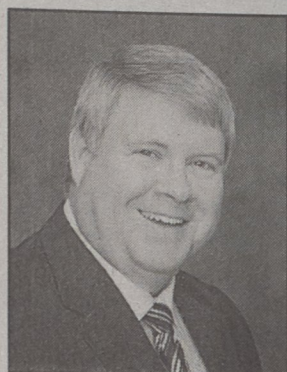


# Polycarp and his important role in the church



Dr. Jeff Hensley  
Pastor  
Kings Mountain  
Baptist Church

Many believers have probably never heard of an early Christian pastor named "Polycarp," but Polycarp played an important role in the development of the Christian Church during the second century. It had been over thirty years since Jesus had been raised from the dead and the Apostle Paul may have already been martyred when Polycarp was born in A.D. 69, but the Church was just beginning and Polycarp was destined to touch many lives.

Polycarp was the pastor of the Church in Smyrna, which was located in modern-day

Turkey, and one reason why he is important in Christian history is because of a record of his martyrdom has been preserved for us. The traditional date of Polycarp's death was February 23 of 155 or 156 and he died at the hand of the Romans because he refused to renounce his faith in Jesus Christ and support the cult of the Roman emperor instead.

The story of his martyrdom is moving and detailed. Some parts of it may seem miraculous and may not be accepted by all readers, but whether or not you accept all

the details, there is no doubt that Polycarp is an example of someone who was truly committed to his LORD, and so he remains an example of passionate discipleship.

According to the story, Polycarp was burned at the stake for choosing Christ over Caesar, "and as the flame blazed forth in great fury" those who witnessed it "beheld a great miracle... for the fire, shaping itself into the form of an arch, like the sail of a ship when filled with the wind, encompassed as by a circle the body of the martyr, and he appeared within not like flesh which is burnt, but as bread that is baked, or as

gold and silver glowing in a furnace." Then "at length, when those wicked men perceived that his body could not be consumed by the fire, they commanded an executioner to go near and pierce him through with a dagger. And on his doing this, there came forth a dove, and a great quantity of blood, so that the fire was extinguished."

Now it may seem strange to the eyes and ears of skeptics, but whether or not there was a dove or enough blood spurting from Polycarp's body to extinguish the flames, the tradition that he was burned for his faith is fully realistic. What amazes me

whenever I read this story is that this is a specific example of a person whose faith mattered so much to him that he was willing to lay down his life for it.

I have a friend who was deeply hurt by the institution church. When he was younger, my friend was deeply devoted to the church and worked very hard in church activities, but all the conflict in churches left him feeling broken in spirit. It makes me wonder. If our faith was as Jesus-centered as Polycarp's was, rather than as self-centered as much religion seems today, might things be different?

## Murphrey hosts Magnolia Club's Feb. 27th meeting

The Magnolia Garden Club met on Tuesday, Feb. 27, at the home of Sandra Murphrey. The 12 members enjoyed refreshments before the meeting.

The Magnolia Garden Club will provide ice cream and cake for the Life Enrichment birthday party on March 27. Several flats of flowers will also be furnished. It was mentioned that the center would like the club to help with the

planting of the plants. The club unanimously approved the event.

Sue Drye presented the program, "Hummingbirds and the Garden" Informative and interesting information was given.

Arrangements were presented by Teresa Ruppe and Anita Campbell. Valentine Sweeties were critiqued by the club with positive remarks. The teams tied at 18 points apiece.

## Sweat to speak April 16

Using humor and her own experiences, acclaimed motivational speaker Holly Sweat will present a message of hope and inspiration at the annual Ladies Night Out at Double Springs Baptist Church Monday, April 16.

A counselor for more than 20 years, Mrs. Sweat

has spoken to numerous conferences and workshops on such topics as "You Said What?", "How to Have a New Husband by Sunday", and "When I Grow Up?", and "What is My Purpose?"

Accomplished pianist and cancer survivor Bryte Warrick will give her testimony and provide music for

the evening, which begins with dinner at 6 p.m.

Tickets are \$10 each and may be ordered by calling the church at 704.434.2258 by April 12.

Double Springs is located at 1130 Double Springs Church Road, near Lattimore just off Washburn Switch Road.

### Fellowship & Faith

## Church Service Directory

#### KINGS MOUNTAIN

Long Creek Presbyterian Church  
701 Long Creek Road  
704-629-4406

Love Valley Baptist Church  
2032 Bethlehem Road  
704-730-0075

Macedonia Baptist Church  
1101 S. Battleground Avenue  
704-739-6811

Midview Baptist Church  
703 Margrace Road  
704-739-6711

Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church  
220 N. Watterson Street  
704-739-8354

Mountain View Agape Church  
506 Sparrow Springs Road  
704-739-0160

Mt. Olive Baptist Church  
Compact School Road  
704-739-4516

Mt. Zion Baptist Church  
220 N. Watterson Street  
704-739-8354

New Beginnings Church of Jesus Christ  
541 Crocker Road  
704-730-9507

New Bynum Chapel Zion Church  
N. Cansler Street  
704-739-2606

New Camp Creek Baptist Church  
863 New Camp Creek Ch. Road  
704-487-7128

New Life Family Worship Center  
428 Oak Grove Road

704-739-9371

New Way Missionary Baptist Church  
105 Waco Road  
704-724-0414

Oak Grove Baptist Church  
1022 Oak Grove Road  
704-739-4833

Oak View Baptist Church  
1517 York Road  
704-739-7831

Pathway Baptist Church  
3100 Parkdale Circle  
704-734-0852

Patterson Grove Baptist Church  
301 Oak Grove Road  
704-739-5826

Peoples Baptist Church  
1010 Groves Street  
704-739-0398

Proclaiming the Word Ministries  
7011 Cleveland Avenue

Progressive Church of Our Lord  
1001 Cleveland Avenue  
704-734-1070

Resurrection Lutheran Church  
600 Crescent Circle  
704-739-5580

Royal Praise Ministries  
2055 Shelby Rd.

Saint Matthew's Lutheran Church  
201 N. Piedmont Avenue  
704-739-7466

Second Baptist Church  
120 Linwood Road  
704-739-4216

Shady Grove Baptist Church  
339 Shady Grove Road  
704-739-8920



### Featured Church of the Week: Bethlehem Baptist Church

St. Paul United Methodist Church  
N. Cansler Street  
704-739-1256

Sunrise Baptist Church  
208 Mail Road  
704-692-3007

Temple Baptist Church  
612 N. Cansler Street  
704-739-4716

The Favor Center Church  
602 Slater Street

True Gospel Holiness Church  
1608 Shelby Road  
704-739-6764

Unity AME Zion Church  
948 Unity Church Road  
704-228-0328

Vestibule AME Zion Church  
2175 Vestibule Church Road  
704-739-7961

Westover Baptist Church  
114 Westover Drive

GASTONIA  
Bethesda United Methodist Church  
3714 S. New Hope Rd

Grace Community Advent Christian Church  
206 West 3rd Avenue  
704-739-9230

GROVER  
Bethany Baptist Church  
423 Cleveland Avenue  
704-937-3010

Carolina Praise and Worship Center  
201 N. Main Street  
704-937-7541

First Apostolic Church of Blacksburg  
205 E. Cherokee St.  
Blacksburg, SC  
704-937-7390  
864-839-1873

**Notice:** In order to accommodate the number of churches in our communities, we will print two alternating lists of churches each week. you don't see the church you're looking for, be sure to check next weeks paper.

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