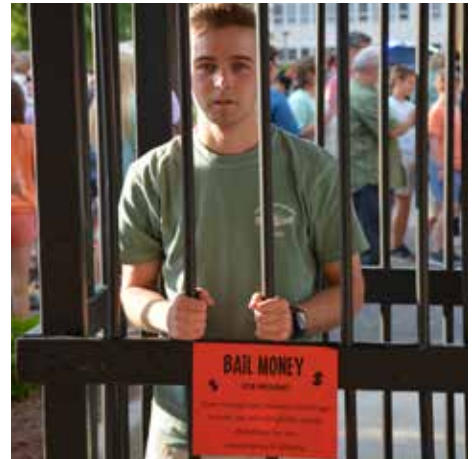


The background of the entire page is a dark, semi-transparent overlay featuring a repeating geometric pattern of interlocking circles. Behind this pattern is a vibrant stained glass window. The stained glass depicts various biblical scenes, including figures in robes, a central figure with a halo, and groups of people in various poses. The colors are rich and varied, including blues, reds, yellows, and greens.

2023 STATE OF THE CHURCH

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH MONTGOMERY



THE STATE OF GOD'S CHURCH

2023 was a fantastic year in the life of FBC Montgomery!

For the first time since 2019, we were able to experience an entire year without major disruptions such as COVID-19, fire, and refurbishing. And it was a stellar year of faithfulness!

Nearly every metric one can look at to measure church health is trending in the right direction for our church. While not as high as pre-COVID, baptisms doubled from the previous two years. New members also nearly doubled from what they have been in the past two years. Bible Fellowship average attendance and worship attendance both grew in highly positive ways. Generosity continues to be staggering as more and more are connecting to giving of their time, talents, and treasure.

This year's budget offering was the largest in our church's history at \$7,739,222 (an overage of \$834,222!). We also exceeded our Lottie Moon, Annie Armstrong, and Myers-Mallory missions offerings, and were able to send even more towards Community Ministries and missions in our church – both locally and abroad.

While numerically, nearly every trend continues to go in all the right directions, there is another metric that's hard to quantify. It's more of a feeling. Walking in each Sunday and Wednesday and gathering time with our faith family, I'm blown away at what I see the Lord doing. The warmth, joy, celebration, and Christ-centeredness of those all around is staggering. I sense the Lord is continuing to do something extraordinary in this old downtown church. There is strong unity and commitment to the Lord's purpose, and for that, I am ever mindful and grateful.

As I step back and look at what the Lord did amongst us in 2023, it's humbling. The Lord continues to use our best efforts and multiply them in incredible ways. We want to continue to be razor-focused on our calling in the center of downtown Montgomery – to bring people in through evangelism, to build friends up through discipleship, and to send each of us out on mission across the street and around the world.

As we press forward into 2024, there is still more to be done. There are more people who need Jesus, more souls that need peace, more friends that need to be built up in their faith, more lost around the world that need access to the gospel, and more work that is yet unforeseen.

Let's go together!

I love you, and I look forward to serving King Jesus alongside you in 2024!



 **MARK BETHEA**
Senior Pastor

BY THE NUMBERS 2023



BUDGET
\$6,905,000



BUDGET RECEIPTS
\$7,739,222



BUILDING FUND
\$137,000



COMMUNITY MINISTRIES
\$207,790

TOTAL OVERAGE

\$834,222

Split between:

**COMMUNITY
MINISTRIES**
\$250,266

**MISSION
CAUSES**
\$333,688

**DEPRECIATION
CAUSES**
\$250,266

PRAISE GOD FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW!



UNDERSPENT FUNDS

\$416,705

Split between:

**DEPRECIATION
CAUSES**

\$100,000

**MINISTRY
SUPPORT**

\$140,000

**MISSION
SUPPORT**

\$176,705



MISSIONS OFFERINGS

ANNIE ARMSTRONG
EASTER OFFERING FOR
NORTH AMERICAN MISSIONS

\$132,674

LOTTIE MOON
CHRISTMAS OFFERING FOR
INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

\$263,844

**GLOBAL HUNGER
RELIEF OFFERING**

\$5,570

**MYERS-MALLORY STATE
MISSIONS OFFERING**

\$26,585

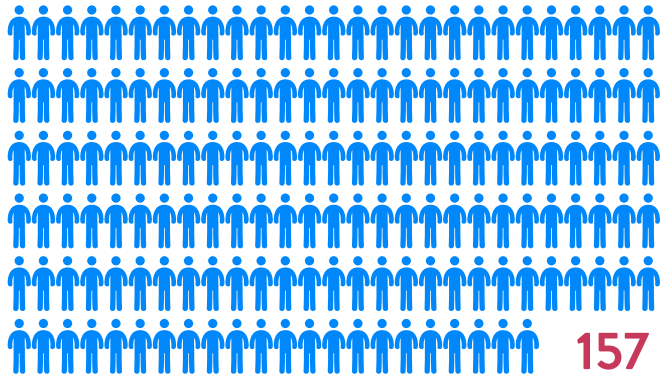
**ALABAMA BAPTIST
CHILDREN'S HOMES**

\$6,164

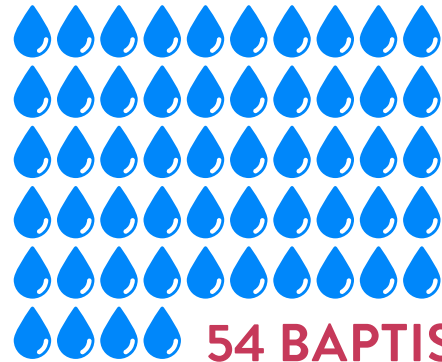
**INDIA
MISSIONS**

\$55,960

BY THE NUMBERS 2023



NEW MEMBERS



FBC MEMBERSHIP

4,615



BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

ENROLLMENT

3,504





DISCIPLESHIP

BIBLE FELLOWSHIP | In 2023, 201 new members and prospects were enrolled in Bible Fellowship (up from 155). Our average attendance for the year was 1,201. There were 288 members who served as teachers throughout the Bible Fellowship organization, with 31 new teachers joining the team. The total enrollment at the close of the year was 3,504. This year, we started a new group for young married couples, a growing demographic of our church.

DISCIPLESHIP CLASSES | Sunday and Wednesday discipleship classes continued as a primary means to “build them up.” Three hundred ninety-four adults participated in various discipleship classes designed to elevate the gospel in that particular area of the participant’s life. These in-depth Bible studies and topical studies included parenting, grandparenting, marriage, evangelism training, apologetics, spiritual gifts, and support groups for those grieving the loss of loved ones and recovering from divorce.

GIFT MINISTRY | Our GIFT Ministry continued to minister to children and families with special needs. The ministry comprises buddies for Sunday School, a standalone Sunday School class, and music and choir. This year, we added rEcess events, which were hosted each quarter and offered fun activities for the children in the family and a time of respite for parents.

OUTREACH + EVANGELISM

HARVEST EVENTS | Our Evangelism and Outreach events included Vacation Bible School, Fall Festival, and the Living Christmas Tree. At our Fall Festival, more than 315 first-time guests came to learn more about our church while connecting with us. Our other evangelistic events brought hundreds of new friends to explore who we are and what we do here at First Baptist.

EVANGELISM ESSENTIALS | This discipleship class, which equips people to share the redeeming hope of Jesus in an ever-changing world, continued to reach out to those in the River Region — connecting with more than 100 who had visited our church.

DISCOVER FIRST BAPTIST | In 2023, we hosted eight Discover First Baptist classes, which continued to thrive. Our August Discover class was the largest in the last five years! Many young adults and college students connected and came to a Discover class tailored just for them and plugged into serving the Lord through First Baptist.



PRESCHOOL + CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

COLLABORATED ACTIVITIES

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL | In June, our preschoolers and children learned to navigate the *Twists and Turns* of life at VBS. One hundred four preschool teachers and 229 children's teachers shared Jesus with 159 preschoolers and 363 children. We ended the week with a celebration of Nancie's Italian Ice, inflatables, and loads of fun.

FAMILY MISSION TRIP | Seven families traveled to Cincinnati for a Family Mission Trip, to help The Valley Church prepare for their VBS as well as experience other ministry opportunities throughout the city.

FALL FESTIVAL | In October, this annual event, held in the Perry Street lot, drew more than 750 members and visitors for an afternoon of fun, food, and fellowship. Thanks to the many Bible Fellowship groups that manned the games for our preschoolers, children, and their families.

PARENTS NIGHT OUT | This popular event for parents was held three times throughout the year with an average attendance of 50.

MY FAVORITE THINGS PARTY | Our moms of children and preschoolers gathered in the fellowship hall and shared their favorite things with which the LORD had blessed them. Forty-eight preschool and children's moms enjoyed a night of building relationships through our annual My Favorite Things Christmas party.

STORIES OF CHRISTMAS | Our last Wednesday night event for the year was "Stories of Christmas," where families enjoyed a pancake dinner provided by our deacons, lots of Christmas fellowship and music, special Christmas memories shared by Doyle & Lisa Powell, and THE Christmas story presented by our preschoolers and children.



PRESCHOOL ACTIVITIES

PRESCHOOL BIBLE FELLOWSHIP | We ended 2023 with 184 enrolled and 87 dedicated teachers who showed and shared the love of Jesus with an average attendance of 116 preschoolers each week. Our Worship Care Ministry included 98 volunteers who provided loving care to our preschoolers from eight weeks through four years of age during our 8:30 and 11:00 AM worship services. Finally, God blessed our First Baptist Family with 22 precious babies!

EASTER EGG HUNT | We had a fabulous time at the annual Easter Egg Hunt! More than 125 individuals participated in this family fellowship on the lawn at the home of one of our grandparents. Games, goodies, inflatables, and lots of eggs made for an enjoyable time for our preschoolers!

CLUB 2:52 | On Wednesday nights during the summer, preschool families participated in Club 2:52, where preschoolers learned what it means to grow as Jesus grew – in wisdom, stature, and favor with God and man. We measured our physical growth, visited the Caring Center, where we packed appreciation bags for our security team, and worked with other friends on a storytelling chart. Parents were encouraged to lead the family in these age-appropriate activities as preschoolers learned the meaning of growing like Jesus.



PRESCHOOL MISSIONS | Mission Friends had an average attendance of 38 preschoolers (3 – 5 years of age). Our 12 leaders provided various opportunities for our preschoolers to be involved with missions, such as making community care packages and designing beautiful art pieces that were auctioned off for Christmas gifts, providing over \$997 for Lottie Moon.

CHRISTMAS CONTRIBUTIONS | Our preschoolers decorated a Christmas Tree with children's socks, mittens, gloves, and hats that were later donated to the Caring Center.

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

CHILDREN'S BIBLE FELLOWSHIP | In 2023, there were 281 children enrolled. Our 45 dedicated teachers showed and shared the love of Jesus with an average attendance of 139 in our Sunday School classes. This is a 27% increase in average attendance from last year.

YOUNG WORSHIPPER'S CLUB | YWC involved children in the 4th through 6th grades leading in scripture reading and prayer during our morning worship services.

BIBLE BUDDIES + BIBLE DRILL | In January, we kicked off Bible Buddies, a Bible skills class for 1st through 3rd graders. Bible Drill, for 4th through 6th graders, also kicked off with around eight participating in the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions Bibles Skills and Drills workshop hosted by our church. Six children completed the associational and regional drill levels in April.

INCREDIKIDS CAMP | This annual day camp saw 52 children and numerous chaperones enjoy God's creation while spending time together and learning all about how we can be *Forever Friends* with God.

GLOWING EGGVENTURE | In April, 51 children participated in our Glowing Eggventure where they hunted eggs around the church in the dark as they created sets of Resurrection Eggs to give a friend as a way to share Jesus.





SUMMER CLASSES | Discovering the Artist in You and Cooking2gether taught the children how to use their talents to serve others and God.

POWERING UP | On Wednesday nights during the summer, our children focused on Powering Up to Serve, by equipping themselves spiritually and physically to serve others.



WEDNESDAY NIGHTS | For the 4th of July, our children provided a Celebrate America presentation and in August we concluded the summer with a Family Game Night.

KIDS KAMP | Kids Kamp 2023 enrolled 44 children and 12 chaperones. We returned to Camp Lee, where Steven Bonham, from Johnson Ferry Church in Atlanta, helped campers focus on how we've been RESCUED from our sins by God's great mercy and love.



DAY TRIPS | During the summer, we returned to Butter and Egg Adventure and allowed our imaginations to soar as we went to the Georgia Aquarium and Pine Mountain Animal Safari Park.

BIG CHURCH TOUR | In September, our Big Church Tour saw 60 first graders participate in lunch, an interview of Pastor Mark, and a tour of the church building. During the evening service, each child was recognized and presented a new Bible from the church.



SUNSHINE MINISTRY | A new ministry called The Sunshine Ministry kicked off, pairing children's families and senior adults offering the opportunity to love on, pray for, and encourage each other.

NEW CHRISTIAN CLASS | In the fall, 24 children participated in this class to help them grow in their faith.



RAs AND GAs | The commitment to RAs and GAs soared as our weekly attendance grew during the fall.

STUDENT MINISTRY

The year 2023 was an amazing one in our student ministry. The events, meetings, fellowships, and everything in between were great, but the most remarkable were the lives impacted. **More than 25 students were baptized in 2023**, many following Jesus for the first time while others finally decided to make their faith public. We'll never know the complete picture of all the fruit God grew in 2023, but the following are some of the year's high points.

DISCIPLE NOW | This annual event started off our year in January with nearly 250 students and leaders coming together for a weekend of worship and growth. Our theme was 'Fearless,' as we encouraged the students to live boldly for Jesus Christ.

GRADUATE RECOGNITION | In May, we celebrated 46 graduating seniors, one of our largest and most active graduating classes.

TALLADEGA MISSION | In April 2023, 25 guys went to Talladega for the NASCAR race. These guys helped spread the word about a Sunday Morning service where our Youth Band led worship and several NASCAR drivers shared their testimonies. Several hundred people were in attendance.

SUMMER INTERNS | Blake Smith and Taylor Griggs did a spectacular job planning, preparing, and leading our summer events.

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE | We took 150 Students to the Ocoee River for a weekend of Worship and Adventure, including 28 rising 7th graders! We recently began including the 6th graders on this trip to help them acclimate to the Student Ministry before they officially enter it in August.

MISSION MONTGOMERY | For two days, dozens of our students engaged in missions and service in our area. We focused on the Nehemiah Center kids program and helping clean up and renovate a camp facility for Common Ground Ministry.





YOUTH CAMP | This year, we took 207 Students and 40 Leaders to Shocco Springs for camp, where we were led by Stuart Hall as our camp speaker and Move Love as our camp band. Our students gave \$ 3,000 to the camp offering that we would use to support the Lanier High School Football Team.

SUMMER SMALL GROUPS | For six Monday nights throughout the summer, we had 12 small groups meeting, one for each youth grade and gender. These were primarily led by College Students who did a fantastic job connecting with our students and leading them closer to Jesus.

LANIER HIGH SCHOOL MINISTRY | Our Church provided pregame meals for the Lanier High School Football team for the 9th year in a row, opening the door again for Russell & Andrew to serve as Lanier's chaplains. We shared the Gospel with the team weekly through their trip to the playoffs. We were even honored by Lanier High School as their Community Volunteers of the Year for 2023!

POWERHOUSE | We had our largest weekly average attendance ever at Powerhouse throughout the Fall 2023 Semester, maintaining a weekly average of 160 Students joining together for Worship each Wednesday from 6:30 to 7:45 PM.

BALDWIN BIBLE STUDY | Every Wednesday from 2:15 to 3:45 PM, an average of 65 Baldwin Middle Schoolers join us in the Student Center for games, snacks, and Bible study led by Andrew Mingus. Many of these kids are unchurched and can hear the Gospel week by week.

NEHEMIAH CHRISTMAS PARTY | In December, the student ministry and many others from our church provided gifts for 45 Nehemiah children, the most we've ever sponsored through this effort.

COLLEGE MINISTRY

PASSION CONFERENCE | We began the year at Passion in Atlanta, Georgia. Our group of 35 students gathered with 20,000 college students from across the world to worship King Jesus.

PURSUE CONFERENCE | In February, we hosted the Pursue Conference at First Baptist, a collegiate conference sponsored by ALSBOM. This year, we had 30 students from our college ministry attend! During the conference, speakers and leaders challenged our students to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth.



MISSIONS | Our college ministry participated in *Serve Montgomery* in March, where we partnered and served with local ministries. In July, we took a team of ten to London, England, to serve with Thomas and Elizabeth West to assist in the ministry and mission of Redeemer Queen's Park.

CONNECTIONS MINISTRY | This year, we paired 15 college students with families in our church who will love them, encourage them, and pray for them during the school year.

THE GATHERING | Throughout the year, our college worship service thrived and flourished in many ways. We began building momentum in the spring semester, but only in the fall semester did we see a weekly average of 70+ students in our Monday night service. The Lord moved in a powerful way.

SMALL GROUPS | In the fall, we launched five small groups that met weekly to read and study scripture. Led by college students, more than 30 students were involved in our small group ministry.

AREA COLLEGES | Our college ministry consists of students from each of the four main college campuses in Montgomery, and we continue to develop partnerships with the administrations of these colleges. It's been a HUGE win for our college ministry to represent a diversity of schools.

MEMBERSHIP | In 2023, there were 15 students who joined our church, and we praise God for these blessings.

FELLOWSHIPS | It's not college ministry without good fellowship. During the year, we had several on-campus and off-campus events to build and grow relationships with one another. These events/fellowships included a girls' Valentine's dinner, ice cream socials, summer hangouts at the park, sports and sporting events on the college campus, a skate night, and a Friendsgiving dinner.



SINGLE ADULT MINISTRY

SINGLE ADULT BIBLE FELLOWSHIP | One of the greatest ways to plug in to our church is our Bible Fellowship Ministry, and our single adults have grown in the Lord by being plugged into one of our groups. Single adults are being brought in, built up, and sent out on mission.

SERVICE + MISSIONS | Our single adults continued to thrive in the area of service, from helping serve in children's ministry, student ministry, community ministries, and numerous other ministry needs within our church family. Several of our single adults also participated in mission trips throughout the year.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL BLOCK PARTY | Our single adults helped organize our annual Back-to-School Block Party at the Nehemiah Center, where we distributed 264 backpacks filled with school supplies and shared Christ with many.

SENIOR ADULT MINISTRY

MONTHLY BIBLE STUDIES | An aggregate of seven Bible study events per month began in January. The Bible studies were conducted at Oak Grove Inn, Wesley Gardens, John Knox Manor, Haven Memory Care, Eastdale Estates, Eastview Retirement Center, and The Gardens at Waterford.

JANUARY BIBLE STUDY | January Bible Study included an in-depth look at the book of Ephesians taught by Ed Cleveland, Kenny Hoomes, Jamie Pruitt, Dale Huff, and Jay Wolf.

SMART TEAM | Our SMART team completed more than 45 projects after re-organizing in March. We were led by Kendall Shehane, who passed away during the year. New leadership stepped in, and now we have Ken Sandstrom and Jim Johnson as co-chairmen of our SMART team.

SENIOR ADULT VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL | This year's Senior Adult VBS, *Twists and Turns*, had more than 60 participants who had a great time learning God's Word and playing games in our fellowship hall.





DAY TRIPS + CONFERENCES | The Senior Adult Ministry traveled to the Ark Encounter in Williamstown, Kentucky; the Biltmore and the Cove in Asheville, North Carolina; the Celebrators Conference in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee; and the Biblical History Center in LaGrange, Georgia.

IN-HOME MINISTRY | Our In-home ministry, led by John and Kay Fleming provided leadership and coordinated gift-giving to all of our in-home members. Gifts were taken to these church members during Easter and again at Christmas.

CHRISTMAS BANQUET | Our Senior Adult Christmas Banquet was extremely well attended. The “Upbeats” provided the entertainment, and the meal was provided by Alexis Aday and John Longpre.

REACH IN | A new ministry opportunity began in September called “REACH IN.” Blank cards and envelopes were provided for our senior adults to write to our in-home members, the sick, and those who need encouragement.

MINISTRY MEETINGS | More than 50 senior adults attended a ministry meeting in September, where they offered guidance and volunteered to lead the ministry into the new year.



MUSIC MINISTRY

STUDENT CHOIRS | The **One Heart Choir** (7th & 8th grades), led by Greg Steele, traveled to Nashville in June for their annual choir tour. Nineteen students and eight chaperones served the community and led in worship in various venues, including the Nashville Rescue Mission and the Grand Ole Opry. **One Voice Choir** (9th-12th grade) experienced wonderful growth throughout 2023. For their annual choir tour, this group traveled to New York City, where they did a tremendous job leading worship in several local churches. In addition, these 64 students and 23 chaperones served at the Bowery Mission, Iglesias Bautista Canaan, and Metropolitan Baptist. **The Reflections Ensemble** continued to rehearse and perform in 2023, preparing them for their trip to Los Angeles. Though not the typical trip made by this group, God greatly blessed their efforts as they sang and served at Set Free Church, Ocean Gate Baptist Church, and the Union Rescue Mission.

PRESCHOOL AND CHILDREN'S CHOIRS | These choirs, coordinated by Jenny Renner, consist of three preschool choirs, two children's choirs, and a host of faithful volunteers. These choirs led in worship throughout the year and participated in our Living Christmas Tree. Fourteen of our children's choir members auditioned and were accepted into the ALSBOM Children's Honor Choir.

JOY SINGERS | The JOY Singers, directed by Ed Cleveland, did a wonderful job leading at the patriotic and advent services in Stakely Sanctuary. This senior adult choir also sang and ministered to assisted living centers in Montgomery, and participated in a senior adult choir festival at Lakeside Baptist Church in Phenix City, Alabama.

HANDBELL ENSEMBLE | This ensemble, led by Jenny Renner, performed in several services this year, especially during the Advent and Christmas seasons. They also joined with the orchestra in the prelude "Beautiful Savior."

SANCTUARY ORCHESTRA | Our orchestra, led by Greg Steele, consistently provided incredible worship music weekly in our morning services. In addition to weekly rehearsals and services, our orchestra members participated in the Living Christmas Tree.

ICHTHUS ENSEMBLE | This adult vocal ensemble, directed by Ray Burdeshaw, led our Sunday morning worship services several times throughout the year.

LIVING CHRISTMAS TREE | The 2023 program involved 122 singers, 40 instrumentalists, and more than 200 volunteers. Our entire church body rallied around these services to present a Gospel-centered message to those in attendance. God's warmth was felt, and numerous attendees indicated that they had been encouraged and their lives changed.







MISSIONS MINISTRY

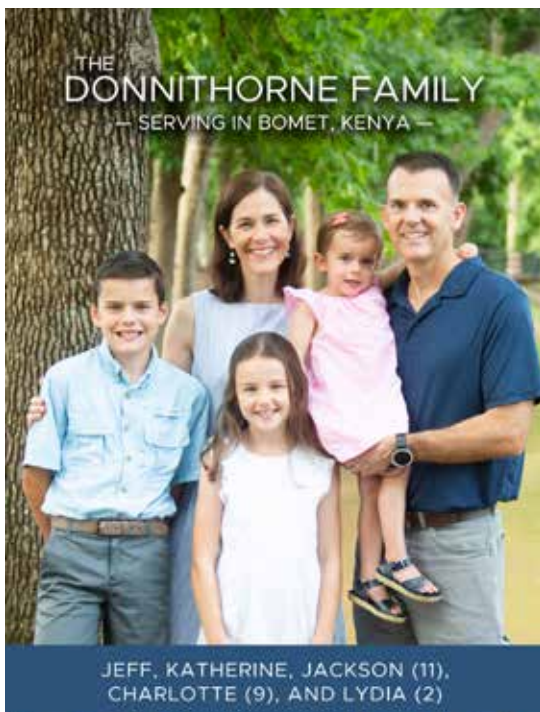
SERVE MONTGOMERY | In March, First Baptist hosted a massive community service project called SERVE Montgomery. More than 800 volunteers from seventy-nine churches across the United States gathered in Montgomery to participate in this project in partnership with Send Relief, the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, and the Montgomery Baptist Association. Volunteers linked arms to bless nurses and first responders, beautify schools, provide free dental clinics, host neighborhood block parties, and assist local families with projects in and around their homes.



CHURCH PLANTERS | We continue to support church planters around the world both financially and through prayer. Thomas & Elizabeth West in London, Wesley & Ashley Costello in New York, and Alonza Lewis in New York all continue serving as church planters brought up in our own congregation and sent out as missionaries to their respective assignments.



MISSIONARIES | We were excited to send out Jeff and Katherine Donnithorne along with their children as missionaries to Kenya, Africa. During the Global Missions Celebration, the Donnithornes felt God calling them to respond by Going. They accepted this call by going on a one-year assignment with Samaritan's Purse to serve at Tenewek Hospital in Kenya and have been serving faithfully there since September.



MISSION TRIPS | We continued to send volunteers on mission trips. In 2023, 19 teams went to locations from New Orleans to New York and Mexico to Ghana, as well as other locations around the US and the World.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD | This year FBC donated 545 boxes to be distributed around the world.

DISASTER RELIEF | We continued to respond to those in need. Especially notable was our response to the tornado that struck the Flatwood community in northern Montgomery.

PRAYER EMPHASIS | We continued to see an increase in our church's prayer movement. Our nightly prayer call passed its third year of continuing to meet every night as we prayed together for each other, our church, state, nation,

and the world. God's work has been evident as this group has prayed and seen remarkable results of God's work in response to the prayers offered. We also had our first Night of Prayer service, which focused exclusively on worship and prayer. This was a God-honoring event and set the stage for more prayer emphasis to come in the next year.

WOMAN'S MISSIONARY UNION (WMU) ACTIVITIES:

WOMEN ON MISSION (WOM) GROUPS | Every month members of the Charlotte Cearley, Helen Hancock, Sara McCrory, Amy Cooper, Jane Burdeshaw, Jackie Swan, and Community Ministries Prayer Women on Mission are involved in meeting needs here in Montgomery and around our nation.

INTERNATIONAL MISSION STUDY | Women from all seven Women on Mission (WOM) groups as well as visitors gathered to learn and experience much of the Zambian culture through displays, costumes, presentations, music, and cuisine. A guided prayer time for mission work in Zambia was led by WOM members.

ESL INTERNATIONAL CHRISTMAS PARTY | Women on Mission groups joined in hosting a Christmas Party for our ESL students with crafts and refreshments in December. The students dressed in costumes and presented the Christmas story during the reading of Luke 2 with a beautiful closing of "Oh Holy Night" by two of our extremely well-trained internationals.

PRESCHOOL + CHILDREN'S MISSIONS | Mission groups for children ages 3 through 6th grade have actively participated in mission study and activities. The Art Show sponsored by Mission Friends for their parents led the way in collecting money for the Lottie Moon Christmas offering. At the same time, GAs and RAs learned about mission work and hosted a very successful community ministry Christmas Party.





The Global Missions Celebration was astounding. This tri-annual event was a fantastic few days of learning, encouraging, and fueling our hearts for missions at First Baptist. We hosted 34 missionaries (with 13 missionary kids) from the United States and the ends of the earth. There were fantastic guest speakers, including J.D. Greear, Bryant Wright, Jacob Boss, and Gordon Fort, and there were incredible times of worship and study of our purpose in God's work and our role in missions around the world. As we concluded the conference, more than 150 commitments were made to be involved in missions through prayer, giving, going, and even answering the call to full-time vocational missions.

This event was indeed a churchwide effort from preschoolers to senior adults. From the pep rally to the Bible Fellowship dinners, there was an excellent opportunity to spend quality time with these chosen missionary servants. The Wild West Dinner engaged preschoolers, children, youth, and adults with missionaries and their stories. The energy of missions was everywhere!





MEDIA MINISTRY

BROADCAST MINISTRY | We continued to deliver our Sunday services each week on WSFA, Frazer, our website, app, and social media channels (Facebook, YouTube, and Vimeo). We are blessed with a great group of volunteers who continue to help us share the Gospel outside the walls of our church. In June, the Main Sanctuary projectors were replaced with LED screens which enhanced our worship experience. In December, we welcomed Rita Tidwell to our team as our Audio & Technical Assistant. She has done a fantastic job with our sanctuary audio.

COMMUNICATIONS MINISTRY | Our members and community stayed informed about the latest news and events happening at First Baptist through social media, email marketing, printed materials, the app, and the website. As always, our website is a vital tool for our members as well as our community to get current information and events at FBC. If you aren't using this beneficial tool, check it out at montgomeryfbc.org.



RITA TIDWELL

Audio + Technical Assistant

COMMUNITY MINISTRIES

Soli Deo Gloria—to God alone the glory. We have experienced God moving within our ministries and within the hearts of those we serve as we witnessed many professions of faith this year. We continue to meet human needs in the name of Jesus, but our focus is to glorify God in all we do and bring the good news to those we serve. Each of our ministries continues to thrive in service. We are privileged and humbled to be able “to see where God is at work and join him there.” Additionally, this year we welcomed a new Executive Director and a new Caring Center Director to the Community Ministries leadership team. However, the heart of the engine at Community Ministries will always be the faithful generosity of our church and our volunteers. As you read the ministry highlights that follow, know that behind every wonderful testimony to God's provision is a team of volunteers that brought glory to God and experienced a growing relationship with our Heavenly Father.

CARING CENTER | We continue to be one of the premier physical need providers in the Montgomery area. We are fully operational in the Huff-Ferguson Building. Additionally, we are now open five days a week with the addition of Friday food appointments and donation drop-off. We also developed plans to digitize some of our processes and will implement these in early 2024.



CHARLES HAMILTON

Community Ministries Executive Director



EMMA KATE SHELTON

Caring Center Director



Caring Center highlights from 2023:

- Impacted 7,638 households representing 25,621 people.
- Distributed 44 tons of food at a cost of approximately \$12,980. Additionally, we received over 5,000 pounds of food from the stewardship canned food drive.
- Continued our partnership with the United Way 211 Door Dash to provide 152 grocery deliveries to clients with no means of transportation.
- Assisted 5,497 individuals in the Clothing Shop, an average of 26 shoppers per day.
- Provided \$87,892 in financial assistance to clients for utility, housing, ID assistance, funeral assistance, pharmacy, and emergency gas.
- Weekly volunteer team of 57 and numerous additional family and community teams such as FBC Youth, FBC Children's Ministry, and Trinity Presbyterian School service classes assisted clients throughout the year.
- Met needs including prayer, relationships, and community.

CHILDREN'S LEARNING CENTER (CLC) | This DHR-licensed facility provides high-quality childcare to children ages six weeks to five years. The Center operates year-round, from 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM, emphasizing spiritual, physical, and intellectual development. Over the year, the CLC provided 277 scholarships to at-risk children valued at nearly \$40,000 and provided more than 11,890 attendance days of childcare. Our children learned Bible lessons, memorized scripture, sang songs, and studied age-appropriate academics in preparation for kindergarten.

INTERNATIONAL MINISTRY | During the past year, more than 266 students from 36 countries have participated in the six **English as a Second Language** classes held on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. All Women on Mission groups helped with the ESL Christmas program, where students made crafts, sang and heard Christmas songs, and saw the real meaning of the season as acted out by

students. Fun Fridays in American homes provide an informal time of craft-making and fellowship. There are 23 **Americana Café** volunteers and two teachers. Not only are the students introduced to new friends in the café, but more importantly, they are introduced to Jesus through scripture, prayer, and conversations with our ESL workers. In addition, we support the Montgomery Baptist Association **Conversational English** class, which meets on Thursdays. CE enrolled 131 students from over 30 countries, with 44 volunteers helping to teach, provide administrative assistance, and provide childcare. The Sunday International Bible Fellowship Group has settled into its space in the Miller Building and is growing in number.

TUTORING PROGRAM | Our program averages 38 students and 20 volunteers weekly. We provide a snack supper to the children each week, which is provided by a generous church member. Our tutors deliver a Bible story and academic instruction, and most importantly, they model Christ through personal relationships. A highlight of our fall semester was a night of gratitude provided by families of tutoring students, where tutors were treated to special dance performances and traditional Hispanic foods. In December, we held Santa's Workshop for these students, who shopped for more than 300 gifts for family members in our gift room filled with hundreds of donated presents. RAs, GAs, tutors, and volunteers helped the students shop and wrap these special gifts.

MASTER'S GARDEN | Our Eden in Chisholm and is a one-of-a-kind ministry in the Montgomery area maintained by a core of dedicated volunteers led by Robin Caddell. Our volunteers, along with James Thomas, the Garden Steward, prepared the garden for opening by plowing, fertilizing, and planting. The strawberry harvest from 1500 plants produced over 3,000 pounds of strawberries that were shared with the community and other local food ministries. Volunteers planted the communal garden, maintained the water system, fertilized, weeded, and harvested the fruits and vegetables. Fresh produce from the garden was harvested and delivered to the Caring Center, The Friendship Mission in Chisholm, the MBA Food Bus Program, the Montgomery Food Bank, the Montgomery Area Council on Aging, and nursing homes. The Peace Garden provided a large bounty of fruits for the Chisholm Community. For the first time community members were able to walk up



and pick large amounts of muscadines, blueberries, figs, and grapes. This fall they also gathered pecans and chestnuts from the Peace Garden. The Lanier football team helped to remove plants from the garden to get ready for the next season. The growing season ended with the planting of another 2000 commercial strawberry plants and a harvest of hundreds of pounds of sweet potatoes, collards, and other vegetables.

NEHEMIAH PROGRAM | This Christian Community Development ministry in the Chisholm area offers many programs to meet human needs in the name of Jesus.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR NEHEMIAH CENTER INCLUDE:

MOMS AND MENTORS (MOMS) | Classes are held in conjunction with ESL classes each Wednesday, with an average attendance of 20 women. Each week begins with a meal provided by a Bible Fellowship and Women on Mission group. The ESL students go to class with teacher Barbara Owen, and English-speaking Moms group together for parenting class and other enrichment and devotional activities.

ADULT EDUCATION | We continued to offer in-person and online GED prep classes, and this year saw an update to our online GED prep program. We also initiated a dual enrollment program for the Nehemiah Adult Education Program and Trenholm Technical Community College. We offered assistance with resumes, job or college test prep, college enrollment and support, requests for college financial assistance, and professional development. We are often the hands-on link between a student's aspiration and enabling them to take necessary steps toward completing their goal. We minister to these adults by breaking down community-level barriers that keep them from reaching their potential. The adult education program has an enrollment of 10 students.

NEHEMIAH KIDS CLUB | This free daily after-school program transported an average of 35 children from Chisholm Elementary, Highland Garden Elementary, and Morningview Elementary to the Nehemiah Center for a structured enrichment and discipleship-building program. Our goal is to provide a safe, nurturing, and learning environment. By building strong and lasting relationships with each child, we can teach life skills, Bible literacy, and discipleship and promote a lifelong Christian lifestyle. When ministering to the children, we also establish a trusted relationship with their parents. Because of this strong bond, parents rely on us for spiritual guidance, parenting support, health and education advocacy, and Christ-like family coaching.

COMMUNITY-WIDE EVENTS | In 2023, we held a Spring Easter Egg Hunt and Celebration, July cookouts and movies, a Back-to-School Block Party and Backpack giveaway, a Community Thanksgiving Blessing, and a Live Nativity.



CAMP NEHEMIAH | This summer, 62 children were enrolled in a daily Civics program to promote good citizenship. Children enjoyed breakfast, snacks, and a healthy lunch each day, along with many activities ranging from swimming, mountain bike riding, cooking, art, books, guitar lessons, and much more.

DEVELOPMENT MODEL | As part of our Christian Community Development Model, we conduct several community outreach events throughout the year, coordinating with community partners. We conducted community events: the Home Instruction Program for Parents of Preschool Youngsters, provided by MPS, a fall and spring event with Family Guidance, church services in the gym for a Hispanic congregation, and Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day Services by a Guatemalan congregation.

PRISON MINISTRY | First Baptist maintains an established foothold as one of the most critical components in prison ministry for the Alabama Department of Corrections (ADOC) through creating and continuing management of the State's first-ever online volunteer training site. With over 4,300 user accounts created on the website, the technical support arm of our prison ministry facilitates volunteers and vendors in quickly completing Federal training requirements. This is the critical first step for other ministries and churches to bring faith-based programs and events into the 25 ADOC facilities. Our sustained success in this area opened doors for our ministry to have access once again to the Kilby Correctional Facility, where we have seen significant fruit under the leadership of Ken Brothers. Our prison ministry volunteers from FBC serve as "Jesus with skin on" to our incarcerated brothers and sisters, those getting out of prison, and the families of prisoners (while being sensitive to the needs of victims of crimes and those working in the criminal justice system).

HIGHLIGHTS OF PRISON MINISTRY INCLUDE:

ANGEL TREE | The annual highlight for the prison ministry continues to be the success of the Angel Tree ministry led by Beth Green. FBC members again faithfully supported this ministry as we blessed 120+ children from 52 families with Christmas gifts for children and youth of incarcerated parent(s). Caregivers made 17 faith professions during the Angel Tree gift pick-up event.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY YOUTH DETENTION FACILITY | The last quarterly visit at the Montgomery Youth Detention Facility in December resulted in 15 of the 20 teens accepting Christ as their Savior. Several other highlights of the day included two teens asking our mentors if they thought God would forgive them for their crimes. Another who prayed the prayer of salvation asked privately if we could show him how to pray.



IN-PERSON MINISTRIES | We have expanded our in-person ministries with the addition of Kilby CF and our enlarged presence at the Montgomery Women's Facility, where Wendy Seabrook is now serving as the chaplain. More than 200 professions of faith involving in-person ministries at four facilities have been made. We have expanded our existing partnerships with other prison ministry efforts.

BIBLE STUDY | 2023 closed out spectacularly with the final Bible study of the year at Kilby, resulting in six new faith professions and more than 27 responding to altar calls and rededication.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT | We supported a Kairos Weekend at Staton CF, participated in the Bill Glass Prison Ministry revival at Kilby and Red Eagle, and coordinated with Gideons International to distribute several hundred Bibles to the prison chaplains.

CHILDREN'S HOPE

Haiti is an increasingly difficult place to serve, and it seems to get more complex every day; this is exactly why we are committed to continuing to serve the people in Haiti in the name of Jesus.

In 2023, we have seen the country continue to fall into the control of violent gangs. With the absence of any kind of authority or government, gangs have taken control of large parts of Haiti. Social and political unrest have continued to cause severe food and supply shortages and rampant inflation. Praise the Lord, our staff and children have remained safe. Through God's provision, the resourcefulness of our Haitian staff, and your faithfulness, we have always been able to locate and acquire the desperate food and supplies as they are needed.

Through the hardships we've seen in Haiti in 2023, the Kingdom of God also increased through the work of Children's Hope. We continue to shine brightly as we care for children, strengthen families, and serve communities in the name of Jesus, and we are so thankful for all our partners whose contributions fueled our ministries in Haiti. Together, we are changing lives both right now and forever. Total gifts to Children's Hope from First Baptist Church members and other partners totaled more than \$1.1 million in 2023.

Here are just a few of the highlights from the past year:

- 62 children are under our care at our children's home in Jacmel, Haiti.
- We now have two young men and five young women in our transition homes for our older children (16+ years old).
- Our weekly prison ministry brings prisoners medical care, food, and pastoral care.
- Our medical clinic provides quality healthcare to over 6000 community members, with our staff of 4 doctors, 4 nurses, 1 dentist, 1 psychiatrist, 2 lab technicians, and 1 chaplain. Each patient is offered prayer with their medical care.
- Our 3 Christian schools provide a quality education to over 673 students.
- Our Bible Training Center for Pastors has 18 individuals who have been faithful through a 24-month course to prepare them to be pastors in their local communities.

- Our staff continues a weekly Mental Health Meeting for our community to receive training and counseling regarding mental health issues.
- We continue our community food distributions to the elderly to feed more than 200 individuals per month. We are seeing an amazing impact on our community through this food distribution.
- We provide full-time employment to 114 Haitian staff. This meaningful work provides critical income for their families.

Thank you so much for your prayers and support. We look forward to caring for more children, strengthening more families, and serving more communities in greater ways in Haiti in the name of Jesus in 2024!

FIRST BAPTIST FOUNDATION

The First Baptist Foundation managed more than \$8 million in 2023 and received gifts that will yield a massive eternal dividend.

Highlights include:

- Our Foundation distributed over \$400,000 in funds to help fuel God's work through ministries at FBC. We assisted Community Ministries significantly, supported church plants in Las Vegas and New Orleans, and helped invest in families and marriages through Kingdom-building events. We also provided funds to support mission endeavors from our neighborhoods to the nations and provided counseling assistance.
- Our Foundation made a significant contribution of \$72,000 for the educational advancement of over 65 scholarship recipients.
- Our Foundation continues to partner with the Baptist Foundation of Alabama to provide legacy planning services to our church members, with anticipated gifts of nearly \$40 million in the future.



SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED
65 RECIPIENTS
\$72,000



Meet Our Team

Alexis Aday

Church Hostess

Tiffany Alewine

Ministry Assistant

Mark Bethea

Senior Pastor

Brad Brand

Minister of Music + Worship

Charles Hamilton

Community Ministries
Executive Director

Joy Brown

Organist

Carolyn Bryan

Ministry Assistant

Judy Bryant

Minister to Preschoolers + Parents

Robin Caddell

Master's Garden Director

Shirley Case

Receptionist

Charlotte Cearley

English as a Second Language

Ed Cleveland

Minister to Senior Adults

Mary Virginia Crum

Ministry Assistant

Beth DeBardeleben

Ministry Assistant

Steven Faulkner

Property Manager

Brian Gay

Minister of Missions

Ryan Gray

Minister to College Students +
Single Adults

Kim Herbert

Children's Learning Center Director

Kenny Hoomes

Associate Pastor for Spiritual Maturity

Melanie Hudson

Ministry Assistant

Jill Johnson-Leach

Bookkeeper

Gwen Keene

Bookkeeper

Mike Kyser

Broadcast Director

Scott Lamb

Security Director

Chuck Latham

Prison Ministry Director

Justin Law

Associate Pastor for Discipleship

Caden Lockett

Ministry + Outreach Associate

Russell McCrory

Minister to Students

Ruth McKinney

English as a Second Language

Brooke Mills

Conversational English

Andrew Mingus

Associate Minister to Students

Alissa Parrish

Foundation Stewardship Coordinator

Jenny Renner

Pianist / Children's Choirs Director

Carol Roberts

Minister to Children + Parents

Emma Kate Shelton

Caring Center Director

Patti Shoemaker

Church Administrator

Amanda Smith

Communications Director

Greg Steele

Orchestra Director/
One Heart Choir Director

Mike Talley

Property Manager

Rhonda Thompson

Nehemiah Center Director

Pat Thurman

Ministry Assistant

Rita Tidwell

Audio + Technical Assistant

Sharon Windham

Women's Ministry Coordinator

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