

ONLINE:
Film series to help educate community on difficult issues

ONLINE:
Department of Music showcases fall choruses

LIFESTYLE

WALKING TO WORSHIP



DIEGO PINEDA | Photo Editor
Elon Community Church is the closest church to Elon's campus but only attracts six students and faculty weekly.

Students head to churches within a mile of campus

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Every Sunday morning, about 10 students attend one of three church services by taking a five- to 10-minute walk from campus.

Follow Ball Park Road west from the Elon Fire Department to reach Elon First Baptist Church at 113 Lynn St. Or cross the street from the Danieley Center entrance to the doors of First Baptist Church of Elon at 621 E. Haggard Ave.

For an even shorter path to prayer, join the Elon Community Church at 271 N. Williamson Ave.

James Wilkes, pastor at Elon First Baptist Church (EFBC), has approximately 300 members in his congregation, including small groups of Elon students and 10-15 Elon faculty and staff members on any given Sunday. The church continually works to improve its efforts of outreach to Elon students.

"We are working to have an after-school tutorial program, and we'll need as many undergraduate college student volunteers as possible," Wilkes said. "In 2017, we will have a newly appointed college ministry to promote more college outreach."

Currently, EFBC hosts an annual College Day service during the month of October.

"We invite the Elon University

ELON FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH COLLEGE DAY

When: 11 a.m. Oct. 30
Where: 113 Lynn St.
What: Elon University gospel choir sings, members wear their favorite collegiate attire and free food is provided

gospel choir to sing," Wilkes said. "All college students are encouraged to attend, and our members wear their favorite collegiate attire. We also feed the students after the service."

This year's EFBC College Day will be at 11 a.m. Oct. 30.

Less than a mile away, the First Baptist Church of Elon is also working to attract and worship with more undergraduates and staff members. Currently, about 10-15 students of the 160 congregation members are considered regular attendees.

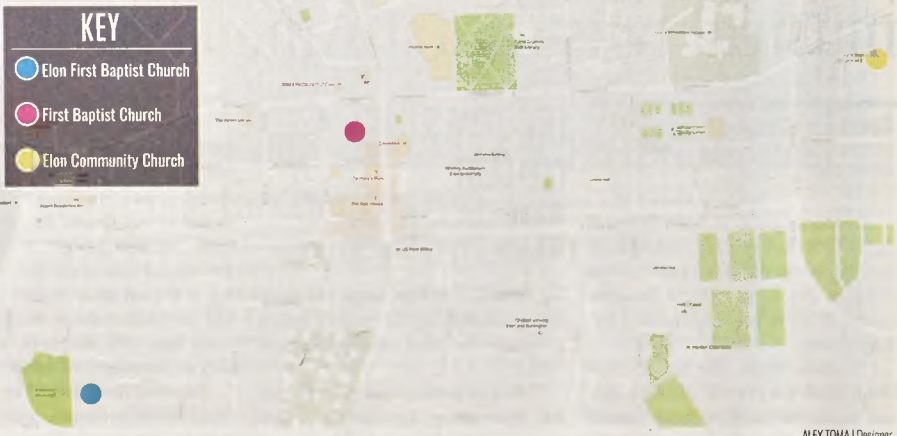
"We would love to see more students engaged in our many social ministries," said Mason Fuller Smith, senior pastor for the church. "We are equally eager to be a part of the university's efforts to meet the needs of the community. If there are clubs, organizations, or other groups that are working to alleviate poverty, crime, substance abuse or other social concerns, we would be happy to support you in your efforts."

The First Baptist Church of Elon works closely with the university to host sorority events, provide fellowship to international students and organize a reading day for students to have a quiet, supportive place to

CHURCHES WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE OF CAMPUS

KEY

- Elon First Baptist Church
- First Baptist Church
- Elon Community Church



ALEX TOMA | Designer

study. The event includes free Wi-Fi, free food and even a personal massage.

The church also takes a more individual approach to student support.

"Many of our church members have developed very personal and supportive relationships with students, even 'adopting' them as home-away-from-home 'parents' and 'grandparents,'" Smith said. "We strive to provide community and love."

The Elon Community Church (ECC) shares similar goals.

"We have always enjoyed our relationship with the Elon University community," said the ECC Rev. Sharon Wheeler. "We want to continue to be a good neighbor and church, welcoming every student no matter where they are on life's journey."

The church has a longstanding relationship with the university and

even celebrates mass with a "famous" member — Dr. Earl Danieley, former Elon president.

While many retired faculty and staff are members of ECC, Elon student attendees are inconsistent and hover around six to eight on Sundays. Three of these students are paid choir soloists.

To draw in Elon students and support the community, ECC's university relations committee organizes events geared toward college students throughout the academic year.

Last month, the church hosted its annual Dog Day Mixer, inviting students to come and relieve stress with some animal therapy. This winter, ECC is sponsoring another event — a chili and bingo night.

"We make it a food drive for Allied Churches, and students bring cans to the event," Wheeler said. "They eat some great chili and enjoy a great night of bingo with some

awesome prizes. We have made it a competition between organizations, and the organization that wins the most games gets a donation to their charity of choice."

ECC reaches out to student organizations, such as athletic teams and service fraternities, in other ways, too.

"The softball team helps us in serving meals at the homeless shelter, as has the cross country team," Wheeler said. "The softball team also helps us with our annual Halloween Party, and I have had women's track help me with the Easter Party."

Though they have a small student following, the nearby Elon religious communities are only a walk away, waiting with open arms and encouraging all students and faculty to join in worship or stop by for a community event.

"We love Elon," Smith said. "We are here for you."