



CONNECTIONS NEWSLETTER

January 2025

Volume LXXVII, No. 01

Sunday, January 5

Deacon Installation and Ordination—11:00 am Service
Committee Orientation—3:00 pm
Removing and Storing Advent Decorations—4:00 pm

Wednesday, January 8

All Wednesday Activities Resume

Wednesday, January 22

Intergenerational Noye's *Fludde* Craft Night—6:30 pm

Sunday, January 26

**CONGREGATIONAL
CONVERSATION**
**BREAKFAST & CONVERSATION BEFORE
WORSHIP ON JANUARY 26**

JOIN US FOR THE
FIRST OF SEVERAL
DREAMING
CONVERSATIONS!

8:30 - BREAKFAST
9:00 - CONVERSATION
BEGINS
10:30 - BREAK
11:00 - WORSHIP

FIRST
BAPTIST
CHURCH



A Note from the Pastor

A new year brings resolutions! With each 'new' start, we hope to set different expectations, build better habits, and create space that might lead to more happiness. While I have never scribbled any list on paper in previous years, I have resolved to work on myself and many of those years held lackluster results and waning commitment to my absent list. But, this 'hinge-point' of a new year allows us to reflect and potentially make meaningful changes. So, here are some things I'd ask you to consider if you are making your resolution list for 2025:

Practice proximity. Practice proximity with God through prayer and bible study. Be intentional in growing your faith practices in 2025. Practice proximity with neighbor, too. Make an effort to get to know someone new each week - especially if they don't look like you.

Deepen family ties and time. Family looks different for each person. So, no matter if you are connected by blood, faith, or decision—spend intentional time with YOUR family, no matter what that looks like. Hug them. Forgive them. Share food with them. Digital time and presence on phones, tablets, and social media are much less valuable than genuine relationships.

Add a practice of service. I am convinced that service is the heart of the gospel, so find some way to serve in this community. It could be behind the scenes or up front, but practice giving yourself away in 2025.

Consider and grow your capacity for generosity. We cannot grow our capacity for generosity until we measure how we're doing with it now. Step back and consider how generous you are. What do you need to change? How could your generosity grow in 2025? While resolving to eat more vegetables, work out more, and spend less time on your phone might be good, I'm convinced investing in the list above might just unlock more depth and faith than you might ever imagine. Jesus taught his disciples in John 13, ³⁴"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." May we seek to love and serve all who surround us in 2025 so they'll know who we follow!

Your Pastor,

John

One More Thing

I'd like to encourage you to attend our first *Congregational Conversation* on **January 26**. This important gathering will mark the beginning of a season of prayer and discernment as we seek to understand what God is calling us toward as a church family. Your voice, presence, and prayers are essential as we come together to listen, reflect, and dream about the future God has in store for us. We hope you will join us for this meaningful time of unity and shared purpose.



Worship in January

Sunday—January 5

Epiphany Sunday

Deacon Instillation/Ordination

Scripture: John 1:(1-9)10-18

Psalm 147:12-20

Sermon: "If God Is with Us"

John Uldrick

Special Music

"The Work of Christmas"—Chancel Choir

Sunday—January 12

Baptism of Our Lord Sunday

Scripture: Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Isaiah 43:1-7

Sermon: "Of Water and Fire"

John Uldrick

Special Music

"Come to the Water" - Chancel Choir

The Sanctuary Flowers are given to the glory of God and in memory of Jim Ridgeway by his family.

Sunday—January 19

Scripture: John 2:1-11, Isaiah 62:1-5

Sermon:

"Wedding Wine—The Miracle

That Started It All"

John Uldrick

Special Music

"Beautiful Saviour"- Chancel Choir

The Sanctuary flowers are given to the glory of God and in memory of Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Hancock, Sr. by Anne Hancock.

Sunday—January 26

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

Psalm 19

Sermon: "Living as the Body of Christ"

John Uldrick

Special Music

"Living Faith"- Chancel Choir

In lieu of Sanctuary Flowers, a donation has been made to the Greater Greenwood United Ministry to the glory of God and in memory of Claude and Sara Burnett, Grady and Martha Strom, and Erin Smith by their family.



A Flood Is Coming... Noye's Fludde, a Church Opera, to Be Presented in March 2025

Noye's Fludde (Noah's Flood) is coming to FBC Greenwood March 13 and 14, 2025. This community church opera, written by the British composer Benjamin Britten, will be performed in our sanctuary. This wonderful large-scale work employs two Metropolitan Opera singers, a Broadway actor, youth roles, lots of children as animals, dancers, orchestra, sets and costumes... and YOU. The audience sings three hymn tunes throughout the performance. This is a gigantic undertaking, and we are delighted to bring this work to Greenwood and the Upstate for the first time. The FBC Foundation has graciously underwritten this special event. The performances will be free and open to the public. Our children from *Music Makers* and *Young Musicians* and our youth, along with children from area churches, schools, and the entire community, plus students attending Lander University, will join together to perform the roles of Noye's family and the various animals that enter the ark. Two dancers will represent the raven and the dove. Broadway star Stacey Robinson returns to Greenwood to be the Voice of God, and Metropolitan Opera singers Kyle Pfortmiller and Kirstin Chavez will sing Noye and Noye's Wife. An orchestra consisting of strings, recorders, trumpets, organ, piano, handbells, and lots of percussion, including homemade instruments, will fill our sanctuary with the sounds of raindrops, rainstorms, seas, and the appearance of the rainbow, God's covenant with Noah and all people. Keith Jameson will conduct and Ellen Schlaefer from Opera at USC in Columbia, SC, will direct. I hope you will make plans to attend this amazing, special, and uplifting event in the life of our church and community! A Flood is coming... make your preparations!

Keith

Spring Semester Building Blocks



**January–February
Building Blocks**

(January 8–February 26)

January 8 and 15—two week Bible study led by John Uldrick

January 22—Intergenerational CRAFT NIGHT in preparation for Noye's Fludde (Noah's Flood) - EVERYONE is invited.

January 29–February 26

"The 10 Best Parenting Ways to Ruin Your Child" led by John Uldrick

**March–April Building Blocks
(March 5–April 23)**

March 5—Ash Wednesday Service

March 12, 19, 26, April 2, 9, 23)

- "Lenten Practices" led by members of the Spiritual Formation Committee

- Series on the Lenten Season and loneliness led by John Uldrick

March 19 (NO MEAL)—Building Blocks

March 26 (NO MEAL)—Building Blocks

Holy Week April 16 NO Activities

April 17 Maundy Thursday

April 18 Good Friday

April 20 Easter

April 23 —End of Spring Building Blocks

April 30—M&M Night

(Last Wednesday Night Meal until fall/new school year schedule begins)



The church office will be closed Monday, January 20, for Martin Luther King Day.



Church Directory Is Available Online

Need contact information for a church member, but the church office is closed? Check the online version of the church directory. Even though the hard copy of the FBC Directory needs to be updated, the online version of the directory is updated when the office receives notice of changes. The online directory is a simple and secure resource you can use anytime, anywhere on your computer, smartphone, or tablet. If you have not set up your login, please visit <https://members.instantchurchdirectory.com/signup>. There you will find simple step-by-step instructions on how to set up your login. Once you have set up your login, you can carry our church directory wherever you go, right on your phone! Information on how to download the app to your mobile device can be found on the church's website, <https://www.fbcgwd.org/member-directory/>.

The online directory provides invaluable information about our FBC families. You will also be able to submit updates to your own information (and family member information) anytime, including your photo and contact details.

Of course, the church office is still happy help you with addresses, phone numbers, and emails. The office also asks that you continue to supply us with any changes to your contact information, even if you make changes to the online directory yourself.



Newsletter Schedule

The First Baptist Church newsletter, *Connections*, is printed once a month. Office staff have the goal of families receiving the newsletter approximately a week before the end of the previous month. Holidays, weekends, and the number of days in a month affect when the newsletter is mailed. To help everyone remember when articles are needed for the newsletter, the deadline for articles is the fifteenth of each month. Thank you for helping First Baptist include relevant information in the newsletter.



Committee Orientation January 5 at 3:00 pm

Much of the ministry of First Baptist Church is done through committees. In fact, First Baptist Church has thirteen Standing Committees designed to work with mission partners, welcome visitors and new members, visit and write cards to those who can no longer attend worship, prepare meals for church functions, as well as work with children and youth, oversee personnel, finances, and property.

Each January, time is set aside for Committee Orientation. This year Committee Orientation is **Sunday, January 5, at 3:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall**. Everyone serving on a committee in 2025 is asked to gather for a brief orientation before meeting with members of your respective committees. Following a brief orientation in the Fellowship Hall, committee members are asked to hold their the first meeting of the year. Regular meeting dates and times will be set during this meeting.

Members from all committees, not just the Worship Committee, are asked to stay after their meetings to assist the Worship Committee in removing the Christmas decorations from the sanctuary. The more the merrier!



2024 Contributions

All contributions for the 2024 tax year must be received or postmarked **no later than December 31**. You may place a check in the mail, bring your contribution to the church office, or use the FBC online giving tool at <https://www.fbcgwd.org/giving>. Please note that the church office will close at noon on December 23, closed all day on December 24 and December 25, and will close at noon on December 31. For more information about 2024 contributions, please contact Linda Miller at lindamillerfbc@gmail.com.

Church Family News

Christian Sympathy is extended to the families of

- Frances Brabham
- BJ Smith, mother of Eric Smith
- Mary Elizabeth "Betsy" Goldman Babb, family of Jeanette Goldman and Sharon Woolbright
- Betty Powell

Greenwood Rehab: Rose Whaley, Bill Whaley

Home Hospice: Diana Edwards

New Residence: Polly Harvin (The Oaks)



Weekly Need of the 2025 Ministry Plan

In order to pay bills, salaries and commitments to ministry partners as well as purchase literature and provide various activities for all ages, FBC needs to receive an average of \$19,144.34 each week. Please share your blessings and give as you are able to help FBC be the heart and hands of Jesus



2025 Offering Envelopes

2025 Offering envelopes are available for pick-up in the narthex. If you cannot locate your envelopes, please contact David Jennings (jenningsdaj@gmail.com or 229-5557).

2024 Financials

November

November Receipts:	\$ 88,185.80
November Expenses:	\$ 62,794.94
November Surplus:	\$ 25,390.86
Revenue vs Expense YTD	(\$ 80,322.99)

December 1 - December 15

Period Need	\$ 57,023.61
Period Gifts	\$ 94,351.31
Ministry Plan Req'd YTD	\$ 950,393.50
Ministry Plan Rcv'd YTD	\$ 823,539.05
Ministry Plan YTD Deficit (Under)	(\$126,854.45)
Sunday School Att. (Avg)	191
Worship Attendance (Avg)	234



Family Worship Services

"LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME TO ME, AND DO NOT HINDER THEM, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN BELONGS TO SUCH AS THESE." - MATTHEW 19:14

AT THE HEART OF FAMILY WORSHIP IS THE TRUTH THAT EVERY MEMBER, NO MATTER HOW YOUNG, IS A VITAL PART OF THE BODY OF CHRIST. INCLUDING CHILDREN IN WORSHIP TEACHES THEM THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY, FAITH, AND DEVOTION.

WE WILL NOT HAVE EXTENDED SESSION ON:

-JANUARY 19TH
-MAY 25TH
-BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS: AUGUST 3
-CHILDREN'S SABBATH IN OCTOBER
-HANGING OF THE GREENS: DECEMBER 7

WHY CHILDREN IN WORSHIP MATTER:

- FAITH FORMATION
- BELONGING
- SPIRITUAL GROWTH

JOIN US AS WE CREATE SPACE FOR EVERY GENERATION TO WORSHIP, LEARN, AND GROW TOGETHER!



Help FBC Grow, Volunteer to Help in Extended Session!

Safe Sanctuary regulations require two adults or mature youth in each preschool room. Visitors who learn that FBC follows Safe Sanctuary guidelines know that FBC cares about the safety and well-being of their children. This means the parents are more likely to consider making FBC their church home. Preschoolers need developmentally appropriate activities, including opportunities to play. Preschoolers need room to move. Multiple Extended Session classes and Children's Church address the needs of preschoolers as they grow and develop. Extended Session/Children's Church depend on volunteers. Currently Ann needs adult Children's Church volunteers on the first Sunday of February, April, June, August, October, and December. Two Toddler Extended Session volunteers are needed for the fourth Sunday of these months as well.

Youth News



January Sunday Night Live
Sunday, January 5
5:00 pm-7:00 pm
Location TBA

SNL hosts are needed for February 2, March 2, April 6, and May 4. Please contact Lauren Coker if you can help.

Save the Date
February 9
"Souper"
Bowl Sunday



The Youth "Souper" Bowl event to raise funds for youth projects is Sunday, February 9. Plan to remain after worship for lunch.



Sounds of Grace
 Senior Choir

Sounds of Grace Senior Adult Choir resumes rehearsals on Tuesday, January 14, at 1:30 pm. If you are 65 years old or older, join this group for singing, fun, fellowship, and community.



Just a Reminder:
NGO Does Not
Meet in January

Because January holds the possibility of very cold and/or inclement weather, the Never Grow Old Club (NGO) does not meet in January. The next NGO meeting is Tuesday, February 4.

Dement Waldrep Circle
Reminder

The Dement Waldrep Circle will not meet in January.



Flower Calendar Openings

The flowers on the Communion Table each Sunday add to the beauty of the Chancel. One of the church's permanent floral arrangements is in the sanctuary on Sundays when no one claims that date or when contributors decide to give a donation to the Ministry Plan, one of the missions offerings, or one of FBC's ministry partners. No floral donations are the bulletin in the same way flowers are noted.

Families and groups who provided flowers in 2024 will be contacted to determine if they want to provide flowers in 2025. Other persons interested in providing flowers are asked to contact Mary Frances Thompson (229-5557) to reserve a date. Please remember, the persons who contribute flowers are responsible for making arrangements with the florist of their choice to prepare and deliver the arrangements to the church..

Prayer Shawl Ministry

(Knitters and Crocheters)



Second Thursday of the month
 10:00 am-noon in the church parlor

Next meeting: January 9

For more information, contact June Shaw (538-9101).



Young at Heart

(A group for widows and widowers)

The group meets on the second Tuesday of each month at noon at the Greenwood Country Club. The next meeting is Tuesday, January 7. For more information contact Nancy Rooney (229-3641).

Family Night Suppers

Resume January 8



Family Night Supper will be planned based on standing reservations numbers from November plus any new reservations made by noon on Wednesday, January 8.



722 Grace Street Greenwood, SC 29649
 (864) 229-5557 (864) 229-2561 Fax
 Website: fbcgwd.org

Cheerful Cherubs

(864) 229-2787 www.cheerfulcherubsfbc.com

Ministers and Staff

John Uldrick
 Anna Burch
 David Jennings
 Keith Jameson
 Lauren Coker
 Will Thomas Cleveland
 Claudia Burch
 Mary Frances Thompson
 Linda Miller

Senior Pastor
 Minister to Children
 Minister of Administration
 Church Music Director
 Part-Time Youth Leader
 Organist
 Director of Cheerful Cherubs
 Ministry Assistant
 Financial Assistant

john.uldrick.fbcg@gmail.com
 aeburchfbc@gmail.com
 jenningsdaj@gmail.com
 keithjameson@hotmail.com
 laurenncoker@gmail.com
 willthomasclleveland@gmail.com
 claudiaburch5@gmail.com
 gfbcsc@gmail.com
 lindamillerfbc@gmail.com

864) 229-8051

Helping Hands Ministry Information Line

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED