

JANUARY 9, 2025

# First Baptist Church of Eatonton Messenger

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



## FROM THE PASTOR

I am mindful of the things for which I am most grateful after the gracious holidays. And I am mindful of the prayers I pray for a gracious spirit to grow within me. There are two pieces that provoke such thought, but only space to share one such piece. I've been moved by Howard Thurman's prayer for a gracious spirit and aware Joyce Rupp's exhortation is such a necessary part of developing the gracious spirit. So it's her words I share, *Stay, My Heart, Stay*.

Everything inside of me  
longs to flee to where the sun  
rinses the winter sky,  
filling the day with invitation,  
to run where the brilliant light  
shines into blushing sunset,  
avoiding the space were night  
whispers to oncoming darkness.

Do not give in. Stay. Sit inside  
the grayness, the airless heart,  
day after day after day after day.  
Stay and enter the dark void.

Yin space. Lots of it. Cave time.  
Pull back a desire for Yang.  
Be with the persistent dullness.  
Listen intently for the smallest  
murmuring of life.

It is there, quiet as an enclosed root  
in the seeming dead of winter  
secretly sipping from the soil,  
waiting for a turn toward warmth,  
not giving its strength to worry  
or yearning for what is yet to be.

Stay, my heart, stay.  
Stay. Stay. Stay where you are.

None of this is about seeking the most depressing space you can find, as it may sound to some. It is about using the winter time as the trees do, to let the deepest roots sip from the soil, feeding you the sap you will need for a gracious spirit!  
May it be so for you!

*Grace,  
Craig*

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

# HAPPY NEW YEAR!

As we turn the page to a new year, I am reminded of God's promise in Isaiah 43:19: "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." These words serve as a powerful reminder that our God is a God of new beginnings, fresh opportunities, and renewed hope.

For many of us, the start of a new year is a time to reflect on the past and anticipate what lies ahead. It is a season of resolutions and commitments—a chance to realign our lives with God's purpose and plan. As we embrace this new season, I encourage you to take some time to pray and ask God how He is calling you to grow and serve in 2025. What areas of your life need renewal? Where is He asking you to trust Him more deeply?

Here at FBCE, we are excited about what God has in store for us as a congregation in the coming year. Whether it's through vibrant worship, opportunities to serve our community, or small groups and Sunday School classes that deepen our relationships, I believe God is calling us to greater faithfulness and impact. Let's commit together to making this a year of spiritual growth and loving fellowship.

As we step into this new year, let's remember that our hope is not in our own plans or efforts but in God's unchanging love and faithfulness. Psalm 90:12 reminds us, "Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." May this year be marked by hearts that seek wisdom, lives that reflect Christ, and a church that shines as a light in the world.

In practical terms, let's each take the following steps as we enter the new year:

1. **Renew our commitment to prayer and Scripture** – Make daily time with God a priority. Let's immerse ourselves in His Word and listen for His guidance.

2. **Find ways to serve** – There is no shortage of opportunities to be the hands and feet of Jesus. Whether it's volunteering at church, helping a neighbor, or supporting a local mission, every act of service matters.

3. **Stay connected** – Life is richer when shared with others. If you're not already part of a small group or Sunday School class, consider joining one this year.

4. **Be intentional about sharing your faith** – The new year offers countless opportunities to share the love of Christ with those around us. Let's be bold and compassionate witnesses for His kingdom.

As we embark on this journey together, I want you to know how grateful I am for each of you. Your faithfulness, generosity, and love make this church a place where God's presence is evident. Let's step into 2025 with confidence, knowing that the One who began a good work in us will carry it to completion.

Happy New Year, and may God bless you richly in the days ahead.

*In Christ's love,  
Dylan*

## RETIREMENT 2.0

In 1965, 60 years ago, I was a high school student who was first beginning to sense God calling me into full time ministry, with music as my primary tool. Fast forward over 50 years of music ministry in 5 Georgia cities later, to when I retired in 2015. It wasn't long after that when I received a call from Keithen Tucker, asking if I might come fill in for a couple of weeks until First Baptist of Eatonton could find a suitable replacement for Glenn Harrell. I gladly accepted, and a year later became your "permanent" part-time music minister, serving about 15 hours a week here at the church, plus working from home. This arrangement has worked beautifully. You have been a wonderfully warm, welcoming church, and I have loved serving our Lord with you.

Some months ago, however, I began sensing that the time for me to *re-retire* was growing near. I shared this with our Pastor in November, who in turn shared it with our Personnel Committee. We agreed that it would be best if I stayed through the busy Christmas season and a few weeks thereafter, and that my last Sunday with you will be January 26. We also decided that it would be best to wait until now to share this news with you.

Few music ministers get to serve for 60 years, and I know I am highly blessed! As long as I am able, I hope to continue serving - in supply roles, teaching, mentoring, writing, and musical missions. I plan to go to my 38<sup>th</sup> or 39<sup>th</sup> country, Cuba, with Jubal Ministries Inc this October. (I'm not sure whether to count California as a separate country; I'm leaning toward yes!)

While I don't know all the details of the plans God has made for this church, I know they are bright. You are blessed to have a wonderful Pastor in Craig, a multi-talented, fun-crazy Associate in Dylan, and a great office Staff in Ellen and Hannah. You have wonderful keyboard ministers in Connie and Hunter, and your children's, adult, and handbell choirs genuinely love praising our Lord musically.

You are a beautiful, multi-generational congregation that values every person, from our tiniest little babies to our very oldest saints, and you genuinely love worshipping in each of their musical heart languages. Your future, like mine, is full of the hope and promise of God's persistent presence. I've come to love you all, and will genuinely miss you. I will be eternally thankful to have served our Lord with you these past 8.5 years!

*BlesSings!  
John*

# SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

## WELCOMING FOR JANUARY

Jim and Vicki Hall

## USHERS FOR JANUARY

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

## DEACON OF THE DAY

### DEACON FOR JANUARY 5

Robin Benton

### DEACON FAMILIES

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

### DEACON FOR JANUARY 12

Barry Chambers

### DEACON FAMILIES

Dylan Bowden, Lisa Herndon,  
Anne Marie Horton Family, Leslie Peebles Family,  
Jean Rich, Roger Vining Family,  
Ronnie Williams Family

### DEACON FOR JANUARY 19

Kim Camp

### DEACON FAMILIES

Steve Benton Family, Brandon Cardwell Family,  
Daryl Covington Family, Jesse Covington,  
Chris Hewett Family, Frank Thompson Family,

## WORSHIP REPORT

Sunday, December 15      120

Sunday, December 22      128

Sunday, December 29      97

## BIRTHDAYS

01/09 - Mike Faulk, Steve Tubbs  
01/10 - Jarred Camp, Pam Lancaster  
01/13 - Wyatt Wojtas  
01/14 - Brooke McMillen  
01/15 - Nancy Chambers, Edwin Self  
01/18 - Pam Douglas  
01/21 - Tatum Camp, Judie Kitchen, Glenda Ridley  
01/23 - McKenzie Cardwell, Carl Haizlip, Reagan Prance

## ANNIVERSARY

01/16 - James and Sylvia Cheney  
01/21 - Guerry and Joan Key  
01/21 - Steven and Rebecca Prance

## THANK YOU

Stepping Stones would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of our wonderful "Angel Tree" donors this Christmas, as well as a big thank you to the FBCE Missions for our staff Walmart gift cards. We couldn't continue our Stepping Stones children's ministry without the church's love and support.

May each of you have a blessed and Happy New Year!

*Much love,  
Stepping Stones Learning Center*

## STEPPING STONES IS HIRING

STEPPING STONES LEARNING CENTER

### NOW ACCEPTING APPLICANTS

#### INFANT ROOM POSITION

*We are seeking an individual who is prepared to provide exceptional care, love, and share the teachings of Jesus in our infant rooms!*

#### OUR MISSION

*Since 1999, we have dedicated ourselves to serving our community by offering a ministry that enables children aged 6 weeks to 10 years to learn the teachings of the Lord while having fun playing with their peers.*

#### SUBMIT AN APPLICATION NOW!

Applications are accepted online only; no physical copies will be distributed.



Currently, we are only accepting applications for the infant room position. Should any other positions open up, we will provide an updated list of available roles.

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First Baptist Church  
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Return Service Requested

# HAPPY RETIREMENT



**Celebrating 8.5 years  
as Music Minister at  
First Baptist Church  
Eatonton.**

**Join us as we honor Rev. John Cotten  
on Sunday, January 26 at 10:50am  
Following the service, we will have  
a meal catered by Andy's BBQ  
in the Fellowship Hall.**

