

First Baptist Church of Eatonton Messenger

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



FROM THE PASTOR

I was recently reminded of the song “*I Wonder as I Wander*.” The full lyrics matter less to me than the title itself, because my concern at this point is with both **wondering** and **wandering**.

You’ve heard some of my meanderings about *wonder* before, but Advent and Christmastide always bring these twin practices – wondering and wandering – back to the forefront of my thoughts. Each year, as I arrive at Christmas Eve, I find myself wondering about the wandering we – church folks and pastors alike – have been doing since the first Sunday of Advent. I also wonder about those beyond our church who have been wandering through these weeks as well.

Perhaps we have all wandered around the birth of Jesus in different ways – some treating it as a holiday, some as a holy day, and most of us as some mixture of the two.

And that makes me wonder: **have we actually wondered at all as we wandered through these weeks?** Have we been too busy to wonder – or even to wander? Will we continue to wonder as we wander into the aftermath of Christmas, through the twelve days of Christmas into Epiphany? Or will we simply thank God it’s over and rush back to our normal, predictable lives?

You can’t make people wonder or wander. That realization causes me to reflect: *Was there something in these past weeks I passed by too quickly – something I should have wondered about as I wandered?* It also invites me to think about how I might wonder more attentively in the days ahead, and how I might allow wonder to find me there.

I once heard someone say that when all is said and done, God’s only question will be, “Did you enjoy it?” I know this much: I enjoy life most when I am filled with wonder. When I wonder as I wander, life feels richer. And even when I simply wander, I often stumble into wonder.

So on Christmas Eve, I will sit before the final lights of the Advent wreath and wonder. On Christmas morning, I will light a fire, turn on the tree lights, and sit in the quiet to wonder once more.

One thing I continue to wonder about is our resistance to wandering. Everything in our lives feels driven – planned, prescribed, directed, intentional. Wandering almost feels like a sin. Who has time for it? What happens if we stray from the prescribed path and get lost? Those fears may be justified on a hiking trail, but they often keep us from wandering into moments of beauty and grace. We are almost programmed *not* to wander. GPS guides our every move, and time feels too precious to “waste” on aimless exploration.

And so my prayer this Christmas is simple: that you and I – and many others – might dare to wander, and **wonder as we wander**.

*Merry Christmas,
Craig*

GOD'S LOVE MADE MANIFEST IN THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST

As we light the final candle on our Advent wreath this Sunday, we arrive at the theme that encompasses all the others: LOVE. After journeying through Hope, Peace, and Joy, we now celebrate the greatest gift of all—God's love made manifest in the birth of Jesus Christ.

Our music this Sunday will reflect this profound theme. Love is not merely a warm feeling or sentiment; it is the very nature of God. As we read in 1 John 4:8, "God is love." The incarnation—God becoming human in the person of Jesus—is the ultimate expression of divine love for humanity. In our worship, we'll give voice to this mystery through hymns and anthems that have sustained the church for generations.

The carol "O Come, All Ye Faithful" takes on deeper meaning this week as we prepare to answer that call with hearts full of love and gratitude. When we sing "O come, let us adore Him," we're responding to Love Himself. Our choir will also present music that celebrates how Christ's love transforms us and calls us to love one another.

I encourage you to listen for moments of tenderness in our music this Sunday—the gentle melodies that mirror Mary's lullaby, the soaring harmonies that express joy too deep for words alone. Let the music draw you into contemplation of what it means that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son."

As we stand on the threshold of Christmas, may our songs of love prepare our hearts to receive the Christ child anew. Let us sing with gratitude for the love that came down at Christmas, the love that changes everything.

In joyful anticipation,

Dylan

NOW HIRING: CHILDREN'S MINISTER

Children's Minister

First Baptist Church of Eatonton, Georgia

Position Summary

First Baptist Church of Eatonton is seeking a passionate and energetic Children's Minister to lead and grow our children's ministry from 3 years through elementary age. This individual will partner with church staff, parents, and volunteers to create engaging, Christ-centered environments where children can come to know Jesus and grow in their faith.

Key Responsibilities

- Plan, organize, and lead all children's ministry programming, including Sunday School, Children's Church, Vacation Bible School, and special events
- Develop and implement age-appropriate, biblically sound curriculum
- Recruit, train, and support volunteers to serve in children's ministry
- Create a safe, welcoming, and nurturing environment for all children
- Communicate regularly with parents and caregivers regarding ministry activities and spiritual development
- Collaborate with church staff and leadership to support the overall mission and vision of the church
- Maintain appropriate safety, check-in, and child protection policies
- Encourage outreach opportunities to connect with families in the Eatonton community

Qualifications

- A personal and growing relationship with Jesus Christ
- Experience working with children in a church or ministry setting
- Strong organizational, communication, and leadership skills
- Ability to work collaboratively with staff, volunteers, and families
- Must pass background checks and comply with church policies and procedures.

How to Apply

Interested candidates should submit a résumé to craigwmsn@gmail.com or revbowden@gmail.com.

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S SCHEDULE



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

SUNDAY SERVICES

Sunday School begins at 9:45am
Morning Worship begin at 10:50am


WEDNESDAY NIGHT SERVICES

December 17 – No Services or Activities
December 24 – Christmas Eve Service at 5:00pm
December 31 – No Services or Activities
January 7 – No Services or Activities
January 14 – Family Night Supper and Prayer Service Resume

OFFICE HOURS FOR THE WEEK OF CHRISTMAS

Monday, December 22: 8:30am – 4:00pm
Tuesday, December 23: 8:30am – 4:00pm
Wednesday, December 24: Closed
Thursday, December 25: Closed
Friday, December 26: Closed

OFFICE HOURS FOR THE WEEK OF NEW YEARS



Monday, December 29: 8:30am – 4:00pm
Tuesday, December 30: 8:30am – 4:00pm
Wednesday, December 31: 8:30am – 1:00pm
Thursday, January 1: Closed
Friday, January 2: 9:00am – 12:00pm

POINSETTAS

IN MEMORY OF

In Memory of

*Harry and Dottie Stickleby
Sarah Sue Thompson
Harold and Jewel Alford
Don's Parents
Pat's Parents
Eldon Lundin Sr.
Eldon Lundin Jr.
Hugblon and Lillian McElbenney
Gary McElbenney
Debbie McElbenney
Pam McElbenney Lacey
Phyllis' Parents – Jack and Emily Vaughn
Terry's Parents – Cecil and Ruth Blanton
Dan Benshoof
Dan Benshoof
Felice's Parents
Felice's Brothers
George's Parents
Mr. and Mrs. Tom Thompson Sr.
Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth A. MacLeod
Mom and Dad
Louie Long
Camille Ryan
Jim Page
Amy Mitchum
Imogene Vincent
John Gordon, Kim's Daddy
Sanyer Rae Davis
Grandma Dot
Grandma V.C.
Clarence Wright
Bill Nolen
Sallie Key
Gebu Key Sr.
Gebu Key Jr.
Fred Key
Sara Key*

By

*David and Tracy Stickleby
David and Tracy Stickleby
David and Tracy Stickleby
Don and Pat Turney
Don and Pat Turney
Grace Lundin
Grace Lundin
Tommy and Amy McElbenney
Tommy and Amy McElbenney
Tommy and Amy McElbenney
Tommy and Amy McElbenney
Terry and Phyllis Blanton
Terry and Phyllis Blanton
His wife, Helen Benshoof
Jeff and Cindy Smith
George and Felice Dissmeyer
George and Felice Dissmeyer
George and Felice Dissmeyer
Tom and Pam Thompson
Tom and Pam Thompson
Ellen Trice
Jan Long and Family
James Ryan
Madeleine Page
Jill Vaughan and Cheryl Williams
Jill Vaughan and Cheryl Williams
Tim and Kim Camp
Chad and Jessica Davis
Chad and Jessica Davis
Chad and Jessica Davis
Connie Covington
His Family
Guerry Key
Guerry Key
Guerry Key
Guerry Key
Guerry Key*



POINSETTIAS

IN HONOR OF

In Honor of

*Tyrone and Arlene Alford
Tom and Pam Thompson
Our Children
Our Grandchildren
Donald and Judy Shipp
Harry and Wanda Hallman
David and Tracy Stickley
Our Children
Our Grandchildren
Our Grandchildren,
Tatum, Charlee Anne, Tripp, Celia, Wren and Rhett)
Our Parents,
Warren and Mary Camp and Jo Ann Clay
FBC Ladies Bible Study
David and Tracy Stickley
Gloria Covington
Nell Wright
Ellen Trice
Helen Benshoof
Linda Reagin
Sonny Turner*

By

*David and Tracy Stickley
David and Tracy Stickley
Don and Pat Turney
Don and Pat Turney
Tommy and Amy McElbenney
Tommy and Amy McElbenney
Tom and Pam Thompson
Tom and Pam Thompson
Tom and Pam Thompson
Tim and Kim Camp
Tim and Kim Camp
Kim Camp
Friends and Family Class
Daryl and Connie Covington
Daryl and Connie Covington
Guerry and Joan Key
Guerry and Joan Key
Guerry and Joan Key
Guerry and Joan Key*

*Poinsettias may be picked up on Sunday, December 21
after the morning worship service.*

THE POWER OF PRAYER

PRAYER NEEDS

Please continue to call the church office if you have prayer requests or updates to the prayer list. An urgent prayer request can always be sent out to the church by way of email.



PRAY FOR:

SYMPATHY:

Our Christian love and sympathy are extended to Mike Faulk and family in the passing of his sister, Linda Faulk.

OUR MEMBERS:

Terry Blanton, George Dissmeyer, Ben Leverette, Gwen Ralston, Kyle Ralston, Mike Reagin, Scott Sharp, Janice Turner, Jimmy Williams, Nell Wright, Unspoken

FRIENDS AND FAMILY:

Lynn Butterworth, Neile Chambers, Tommy Copelan, Gloria Covington, Linda Faulk, Billy Joiner, Nancy Joiner, Zellie Marbury, Aaron Norman, Walt Rocker Jr., Earnest Rogers, Steven Sharp

ASSISTED LIVING/NURSING &

HOMEBOUND:

Mary Jo Balas, Jo Ann Clay, Luceil Harrison, Mary Ann Heath, Gaye Lankford, Jean Rich, Betty Sills, Sug Walton

MISSIONARY FAMILIES:

Trey and Kaitlyn Lancaster in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
Matt and Michelle Norman in Catalunya, Spain

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHILDREN'S LIVE NATIVITY

Sunday, December 21
Before Worship



UGLY CHRISTMAS SWEATER SUNDAY DECEMBER 21

Coffee and Donuts will be
served in the Narthex



End of the Year Giving

FOR ALL END OF THE YEAR CONTRIBUTIONS TO BE COUNTED AS 2025 DONATIONS, THEY MUST BE PLACED IN THE OFFERING PLATE, BROUGHT TO THE CHURCH OFFICE, OR POSTMARKED BY MIDNIGHT ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

WELCOMING FOR DECEMBER

Clayton Lancaster

WELCOMING FOR JANUARY

Jim and Vicki Hall

USHERS FOR DECEMBER

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

USHERS FOR JANUARY

David Giddens, Scott Joris, Ben Leverette,
Jesse McMillen, Charles Patten, Cary Walton

DEACON FOR DECEMBER 21

Roger Vining

DEACON FAMILIES

Tasha Cannon Family, George Dissmeyer Family,
David Lutz Family, Beth Willis, Karen Willis Family,
Charles Winslette Family, Warren Yates

DEACON FOR DECEMBER 28

Clayton Lancaster

DEACON FAMILIES

Terry Blanton Family, Walt Rocker Family,
Lois Schell, David Stickley Family,
Ellen Trice, Nell Wright

DEACON FOR JANUARY 4

Robin Benton

DEACON FAMILIES

Hunter Giddens, Carl Haizlip Family,
Clayton Lancaster Family, Ennis Lankford Family,
Gwen Ralston, Kyle Ralston,
Joann Smith Family, Tom Thompson Family

BIRTHDAYS

12/21 - Beth Willis, Jared Williams

12/22 - Clayton Lancaster

12/23 - Lana Harvey

12/27 - Ralph Barclay

12/28 - Sammy Walker

12/29 - Andrea Welch, Daniel Andrews

12/30 - Margaret Howell, Tim Camp, David Lutz

01/02 - Elaine Haizlip

01/03 - Gaye Lankford, T.J. McElhenney,
Vicki Hall

01/04 - Jean Rich, Betty Sills

01/07 - Robin Benton, Harris McCollum

01/08 - Mac Rainey

ANNIVERSARIES

12/20 - Jim and Casey Kauffmann

12/28 - Bill and Jennie Sharp

12/29 - Craig and Catherine Williamson

01/08 - Mike and Linda Reagin

WORSHIP REPORT

Sunday, December 07 110

Sunday, December 14 147

WELCOME

We welcome Kelli Phillips to the
membership of First Baptist Church.

FINANCIAL REPORT

NOVEMBER 30, 2025

Budget Needs YTD \$512,759.00

Total Receipts YTD \$503,543.80

Budget Expenditures YTD \$524,039.71

NEXT NEWSLETTER

The next newsletter will go out
on Thursday, January 8, 2026.

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

Christmas Eve

Candlelight and Communion Service

Wednesday, December 24 at 5:00PM

