

NOVEMBER 20, 2025

First Baptist Church of Eatonton Messenger

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



FROM THE PASTOR

An offering of a Thanksgiving Prayer – from Elizabeth H. Doolin, from North Carolina where she parents a wild and wonderful toddler, and tries to read and go outside whenever she can.

Dear God,

We find ourselves in the season of turkey dinners, football games, sweater weather, and requests to share what we are thankful for. We are implored to be thankful; gratitude is the season's theme.

But what if we are not feeling it?

What if the weight of the world feels too heavy for platitudes of gratitude?

What do we do with the things we are not grateful for, that we wish were different? That list can feel longer than our list of thanks.

How do we give thanks around our tables,
knowing there are many with no table to join?

How do we share thanks together, when our differences feel so painful,
and the hurt feels too deep?

How do we gratitude-journal our way out of this?

This Thanksgiving, grant us imagination, compassion and safe spaces.

Maybe gratitude is not just noticing what we have,
but envisioning what could be.

Maybe giving thanks is not a sign of our piety, but our longing for wholeness.

Maybe gratitude can be a call not only to notice but to act.

When we give thanks for our families, may we welcome those with no family.

When we find splendor in the fall colors, may we work to protect the earth.

When we graze over lengthy meals, may we care for those who are hungry.

May our gratitude be more than lip service to righteousness.

May our thanksgiving widen God's table of grace.

My sincerest thanks to all of you!

**Grateful,
Craig**

WHAT IS LITURGICAL WORSHIP?

Understanding Liturgical Worship in Baptist Life

For many, the term "liturgical worship" conjures images of ancient cathedrals, ornate vestments, and formal prayers read from weathered books. Yet an increasing number of Baptist congregations are discovering that liturgical worship isn't foreign to their heritage—it's a return to something deeply rooted in Christian history that many Baptists embraced long before modern worship trends emerged.

What Is Liturgical Worship?

At its core, liturgical worship follows a structured pattern or order of service that has been used by Christians for centuries. The word "liturgy" comes from the Greek *leitourgia*, meaning "the work of the people." Rather than being rigid or lifeless, liturgical worship invites the entire congregation into participatory worship through prayers, Scripture readings, and responses that have united believers across time and geography. A typical liturgical service might include elements like a call to worship, recitation of historic creeds, responsive Scripture readings, written prayers, and more than once a quarter, the Lord's Supper—all woven together in a deliberate pattern that tells the story of God's redemptive work.

Why Historical Baptists Embraced Liturgy

While Baptists are often associated with spontaneous, non-structured worship, our earliest forebears understood that structure and Spirit work together, not against each other. Many seventeenth and eighteenth-century Baptist congregations followed thoughtful orders of worship, used written prayers, and incorporated historic Christian practices into their gatherings.

My commitment to liturgical worship reflects several core Baptist convictions. First, it demonstrates our connection to our brothers and sisters around the globe, the universal Church. When we pray the Lord's Prayer or recite the Apostles' Creed, or read lectionary readings, alongside believers throughout history, we affirm that we are not innovating a new faith but participating in the historic Christian tradition. Second, liturgical worship shapes us through repetition. Just as Scripture emphasizes patterns of remembrance and repeated acts of worship, liturgy forms our hearts and minds through consistent practice, or as some may call it, discipline. The regular rhythm of reading Scripture, prayer, and communion doesn't become rote—it becomes formative, allowing deeper truths to take root over time. Finally, liturgical worship protects us from the cult of personality and cultural captivity. When worship follows a historic pattern centered on Scripture and the Sacraments, it's less likely to be swayed by passing trends or dominated by any single cultural voice. The liturgy itself becomes a faithful teacher, guiding us into balanced, Christ-centered worship.

Walking Through Scripture Together: The Lectionary

Central to our liturgical practice is our use of the lectionary—a three-year cycle of Scripture readings used by Christians around the world. Each Sunday, the lectionary provides passages from the Old Testament, the Psalms, the Epistles, and the Gospels, ensuring that we hear the full breadth of Scripture over time rather than simply revisiting our favorite passages.

Following the lectionary means we walk through the church year alongside millions of believers across denominations and continents. When we read from Luke during Advent or hear the Resurrection accounts during Easter, we join a global chorus of worship. This shared rhythm prevents us from becoming narrow-minded and reminds us that we belong to something far larger than our local congregation. More importantly, the lectionary protects us from selective Scripture reading. Rather than choosing texts that merely reinforce what we already believe or prefer, we submit to hearing passages that challenge, comfort, instruct, and transform us—even when they're difficult or unexpected.

Prayerful Intentionality: Weaving Worship Together

Each week, Craig and I approach worship planning not as a mechanical exercise but as a prayerful act of discernment. We prayerfully consider the lectionary readings and ask: What is God saying to us through these texts? How do these Scriptures connect? What themes emerge? How can every element of our service—from the opening hymn to the benediction—illuminate and reinforce these truths?

This intentional weaving means that our call to worship, responsive reading, hymns, prayers, sermon, and response all work together as a unified whole. If the Gospel reading speaks of Christ's mercy to the outcast, our prayers might acknowledge our own prejudices, and our hymns might celebrate God's radical welcome. Nothing is random; everything serves the central message God is speaking through His Word that day. This approach requires patience and prayer. It means wrestling with texts in advance, listening for the Spirit's leading, and sometimes setting aside our own preferences for what God wants to say. The result is worship that feels cohesive and purposeful—where each element builds on the last, creating a cumulative experience that shapes our hearts and draws us deeper into God's story.

As Baptists who value both the freedom of conscience and the wisdom of tradition, we find that liturgical worship offers a rich path forward—one that honors our roots while nourishing our souls for faithful living today. Through the lectionary's guidance and our prayerful preparation, we gather each week to be formed by Scripture, connected to the universal Church, and transformed by the God who meets us in worship.

Dylan

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY THANK YOU

Dear First Baptist Church,

I wanted to share that I'll no longer be working at the church. While I'll miss being part of things, I'm really looking forward to having more time to pour into my own family and be more present with my kids. I know how quickly these years pass, and I want to be intentional about cherishing this season and allowing God to strengthen and shape our home through it.

I'll always carry this season in my heart with so much gratitude. I'm praying that God continues to pour His love, peace, and joy into your families—and that you never forget how deeply the work you do in your homes matters in His eyes.

Bridget

STEPPING STONES LEARNING CENTER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Since our founding in 1999, *Stepping Stones Learning Center* a ministry of *The First Baptist Church* has been dedicated to nurturing young minds and hearts through the love of Jesus Christ. What began as a small vision to create a safe, faith-filled learning environment has grown into a vibrant preschool ministry serving generations of families in our community.

Every day, our teachers share God's Word through songs, stories, and play—helping children discover that they are wonderfully made and deeply loved by their Creator. We see God's hand at work as children learn, laugh, and grow in both wisdom and grace.

As a **nonprofit ministry**, we depend on the generosity of friends and families who share our mission. Your donation helps us provide scholarships for families in need, maintain safe, engaging classrooms, equip our teachers with faith-based materials and training, continue sharing Christ's love with every child who walks through our doors,

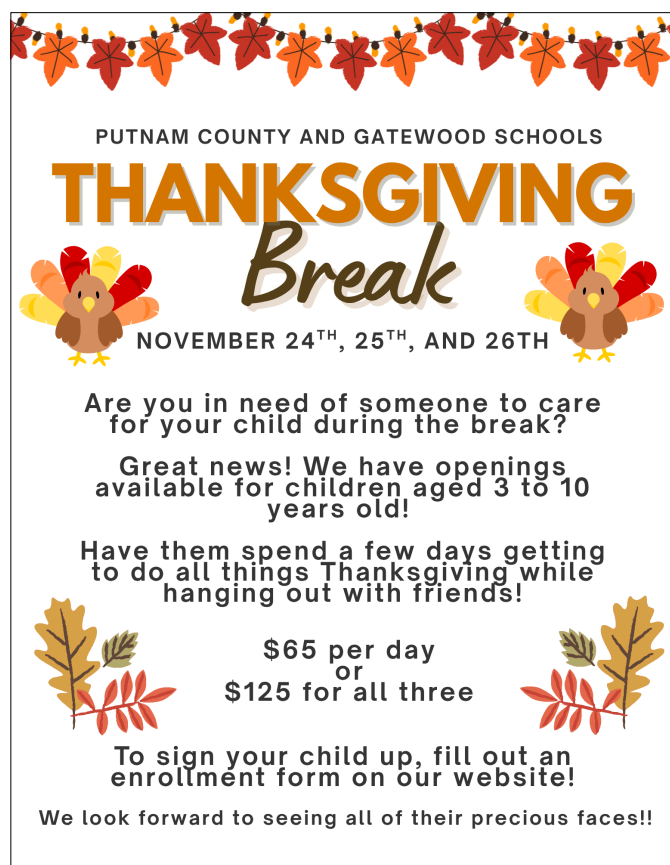
Would you prayerfully consider making a gift today to help us continue this mission? Whether it's a one-time donation or an ongoing monthly contribution, your support makes an eternal difference in the lives of children and families. All donations are tax deductible.

Together, we can continue *"training up a child in the way they should go"* (Proverbs 22:6) — just as we have since 1999.

With gratitude and faith,

Denise Carmichael

Director, Stepping Stones Learning Center



PUTNAM COUNTY AND GATEWOOD SCHOOLS

THANKSGIVING Break

NOVEMBER 24TH, 25TH, AND 26TH

Are you in need of someone to care for your child during the break?

Great news! We have openings available for children aged 3 to 10 years old!

Have them spend a few days getting to do all things Thanksgiving while hanging out with friends!

\$65 per day
or
\$125 for all three

To sign your child up, fill out an enrollment form on our website!

We look forward to seeing all of their precious faces!!



LOOKING FOR A SATURDAY TO PREPARE FOR CHRISTMAS OR TO TACKLE YOUR TO-DO LIST?

WE WILL BE HOSTING A

Parent's Day Out

SAT | 13 DEC | 9AM-3PM

Allow your child to have a delightful day with their friends, along with our wonderful SSLC Staff. They'll experience a day filled with Christmas festivities and bring home a special Christmas surprise! Lunch will be offered to the children, along with the option for a nap if needed!

Pricing:
One Child: \$50
Two Children: \$80
Three or more Children: \$100

Please use this link or scan the QR code to sign up:

<https://forms.gle/Cy5NVkA931d1TtH59>



This event is for everyone in the community and all proceeds go to our center! THIS WILL BE HOSTED AT STEPPING STONES LEARNING CENTER AFTER HOURS AND NOT STATE REGULATED.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GOSPEL

on the Avenue

FREE EVENT
LOVE OFFERING OPTIONAL

11/22/2025
6PM TO 8 PM
EATONTON FMC
THE GREAT HALL
103 WEST MAGNOLIA ST.
EATONTON, GA



JOSEPH HABEDANK

THE PUTNAM CO. ENSEMBLE OF PRAISE  THE EFMC TRIO



706.486.5871
EATONTONFMC.ORG

CALLED CHURCH CONFERENCE

SUNDAY,
NOVEMBER 23
AT 10:50 AM
DURING THE WORSHIP SERVICE

We will be voting on the 2026 nominating report and updated building use policy



COMMUNION SERVICE

SUNDAY,
NOVEMBER 30
AT 10:50 AM



CHRISTMAS DINNER

Wednesday, December 10
6:00PM

Turkey, Ham, and Dressing Provided
Please bring casseroles, vegetables, salads and desserts.


RSVP TO THE CHURCH OFFICE
BY FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5



Christmas Eve

Candlelight and Communion Service
Wednesday, December 24 at 5:00PM





Christmas on the Avenue

HOPE HAS DAWNED. NOEL!

A cantata for Christmas by Mary McDonald

Come celebrate the true spirit of Christmas with your community, praising the Lord with beautiful music and timeless carols!

DECEMBER

Choirs	7	Eatonton First Methodist
Handbells	6:00 PM	Eatonton First Baptist
Orchestra		Eatonton Presbyterian

Eatonton First Methodist
103 W. Magnolia St., Eatonton, GA

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

WELCOMING FOR NOVEMBER

Steve and Robin Benton

USHERS FOR NOVEMBER

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

DEACON FOR NOVEMBER 23

Mollie Harvey

DEACON FAMILIES

Tara Bushmaier, Russell Davis Family, Marvin Franklin Family, Sheryl Hall, Scott Joris Family, Steve Marshall, Pat McDade

DEACON FOR NOVEMBER 30

Cooper Rainey

DEACON FAMILIES

Pam Douglas, Jim Howell Family, Mike Lyons Family, Charles Patten Family, Glenda Ridley, Ed Self Family, Bill Sharp Family

WORSHIP REPORT

Sunday, November 09 219

Sunday, November 16 160

FINANCIAL REPORT

OCTOBER 31, 2025

Budget Needs YTD \$466,145.00

Total Receipts YTD \$448,381.55

Budget Expenditures YTD \$488,897.41

BIRTHDAYS

11/22 - Mary Ann Heath

11/23 - Sara Williams, Maxine Godin

11/26 - Jeanne Vining

11/30 - Taylor Keiser

12/01 - Danielle Hewette, Mike Lyons

12/02 - Frances Jane Self

12/04 - Steve Benton

ANNIVERSARIES

12/01 - Gene and Lesa Adams

12/01 - Jesse and Brooke McMillen

ADVENT'S MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

Putnam Christian Outreach

Thanksgiving Bags

200 bags of stuffing mix, cranberry sauce and yams – To go with PCO's turkeys for 200 families' Thanksgiving meals.

Service League Toy Drive

Please bring new and *unwrapped* toys to the toy box in the Narthex by Sunday, December 7.

Shop With a Cop

A donation to the Eatonton Police Department to support Shop with a Cop for Christmas. Helping families with Christmas and providing kids a positive interaction with the Police.

Stepping Stones Angel Tree

Angel tree – to donate an amount of your choice to help Stepping Stones families in need, with tuition. Donations are needed by Sunday, December 14.

Putnam County High School

Mistletoe Ball

A donation to the Mistletoe Ball to support special needs students.

Circle of Love Christmas Dinner

Provision of a Christmas Dinner for Circle of Love clients and staff on Christmas Day.

Any donations to help with these projects or our projects for next year is greatly appreciated.

Make check to First Baptist Church and indicate on check for Missions.

Thank you for your continued generosity.



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

November 30 - Hope
December 07 - Peace
December 14 - Joy
December 21 - Love

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

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

The First Baptist Church Office will close at 12:00pm on November 26 and will be closed on November 27 & 28.

There will be no services or activities on Wednesday, November 26.

