

CALENDER OF EVENTS

Sunday, December 7, 14, 21,(Pastor Johnathan) 28 – Pastor Dwayne  
9:45 am Sunday School/11:00 am Worship

Monday, November 17, 24

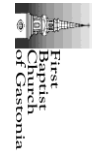
17: 7:00 pm Church Council/ 24: 6:00 pm Finance/7:00 pm Deacons

Tuesday, December 2, 9, 16, 23, 30  
6:00 pm Bible Study

Wednesday, December 3, 10, 17, 24, 31  
12 Noon Bible Study/ 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal

Wednesday, December 24  
5:30 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight/Communion Service

Church Office Closed – December 23-27



First Baptist Builder (UPSP 191-800) published weekly except the weeks of July 4 and Dec. 25 by the First Baptist Church, 2650 Union Road, Gastonia, NC 28054. Periodicals postage paid at Gastonia, NC 28054. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to First Baptist Builder, P.O. Box 6298, Gastonia, NC 28054-6000.



#### DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1 – Paul Avery  
Teresa Biggerstaff  
4 – Lee Pritchard  
6 – Susan Absher  
22 – Susan Haney  
26 – Ann Woodruff

**JANUARY, 2026**

3 – Ella Cann  
Steve Webb  
8 – Jeff Worley  
9 – Lewis Denton  
James Harvey  
10 – Patti Black  
16 – Eli Pardo  
30 – Abby Robinson  
31 – Fred Jones

**THE CHURCH BOOKS WILL  
CLOSE AT NOON ON  
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER  
31<sup>ST</sup>. PLEASE TRY TO MAKE  
ANY CONTRIBUTIONS  
BEFORE THAT DATE SO THAT  
THEY WILL BE COUNTED IN  
DECEMBER.**

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**Sunday School literature for  
January – April 2026 will be in  
the Narthex beginning this  
Sunday.**

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**2026 Offering Envelopes will  
be available soon.**

***HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!  
2026***

#### MEMORIALS

**In Memory of:**

**Wayne Eppley**

By: Ann Siva

**In Memory of:**

**Carolyn Wright**

Mother of Rebecca Hart

By: The Adult SS Class

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**Ballots for Deacon election will be  
going in the mail this week.**

The last day to cast your vote is  
Sunday, December 21 during  
worship service. Votes will be  
counted immediately after  
worship.

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**Also Proposed 2026 Budgets for  
FBC, CCM and SEAM will go out  
this week also. There will be a  
discussion and voting time on  
Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup> after the  
worship service.**



# The Builder

Volume XIV Number 12

December 7, 2025

## The Advent

Advent is if nothing else a season of anticipation. Specifically for the Christian, it is an entering into an intentional posture of remembrance of the anticipation that defined awaiting the birth of the Messiah. For centuries we have celebrated the anticipation of the Christ child in remembrance and appreciation for all that his life, death, and resurrection would mean to us.

Last year for Advent we celebrated the arrival of Jesus: Prophet, Priest, King, and Savior. This is what we call the munus triplex plus one, or the threefold office of Christ plus that of Savior. This year isn't much different. Again we look again at the coming of Jesus Christ with gratitude and thanksgiving in our hearts for all that he is, and all that he is to us. With that, we will adore him as John 14:6 reveals him to us as the, I AM, The Way, The Truth, and The Life.

Join us this Advent season as we explore the Jesus who came to us to deliver hope as the I AM, show us that he is The Way to peace, reveal to us that our joy rests in knowing that he is The Truth, and that his love, and the love that he bears witness to make him truly The Life that is more abundant. We would love to be praying with you during this time of remembrance, so please let us know what we can be interceding for as your sisters and brothers in Christ. God

bless you!

***Pastor Johnathan***

***Christmas Blessing***

***May the Lord bless you***

***and protect you.***

***May the Lord smile on you***

***and be gracious to you.***

***May the Lord show you his favor***

***and give you his peace.***

***Numbers 6:24-26 NLT***

***First Baptist Church, Gastonia North Carolina***

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

MISSIONS UPDATE

As we enter the last month of the year, the Backpack Mission is our focus. We received this letter from Southwest Middle School that expresses the need and gratitude for this program:

Dear First Baptist Church Family,

On behalf of the Southwest Middle School faculty and staff, I would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to your church family for your weekly sponsorship of food for our most vulnerable students and families.

Students selected to participate in the food assistance program are referred by their school counselor, social worker, and/or teacher. There are a number of reasons why a student’s family may be referred to the program, such as ---homelessness, through observation of a student exhibiting consistent hunger, and through disclosure of food scarcity at home.

Collectively, the food assistance is positively impacting our families. The recipients of the food assistance express their appreciation at each weekly pickup. One family stated, “The weekly food bags our family receives have been such a blessing. They truly help lighten the load and make it easier to ensure our home has what we need throughout the week. With busy schedules and rising costs, having this support brings real peace of mind. We are grateful for the care, kindness, and consistency the church has shown. Your generosity is making a meaningful difference in our lives, and we appreciate you more than you know.” Another family stated, “The food assistance has helped tremendously. Planning meals can sometimes be overwhelming, especially with the rising costs of groceries.”

First Baptist Church food assistance program is unique with regard to the length of time that families are sponsored, which provides our families with security. Also, the rotated menus provide a variety and our families love that they are receiving meals to cook, in addition to snacks.

As you can see, your church family is making a positive difference in the lives of others. Southwest is extremely blessed to have First Baptist Church as a community partner and because of your dedication our students are able to come to school ready to learn. We look forward to your continued partnership.

*Kindest Regards,*  
*Paris Goudy, MSW, BSW, School Social Worker*  
*Southwest Middle School*

Our goal to keep this program going for the next year is \$6,000. Thank you for your contributions, so far this quarter the Backpack Mission has received \$1,810.00 (Please make Mission contributions separate from your tithe and offering with a check or cash in an envelope marked missions)

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBER



Charlie Harper

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COFFEE/DONUTS  
Sunday December 7  
9:30 am in the Narthex



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**Jonathan Shriver · 18h**  
**Now that’s a church I’d love to have in my neighbourhood!**

Be Encouraged, Church

This comment about First Baptist Church, Gastonia was placed on social media by a college friend of Pastor Dwayne’s after he viewed our service on Facebook - Oh by the way, he lives in Adelie, South AUSTRALIA. Thank you for sharing God’s hope both in our own community and 10,000 miles away

***"See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! "***

1 John 3:1

As this year draws to a close it seems fitting to take a look back at some of the wonderful things that God has done in our church this year, We started out with a focus on prayer and Bible study and I am happy to report that we have remained faithful to that mission. Take a look at what we covered in a year of worship, study, and prayer.

**Sermon Series:**

- The Godhead Series - Exploring the Trinity (January - March)
- The Christian Series - Exploring the Christian Identity (April - June)
- The Mission of God Series - Exploring God's Work in the World (July - September)
- Stewardship Series - The Theology of Giving (October)
- Thanksgiving Series - The Theology of Thanksgiving (November)
- Advent Series - I Am (Hope), The Way (Peace), The Truth (Joy) The LIFE (LOVE)

- Deacon's Sunday (March 30th)
- Revival "Finding God" (July 20 -23)
- Church Council Sunday (October 19th)

**Bible Study:**

- Hebrews - Christianity 101 (January-June)
- Ecclesiastes - Humanity 101 (July - October)
- "Thanksgiving" - Psalm 50, John 11, Ephesians 5, Philippians 4 (November)
- "Advent" - John 14 (December)

**Prayer:**

- Forty Days of Fruit - Praying for the Fruit of the Spirit (January 5th -December 31st)
- Forty Days of Prayer for Revival
- Prayer Journaling Workshop (Held March 29th)

God has truly blessed us. In addition to all of this we had one of the most incredible Good Friday services ever, and we left in solemn reverence with the words, "Were you there?" beautifully sung by Tammy Worley echoing in our hearts. We joyfully gathered at sunrise for our Sunrise Service, and entered into our Resurrection Worship with excitement and thanksgiving. We have experienced the joy of the Lord throughout all that he has privileged us to do this year.

Remembering what God has done in our church, and in us, makes me even more excited about the days ahead. A dead church couldn't do all that. A forsaken church couldn't move in such a way. Only a church loved and kept by God could do what we have done, and we haven't even named it all. God is working in and through First Baptist Church of Gastonia! You are a huge part of what we have been and what we are becoming. I cannot say it enough ... Thank you. May God continue to bless you and keep you, his beloved children.

***Pastor Johnathan***