

First Baptist Church of Eatonton Messenger

FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST SHARING GOD'S LOVE AND GRACE WITH ALL



FROM THE PASTOR

Joyce Rupp and Howard Thurman have provoked me to consider the role memory plays in any thanksgiving. Rupp quotes the line, *"I am convinced that our joyful memories have often been overlooked, like some undiscovered gold."*

Thurman even speaks of a season of remembrance. That can be any time of the year, but to me, a season of remembrance seems to rise up with vigor during the current season of thanksgiving and celebration. Thurman writes –

Again and again, it comes:
The Time of Recollection,
The Season of Remembrance.
Empty vessels of hope fill up again;
Forgotten treasures of dreams reclaim their place;
Long-lost memories come trooping back to me.

...

Into the challenge of my anguish
I throw the strength of all my hope:
I match the darts of my despair
 with the treasures of my dreams;
Upon the current of my heart
I float the burdens of the years;
I challenge the mind of death
 with my love of life
Such to me is the Time of Recollection,
The Season of Remembrance.

Rupp quotes Emily Dickinson. "Such good things can happen to people who learn to remember" and suggests a spiritual practice. Pause at the end of each day. Within that quiet space, look for a cherished memory. There is no need to tug at the past. Simply be open and wait to receive what swims to the surface. If a harsh memory happens to come first, acknowledge its presence, and then release it. When a positive memory enters your awareness, welcome it like a gold nugget. Embrace and savor it. Gather your newly regenerated gratitude and hold it close to your heart. And rest in peace.

*Grateful,
Craig*

GIVE THANKS IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

Thinking about Thanksgiving again this week, and the weather this time of year. All the grey skies, fall leaves and shorter days give the feeling of a fall movie, maybe a movie about a family coming home for Thanksgiving and being stuck together for a comedic and/or miserable weekend.

Thanksgiving is one of those occasions that we celebrate without thinking too deeply about, lest we get lost in a vortex of existential turmoil. Think about it too much and it might start to hurt your brain. Taking an opportunity to give thanks for the blessings that we have received in life is certainly a worthwhile endeavor. But where does the duty to give thanks begin and end? And just what are we thankful for?

Thankful for our material possessions, or that we aren't unfortunate enough to be poor? Thankful for an abundance of family and friends in our lives, or thankful that we are not alone? Thankful because Jesus or Grandma or our 3rd-grade teacher told us to be, or thankful because of genuine gratefulness?

Thanksgiving, in that sense, is an odd occasion then. It could perhaps come across as mandatory gratefulness. Yet, gratefulness is a learned skill that needs to be practiced to truly embody it. It is no surprise then that, as Americans, we make sense of this occasion for gratefulness by gathering around a meal. The opportunity to eat together is the great equalizer, putting the strong and mighty next to the weak and lowly, all the same at the table.

And even though Thanksgiving is not a church holiday, gratitude and thanksgiving are deeply connected to faith. In fact, 'Thanksgiving' is one of the names that we call Holy Communion. The Greek word for Holy Communion, *Eucharist*, means thanksgiving. In the Eucharist, we pray, giving thanks to God for all that God has done for us. Yet we also recognize that our thanks are insufficient. Somehow, God still comes and joins us to the Body of Christ in the Bread and Wine.

The true Thanksgiving might just be that of God towards us. God's faithfulness toward and gratefulness for creation. Maybe that is the best way to understand Thanksgiving. We can never express our true gratitude and thanks to God for this life of abundance, but God's love and gratefulness given for our sake makes true Thanksgiving possible.

Dylan

A NOVEMBER NUDGE

You are likely reading this a few days before Thanksgiving, which immediately gives way to Advent and Christmas. The shorter days, cooler temperatures, and more complicated schedules combine with the urge to finish shopping for just the right Christmas gifts. It can begin to feel like an extra-weight pressure. We may well need a November Nudge to discover anew God's gift of joy.

Psalms 98:4 may be just what we need. *"Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music."* Isaac Watts, prolific author of such hymns as *"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross,"* interpreted Psalm 98 with his hymn that begins, *"Joy to the world; the Lord is come; Let earth receive her King; Let every heart prepare him room, And heaven and nature sing..."* Although we tend to think that's a Christmas carol, it makes no mention of Bethlehem, angels, shepherds, wise men, a Savior in a manger, not even a little drummer boy. We need the joy that comes from the good news of God's truth and grace, the wonders of his love, *year round!*

Singing for joy is one of the signs or fruits of the Holy Spirit living and growing within us (Galatians 5:22). It's not dependent on our emotions (that's cheerfulness) or on our circumstances (that's happiness). Singing for joy is a gift from God.

That's why since September our Choir, Connie Covington, and I have been joining musicians from First Methodist and Eatonton Presbyterian churches to prepare for our 16th Annual *"Christmas on the Avenue"* presentation. It will be on Sunday evening, December 8, 6:00 pm, in the Great Room of Eatonton First Methodist Church. Our combined vocal choirs will be joined by our combined handbell choirs and professional instrumentalists from Georgia College and State University. (It's free, though an offering will be received.)

Is it too early to think about Christmas music? No, for a number of reasons. One is that, though we will be using mass media to get the word out, the best publicity by far is an invitation from a friend. Who do you know that can use a little extra joy this time of year?

This Sunday, our Choir sings *"Total Praise,"* by Richard Smallwood, made famous by the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir. In 1995, Smallwood was totally stressed out as the caregiver for two terminally ill family members. One day in October he sat down at the piano, and *"Total Praise"* came tumbling out. He calls it "valley praise," because he was in a dark, exhausting situation, but praised God anyway. God used it as a teaching moment for him and thousands of believers the world over since then.

"You are the Source of my strength, You are the Strength of my life; I lift my hands in total praise to You."

"No more let sin and sorrow grow, Nor thorns infest the ground. He comes to make His blessings flow, Far as the curse is found."

May these musical messages be a welcome, encouraging November Nudge for each of us!

John

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHURCH CONFERENCE

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24
DURING MORNING WORSHIP

We will be voting on the 2025 Budget.

Happy Thanksgiving

The First Baptist Church Office will close at 12:00pm on November 27 and will be closed on November 28 & 29.

There will be no services or activities on Wednesday, November 27.



STEPPING STONES LEARNING CENTER
PRESENTS

**RAFFLE
CONTEST**

NOVEMBER 1ST-30TH



One of our wonderful church members from First Baptist Church of Eatonton has kindly donated this exquisite handmade quilt to be raffled as a fundraiser for our center! This presents a fantastic gift opportunity just in time for the upcoming Christmas season!

Tickets will be sold at the SSLC office so be sure to stop by and get yours today!

**\$10.00
A TICKET**

**LIVE DRAWING WILL BE DECEMBER 2ND
ANYONE IS ELEGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE!!**



**TIME TO
UPDATE!**

**Has your contact information changed?
If so, please contact the church office
at 706-485-3331 so we can update our files
and you can stay up to date with what's
happening at First Baptist Church!**

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

**Christmas
TOY
DRIVE**

Please Give a Little Joy to Our Local Children

Begins Friday, November 1
Please bring new toys unwrapped to the
Narthex by Sunday, December 1

ANGEL TREE

OUR ANGEL TREE WILL BE SUPPORTING
STEPPING STONES LEARNING CENTER.
PICK UP AN ANGEL IN THE NARTHEX
BEGINNING DECEMBER 1.
GIFTS WILL BE DUE DECEMBER 22.

CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS WITH US

The Ballad of Bethlehem

BY PEPPER CHOPLIN

16TH ANNUAL

Christmas on the Avenue

Sunday, December 8, 6:00 pm

PRESENTED BY THE CHOIRS & ORCHESTRA OF:

Eatonton First Methodist Church
Eatonton First Baptist Church
Eatonton Presbyterian Church

Location: Eatonton First Methodist Church
103 W. Magnolia St. Eatonton GA 31024



CONCERT FREE AND OPEN TO PUBLIC | DONATIONS ACCEPTED

First Baptist Church Holiday Hours

There will be no Wednesday Night Services or activities on December 18, December 25, and January 1.

The Church Office will be closed for the holidays on December 24th and 25th.

We will observe flex hours the rest of the week. Call the church office before coming to see if it is open.

The office will also close at 1:00pm on Tuesday, December 31 and will be closed on Wednesday, January 1.

JOIN US FOR

Christmas Potluck Dinner

Wednesday, December 18

6:00 pm
Fellowship Hall

The Church will provide turkey, ham and dressing. Please bring casseroles, vegetables, salads and desserts.

RSVP to the church office at 706-485-3331
by Monday, December 9 at 4:00pm

Christmas Caroling

First Baptist of Eatonton will be caroling on Madison Ave.

Wednesday, December 11
after 7pm.

If your porch light is on we will ring your doorbell and sing for you.

If it's raining unfortunately we will not be out. Hope to see and sing for you Wednesday night!!!



SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

WELCOMING FOR NOVEMBER

Cary Walton

WELCOMING FOR DECEMBER

Guerry and Joan Key

USHERS FOR NOVEMBER

Steve Benton, Randall McCook,
Cooper Rainey, Charles Winslette

USHERS FOR DECEMBER

Mike Reagin, Don Baker, Tim Camp,
Hollis Harrison, Jim Ryan

DEACON FOR NOVEMBER 24

Harris McCollum

DEACON FAMILIES

Ralph Barclay Family, Sharon Haney,
Tommy McElhenney Family, Paula Rossee Family,
Grady Strube, Lynda Walker Family,
Sug Walton, Cary Walton Family

DEACON FOR DECEMBER 1

Jesse McMillen

DEACON FAMILIES

Helen Benshoof, Kent Duffey Family,
Mike Faulk Family, Hollis Harrison Family,
David Heath Family, Bill Kitchen Family,
Scott Sharp, Patrice Underkofler

BIRTHDAYS

11/22 - Mary Ann Heath
11/23 - Sara Williams, Maxine Godin
11/26 - Jeanne Vining
11/30 - Taylor Keiser
12/01 - Danielle Hwewtte, Mike Lyons
12/02 - Frances Jane Self
12/04 - Steve Benton

ANNIVERSARY

12/01 - Gene & Lesa Adams
12/01 - Jesse & Brooke McMillen

WORSHIP REPORT

Sunday, November 03 107
Sunday, November 10 115

FINANCIAL REPORT

NOVEMBER 3, 2024

<u>Budget Needs</u>	<u>\$10,200.56</u>
<u>Budget Receipts</u>	<u>\$28,586.00</u>
<u>Budget Needs YTD</u>	<u>\$448,824.64</u>
<u>Budget Receipts YTD</u>	<u>\$453,998.45</u>

NOVEMBER 10, 2024

<u>Budget Needs</u>	<u>\$10,200.56</u>
<u>Budget Receipts</u>	<u>\$7,636.00</u>
<u>Budget Needs YTD</u>	<u>\$459,025.20</u>
<u>Budget Receipts YTD</u>	<u>\$461,634.45</u>

First Baptist Church
P.O. Box 3400
Eatonton, GA 31024
Return Service Requested

JOIN US FOR OUR ADVENT SERVICES



Join Us For Our
Advent Services
Sundays at 10:50AM

December 1 - Hope
December 8 - Peace
December 15 - Joy
December 22 - Love