

December 8, 2025

WEDNESDAYS@FIRST

December 10

Supper will be served at 5:00pm.
Make supper reservations
and view menus at <https://firstbaptistgreenville.com/wednesdays-at-first/>

Adults@First Opportunities—6:00pm
Christmas Party (Fellowship Hall)

WORSHIP

December 14

The Third Sunday of Advent

Baptism

10:30am

Proclaimer: Carol McEntyre

Scripture:

Isaiah 35:1-10; Luke 1:26-31

Sermon Series:

God's Peaceable Kin-dom

Sermon:

Deserts Blossoming and Singing

Service Musicians:

Sanctuary Choir; Bell Tower Ringers

The decorations in the Sanctuary are provided by gifts from congregation members. A list of poinsettia dedications will be published later in the season.

December 11

9:00am-4:00pm

Annual Yard Sale Holiday Fair
(C114)

December 14

11:30am-2:30pm

Engaged Aging Christmas Party with
Children's Choir Performance
(Fellowship Hall)

December 21

6:30pm

Candlelight Service of
Lessons & Carols (Sanctuary)

Our Advent theme, God's Peaceable Kin-dom, is inspired by imagery from Isaiah. Advent devotionals featuring reflections written by First Baptist folks are available in print version and on our website. Below is an extended version of Michael McEntyre, Minister of Engaged Aging's devotional. —Carol

The book of Isaiah finds the prophet calling out the nation of Israel for its idolatry and treatment of the poor and warning of a coming judgment. Yet Isaiah also offers hope to the people, speaking of one who is to come who will bring peace. This peace will extend beyond humanity, extending to all of creation. In chapter 11, Isaiah says this peace will be so complete that, "The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat," a fascinating and confusing passage. It is easy to assume this kind of peace is only accomplished in eternal life, but Isaiah consistently speaks of God's peaceable Kin-dom being here on earth. If that is the case, it leads me to wonder what it would take for such creatures to live in harmony.

Growing up near the end of the Cold War, when I thought about the Soviet Union, I pictured people who hated all Americans. If there was a villain portrayed on TV, you knew they were going to speak Russian, or at least broken English with a poor Russian accent (think Rocky IV, Red Dawn, or James Bond). I wasn't worried about war, but annihilation. In elementary school, we had drills to simulate what to do in the event of a nuclear attack. In short, if you asked me as a 9-year-old to describe the most prominent foe to God's Peaceable Kin-dom, that person would have inevitably been Russian.

Then, in college, I had the opportunity to take part in a mission trip to Moscow. With the end of the Cold

War and the fall of the Iron Curtain, the church I attended felt called to send multiple teams to Russia to work with our partner missionaries who had been serving there. It was with much fear and trepidation that my family supported my decision to go, and underneath my bravado, I was preparing for a hostile encounter. The experience didn't match my expectations.

Over several weeks, I attended worship services, stayed in host homes, attended small-group Bible studies, and got to know people from our sister congregation in Moscow. One night, I had a conversation with our interpreter that changed the way I understood the world. I told her, "When I was growing up, I was taught that Russians hated Americans and that you were consumed with trying to figure out how to destroy our way of life. We were always worried about what you all might do. Was it the same for you? Did you grow up despising Americans?" She looked at me a bit funny and said very matter-of-factly, "No, I was too busy looking for food to worry about you." I started laughing, then realized she wasn't joking. She continued, "I guess if you were in the army, you thought about the US, but we had enough to worry about on our own."

It's odd to say, but those few sentences broke my worldview. That moment was the first glimpse for me of the incredible bias that influences all of us (meaning all of humanity)

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First Baptist Helps Here and Around the World

There are many ways that First Baptist supports those in need, from the local level to the global. There are three specific ministries we'd like to highlight for you: our Local Relief Fund, which offers assistance to community members in need; Mission Backpack, which provides food to students whose families face food insecurity; and our Lula Whilden World Missions offering, which supports ministries and partnerships of our Baptist affiliates. During the month of December, we are highlighting these three ministries so that we can finish the year's giving strong!

To support Mission Backpack, consider a financial gift or a donation of cereal for the students to take home for Christmas break.

To support Local Relief, financial support is also welcome, and you are invited to consider joining the team who meets with families needing help with utilities each Wednesday afternoon.

At the Candlelight Service on December 21, 100% of the evening's offering will go to the Lula Whilden World Missions Offering. Your generous gifts will be used by these partners to show love and support those for whom Jesus calls us to care:

- The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's (CBF) "Offering for Global Missions"—<https://cbf.net/global-missions>
- CBF Field Personnel: Jonathan Bailey, Carson and Laura Foushee, and Tina Boyles Bailey—<https://cbf.net/field-personnel>
- The Alliance of Baptists' (AOB) "Active Hope Partners"—<https://allianceofbaptists.org/partners/>
- Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of South Carolina's (CBFSC) "Beverly Greer* Offering for State Missions"—<https://cbfsc.org/missions/>
- Amani Sasa's ministry to refugee families in Uganda — <https://www.amanisasa.org/>

*Two of these offerings are named after women in our church who made a significant impact in missions ministry: Lula Whilden (<https://firstbaptistgreenville.com/who-was-lula-whilden/>) and Beverly Greer (<https://cbfsc.org/missions/>).

For more information about how First Baptist engages with our community and how to get involved, check out the Community Engagement page on our website.

—Matt Rollins, Minister of Community Engagement and the Partnerships and Affiliations Committee (PandA)



Newcomers at FBG

Fall has brought many new faces to FBG! Thirty newcomers participated in our recent First Baptist 101 class. We spent three Sunday afternoons getting to know each other over food and conversation, learned about Baptist identity at FBG, explored the values animating our Children and Youth Ministries, and discussed the many ways to participate in our Pastoral Care, Community Engagement and Engaged Aging ministries. We traveled around the church campus seeing how God is at work in each space, from the AYMC and Youth Ministry area, new Children's Hallway, Labyrinth and Columbarium, to the Media Center.

This was a thoughtful group, asking questions like:

"If FBG is not Southern Baptist, what kind of Baptist are we?"

"How does FBG's approach to mission work respond to its colonial history?"

"What will my children really be hearing about who God is?"

"What is the meaning behind the colors in the Sanctuary and on ministers' stoles?"

"How will membership change the way we participate in community life?"

Are you interested in joining the next class? We will meet again

for three Sundays in the spring: February 22, March 1 and March 8. Registration will be available in the new year. First Baptist 101 is perfect for anyone considering church membership or new to our church community.

In the meantime, I and other ministers are always available to answer your questions about FBG. Please reach out to me by email (camille.loomis@firstbaptistgreenville.com) or phone (church extension 145)!

—Camille Loomis Rehnberg,
Minister of Spiritual Formation and Outreach

High School and College Missions Immersion in Costa Rica

Our High School and College missions experience is a highlight of every summer. During a student's time in the Youth Family, we offer an opportunity to experience local, regional and international missions. This summer, we will travel to Costa Rica for our High School and College Mission Immersion Experience on Saturday, June 13, to Friday, June 19, 2026. Youth who have completed 9th grade or higher are invited to attend! We also welcome college students on this immersion experience. This trip provides an opportunity to serve, grow and see God at work across borders. As a church family that is committed to shaping disciples, we want to share this meaningful opportunity with you so you're aware, but also so you can join us in praying, encouraging and supporting our youth, college students, and the adult leaders who commit to traveling with us.

Mission immersions aren't just trips; they're transformational experiences that open eyes and hearts to how God is working in the world. They place students in new contexts, introduce them to local ministries, and invite them into an active partnership

with the global Church. During our time in Costa Rica, we will partner with local ministries, build relationships with the Costa Rican community, and discover what it means to live out our faith beyond the walls of our church. We will serve through community outreach, relational ministry, and service projects, all while learning from local leaders who faithfully serve their communities every day.

International missions are an investment of time, energy and resources. The actual cost of this experience is approximately \$2,200 per participant. Thanks to the generosity of our church and a legacy gift from the Stogner Estate, FBG can supplement a significant portion of this cost, bringing each participant's cost down to \$950.

This support helps to make the trip accessible for more students and families in our church, and it reflects our shared belief that forming missional, compassionate disciples is the work of the whole church. Providing teenagers with opportunities to encounter Jesus outside of their usual environment helps them strengthen their faith and expand their perspectives. Thank you for your support of our youth and college ministry and for helping us provide transformative events that can alter how teenagers engage with the world for the kin-dom of God.

—Mary Carol Anderson, Minister to Youth and College

Upcoming Events

WATCH indicates worship experiences broadcast via Vimeo and Facebook Live.

12/10 6:00pm MidWeek Christmas Party for Adults (Fellowship Hall)

7:00-8:00pm Annual Yard Sale Holiday Fair (C114)

12/11 9:00am-4:00pm Annual Yard Sale Holiday Fair (C114)

12/14 9:00am Youth Breakfast (AYMC Terrace Level)

9:30am Advent Sunday School (Fellowship Hall)

WATCH 10:30am Third Sunday of Advent (Sanctuary) with Proclaimer Carol McEntyre, including Bell Tower Ringers and Baptism

11:30am-2:30pm Engaged Aging Christmas Party with Children's Choir Performance (Fellowship Hall)

5:00-7:00pm Sunday Night Live for Youth Family (AYMC)

Wednesday Night Supper Menu

Please make reservations by noon on Monday at <https://firstbaptistgreenville.com/wednesdays-at-first/>

December 10

Adults: Meatloaf, Mashed Potatoes, Green Beans, Green Salad, Fruit, Rolls, Dessert

Children: Chicken Fingers, French Fries, Fruits, Cookies

Introducing



...Ally Alicki who joined our Church on Sunday, November 30. Ally is employed with Safe Harbor.



...Bill and Edith Hardaway who joined during worship on November 30. Bill and Edith are members of the Rose/Grace Class. Bill is retired and Edith is employed with Artists Guild Gallery.



...Callie Phillips and Hali Tinkersley, who became members on November 30. Callie is employed by Clemson University and Hali is employed by Jasmine Road. They are both members of the Bridge Class.



...Lynne Ramsey who joined the church on November 30. Be sure to welcome all of our new members!

Sympathy

...to Patti Grantham in the death of her mother, and Hagood Grantham in the death of his grandmother.

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Revenue Report

11/30/2025 YTD: \$2,447,360

11/30/2024 Actual: \$2,347,806

11/30/2025 Budget: \$2,733,500



Scan here to support the financial needs of First Baptist Greenville.

Reflection, continued from p. 1

every day. My lens of Good vs. Evil was cracked, breaking my "us" vs. "them" mentality and revealing, instead, someone for whom I had compassion. It was a moment when the kingdom of this world became the Kin-dom of our God, and I am forever grateful.

Regarding Isaiah, my time in Russia made me wonder who was the lion and who was the lamb. As I've grown, I've learned that life is far more complex. Stereotypes make things simple, but they keep us from really seeing one another. In Isaiah 11, the lions, wolves, lambs, and calves don't stop being who they are. They don't give up their identities to make peace. Instead, they recognize their shared Creator and choose to act in ways

that honor God's image in themselves and in each other.

In a similar way, Kingdoms are loyal to a King. The focus is singular, "What does the king desire of me?" A kingdom makes kin, family, the focus. "We are all connected and related, how do we (including our King) do this together?"

This does not devalue God; instead, it elevates God's desire. John 3:16 tells us that Jesus came because of God's love for the world. Through Christ, the Bible says we are children of God and co-heirs with Christ. We are family with Christ and with each other, all of us. Recognizing that is the only way God's peaceable kin-dom can be established, "On earth, as it is in Heaven." May it be so in us.

For After Hours Pastoral

Care, please call the Church Office, 864-233-2527, leave a message by pressing the number "2" for "Pastoral Care"

or email pastoral.care@firstbaptistgreenville.com. One of our staff ministers will respond to your message.