

THE WORD

UNIVERSITY BAPTIST CHURCH

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The Need for Theology Today

ON WATCH

I get it. Sometimes, theological discussions can feel like debating how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. The news demands our attention. The events of the day grab whatever energy remains. Then, exploring the nature of God can feel like a secondary concern. With so many urgent matters, even something as important as understanding God falls by the wayside.

Without understanding, our faith rests on momentum. We worship because we have been worshipping. We read the Bible because our church culture values scripture. We sing hymns because we know them and they give us comfort, and we pray because we have always prayed. We need to understand why we do what we do.

This Sunday, Will will deliver the sermon. He will preach about Jesus calling disciples in Mark, and he will probably mention the sense of urgency in the second gospel. Any questions we ask about the text, its meaning, and why we let it speak to us today are theological. If we ignore these questions, we risk developing a vacuous faith, and an empty faith will not stand when pushed.

Many people grow up attending church but stop when they have the option to do so. One reason they stop attending is a lack of theological depth in their faith. Out of fear of being boring or a desire to be pithy, relevant, or hip, ministers often steer away from theology. I do not intend my comments as an indictment of any particular congregation. They apply to many churches and congregants.

If we recognize the need for theological discourse, then we can dip a toe in that water. There are many simple, short theological books. Getting together (on Zoom, of course!) with a group of friends and reading one of these books is a great

SERVICE OF HOLY WORSHIP

January 24, 2021
11:00 AM

Sermon:

"Like, now?"

Rev. Will Brown

Scripture:

Mark 1:14-20

Anthem:

"Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us"
(Bock)

Dr. Tennant will be enjoying some time with his family this weekend.

CALENDAR

WEDNESDAY, January 20

7:00 Sanctuary Choir Practice
(Zoom)

THURSDAY, January 21

1:00 Lectio Divina ([Zoom link](#))

SUNDAY, January 24

8:30 Missions Council Meeting
(Zoom)

9:40 Online Bible Study ([Zoom link](#))

starting point. Instead of having faith by momentum, this discourse feeds our faith.

Few Christ-followers will argue against the need for theology. The stumbling block becomes acting on that recognized need. Many years ago, before I was in ministry, I sat in the pew each week and listened to the sermon. One week, our minister referenced a study group he attended. In his sermon, he shared an anecdote from a recent group meeting. His description of the group was enthralling to me, so I called him and asked if I could visit the group.

That conversation was formative in my view of ministry and theology. He appreciated my interest but assured me that his group was not for me (or me for the group). He said, "All the members have PhDs in theology, so let me percolate on this and get back to you." Twenty-four years later, he has not yet recommended a study group.

Years later, when I responded to God's call and entered ministry, I realized that the best theology is accessible. Juan Luis Segundo writes about a personal God who connects with us in community with other believers. He once wrote, "We can no longer carry the burden of a theology that leaves us alone at dinner time." We don't need PhDs to discuss theology. We need an "absolute dependence on God" (Schleiermacher). We need a thirst to know God and understand what we believe.

Fancy phrases, unfamiliar names, and ten-dollar words are convenient. Yet, if we cannot all join the conversation, our theology is useless. We need theology today to undergird the kind of faith necessary to respond to a world in trouble. When we don't understand something, we need a safe space to say, "I don't get it. Please explain." We don't need exclusive groups to talk about God. We need to invite everyone to the conversation.

The world seems to be in trouble, yet God is still omnitemporal, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. Talking about a God who is in all times, all-powerful, all-knowing, and in all places is theology. I pray that we can talk about what all of this means. Everyone's invited to that conversation, and I hope it helps us grow together.

Peace,
Matt

11:00 Morning Worship
(radio and livestream only)

MONDAY, January 25

8:30 Morning Prayer ([UBC Facebook Page](#))



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!

Join us in wishing some of our church family a Happy Birthday this week!

January 24: Zeke Stewart

January 25: Brad Groff

January 26: Debra Bryant

January 27: Betsy Kauffman

Having a birthday and do not see your name here? Please help us update our records. Contact Lexi to provide your updated information at (434)-293-5706



Congratulations!

Congratulations to Marcus and April Stanley as they welcomed a 8 pound baby girl on Friday, January 15, 2020.

New Church Directory

We ask for your assistance and updated information as we prepare to create and distribute a new edition of our Church Directory in the coming weeks.

Contact information updates: If your address, phone number, or contact information has recently changed, please contact the church office (call 434-293-5106 or email Lexi at lwoodson@universitybaptist.org) to let us know. In addition, if you would like information to appear differently than it did in the prior directory (e.g., not to list a home or cell phone number), please let us know.

Pictures: If we don't hear from you, we will use the same picture as the last directory. To use an updated picture, or to add a picture if you weren't in the last directory, please email the picture file to Lexi at lwoodson@universitybaptist.org

Church Conference Recap

This past Sunday, January 17, our congregation met in a Church Conference, unanimously approving a budget for the 2021 year. We also affirmed a statement outlining our vision and goals for the year, which can be found [here](#).

Congratulations, Rev. Mildred Best

Many of you may know Rev. Mildred Best, who for years has led the Chaplain's office at UVA Hospital. You may recall her participation in a prayer service held at our church in August 2017. We congratulate Rev. Best on her retirement, and we are pleased to provide our sanctuary for a service of worship this Friday evening in honor of her ministry career. Our location facilitates participation by staff from the hospital (our sanctuary makes social distancing possible), and our livestream cameras make it possible for her family and colleagues to watch from afar during this time of covid-19. (Hosting this service also aligns nicely with one of our church goals for 2021: "Welcoming Our Neighbors.")

COVID-19 Vaccination

The Blue Ridge Health District (BRHD) is working diligently on COVID-19 vaccination plans for the district. Currently BRHD vaccine distribution is limited to Phase 1A Frontline Healthcare workers. The next step is Phase 1B – for individuals 65+ and high risk.

If you are **65 YEARS OR OLDER** living in the Blue Ridge Health District OR are living/coordinating for those in a correctional facility, homeless shelter, or migrant labor camp and have a FIRM commitment to be vaccinated against COVID-19, please complete [this survey](#) to be placed on our vaccine list. The Blue Ridge Health District includes Albemarle, Charlottesville, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, and Nelson.

- Individuals ages 65+ that live in Albemarle, Charlottesville, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, and Nelson.
- Individuals living or coordinating services for those in a correctional facility, homeless shelter, or migrant labor camp.

This form is only to notify the Health Department of your specific demographics. This is NOT scheduling an appointment. We will be in touch with more information as it becomes available, which could be awhile, and next steps for how you can schedule an appointment.

Reading the Bible

Did you make a New Year's Resolution to read the Bible more this year? Let's do it together!

Recently one of our church members suggested forming a group to read the Bible. We'd gather on Zoom once a week, simply to read through passages of the Bible as a group. Would you be interested in participating?

We could do this first thing in the morning, at midday, in the evening--whatever works best for the group. If you're interested, email Will (wbrown@universitybaptist.org) so we can make sure the timing works for you.

String Quartet

During this past Advent Season, we were fortunate to have a String Quartet to enhance our worship services. I would like to introduce the members of this group. Three of the players are members of the Charlottesville Symphony at the University of Virginia. The first violin, Dan Sender, the violist, Ayn Balija, and the cellist, Adam Carter, are all the first chair leaders in the symphony. Dan is also the Concert Master for the symphony. Our second violinist, Jeanette Carter, is Adam's wife and often plays with the symphony and in other groups in our area.

There is one more piece that they recorded for us, and we will enjoy it in the future. We are blessed to have these and many other talented musicians close to us and available to play in our worship services from time to time.

Sunday Mornings Online

Even though we are not gathering in person, we are still joining together each Sunday morning for worship and Bible study. We hope you will join us!

Bible Study

At 10:00 am, we begin an interactive Bible Study. To join us, click this [Zoom link](#). Or, watch the Bible Study portion on [YouTube](#). We invite you to join in the conversation by adding comments during the session. To download the handout ahead of time, visit universitybaptist.org/live

Worship

Our Sunday morning worship service will begin, as usual, at 11:00 am. We encourage everyone in the congregation to join us from home. As always, you can listen by radio on WINA (1070 AM and 98.9 FM), or you can join us online for our live broadcast. To view the live video broadcast, visit our [Facebook page](#) or click [this link](#) to watch on YouTube.

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Connect with us

