

MT. OLIVET BAPTIST CHURCH, 3500 Edwards Mill Road, Raleigh, NC 27612

NEWS & EVENTS – May 2025

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I don't know the name of the plant, but the one across the street around the neighbor's mailbox reminds me of the times of great change. May Days comes to mind. At this time of year, the aroma from that bush enters my airspace as I head out to work in the morning. The smell is quite pleasant and causes me to remember the early days of my life. I had just begun my elementary education and was attending the first grade. The school had no air conditioning. It was not yet a cultural necessity, so all the windows were open. I still call that odor the "get out of school for the summer" smell. Change was certainly in the air!

Through the years, the month of May has seemed like times of great change. I tried to process my high school graduation. Some young scholars these days take a year or two off to do that...I took less than a week before I entered the military. I left my home and family and entered basic training on May 29, 1973. Amazing how some dates are imbedded into your psyche. Trauma has a way of doing that. I didn't know my worldview could change so rapidly. Not too long after joining the military, I was married to my wife Sharon, and we were blessed a year later with the birth of our beautiful daughter Lisa. Three months later, during the frigid winter of January, I reported to my assignment in the Republic of Korea for a yearlong, unaccompanied, tour of duty. Once again, I had left my family behind and began a long year of change, in addition to enduring no small amount of culture shock. By the time May arrived that year, I had spent a long and lonely season, with another dreadful long and lonely season ahead. Time can be hard to you. At least that's what prison terms are called. Hard time.

Many years later, my wife and I visited the campus of Southeastern Seminary in May of 1992. We were considering a major move in pursuing the will of God. By my account, living through the seminary experience is best described as learning how to trust the plan. We had come with a plan and a backup plan. That was when we thought we were in control of the planning. The Good Lord brought us to the place of trusting His plan. It was one of the most important things I would need to know about God and becoming a pastor. When we follow Jesus, one must know that entering His Presence is our destiny. Trusting His plan is essential. The journey of following Jesus and trusting Him seems to be more of a process over time than an itinerary of stops along the way.

We began to serve in our first pastorate in May of 1993. A couple of years later, our son left this earthly realm. This year marks 30 years of a new level of hard time. Grief is a strange teacher. Elementary in a way. I have learned that all of life in this fallen world is learning how to process the change that life will bring. Rather than living out my days resting away in my easy chair (my wife bought me one and it's quite comfortable there), I have heard the whisper of the Spirit of Life telling me You're not too old to do new things! Every day I thank my Lord Jesus Christ for being trustworthy in His character and steadfast in His love. I have watched my family process the changes in their lives and choose to trust the Lord's plan. He's playing the long game. We are being molded and shaped for eternity. He is truly the God of the generations. My grandfather told me on one of the darkest days of my life that I've got to trust Jesus. That's the best plan I can pass on to the generations that remain after me. Rather than lament about how wicked and evil the world around me has become...that's what sin will do...kill, steal, and destroy...Lord, let me keep learning I'm not too old to do new things.

And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. (Rev 21:5-6)

He has revealed His plan for you and me...and we can read all about it!

*Blessings to you,
Pastor Sam*

(If you are unable to attend Mt. Olivet's 11 AM Sunday worship service in person, can go to website www.mobc.org and click on "Worship Services" for live streaming or prior messages.)