

VOLUME 6 | ISSUE 1 | LENT 2023

IN THIS ISSUE

*Lent Schedule
Calendar*

FIRST TAKE

The Newsletter of First Baptist Dalton

from the

PASTOR



What does growth look like in your life? As we begin this new year, we are exploring the ways First Baptist is growing. We are looking at the branches that are producing fruit in the Kingdom of God. Which has me thinking a good bit about growth.

I remember being younger and experiencing growing pains. Do you remember your hips or legs aching? In one of my high school years, it was like everything just hurt. Turns out it was right before a major growth spurt. But it isn't just physical growth that causes pain, it seems to be in every area of my life. "No pain, no gain!" How many workout gyms had that poster hanging? Want to really learn who you are, I mean really know more about yourself? You will have to endure the pain that comes with deep and honest evaluation. Growth seldom comes without pain. Some have suggested that all growth requires pain, in one form or another. I don't know if I buy this whole hog, but I understand the sentiment.

As we look at growth in the Kingdom of God, it seems that pain joins us there too. The pain of learning we have been wrong and the journey to obedience is hard. The pain of following God into a next level where loving those who are rude and unkind is required. It is so much easier to ignore and to avoid, than follow God. Sometimes circumstances are downright painful.

The same is true of churches, growth requires pain. If God is calling on us as a church to grow, it will require some pain. I wish I knew what that was going to look like and could begin to safeguard you from it, but I can't. As we grow, we are going to change. As we change, we are going to experience difficult decisions. As we are obedient to God, there are going to be some growing pains. But the alternative doesn't sound very appealing, does it? Not grow. Not change. Not follow what God would have us to do.

One of the things I love most about growing pains is the payoff. After my legs ached, I was taller; I had longed to be taller for such a long time. After the workouts in the gym, our team played better on the field; we were stronger and faster. After I endured a season of God's refinement around an area in my life, I was more aligned with what God would have me to do. For the church, as we look at the branches and the areas of our church that are growing, know that growth will only blossom into fruit after some painful pruning. But we will have fruit and that is the goal.

If something is causing you pain, annoyance, or difficulty I encourage you to look at it as growing pains.* If you can, then you can look at the pain as part of the growth that leads to fruit. I look forward to good fruit being produced this year as the church grows closer to one another, as the church invites people to join us in our mission, and as the church looks for ways to be the Kingdom of God in the world. Remember, no pain, no gain!

*Unless you need to go see a doctor, sometimes pains are your body telling you something is broken or hurt and that's a totally different pastor's article.

Jonathan Barlow

Dr. Jonathan Barlow

New Deacons

Each year a new class of deacons begins serving our congregation. They join a group of men and women who have already answered God's call to love others by acts of service. The Deacon body at First Baptist spends time caring for the spiritual needs of the church, visiting those who are sick or at home, helping the ministers in a variety of ministry endeavors, and praying for the Church and its continued mission. First Baptist gives thanks to our Lord that these individuals have answered God's call to serve us for the next three years: Eric and Jill Calfee, Larry Flanagan, Richa Dean Johnson, Brandon Kersey, Austin King, Lori Lowery, Lamar McClure, Andrew Moore, Jon Rackley, Ken Russell, and Ronnie Stephens.

We also want to highlight the two newest deacons: Eric Calfee and Ronnie Stephens. They were ordained on January 15.

My wife Pam and I joined First Baptist in the spring of 2008. As soon as we walked through these doors we knew without a doubt that this was a church where we could grow in our faith and serve the Lord. Serving as an Usher has allowed me the privilege of getting to know most of you. I've also enjoyed helping with Vacation Bible School, Extended Session, volunteering on the construction site at Habitat for Humanity and serving on the Ordinance Committee.

I moved to Dalton in 1985 from my home state of South Carolina after being recruited as a Senior Industrial Engineer by Tappan (Microwave Division). I finished my career in production management. When I retired in 2019 I asked the Lord to plan a path of service that would honor Him. I feel like serving as a deacon is part of His plan for me to fulfill.

Pam and I have one son, Kris who resides in Chatsworth, GA with his wife April. We are proud of their success professionally but what we are most proud of is their heart for God.

My favorite Bible verse is Deuteronomy 31:6. This verse reminds us that God is always in control and is with us every step of the way.

I am deeply humbled and honored to be a deacon and serve my wonderful church family. I would appreciate your prayers as I begin my new role of service. May all that we do glorify the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.



Ronnie Stephens



Eric Calfee

My wife, Jill and I moved to Dalton in June of 1997 with our two children, Cole and Caroline. I had just finished my residency in Jackson, MS and was eager to begin my new job with Associates in Obstetrics and Gynecology. Upon moving to Dalton, it was important to both Jill and I to find a church home. We visited First Baptist and immediately felt a connection with the congregation and joined soon after. I had grown up in the Methodist faith and was baptized here upon joining the church. First Baptist has been instrumental in our family's faith development and in helping us guide our children as they grew into young adults. I am grateful for the support the church has given to our family over these many years and am thankful for the role this church played in helping to lead our children to Christ. I am honored and humbled to be asked to serve as a deacon. May God lead our hands and feet for Christ.

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." —Isaiah 41:10

"For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations." —Psalms 100:5

Staff SPOTLIGHT

Coy Ward was recently hired at First Baptist in December 2022 as our new Facilities Manager.

His first position was as an equipment operator in an underground limestone mine. Fun fact: Coy has served in the north GA mine rescue association finishing 2nd place in the national mine rescue competition of over 100 teams. He transitioned into Dalton Public Schools maintenance department taking on the asbestos, lead paint, fire alarm and maintenance duties.

Coy has been married to Catrin for eleven years. They have two children, a son Johnathan and daughter Destiny. They enjoy spending time with their grandkids, watching the Waltons, and traveling. They are currently planning on volunteering a lot of time helping natural disaster families with clean up.

His birthday is April 19. He enjoys football from little league to college with his favorite team being the Georgia Bulldogs. He likes a variety of movies, from comedies to action thrillers. He enjoys going to Cyra's in downtown Dalton on special occasions. He enjoys the Alamo and Old Mill when visiting Pigeon Forge. He loves listening to bluegrass and gospel music, His favorite saying is "Don't deny, rectify."

Coy Ward



On behalf of First Baptist, welcome! May you find us as much a blessing as you are to us!

CHILDREN'S *Ministry*

It was a joy to witness twenty of our children and three of our youth perform in the "Not-So-Silent Night" Christmas Pageant this Advent. A huge thank you to everyone who made this performance happen and to all the children who offered their time and talents to lead us to worship God in a new way!



Not-So-Silent-Night



CBF GA Retreat

The last weekend in January, a group of nine children went to Eatonton, Georgia for CBF Georgia's children's retreat! We had so much fun learning about the ways Jesus taught in stories, playing games, and worshipping God together!

Join us for Sunday Nights

Growing in Christ Bible Study (ages 6-12) | 6:00-7:00pm
We will dive into the basics of Christian faith and have fun together during this 5-week study during March and April!*

**See Church Wide Calendar for dates*

Save-the-Date

VBS 2023 | June 12-15



YOUTH *Ministry*

YOUTH MINISTRY

The youth did a great job helping to pack Red Tubs in December. We also had a great time caroling at Royal Oaks/Gardens before we had our Christmas party!

We are currently studying a series called *Don't Believe Your Eyes* on Wednesday nights. In this study we are discovering myths that we often believe about ourselves and are discovering the ways in which Jesus sees us and challenges us to see ourselves as He does.

After this study, we will begin a new one entitled *Stories Jesus Told*. We all love a good story and the narratives we consume help shape us into who we are today. With this study, we will be diving deeper into the parables of Jesus. His stories help form who we are and reveal more about God than we ever thought possible. They provide the hope we are searching for, speaking above all other noise we may be hearing.

Save the Dates

May 3 - Senior Graduation Dinner

May 21 - Graduation Sunday



Weekly Schedule

Wednesday Night Activities

4:45-5:30pm: Dinner in the Fellowship Hall

5:30-6:10pm: Youth Hangout

6:10pm: Group Activity & Bible Study

6:45-7:15pm: Small Group Discussion

Sundays Activities

9:40-10:15am: Sunday School

5:00-6:00pm: Youth Choir

6:00-7:00pm: Youth Food & Fellowship



New Horizons

UPCOMING EVENTS

In December, New Horizons had a wonderful time celebrating the Christmas season. We had our second annual Christmas party where we sang carols, shared Christmas stories, made goody stockings for our friends-at-home and assisted living, and had a gift exchange. We also had our Christmas banquet where our new music minister, Mitch Huskison, and our organist, Lynn Murphy, provided a wonderful Christmas program!



Monthly New Horizons Meeting

February 28th, March 28th, and April 25th
6:00-8:00pm
Join us for fellowship and entertainment!

Day Trips

March 4th

Tennessee Valley Railroad High Tea and Train Ride

10:00am-3:00pm

March 26th

David Phelps Concert
(Johnson Ferry Baptist Church)

3:00-11:00pm

April 22nd

4 Bridges Art Festival (Chattanooga)

9:30am-2:00pm



MUSIC

Ministry



Spring into Music!

This is the season for joining a choir or musical group at FBC. Guests and members alike are welcome to join us! The goal of our Music Ministry is to lead in worship and to create a soundtrack of faith for our congregation. We provide opportunities for all ages and skill levels and all our groups are open to everyone.

Sunday

Youth Choir 4:30pm (grades 6-12)

Monday

New Horizons 4:00pm (ages 55+)

Handbells 5:30pm

First Light 7:00pm

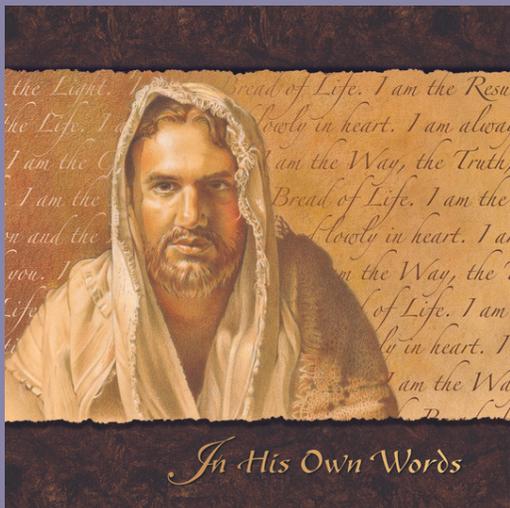
Wednesday

Graded Children's Choirs 5:30pm (pre-K- grade 5)

Sanctuary Choir 6:30pm (ages 18 and up)



If you are interested in joining FBC Instrumental Ensemble, contact Mitch at mhuskison@fbc dalton.org



Please join us for a
Special Worship Service

IN HIS OWN WORDS

Sunday, April 23, 10:30am

Sanctuary Choir and Orchestra

A choral presentation based on the words of Christ.

Come celebrate our children's and youth
choirs at

SPRING CHOIR RECOGNITION
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26, 6:00PM



MISSIONS

Ministry

Thank You First Baptist for your generous hearts!

RED TUBS

Your generosity in December made it possible for us to:

- Served 138 families with food in Red Tubs for the holiday break
- Collected 10,000 lbs of food for the Chattanooga Area Food Bank
- Hosted 13 Westwood families with a meal and time with Santa
- Hosted 140 Kid City children and their families with a Christmas dinner and time with Santa
- Served over 1,000 children at Sharing is Caring whose parents qualified and took 3 classes to attend. They received 3 gifts and a new outfit of clothing.



SERVING
beyond DAY

MARCH 25, 2023

8:15 AM - Breakfast

8:45 AM - Work Sites

Please join us for a church wide day of service. See the sign up board in the atrium at the Mission Kiosk to volunteer.



Current need

EASTER EGGS NEEDED

THE CHURCH IS IN NEED OF FILLED EASTER EGGS FOR OUR BEECHLAND COOKOUT AND EGG HUNT ON APRIL 1ST. PLEASE DROP OFF DONATIONS AT THE CHURCH OFFICE BY WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29TH.



Lent Schedule

PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE FOLLOWING
EVENTS AND SERVICES

Ash Wednesday Service

February 22nd 6:00pm
Sanctuary

Journey to the Cross*

March 27 - April 6
Chapel during normal church hours.

Good Friday Tenebrae**

April 7th 7:00pm
Sanctuary

Easter Sunday Worship

April 9th 10:30am
Sanctuary



***Journey to the Cross**

Journey to the Cross is a self-guided worship experience for all ages that will be in our chapel. It is based on the traditional Stations of the Cross and uses readings and symbols to connect the worshiper to the events of Holy Week.

****Good Friday Tenebrae, Service of Shadows**

This service is centered around the seven last sayings of Christ from the cross. At the end of each reading one of seven candles is extinguished. At the seventh reading the Christ candle remains lit, but is taken out of the sanctuary to remind us of the darkness of Good Friday but that the light was not overcome by the darkness. On Easter Sunday the Christ candle will return to the sanctuary to signify the resurrection.

CHURCH WIDE *Calendar*



CHILDREN

- February 12 - Children's Sunday
- March 12 - Family bowling night, 5:00-6:30pm
- March 19 - Lunch and Learn about Baptism, 11:30am
- March 19 - Growing in Christ (ages 6-12) 6:00-7:00pm
- March 26 - Easter Egg Hunt, 2:00pm
- March 26 - Growing in Christ (ages 6-12) 6:00-7:00pm
- April 2 - Growing in Christ (ages 6-12) 6:00-7:00pm
- April 16- Children's Worship
- April 16 - Growing in Christ (ages 6-12) 6:00-7:00pm
- April 19- RA/GA Recognition (last missions of semester)
- April 23 - Growing in Christ (ages 6-12) 6:00-7:00pm
- April 26- Choir Recognition Service
- April 30- Children's & Youth Volunteer Appreciation Lunch
- April 30- Children's Movie Night- 5:00pm

YOUTH

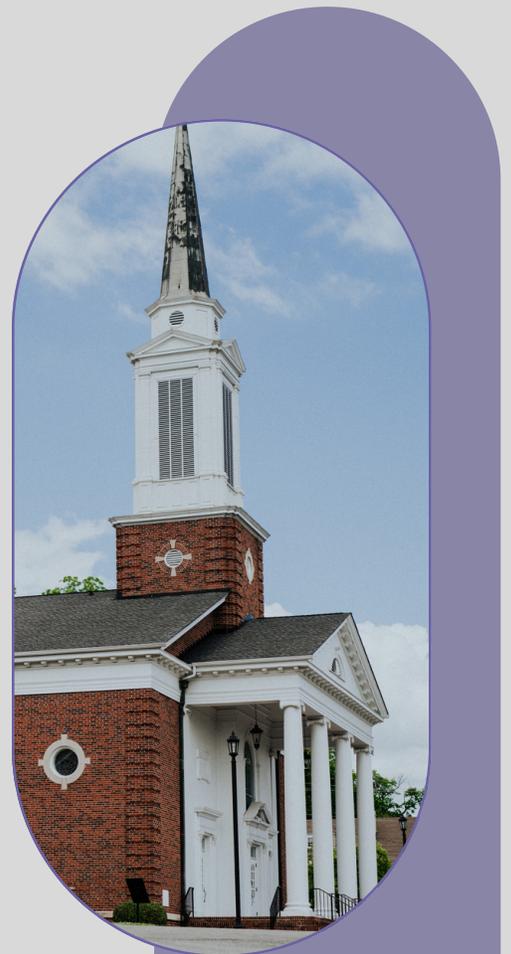
- February 12- SuperBowl Watch Party, 6:00pm-Halftime
- February 22- Ash Wednesday Service (No Youth Bible Study)
- March 11- Top Golf
- March 26- Youth Sunday
- April 14-16- Mission Madness in Columbus, GA
- April 26 - Choir Recognition Service, 5:30pm
- April 30- Children's & Youth Volunteer Appreciation Lunch

SENIOR ADULT

- February 28-New Horizons Meeting, 6:00-8:00pm
- March 4- Day Trip: Tennessee Valley Railroad High Tea and Train Ride, 10:00am-3:00pm
- March 26- Day Trip: David Phelps Concert at Johnson Ferry Baptist Church, 3:00-11:00pm
- March 28- New Horizons Meeting, 6:00-8:00pm
- April 22-Day Trip: 4 Bridges Art Festival in Chattanooga, 9:30am-2:00pm
- April 25-New Horizons Meeting, 6:00-8:00pm

CHURCH WIDE

- February 20 - March 2 - Israel Trip
- February 22 - Ash Wednesday Service (No Regular Wednesday Night Activities) 6:00pm
- March 25 - Serving Beyond Day
- March 27 - April 6 - Journey to the Cross
- March 29 - Easter egg donations due to the church office
- April 1 - Beechland Egg Hunt and Cookout
- April 7 - Good Friday Tenebrae Service, 7:00pm
- April 9 - Easter Sunday Worship
- April 23- "In His Own Words" Special Worship Service
- April 26- Children's & Youth Choir Recognition Service, 5:30pm





FIRST FOUNDATION

First Foundation, Inc. originated in 1996 and was established by First Baptist Church Dalton to assist in undergirding and supporting the objectives and ministries of the Church both now and into the future. When a gift is made to the First Foundation or when someone remembers the First Foundation in their will or estate, the gift is endowed and enables the Church to support the missions and benevolent ministries of the Church, support those in religious academia, support the capital and facility needs of the Church, and support other ministries as approved by the Board of Trustees.

First Foundation accepts donations in a variety of ways and encourages everyone to participate. Gifts can be donated on an ongoing basis, through trusts, and through legacy bequests. These gifts help the continued success of First Baptist Church. These gifts are not to replace your regular tithes and offerings but be in addition to them. Due to the generosity of many people, several ministries of First Baptist have benefited from First Foundation: various mission endeavors, the building of the columbarium, updating the Christian Counseling Center, along with numerous families seeking benevolence help to name a few.

We invite you to join us as we work to serve the Lord. If you would like more information about First Foundation or how you can contribute, please come visit the Associate Pastor.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Church family, I just want to say thank you for your continued generosity and support of First Baptist. Our Church ended 2022 with a small surplus. Not only did the Church end well, but the Children's Learning Center also ended the year with a surplus! You heard all the details about it in the Church's February Town Hall Meeting.

Thank you for your continued support of First Baptist and the many ministries our Church does and financially supports throughout the year. Without your generosity, we would not be able to feed the hungry, cloth the naked, lead our children and youth closer to Jesus, let alone keep the lights on, fix frozen water pipes, clean the carpets, or hire the excellent staff that we have here.

Your generosity does all this and I believe speaks to your faithfulness in the mission of First Baptist and that God will protect and provide for your needs. Jesus tells us in Matthew 6 not to worry about what we will eat or what we will wear, but to be honest, I worry about those things in my life. Giving back to God is one way I believe all of us can say, "I trust you Jesus." Following Jesus is not always easy and many times it has proven difficult for me in both my actions and financial situations. Yet I continue to hear, "Justin, trust Me."

Thank you for trusting God. Thank you for giving to First Baptist. Thank you for giving to debt retirement. In January's Finance Committee, the members voted to pay \$100,000 towards our debt to First Foundation because of your generous gifts! Praise God that we are able to do that! In December the Facilities and Capital Management Committee paid \$25,000 to pay off the Church's debt on the columbarium. Without generous and faithful members, these debts would still be owed. May we celebrate this debt retirement and may we all be encouraged to give faithfully.

God Bless,
Justin Safley



Children's Learning Center

In December we had so much fun at our Christmas Program. Our 2s, 3s, and 4s sang Christmas songs for our parents! Thank you Mrs. Melinda, Mr. Clyde and Mrs. Shari for your help!

Monthly Recaps

In November we focused on what we are thankful for and made a thankful chain in the CLC Lobby!

In December we focused on what we were doing for others and collected art supplies for local ministries.

Upcoming Events and Ways to be involved:

- Special Readers - see Midweek for more information
- Registration for 2023-2024 School year will be February 27-March 3 for current families and church members and March 6 for new families.
- Dr. Seuss week - February 27-March 3
- Easter Hat Parade and Egg Hunts - April 11
- Week of the Young Child - April 24-28



FIRST BAPTIST DALTON

311 North Thornton Avenue
Dalton, GA 30720

At the corner of Waugh Street and Thornton Ave.

WATCH OUR SUNDAY SERVICES

fbcdalton.org
10:30 a.m. every Sunday



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