

# ~ Visions ~

**LENDALE BAPTIST CHURCH**  
*A caring community of equality and grace.*

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## Interim Pastor, Mahan Siler

On February 22, Mahan Siler joined us as our interim pastor and will be with us through the first week of May. Mahan retired as pastor of Pullen Memorial Baptist Church in Raleigh, NC in the spring of 2003. He has served in churches in various states and currently lives in Asheville, NC with his wife, Janice. They have four children and several grandchildren, some of whom live in Asheville.

Mahan will be with us 8 Sundays and 7 Wednesday nights. He will lead us in some Saturday sessions, where we will talk about our church and the changes we anticipate as we move toward a co-pastorate. He is a very creative guy, and we will certainly benefit from the Bible studies, worship services, leadership, and pastoral care he will offer us. Welcome, Mahan!

### A Personal Word about Mahan Siler from Deborah Lynn

It is exciting to me that Mahan Siler will be with us for the next few weeks. He and Janice, his partner, have been an important part of my life since my seminary days when I lived in theological community with them.

Over the 19 years I have known Mahan, I have heard him speak with a strong prophetic voice in the face of injustice in our world and in the church. I have seen him embody pastoral ministry in ways that not only comfort and support, but help people to grow in all parts of life. He is prophet, pastor, teacher and friend. Integrity and compassion are evident in his words and his actions.

Mahan was involved in the Civil Rights struggles of the 1960s. He took a leadership role opposing the dismantling of Baptist principles by the fundamentalists who took

control of the SBC. And before many religious leaders dared speak the words, he was advocating for equal rights for LGBT folks and calling the church to embrace all of God's children without regard to sexual orientation. Mahan is a person of deep faith and commitment, who opens himself to God's voice in the narratives of life.

He laughs a lot, especially at himself. Mahan is quick to admit his imperfections. He values and respects the opinions of others—even, or maybe especially, those who differ from him. That should be an asset at Glendale!

We welcome you, Mahan. We are eager to learn with you and from you as we live into the vision of shared ministry and anticipate the coming of another pastor among us.

## Hello from Mahan Siler

Here I come, another "interim," just when you are letting go of John and his good work. It must not be easy for you to get used to another person who will be with you for a limited time. With all of the changes during the past year, I'm sure you appreciate April and other leaders who have provided the steady continuity.

Yet, given the limits, I want you to know of my excitement in being with you. I have admired you from a distance; now I can belong for a spell. I see myself coming alongside of your vital life together, contributing where I can. April and Deborah have been friends for years. I will enjoy working with April as you anticipate calling a permanent pastor to partner with her in ministry.

I will have seven Sundays, 38 days with you. Not much time. Help me use this time to our mutual benefit by making suggestions, entering into dialogue, asking for conversation. In the time we have together, I promise to be as present as I can be, believing that in that mutual promise God will be present --- summoning, disturbing, encouraging, and challenging us during this Lenten/Easter season.

—Mahan Siler

## Interim Committee: Thanks to Rev. John Laney

On behalf of the congregation, the members of the Interim Committee express gratitude to Rev. John Laney for serving as our interim pastor since September 1<sup>st</sup>. It was this committee's responsibility to invite someone for this position. We felt good about asking John to join us, and as we reflect on this time together, we are certain that our decision was the right one. John has endeared himself to Glendale in this short span of time. When John arrived in Nashville in early August to meet us, he had already "done his homework". By studying the church membership roll and our last pictorial directory, he knew names and family connections. From brief biographical overviews that members had written, John learned something about us and apparently memorized the information. That action on his part really amazed the members of the committee. It let us know that he was truly interested in us.

John exudes a caring presence, affirming individuals and the church congregation as a whole. He is genuinely glad to see us. And how good that feels! We appreciate his faithfulness in visiting and ministering to shut-ins. His sensitivity for folks during illness and in distress is reassuring

and comforting. His preaching has been right on target for messages that we needed to hear. John does not mince words on expressing his beliefs in the pulpit. That has been good for us.

John expressed to the interim committee in October that he was concerned about our financial state and the manner in which we address stewardship. His depth of understanding on that issue led church leaders—particularly "three wise women" (Martha Jo Berry, Raye Nell Dyer, and Eileen Campbell-Reed )—to spearhead leadership and formulate an ongoing study of "Rightly Dividing the Wealth." We have John to thank for clarifying this need to pay closer attention to each person's responsibility for stewardship.

We know that Glendale is unique in many ways and is having an "atypical" interim. John has been flexible with the situation, and his good sense of humor combined with his dedication to God's service have helped him work with us these last several months. John, we are indebted to you. Thank you for coming to us and for loving us through this interim time. The members of Glendale Baptist Church are blessed by your presence.

## THANKS FROM JOHN LANEY

My article in last month's was supposed to be my final one, but you made my last Sunday as your associate pastor so memorable for me that I must express my deep and profound gratitude.

The beautiful communion stole is one that I will always cherish as a reminder of the beautiful Glendalers who gave it to me and with whom I was privileged to share communion. I'm also grateful for a number of individual or group gifts such as a book of hymn stories by a Nashville author, a box of GooGoo Clusters, and a package of Hershey's kisses.

The beautifully decorated basket with a GBC medallion and filled with so many touching notes from a host of members, including children, means more to me than you can imagine.

Finally, the enthusiastic affirmation which you gave to Joan Yarborough and me on the announcement of our engagement to be married, while a bit surprising and embarrassing, was nevertheless deeply appreciated.

Many, many thanks for being such marvelous people!!

—John Laney

## **A Report from *Your* Church Council . . .**

This report was presented at the Quarterly Business Meeting,  
Sunday, February 15, 2004.

- We began 2004 with the exterior of our building freshly painted, windows washed, and the steeple repaired. We are seven weeks into the year, and lots of good things are happening!
- Jason Crosby, Vanderbilt Divinity student, joined the staff as an intern for this semester.
- The computers in the church office were cleaned up, and new software was added. The next step will be an overhaul of our telephone/internet system. This will include a dedicated fax line, a dedicated internet line, six telephones, no “busy” signal, and free long distance. The networking system is up and running, and speed will be improved with the upcoming work.
- We spent two planning sessions in January discussing Rightly Dividing the Wealth— developing questions and constructive proposals. We will continue this discussion in the coming weeks.
- The communications division has developed a series of ads for Glendale that will be presented in a variety of ways from flyers to t-shirts for youth camp. You will be seeing these soon!
- We have asked Mahan Siler to serve as our Interim Pastor and give our heartfelt appreciation and thanks to John Laney for his ministry to Glendale during this first phase of our Interim period.
- Our hand bell choir began a regular practice schedule in January.
- We look forward to a new worship experience for our children with “Celebrate”—ten minutes following the worship service.
- There will be a Discipleship class for 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> graders beginning February 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Anne-Leslie is planning another exciting evening at Glendale with “Writer’s Night” on February 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- We are writing another letter to the Friends of Glendale, inviting all to participate in our Lenten Season.
- Our financial picture is improving, with our debt decreasing and current giving ample to meet our financial responsibilities thus far in the year.
- We are planning a new pictorial directory for late Spring.
- Our youth are planning a trip to Cuba and back to Baptist Youth Camp.
- We have had no further communication from Belmont Heights Baptist Church.
- We express our appreciation for the ongoing work of the Interim Committee and the Discernment and Search Committee.

2004 is off to a great start with much promise for the days ahead.

Martha Jo Berry, Church Council Chair

## **Pie Supper and Business Meeting**

The 27<sup>th</sup> annual pie supper was held at the Ramage’s home on February 15, following the first quarterly business meeting. We celebrated John Laney as well as the recent engagement of John to Joan Yarborough. A great time was had by all!

## **Ash Wednesday**

An Ash Wednesday vespers service will be held on Wednesday, February 25. All are invited to participate in this special service marking the beginning of the season of Lent.

## **Luke 14:12**

This program at Edgehill Methodist Church continues to serve 110-120 people. Glendale helps prepare and serve lunch the second Tuesday of each month. We have faithful volunteers, but more are welcome. Please let Joy Gooch know if you are interested.

## **Writer’s Night**

The Membership Division brought back “Writers’ Night” for the second year. Many writers of song, poetry, and prose shared their original work (or someone else’s original work) on Sunday evening, February 22, from 5:30-7:30. Hors d’oeuvres, prepared by most everyone who attended, were enjoyed throughout the evening. This was also the first official Sunday for Mahan Siler, our new interim pastor. Mahan shared with us and was presented with a basket of Nashville and Tennessee goodies.

## MOVIE AND DISCUSSION OF GENDER IDENTITY

The movie "Normal," starring Jessica Lang and Tom Wilkinson, will be shown at Glendale on Sunday, Feb 29th at 5:45 PM. The film portrays an active church couple in a rural community as they cope with Gender Identity Disorder. After the ninety-minute film, Elise and Joni Elrod will share their experiences in family, faith, and career.

Some parents have raised questions about youth seeing the movie and participating in the discussion. The original HBO movie contains language and one scene that would warrant an R rating. However, Elise found these offensive and has digitally edited the film she will be showing to cut the scene and delete the inappropriate language. If parents have other questions, they may contact Elise Elrod or April Baker. Childcare will be provided.

On Tuesday, March 22nd, Elise will lead a forum at 7:00 PM in Vanderbilt' s Divinity School. Glendalers are invited to attend that forum.

### TNT

Our church hosted a meeting of the TNT (Tying Nashville Together) Clergy on Tuesday, February 10. They dealt with major TNT initiatives in the areas of education, health care, and neighborhoods and affordable housing. They also considered plans for promoting **TNT's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration** and delegate assembly. Around two thousand people are expected for this gathering, which will also include significant representation from partner organizations in other parts of Tennessee. All presidential candidates are being invited, with indications that at least some of them will attend.

**Bill Howell, from TNT**, spoke on Wednesday, February 18. He encouraged us to attend the anniversary celebration and delegate assembly at Temple Baptist Church on Sunday, March 21, at 4:30 p.m. Glendale Baptist Church has been asked to send 25 persons. **Kreis and Jennifer White** can tell you more about this. Put it on your calendar now!

**Celebrate! has begun!** This new Sunday worship opportunity for preschool and elementary children, their parents, and other Glendalers began on Sunday, February 22. Children and others gathered at the front of the sanctuary for a brief (10 minutes) time of music and storytelling at 11:40 (or shortly after worship ends). All are invited to join this group each Sunday.

Tennessee Cooperative Baptist Fellowship  
"One Song: Celebrating Christian Unity"  
Trinity Baptist Church, Cordova ~ April 23-24, 2004

**Jason Crosby, our pastoral intern** from Vanderbilt University, will lead us in a discussion about his work at the Tennessee Environmental Council on Wednesday, March 3. We will also be privileged to hear Jason preach on Sunday, March 21.

### TIME OUT!

April will lead **Time Out!, a discipleship class for children in grades 4-7 beginning Sunday, February 22.** This will be an opportunity for exploring their faith and the meaning of church membership. It provides a small group setting for learning, discussing, and asking questions about God, the Bible, and church. It will also offer the possibility of joining the church through a public profession of Christian faith and baptism. Such a decision is a personal one. Young people are welcome to participate without choosing to be baptized at this time. April and the children will share lunch together each Sunday after Celebrate! and learn together until 1:15. The class will end on April 4.

**Knitters, unite!** Glendale's knitting group has met two months in a row. Folks have gathered at the homes of Margaret McGill and Dot Pearigen on Saturday mornings to knit and have a light lunch. Both seasoned and novice knitters are welcome. The date for March is TBA.

The Alliance of Baptists  
18<sup>th</sup> Annual Convocation  
April 16-18, 2004  
Dayton, OH  
[www.AllianceofBaptists.org](http://www.AllianceofBaptists.org)

## Exploring Life as a Community of Faith

Using the book *Creating a Healthier Church* by Ron Richardson, Mahan Siler will be leading an interactive study/discussion using systems theory to talk about our church and the changes we anticipate with new leadership. The book is a readable introduction to systems thinking related to the church. Mahan hopes to expand the scope to include our own families, but keep the emphasis on the congregational system.

Everyone is encouraged to participate in the sessions. They will be held on Saturday mornings and possibly repeated on Sunday afternoons if necessary. Each session will be 9:00 am - 11:30 am on the following dates.

February 28

March 27

April 3

April 24

We' d like for as many people as possible to participate. It will be important to commit to all sessions.

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## **Adult Sunday School Spring 2004**

Reading the Bible again for the first time is the goal of **BibleStudy@Glendale.etc.** The Bible is considered a fundamental feature of Baptist spirituality. This class, led by Richard Sapp, attempts to reclaim and renew this important Baptist fundamental. In addition to the Bible, the class uses other resources, including the internet. Currently the class is studying "Mary Magdalene and New Testament Traditions." They meet downstairs in the second room across from the fellowship hall.

David Shepherd leads the **Men's Class**, which meets downstairs in the first room across from the fellowship hall. They are currently discussing the book, *A New Kind of Christian*, by Brian McLaren.

The **Reflections Class** is co-facilitated by Stuart Harris and Annette Sisson, who encourage a high level of participation from class members. This class reads, discusses, and probes works of contemporary non-fiction, fiction, or poetry that address theology, God's relationship to humanity, humanity's relationship to society and to one another, etc. Currently they are using *The Other Side*. *The Other Side* is an ecumenical magazine

that "weaves together personal spirituality, social transformation, and the creative spirit to advance a progressive Christian vision that is biblical, compassionate, and infused with the radical hope of Jesus." The Reflections Class meets in the classroom to the right at the top of the central stairwell.

The **Special Studies Class** meets in the conference room on the second floor of the education wing. John Halbert, Joy Smith, and Charles Warford facilitate this group, which shares teaching responsibilities. They are currently reading and discussing *Rumors of Another World: What on Earth are We Missing?* by Philip Yancey.

The **20's - 30's Adult Class** meets in the room above the foyer. At the top of the central stairwell, turn right. The room is at the end of the hallway. David Elkins leads this group of college-age, young singles, and young couples who have begun a new series on "Sharing Your Faith."

Currently, two **Companions in Christ** groups are meeting on Sunday mornings and Monday evenings.

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## **CBF Continues Humanitarian Aid to Hurting People**

- **North Korea** — The Fellowship contributed \$10,000 to provide food to children living in three different North Korean orphanages, as well as for construction workers rebuilding water canals destroyed by massive flooding.
- **Iraq** — CBF channeled more than \$40,000 from churches, individuals, and existing Fellowship relief funds toward relief efforts in Iraq.
- **Liberia** — The Fellowship sent \$10,000 in emergency relief funds to Monrovia, Liberia, through Baptist World Aid — the assistance arm of the Baptist World Alliance.
- **India** — An accidental fire left the Banjara Gypsy community in Hyderabad, India devastated. Fellowship funds totaling \$2,300, along with \$1,000 from an existing auto rickshaw project, provided 26 bicycles and 30 bicycle rickshaws to the community, allowing 56 families to recover quickly from the fire.

## Discernment & Search Committee Update “Parallel Processes”

Our largest task right now is to listen deeply to the candidates who have entered into this process of discernment with us. We are gradually clarifying those with whom we can move ahead and those from whom we must depart with blessings. In addition to this winnowing work, we are also working on "parallel processes," which interface with a number of church divisions and committees and include the following:

\* Space questions - where will we locate our co-pastors? We have met twice with an architect to brainstorm ideas and look at sketches of possible long-term solutions to our needs. With a set of alternative sketches, we will begin to interface with the personnel and properties committees, as well as the church council and staff, on this important matter. In the short-term, we will need to develop a creative solution for receiving a new person when s/he comes.

\* Computers – how will our new pastor be able to work at a computer and receive email? The staff needs to be networked through the building and be on-line at the same time. (Thomas Connor and April Baker were ahead of us and have pretty well taken care of this, although changes to our space might require additional reconfiguration.)

\* Sound system – how can we improve the sounds of worship for our church members and visitors who are hearing impaired? Several members have asked us to find someone who can be heard easily when preaching, and it seems obvious that we need to make any speaker (present or future) easily heard by those with difficulty. Together with those who run sound and with April, we are researching the possibilities.

\* Financial compensation packages for our co-pastors – what pay and benefits will our pastors need and can we afford?

\* Integration – how does a new person fit into the life of the congregation and day-to-day work of the church? The personnel committee is working on better total integration for new staff.

\* Website – how are we continuing to describe ourselves online? As we move closer to a call, remaining candidates will be visiting our website regularly, and we want to keep it as up-to-date as possible.

Please watch and listen for brief updates periodically on Wednesday nights, and in writing in Sunday' s worship order in coming weeks. Our next update is scheduled for Wednesday, March 17.

If you have any particular concerns, thoughts, or questions on any of these items, please let us know. Thanks so much for your support and prayers!

*Discernment and Search Committee: Eileen Campbell-Reed, Louise Clifton, Jimmy Davis,  
Christy Halbert, Jim Hiatt, Nell Magee, Dave Shepherd*

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## Youth Happenings

All three **youth Sunday School classes** are finishing up the Judson Press curriculum, *We are Baptist*. The girls, led by Chalene Helmuth, meet in the first room on the left at the top of the central stairwell. The 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade boys are co-led by David Gooch and Jim Berry. They meet upstairs in the large youth room. Jimmy Davis leads the 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys who meet in the room on the right, just before the youth room.

### The past month. . .

The **youth band** is in full swing. New members are invited to join. Practices are scheduled for Sundays, February 22 and 29, 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.

The youth collected a **“Souper Bowl” offering for hunger** on February 1. Later that day, a **Super Bowl party** was held at the Sisson-Davis home, complete with chicken tenders from Otters.

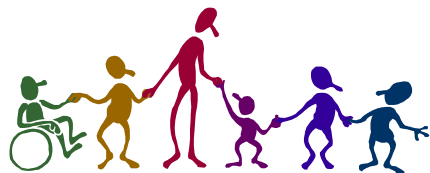
**Stephanie Wyatt** met with the youth on February 11 and 18 while Thomas was at the Baptist Youth Camp planning meeting and the board meeting for the Baptist Peace Fellowship.

### Things to come. . .

Plans are underway for Friday, March 5. **The girls will serve dinner at Dismas House while the boys serve dinner to our Room in the Inn guests.** Afterwards, everyone will meet together for laser quest, a movie, bowling, or the laser show in Dickson. Parents will need to pick up youth at 11:30 p.m., as everyone will need to be back at church early the next morning to prepare and serve breakfast for Room in the Inn. Details are available from Anne-Leslie and Thomas.

Those going to the **Baptist Youth Camp at Laurel Ridge, NC**, will be leave on June 26 and return on July 2.

## Kid's Corner



*Keep your heart clean with peace. Don't get it dirty with greed. It is not too late to clean it.*

*—Kaila Spencer  
Age 8, Colorado*

During **Faithful Friends in February**, Eileen Campbell-Reed and Louise Clifton led the children in a time of learning about how we are looking for another pastor. The children also made thank you cards for John Laney.

**Faithful Friends** is scheduled for the usual third **Sunday, March 21**.

Members of the children' s team met recently and determined a few possible dates fo**Vacation Bible School** this summer. As in recent years, VBS will meet four evenings, beginning with Sunday afternoon and concluding on Wednesday evening. Parents, please look at your calendar and let Julie Coulter know which, if any, of these dates work for your family: July 11-14, July 25-28, August 1-4. We want to schedule VBS when most everyone is in town.

The three **preschool Sunday School classes** meet on the first floor of the education wing. Babies are loved and cared for by Rhonda Pearson each Sunday morning. One and two year olds are taught by Pat Elkins and Cathy Wood. They meet in the room across from the babies. Three and four year olds meet at the end of the hall on the left. Jennifer White and Larry Cohen teach these children.

The **Elementary Sunday School class**, grades K – 5, uses curriculum developed by Linda Ray Miller, the teacher. The first third of class focuses on music. The second third centers around a Bible story which is taken from one of the scripture lessons to be used in worship the same morning. During the last part of class, the children are divided into two age groups for activities. Claire Richardson assists with this group that meets at the end of the hall on the second floor of the education wing.