

JANUARY 8, 2026

First Baptist Church of Eatonton Messenger

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



FROM THE PASTOR

Our turning of the calendar carries us into a new season of the church year – Epiphany. One of the central scripture readings of Epiphany is the baptism of Jesus. Reflecting on that moment, author Christine Chakoian writes, “Sometimes it’s hard for us to remember who we are.”

We know something about that, don’t we? Many of us have been to family reunions or class reunions with a low-grade anxiety humming beneath the surface. Will I remember who people are? Will they remember me? And perhaps most unsettling of all—will I recognize myself?

Unbelievably, I am approaching my fiftieth high school reunion, and I’m not handling it well. At first, I was excited. Then I saw some classmates on Facebook, a few in person. I saw pictures, of them, and of myself. We look somewhat like the people we remember being... and yet not. So the reunion – Will it be joyful, full of dreams lived and still unfolding? Will it be painful, marked by the ways life has been unkind? God forbid someone should say to me, “You’re the same old son of a gun you were back when.” The thought that I might have squandered the last fifty years with so little transformation is deeply unsettling.

The question of who we are — really are — is central to the meaning of our lives. And it sits right at the heart of Epiphany.

Chakoian points out that Jesus’ baptism is an announcement to everyone about who Jesus is: “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.” Yet this moment is more than a public proclamation. Jesus’ baptism is also a clarification as well as an invitation to Jesus himself to remember who he is.

The Gospel writers were certain it was crucial that “Jesus’ identity is announced publicly, but just as essential that Jesus himself lay claim to his identity — that he take up his calling. ... It will not be easy. ... And through it all, he will remember who he is.”

I have long thought of Jesus’ baptism as a hallmark moment for Jesus. And if that is true for Jesus’ baptism, then the same should be true of our baptism. Our baptism speaks volumes to us about who we are, who we will always be, and into whom we are continually becoming.

What encouraging, bright news about who we are: ***God’s beloved, in whom God is well pleased.***

It has been a long time since I last saw it, but Chakoian uses a film to lead us to an epiphanic moment. “In *The Lion King*, Rafiki asks Simba, “Who are you?” It is a pivotal moment, confronting Simba’s refusal to claim his true identity as the rightful heir to the Pride Lands. Later, Simba finally understands when his late father, Mufasa, speaks from the sky: “Remember who you are. ... You are my son and the one true king.” Only then is Simba able to come to terms with his past, claim his identity, and take up his responsibility to restore what has been broken.”

So as we turn the calendar to Epiphany ...

Remember who you are!

Craig

P.O. Box 3400

115 N. Madison Ave

706-485-3331

firstbaptisteatonton.org

Office Hours: Monday – Thursday: 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Friday: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

“A CHARGE TO KEEP I HAVE”

This Sunday we will witness something both ancient and immediate: the laying on of hands, the prayers of consecration, and the solemn vows that mark the ordination of our deacons. As your minister of music, I've been pondering what it means to accompany such a moment musically.

There's a verse in Colossians that speaks of teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with gratitude in our hearts to God. Music in the life of the church has never been mere performance or entertainment—it's how we remember, how we pray, how we bear witness to what God is doing among us.

When we ordain deacons, we're recognizing God's hand already at work in their lives. We're saying as a community: we see Christ in you, and we need the gifts you bring. Charles Wesley captured this sense of divine appointment beautifully in “A Charge to Keep I Have.” The hymn speaks directly to the weight and wonder of being entrusted with a specific calling: “A charge to keep I have, a God to glorify, a never-dying soul to save, and fit it for the sky.”

Every deacon accepts such a charge—not as burden but as sacred trust. Wesley's second verse reminds us that this work requires vigilance: “To serve the present age, my calling to fulfill.” Our deacons are called to this present moment, to these particular people, to the needs that exist right here in our community. The hymn doesn't promise ease but purpose, asking God for strength to guard against temptation and to watch and pray through faithful service.

I'm mindful that some of our most powerful moments of worship happen when the music steps back and makes room for silence, for reflection, for the still small voice. Sunday's service will include both—songs of celebration and quiet moments where we can hear our own hearts responding to God's call in our lives, whether we're being ordained or simply reaffirming our commitment to follow Christ wherever He leads.

Come expectant. Come ready to worship.

Grace and peace,

Dylan

THANK YOU FROM STEPPING STONES

Dear FBCE members,

Thank you so much for your monetary support during our Christmas Season.

Your gift directly supports our daycare ministry and helps us provide a loving, Christ-centered environment where children are nurtured, taught, and reminded daily of God's love. Because of your generosity, we are able to serve families in our congregation and community while continuing the mission God has placed before us.

We truly appreciate your prayers, encouragement, and willingness to invest in the lives of our children. It is a blessing to minister alongside fellow believers who share a heart for raising children in faith.

May the Lord bless you abundantly for your generosity and faithfulness.

With heartfelt thanks,

Denise Carmichael

Stepping Stones Learning Center Director

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

WELCOMING FOR JANUARY

Jim and Vicki Hall

USHERS FOR JANUARY

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

DEACON FOR JANUARY 11

Steve Benton

DEACON FAMILIES

Chad Davis Family, Gail Harley, Janice Knowles,
Randall McCook, Betty Pinholster,
Don Turney Family, Jerry Williams Family,
Craig Williamson Family

DEACON FOR JANUARY 18

Joni Dixon

DEACON FAMILIES

William Etheridge Family, Don Masson Family,
Karen McGinnis, Cooper Rainey Family,
Mac Rainey Family, Jeff Russell Family,
Andrea Welch

BIRTHDAYS

01/08 - Mac Rainey
01/09 - Mike Faulk
01/10 - Jarred Camp, Pam Lancaster
01/13 - Wyatt Wojtas
01/14 - Brooke McMillen
01/15 - Nancy Chambers, Ed Self
01/18 - Pam Douglas
01/21 - Tatum Camp, Judie Kitchen, Glenda Ridley

ANNIVERSARIES

01/08 - Mike and Linda Reagin
01/16 - James and Sylvia Cheney
01/21 - Guerry and Joan Key

WORSHIP REPORT

<u>Sunday, December 21</u>	<u>120</u>
<u>Sunday, December 28</u>	<u>95</u>
<u>Sunday, January 04</u>	<u>113</u>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DEACON ORDINATION

SUNDAY, JANUARY 11
AT 10:50AM
DURING MORNING
WORSHIP



Children's Choir

AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

TUESDAYS

Beginning January 13
3PM - 4:30PM

Come and be a part of our new Children's Choir for children in K4-5th Grade.
A snack will be provided and we will offer a time for a Bible Story.

Register Today at www.firstbaptisteatonton.org

For More Information, Contact Dylan at 706-485-3331



Wednesday Night
Services
begin January 14

3rd -5th Grade Sunday School Teacher Needed

We are currently looking for
volunteers to help lead our
Sunday School class for
3rd-5th grade students.

If you're interested or would
like more information, please
contact a minister.



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

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.

