

HOPE & HARMONY

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF MARY ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH



In This Issue

WELCOME

TRANSFORMED

A JOURNEY IN
CHRIST

GOOD FOR THE SOUL

ANNOUNCEMENTS,
EVENTS, & UPDATES

WELCOME!

Spring is in full swing! My family has been spending more time outside, and the days are stretching longer. Our garden is plowed and the first plants have been put in the ground. The garden area of Lowe's can easily become an all day outing for me. We even recently discovered 4 tiny baby chickadees in a birdhouse my daughter hung last summer. All of the newness of the season is such a welcome change after the cold days and long nights of winter.

Our church is also experiencing a newness and growth as we welcome our new pastor, Joe Stroud. We thank our hard-working and diligent search team for allowing the Holy Spirit to guide them to bring in someone who is excited to jump into his role at MEBC. In this brief issue, we have included a letter from Pastor Joe about his journey to MEBC, and an article looking at the similarities of a springtime creature and our spiritual lives.

We hope with the recent celebration of Easter, our spirits are renewed in the remembrance of Christ's victory over the grave, and his gift of salvation. We pray that your spirit is refreshed by the living water that Jesus provides. I pray that as we plant and harvest our gardens, we remember that we are to labor in the fields of ministry to meet the plentiful harvest (Matthew 9:35-37).



TRANSFORMED

My daughter has become an avid caterpillar catcher. She enjoys holding them as she shows them around our yard, and she sometimes creates homes for them. She recently created a leafy home for one in a frisbee, and when we checked on “Nectar” the next day we were pleasantly surprised to find it had made a cocoon! She knows a little about the lifecycle of butterflies & moths, but to see it in action is exciting! We are looking forward to seeing the moth emerge in the next few days.

In my opinion, the transformation of a caterpillar to a moth or butterfly has always been quite the idea to ponder. These creatures go from merely creeping along the ground munching leaves and plants to flying through the air and lightly landing on flowers drinking sweet nectar. Imagine the change in perspective!

The method of eating, moving, even the primary focus for living shifts completely when the moth or butterfly emerges from the pupa stage. Not only that, but how the insect appears to the world has drastically changed.

As he frequently does, God has provided a real, tangible symbol of a spiritual truth in our observable world. Just as a butterfly completely changes from a caterpillar, so do we when we accept Christ. In 2 Corinthians, Paul wrote “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

When we accept the gift of salvation, we are transformed. Our perspective shifts to eternal life in Christ with victory over sin and the grave. Just as the butterfly drifts on the breeze and no longer drags along the ground, we are no longer tethered to the cares and troubles of the flesh and this world instead we strive to please God and “set our minds on things above.” (Colossians 3:2).

Just as the butterfly no longer seeks leaves, but searches for sweet nectar to sustain itself, we no longer look to the desires of the flesh, but we seek the living water that Christ offers.

Finally, the moth or butterfly looks very different from the caterpillar. When we become Christians, our “new creation” should appear very differently to the world around us. Specifically, in Colossians chapter 3, Paul says “But now, put away all the following: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and filthy language from your mouth. Do not lie to one another.” Instead, “as God’s chosen ones, holy and dearly loved, put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another... Above all, put on love... And be thankful.” (Colossians 3:5-17)

ALL THINGS BECOME

NEW

As our little “Nectar” emerges from the cocoon and spreads its wings, I pray that I continue to mature as a “new creation” and I thank God for the new life He has given me through his Son.



A JOURNEY IN CHRIST

JOE STROUD

The bible says in Exodus 23:20, "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into a place which I have prepared."

God has brought me into a new place that I believe God has prepared. It has been and is a privilege to have had the opportunity to serve Christ through His church. In the providence of God, I have had the blessing of three wonderful churches in my past. Now, the beginning of a fourth Church to serve has begun. The church is wonderful, because Jesus "shed His blood" to redeem and call His church to make disciples.

This journey began at Shiloh Baptist in upstate SC. It was in that church, as a nine year boy in a R.A. meeting, that The Holy Spirit came into my life. There a journey began that is still in progress to this day. As we know, this journey will not be complete until we are with Jesus in heaven. However, I have found that the church is God's channel for the spiritual food we need for this present journey for our life. It was at Shiloh that

the foundation of my Christian life and faith has been built upon. There I learned the Hymns like: What a Friend we have in Jesus; There is a land that is fairer than day and By Faith we can see it afar; and Christ Arose from the grave with mighty triumph o'er his foes. It was at Shiloh where I received Believers Baptism, married Sissy, and where in 1977 answered the call to the gospel ministry.

The second church was Centerivew in Marshville, NC (1985-2013). It was at Centerview that Christ clothed me and my family with people who gave me their patience, understanding, guidance, love, and prayers as I grew as a pastor. There God gave us incredibly special friends that remain to this day. It was at Centerview that I had the privilege to first lead in the two ordinances of our church... Believers Baptism and the Lord Supper.

The third church was Midway Baptist in Chesterfield, SC (2014-2025). Midway gave me love, support and kindness through some of the most difficult days of my life thus far. During those years, the death of five loved ones where difficult, as you know who have lost loved ones. The most hurtful is the death of my precious wife Sissy of 52 years.

Throughout Sissy's illness the church supported me with additional financial support, love and time to care for Sissy during her most difficult days. The love Midway gave me during and through that time has and will always have a special place in my heart and Life.

Now the fourth Church. Mary Elizabeth Church in Waxhaw. My heart is touched with the acceptance and Christian love already given to me by the congregation. God is blessing as we begin this new journey to serve The Lord together. The warmth from the smiles, friendliness and acceptance as a brother in Christ is appreciated. Yes, as The verse says in Exodus 23:20 God has sent his Angel before me. And that he will keep us in the way He has prepared for us.

I am very excited to trust God and to experience "the great things He will do" in and through His people at Mary Elizabeth Baptist Church. It is my prayer that God will enable me, through The Holy Spirit, to be obedient to Him and an example of Christ's love, grace and truth to His church -Mary Elizabeth.

Love In Christ,
Joe

APRIL

UPCOMING*



- MOTHER'S DAY
 - MAY 11
- WOMEN'S SUPPER & DEVOTIONAL
 - MAY 16, 6 PM
- VBS
 - JUNE 8-12
 - MEAL: 5:45 PM
 - CLASSES: 6:30 PM- 8:45 PM

*CLICK THE EVENT FOR MORE INFO & SHARABLE FLYER

MEBC HIGHLIGHTS

CELEBRATING BAPTISM

WE ARE EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE NATE WAS BAPTIZED AND IS NOW A MEMBER OF MEBC AND A BROTHER IN CHRIST. MAY WE DO OUR PART AS A CHURCH IN FOSTERING HIS GROWTH AS A CHRISTIAN.

VBS

VBS WILL BE HELD JUNE 8-12TH. ONLINE REGISTRATION IS OPEN NOW! WE LOOK FORWARD TO SHARING THE GOSPEL AND GOD'S LOVE!

WISDOM CORNER

"But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."

Isaiah 40:31

GOOD FOR THE SOUL

SINCE IT'S PRIME TIME FOR MY FAVORITE HOBBY, HERE ARE SOME GARDENING JOKES!

Q: WHAT'S THE EASIEST WAY TO STOP A DOG FROM DIGGING IN THE GARDEN?
A: TAKE AWAY HIS SHOVEL!

Q: WHY CAN'T THE FLOWER RIDE HIS BIKE?
A: BECAUSE HE LOST HIS PETALS!

Q: WHAT DO YOU GET IF YOU CROSS A SHEEP DOG WITH A DAISY?
A: COLLIE-FLOWER.

Q: WHY DID NO ONE LAUGH AT THIS POOR FARMER'S JOKES?
A: THEY WERE TOO CORNY!



THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND INTEREST WITHIN OUR CHURCH & COMMUNITY. PLEASE FORWARD OUR NEWSLETTER TO A FRIEND! IF YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR OUR NEWSLETTER OR HAVE CONTENT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE FEATURED PLEASE CONTACT US AT: MEBC3703@GMAIL.COM