

The *January 2026* Anchor

We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul...Heb.6:19a



A New Year: A New Life Centered in Christ

I want to begin this article with a simple thank you to everyone in the church who made Christmas so special this year. From our Advent service readers, to those who decorated the church, to those who participated in Operation Christmas Child, to those who performed in the cantata, the Christmas program, and the bell choir, and to those who took time during this busy season to help with our kids' Christmas parties—thank you. On behalf of the staff, I also want to thank you for the Christmas gifts you gave to us this year. It means so much. Thank you. With that said, I want to say, what a wonderful year 2025 has been for our church. As we stand at the threshold of a new year, it is a perfect moment to reflect on the past and renew our commitment to living a life centered in Christ. We must remember that the new year is not merely a transition of time, but an invitation from God to embrace a fresh start—a chance to grow closer to our Lord and Savior. When we look back over the past year, it is truly amazing to see how the Lord has blessed our church. Attendance has grown, with many new faces and families among us. Our finances are strong, and we have witnessed many re-dedications, some baptisms, and overall commitments to serving the Lord. Surely, God is pleased with First Baptist Church of Ravenswood. God has been so faithful.

As a church, we must continue to take seriously the command of Jesus to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19, NIV). Proverbs 16:3 (NIV) reminds us, “Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.” As we align our plans with His will, we are reminded that even in our successes, all glory belongs to Him. As the new year gets underway, we should use this “calendar reset” as an opportunity to consider our own spiritual goals. Setting goals is crucial to growing our relationship with Christ. Just as we plan our finances or focus on our health, we should take time to contemplate how we can serve Jesus better in 2026. As your pastor, I want you to understand that knowing Christ more deeply must always be a priority, and His Word—the Bible—serves as our guide. Paul, in Philippians 3:14 (NIV) shares his own effort to draw closer to God: “I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” Are we pressing on in our own walk with Christ? We should be. Here are a few ways you and I can “press on” this year:

1. Dedicate time each day to prayer, meditation, and studying Scripture.
2. Seek accountability by getting involved in our small groups (Men’s and Women’s Fellowship, Christians with Coffee), Sunday School, Bible Study, Community Kitchen, and Park Ministry.
3. Attend regular worship services.
4. Participate in church activities to build friendships and spiritual relationships.
5. Support the church financially to help ensure strength and stability for the future.

Whatever actions we take, we must do so out of love with joy and excitement for the Lord. Ephesians 2:10 (NIV) says, “For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” When we find ways to serve God and our congregation, we do good works that not only deepen our faith, but also glorifies God. As we step into 2026, let us enter this season of renewal with hearts full of gratitude for the past and an eagerness for what God has in store for us as a church.

My prayer for our church family moving forward into 2026 is that each of you would enjoy good health and a renewed commitment to Christ through worship, praise, and service. When we love God and love others, we are fulfilling what God has asked of us. With that mindset, we will serve others with the sole motivation of honoring God and sharing His love. I am truly excited to see what the Lord will do at First Baptist in 2026. I believe in my heart that God has great things in store for us. Let's love on people! Are you ready? I am.

Happy New Year.

In His Service,

Pastor Toby





December was a powerful and joy-filled month for Moving Mountains Youth, as we wrapped up the year focused on celebrating Christ androwing deeper in our faith. Throughout the month, our students continued in our Christian Basics series, spending time learning what it truly means to be a Christian—not just in words, but through daily living, obedience and a growing relationship with Jesus. These lessons sparked great discussion and encouraged our students to think seriously about their walk with Christ.

One of the highlights of the month was our BIG Moving Mountains Youth Christmas Party. We were blessed to have around 30 people join us for an incredible evening will with games, laughter, meaningful teaching and great food. It was exciting to see students and adults both having fun together. The night was a wonderful reminder that Christian community can be both joyful and deeply impactful. We also wrapped up our “Bring a Friend” competition this month, and we want to congratulate Colton Pistelli as our winner! We are so encouraged by students who are willing to invite others and help make Moving Mountains Youth a welcoming place for everyone.

As we reflect on this past month—and the year as a whole—we want to extend a heartfelt thank you to First Baptist Church of Ravenswood. Your continued support, service and investment in our youth ministry does not go unnoticed. We are incredibly grateful for all the ways you help make this ministry possible, and we truly see how God has blessed Moving Mountains Youth through your faithfulness.

December reminded us that everything we do centers on Christ—His birth, His sacrifice, and the hope we have in Him. We are excited to see how God will continue to move mountains in the lives of our students as we step into the new year.

Soli Deo Gloria,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pastor Ethan".

Pastor Ethan

Silent Prayer and Reflection



First Baptist will once again observe an evening of Silence and Reflection on New Year's Eve from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

All are welcome to stop by anytime to offer prayers, praise, or be silent to listen to our Lord .

Start your New Year with prayer.

2026 Leadership Training

THEME: Intentionally Engaging Communities for Christ

COST: The cost will be \$25 per person . Your registration includes lunch.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: Any registration that comes in after **January 24** will not include lunch.

WORKSHOPS: When registering, you will be asked to select one AM and one PM workshop. The workshop titles are listed at the bottom of this section.

SCHEDULE:

- 9:00 AM: Registration - Hill Hall
- 9:30 AM: Worship - Hill Hall
- 10:15 AM: Morning Workshops
- Noon: Lunch
- 1:00 PM: Afternoon Workshops
- 2:30 PM: Dismissal

***Note:** Students in the General Studies program of the Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies are eligible to receive course credit for participating in two workshops of their choice.

MORNING WORKSHOP OPTIONS:

1. Short-Term Mission Trip Leader Training (Part 1)
2. Same Storm, Different Boats: Bridging the Generational Divide in the Church
3. Identifying and Discipling Leaders
4. Faithful Innovation: Using AI to Enhance Your Ministry
5. Recruiting Faithful Volunteers for Children's Ministry
6. God's People, God's Word, God's Purposes
7. Planning a Community Festival
8. Who Are We? Exploring the WVBC
9. Church Trustees
10. Church Treasurers and Financial Secretaries
11. Church Clerks

AFTERNOON WORKSHOP OPTIONS:

1. Short-Term Mission Trip Leader Training (Part 2)
2. Effectively Communicating with Different Generations
3. Dinner Church: Exploring Different Contexts and Strategies
4. Christian Pharisees: The Ways We Look More Like Pharisees Than Jesus
5. Connected: Building Authentic Community in Youth
6. How Does What I Believe About God Affect my Mental Health?
7. Creating Remarkable Experiences
8. Women's Ministries in the WVBC
9. Conflict in Church: Why & What & Where Do We Go from Here?
10. The Escape Plan: Retreats and Advances for Your Ministry
11. Deacons

All Officers

Sign up today!

Contact the office!

First Baptist Church will pay for our officers training. Please contact the office and let Pastor Toby or Susan know what workshops you would like to take.

Registration deadline for FBC is January 15 to give us time to get you registered and send the payment.



RAVENSWOOD HIGH SCHOOL CHORAL DEPARTMENT PRESENTS
2026 DINNER THEATER SHOW

LAW & DISORDER



CHAOS AT THE JACKSON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

SATURDAY, JAN 31

4:00

SATURDAY, JAN 31

7:00

SUNDAY, FEB 1

1:00

BOCE Adult Representative Kristi King has reserved 3 table (24 seats) for the 2026 Ravenswood High School Choral Department's annual dinner theatre. The tickets are \$18.75 each. We will all go after church on February 1 for the show at 1:00.

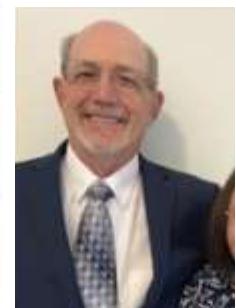
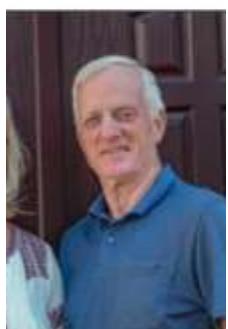
If you are interested in going with the FBC group, contact Kristi or make your checks to **FBC** and earmark for ***dinner theatre***.

The show promises to be a great time of good food and great entertainment.

Sign up today!

2026 Officers of FBC

Deacons



Alan Arrington

Jon Moore

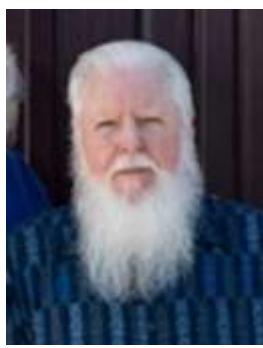
Gary Balser

Jim Frazier

Dan Dzierzanski

Matt King

Trustees



Ron Starkey

Mike DeLong

Debby Bashaw

Phil Walker

Brent Ritchie

Tom Stephenson

Deaconesses



Jane Moore

Robin McGoskey

Sherry Dzierzanski

Ellen Varner

Gusta Arrington

2026 FBC Officers

Board of Christian Education



Tanya Cole
Chairperson



Ethan Tawney
Youth



Brittany Pistelli
Children



Tammy & Bill Harpold
Family Life



Amy Starkey
Missions



Debra Lyons
Sunday School



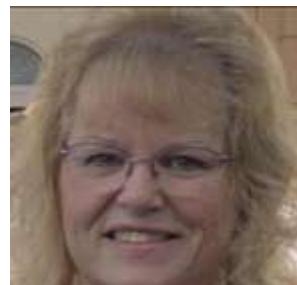
Kristi King
Adult Life



Bev Stephenson
Sunday School
Clerk



Connie Staats
Financial
Secretary



Jo Hendricks
Treasurer



Rhonda Ritchie
Samples
Church Clerk



Abbi Woods
Music Director



Jon Moore
Head Usher



Special Thanks to the Deacons
for their beautiful memory ornament
from the church.

Many thanks to all who had a part in
making this gift so special.

God's Cadets welcomes their new leader
Samantha Willis. Sam will begin with the GC
start up on January 11 at 6:00.

Samantha is married to Lucas and they have one
child Silas.

Bring your preschool to 5th graders every Sun-
day night at 6:00.

We are excited to see what God's Cadets will do
in the New Year! It's going to be great!



HELP!!!
We need helpers for
CommUnity Kitchen

Please sign up today!

Advent Lighting 2025



A little child shall lead them....



The God's Cadets, under the direction of Jane Moore, presented their Christmas Program on December 21 to a full house! What a blessing! The children's choir under the direction of Ann Johnson was absolutely beautiful!

A Time of Fellowship!



YOUTH CHRISTMAS PARTIES
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH



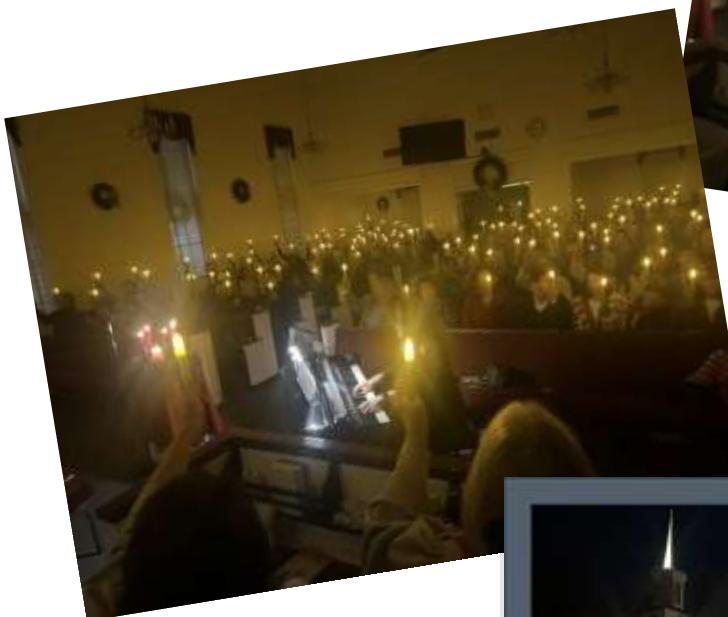
This and That at FBC



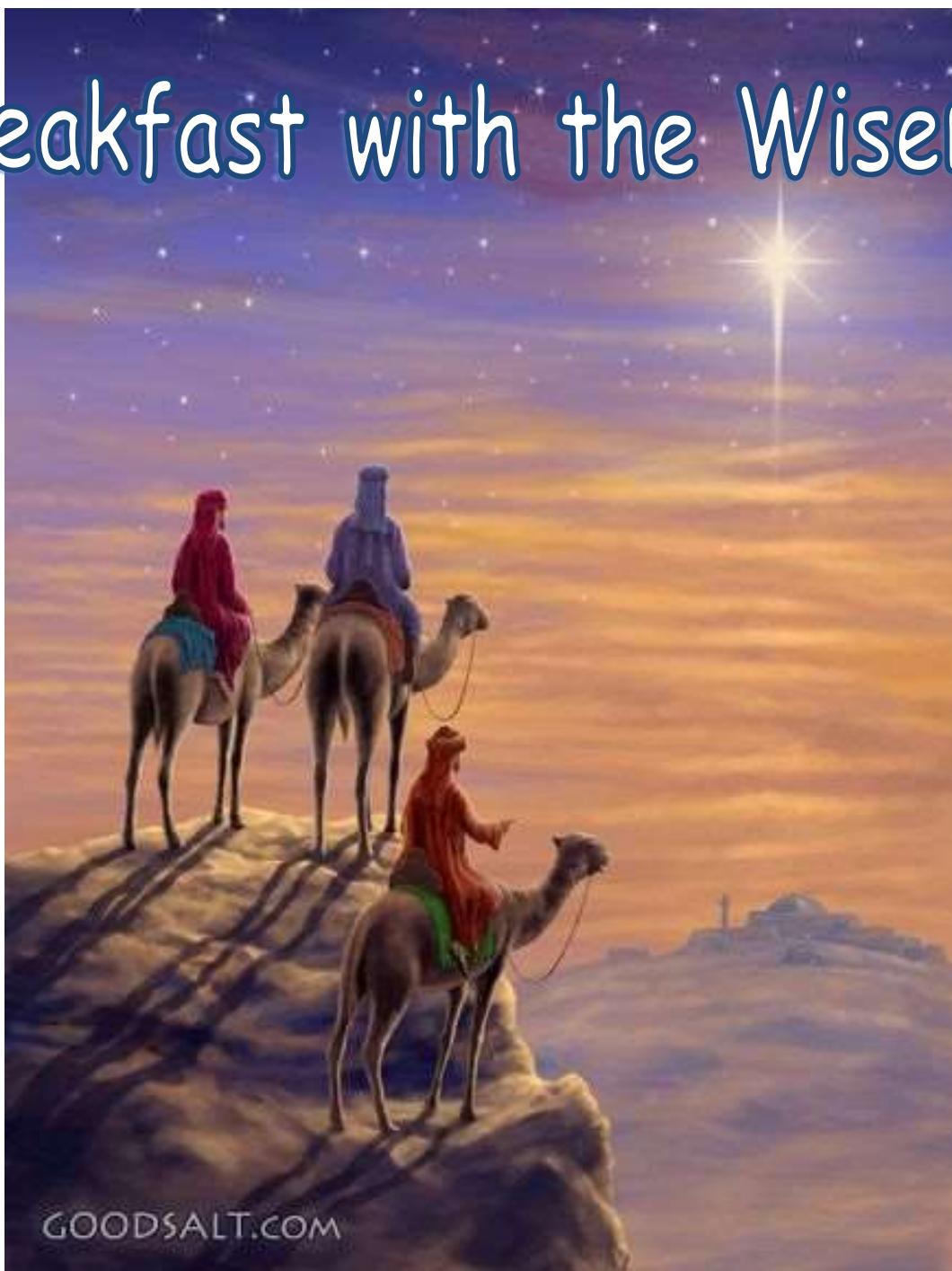
JR/SR HIGH
YOUTH GROUP
CHRISTMAS PARTY



Christmas Eve Service at FBC



Come to Breakfast with the Wisemen



Hear the synopsis of the Christmas Story
ending with the Wisemen before Jesus.

Enjoy breakfast with everyone!
All are WELCOME!
Sunday January 11 at 9:30 a.m.



Open House for Sarah McCloy

Saturday, January 3rd
1 - 3 PM
Parchment Valley
(Santrock Education Center)



Sarah McCloy is one of our International Ministries global servants serving in Japan. Our WVBC family had the privilege of commissioning Sarah almost three years ago.

Sarah will be visiting West Virginia for the holidays and will be at Parchment Valley on Saturday, January 3rd for an Open House. She will NOT be making additional church visits on this trip, so this will be the only opportunity to see her and hear updates.

Our entire WVBC family is invited to join us on Saturday, January 3rd from 1-3 PM in the Santrock Education Center at Parchment Valley. Light refreshments are being provided by her Missionary Partnership Team and Mt. Zion Baptist Church.

Need a ride? Contact Kathy Hudson

Goliath Must Fall

It is likely you have encountered a giant or maybe even two in your life. Does it seem hard to hear God over the noise of anger, fear, worry, addictions, or other giants? We can lose sight that God has a plan for us to live more abundantly and free from giants. In Goliath Must Fall, pastor Louie Giglio will show us "the key to living free from our giants is not better slingshot accuracy but keeping our eyes on the one and only giant-slayer—Jesus."

Community

Scripture

Develop

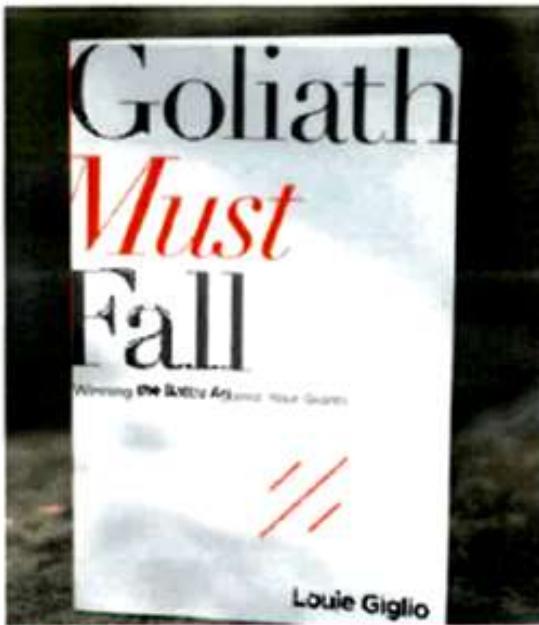


Starting January 12th and January 15th

Join us on either

Monday mornings at 10:00am (lead by Melanie Swisher) or
Thursday evenings at 7:00pm (lead by Sherry Husted)

The *Goliath Must Fall* by Louie Giglio can be found at Amazon, or Christian Book Distributors. You can also find the book online free at many libraries in the state on Hoopla or Libby.



Sign up at

<https://www.abwmwv.org/bbom>

or

Scan the QR code



Focus on Sunday School:



An annual event is coming!

January 11 at 9:30 in the Fellowship Hall, we will be celebrating the end of the Christmas season with our Breakfast with the Wisemen.

For those who may be new to our church, this is a time we come together for Sunday School to share the Lord's Word from Isaiah's prophecy about the birth of Christ to Matthew's record of the Wisemen's visit to the toddler Jesus in His home with Mary and Joseph.

We will sing songs and enjoy each other as we share a breakfast as our Wisemen bring their gifts to the Christ Child.

Start your New Year out in a special way. Come to Sunday School and hear the Word. You will be fulfilled.



It's amazing what you can learn in Sunday School!

*Sunday School!
9:30 a.m.*

January Calendar

- Jan 1 Happy New Year! Office will be closed
- Jan 3 Open House for Sarah McCloy at PVCC
- Jan 4 Officer Installation
- Jan 5 Trustee Meeting
- Jan 7 Annual Reports due
- Jan 11 ***Breakfast with the Wisemen;*** Deaconess Meeting
- Jan 12 BOCE
- Jan 13 Men's Fellowship
- Jan 14 Annual Business Meeting
- Jan 15 CIRCLE
- Jan 20 Financial Meeting
- Jan 27 Deacons Meeting

* Game Day every Thursday 1:00-3:00 (not on holidays)

January Birthdays



**Ryley Thompson 1/6
Blake Bennett 1/7
Matt King 1/11
Jennifer Wagoner 1/14
Deb Lyons 1/14
Belinda Rader 1/16
Pam Balser 1/17
Jacob Graham 1/23
Destiny Nease 1/24**

**If your birthday is missing,
please let Susan know.**

Bible Book of the Month January Mark



CommUnity Kitchen

- Jan 3 Donna Allen**
- Jan 10 Episcopal Church**
- Jan 17 Teagan & Girls**
- Jan 24 Burt Lyons**
- Jan 31 Calvary Baptist**

Help is Needed!

**Please consider
CommUnity Kitchen
as your Ministry.**

Sign up today!

CHURCH PRAYER CALENDAR

Prayer for our fellow members is an important part of our relationship with the Lord and helps us to grow closer as a church family. Each day during this month there is a different individual or family that you are asked to include in your prayers.



January 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Josh Scott	2 Kim & Dee Scritchfield	3 Grace Shirley
4 Jim Speer	5 Tim & Connie Staats	6 Ron & Amy Starkey	7 Warner Stephens	8 John Stephenson	9 Tom & Beverly Stephenson	10 Glenn & Rose Stevens
11 Teagan Stevens, Tallulah, Georgia	12 Tammy Stump	13 Ethan & Zoe Tawney	14 Mark & Amy Taylor	15 Ralph & Jen Taylor, Mackensie	16 Nathan & Renna Thompson, Grayson	17 Stephen & Leanne Thompson, Ryley
18 Jared Torris	19 Randy & Carolyn Torris	20 Avis Turner	21 Dale & Anna Vanderlaan	22 Don VanLehn	23 Ellen Varner	24 Frances Varner
25 Ken & Perry Vintorini	26 Aaron Wagoner	27 John & Grayce Wagoner	28 Toby & Jen Wagoner, Hannah	29 Pauline Walker	30 Phillip & Sherry Walker	31 Janyce Watkins

"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hand."

Psalm 19:1

