

MARCH 5, 2026

†
First Baptist Church of Eatonton
Messenger



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

FROM THE PASTOR

For the sake of clarity, I want to acknowledge once again, after much thought, prayer and discerning the Board of Directors of Stepping Stones Learning Center has made the difficult decision to close Stepping Stones Learning Center, effective at the conclusion of the work day, March 13, 2026, 6:00 PM. What a difficult thing to do! How excruciating for everyone involved – children, parents, employees, board members and the FBC family.

How grateful FBC is for the **dedicated staff** who have given their lives to care for children trusted to them every day for the past twenty-seven years! Several have given fifteen to twenty-five years to the ministry! Declining enrollment, struggling finances and staffing limitations have made it impossible to continue the ministry at this point. Closing the day-care is the most responsible path forward at this time. May God help us move forward with mercy and grace!

Lenten Bible readings in Romans remind me of Jo. It was funny and tragic all at the same time when my delightful, humorous 80ish year-old friend Josephine, told me about the time she fell and had, for the first time ever, used her call service. After pressing the button for assistance, she said she had no choice but to repeat that unforgettable line: *"I've fallen and I can't get up."*

She couldn't fully explain how it happened. She simply fell — and finally concluded she needed help. She told it with humor, but underneath the laughter was vulnerability. What metaphor!

It's an old commercial line, and not without its problems — especially the way it caricatures aging and disability. None of us wants to imagine reaching the point where we fall and cannot rise on our own. There is something in us that resists that image.

But it is part of the gospel truth - we live in a world saturated with sin. Not just personal mistakes, but patterns and powers that warp relationships and distort goodness – and leave us fallen. But another part of the gospel truth – one stronger than the strongest temptation, greater than the greatest sin has always been present in the world with us – made so obviously visible in Jesus Christ.

You are fallen and cannot get up — not by willpower alone, not by moral striving alone. But God who has always done so from the beginning of time works to raise you up. God works in Christ to raise you up — to set you on your feet — to call you righteous even while you are still healing.

So yes — we are fallen. But we are also lifted. God in Christ bends down, lifts up, and keeps lifting up. Thanks be to God!

Grace and Peace,
Craig

A CROSS WORTH SURVEYING

A Cross Worth Surveying

Reflections on *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*

Third Sunday in Lent

“When I survey the wondrous cross / On which the Prince of Glory died,

My richest gain I count but loss, / And pour contempt on all my pride.”

— Isaac Watts, 1707

Dear Friends in Song and Spirit,

As we journey together through this third week of Lent, our hearts and voices are drawn once more to one of the most profound hymns in the Christian tradition. *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* was penned by the great English hymn writer Isaac Watts in 1707, and in over three centuries it has lost none of its power to stop us in our tracks and redirect our gaze toward Calvary.

Watts drew his inspiration from Paul’s letter to the Galatians: “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Galatians 6:14). Notice that the hymn does not begin with a command to others — it is deeply personal. *When I survey*. In Lent, we are each invited into this singular act of beholding. To survey is to look carefully, deliberately, with your full attention. It is the opposite of a passing glance.

The Music Behind the Message

We will sing this hymn to the beloved tune ROCKINGHAM, the setting most familiar to many of us. Its unhurried, stately pace is not accidental — it is a musical instruction. This is not a hymn to be rushed through. The long, measured phrases ask us to breathe deeply between lines, to let each image settle before moving to the next.

I encourage you this week, even before Sunday, to sit with just one stanza. Consider the breathtaking movement from pride to loss in the first verse, the tender physicality of the second (“Sorrow and love flow mingled down”), and the sweeping total surrender of the final verse: *“Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present far too small.”* Watts is telling us that nothing we could ever offer is adequate response to this love — and yet we offer it anyway, in song.

A Hymn That Changes How We See

Lent is, above all else, a season of seeing clearly. We are invited to see ourselves as we truly are — finite, dependent, beloved — and to see God’s love displayed in the most unlikely of places: a cross on a hill outside Jerusalem. This hymn trains our eyes. Each time we sing it, we practice the discipline of looking at what is costly and true rather than what is easy and comfortable.

When we gather our voices together on Sunday, I want us to sing this hymn not merely as a performance of piety, but as an act of genuine beholding. Let the words do their ancient work. Let the melody carry you past what is merely familiar into something that can only be called holy.

Come ready to sing slowly, and to mean every word.

Blessings,

Dylan

EXPERIENCE EASTER

Easter Lilies

Easter Lilies will be placed in the sanctuary for Easter. If you would like to place a lily in memory or honor of a loved one, please place your check and information in the offering plate or mail it to the church office.

Cost is \$8

Deadline is March 11



Love Divine

A Palm Sunday Celebration

SUNDAY, MARCH 29, 2026

6:00PM IN THE SANCTUARY

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

115 N. MADISON AVENUE, EATONTON, GA 31024

Combined Chancel and Bell Choirs

Eatonton First Methodist Church and First Baptist Church of Eatonton

Holy Week Services

AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

MONDAY, MARCH 30 - THURSDAY, APRIL 2

12:00 NOON (Lunch will be provided after the services)



PALM SUNDAY
March 29
WORSHIP AT 10:50 AM
CANTATA AT 6:00 PM

**MAUNDY THURSDAY
COMMUNION**
April 2 AT 6:00 PM

EASTER SUNDAY
April 5
Sunrise at 7:00 AM
Worship AT 10:50 AM

Holy Week Schedule Update

First Baptist Church will not have Children's Choir, Wednesday Night Services or a Good Friday service during Holy Week, March 30–April 2, 2026.

Regular services and activities will resume the following week.

Easter Sunrise Service

April 5 at 7:00am
at the Plaza



Living Cross

We will be decorating a living cross on Easter Sunday. Please bring flowers to place on the cross, Sunday April 5.

EASTER EGG HUNT

SUNDAY, APRIL 5 AT 9:45 AM

BRING YOUR EASTER BASKET!

THE CHURCH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED ON EASTER MONDAY, APRIL 6, 2026.



SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

WELCOMING FOR MARCH

Mike and Kathy Faulk

USHERS FOR MARCH

Chad Davis, Edge Farley, Marvin Franklin,
Luke Harvey, Clayton Lancaster

DEACON FOR MARCH 8

Clayton Lancaster

DEACON FAMILIES

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

DEACON FOR MARCH 15

Pam Lancaster

DEACON FAMILIES

Jim Howell Family, Mike Lyons Family,
Charles Patten Family, Glenda Ridley,
Ed Self Family, Charlotte Williamson Family

WORSHIP REPORT

Sunday, February 22 98

Sunday, March 01 111

BIRTHDAYS

- 03/05 - Helen Benshoof, Charlee Anne Brown
- 03/06 - Don Masson, Paula Rossee
- 03/09 - Karen McGinnis
- 03/10 - Edward Ricketson
- 03/13 - Annie McMillen
- 03/14 - Ronnie Williams
- 03/16 - Marie Rainey
- 03/17 - Tammy Baker, Miranda Rossee

ANNIVERSARIES

- 03/08 - Carl and Elaine Haizlip
- 03/10 - Tim and Kim Camp
- 03/14 - Ronnie and Cheryl Williams

NOTES OF SIGNIFICANCE

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

Sunday, March 8
5:00 PM

CHURCH CONFERENCE



SUNDAY, MARCH 15
10:50AM DURING
MORNING WORSHIP

ANNUAL FBC FOOD DRIVE

Please bring non-perishable food items to the Narthex by Sunday, March 29.



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

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS MARCH 8

