord. God desires to meet you in the midst of life's chaos and emotional upheaval, and he intends for you to encounter his goodness and provision during these seasons of uncertainty.

Sacred Waiting: Waiting on God in a World that Waits for Nothing

by David Timms

What does it look like to wait on the Lord? Our hurry-up world has made us so impatient. Examples of faithful saints from Noah to David to Paul show their best moments arose from God's timing, not their own. Timms challenges us to embrace God's presence as a spiritual discipline.

The Radical Disciple: Some Neglected Aspects of Our Calling

by John Stott

In what will likely be Stott's final book, this respected pastor/teacher offers a lifetime of wisdom about eight aspects of Christianity that are too often overlooked – nonconformity, Christlikeness, maturity, creation care, simplicity, balance, dependence and death.

Think: The Life of the Mind and the Love of God

by John Piper

Is it possible to think to the glory of God? Piper says it's not just possible, but critical to focus on the life of the mind to know God better, love him more, and care for the world around us.

What Good Is God? In Search of a Faith That Matters

by Philip Yancey

Does what we believe about God really matter? Yancey travels the globe in search of an answer. From Virginia Tech's devastated campus, to Mumbai, India, he uncovers faith and hope in the hearts of those you may least expect. Yancey shares firsthand evidence and scriptural grounding that faith does matter in real life, even in the face of confounding horror, disaster and loss.

Generous Justice: Finding Grace in God Through Practicing Justice

by Timothy Keller

Keller offers a persuasive plea for evangelicals to embrace social justice efforts. He also argues that gospel preaching that aims only to change hearts while remaining oblivious to unjust social structures will never fully succeed. A balanced and authoritative voice on the postmodern question of the gospel vs. social justice.

C O R N E R

H MARK YOUR CALENARS!

January 19

Cornerstone Begins

T April 8 - 10

Middle School Retreat

U April 29 - May 1

High School Beach Retreat

O June 12

Summer Bible Study Begins

Y June 26 - July 1

High School Mission Trip

July 28 - August 2

Great Escape Trip

Visit www.youth.blacknall.org

for weekly youth updates and additional info including downloadable camp forms.

Interested in being a youth leader?

The heart of our ministry is our volunteer leaders. More than anything, our ministry is centered around teenagers hearing the Gospel from adults who care about them and are consistently in their lives. If you have a few extra hours a week and love Christ and teenagers, then being a volunteer leader may be perfect for you! This spring we will be looking to add some folks to our team of youth volunteers. If you are interested in helping out or just want to learn more about Blacknall youth ministry, please contact Brad Turnage - btturnage@blacknall.org.

Blacknall Happenings

STAY UP-TO-DATE WITH WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Spring Semester Pass the Peas Dinners

Blacknall continues to support [Reality Ministries'](#) outreach to friends with disabilities by preparing and serving family-style meals several times a month. Volunteers are needed to prepare and serve (5:00-7:00pm) and serve and clean-up (6:30-8:30pm) on the following Tuesday nights: January 25, February 1, March 1 and 22, April 19 and 26, and May 17 and 24. Please consider volunteering as a group or as an individual. Contact Noreen Naiman (nnaiman@nc.rr.com) or Stella Sieber (sieber@niehs.nih.gov).

What is it really like to live in poverty?

On Saturday, March 5, Blacknall will host a **Poverty Simulation** in our Fellowship Hall. The Durham Ministry Team and the Interfaith Hospitality Network of Blacknall have invited the United Way to facilitate this event for up to 80 participants.

A **Poverty Simulation** is a powerful tool that helps the participants to develop an awareness of the day-to-day living experiences and constant challenges of families who live in poverty.

During the simulation, participants will be grouped into family clusters, and volunteers will represent various community resources that will be located at tables around the perimeter of the room. To begin the exercise, each family is given a card explaining its particular circumstances. The participants role-play the lives of low-income families, from single parents trying to care for their children to senior citizens trying to maintain their self-sufficiency on Social Security. During four 15-minute "weeks," the families deal with the challenges and frustrations of trying to provide food, shelter, and other basic necessities for their families, as they interact with the community resources, including bank, pawn shop, school, social services, police, grocery store, child protective services, utility company, rental office, employment office, and more. Following the simulation, there will be a debriefing and discussion.

The experience of participating in a **Poverty Simulation** is truly eye-opening and provides participants with insight and understanding of the issues surrounding poverty that cannot be gained from only books or discussions. Be a part of this life-changing experience Saturday morning, March 5 from 9am to noon at Blacknall.

For planning purposes, please contact Brian Averette (919-816-6873; brian.averette@yahoo.com) or Peg Franklin (919-403-1689; pegfranklin@nc.rr.com) by February 18 to sign up for this unique opportunity.

Interested in Blacknall's 2011 Lenten Pilgrimage of Pain and Hope into the Heart of Durham?

The past three years, during the season of Lent, Blacknall groups have journeyed together as pilgrims to cross our city's divides to deepen our Christian vision for what it means to be an "Outpost of the Kingdom" amidst the history, pain, and hope of Durham. The 2011 pilgrimage dates are March 25-27 (5pm Friday through 2pm Sunday), with Sunday School hour (9:50am) meetings the four Sundays before and three Sundays after to prepare for and debrief from the pilgrimage. Space is limited.

If you interested in participating email Chris Rice (crice@div.duke.edu) or Dave Dunderdale (ddunderdale@blacknallpres.org) to receive further information.

Stay tuned to Sunday bulletin announcements about an informational meeting to learn more about the pilgrimage.

Vacation Bible School

Coming Soon: VBS at Blacknall!

Save the date: June 20 - 24.

More information forthcoming.

Questions? Contact Brooklynne Travis

(brooklynne_travis@yahoo.com)

The gifts of God from the people of God...

2010 Budget	\$1,140,113
2010 Income	\$1,157,024
2010 Expenses	\$1,109,218

"...for God loves a cheerful giver." II Corinthians 9:7

Happening Now at Blacknall

Alpha is a 10-week course aimed at providing people with the opportunity to explore Christianity in an open, non-judgmental setting. Guests share a meal, watch a video, and discuss various topics. Invite your friends and family to [Alpha](#) and please pray.

Courses begin the week of January 23:

Sundays: 5:30-8pm in Southwest Durham (4309 Branchwood Drive)

Sundays: 6:00-8:30pm near Duke (612 Swift Avenue)

Tuesdays: 6:30-9pm in Watts-Hillandale (2106 Wilson Street)

Wednesdays: 6:30-9pm near 54/55 (911 Odyssey Drive)

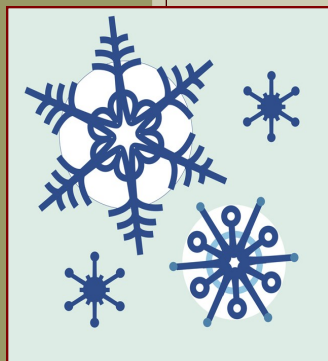
For more information, contact Jonathan Lett (jonathanlett@gmail.com), or Dave Dunderdale (286-5586) or alpha@blacknall.org.

Community Masterworks Concert – Friday February 4, 7pm at Science & Math; Saturday February 5, 7pm at Blacknall – FREE and open to the public – this collaborative event features almost 90 singers from Science & Math, Blacknall, and the wider community, along with the orchestra from Science & Math. Featured pieces are the charming "Clock" Symphony by Haydn (Scott Laird conducting) and the exuberant "Gloria" by Vivaldi (Dave Stuntz conducting). Almost 150 performers! Come and enjoy! Questions or more info, contact Dave Stuntz (dstuntz@blacknall.org).

Interested in inquiring about life and membership at Blacknall?

An Inquirers Class will begin Sunday, February 13, at 5pm in the Parlor. Let [Allan Poole](#) or the [Church Office](#) know if you plan to attend, and if childcare is needed. Come get to know more about Blacknall, and let us get to know you! We are glad you are here.

Final Notes



INCLEMENT WEATHER & CLOSINGS:

- Phone message and [CCB](#) will be updated with church closing information on Sunday mornings around 6:30am.
- If the 8:30 service and Sunday school are cancelled, then that evening's Youth events are also cancelled

CCB, Church Database

Our new online directory needs your input! Please update your record by going to Church Community Builder (CCB) at <http://blacknall.ccbchurch.com>. Please call the Church Office if you need any help!