



# ***THE CORNERSTONE*** **FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH** **THOMSON**

*Loving God, Loving People,  
Making Disciples of Jesus*

PHONE: (706) 595-4252

WEB: [www.fbcthomson.org](http://www.fbcthomson.org)

Vol. 62

January 2026

No.1

## MERRY CHRISTMAS



### Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

with Lord's Supper

December 24  
5:00 PM

No nursery provided

### Youth Winter Retreat

Gatlinburg, TN  
January 16-19

\$75 for Snowtubing  
\$225 for Skiing

Sign up Today!

### Year-End Giving

Year-End gifts need to be received in the church office no later than 5:00 PM on Wednesday, December 31, 2025, or postmarked by December 31, 2025, in order to receive 2025 giving credit.

Thank you for your gifts!

# Dr. David Lambert, Lead Pastor

As we move toward Christmas Day, we are reminded that the Gospel story never ends at the manger—it sends us forward in worship, obedience, and mission. I want to encourage you to join us for our **Christmas Eve service at 5:00 PM**, a **candlelight Lord's Supper service**, always a sacred and meaningful time for our church family, as we remember that we don't save Christmas—**Christmas is how Jesus came to save us**. We will gather around the Table, lift our candles in worship, and celebrate the greatest gift exchange the world has ever known. Make plans now to be there and bring someone with you!

As we look ahead to the **new year**, I am filled with gratitude for what God has done among us—and anticipation for what He will continue to do. January will begin a new Sunday morning sermon series entitled **"The Law of Love: Ten Words Written on the Heart"** where we'll explore the Ten Commandments—not as cold rules carved in stone, but as a gracious gift from a loving God—words meant to shape our hearts, guide our lives, and teach us what it looks like to love God and love others well.

We are also excited to launch a new semester of **Wednesday Night Bible Studies**, beginning **January 7 at 6:00 PM**. I will be teaching **"Revelation: The Unveiling of Jesus Christ,"** a verse-by-verse study of the final book of the Bible—focused not on fear or speculation, but on hope, worship, and the victory of Christ. There will be studies for men and women and all ages, and I encourage you to make Wednesday nights a priority this semester.

As we close out the year, I want to pause and thank God for what has truly been a **fantastic year of worship and service** at FBC Thomson. We have celebrated baptisms, welcomed new members, rejoiced over new babies, and witnessed the faithful generosity of God's people. The launch of our **For All Generations** campaign was especially momentous! With a three-year goal of **over \$1.4 million**, we are not even a full year into the campaign—and yet, by God's grace, we have already received **nearly 45% of that goal**. This campaign is not just about buildings or renovations; it is about **investing in people, renewing our ministry spaces, and growing the work of the Gospel for every generation God entrusts to us**. Thank you for your prayerful, sacrificial giving and your shared vision for the future.

Looking ahead to **Sunday, January 4**, we will **ordain and commission two new deacons, Dr. Bob Lemley and Mr. Randy Pilgrim**, during our morning worship service. Pray for them and their families, and plan to be present as we set these men apart for servant leadership in our church.

On **January 18**, our church will participate in a **statewide emphasis** called **Prayer365**, in partnership with the Georgia Baptist Mission Board. Churches across Georgia are standing in the gap to pray for spiritual awakening and gospel impact in our communities. We will be asking our members to sign up for **15-minute prayer blocks**, so that as a church we can cover a full **24 hours of prayer**, asking God to reduce lostness and advance the Gospel in our state. Let's fill the day and flood Heaven with prayer for the lost!

As the year comes to a close, let me also remind you that if you would like your gifts to be credited for **2025**, they must be **postmarked by December 31** or delivered to the church office **before it closes at 5:00 PM that day**. And as we move into 2026, I encourage you to continue praying about your giving. We have stepped out in faith with an increased ministry budget alongside our *For All Generations* commitments—and our goals are only as strong as our willingness to give faithfully and joyfully toward them.

Finally, mark your calendars for **Sunday, January 25**. At **5:00 PM**, we will hold our annual **Committee Workshop**, where new committees will meet, select officers, and begin setting their goals for the year. Then at **6:00 PM**, we will gather for our **Quarterly Church Conference**. During that time, we hope to hear an important report from our **Campus Vision Team** regarding renovations to the Education Building and Atrium. Please be in prayer for this meeting, and be present to hear the plans, ask questions, and take part in the process of **investing, renewing, and growing—for all generations**.

Church family, thank you for a wonderful year. I am grateful for you, proud of the way you serve, and excited about what God has in store. From the manger to the mission—**let's continue to walk faithfully together into the new year**.



# Dr. Matt Ward

## A Drive-Through Nativity Thank You

This is a thank-you to everyone who helped. Church members painted the sets, put up the sets, and decorated the sets. (And also tore down the sets after it was over — that's a big job that few people want to do.) Church members washed and sorted the costumes, prepared meals for the actors, and acted. Church members set up and tore down tech every night. Church members directed cars (the first people started arriving at 5:00 this year!), watched for trouble (there was none this year), gave out hot chocolate, and talked to our guests while they waited. It's a huge effort for a church our size, and it takes all of us. Please be ready to do all of this again next year! On behalf of Paige and myself, thank you! Paige describes the Nativity as our Christmas gift to our community. I've heard many anecdotes about how thankful our guests are that we do this. We know from talking to them that some of our guests don't go to church anywhere, and some of them don't know very much about Jesus. If they paid any attention at all, they were introduced to Jesus through the Christmas story. Pray that they were listening!

## Drive-Through Nativity Parking Lot

I've gotten plenty of questions about this, and there are some things we just won't know until next year, but I feel good about our parking situation going forward. Even though the gas station is not open yet, we still operated the nativity parking according to the plan the shopping center owner approved as if it were, and it seemed to work. We all think that the new gas station operator should be thrilled to have 100 cars parked in front of his convenience store. Regions Bank has also given us permission to drive through their parking lot if we need to, and Dwayne has worked out a "break glass in case of emergency" plan with the city if the gas station owner decides he doesn't want us in his parking lot. There are a lot of unknowns that are beyond our control, so we will revisit all of this next year.

Be aware: if we do have to change our parking plan, we will need more help directing cars. Everybody on that team loves being on that team, so maybe this is a place for you to get involved with Nativity!

## Wednesday Nights Start Again on January 7

The people who have been in these groups know all of this, but I'm hoping to interest a few more of you to start coming: on Wednesday nights, not only do we have a full slate of groups for kids of all ages, but we have three different groups for adults — a young men's Bible study, a women's Bible study in Genesis, and David is leading a Bible study through the book of Revelation. You want to bring your kids, and you want to attend one of these groups. Ask me if you have any questions!

## It's Upward Season

We go from one busy season to the next, and late winter is all about Upward Basketball. This event has been a wonderful community-builder (and outreach) for years, and it requires the same kind of commitment as Nativity. If you hear Ben ask for help, please have your ears and heart open!



# Rev. Ben Tarver

As we begin a new year together, we are thankful for the many ways the Lord continues to work through our church family. January brings fresh opportunities for growth, service, fellowship, and discipleship for every age, and we are excited about what lies ahead in our Youth and Family Ministries.

Our **Upward Basketball** season is nearly ready to tip off. We are in the final stages of forming teams as we secure a few remaining coaches, and we are grateful for the many volunteers who have already stepped forward to serve. **Practices will begin a couple of weeks before games start in January** (specific details will come directly from your coach). **Games begin Saturday, January 24**, and the season will conclude with our **Awards Celebration on Saturday, March 14**. Upward continues to be a meaningful ministry where children grow not only in their basketball skills, but also in character, teamwork, and an understanding of the love of Christ. Please continue to pray for our players, coaches, and families as the season approaches.

We are grateful for the impact of our **Angel Tree Ministry** this Christmas season. Through the generosity of our church family, **33 children** received beautifully wrapped gifts. Thank you to the families, Sunday School classes, and volunteers who gave and served so faithfully. Gifts were delivered to **DFCS McDuffie County**, and funds from the **Go & Tell Mission Fund** provided lunch and Christmas treats for DFCS staff and caseworkers. Most of all, we rejoice knowing these children were reminded that they are loved and cared for. *To God be the glory.*

Looking ahead, our **Youth Winter Retreat to Gatlinburg** is coming up over **Martin Luther King Jr. Weekend**, and it promises to be a meaningful and memorable time together. Students will enjoy Bible study, worship, fellowship, and optional activities including skiing, snow tubing, ice skating, shopping, and sightseeing.

The **cost is \$75**, which includes the **tram ride to Ober Mountain, ice skating, and snow tubing**. For students who choose to add skiing, the **total cost is \$225**, with **ski rentals, lift tickets, and optional beginner lessons available at an additional cost**. Students should bring **extra money for one meal out**, while all other meals will be covered and shared together.

We will stay at the **Smoky Mountain Resort Ministries (SMRM) home**, and we are incredibly thankful for our partnership with SMRM, which allows us to use this “home away from home” as we grow closer to the Lord, enjoy the beauty of the mountains, and build lasting relationships. **Please let me know as soon as possible if your student plans to attend. The absolute deadline to commit is Friday, January 9 — no exceptions.**

Finally, we are excited to kick off **Wednesday Night activities on January 7**. Our **Tiny Tots, Tiny Kids, Team Kid, Elevate students, and adult groups** will all be meeting, and there truly is something for every age. We invite you to **join us, bring your family, and invite someone** as we begin the year growing in the Lord and enjoying fellowship with other believers.

As we step into this new year, thank you for being part of a church family that loves well, serves faithfully, and seeks to honor Christ in all things. We look forward to all that God has in store in the months ahead.

*Ben*

## Last Month

## End-of- November Final Finances

We Came	Morning Worship (in person)	Morning Worship (online)	Sunday School	We Gave
November 23	284		246	\$8,365.00
November 30	304	205	231	\$33,365.69
December 7	322	326	264	\$23,142.50
December 14	260	205	207	\$16,967.19
BUDGET		NON-BUDGET RECEIPTS		
Required	\$887,833.85	Cap. Improvements	\$12,915.65	
Received	\$966,093.34	Vision Implementation	\$654,487.28	
Disbursed	\$884,463.42	Go & Tell Mission Fund	\$38,301.17	



## Register for Camp!



CentriKid Camp  
Rising 2nd- Rising 6th  
June 26-28



Look Up Lodge  
Rising 7th- Completed 12th  
May 31- June 5

Contact the church office to sign up, or sign up on the connect card. A \$125 deposit is due by January 15.



Are you new to First Baptist?  
Did you recently join?  
We would love for you to come find out more about our church at the Next Steps Luncheon immediately following Worship on February 1!

## Deacon Ordination Service

Sunday, January 4  
During Morning Worship

Dr. Robert Lemley  
Mr. Randy Pilgrim

## Sunday, January 25

10:45 AM:

Worship with Lord's Supper

5:00 PM:

Committee Workshop

6:00 PM:

Quarterly Church Conference

## Wednesday Nights

Beginning January 7

TinyTots: Age 2-3 (Nursery)  
TinyKID: Age K4-K5 (Chapel)  
TeamKID: 1st-6th Grade (Gym)  
Elevate: 7th-12th Grade  
(Warehouse)

Adults:

Revelation: The Unveiling of  
Jesus Christ

Men:

Men's Bible Study  
led by Andrew Harding

Women:

"Women of the Word"  
By Jen Wilkin

\$6.50 ADULTS - \$4.00 UNDER AGE 12  
PLEASE MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS BY NOON ON MONDAYS

Family Night Supper  
Wednesdays at 5:00; Fellowship Hall

January 7  
Taco Bar

January 14  
Lasagna

January 21  
Chick-fil-A

January 28  
Pizza

## JANUARY MINISTRY DONATION

HAIR CARE PRODUCTS



PLEASE PLACE ITEMS IN THE BLUE BIN IN THE ATRIUM

# january

SUN	9:00	Cornerstone Cafe
	9:30	Sunday School
	10:45	Morning Worship
MON	9:00	Walking Track open (until 5:00 PM)
	9:00	Nautilus Room open (until 1:00 PM)
	10:00	Stretch & Flex, Gym
TUE	9:00	Walking Track open (until 5:00 PM)
	9:00	Nautilus Room open (until 1:00 PM)
	1:30	Church Staff Meeting, 402
	5:15	Firm Believers, Gym
WED	9:00	Walking Track open (until 5:00 PM)
	9:00	Nautilus Room open (until 1:00 PM)
	10:00	Stretch & Flex, Gym
	5:00	Family Night Supper, FH
	6:00	<i>Disciples Pathway</i> (Adults, Fellowship Hall)
		<b>Women's Study, Craft Room</b>
		<b>Men's Study, Parlor</b>
		Elevate (7-10 Grade), Warehouse
		TeamKID (1-6 Grade), Gym
		TinyKID (K4-K5), Chapel
		TinyTots (2-3), Nursery
	7:15	Adult Choir Rehearsal, Choir Room
THU	6:30	<i>Stand in the Gap</i> Prayer Group, Parlor
	9:00	Walking Track open (until 5:00 PM)
	9:00	Nautilus Room open (until 1:00 PM)
	5:15	Firm Believers, Gym
FRI	9:00	Walking Track open (until 5:00 PM)
	9:00	Nautilus Room open (until 1:00 PM)
	10:00	Stretch & Flex, Gym

January 1, 2026

Happy New Year! Church Office Closed

January 4, 2026

Deacon Ordination

January 7, 2026

Wednesday Night Programs Resume

January 12, 2026

6:00 PM Property and Space Committee Meeting

January 13, 2026

11:00 AM Young at Heart

6:00 PM Stewardship Committee Meeting

**7:00 PM Deacon's Meeting**

January 16-19, 2026

Youth Winter Retreat in Gatlinburg

January 18, 2026

Day of Prayer for Evangelism

January 19, 2026

Church Office Closed

January 24, 2026

Upward Games Begin

January 25, 2026

**Lord's Supper**

5:00 PM Committee Workshop

6:00 PM QCC