

# January

Shady Shores Baptist Church

2018

From The Pastor's Heart . . .

A New Year. A time for looking back and a time for looking forward. The year 2000 was a pivotal year for me because I had major heart surgery. I had a member of a previous church who told me he had a "quad-triple bypass." Now, that caused me to begin speculating. Did he have a triple bypass (3), a quadruple bypass (4) or a duodecuple bypass ( $3 \times 4 = 12$ ). I had to look that last one up. Wasn't sure if "uples" went that far. He has been a great source of encouragement for me because he just passed away. That means he survived somewhere around 20-30 years after his heart surgery.

Thinking about the past 17+ years, a lot has happened. Summer 2018 will mark my 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary as pastor of SSBC. It will also mark 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the ministry. That's a long time, but I will tell you the last 15 years have flown by. What all has happened in that time frame. We went to a really tiny Baptist church, to a tiny Baptist church without the really. We paid off all indebtedness, added on to the foyer and built our fellowship hall. And we paid for it as we built. Yes, there have been some lean years, but by and large, we have had ample funds to do whatever God has brought our way.

The study of Experiencing God changed our church to be a Mission giving, Mission sending, and Mission hands-on involvement. We have participated in Experiencing God weekends all over the country. We have participated in Bill Glass Prison Ministry weekends including both men and women. We have adopted the two schools across the street and to this day, we are involved in on-going ministry to those schools. We started a total of 6 mission churches, although only 2 of them are still alive and expanding. We have seen our music program of the church expanded and I think we all agree that is through the leadership of Harry Monroe who will also celebrate his 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year. We have an ongoing Contemporary Worship service under the leadership of Mike Townsend. We also have Children and Preschool ministries led by LoVana Alberts and Kayla Nielsen. And just a couple of years ago, God brought Morris Whitener to be our Associate Pastor. Through his leadership, we have a Monday night Bible study as well as other visitation and witnessing efforts for our church. Our Youth were able to become involved in a fireworks stand in Gainesville that brings in over \$10,000 per year. So no youth left behind is SOP (standard operating procedure) at Shady Shores. Kevin Edwards is doing a great job of leading this ministry. Paid nursery workers keep the kids so the parents can go to worship. I would be remiss if I failed to mention The Tabernacle Tours. In the spring of 2016 a ministry out of Florida brought a full-size replica of the Old Testament Tabernacle. Between Rob Price and Morris Whitener we gave several tours over a 5 month period. We also collected over \$27,000 for children in Africa who are orphans due to the Aids epidemic. We impacted the lives of over 13 million children. Doesn't make sense does it.

One of the greatest ministries is our prayer ministries. Jack and Linda Blanton started the Tuesday Morning Prayer Partners and even though Jack went home to the Lord, it is still as active and effective as it was when they started it. Along with that we have a new prayer ministry called "The Stitchers" meeting weekly at Janet Jenny's home. (They rejected my suggestion that they call themselves the "Knit Wits.") They knit prayer shawls and pray over them before taking them to people who are home bound or in the hospital. Pat Botts who has been around here for the past umpteen years said one of the things she liked about our church was the emphasis on

prayer. We are still praying about how we might be able to expand beyond where we are prayer-wise.

Our “Shady Ladies” women’s ministry is becoming renowned in our area. I get comments from people who recognize our ladies and say “You are one of those Shady Ladies.” And their t-shirts include the statement, “Under the shadow of the Cross.” Our men have been active in building, maintaining and enhancing our property. New A/C’s, new sound equipment, 2 new electronic pianos...and the list goes on and on. I know I am leaving out way too many things that have happened in our fellowship. Just suffice it to say, we are making a name for our Lord, and not for ourselves. He is the author and finisher of our faith and is truly the Lord of our church.

Okay, that’s the past. Where do we go from here. Well, one thing we have learned is that we look to see where God is already working and then determine how we can get in on what He is doing. One thing that you are beginning to hear about from Carlos Morales and our Missions Team is the “Come As You Are” emphasis starting in 2018. This is an opportunity to pray for, encourage and ultimately invite our friends, neighbors and family to join us on a Sunday to be announced. It is our prayer that some of these folks will decide to join us. It is also our prayer that we may be able to reach people who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The bedrock of this effort comes out of the Great Commission and the Great Commandment.

The Great Commission: [Matthew 28:18-20](#).

<sup>18</sup> “And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” ([Matthew 28:18-20 NAS77](#)).

The Great Commandment: [Matthew 22:35-40](#).

<sup>35</sup> “And one of them, a lawyer, asked Him *a question*, testing Him, <sup>36</sup> “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” <sup>37</sup> And He said to him, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.’ <sup>38</sup> This is the great and foremost commandment. <sup>39</sup> The second is like it, YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ <sup>40</sup> On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets” ([Matthew 22:35-40 NAS77](#)).

Another thing we will be doing in the New Year, we will be training and activating a Deacon Body to minister to the congregation. I believe we have found some men who will be great deacons. This will be a blessing to our church. Along with that training, I will be conducting witnessing training to help people have the tools they need to lead someone to faith in Christ. We have the Commandment and we have the Commission. Now we will be striving to equip everyone in our church to fulfill our mission. As long as we keep our eyes on Jesus, there is no way we can fail. As He said in ([Matthew 6:31-34 NAS77](#)).

<sup>31</sup> “Do not be anxious then, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘With what shall we clothe ourselves?’ <sup>32</sup> For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. <sup>33</sup> But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you. <sup>34</sup> Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. *Each day has enough trouble of its own*” ([Matthew 6:31-34 NAS77](#)).

One final thought: I spent a number of years studying “Church Growth” while I was in seminary. I have sense learned that is the wrong emphasis. The right emphasis is “Church Health.” If an organism is healthy, it will grow. I believe our church is the healthiest church around. Don’t you?

**See you Sunday: Looking Up, Reaching Out, Going Forward.**

**From My Heart To Yours,**

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