

Highlights

Newsletter
July-August 2018





I'd Rather Hear a Good Sermon

You're probably familiar with the opening line of Edgar Guest's clever poem by the same title, "I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day." The poem expresses our common desire to see people walk their talk, and provides us with a more eloquent version of the proverb many of us were taught from a young age, that is, "Don't listen to what people say, watch what they do."

It's reminiscent of a question in The Letter of James, "If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,' and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that?" (2:15-16). In this time of sales pitches, half-truths, and constant propaganda, we're wise to recognize how empty words are without corresponding actions.

But I believe Guest's desire to "rather see a sermon" can be misleading, because it suggests a sermon is merely all talk. Guest even puts preachers in the crosshairs, saying, "The best of all preachers are the ones who live their creeds."

To be sure, a preacher's authority rests on her or his integrity. The most beloved preachers don't merely preach the word, they epitomize it. You can see the living Word welling up in their words, springing forth from lives of genuine discipleship. Nevertheless, while I appreciate a good deed as well as the next person, I confess that sometimes...I'd rather hear a good sermon than see one.

What I mean is this: in a culture that has so devalued words, I remain convinced of the power of the spoken word—and, especially, the power of the preached word. Even compared to enthralling podcasts, breaking news reports, brilliant comedy bits, inspiring spoken-word performances, and fascinating commencement speeches, there is simply nothing like hearing a good sermon.

I also believe that to hear a good sermon is, in fact, to see one as well. Scholar Geoffrey Wainwright teaches us that, though "actions may sometimes speak louder than words...speech may be an effective act." Even more, he says, preaching "gives us access again and again" to Jesus Christ. Sermons enable us to encounter—in real time—the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

While God may speak through Ted Talks, sunsets, or even rocks (see Luke 19:40), sermons are the very Word of God for us every Sunday. We can't discern the Word of God through other media until we've learned to recognize God's voice through preaching in the context of the worship of God. As Paul asks the Romans, "How are they to hear without someone to proclaim [the Lord]?" (10:14).

Throughout Scripture and the church's history, God's primary mode of communication has been words. Our time is no different. Though we privilege videos, images, and screens, the word of God is always "living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword." To be sure, we preachers have proclaimed many a lousy message for centuries, but nothing cuts to the human heart like a good sermon.

I sometimes feel like I'm sitting on a precious secret, which is that so many sermons preached today are indescribably beautiful—in their artfulness, craftsmanship, vulnerability, and bravery. I feel like the world is truly missing out on some of the most compelling sermons that have ever been preached. It's a surprise to see good sermons published in national or local newspapers. The recent publication of Bishop Michael Curry's homily at the royal wedding by The New York Times was a notable exception.

Throughout our nation and world, God continues to speak through preachers, both clergy and lay—in grand sanctuaries and small country churches, in remote villages, beside open graves, across dinner tables, and even in those destination wedding barns people like so much these days. Sometimes, we not only hear these good sermons, but also act on them. This happens often when the sermon has been, in itself, a labor of love on behalf of God's people.

It seems a foolish thing to think so highly of preaching. But, if you're accustomed to hearing good sermons now and again, you'll know that's already been said: "For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe" (1 Cor. 1:21).

— Mack Dennis

Our new website launched on June 2, 2018! While the address (www.fbca.net) remains the same, we hope that you will have an entirely new experience with this site. The best way to explore the website is by trying every option, button, and link on the site. You will learn so much about the mission and ministries of our church, but we recognize that you need a quick reference sheet for the most important things. We hope this guide will be of help. — Leah Brown

FAQs

Where is the schedule for Sunday? Is there a list of Bible Study Classes?

Click on **Sundays** on the Home page. The **Worship This Week** will give you the worship information for the coming week, the schedule for Sundays, and a link to Bible Study Groups!

What is the menu for Fellowship meals on Wednesday evening?

Click on **Wednesdays** on the Home page for the menu, schedule, and activities on Wednesday evenings.

Where is the latest edition of Highlights?

Click on **Highlights** on the Home Page for this information.

What are the upcoming churchwide events?

Scroll to the bottom of the Home page, or explore **Upcoming Events** under the News & Info tab.

Where can I find a video of our worship service?

Click on **Worship Links** under the Worship tab.

How do I tell my friend about First Baptist Church of Asheville?

Tell your friend to click on the **"I'm New"** button on the Home page.

What is going on in Children, Youth and Adult Ministries?

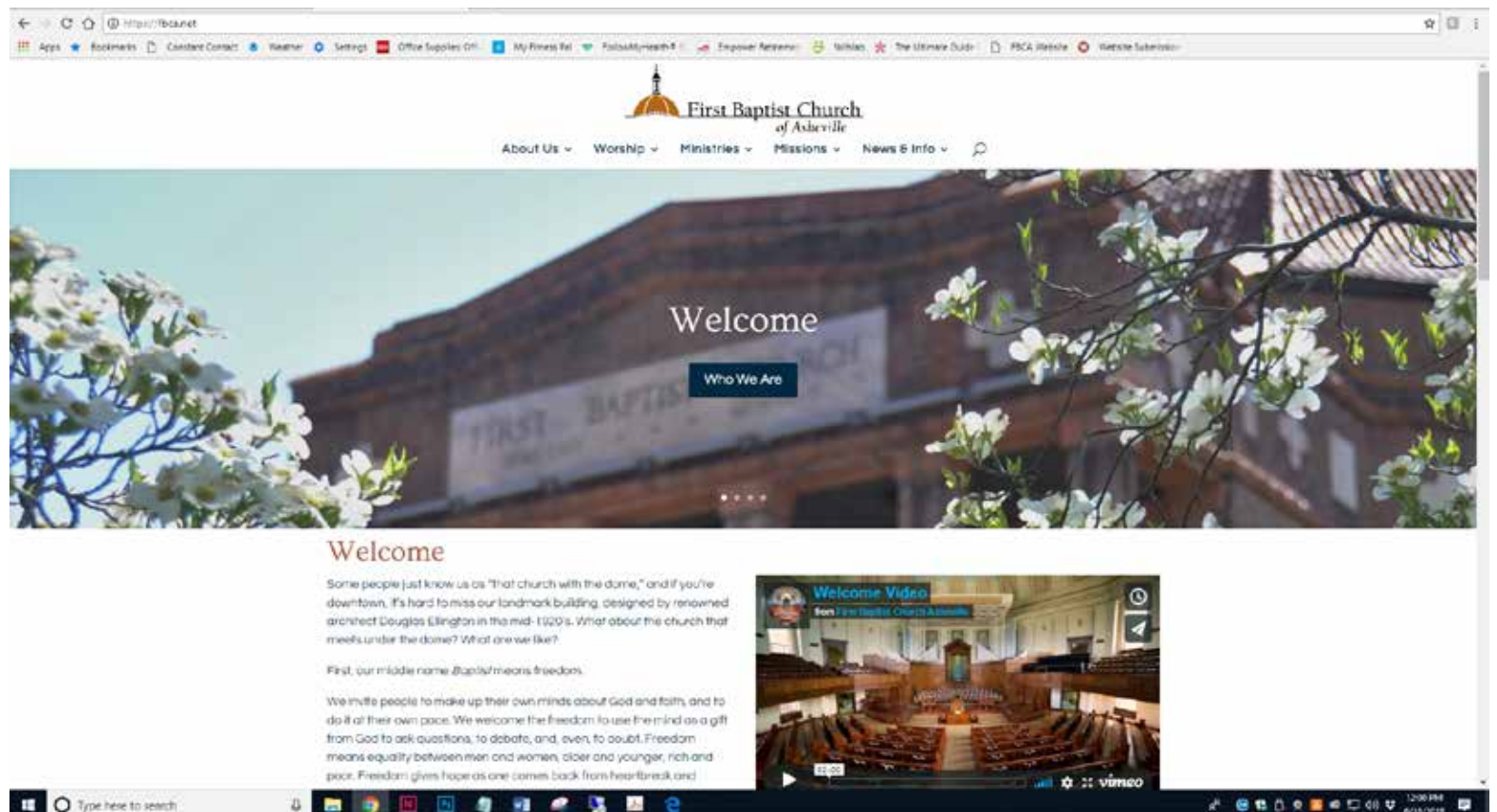
These areas are located under the **Ministries** tab.

Where can I serve at First Baptist Church of Asheville?

Click on **Opportunities to Serve** under the Missions Tab.

What is under the News and Info Tab?

You can find information about the Church Calendar, Upcoming Events, Publications, Pictorial Directory, Online Giving, and the Sacred Garden.



Imagine the Faces of God's Children

How do you discover our church's vision for the future? One place to begin is with the stories about people who might be reached if First Baptist Church of Asheville lives into God's dream for us. At the Center for Congregations, they call such "made-up" stories *personas*. They are the imagined tales of people God can love through us if only we offer God's friendship openly and without limit. In addition, personas represent partners who bring real gifts of time and talent to join with us in sharing the good news. They help us begin with relationships as we shape our desired future as Jesus' followers. Here are some *personas* imagined by deacons and council leaders . . .

A Family Affair

This family has one teenage daughter and one elementary-aged son. They are regular attenders of another church in town, participating mainly in worship. This past year, their daughter joined the Asheville Youth Choir (AYC), and after being invited by some of the other teens in her grade, began staying after AYC and attending the First Baptist Church of Asheville (FBCA) Sunday Youth gathering, "Koinonia." As she has become more regular in the youth group, her family is now more interested in FBCA. They are exploring new connections here, including retreats and camps.



New to Faith

A young couple in their 30's grew up in homes where faith was not a big focus. They have little interest for religious things but appreciate the ways in which our church engages social causes, like the environment or making a difference in the lives of the poor. Helping others motivates them. They show up for a river clean-up and share news of their two toddlers at home.

Finding a Way Home

Suzy is 54 and lives with her significant other. She has an adult child who is married and pregnant. Suzy was recently laid off from one job but has found a new job. She has had a roller coaster kind of life. Suzy is from a traditional Methodist background and is civic minded. She needs friends and connections. She wonders if First Baptist Church of Asheville can offer both faith and community.



Reconnecting

Gerald and Amanda were regular members at FBCA twenty years ago, but they gradually stopped attending after their children went to college. Gerald and Amanda were feeling there was nothing "new" for them here. They visited other churches and eventually stayed at home on Sundays. They are in their mid-fifties now. They long for the variety of opportunities that a large congregation can offer, but they want a sense of community at church, too.



What's your story?

If you were writing a persona, where would you begin? As you imagine our church wrapping its arms around the city of Asheville, who would be included in your narrative? For what do they long? What might be this person's open door into the life of First Baptist? Why not write a story and share it with your Bible Study class or a friend?

Bringing to Life God's Story in Us

Across the spring, the Center for Congregations has helped First Baptist Church of Asheville craft its “desired future” statements. These hopes are based on the stories 285 of our church members and friends told to one another as we met around tables early in 2018. The five declarations set the horizons we see as the Spirit leads our walk together.

Now, our ministry councils have been assigned the task of breathing life into each of these statements. Over the spring and summer, the councils will work to identify new relationships or programs as well as strengthen some of the things we do best. In everything we do, we will remember relationships (personas) and begin with where we are best. Beginning with our assets will make the most difference. You've heard this before. Lead with your strengths!

Here are our five desired future statements:

First Baptist will be a place where the parable path of Jesus is a way of life.

First Baptist will be a church that welcomes and includes all in a way consistent with God's love and wisdom.

First Baptist will wrap its arms around the city of Asheville.

Worship and music will remain essential and move beyond the doors of the church.

First Baptist will be a church of spiritual transformation grounded in Scriptural imagination, communal discernment, and lived faith.

Consider these invitations as you pray for our leaders and ministry councils as they come together to respond to God's calling in these statements:

- Imagine following Jesus in ways that leave our community surprised and convinced of the truth of the resurrection of Jesus.
- Listen for God's loving voice inviting us to open wide the doors of our congregation to the all who are our neighbors.
- Consider the commitments it would take to wrap our arms around the city of Asheville.
- Capture a sense of the joy of our music and worship moving out across our city.
- Open to the transformation that unfolds as we journey in prayer, sit with the scriptures, and covenant together to live our faith.

 <p>Treats for the Ear & Palate</p> <p>2nd Annual AFTA Faculty Recitals and Delicious Desserts Sundays, July 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 • 6:00 p.m.</p> <p>Set aside your Sundays in July for this special evening concert series featuring AFTA faculty and friends. Each concert is followed by a reception! Donations will be received each night to benefit the AFTA Scholarship Fund.</p>	<p>July 1 • Chamber Music Strings Faculty: Mariya Potapova, Abi Enockson, Frances Duff, and Ben Smith with Clark Sorrells, piano Reception - Make Your Own Ice Cream Sandwiches</p> <p>July 8 • Josh Goforth, Grammy-nominated Bluegrass Artist Reception - Pie Night</p> <p>July 15 • Piano and Voice Faculty Tate Addis, Grace Lee, Clark Sorrells, and Simone Vigilante Reception - Chip Buffet</p> <p>July 22 • Mountain Chamber Jazz Ensemble with AFTA Faculty Frank Southecorvo Reception - Carnival Foods</p> <p>July 29 • Duo Violinists Mariya Potapova and Andrea Pettigrew with Vance Reese, piano Reception - Build Your Own Parfait</p>
--	--

Maura

by Martha Worley and Steve Metcalf

Mauricia Solo is the Pastor of the Elohim Baptist Church, our sister church in Las Tunas, Cuba. On June 13, 2018, Maura graduated from the Evangelical Seminary of Theology in Matanzas with a Bachelor's Degree in Theology. Her program was a three-year course of study that included Biblical Studies, Ethics, Theology, Church History, Preaching, and Pastoral Care.

We first met Maura in 2014 while on a mission trip to Elohim. Maura was preparing dinner on a homemade grill in her backyard. We remember clearly the love and attention Maura gave to the preparation of this very important meal for her brothers and sisters from the First Baptist Church of Asheville.

Since becoming Pastor, Maura has been an effective church leader and strong spiritual presence in the community. We are so proud of Maura because her seminary program often required long and difficult travel. Maura's graduation is an expression of her determination for academic and personal growth and her love for her church and community. We all celebrate with Maura and Elohim. Maura is an inspiration to us all and we are grateful and proud to call her friend and sister.



Laura Frances Snow Lagos

by Linda Lewis



"My ship sailed into the Valparaiso, Chile, harbor on a spring night in October, 1956." Thus began Laura Frances Snow's time as a missionary in Chile. She was almost 32 years old—a graduate of Meredith College and Louisville Baptist Seminary. As the daughter of a Baptist pastor in North Carolina, Laura had participated in all the activities of the church—Sunbeams, GA's, Forward Steps, and YWA. She once said that her heart "vibrated" when she read stories of world missions and their needs.

Then she saw these words in Commission magazine: "Needed: A WMU Young People's Worker in Chile, South America." She answered that call and after a year of Spanish language study in Costa Rica and a 22-day journey by ship, found herself in Chile. For forty years, Laura worked with women's and children's organizations. She assisted the pastor at the First Baptist Church in Santiago and later served as the Executive Secretary of the Baptist Women's Missionary Union of Chile. A young woman who worked as Laura's secretary during this time, said that Laura was the "main brain." She planned projects and materials so that the women of the churches could work with the children and youth. She traveled extensively, training and encouraging the WMU women. A missionary who served in Santiago at the same time said that Laura was loved and adored up and down the entire country.

Before going to Chile, Laura had worked with the North Carolina WMU. She noted that the organizations that had influenced her life were the very ones that God permitted her to use as instruments to present the gospel message to the people of Chile.

Continued on next page.



She felt that throughout her childhood, youth, and young adulthood, God was preparing her for her life as a missionary.

Two generations of boys and girls benefitted from Laura's love, guidance, teaching, and even reprimanding as she worked with RA's, GA's, Choirs, Baptist Young Women, and WMU. Many have become Sunday School teachers, counselors, deacons, and, in at least one instance, a pastor.

Laura once wrote that the assurance that her call was of God gave her confidence and boldness and the courage to persevere and remain faithful.

As a tall, lovely young woman with sparkling blue eyes and a personality to match, Laura began her ministry in Chile. Forty years later, she came to Asheville—still tall, lovely, and with a special sparkle. A new chapter in her life began. Her friend of thirty years, Felix Lagos, a now-retired teacher from Chile, joined her in Asheville, and they were married. God's plan for Laura did not end in Chile.

Building Hope in Haiti • Jenny Jenkins

On January 12, 2010, an earthquake measuring 7.0 on the Richter scale rocked the island nation of Haiti leaving 230,000 persons dead and well over one million displaced. The human tragedy just south of our borders cried out to Jenny Jenkins, an oncology nurse and member of First Baptist. This passionate response to suffering soon embodied God's calling for her life. After multiple short-term medical mission trips, Jenny made the decision to stay in Haiti. She now serves as CBF Field Personnel Medical Coordinator in Grand Goave, Haiti. Across these past several years, Jenny has hosted multiple medical/dental teams from our church as they have reached out to the poorest of that nation. Jenny's early focus on bringing 16-plus teams each year to serve in some of the more remote segments of the country has expanded to include work with housing widows, as well as enriching young teachers, most with a high school diploma. In 2016, Jenny worked with others to rebuild the Mt. Sinai Baptist Church. Presently, Jenny is collaborating with multiple churches in the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship to help fund a future clinic near this congregation to serve a broad array of health and education needs. FBCA members have contributed over \$12,000 to help make that community center a reality. As Jenny shares God's love with the people of Haiti, she invites us to "park our hearts outside ourselves" and consider what the Spirit might do if we answer the call to serve.



Jubilee Luncheons -11:00 a.m.-Dining Room

All senior adults are invited to join us for fellowship, programs that inspire, entertain, and inform, and a delicious meal. The cost is \$3 for the meal, and first-time guests eat free. Please contact Leah Brown at 252.4781 or lbrown@fbca.net for more information.

July 17 - No Jubilee Luncheon in July. We look forward to seeing you on August 21.

August 21 - *Fighting Back Against Scams & Frauds*, Julie Goodwin, Regional Director, Better Business Bureau Seniors, knowledge is the best way to arm yourself or a loved one against scams and frauds, such as the IRS scam, grandparents scam, jury duty scam, fake check scams, sweepstakes scams, utility scams, and many others. Every two seconds someone's identity is stolen so join us to:

- Learn how to avoid fraud and spot a scam
- Top 3 Scams in NC and Top 5 Most Risky Scams
- The BBB's role in the marketplace, the many services they offer, and how they can help consumers stay safe

Stephen Ministry Corner

Everyone faces periods of crisis, transition, or difficulty. During these times, people can receive great support from a confidential, caring relationship with someone who will faithfully listen, pray, and care for them. If you feel that you would benefit from talking with a Stephen Minister, please contact Leah Brown at 252.4781 for more information.

A Look Back . . .

Senior Adult Sunday • Sunday, May 6

Senior adults gathered on May 6 to enjoy a luncheon celebrating our 50 and 75-year members. We are grateful for their commitment and dedication to God and our congregation. A special thank you to members of the Senior Adult Team and Nancy McCrory for such a wonderful event.



agapekids

The theme of agape kids in 2017-18 was *I Can Help*. 3 year olds - 6th graders learned and practiced ways to share God's love with our community and world. This year our children ministered to people who were in prison, homeless, homebound, hungry, and a part of our partner church in Cuba. They planned Children's Sabbath and learned about the church year and spiritual practices. On May 30 our children did a wonderful job sharing things they learned and experienced this year. Each child received a trailmark honoring ways they've grown and contributed to the group this year and each 6th grader received a book and a blessing as they prepare to join the student ministry next year.

The theme for 2018-19 will be:

Throughout the year we will focus on what it means to follow Jesus and how to be a leader. Make plans to join us as we resume on Wednesday, August 29.



PROMOTION SUNDAY



AUGUST 26, 2018

Children will be promoted to their new Bible Study classes on Sunday, August 26. In August, parents will receive a letter with more information.



for I was hungry and you gave me food to eat

June 14 & 15 we hosted our first Advocacy Camp for 4th - 6th graders.

In this missions-focused camp our children learned how they could help meet the needs of the hungry in our community. On Thursday, they learned about Lunch at the Crossroads, helped serve lunch and made snack bags for each of our guests. On Friday, they served at Manna Food bank, delivering food they had collected from our church, and had a grocery store challenge that asked them to prepare a day's worth of meals for a family of four with \$20.



July 11 - 14

Converse College in Spartanburg, SC
Optional Day Camp July 10

Parent Meeting: July 1
4:00 p.m. CB221



July 30 - August 3

Contact Amy to be added to the waiting list

Preschool Camp



July 31 - August 2

Contact Bree to be added to the waiting list



UNIDIVERSITY

SUMMER CAMP
JULY 21-28, 2018

We will begin our youth summer camp with two days of intensive service as we repair roofs in Knoxville, TN. Following the service project, our week of camp will lead us in exploring the theme Rhythms of Grace, based on Jesus' words to the disciples in Matthew 11:28-30.



Youth Student Leadership Team

SUMMIT

Saturday,
Aug. 25
10:00 a.m. -
5:00 p.m.



friday, aug. 10
youth lock in



From 7:00 p.m. till 8:00 a.m. Saturday * Cost \$10



August 26

YOUTH
PARENT
LUNCH



meet Casey

bike

youth 101

FCA RISING 7th GRADE RETREAT

meet big brother/sister

campfire

RSG * August 25-26 * Register online or call 252-4781

KOINONIA KICKOFF

Aug. 26: 4:30-5:30 p.m.

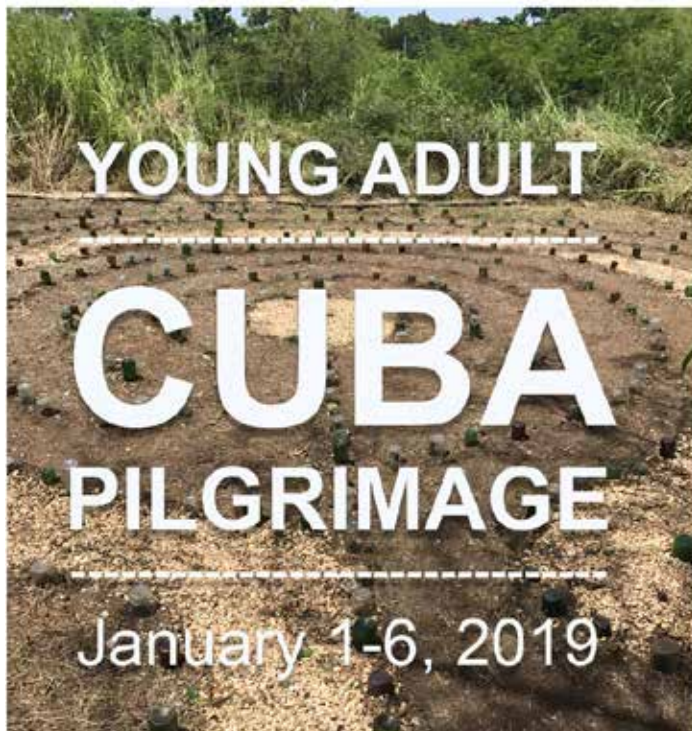




Photo by Nathan Sales

FBCA YOUNG ADULT
BOSTON • JULY 8-12, 2018

URBAN IMMERSION
●●●●●●●●●●



Young Adult Pilgrimage to Cuba January 1-6, 2019

In January, a small team of our young adults will travel to the western region of Cuba for a six-day pilgrimage alongside young adults from our sister church, Iglesia Elohim (Las Tunas, Cuba).

The focus of this pilgrimage will be the intersections of spirituality, social justice, history, and the arts. The group will be based out of the Kairos Center in Matanzas. The leaders for the trip will be Stan and Kim Dotson, who currently reside and work in that region.

Any First Baptist Church of Asheville young adults interested in being a part of this trip should contact Casey Callahan at ccallahan@fbca.net or 828.252.4781. There will be an informational meeting on Sunday, August 19, at 9:30 a.m. in the Karis Bible Study classroom.

Annual Church Picnic

Sunday, August 19 • 2:00-7:00 p.m.

Etowah Valley Golf Club

Our annual church picnic is a great opportunity for our church family to come together for fellowship, food, and recreation. First Baptist will provide fried chicken this year, just remember to bring a covered dish to share! A van will be available at the church to provide transportation to and from Etowah. This van will leave at 2:30 p.m. and return by 7:00 p.m. If you plan to ride the church van, reserve your seat with Leah Brown at lbrown@fbca.net or 828.252.4781.



First Baptist Church of Asheville

Freedom. Friendship. Faith.

5 Oak Street, Asheville, NC 28801 • 828.252.4781 • www.fbca.net

Child Development Center: 828.252.3234 • Fax: 828.254.2302

Sunday Worship: 11:00 a.m. Sanctuary • 9:45 a.m. Bible Study for all ages

Minister on Call

A minister is on call 24/7 to support you in times of need.

To contact the minister on call, dial 828.252.4781.

The deacon of the week can be reached through the church office
or by contacting the minister on call.