

MAY 1, 2025

First Baptist Church of Eatonton

Messenger

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



FROM THE PASTOR

They are coming to visit May 18! All the way from Barcelona, Spain. It's just a couple weeks away. **Matt and Michelle Norman.**

They serve as Cooperative Baptist Field Personnel/Missionaries in Barcelona, Spain. Spain is one of the world's most secular countries and ranks 5th in the world in its percentage of self-identified atheists. The region of Spain where the Normans serve, Catalunya most of the population are 2 to 3 generations removed from the Church.

The Normans "seek to create and assist in the development of "safe" spaces that express the fullness of the gospel message where people can come to recognize both themselves and others as valued creations of God and live out this understanding in practical ways in their everyday lives." As I read that lengthy explanation from their bio I thought of two recent conversations I've had with younger single people. They both talked about how the culture seems to have lost such "safe" places outside of work and home in which people can just gather, for free. Coffee shops are nice, but there is still a fee for being present. Bars and restaurants of course are the same. And maybe neither really has the purpose to just gather people to be together solely for conversation and socialization. There is a hunger for these things. Unfortunately few see the church as such a "safe" place. "Churches have their own agendas," they say. And hoping to continue our "safe" conversations, and because such is true, I didn't argue the point.

But as a result of such needs, the Normans focus their local ministry in two areas:

Partnering with a church, Primera Església Evangèlica Baptista de Sabadell, the Normans host Mosaic, a contextualized worship space for individuals with questions about God and life. The Normans are not seeking to create another church, to have an agenda as much to create and develop conversations, relationships and safe gatherings.

They also seek to address the felt needs of the community through various endeavors. These social ministries are facilitated through *Grupo 5-14*, a local Spanish association that the Normans helped restart in 2020. Through this association, they engage in ministry to immigrant mothers and their babies via a project called *Mamáventura*, and they feed people through a ministry called *Espai Sopem*. These ministries are similar to Mother's Day Out and Food Pantry programs.

First Baptist Eatonton has been in a partnership with Matt and Michelle for almost 15 years now, as FBC agreed to be an Encourager Church with them and their ministry. CBF pays their salaries, but the monies we and others share with them go to support the cost of their ministries.

An Encourager Church like ours is a church that formalizes a relationship with a specific ministry and enters into a covenant relationship with its leadership.

FBC engages with Matt and Michelle with: Prayer support and relationship building, Program support, Short-term engagement, Financial support to CBF, Offering for Global Missions and program funds.

I tell you all of this to say ***Matt and Michele will be our guests May 18, speaking in the worship service and having dinner with us afterwards.*** Please make plans to attend to hear, greet and meet these partners of ours who serve in Catalunya, Spain.

***Practice Resurrection,
Craig***

“AND CAN IT BE?”

When reflecting on and singing the hymn, “And Can It Be?” I'm struck by how Charles Wesley masterfully captures the essence of Christian astonishment. The opening question drives directly to the heart of our faith—how can it be that the Creator of the universe would sacrifice Himself for us? This theological wonder forms the foundation of our worship. Wesley wrote this hymn shortly after his own spiritual awakening in 1738. What makes it particularly powerful is that it doesn't merely describe conversion; it embodies the experience through its poetic structure and musical setting. The progression from questioning to affirmation mirrors our own spiritual journeys.

The tune SAGINA provides the perfect vehicle for Wesley's profound text. Its bold melodic leaps in the opening phrase musically illustrate the vast distance between our human condition and divine grace. The rhythmic energy propels us forward through each verse, building momentum as theological truths unfold. I've noticed in the past, how a congregation's voice strengthens with conviction during the refrain. There's something about that musical setting that allows even the most reserved worshippers to proclaim their faith with unexpected boldness. The melody's soaring quality lifts not just our voices but our spirits.

As your Minister of Music, I've found several approaches that can enhance our experience with this hymn: First, incorporating thoughtful instrumental introductions sets the proper contemplative tone. Second, utilizing dynamic contrasts—beginning softly with the questioning first verse and building to full-voiced proclamation in later verses—helps us experience the emotional progression embedded in the text. Third, occasional a cappella moments, where we hear just our collective voices singing praise to God. It is a heartwarming sound.

The impact of this hymn extends beyond our formal worship services. In our fast-paced world of constant distraction, Wesley's hymn calls us back to contemplation of the greatest mystery—divine love that exceeds human understanding. Whether sung in a grand cathedral or whispered at a bedside, these words continue to transform hearts. May we never lose our capacity for holy astonishment as we join our voices in this timeless expression of faith.

Blessings,

Dylan

ARE YOU GRADUATING?

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If you have a student graduating High School or College this spring and would like them to be recognized for our Graduate Sunday on May 11, please contact Rev. Dylan Bowden or call the church office by Sunday, May 4.

MAPPIN FUND

REQUESTS ARE BEING ACCEPTED FOR THE MAPPIN FUND SCHOLARSHIP. CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE FOR MORE INFORMATION.

THE DEADLINE TO APPLY IS FRIDAY, MAY 30.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

WELCOMING FOR MAY

Pat McDade

USHERS FOR MAY

Steve Benton, Randall McCook, Steven Prance,
Cooper Rainey, Charles Winslette

DEACON FOR MAY 4

Charles Winslette

DEACON FAMILIES

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

DEACON FOR MAY 11

Robin Benton

DEACON FAMILIES

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

BIRTHDAYS

05/02 - Jene Etheridge, Bill Sharp
05/03 - Lisa Tubbs
05/04 - Luceil Harrison, Betty Pinholster
05/06 - Tommy Copelan
05/08 - Sheryl Hall
05/12 - Lois Schell

ANNIVERSARIES

05/06 - Barry and Nancy Chambers
05/08 - George and Felice Dissmeyer

WORSHIP REPORT

<u>Sunday, April 20</u>	<u>215</u>
<u>Sunday, April 27</u>	<u>95</u>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHANGE SOMEONE'S LIFE



Sunday, April 27 was the last day of collection for the baby bottle fundraiser. However, I gave out 75 bottles and got back only 60. I need your baby bottle back whether or not it has loose change, dollar bills or a check in it. I must return all bottles. I will hold this fundraiser open an extra week in order to have all bottles returned.

Final deadline is next Sunday, May 4.



**Wednesday
Connections**

**CONNECT
GROW
SERVE**

**OUR LAST WEDNESDAY NIGHT
CONNECTIONS WILL BE MAY 7**

**WE HOPE YOU ENJOY YOUR SUMMER BREAK
AND WE WILL SEE YOU IN THE FALL!**

THERE WILL NOT BE A WEDNESDAY BULLETIN THIS SUMMER
STAY UP TO DATE WITH OUR ONLINE NEWSLETTER FOR OUR SUMMER OPPORTUNITIES



FISH FRY



Wednesday, May 14 at 6:00PM

**Call the church office to RSVP
by Wednesday, May 7**

MATT & MICHELLE NORMAN

**SUNDAY, MAY 18, 2025
AT 10:50AM**



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



Something
grrrrreat is
coming!

Vacation Bible School
First Baptist Church
Eatonton, GA
June 8 – 11, 2025
6:00pm-8:00pm
(Dinner begins @5:30pm)

Register at <https://www.myvbs.org/Fbcetruenorthvbs>

