



# FBC Monthly Encourager

Volume V, No. 3 March 2026

## Squandered Kingdom Opportunity

*<sup>14</sup> “For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. <sup>15</sup> To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability  
Mt 25:14–15.*

I read a story about a young man who began as a clerk in a hardware store. Like many old hardware stores, the inventory included thousands of dollars worth of obsolete items that customers seldom requested. The young man was smart enough to know that no thriving business could carry such an inventory and show a healthy profit. He proposed a sale to get rid of the stuff. The owner was reluctant but finally agreed to let him set up a table in the middle of the store and try to sell a few of the oldest items. Every product was priced at ten cents. The sale was successful, and the young man got permission to run a second sale. It went over just as well. This gave the young man an idea, “Why not open a store that would sell only nickel and dime items?”

The young man proposed the idea to his boss, however, his boss was not enthusiastic about the idea. He said, “The plan will never work because you can’t find enough items to sell at a nickel and dime.” The young man was disappointed, but eventually went ahead on his own and made a fortune off the idea. His name was F.W. Woolworth. He was one of the pioneers of the five-and-dime store. It was among the most successful American and international five-and-dime businesses and created much of the modern retail model that stores follow worldwide today.

Talk about a missed opportunity. In the parable of the talents Jesus tells in Matthew 25, there is a missed opportunity. A man was going on a journey and needed to ensure that his property was well looked after while he was away. To accomplish this, he entrusted his possessions to his servants before leaving.

Jesus is teaching us that every Christian has been given responsibility for the kingdom. Some people take this responsibility seriously and invest their lives wisely, while others squander it. The part of the kingdom that is entrusted to each of us is precious to the Lord. He is hurt by the mishandling of a lifetime of opportunity, but He rejoices over a lifetime well spent. He has given us what is His own to take care of. This is a sobering thought - we are stewards of kingdom resources.

Notice a unique element in this parable. Each servant is entrusted with a different amount of property - five talents to one, two for the second, and one for the third - based on their ability. The Lord knows us and our full potential for serving the kingdom, which he designed into each of us when he created us. No one is given more than they can handle, but also no one is given less than they can handle.

The person who has been given little is expected to make the most out of it. Each one of us is called to live up to our potential, with God's help and wisdom, for the sake of His kingdom. This stewardship is comprehensive, and it includes time, talents, spiritual gifts, energies, personality, experiences, attitudes, and material resources.

What resources have you been given to steward for the Lord's kingdom, and how are you investing them? When Jesus returns to establish his kingdom, what will he declare over you? My prayer is that we will be rewarded for our stewardship and hear our loving master's praise: "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your master."

*Abiding in Christ,  
Pastor Jason Pounds*

*Worship*  
**MINISTRY**

*Behold*  
THE WOUNDS OF GOD

A night of worship and song woven through dramatic monologues ending in a time of fellowship at the Lord's table.

Good Friday, April 3rd  
7:00 PM

# Student Ministry in March

## Messages:

- Mar 4 - Gal 5:16-26 - Theme: Spirit Empowered Obedience
- Mar 18 - Gal 6:1-10 - Theme: Imitating Jesus' Selfless Love
- Mar 25 - Gal 6:11-18 - Theme: Boasting Alone in Christ

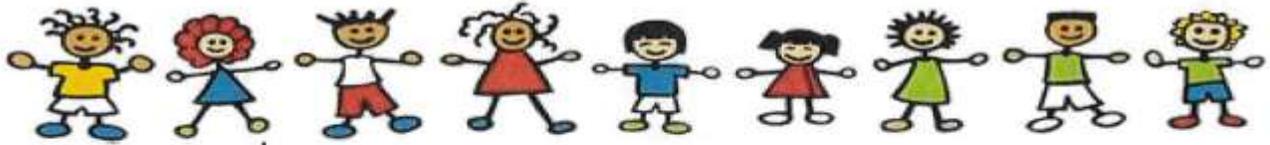
February FLEW by! I praise God for conversations being had within our student ministry and the growth of deepening relationships centered around loving God wholeheartedly and loving others selflessly. Thank you for your continued prayers and encouragement to me and others. I pray we, as brothers and sisters in Christ, grow TOGETHER in our love for God and one another. The life God gives us is a marathon and I pray we encourage and spur each other along well for His glory.

For His Renown,  
Jordan Lopez

## Important Future Dates:

- Mar 11 - FCA Worship night
- May 2 - High School Graduation Banquet  
5:30pm (more details to follow soon)
- May 23-28 - Camp Cherokee





## FBC CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRY

### Sunday School



Our Ms. Dianne Whitehead uses her gift of service to let her light shine for Christ. She serves coffee & water at the hospital, but visitors also receive a smile, kind word, & prayer. She serves drinks & food on Wednesday night with love for all. Ms. Dianne served the students, faculty, & parents of BIS for many years, loving & being a friend to all. Drive or walk through downtown & you can find her sharing God's love through laughter & kindness at Honeysuckle Hollow. Our favorite place that she has served for 30+ years is in the Toddler Sunday School Class at FBC. Her love & kindness has touched many young children. Ms. Dianne is a true light of Christ to all who have the privilege of meeting her.

### Children's Church Helpers

Mar. 1-Janelyse Nelson, Lilly Massey, and Ezra Carlson  
Mar. 8-Zoe Hughes, Parker Ridley, and Riley Bivens  
Mar. 15-Ava Watson, Mabry Watson, and Emma Hall  
Mar. 22-Kaylee Huckaby, Everett Pounds, and Tennessee Hall  
Mar. 29-Reighlynn Cochran, Carson Conatser, and Eva Rogers

### Choir Kids

The children have been working on "God is Good All the Time" and "Goodbye Yesterday".

### Mission Kids, GA's, and RA's

Just a reminder, the children have Missions each Sunday from 5-6:15pm. K-5<sup>th</sup> grade girls meet for GA's in the PreK/K SS class. K-5<sup>th</sup> grade boys meet for RA's in the 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade SS class. PreK and under meet in the nursery.

### Awanas

Mar. 4-hat &/or crazy hair  
Mar. 11-no special event  
Mar. 18-wear green  
Mar. 25-no special event  
Apr. 1-no Awanas

### Coming Up

Mar. 1-Easter eggs for stuffing can be found on all floors.  
Mar. 8-Spring Forward PJ Day-nursery to youth meet in the Fellowship Hall for joint Sunday School and breakfast  
Mar. 22-Child Dedication  
Mar. 30, 31, and Apr. 1-VBS at Engleman Park 10am-12pm  
Apr. 1-no Wednesday night kid programs

We need help on Wednesday nights, 4:30-7:15pm, in the nursery. If you can offer any help for part of the time or all the time, please contact Trish



# FBC Missions News

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**It's Big & It's Back**  
**OPERATION**  
**INASMUCH**

## Operation Inasmuch United Day

April 18, 2026

**SAVE THE DATE**

Sweetwater will have 7 churches working side by side on many different projects in our community on 1 day.

**Inasmuch United:** A model where multiple churches or denominations collaborate for a larger, community-wide impact and is a worldwide Christian ministry and model that equips churches to engage in Hands-on, community-based service projects, often called “Inasmuch Days,” to support the needy. It empowers congregations to “do the gospel” by addressing local needs through projects like food distribution, repairs, and care for vulnerable populations.

**There will be a place for YOU, yes YOU.**

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# FBC Missions News

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## LOCAL MISSIONS

We are having a great time having Sunday School at Valley Park. Thanks to those who have brought breakfast. Also to those who **come and teach. Ken and Loretta Hall leads the children's class** with Jacki West subbing in.

Also thanks to Robert and Fairy Lambert, teaching every other week.

A special thanks to Jacki Hicks and Yvonne Roy for being faithful each week.

If you would like to help out anytime, please contact me.

Phil Roy  
423-337-1212



# A NOTE FROM YOUR FBC BUILDING COMMITTEE

## *Building Committee Update for March*

**February 24, 2026**

**Dear Beloved Congregation,**

The excavation bids have been received, and we are grateful for the strong responses. We are now carefully reviewing each proposal to ensure we are making accurate, “apples-to-apples” comparisons. This includes confirming that each bid reflects the full scope of work needed and that costs are aligned with the appropriate project phase.

Staff, Trustees, and the Building Committee will be meeting with our civil engineering team to analyze and compare the proposals thoroughly. Our goal is to select an excavation partner who can faithfully and efficiently carry out this important first step in preparing our site.

At the same time, we are working to define funding needs for Phase I, which includes grading and infrastructure work. Before we can build upward, we must first prepare a strong and level foundation.

We look forward to bringing a recommendation to the congregation soon.

Thank you for your continued prayers, patience, and support as we move forward — thoughtfully, carefully, seeking God’s timing, direction, wisdom, and discernment.

Stay tuned for more updates and let us continue to trust in God's perfect timing and direction.



Blessings,

**Daryl G. West**

*Chairman - Building Committee*

Sweetwater First Baptist Church

303 Wright St, Sweetwater, TN 37874

(423) 271-7181 cell



# FINISH THE Vision

## Capital Campaign

2,646 0%



■ 3 Year Goal:  
\$1.2 Million

■ Commitment:  
\$1,197,354

1,200,000 100%

## Offerings Year to Date

02/22/2026

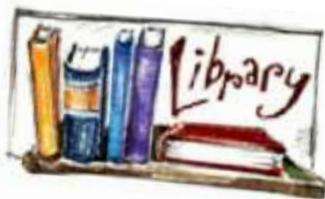
20%



■ 3 Year Goal:  
\$1.2 Million

■ Offerings YTD:  
\$967,498.63

80%



The Discipleship Team is hosting a book sale in the church library starting Sunday morning February 1st.

All books will be \$1.00 and all the proceeds will go to Finish The Vision. The money can be put into the offering plate, left in the library if one of us is there, given online designated for FTV, or brought to the church office.

## TOGETHER AT Wednesday Night DINNER

FOOD FAMILY FELLOWSHIP FRIENDS FUN

### March 4th, 2026 Menu

Mozzarella Chicken, Baked Potato, Broccoli Casserole, Salad, Rolls and Chocolate Cobbler

Kids Option: Hot Dog & Fries

\$7.00 Adults & Youth, \$3.00 K-6th Grade

Meals for 1st time Guest are free!



# Awana™

March 4 - Happy Hat or Crazy Hair Night

March 18 - Celebrate Saint Patrick's Day (Wear Green)

April 1 - Spring Break No Club



**Foundations**  
(Sunday School Class)

March 8, 2026  
Room 302  
(7-week course)

Are you new to faith or want to grow in your walk with Christ? Join our New Believers Sunday School class, designed to help you understand the basics of the Christian faith and build a strong foundation. This class is a welcoming space to learn, ask questions, and grow together in God's Word. All are welcome!

We'll cover the basics of Christianity:

- How to Pray
- Methods of Bible study
- Listening to God
- Sanctification and what does it mean
- The Workings of the Church
- Being part of the body
- Spiritual Gifts

At the end of this class, we will help you:

- Understand your spiritual gifts more
- If you don't already have one - Find an ongoing Sunday School class that suits you best.

We look forward to welcoming you into our class, our church, and the Christian life.

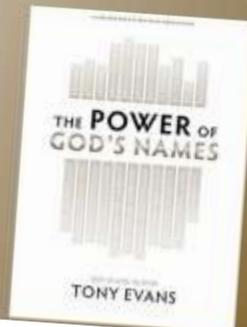


*Save the Date*

**Tuesday, March 10th, 2026**

A NEW Women's Bible Study will begin. We will dive into the Bible Study "The POWER Of God's Names" by Tony Evans! Please sign-up for this study at the Connect Center.

Thank You



# SOMETHING BIG 2026



## Lost and Found

If you have left or lost anything while here at church please be sure to go check the Lost & Found table in the Library. After 2 weeks all items will be donated to Sweetwater Area Ministries.



IsleGo  
Mission  
Trip  
International

*Brazil*

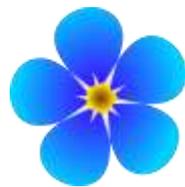
Sept. 19-26

## **Brazil Mission Trip Meeting**

*Thursday, March 5th  
@ 6:30 pm in the  
Sanctuary*

This meeting is for all those interested in going on the Brazil Mission Trip September 19-27, 2026. The submission deadline for the trip is March 22nd.





**Who:** Any of our FBC family that is interested in participating with their children or anyone who is interested in helping/sharing their skills with children?

**What:** An informational Home-schooling Co-op meeting to explore our possibilities.

**When:** Tuesday, March 3 at 12:15 pm

**Where:** Our Middle School Sunday School classroom, which is the second door on the left coming in the main doors from the 2<sup>nd</sup> story porch. Childcare will be available in the Awana Meeting/Children's Church room.

**Why:** FBC is stretching its Mission Field, not only abroad, but here in Sweetwater.

**STOCK  
THE  
HOUSE**

A resource drive for Garland Oaks.

## “RESCUED”

Garland Oaks in Knoxville is East Tennessee's only safe home for girls ages 12-18 who are survivors of sex trafficking. Garland Oaks is a non-profit, faith-based program.

Please be a part of supporting these precious girls and the mission at the home by helping to “**Stock The Home**” by providing supplies needed for a year.

### Items needed for the home will be posted next week!

Tubs will be provided to collect supplies. Collections will be taken on March 15, 22, and 29th. Thank you!

Street Hope TN works to eliminate the sexual exploitation and trafficking of children in Tennessee and provide safe environments to foster hope and healing through Jesus Christ.

Our safe home, Garland Oaks, is for girls, ages 12-17, who are survivors of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST). These survivors will experience the generous support our community offers through your gifts.

[streethope.org](http://streethope.org) | [info@streethope.org](mailto:info@streethope.org)





**Who:** Anyone willing to pick up the aluminum cans and take to the recycling center. You may sign up in the connect center, call the Church office, or contact Trish. The more that sign up, the less often you will do it.

**What:** Pick up our aluminum cans, take them to the recycling center at the industrial park, wait in line, let the people unload for you, collect the money, and bring it back by the Church.

**When:** Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday

**Where:** The recycling center is located in the Sweetwater Industrial Park behind the Fire Department.

**Why:** To help the children in contributing to the Finish the Vision Campaign.



#### EASTER EGG STUFFING TIME

There will be buckets on each floor. There are approximately 50 eggs in each bag. If you find eggs that are cracked or will not stay shut, please trash them. Remember, wrapped candy only. Place finished bags outside my office door or on the floor next to any of the empty shells. Thank you all so much for this beautiful ministry you provide to the children of our community.

This year the Easter Egg Hunt will be on Saturday, April 4<sup>th</sup> beginning at 11am in Engleman Park.



**Sunday, March 22, 2026**

*Dedication*  
Committing Our Children To God

Those wishing to participate in child dedication, call the Church office or contact Trish by Friday, March 13.



# 🎯 Men's Ministry Clay Shoot Event 🎯



Calling All Men & Boys – Ready, Aim, Fellowship!

Youth Welcome – Must be able to hold gun on own comfortably (Eye and Ear Protection Required), Parent or Guardian required.

📅 **Date:** March 21, 2026

🕒 **Time:** 9:30 am

📍 **Location:** Benton Sporting Clays - 5244 Upper River Road, Charleston, TN 37310 (For Carpooling Information please contact Daryl)

💰 **Cost:** \$0.50 per Clay, Golf Cart \$20, Shotgun Rental \$20

📅 **Register by:** March 14, 2026

**Bring:** Your shotgun (Rentals Available), Ammunition, safety gear, and a friend!

**Note:** Limited loaner equipment available – Golf Cart, Gun Rental

🚩 **Sign up today!**

Contact Daryl West at (423) 271-7181 or sign up in the Church Vestibule.



“As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.” – Proverbs 27:17

Let's aim for fellowship, fun, and a whole lot of clay dust!



### Men's Ministry Top Golf Outing

Men & boys of all ages are invited to our Top Golf outing.

We will have 2 bays reserved for the day. There is a limit of 12 people for this outing. Please put only one name on each line of the sign-up sheet. If you sign up and for some reason cannot go, please contact Fred LeMaster (304-264-1775) so someone on the wait list can be added.

We will meet at the church at 10:15 am to carpool to the facility. If you have any questions, please see Fred LeMaster or Daryl West.

We look forward to some fun, food, fellowship, friendly competition, and plenty of laughs.

#### Event Details

- **Date:** April 11th, 2026
- **Time:** 11 am to 1:30 pm
- **Location:** 11400 Outlet Dr. Farragut, TN 37932

#### Why You Should Come

- **Build Brotherhood:** Connect with other men in a relaxed, fun setting
- **Grow in Faith:** Short devotion and prayer
- **Refreshments:** Snacks and Drinks are available

#### How to RSVP

- Sign Up Sheet in the Vestibule
- Call or text: 304-264-1775

**Group Fee:** \$25 per Player plus food and club rentals (if needed)

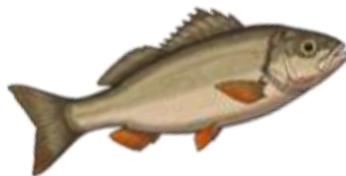
"As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." – Proverbs 27:17

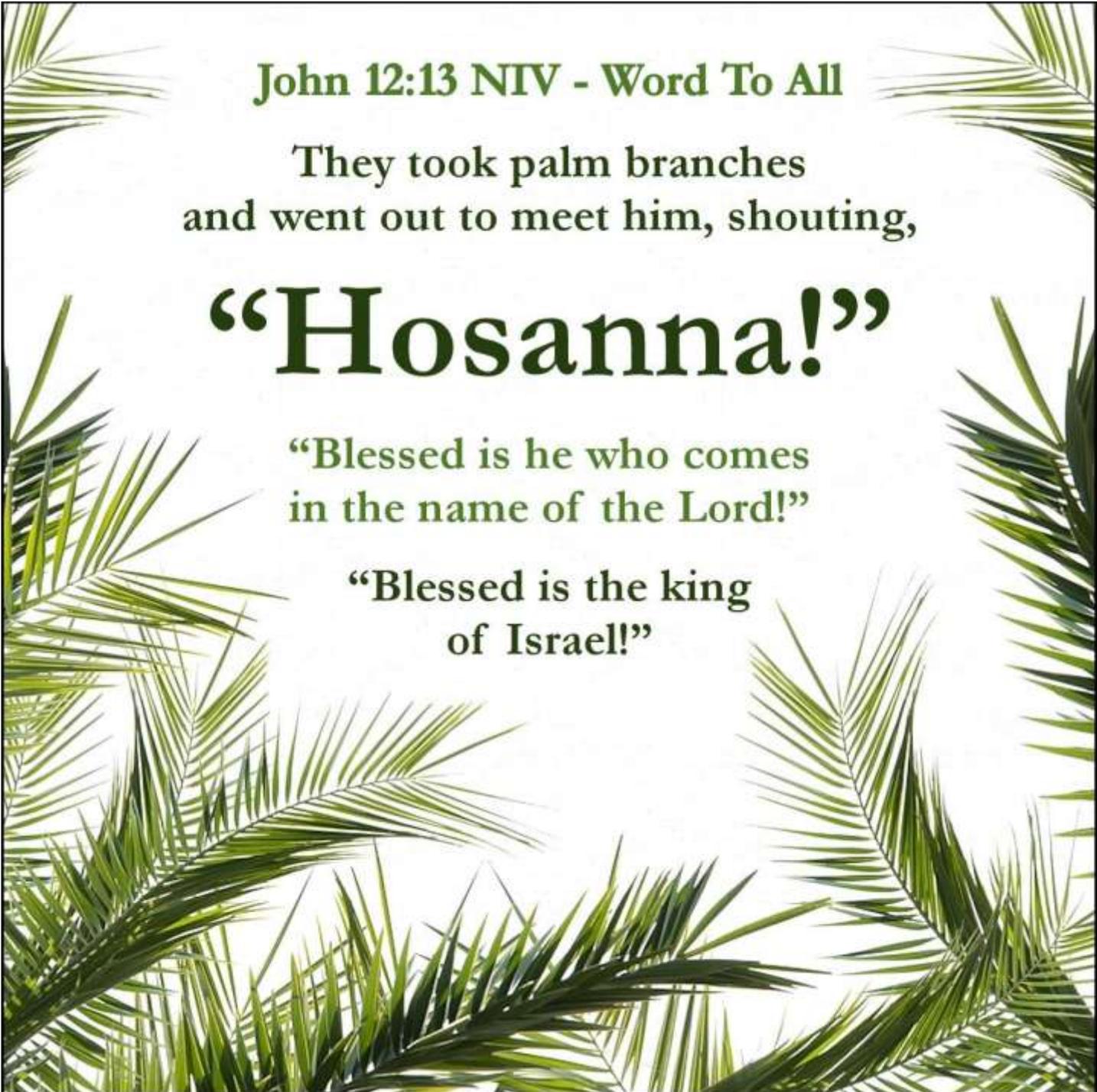
Come sharpen one another's faith—one swing at a time! 🏌️



### May 2nd, 2026

First Baptist Church - Sweetwater, TN is having a Mens & Boys fishing day on Watts Barr Lake. We have a pavilion rented at BlueBirds Landing in Ten Mile TN where we meet at 7:00 am, have biscuits and coffee, and a short devotional, then hit the water. Some of us eat lunch at a restaurant on the lake, then come back to the pavilion at 3:00 pm to swap stories and give out some plaques for biggest Crappie, Bass, Catfish and then we head home. We also have guys bringing boats and have 2 other pontoons rented, so if you need a ride on a boat, it's covered. So come join the fun and bring someone that doesn't normally go to church and just have a fun day of fellowship. Please Sign-Up at the Connect Center or call the Church Office @ 423-337-3533.



The text is framed by a border of green palm branches, with some branches extending into the white background.

**John 12:13 NIV - Word To All**

**They took palm branches  
and went out to meet him, shouting,**

**“Hosanna!”**

**“Blessed is he who comes  
in the name of the Lord!”**

**“Blessed is the king  
of Israel!”**

**Palm Sunday  
March 29th, 2026**



*Our Mission: Spreading the light of Jesus by loving one another and glorifying God.*

*Our Vision: Engage in inspiring worship encourage spiritual growth, reach youth an young families, witness to the unsaved and minister to the physical, spiritual, and emotional needs of member and non-members.*

### **Contact Us**

**First Baptist Church  
303 Wright Street  
Sweetwater, TN 37874  
423-337-3533**

**Website:  
[office@sweetwaterfbc.org](mailto:office@sweetwaterfbc.org)**