Do you remember the last time you attended a “revival” service? For some among us, I fear I must define what I am talking about due to the fact that revival meetings in many churches have become practically as extinct as the dinosaur. I love the Merriam-Webster Dictionary definition of “revival” which reads: “an often highly emotional, evangelistic meeting or series of meetings.” It seems clear at some point, one of the editors must have stumbled into a revival meeting somewhere in the Deep South and got a good taste of “hell fire and brimstone” preaching.

I must confess my earliest memories of revival services date back to my childhood. I can still vividly remember sitting in the pew as a first-grader at the old campus of the Calvary Baptist Church near downtown Lubbock. I don’t remember the name of the evangelist, but I can recall his loud and boisterous sermon about hell. As he described hell with the intensity of someone who had peeked over its molten rim to witness the horrors down below, I decided right then and there I never wanted to go to hell, so when the preacher offered an invitation to “not go to hell”, I practically ran down the aisle to the safety of Jesus’ arms. It would be years later before I came to a clear understanding of what it meant to follow Jesus as my Lord and Savior, but on that dark night I just wanted to be “saved”!

For decades, all across the South, churches have set aside weeks for revival services. Often these services were held under tents with old wooden pews perched on sawdust. In those years, God raised up a generation of evangelists who preached the gospel from sea to shining sea, and from small town to small town across the plains. Some of the great preachers of those days included D.L. Moody, Charles Finney, and a young preacher boy from the hills of North Carolina named Billy Graham. Those days of revival were often days of great awakening and renewal in the hearts and lives of people; however, sadly across the years the revivals become nothing more than services going through the motions, and the fires of revival died out to smoking embers. Consequently, churches no longer even schedule these meetings any more.

So, you may ask, “Why is our church having a revival in a few days?” “Are we just going through the motions, or trying to simply revive an old tradition from years gone by?” Those are good questions. Let me take a moment as a pastor to answer. My simple answer is: I need it. We need it. We all need times of spiritual renewal and refreshment. I believe this is especially true today in our fast-paced, twenty-four hour, seven-day a week race we run. Consider a revival as necessary as the annual physical checkup we often avoid, but can save our lives from tiny cancer cells stirring deep within.

In answer to the inquiry, “are we simply trying to revive an old tradition from years gone by”, my answer is “yes” and “no.” “Yes”, it is about reviving an old tradition, but “No” it is not about reviving a tradition for tradition’s sake. Traditions find strength and life rooted in the real world. How did the tradition start? I suspect those of us who grew up going to revivals can tell our own version of the story from our own life experiences. Just this week, one of our members shared with me how his childhood friend invited him over and over again to go to church. He finally agreed to go to a revival service and it was then and there he realized his need for a personal relationship with Jesus. He accepted Christ at that revival service. Soon, his brother accepted Christ, and then his parents. The trajectory of his family changed because he accepted an invitation to a revival service. My Grandmother Lowrie gave her heart to Jesus as an eighteen-year-old girl at a revival service just a couple of years before my father was born. Thus, traditions are born and rooted in our history and lives.

Speaking of revivals, I have invited my father, Dr. D.L. Lowrie, to preach during our days of revival beginning Sunday morning, October 22, at the 10:15 and 6pm services and Monday and Tuesday at 6pm. In addition, on Monday my Mom, Alice Lowrie, will be sharing how to have “Joy in the Journey” in the Family Life Center, from noon to 1pm; a light lunch will be provided.

We will conclude the revival by hosting a county-wide youth event sponsored by Wise Choices with Jeffery Dean on Wednesday, October 25. Please mark your calendar to be part of these days of revival. If you have never attended a revival, make this your first experience and I hope not your last. If you have attended a revival, come back home. May the prayer of the Psalmist be ours: Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you? Show us your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation. (Psalm 85:6-7 ESV)
Prayer Concerns, Weekly Statistics, & Announcements

Announcements:

Quarterly Business Meeting
October 15th at 7pm.
On the agenda: 2018 budget, nomination committee recommendation, committee on committee recommendations.

Ladies Luncheon: Monday, October 23
The Women’s Ministry of First Decatur is pleased to invite you to a luncheon, noon-1pm with Alice Lowrie, mother of our Pastor David Lowrie. She will speak about “Joy in our Journey”. Childcare will be provided with a reservation at Kidz Connection Counter or preschool desk. RSVP for the Luncheon at the Member Connection Center or contacting the church office.

Truck or Treat:
Sunday, October 29th from 6-8pm. We need Lots and Lots of Candy! Please drop donations at the church office.

Fall Revival
We invite you, your friends, family and neighbors to join us for 4 days of seeking the face of God in a very powerful way. Dr. D.L. Lowrie, Pastor David’s father, will be the preacher for the services on Sunday morning, 10:15, Sunday evening, 6pm, and Monday and Tuesday evenings at 6 pm. Mickey Henderson, of First Baptist Sunnyvale, will lead us in worship.

Financial Statistics

Tithes and Offerings
Received Oct 8: $23,561
Month-to-date Received: $49,637

Building Fund
Received Oct 8: $2,760
Month-to-date Received: $3,635

Weekly Attendance Report
Sunday, Oct 8
Sunday School Attendance: 343
Worship Attendance: 482

FBC Leadership Team
Dr. David Lowrie, Pastor: david@firstdecatur.us
Mike Stallsworth, Executive Pastor: mike@firstdecatur.us
Gerre Joiner, Senior Adult Pastor: gerjoiner@gmail.com
Candy Burden, Children’s Pastor: candy@firstdecatur.us
Ryan Cunnius, Interim Worship Leader: ryan@firstdecatur.us
Clay Carter Student Pastor: clay@firstdecatur.us
Harold Mosley, Building & Grounds: harold@firstdecatur.us
Bree Kirkelie, Office Manager bree@firstdecatur.us
Miranda Boswell, MDO Director: miranda@firstdecatur.us
Beth Addington, Preschool Director: beth@firstdecatur.us