



The Builder

Volume XV Number 2

February 2026

CALENDER OF EVENTS

Sunday, February 1, 8, 15, 22
 9:45 am Sunday School
 11:00 am Worship/Pastor Johnathan
 22 – Pastor Dwayne

Monday, February 16
 7:00 pm Church Council

Monday, February 23
 6:00 pm Finance
 7:00 pm Deacons

Tuesday, February 3, 10, 17, 24
 6:00 pm Bible Study

Wednesday, February 4, 11, 18, 25
 11 – 11:15 am Missions Committee
 12 Noon Bible Study
 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal

NOTE

Due to Alice being parttime in 2026
 the church office will be closed on
 Mondays and Fridays
 unless otherwise noted



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February
 4 – Jay Gerhart
 Nathaniel Hope
 11 – Joyce Price
 12 – Melissa Hope
 15 – Jim Blalock
 19 – Steve Medlin
 21 – Cy Rowe
 22 – Cary Craig
 25 - Grace Wynkoop
 26 – Wally Black
 Pat Rowe
 28 – Lane Cann
 John Pardo

March
 3 – Janette Craig
 4 – Irene Jarvis
 8 – Dock Coleman
 Wilda Denton
 11 – Tammy Worley
 13- Nancy Carter
 17 – Kara Hope
 22- Rebecca Hart
 23 – Will Blalock
 Doris Craig
 27 – Bill Smith
 30 – Cathy Murdock
 31 – Suzanne Long
 Dan Wynkoop

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE
FEBRUARY 18, 2026
5:30 pm

MEMORIALS
In Memory of:
Susan Absher
 Given by: Wally & Patti Black,
 Martha Spurrier
In Memory of:
Ann Woodruff
 Given by: Martha Spurrier

Palm Sunday, March 29
Covered Dish
Town Hall Meeting
1st Quarterly Business Meeting
of 2026

Quarterly Business Meetings

June 28
 September 27
 November 22

No Other Gods

This month we completed our series, “No Other Gods: Idols in the Church.” The point of this series was to recognize the many ways that idolatry in the church can often go unnoticed. Most importantly, we looked at how the first commandment is less of a commandment and more of an invitation to accept a gift of love from God our Father. We identified the three major idols present in our churches, and we noted that an idol is nothing without our reverence for it, so none of the things we identified are inherently bad or evil.

The first was what we called the emotive experience. The emotive experience is at heart of many church’s dependence upon entertainment at the expense of equipping. The need to feel something as it relates to worship has blinded many a good Christian to the ways that we can experience God’s presence and his promises from a place of knowing and believing. We don’t feel our way through our faith no, we treat God’s word and promises as knowledge and truth, and that knowledge and truth guides us in spite of how we feel.

We next looked at the idol of money. Money offers a false sense of security and control over things that God has sovereign reign over. Money promises to fill our lives with the fruits that only the Spirit of God can produce. Money also offers to take care of those things that God has privileged us to be responsible for, the greatest of which is the love and care of others. While money can certainly assist in this, it can never be the determinant as to whether or not we will carry out the Central Commandment (Mark 12:28-34) to love God, ourselves, and others.

Finally, we looked at the idolization of people. This represents the most dangerous form of idolatry because to some degree it undergirds idolizing both the emotive experience and money. When we prioritize people over God we ultimately disrupt the divine order that represents our hope and our security. The main problem with idolizing people centers on human limitations. People will never be able to do for us what God can. While some may argue that human care can be all sufficient in this life, few if any can argue that it can be of any use in eternity.

What we come away with is an opportunity to examine our personal and our congregational lives for the presence of idols. We also come away with an opportunity to revisit the first commandment through the lens of God’s love for us, and to see more clearly how having no other gods but God, ultimately blesses us. Everything that our Father calls us to, and calls us away from, can be understood as a message and a gift of his unfailing love.

May you rest in that love and may that love grow in you a love for God that fills every part of you. God bless you!

Pastor Johnathan

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A place to belong, a place to become, a place to bear witness

A Word of Thanks from Covenant Village

This message, "The Shepherd Who Will Not Let Go," was delivered by Pastor Dwayne on January 16 at Covenant Village, shared with both health-center residents and friends from the main campus. It was joyful morning of worship, reflection, and encouragement centered on God's steady faithfulness across every season of life.

We extend heartfelt thanks to our Covenant Village First Baptist residents for their warm hospitality and the wonderful lunch shared afterward. The kindness, conversation, and care shown were a true expression of Christian community.

We encourage our entire First Baptist family to make time to visit our saints at Covenant Village—whether through worship, conversation, a card, or a simple hello. These visits matter. They bless, they strengthen, and they remind us that the Shepherd is still faithfully tending the flock of God, together.

"The Shepherd Who Will Not Let Go"

Text: Psalm 23 (KJV)

Psalm 23 is not a passage we outgrow—it is a promise we grow into. The longer we live, the more we learn how quickly life can change. Yet the Shepherd remains the same.

David begins with confidence: "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want." This is not borrowed faith or distant theology. It is personal. God has not retired because we have aged. He still provides what we need to endure, obey, and finish well.

The Shepherd also knows when we need rest. Green pastures and still waters speak of peace and provision, and "He restoreth my soul" reminds us that God specializes in putting worn-down people back together. Sometimes rest is not optional—it is how God heals.

Then comes the valley. We do not camp there; we walk through it. In the valley, fear is met with presence: "Thou art with me." God does not observe from afar—He walks beside us, guiding and protecting.

Finally, God sets a table even in the presence of enemies. Goodness and mercy do not drift behind us; they pursue us. Our story ends not in defeat, but in dwelling with the Lord forever.

The Shepherd still leads—and He will not let go.

COMING SOON!!

First Baptist Church of Gastonia

Bible Institute

March 9-12

6:00 – 8:00 pm

Journey to the Cross

For our preaching series this month we will take a look at Lent which begins on February 18th. For many, Lent is a time to reflect on the days leading up to Christ's triumphant victory over sin. To prepare us for this time of prayer and reflection we will do a three- part series called, Journey to the Cross, and we will look at the scriptures that will help us maximize this time of remembrance. Join us in February for what promises to be a great entry into the Lenten season.

Seasons of Life, Layers of Grace

As I paused this morning to take in my surroundings, I realized how the objects around me reflect the seasons of my life. There's a picture of my father's birthplace by my workspace, a reminder of the foundation he laid for who I am today. I miss him, but that season of my life is like bedrock.

Then there are my books—treasured companions that have traveled with me through every era. They've offered encouragement and inspiration from childhood, when "Great Expectations" and a beloved baseball book first sparked my imagination, to today's carefully curated shelves. They remind me that every season brings its own wisdom.

There's a painting from our time in England, a tapestry crafted by a dear member here at First Baptist, and finally a blank whiteboard waiting for whatever 2026 will bring. Each piece is a layer of grace, a reminder of where we've been and a hint of the new season unfolding before us. We have plans, of course, but as we step into this next chapter, I'm reminded that life's greatest adventures often begin on a blank slate. And I can't wait to see what God writes on it.

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First Baptist Church of Gastonia

2026 Bible Study Schedule

Tuesdays 6 PM

Wednesdays 12 PM

First Quarter Bible Study: Ephesians

January 6 - March 4

Bible Institute: March 9-12 (6- 8PM)

Break: March 17 - April 1st

Second Quarter Bible Study: Philippians

April 7 - June 3

Bible Institute: June 8-11 (6-8PM)

Break: June 16 - July 1

Third Quarter Bible Study: 1 Thessalonians

July 7 - August 26

Bible Institute: August 31 - September 3

Break: September 8-30

Fourth Quarter Bible Study: 2 Corinthians

October 6 - December 2

Bible Institute: December 7-10

Break: December 15-30

For any questions contact:

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Senior Pastor

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