

St. John's Baptist Church Profile



A Servant Community: Actively Faithful, Faithfully Active

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St. John's Baptist: What We Believe

Mission Statement

St. John's Baptist Church

A Servant Community: Actively Faithful, Faithfully Active

Vision Statement

St. John's Baptist Church is a fellowship of **faith** bound by a covenant with God and each other and committed to the ideals of **community, freedom, service and worship**. Together we seek...

Faith revealed through **community** with each other and the world around us.

Faith expressed as **freedom** through association, individual interpretation and personal relationship with God.

Faith demonstrated in **service** to our local and global community, inspired by the message and spirit of Jesus Christ.

Faith celebrated through public **worship** and joyful praise for the glory of God.

St. John's Baptist: What We Believe

A Selection of our Core Values

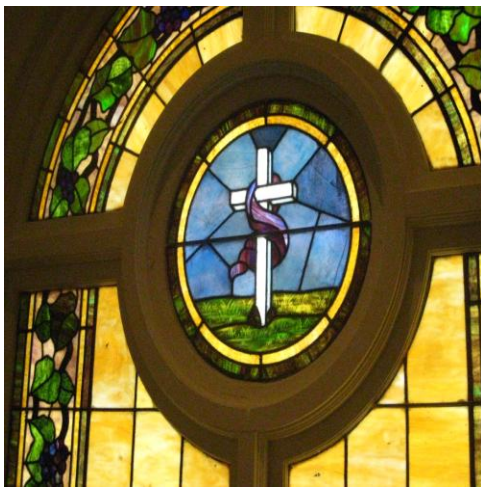
- We are committed to each other as members of the family of faith.
- We are committed to sharing our finances, time and talents.
- We are committed to sharing the Good News.
- We are committed to the community around us.
- We are committed to the family (with all the 21st century variations) from cradle to grave.
- We are committed to active participation with other communities of faith.
- We are an autonomous community of faith.
- We are committed to inclusion and openness to any person who seeks to be a Child of God.
- We strive earnestly to study and grow on our theological journey.
- We are committed to a shared leadership model.
- We are committed to a free pulpit and free pew.
- We are a servant Church and support the servanthood of the many members who seek to “do unto the least of these” in home and foreign missions.
- We are committed to public worship, prayer and celebration for the glory of God.
- We are committed to each person's spiritual growth.

* The complete St. John's Baptist Church Statement of Core Values can be found at www.stjohnsbaptistchurch.org

St. John's Baptist: Where We've Been

A Brief History

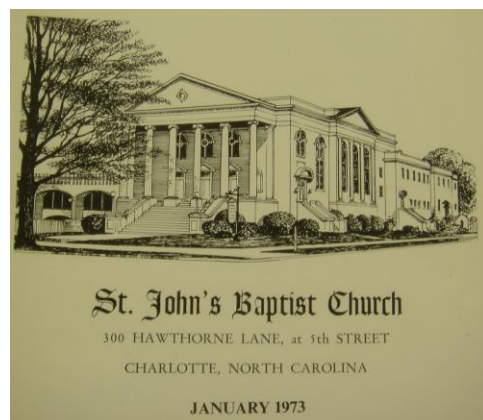
On March 26, 1922 some 200 worshipers met to organize St. John's Baptist Church. This meeting was the culmination of a series of gatherings, prayer groups and conferences of Baptists concerned with the progress of their denomination in the growing eastern suburbs of Charlotte.



The church had begun primarily as an outreach of First Baptist Church of Charlotte, but in an action that was perhaps symbolic of future events, the small group of pioneers determined to accept full responsibility for establishing the new church without help from existing congregations. Just four years later, they dedicated the main sanctuary building in 1926. Dr. Joseph A. Gaines and Dr. C. W. Durden served as the first two pastors, leading the church through financial crises and establishing firm footing for years to come.

Dr. Claude U. Broach became senior minister in 1944, and under his leadership St. John's realized her most significant growth in missions and community ministry. Dr. Broach led the church to develop and nurture the "servant church" concept. His tenure is noted for his belief in ecumenism and an emphasis on racial harmony in Charlotte and its faith communities, notably in the wake of the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education decision and later Swann v. Mecklenburg Board of Education decision, and continuing throughout the next decades. He was the only Baptist

minister to attend Vatican II with Pope John XXIII and was the first director of the Ecumenical Institute after retiring from St. John's as senior minister. Under Dr. Broach church policy was changed to allow Believer's Baptism rather than Baptism by immersion for candidates for membership from non-Baptist denominations.



Dr. Julian Cave, senior minister from 1978 to 1986, broadened the church's social ministry. St. John's expanded her emphasis on community and regional missions projects, building a church in Pinch, West Virginia, and constructing homes in Charlotte in partnership with Habitat for Humanity.

Dr. Thomas H. Graves became senior minister in October 1987. He helped initiate a revitalization of the St. John's spirit before leaving to become the first president of the new Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond. Two events from his tenure highlight the independence of St. John's: the membership policy was officially changed so that re-baptism would no longer be required for Christians from non-Baptist denominations, and the United Baptist Association was formed with other moderate Baptist churches.



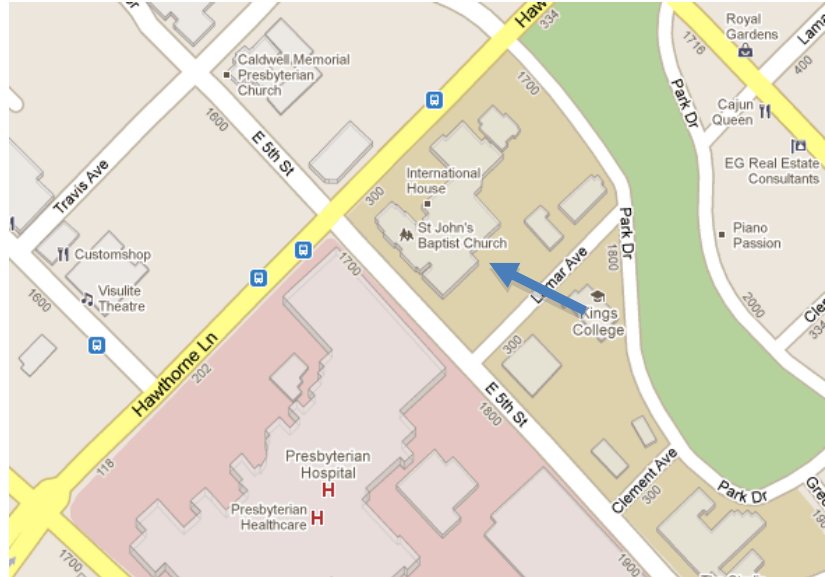
Dr. Wm. Richard Kremer became St. John's sixth pastor in November 1991 and served until 2009. A graduate of Southern Baptist Seminary, Dr. Kremer came to St. John's after pastorates in Kentucky and South Carolina. Dr. Kremer led the church in navigating a period that was marked by distress with the policies of the current Southern Baptist Convention and the North Carolina Baptist Convention. During this time St. John's emphasized connections within the Elizabeth neighborhood and throughout the city, continuing her focus on justice, social issues and hands-on community service. Dr. Kremer was recognized for his intellectually and spiritually challenging messages delivered from the St. John's pulpit.

St. John's has made her mark on Charlotte. Rather than adopting the more conservative policies of the current Southern Baptist Convention, St. John's adheres openly to historic Baptist principles of Soul Freedom, Church Freedom, Bible Freedom and Religious Freedom.

St. John's Baptist Church: Where We Are

The Elizabeth Neighborhood and Charlotte, NC

Located at the corner of Hawthorne Lane and Fifth Street, St. John's Baptist Church is 1.9 miles from the intersection of Trade and Tryon Streets, in the Charlotte Center City. The Charlotte, North Carolina metropolitan area has a population of 1.8 million people which continues to grow. Identified as one of our nation's most livable communities, it ranks high regarding quality of life.



Factors such as affordability, ease of commute, ability to connect with other parts of the world, a thriving arts and science community, professional sports and a talented diverse labor force encourage financial investment in the region, new businesses, quality employees and employment opportunities. Despite economic downturns, Charlotte is the second largest banking center in the U.S.

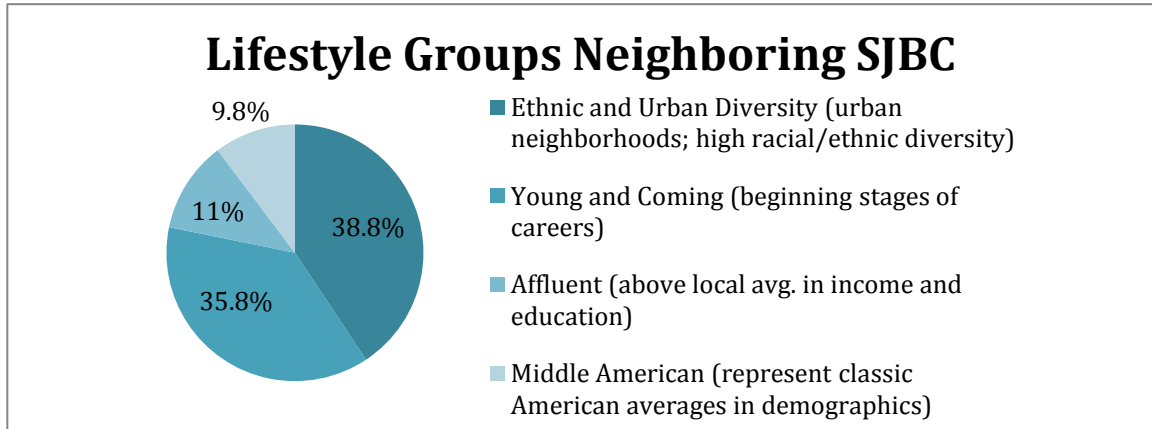
Charlotte has changed during the last half century. No longer do workers turn out the lights and leave the city center when the workday ends. Charlotteans, metro neighbors and tourists flood the streets each evening and on weekends to enjoy world-class events, entertainment and restaurants which are readily available.

When St. John's was founded in 1922, she was considered an outreach ministry to the developing suburbs of the Elizabeth and Myers Park neighborhoods. According to historian Dr. Dan Morrill, both were among the most fashionable of Charlotte's residential areas. During the past 88 years, the city has experienced widespread growth. The metropolitan area extends in almost every direction to the Mecklenburg County line. St. John's remains in her original location, a landmark in the currently rejuvenating Elizabeth Community. Her neighbors include Presbyterian Hospital, a large medical complex, Kings College, businesses, fine dining and neighborhood pubs. There are wide, tree lined streets with single-family and multi-family dwellings and one of the nation's oldest and most beautiful city parks.

Throughout St. John's history, members have come from both the immediate neighborhood and the surrounding metro area. Her reach extends from the heart of

Elizabeth to communities in Lake Norman and Union County. The congregation is committed to reaching out to neighbors in the Elizabeth neighborhood and beyond. St. John's strives to identify and address the physical and spiritual needs of her community.

In the first decade of the 21st century, St. John's has recognized a new local community which has rapidly grown up within a three-mile radius of the church. It not only includes the Elizabeth neighborhood, but newly built Center City residences housing large numbers of urban dwellers. Currently there are 99,459 people residing in 44,241 households in the defined area and that number is projected to consistently increase over the next five years. According to a 2010 report by Percepts, a leading provider of demographic data to faith institutions, individuals 49 and younger make up 75% of the population. "Diversity" best characterizes this community. Racial/ethnic diversity is evident: the white and African-American populations are almost equally represented at approximately 43% and 41%, respectively. Hispanics and other minorities comprise the remaining 16%. The Percepts (2010) demographic study found the lifestyle group of Ethnic and Urban Diversity to be the largest at 38.8%, the Young and Coming follows closely with 35.8% of the total population. Affluent Families (11%) and Middle American Families (9.8%) round out the four largest lifestyle groups within St. John's local community. The variety of lifestyles, wide range of income levels, high numbers of non-traditional families, above average number of rental dwellings, and the above average number of economically struggling households present special opportunities and challenges. The nearby neighbors provide St. John's a source of new and unique talents.



In the document defining core values, St. John's declared a continuing commitment to local service with the following:

"We are a servant Church with a primary focus on local community outreach and missions. While we will serve God's children as God leads us, we recognize that as a center-city community of faith, we have a special responsibility to seek opportunities that will address the unmet social and spiritual needs of communities and individuals within central Charlotte."

In addition, St. John's embraces the wide range of diversity in her newly identified local community, as stated in the following:

"We are committed to the principals of inclusion and openness to all who seek to be a Child of God. We will not allow discrimination in our membership policy against anyone because of race, gender, sexual orientation, station in life or previous religious affiliation. We have settled this position as policy and embrace it fully."

Throughout her history, St. John's has maintained a commitment to strengthening relationships with her neighbors in Charlotte and the larger community of faith. The congregation and staff have examined and take seriously these relationships.

Additional information:

[Elizabeth Community website](#) (link)

[Charlotte Chamber of Commerce 2009 Study](#) (link)

Percepts Demographic study

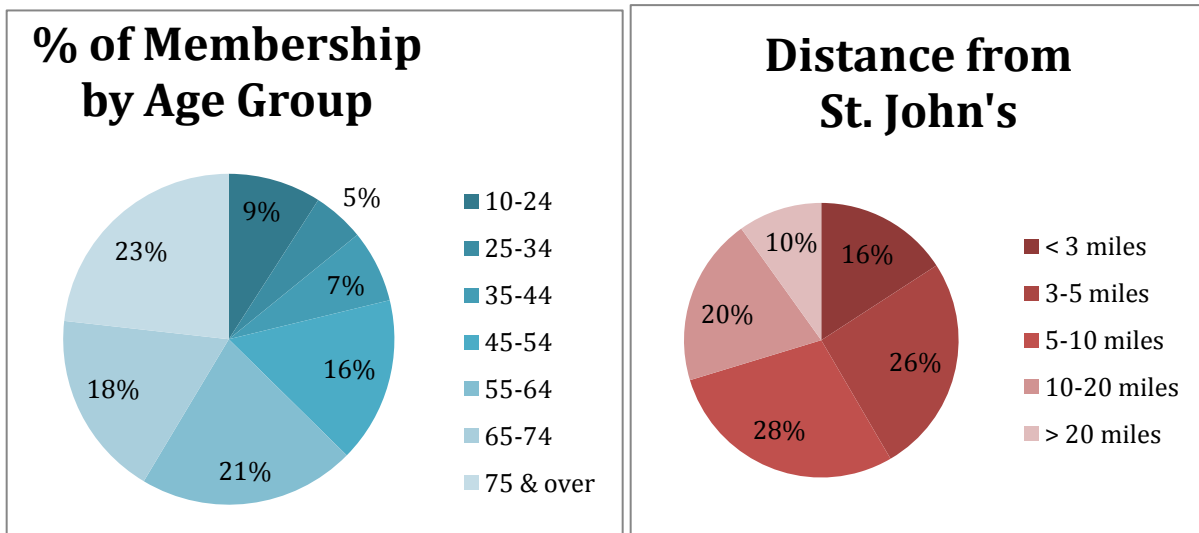
St. John's Baptist: Who We Are

Church Demographics

St. John's Baptist Church is comprised of approximately 600 local members who are active in worship and other church activities. Members and visitors are drawn to the faith community in the Elizabeth neighborhood from the immediate area as well as neighborhoods throughout Charlotte and the surrounding towns. St. John's is an important part of their lives, providing opportunity for Christian relationships, spiritual growth and service ministry.

The congregation worships together in one traditional service at 10:30 each Sunday. Attendance averages 280-300 each week. Worship is preceded by Sunday school for all ages with average weekly attendance of 200-220. St. John's has a vibrant Wednesday evening program: Family Night. Each week throughout the school year there is choir for 3-year-olds through 5th grade, followed by church-wide meals prepared by volunteers and a variety of programming that is appealing to all ages. It is truly where we gather as family for fun, fellowship and study.

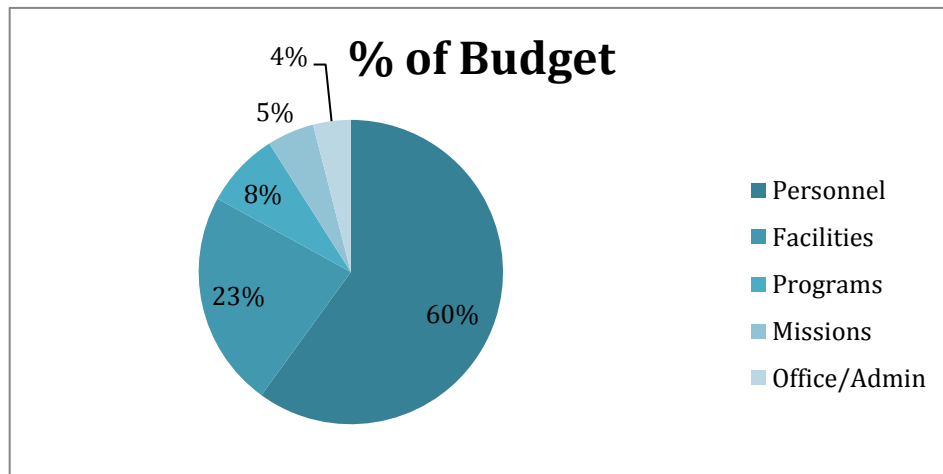
Membership is taken very seriously at St. John's. One-third of St. John's membership is over age 65, reflecting life-long dedication to the church. In fact, 66% have attended for more than 20 years, including 20% who have attended St. John's since childhood. This dedication is further demonstrated by the distance that many members drive each week—one-third drive more than 10 miles each way. Ecumenical focus and membership policy is demonstrated in the 25% of members who were raised in a denomination other than Baptist.



Although numbers lag, youth and young families find St. John's an appealing faith community. The youth department involves approximately 50 teens in activities including choir, mission projects, retreats and Sunday Night Live. Basketball season attracts children and teens to SJBC each year: more than 100 play on teams fielded for age groups ranging from under-6 to under-18. St. John's Weekday School enrolls 60 children from toddlers to 4-year-olds from the surrounding neighborhoods.

St. John's sanctuary was built in 1926 with renovations in 1962 and in 2006, at which time a new Letourneau full pipe organ was built and installed. Major additions to the church facility occurred in 1992 with the Broach Hall wing, including kitchen and fellowship hall, as well as additional classroom and missions space. The St. John's physical plant is an important asset, both for church programs and for the community at large. In addition to the St. John's Weekday School, there is a Head Start program. Office space is donated to Church World Service and the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, and meeting space is given to a number of organizations on a regular basis, including Urban Ministry Center's "Room in the Inn", AA, and Right Moves for Youth. The facility is used by our neighbors for various meetings and events: Presbyterian Hospital, King's College and the Elizabeth Neighborhood Association.

The 2010 operating budget is just less than \$1 million. There is a stewardship emphasis program in the fall each year relative to financial gifts as well as membership talents and interests through which we budget our financial and member resources. With considerable financial resources dedicated to building and staff, aligning these resources with church goals has become a primary goal of the congregants.



St. John's Baptist: Who We Are

Our Structure and Leadership

Both a strong and free pulpit and a strong and dynamic pew are integral to St. John's. *Shared leadership* describes the partnership between the clergy and laity, working together to create meaningful opportunities for personal and spiritual growth for all who attend.

Clergy and staff are led by the Senior Minister. The Senior Minister is accountable to the congregation and supported by the Personnel Resource Team. Current ministerial team is listed below:

Clergy

Dr. Layne Smith, Intentional Interim Pastor
Lee Gray, Minister of Youth and Young Singles (including Missions)
Warren Howell, Minister of Music
Martha Kears, Minister of Children and Family Life (including Adult Education)

Lay Leadership

Board of Deacons – Deacons are individuals (men and women) selected and ordained by the congregation as servant leaders to the congregation and ministers of the church. Annually, a slate of deacon nominees is elected for a three-year term and divided between the following panels:

Administrative Panel – Twelve deacons, along with the Senior Minister, are responsible for all aspects of church administration.

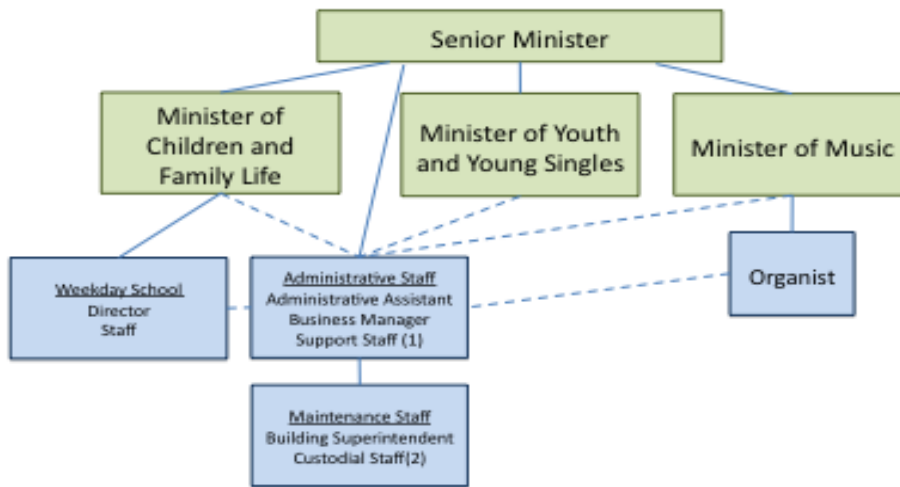
Ministry Panel – Twelve deacons, along with the ministerial staff, work to create, support, budget and evaluate all church programs.

Pastoral Panel – Twenty-four deacons, along with the Sr. Minister and the minister assigned to Membership, are responsible for the congregational care.

Church Council – The Church Council is comprised of the three officers of each of the Deacon panels and the Senior Minister. The Church Council meets monthly to communicate and coordinate efforts of the three panels.

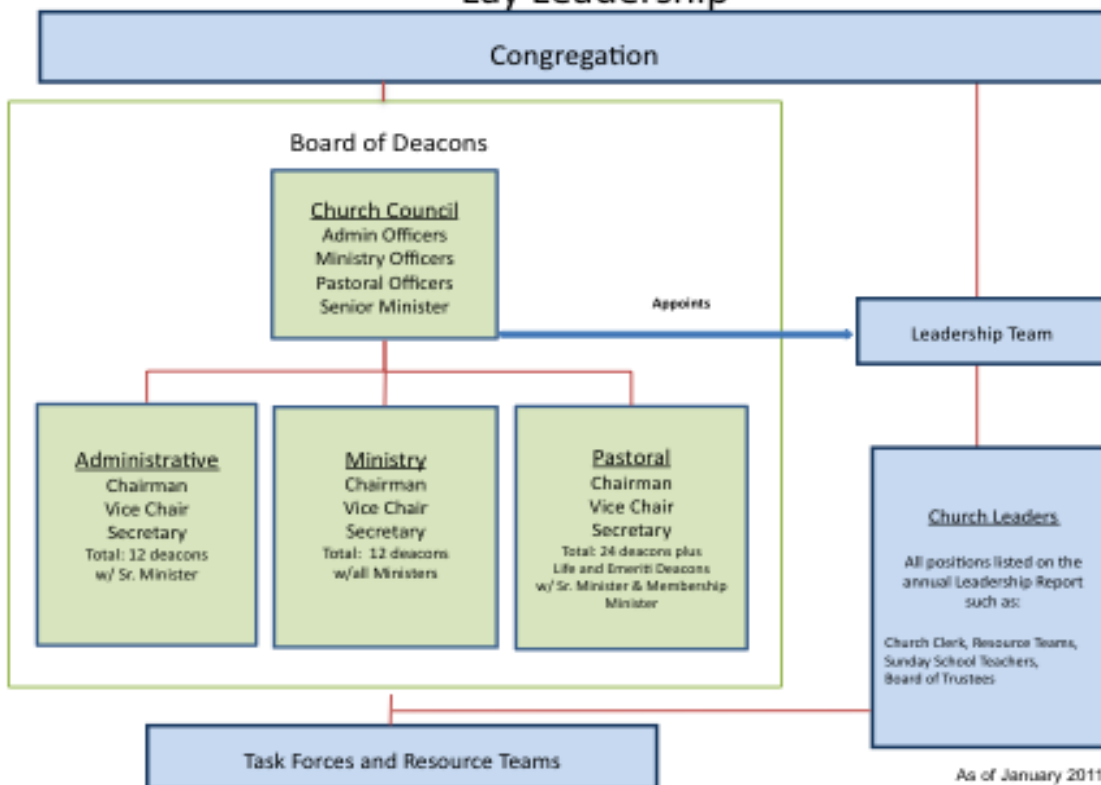
Task Forces and Resource Teams – In addition to serving in many program areas—including Sunday school teachers, choir and youth leaders, basketball coaches, Women of the Church, and service and missions, the laity is encouraged to serve on short term Task Forces or on-going Resource Teams. Currently, Resource Teams support the areas of House and Grounds, Finance, Personnel, Communications/Marketing, Missions, Membership and Technology Operations.

Clergy and Staff Structure



As of Oct. 2010

Lay Leadership



As of January 2011

St. John's Baptist: Who We Are

Our Connections

St. John's is a Baptist community of faith. Our congregation treasures the distinctive qualities that have characterized Baptists throughout history, including the sanctity of each individual's personal relationship with God, the autonomy of the local church and the separation of church and state. St. John's takes pride in its affiliations with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and the Alliance of Baptists. Nonetheless, loyalty to denomination is secondary to the higher authority of God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

St. John's has never depended upon denominational formalities to form connections with the outside world. Partnerships that shape the St. John's identity in the community have traditionally begun with the passions of a few inspired members and grown into church-wide priorities. This person-by-person approach to connections has led to an eclectic mix of missions and partnerships for St. John's, but the unique passion behind each relationship provides depth and meaning. Examples of connections at St. John's include:

- Active involvement in local missions, including [Crisis Assistance Ministry](#), [Mecklenburg Ministries](#), Hope Chapel and the UBA Bible School.
- Nonprofit and charitable organizations which make use of our facilities, including Church World Services ([CROP Walk](#)), [Urban Ministry Center's "Room in the Inn"](#), Salvation Army Women's shelter, [Right Moves for Youth](#), the Mecklenburg County Board of Elections, St. John's Weekday School, and various support groups and Bible study groups.
- Community and neighborhood groups like Head Start, Presbyterian Hospital, King's College, and other arts, education, and neighborhood groups that use the facility on a regular basis.
- Partnership in The Elizabeth Communities of Faith, a cross-denominational group of Elizabeth neighborhood churches plus the chaplaincy groups of the local hospitals.

St. John's Baptist Church Profile

Future Focus: Where We're Going

As of January, 2011, St. John's is engaged in a search of her next senior minister. The Pastor Search Committee seeks a candidate who desires to be part of a community of faith that embraces the Baptist distinctives of soul freedom, church freedom, Bible freedom, and religious freedom as articulated by Walter Shurden in *The Baptist Identity: Four Fragile Freedoms*. These fundamental distinctives are taken seriously at St John's, as are the importance of intellectual and spiritual growth and the partnership between a strong and free pulpit and strong and dynamic pew.

During the Intentional Interim process the congregation determined the qualities that are most important in a senior minister. While acknowledging that no candidate will be highly gifted in all areas, the ideal candidate has substantial professional and life experiences, possesses a Master's degree or higher, and has managed a staff. He or she should preach in a captivating and inspiring style and have a warm, inviting personality with a good sense of humor.

The most important tasks that the new minister will take on include: preparing and preaching inspiring sermons; church growth; managing the staff as a cohesive team; and planning and leading meaningful worship.

As a congregation, St. John's has gone through the Intentional Interim process with Dr. Layne Smith and support from the Center for Congregational Health, articulating identity (Mission, Vision and Values statements) and what is important to us. The next senior minister of St. John's will have a deep faith in God, revealed through the person of Jesus Christ and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit.

From the Covenant, foundational statements, surveys and discussions with the congregation, St. John's has determined her Future Focus areas: Church Growth, including Children & Young Families, Financial Sustainability, and Local Missions. The senior minister will possess the ability to help St. John's realize these goals, in partnership with staff and laity, striving to be the church that is a beacon for Christ at 5th and Hawthorne.