



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH MONTGOMERY

2024
STATE
OF THE
CHURCH



THE 2024 STATE OF THE CHURCH

I am continually amazed at the breadth, depth, and scope of ministry that occurs daily through God's people at First Baptist Church Montgomery. It's astonishing and encouraging to see what happens when the church uses its gifts to serve in our community, neighborhoods, and the ends of the earth. Lives are changed, eternities are adjusted, and God is glorified. All that and more has happened this past year.



Thank you for the ways that **you** served faithfully in 2024!

Each number, statistic, and story in the *State of the Church* represents lives touched by King Jesus through our church. It all reflects our mission and purpose—to bring people in through evangelism, build them up in discipleship, and send them out on mission! We haven't moved away from that goal and will not as we take to heart the Great Commission and the Great Commandment.

We are a strong and united church. We have been a strong and united church. And we will continue to shine brightly with a strong gospel light into our future. For 195 years, we've stood at the heart of downtown Montgomery, and by God's grace, we'll keep shining for 195 more years or until the Lord returns.

You have been a generous church with your time, talent, and treasure, as we'll celebrate through the *State of the Church*. While the *State of the Church* is an excellent document, it can never fully capture everything. There's no way to quantify the ways Bible Fellowship Groups support each other through the challenges of life, the thousands of gospel conversations that take place at ballfields, water coolers, and coffee breaks, or the countless gospel interactions that occur to encourage one another. This document only represents a portion of the complete picture of gospel ministry that takes place when we gather together and then scatter wherever God leads us.

Challenges exist, yet opportunities accompany them. Where there is darkness, there is also the chance to illuminate with a gospel light. Let's look ahead to 2025 with the eagerness to shine the light of Jesus!

You are loved and appreciated. Let's rejoice together in what God has done, what He is doing, and what He has yet to do in our midst!

 **MARK BETHEA**
Senior Pastor

2024

BY THE NUMBERS



4,668

MEMBERSHIP



144

NEW MEMBERS



51

BAPTISMS

3,500

ENROLLED
IN BIBLE
FELLOWSHIP

231

NEW BIBLE
FELLOWSHIP
MEMBERS

280

BIBLE
FELLOWSHIP
TEACHERS

832

ENROLLED IN
VACATION BIBLE
SCHOOL



19

CHURCH PLANTERS
SUPPORTED BY
FIRST BAPTIST



60

TONS OF FOOD
DISTRIBUTED AT
THE CARING CENTER



802

PEOPLE HEARD
THE GOSPEL AT
THE CARING CENTER

29

COUNTRIES
REPRESENTED
AT ESL

253

STUDENTS &
LEADERS AT
YOUTH CAMP

21

NEW BABIES
BORN

10,000

GOSPEL TRACTS
GIVEN OUT IN THE
CITY, STATE, & NATION

PRAISE GOD FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW!



**BUDGET
TOTAL**
\$7,098,000



**BUDGET
RECEIPTS**
\$7,674,900

TOTAL OVERAGE

\$576,900

SPLIT BETWEEN:

**COMMUNITY
MINISTRIES GIVING**
\$173,070

**MISSIONS
CAUSES**
\$288,450

**DEPRECIATION
CAUSES**
\$115,380

UNDERSPENT FUNDS

\$334,207

SPLIT BETWEEN:

**MISSION
CAUSES**
\$50,000

**COMMUNITY
MINISTRIES**
\$50,000

**PROGRAM
SUPPORT**
\$34,207.22

**DEPRECIATION
CAUSES**
\$200,000

MISSIONS OFFERINGS

ANNIE ARMSTRONG
EASTER OFFERING FOR
NORTH AMERICAN MISSIONS

\$92,204

LOTTIE MOON
CHRISTMAS OFFERING FOR
INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

\$265,283.14

MYERS-MALLORY
STATE MISSIONS
OFFERING

\$43,136

**GLOBAL HUNGER
RELIEF OFFERING**

\$6,122

**ALABAMA BAPTIST
CHILDREN'S HOMES**

\$3,895

**INDIA
MISSIONS**

\$66,510

**DISASTER RELIEF
OFFERING**

\$48,018

**TOTAL MISSIONS
OFFERINGS GIVING**

\$1,068,425

**ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY
MINISTRIES GIVING**

\$165,355





DISCIPLESHIP

BIBLE FELLOWSHIP | In 2024, our Bible Fellowship Groups welcomed 231 new members and prospects, bringing our average attendance to 1,210. Throughout the year, 280 members served as teachers in the groups, and we were pleased to add 21 new teachers to our team. By the end of the year, total enrollment reached 3,500.

DISCIPLESHIP CLASSES | Sunday and Wednesday discipleship classes continued as a primary means of “building them up.” A total of 323 adults participated in various classes aimed at deepening their understanding of the Gospel in specific areas of their lives. These classes featured in-depth Bible studies, topical studies, and family-centered studies on parenting, grandparenting, and marriage. Additionally, there was practical training in evangelism, apologetics, and identifying spiritual gifts, along with support groups for individuals who are grieving or recovering from divorce.

G.I.F.T. MINISTRY | Our G.I.F.T. Ministry continues to serve children and families with special needs. The ministry includes Buddies for Sunday School, a separate Sunday School class, and Music and Choir. Throughout the year, several recess events were hosted to provide fun activities for the children and a time of respite for the parents.

MEN'S MINISTRY | The Men's Ministry organized two main events to foster fellowship and spiritual encouragement among men. In the spring, we hosted speaker Daniel Ritchie for a men's breakfast that drew 150 men and their sons to hear his powerful testimony and be challenged in their commitment to Christ. In the fall, we also enjoyed a men's tailgate with Pastor Chris Montgomery. This year, two men's softball teams participated in the Montgomery Spring church league, along with a men's golf league.

OUTREACH + EVANGELISM

MEMBERSHIP | We praise the Lord for another wonderful year of people coming to know Christ and joining our faith family. We received 144 new members, with 51 new friends expressing their faith through baptism.

TEAM NIGHT | Over 750 high school students from the River Region came together for Team Night to hear inspiring messages from Alabama chaplain Jeremiah Castille and Auburn chaplain Chette Williams. Four students decided to give their lives to Christ, and seeds of faith were planted for the future. Our church and its dedicated volunteers prepared 1,400 hot dogs for the students before the event.

EVANGELISM | In 2024, over 10,000 updated Gospel tracts were distributed across our city, state, and nation! Moreover, an average of four people attended First Baptist for the first time each week. Statistically, 89% of people will visit a church for the first time if invited by a friend. Let's continue to faithfully share the life-changing Gospel message with those in our circles who do not know Jesus!

PRESCHOOL + CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

COLLABORATED ACTIVITIES

PARENTS NIGHT OUT | This popular event for parents took place three times throughout the year, with an average attendance of 52.

MY FAVORITE THINGS | Over 40 mothers of children and preschoolers gathered to build connections and share their favorite blessings from the LORD during this annual event.

FALL FESTIVAL | In October, this annual event, held in the Perry Street lot, attracted over 750 members and guests for an afternoon of fun, food, and fellowship. Thanks to the Bible Fellowship groups that staffed the games for our preschoolers, children, and their families.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL | In June, our preschoolers and children discovered that God's truth never changes at Breaker Rock Beach VBS. Eighty-two preschool VBS teachers and 162 children's teachers shared Jesus with 160 preschoolers and 368 children. Throughout the week, we collected over 5,000 hygiene items to donate to our Caring Center. We concluded the week with a celebration featuring Nancie's Italian Ice, inflatables, and plenty of fun!





SPRING FAMILY CELEBRATION | Approximately 70 families attended our Spring Family Celebration. This picnic-style event included inflatables, games, egg hunts for all ages, food, and plenty of fun and fellowship!!

ADVENT BAGS | Families with preschoolers and children received a Family Advent Bag containing all the necessary supplies to guide their family in weekly devotions and activities focused on “JOY” during the Advent Season.

PRESCHOOL ACTIVITIES

PRESCHOOL BIBLE FELLOWSHIP | We concluded 2024 with 191 children enrolled in our Preschool Bible Fellowship classes and 77 devoted teachers who demonstrated and shared the love of Jesus. The average weekly attendance was 131 preschoolers. Our worship care ministry featured 100 volunteers who provided loving care to our preschoolers, ranging from eight weeks to four years old, during our 8:30 and 11:00 a.m. worship services. Finally, God blessed our First Baptist Family with 21 precious babies born throughout the year!

KLUB KID | On Wednesday nights during the summer, preschoolers participated in Klub Kid, where they learned about children in the Bible. We focused on Mark 12:30-31, engaging in activities that taught us how to love God with our heart, soul, mind, and strength. We averaged 12 children, ranging from three years old to kindergarten.

ADVENT CLASS | While preschoolers were in Klub Kid, parents and grandparents had the chance to create and prepare an Advent shadowbox along with a daily devotional guide for use throughout December. Ten families participated and completed both the shadowbox and the devotional guide.



SUMMER FELLOWSHIPS | This summer, our preschool families had opportunities to connect through exciting events. We explored transportation at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, enjoyed a Princess/ Pirate/Superhero Cruise on the Harriet II Riverboat, cooled off at a swim party, and bounced, climbed, and jumped at Newtopia. It was a fantastic summer filled with old and new friendships.



CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

CHILDREN'S BIBLE FELLOWSHIP | In 2024, the Children's Ministry enrolled 281 children. Our 47 dedicated teachers shared the love of Jesus with an average Sunday School attendance of 146.



YOUNG WORSHIPPER'S CLUB | During February, YWC involved over 50 children in Scripture reading, prayer, and worship.

BIBLE BUDDIES + BIBLE DRILL | Over 67 children took part in these two classes. Each class was designed to teach first through sixth graders about God's Word through fun and interactive activities while also helping them practice Bible skills and memorize key verses. Eight children went on to participate in the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions associational and regional drills, showcasing their Bible skills.



INCREDIKIDS CAMP | This year, we welcomed 61 children and 22 adults to IncrediKids Day Camp, where they learned to follow the greatest leader – Jesus!



SUMMER CLASSES | Cooking2gether remained one of our children's (and parents') favorite summer programs. This year, we introduced God's Amazing Animal Kingdom, which filled our fellowship hall with various animals mentioned in the Bible.

THE SWEETEST TRUTH | On Wednesday nights during the summer, our children celebrated the sweetness of God's truth and their commitment to following Him. They concluded each gathering with a different ice cream treat.

KIDS KAMP | Kids Kamp 2024 engaged 49 children and 12 fantastic chaperones. Stephen Bonham from Johnson Ferry Church in Atlanta returned as our camp pastor, guiding everyone to be a TORCHBEARER for Christ. In the weeks following camp, we witnessed baptisms of numerous children.

DAY TRIPS | During the summer, we returned to Butter and Egg Adventure and let our imaginations soar as we visited the Lego Discovery Center and Sloomoo Slime Institute in Atlanta. On each trip, we averaged 49 children.

CHILDREN'S FAMILY MISSION TRIP | Fourteen families partnered with The Church at Harpeth Heights in Nashville, Tennessee, to pour out love and serve the community. They organized a Fourth of July block party, harvested potatoes, prepared food bags for local food banks, and cleaned out an older church to repurpose it as an ESL center. Children and adults worked together to share Jesus' love with everyone we encountered.

BIG CHURCH TOUR | In August, 23 first graders joined us for lunch, an interview with Pastor Mark, and a tour of the church building as part of our Big Church Tour. Each child was acknowledged during the evening service and given a new Bible from the church.

NEW CHRISTIAN CLASS | In the fall, 25 children participated in our New Christian Class, which aided them in understanding their decision to follow Jesus and deepening their faith.

THANKFUL BASKET MAKE N' TAKE | Twenty-nine children and nine adults gathered on a Sunday afternoon in November to prepare and deliver bags to homebound seniors in our church. We all found the fellowship with these seniors to be more meaningful than the items we brought to them.

CHILDREN'S FAMILY FELLOWSHIPS | This year, we held two family fellowships to celebrate what God is doing in our Children's Ministry.





STUDENT MINISTRY

DISCIPLE NOW 2024 | In January, we kicked off the year with an event that gathered 200 students, 40 leaders, and 12 host families for a weekend of worship and discipleship. The theme was “INFLUENCER,” and students were encouraged to be the Light of the World and seek opportunities to make a positive impact on those around them for Christ.

FELLOWSHIPS | Throughout 2024, fostering fellowship was a primary focus of our Student Ministry as we aimed to unite our large group of students. In April, we held our first-ever Bass & BBQ/Picnic & Painting Fellowship at Birchfield Farm, where the boys went fishing while the girls participated in painting. Additionally, we organized regular fellowship gatherings in homes on Sunday nights after choir and every Wednesday after Powerhouse at Moe’s. These events brought together hundreds of students from various schools and six grades, creating a more unified community.

GRADUATE RECOGNITION | In May, we celebrated 41 graduating high school seniors! We revised our annual Graduate Recognition service, taking this opportunity to honor these students and commission them to the mission field of their college campuses or next steps.

SUMMER INTERNS | Elean Fajardo and Mary Alice Sasser served as our youth interns, helping to make the summer of 2024 one of our most impactful and enjoyable seasons yet. Elean was such a blessing to our students and the church that the Lord guided us to call him as our new Associate

Youth Minister after he graduated from AUM!

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE | In late May, we took 100 students to the Ocoee River for a weekend of worship and adventure. Students stayed in rustic cabins, fellowshiped around the campfire, tubed on the lazy river, and rafted down the white waters of the Ocoee!

NEHEMIAH CENTER MINISTRY | Throughout the year, our students enjoyed connecting with the children at the Nehemiah Center. Ten of our students served as tutors every Wednesday night. In June, many of our students spent a day swimming with the Nehemiah kids and took them to the movies for our annual Mission Montgomery event. In December, our students, along with several adult Bible Fellowship Groups, provided Christmas gifts for each of the 40 Nehemiah kids. They organized a Christmas party that featured a visit from the REAL SANTA!

YOUTH CAMP | This year, we took 213 students and 40 leaders to Shocco Springs for camp, making it one of our largest camps ever. Our theme was “I AM,” and we were led by camp speaker Stuart Hall and the camp band Move Love. The camp focused on discovering God’s identity and aligning our own identities with the “Great I AM.” Two of our students responded to God’s call to vocational ministry, several dedicated their lives to Christ for the first time, and everyone experienced growth in their faith!

SUMMER SMALL GROUPS | Over five Monday nights in the summer, we held 12 small group meetings, one for each youth grade and gender. College students mainly led these meetings, building connections with our students and helping them grow closer to Jesus.





CARVER HIGH SCHOOL MINISTRY | After eight years of partnership with Lanier High School, especially with the football team, Lanier has closed its doors and merged with Carver High School. The Lord has opened up a great opportunity for us to partner with Carver. This partnership is just beginning, but we have already been able to provide weekly meals for the football team and share the Gospel during each meal. FBC members have also discovered various ways to contribute their resources, including gift cards for families in need of food and clothing, school supplies for the school's tutoring program, and a \$1,000 kicking net in Carver's colors and logo!

POWERHOUSE | Powerhouse youth worship on Wednesday nights has been one of the most significant parts of our students' weeks for decades! In 2024, God continued to bless this gathering. Russell delivered a message each week, and students boldly shared their testimonies from the stage while our youth-led praise band guided us in worship. In the fall, we averaged 150 students and had over 175 students on several occasions

BALDWIN BIBLE STUDY | For nearly 20 years, we have held Baldwin Bible Study every Wednesday from 2:15 to 3:30 p.m., with around 40 students attending from Baldwin Middle School. Only a few of these students are members of FBC, and about half are unchurched. For many, this is the only Gospel they encounter. We pray that God continues to use this Bible Study to impact young hearts.

RENOVATIONS | This fall, our Student Center underwent several renovations, enhancing its appearance and creating more ministry space. We expanded our main room by removing a wall and adding modular seating and tables for students to enjoy fellowship. We extended the stage to accommodate the band and speaker and updated the lighting and backdrop. Additionally, our video projection system was upgraded with new HD projectors. We're incredibly thankful for this wonderful space and eager to see how God will continue to use it in 2025!

SENIOR RETREAT | During the first weekend of August, we hosted our annual Senior Lake Retreat for the rising 12th graders. Thirty upcoming seniors joined us as we guided them through several leadership training sessions and encouraged them to share their thoughts on how they can lead our Student Ministry in their senior year.





COLLEGE MINISTRY

CONFERENCES | We began the year in Atlanta at Passion, where we joined 55,000 other college students from around the globe to worship King Jesus. We were excited to bring 49 students to Passion 2024. In February, we took part in the Pursue Conference, a collegiate event sponsored by ALSBOM. This year, 20 students from our college ministry attended this conference. Passion speakers deeply challenged our students to spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

FIRST COLLEGE PODCAST | At the beginning of the year, we launched a podcast to answer questions asked explicitly by college students. It's been a helpful resource for not only our students but also the church at large.

MISSIONS | One of the most exciting things we did for missions in 2024 was our spring break mission trips. We serve many campuses, so there are various spring break schedules. For the first time, we had back-to-back spring break mission weeks—one team went to Las Vegas to serve with Joseph Gibbons and Favor City Church, while another team served in NYC with Wes and Ashley Costello and Alonza Lewis. The result was two phenomenal weeks of missions and outreach!

THE GATHERING | The Lord completely amazed us with what He accomplished during this year's Gatherings. We averaged about 85 students each week at our Monday night service. In February, we reached our highest attendance ever for this program—110 students! From spring 2023 to spring 2024, we celebrated a 140% increase in attendance at The Gathering. Throughout 2024, we studied the book of Philippians in the spring semester and began the book of Romans in the fall semester. These students are more engaged than ever before in worship and the Word of God.

SMALL GROUPS | During the spring and fall semesters, we launched several small groups that met weekly to read and explore Scripture. Each group was led by a college student and gathered at

various locations on college campuses. In total, 70 students participated in our small group ministry throughout 2024.

AREA COLLEGES | One of the most significant accomplishments we celebrate in our college ministry is that, in 2024, students from each of the four leading colleges and universities in Montgomery were involved in our activities. This is a significant achievement for us! We are also continuing to build partnerships with the administrations of each of these institutions.

FELLOWSHIPS | College students love a good fellowship. We intentionally plan hangouts and fellowship throughout the year to grow our students closer to one another. These events/fellowships have included Sunday lunches, a girls Valentine's event, ice cream socials, summer hangouts at the park, sporting events on the college campus, bonfire night, and a Friendsgiving dinner.

SINGLE ADULT MINISTRY

BIBLE FELLOWSHIP | One of the best ways to connect with our church is through Bible Fellowship Groups. Our single adults have grown in their faith by engaging with one of our groups. They are brought in, built up, and sent out on mission.

SERVICE + MISSIONS | Our single adults continued to thrive in service to our church, helping with children's ministry, student ministry, community ministries, and numerous other ministry needs within our church family. In 2024, we were able to send several single adults on mission through various trip offerings throughout the year.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL BLOCK PARTY | Our single adults sponsored our annual Back-to-School Block Party at the Nehemiah Center. We distributed 216 backpacks filled with school supplies during the event and shared Christ with those in need.



SENIOR ADULT MINISTRY

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

SMART TEAM | Our SMART team, led by Ken Sandstrom and Jim Johnson, has completed over 50 projects that helped tangibly share the love of Jesus.

SENIOR ADULT DISCIPLESHIP | In 2024, senior adults had many opportunities to engage in discipleship. They began the year with a January Bible Study focused on the Sermon on the Mount, where they delved into key teachings from Jesus, including the Lord's Prayer and the Beatitudes. This study was facilitated by Ed Cleveland, Kenny Hoomes, Mark Hodges (Pastor of Thorsby First Baptist Church), Dale Huff, and Jay Wolf. In March, Ed conducted a discipleship class titled "Grandparenting Matters," which offered inspiration, ideas, and tools to help grandparents recognize and achieve their full potential. In May, over 60 senior adults participated in Vacation Bible School, where they enjoyed learning, growing, and playing games at Breaker Rock Beach (the fellowship hall).

SENIOR ADULT BANQUETS | Senior adults enjoyed two banquets this year. The Valentine's Banquet, held on February 13, featured a dinner accompanied by musical entertainment from Nathan and Lindsay Lyon. The Christmas Banquet, held on December 10, drew a large turnout and showcased the "Upbeats" once again. The meal, provided by Alexis Aday and John Longpre, was fantastic!

MINISTRY MEETING | More than 50 people attended the September planning meeting for our senior adult ministry. They offered guidance and volunteered to be leaders. We added one more officer to our group: Richard Pierce, now one of our activities coordinators.

"REACH IN" MINISTRY | Our "Reach In" continued throughout the year. We gave our senior adults blank cards and envelopes to write to our In-Home members, the sick, and those who might need encouragement.



IN-HOME MINISTRY | Debby and Scott McLaughlin led our in-home ministry, which provided leadership and coordinated visits and gift-giving to all our In-Home members. Ginger McMichael and her team delivered fresh flowers (repurposed from our Sunday morning worship services) to our In-Home membership each week. Two luncheons for our In-Home volunteers were held during the year.

TRIPS AND CONFERENCES | Our Senior Adults traveled to Savannah, Georgia, enjoyed a train excursion in Tennessee, and journeyed again to the Celebrators Conference in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. Each trip provided a wonderful opportunity for learning and fellowship in the Lord.

MUSIC MINISTRY

STUDENT CHOIRS | The One Heart Middle School Choir, directed by Greg Steele, traveled to Chattanooga this past June for their annual choir tour. Twenty-six students and eight chaperones served the community and led worship at various venues, including assisted living facilities and homeless shelters. The One Voice High School Choir had a remarkable year in 2024. This group traveled to Myrtle Beach and Charleston, South Carolina, for their annual choir tour, where they excellently led worship in several local churches. These 66 students and 20 chaperones collaborated with First Baptist Church of Charleston, First Baptist Church of Surfside, and Rivers Edge Church. The Reflections Ensemble continued to rehearse and perform in 2024, preparing for their trip to Nashville, Tennessee. God greatly blessed their efforts as they sang and served at the Nashville Rescue Mission and led the Sunday morning service at Cedar Grove Baptist Church.

PRESCHOOL AND CHILDREN'S CHOIRS | Jenny Renner coordinates the choirs, which include three preschool choirs, two children's choirs, and numerous dedicated volunteers. These choirs lead worship and participate in several morning services throughout the year. Additionally, 14 members of our children's choir auditioned and were accepted into the ALSBOM Children's Honor Choir.

JOY SINGERS | This dedicated group of senior adults, led by Ed Cleveland, beautifully guided the church during our patriotic and Advent services in the Stakely Sanctuary. The JOY Singers not only performed at various assisted living centers, including Oak Grove, but also held a Spring Concert in







the main sanctuary, enhancing their experience with new seated risers. In April, they participated in the senior adult choir festival at Lakeside Baptist Church in Phenix City, AL, and collaborated with our Adult Handbell Ensemble for the annual Advent Worship Concert in the Stakely Sanctuary.

HANDBELL ENSEMBLE | Under Jenny Renner’s direction, this ensemble performed at several services this year, including the Advent Worship Service and special Christmas services. They also collaborated with the orchestra on multiple occasions to enhance our corporate worship on Sundays.

SANCTUARY ORCHESTRA | Conducted by Greg Steele, the orchestra provided incredible worship music each week. In addition to weekly rehearsals and services, our orchestra members performed in the Living Christmas Tree and our Palm Sunday Night of Worship.

LIVING CHRISTMAS TREE | The 2024 Living Christmas Tree featured 120 singers, 39 instrumentalists, and over 200 volunteers. Our entire church community came together to present services that conveyed a Gospel-centered message to all attendees. God’s presence was felt, and many participants expressed encouragement and life-changing experiences.

MISSIONS MINISTRY

PRAYER INITIATIVES | Prayer was the cornerstone of our church’s mission and spiritual life this year. We began with a dedicated Journey of Prayer and a Week of Prayer that brought the congregation together in unity and purpose. Prayer opportunities take place every night via Zoom, every Sunday morning, and every Wednesday night.

CHURCH PLANTERS | Our church provided financial and prayer support to 19 church planters dedicated to serving communities worldwide. These committed individuals have witnessed hundreds of people come to Christ and be baptized, transforming lives and contributing to the growth of the Kingdom in their local areas. Through their efforts, our church’s impact extends far beyond Montgomery, positively affecting lives across the globe.

KENYA | Jeff and Katherine Donnithorne, along with their children Jackson, Charlotte, and Lydia, dedicated the year to serving at Tenwek Hospital. Their efforts have positively impacted countless individuals and truly exemplify the essence of our mission. In the spring, we had the opportunity to send a team to support this family and provide encouragement for the vital work to which God has called them.

MEXICO | In Mexico, we experienced an incredible movement of God. The church plant we support has grown from nothing to 37 baptized believers in only two years. This extraordinary growth is a testament to the power of the Gospel and the commitment of the mission team working on the ground.

MISSION TRIPS | Teams were deployed globally to share the Gospel and provide support through trips to New Orleans, Nashville, Romania, Brazil, and Peru. These endeavors broadened our church's outreach and strengthened the Great Commission. The Onion Prayer Conference was a significant time of worship and intercession, enhancing our dedication to seeking God's will for our church and the Z community.

MID-TERM CALLINGS | Three FBC members accepted God's call for mid-term mission assignments: Cary McMillan will serve in Peru for four months, while Mary Conley Teel and Will Hardin will serve in Uganda for two years and five months, respectively.

NEW MISSION PARTNERSHIPS | This year, God has opened doors for new partnerships, allowing us to expand our global reach. We have established a new partnership in France, where Patrick and Katie Thompson serve faithfully. Additionally, preparations are in progress for our work in Uganda, with Mary Conley Teel and Will Hardin set to join this exciting new mission field in 2025.

DOMESTIC MISSION ENGAGEMENT | Through active participation in domestic missions, we made a meaningful impact on lives closer to home. College students were organized for trips to New York City and Las Vegas, where they spread hope in urban communities. Families served in New York City, Nashville, and New Orleans to strengthen relationships and advance our mission.



FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP AND IMPACT | This year, our congregation's generosity has made a significant impact. We donated \$25,000 to Flatline Church to help establish a youth center, creating a space for growth and discipleship among young people in Chisholm. A \$10,000 contribution to Strong Tower Church facilitated the purchase of a ministry van, enhancing their ability to serve both the local community and greater Montgomery. These financial gifts strengthened our mission efforts both locally and globally, reinforcing our church's commitment to building the kingdom.

WOMAN'S MISSIONARY UNION (WMU)

WOMEN ON MISSION (WOM) GROUPS | Each month, members of the Charlotte Cearley, Helen Hancock, Sara McCrory, Amy Cooper, Jane Burdeshaw, Jackie Swan, and Community Ministries Prayer Women on Mission engage in addressing needs in Montgomery and across our nation.

ESL INTERNATIONAL CHRISTMAS PARTY | In December, Women on Mission groups hosted a Christmas Party for our ESL students. The party included crafts and refreshments. The students wore nativity costumes made by WOM members and presented the Christmas story from Luke 2, which some students had not heard.





PRESCHOOL AND CHILDREN'S MISSIONS |

Mission groups for children ages 3 through 6th grade have been actively involved in mission studies and activities. Mission Friends, led by Sydney Herbert, had an average attendance of 35 preschoolers and raised over \$440 for the Lottie Moon Christmas offering through an art show featuring their artwork. Additionally, our 12 Mission Friends leaders engaged the preschoolers in creating community care packages and other mission-related projects. Meanwhile, Girls in Action (GAs), led by Mary Ruth Wolf, and Royal Ambassadors (RAs), led by Chris Mills, learned about mission work and how to serve others. Together, they had an overall average attendance of 74.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Sharon Windham joined the staff part-time as the Women's Ministry Coordinator on February 4. Her first task was establishing a Women's Ministry Leadership Team (WMLT). This group consists of twelve women: RachelAnn Burkett, Megan Deal, Sara Denney, Trista Griggs, Cheri Love, Kelley Phelps, Lisa Powell, Leah Stephens, Katherine Webb, Rachel Webb, Sandra White, and Suzanna Willis. For the eleven months in 2024, Sharon and the WMLT have sought ways to involve and engage the women of FBC in the church mission of "bring, build, send." We have also been striving to be "ladies who" pray, serve, give, go, study, love, read, lunch, care, and fellowship, among other things. Here are some highlights from 2024.



SHARON WINDHAM
Women's Ministry Coordinator

THE BLESSED BANQUET | The annual Mother/Daughter Dinner occurred on Thursday, May 9, featuring Mary Ruth Wolf and her daughters—Sarah Wolf Sizemore, Mary Austin Wolf Hall, and Alex Wolf Hershey—along with her granddaughter, Glory Sizemore. They shared insights on the theme *Finding Treasures in the Dark*. Alex

and her sister-in-law, Katherine Wolf, recently published a devotional book titled *Treasures in the Dark: 90 Reflections on Finding Bright Hope Hidden in the Hurting*. The event drew over 315 ladies and girls.

LADIES WHO LUNCH | The WMLT hosted three new member luncheons this year. These quarterly lunches have been such a blessing. It's been a great time for us to welcome new ladies into the friendship and fellowship at FBC.

ECCLESIASTES 4 MENTORING | A kickoff breakfast was hosted at Sharon Windham's home on August 24 to launch this new ministry at First Baptist. The name is derived from Ecclesiastes 4:9, which tells us that two are better than one. This six-month initiative focuses on the mentor-mentee relationship and delves deeply into intentional discipleship. We have 32 ladies participating in this session as mentors and mentees, with ages ranging from high school juniors to those in their early 70s.

APPLES OF GOLD | Apples of Gold is a nurturing mentoring program for young married women in a group environment. We explore the concepts and discussions from the book *Apples of Gold* by Betty Huizenga, founded on two Scripture passages: Proverbs 25:11 and Titus 2:3-5. For the Fall 2024 session, we had eight mentees, 17 mentors, seven ladies who generously opened their homes to host, and six women who taught the Bible lessons.

SERVE SEPTEMBER | The Women's Ministry hosted a churchwide Day of Service on Tuesday, September 17. The emphasis was called SERVE SEPTEMBER. The SIX SERVE SITES were the FBC Caring Center, Southside Gospel Fellowship (SGF), Medical Outreach Ministries (MOM), First Choice (FC), Montgomery Christian School (MCS), and MPD Headquarters + Fire Stations. Around 150 people from our faith family participated. Volunteers sorted through clothes, made frozen casseroles, reviewed medications & stocked shelves at MOM, prepared ornaments for the FC Christmas "Tree of Life," provided lunch for the 25 teachers & staff at MCS, and delivered homemade baked goods to MPD HQ plus three fire stations in our great city!



LADIES WHO READ | Twenty ladies attended the first “Heroes of the Faith” FBC Women’s Ministry Book Club meeting on August 27. Lisa Powell led wonderfully, and Melanie Pace was the most gracious host. The book *Evidence Not Seen* tells the story of missionary Darlene Deibler Rose. Her life of faith, submission, prayer, and leadership in the jungles during World War II was both inspiring and humbling. We reconvened on November 19, with Casey Ensminger leading and Christy Kreitz hosting. Ten ladies discussed the book *A Chance to Die: The Life and Legacy of Amy Carmichael*. Amy, a missionary, was also a dedicated follower of Jesus in India for many years. Her heart was for the Indian children, which led her to become “Amma” to hundreds of little ones. To God be the Glory!

WOMEN’S MINISTRY MOMS HEAD TO COLLEGE | FBC Moms and a few of our staff took road trips to Auburn University and The University of Alabama on November 12 and November 19, respectively, to visit and have lunch with our First Baptist college students. We had 20 at the Hey Day Market in Auburn and 12 at Central Mesa in Tuscaloosa. We took goody bags to students filled with popcorn, water bottles, candy bars, “Follow Jesus” crosses, etc., as a “thinking of you/love you/praying for you” gift from the church.

LIFEWAY WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP FORUM | Sharon Windham, Sara Denney, Katherine Webb, and Brittany Bethea attended the Lifeway Women’s Leadership Forum at Long Hollow Church in Nashville, Tennessee, on November 7 and 8. The theme for the two days was “Whole” (from Mark 12:30). We focused on the need to truly understand how to love God with all our heart,

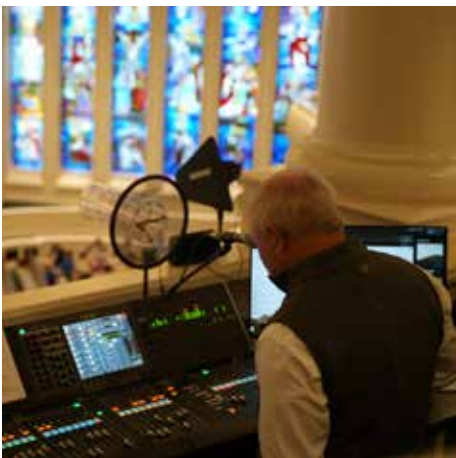


soul, mind, and strength (in other words, with our whole self). Lifeway brought some of their best teammates as speakers and breakout session leaders.

MEDIA MINISTRY

BROADCAST MINISTRY | We continued to deliver our Sunday services each week on WSFA, Frazer, our website, and our social media channels (Facebook, YouTube, and Vimeo). Our volunteers are dedicated to helping us amplify the Gospel to our attendees and beyond the walls of our church.

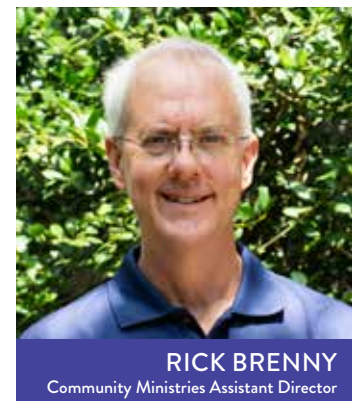
COMMUNICATIONS MINISTRY | The Communications Ministry strives to keep our members and community informed about the latest news and events at First Baptist through social media, email marketing, printed materials, the app, and the website. In September, we welcomed Barret Rush to the team as our digital media specialist. He has been instrumental in capturing videos and photos of our church. As always, our website is vital for our members and community to access current information and events at FBC. If you aren't using this beneficial tool, check it out at montgomeryfbc.org.





COMMUNITY MINISTRIES

Soli Deo Gloria—To God alone be the glory. We achieved “more in ‘24” and are set to “thrive in ‘25!” We continue to see God at work in our ministries and in the hearts of those we serve, witnessing many professions of faith this year. Our mission is to meet human needs in Jesus’ name, focusing on glorifying God and sharing the good news. The generosity of our church and volunteers drives Community Ministries. As you read the following ministry highlights, know that each testimony of God’s provision is supported by dedicated volunteers deepening their relationship with Him. We are excited to welcome Rick and Kelda Brenny to our team, with Rick already making a significant impact as our assistant director of Community Ministries.



RICK BRENNY
Community Ministries Assistant Director

THE CARING CENTER | The staff and volunteers continued to share Jesus’ love in many tangible ways. As you know, through the Caring Center, we are blessed to assist many of our local neighbors with clothing, food, and financial assistance. It’s hard to grasp how many tons of food and clothing have been given to those in need. These services provided are directly linked to the generosity of a devoted body of believers.

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- 55 tons of clothing to 6,281 households (21,984 family members)
- 60 tons of groceries to 2,164 households (9,488 family members)
- \$62,000 in assistance to 168 households!
- 802 people heard the Gospel, with at least 21 accepting Christ as their Savior!

Lastly, a special thanks to all our volunteers! On average, 37 volunteers per week contributed 3,848 hours in 2024! Their enthusiastic love for God and neighbor is truly commendable! We cannot carry out this vital ministry without God working through His people – working through you!

CHILDREN’S LEARNING CENTER (CLC) | In the fall of 2024, we transitioned our Children’s Learning Center from a DHR-licensed facility to a DHR-exempt facility. This change, as a faith-based organization, provides us with greater freedom to operate our programs while upholding high standards of child safety and education. We offer high-quality childcare for children ages 6 weeks to 5 years, operating year-round from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. With support from the First Baptist Foundation, we provided over 400 scholarships totaling more than \$50,000 to families in need. Our staff of 13 women cares for about 58 children each week. We incorporate Bible focus sessions twice daily, during which children memorize scripture, sing, and role-play Bible stories.

INTERNATIONAL MINISTRY | Over the past year, more than 179 students from 29 countries have participated in six ESL classes held on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. All Women on Mission groups contributed to the ESL Christmas program, where students created crafts, sang Christmas songs, and experienced the season’s true meaning as portrayed by their peers. There are 23 volunteers at the Americana Café and two teachers. Not only do the students meet new friends at the café, but more importantly, they are introduced to Jesus through Scripture, prayer, and discussions with our ESL workers. A highlight of the fall semester was the launch of the Friendspeak Program. Volunteers engage with individual students to explore the book of Luke. Students receive the Gospel one-on-one while practicing their English skills. This is an incredible evangelistic opportunity that is already yielding results. Additionally, we support the Montgomery Baptist Association Conversational English class, which meets every Thursday. We have enrolled over 120 students from more than 30 countries, with over 40 volunteers assisting in teaching, administrative tasks, and childcare. The Sunday International Bible Fellowship Group has found its home in the Miller Building and continues to grow in numbers.

TUTORING PROGRAM | We averaged 33 students and 20 volunteers each week. We provide a snack supper for the children weekly and are grateful to our church family who generously supplies the meal. Each week, our tutors share a Bible story, offer academic instruction, and, most importantly, embody Christ through personal relationships. In December, we hosted Santa’s Workshop for our tutoring students, who selected over 250 gifts for family members from our gift room filled with hundreds of donated presents. RAs, GAs, tutors, and volunteers assisted the students in shopping for and wrapping these special gifts, creating lasting memories!



MASTER’S GARDEN | Our “Eden in Chisolm” is a unique ministry in the Montgomery area maintained by a dedicated team of volunteers, led by Robin Caddell. Under Robin’s leadership, our volunteers prepared the garden for opening by plowing, fertilizing, and planting. They worked two to three days a week throughout the growing season (March to mid-November). The volunteers planted the communal garden, maintained the water system, fertilized, weeded, and harvested fruits and vegetables. Fresh produce from the garden was collected and delivered to the Community Ministries Caring Center, The Friendship Mission in Chisholm, the MBA Food Bus Program, the Montgomery Food Bank, the Montgomery Council on Aging, and local nursing homes. The Peace Garden offered a plentiful supply of fruits for the Chisholm Community, where members could gather an abundance of muscadines, blueberries, figs, and grapes. This fall, they collected pecans and chestnuts from the Peace Garden. At the end of our 2024 growing season, the visionary and extraordinary force behind the creation and growth of our Master’s Garden Ministry, Robin Caddell, retired from her leadership role. Robin has been an incredible volunteer and a devoted servant of the Lord. We will miss her nurturing care for the garden and our team. Thank you, Robin! Additionally, we bid farewell to our long-time garden steward, Mr. James Thomas. Thank you for your service, James.

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

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

ESL CLASSES AND MOMS & MENTORS | The Nehemiah Center English Classes are held every Wednesday and cater primarily to Latino families in the Chisholm area. This group includes individuals from Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico, particularly those who speak Mixteco. Our ESL ministry focuses on building relationships through shared meals, practicing language skills, fostering friendships and family bonds, and spending time in prayer. The Steppingstone Sunday School Class, the Helen Hancock WOM group, Charlotte Cearley WOM, the Lisa Powell cooking fellowship group, and others provide meals each month. Barbara Owen leads the classes. Our sessions feature creative instruction, devotional enrichment, and various activities, including an international potluck luncheon, seminars, health screenings, field trips, and a Christmas luncheon hosted at the Thompson-Ferguson home. Currently, we have 12 students enrolled



in English classes. At the same time, we offer a Moms and Mentors program. After lunch, our English-learning students attend their classes while our English-speaking moms gather for a parenting class and other enrichment and devotional activities. We typically have around 20 ladies participating each week.

ADULT EDUCATION | Our Adult Education program is evolving to meet community needs. The updated online GED prep program allows students to learn from home, online, or in the classroom, with instructors monitoring progress and assisting during office hours. We offer support with resumes, college test prep, enrollment, financial aid requests, and professional development, fostering personal relationships with each student. Currently, we have 14 students enrolled, including four high school students at The Edge Online Public School. As of November 1, 2024, two students are new parents, enabling the father to work while continuing his education. Both teen parents completed their fall semester work and are on track to graduate in May. We provide essential support for the new parents, grandparents, and baby, and we remain dedicated to building relationships with “the least of these.”

NEHEMIAH KID’S CLUB | This free daily after-school program stands out as one of the most effective offerings of the Nehemiah Center. We provide transportation for children from three local elementary schools: Chisholm Elementary, Highland Garden Elementary, and Morningview Elementary to the Nehemiah Center. Our goal is to create a safe, nurturing, and educational environment. We utilize a Christian Community Development model to engage with the community and build strong, lasting relationships with each child. With the commitment of our staff and volunteers, we teach life skills, Bible literacy, and discipleship while encouraging a lifelong Christian lifestyle. In addition to ministering to the children, we cultivate trusted relationships with their parents. Because of this strong bond, parents rely on us for spiritual guidance, parenting support, health and educational advocacy, and Christ-centered family coaching. Currently, we have 35 children enrolled.

CAMP NEHEMIAH | Our Camp Nehemiah is designed to provide a safe, nurturing, and Christ-centered environment for children to experience the joys of summer. We teach and practice discipleship in every activity. Children continue to read and learn throughout the summer. Each



child enjoys breakfast, a healthy lunch, snacks, and engaging programs. One of our daily highlights is Bible Buddies time, which includes scripture memory, Bible stories, and Bible activities. We also launched our Mountain Bike Club this year, made possible by a generous donation. Our enrollment for the 2024 summer program was 61, with an average daily attendance of 40 children.

PRISON MINISTRY | First Baptist has established itself as one of the most vital components in prison ministry for the Alabama Department of Corrections (ADOC) by creating and managing the State’s first online volunteer training site. With over 3,000 user accounts registered on the site, our prison ministry’s technical support team helps volunteers and vendors quickly meet Federal training requirements. This is the essential first step for other ministries and churches to introduce faith-based programs and events in the 26 ADOC facilities. The State Chaplain now ranks us among the top five prison ministries in the state.

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

KILBY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY | We have seen significant growth 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 re-entering society, and the families of those imprisoned, while remaining sensitive to the needs of crime victims and those involved in the criminal justice system.

ANGEL TREE | This ministry, led by Wendy Hamilton, was an annual highlight of the prison ministry. Members of FBC once again faithfully supported this initiative, blessing 130 children from 42 families with Christmas gifts for children and youth of incarcerated parents. We also received 15 professions of faith and established a new partnership with the ASU AFROTC Detachment, which supported Angel Tree in 2024.

MONTGOMERY YOUTH DETENTION FACILITY | In December, our last quarterly visit to the Montgomery Youth Detention Facility resulted in 12 out of 30 teens accepting Christ as their Savior. We invited Flatline Church to partner with us for this event, and they brought their praise and worship team, along with an excellent group of female counselors. As a result



of their ministry involvement, five of the six female teen inmates accepted Christ that day. Overall, 2024 concluded spectacularly, with more than 163 professions of faith and rededications.

IN-PERSON MINISTRIES | There were about 350 professions of faith resulting from in-person ministries at four different facilities. Additionally, we expanded our in-person ministries to include visits to the Department of Youth Services (DYS) and Elba Correctional Facility. In coordination with Gideons International, we distributed several hundred Bibles to the prison chaplains at our designated facilities.

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS | The Prison Ministry supported various partner organizations, including We Care, Prison Fellowship, Church of the Highlands, Rock of Ages, Fly Right Ministry, and others. Chuck Latham participated in the Bill Glass Prison Ministry and established a new partnership with the Faith Professional Wrestling Team. Their evangelistic performance led to over 40 inmates from Elba coming to the altar to receive Christ. Additionally, 23 young adults were saved during their performance at the Montgomery Youth Detention Facility.

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS | The ADOC has benefited from our assistance during two strategic planning meetings and training sessions for its chaplains. We secured ongoing funding for training initiatives and the maintenance of the website, as well as for providing ministry and career enhancement opportunities for three college interns. Additionally, we provided status reports on the progress of volunteer training, which helps enhance management and awareness among ADOC leadership by compiling trends from site analytics. We also created a business case for ADOC that outlines risks and offers improvement recommendations related to volunteer management.



CHILDREN'S HOPE

Haiti's challenges have reached a critical level, and the situation is alarming. The country is grappling with a lack of stable governance, which has resulted in a significant increase in gang violence, displacing thousands of families. Furthermore, rising inflation and escalating living costs are placing immense pressure on the population. This year, Haiti has been recognized as one of the most dangerous places in the world, highlighting the severity of the ongoing crisis and the urgent need for the Gospel. At Children's Hope, we offer love, support, and opportunities to our community in Jacmel, in Jesus' name.

HERE ARE SOME HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2024:

- The Children's Home provided a nurturing and supportive environment for 62 children, brimming with hope and care.
- The Medical and Dental Clinic provided vital services to more than 6,000 patients in our community.
- The Education Initiative has supported over 600 students across our three schools.
- The Community Development program included a senior food initiative, prison ministry, and mental health services.

Even with the immense challenges, our commitment to this mission remains unwavering. We truly believe that the light of hope we find in Jesus shines through, even during the darkest times.

Thank you very much for your prayers and support. In 2025, we look forward to caring for more children, strengthening more families, and serving communities in even greater ways in Haiti, in Jesus' name!

FIRST BAPTIST FOUNDATION

Our First Baptist Foundation managed approximately \$9 million in 2024 and received contributions that will provide a significant eternal dividend.

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- Our Foundation distributed over \$400,000 to support God's work through FBC ministries. We also offered substantial assistance to Community Ministries, backed a church plant in Las Vegas, and contributed to families and marriages through Kingdom-building events.
- Our Foundation also provided funds to support mission efforts ranging from our neighborhoods to the nations and counseling assistance.
- Our Foundation contributed \$70,000 to advance the education of over 60 scholarship recipients.
- Our Foundation continues collaborating with the Baptist Foundation of Alabama to offer legacy planning services to our church members, anticipating gifts totaling over \$40 million.



MEET OUR TEAM

Alexis Aday

Church Hostess

Tiffany Alewine

Ministry Assistant

Mark Bethea

Senior Pastor

Brad Brand

Minister of Music + Worship

Madison Breeden

Community Ministries Administrator

Rick Brenny

Community Ministries
Assistant Director

Joy Brown

Organist

Carolyn Bryan

Ministry Assistant

Judy Bryant

Minister to Preschoolers + Parents

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

Elean Fajardo

Associate Minister to Students

Steven Faulkner

Property Manager

Brian Gay

Minister of Missions

Ryan Gray

Minister to College Students +
Single Adults

Charles Hamilton

Community Ministries
Executive Director

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

Alissa Parrish

Foundation Stewardship Coordinator

Jenny Renner

Pianist / Children's Choirs Director

Carol Roberts

Minister to Children + Parents

Barret Rush

Digital Media Specialist

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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