FBC Monthly Encourager

Volume V, No. 11 November 2026

The God Who Never Sleeps

"I saw all the work of God, that man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun… even though a wise man claims to know, he cannot find it out." (Ecclesiastes 8:17)

In Ecclesiastes 8, the Preacher watches a certain kind of person—and I recognize him, because most mornings he is me. Here is a man who gives his eyes no sleep day or night, straining to figure out everything God is doing in the world, trying to get his arms around it all. And after all that effort, the verdict comes three times in a single verse: he cannot find it out. He cannot find it out. He cannot find it out. However hard he works, however wise he is, the full scope of what God is doing stays beyond his reach.

I am, by nature, a striver. And if I am honest, a lot of my restlessness is the quiet, exhausting attempt to be something I am not—to see the whole picture, to stay on top of it all, to hold a world together that was never mine to hold. That is why I cannot sleep. I am awake because, deep down, I believe that if I stop, something will fall.

And then Scripture sets another sleepless figure beside me, and the contrast takes my breath away. "He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep… The LORD is your keeper" (Psalm 121:3–5). There is One who never sleeps—but His wakefulness is nothing like mine. I lie awake because I am losing; He stays awake because He is keeping. I cannot rest because I am trying to be God. He does not rest because He actually is God—holding the whole of what I was killing myself to hold.

Do you see what that means? The very limit the writer of Ecclesiastes grieves becomes, for the child of God, the place I can finally lie down. I do not have to stay awake holding the world together, because the work I cannot find out is already being done—and done perfectly—by a Father whose eyes never close. The Psalms say it plainly to people like me: it is vain to rise early and go late to rest, anxiously toiling, "for he gives to his beloved sleep" (Psalm 127:2).

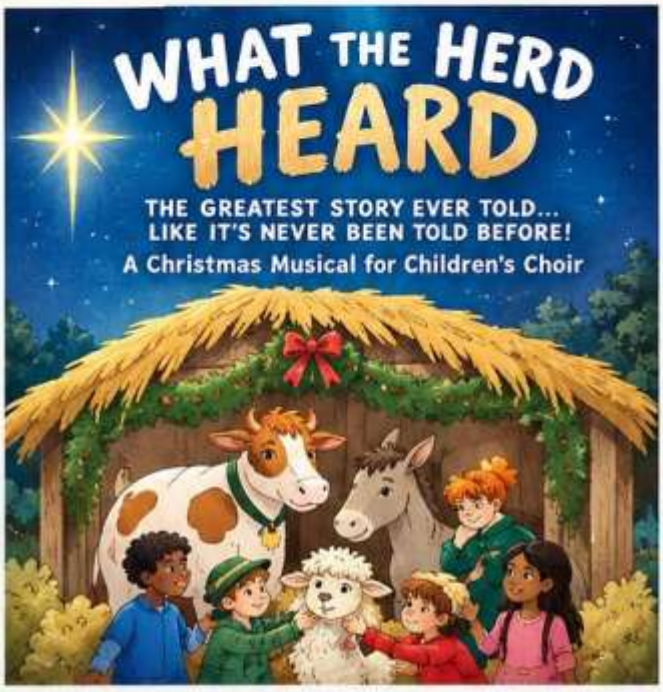
Notice how the gospel brings that rest. Not by making me unlimited. Not by finally letting me figure it all out or get control. I am still a finite creature who cannot see the work of God—that never changes this side of heaven. The rest comes from the other direction entirely: I am given an unlimited Keeper. And that is why this word is both convicting and comforting at the same time. Convicting, because it names my sleepless striving for the pride it is—a creature refusing to be a creature, insisting on holding what belongs to God. Comforting, because the same breath tells me I may stop: the holding is already being done by One who never grows tired.

And this Keeper does not merely watch; He holds, and He will not let go. Jesus said of His own, "no one will snatch them out of my hand… no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand" (John 10:28–29). Jude ends by praising the One "who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless" (Jude 24). He does not lose one who belongs to Him. Not one.

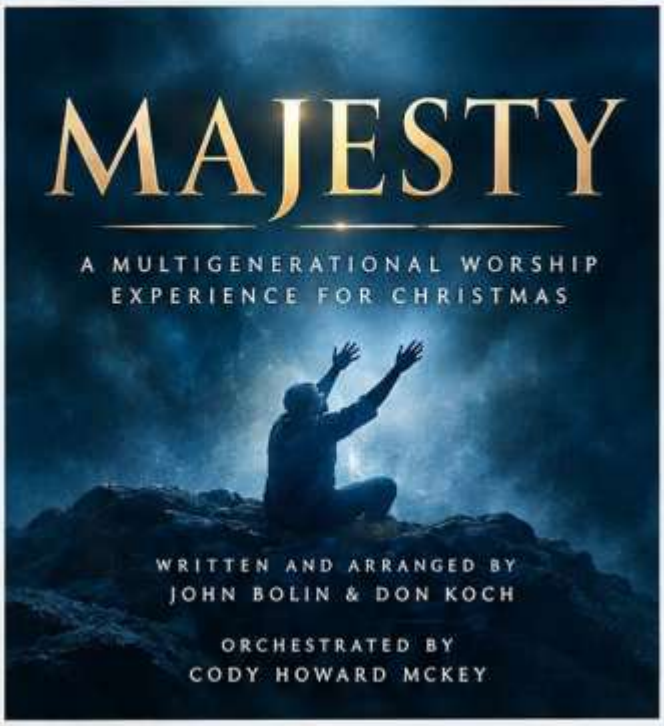
So if you are weary this week—lying awake trying to carry what was never yours to carry—hear the good news. You are limited, and you were never meant to be otherwise. But your Father is not. He is at work, right now, keeping what you cannot, and He will not lose you. You can put it down. You can close your eyes. The One who keeps you is wide awake.

Abiding In Christ,
Pastor Jason Pounds

Worship & MINISTRY



Our children's choir has been hard at work for months now on their Christmas musical. They will present "What the Herd Heard" on Sunday evening at 6:00 PM on December 20th. They will present it on Saturday, December 19th at 6:00 as well, but we are not ready to announce the location of that performance yet. The kids have been working very hard and you will be blessed as always by their performance and the message that is communicated in this play.



The worship ministry will present their Christmas worship experience during the morning service on Sunday, December 13th. The sanctuary choir, youth choir and children's choir will all come together to present this powerful and uplifting musical that celebrates King Jesus making his entrance into this earth in the form of a baby. It will be an incredible time of worship featuring familiar carols and worship songs that will be a blessing for all and honoring to the Lord!

Senior Adult Ministry

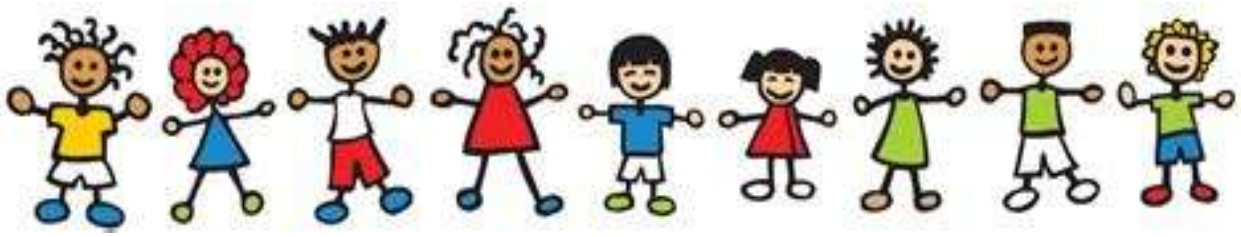


There is still time to sign up to enjoy an evening of good food and fellowship followed by Jack Clark and members of the worship ministry leading us in a night of hymn and gospel singing! Jack is a member of the Southern Gospel music hall of fame and has been leading singings like this for decades! Dinner will be at 5:00 with the singing starting around 6:00. The dinner will be for FBC members only unless you are bringing a guest. I will be inviting the community to come for the singing, which will be in the sanctuary following dinner.



Monday, November 16th

Senior adults hop on the bus and join us for our annual Fall shopping trip to the outlet malls! We will leave at 8:30 and shop until we are happy and then have lunch at the Apple Barn. The leaves will be in their full glory by this time and it will be a beautiful trip through the mountains! Call the church office to reserve your spot on the bus!



FBC CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRY

Oct. 31: Trunk or Treat, 5-8pm
Set up for Trunk or Treat participation is between 3 and 5pm in the lower parking lot. Those wishing to help with hotdogs, we will meet in the Fellowship Hall at 3pm. Families with kids that need a parking spot for trick or treating, please use the upper parking lot.
Whether you are trick or treating, serving hotdogs, or handing out candy, this is a wonderful opportunity for outreach. This will be a night of faithfulness, intentional connections, and an opportunity to share God's love.

Nov. 11: Camo and Can Night at Awana
Dress in your favorite camo clothes and bring a canned good for the blessing box.

Nov. 13: Parent's Night Out, 6-9pm
Kid's Choir needs to arrive at 5:30pm to practice before our evening activities. Sign-ups will begin November 1, with sign-up sheets in the Connect Center or in the Children's Wing and on our private Facebook page post. We will have pizza for supper, cookies for dessert, and popcorn for snack. There will be a bucket at sign in, if you would like to make a donation to the children's department it would be much appreciated.

Nov. 15: Kid's Choir sings, 11am
Kid's Choir will meet in the sanctuary at 9:45am to practice. The kids will be taken to Sunday School after practice. We will pick them up from Sunday School and take them upstairs for service. They will return to you in the Sanctuary after they sing.

Nov. 25: Happy Thanksgiving Week
There will be NO Wednesday activities.

Student Ministry in November

We're entering the tail-end of the year and our student ministry has some exciting events coming soon! Our student ministry, and all that we do, is central on loving God wholeheartedly and loving others selfless as Christ has loved us. We have been blessed to be a blessing to others. Eternal life has been given to us that we would share it with ALL people. I pray we are fully convinced of that and intentionally glorify God with all we have and all we are.

Wednesday Night Scheduling:
5:45-6:15pm | Worship through a Large Group Game
6:15-6:30pm | Worship through Song
6:30-7pm | Worship through the Preaching of God's Word
7-7:30pm | Worship through being in Small Groups

Important Future Dates:

- 11/18 | Friendsgiving @ Candies Creek Baptist Church
- 12/5 | 24 hour lock-in
- 12/30 - 1/2 | New Year's Retreat
- 5/28 - 6/3 | Camp Cherokee

A NOTE FROM YOUR FBC BUILDING COMMITTEE

Building Committee Update for August

Building Committee Update

October 26, 2026

Faith in Action: Our Building Project

Dear Beloved Congregation,

The Building Committee is excited to share the continued progress on our Family Life Center project! Over the past few months, our efforts have focused on establishing a practical starting point for construction on our new property while keeping our long-term vision for the property intact.

The civil drawing package for our initial phase of development is now complete. As part of this effort, we have moved the proposed Family Life Center closer to Monroe Street while preserving the overall Master Plan for future development. This adjustment will eliminate the need to pave a road extending to Highway 68 as part of the initial Family Life Center project, helping us focus our resources on the first phase of construction.

The City of Sweetwater Planning Commission has approved the updated plan, contingent upon completion of a traffic study for the proposed Monroe Street entrance. Quotes have been requested for the study to help confirm the viability of our revised plan and move us closer to the next steps.

With the civil drawings complete, our excavation contractor now has the information needed to develop pricing for site preparation and utility installation.

We are also working with the metal building supplier to refine our building costs. We have received preliminary pricing for building shells with concrete slabs based on various dimensions and are continuing to develop the interior specifications needed to obtain a realistic quote for a completed Family Life Center.

Each of these steps brings us closer to a clearer picture of the overall project cost and helps us prepare for the next phase of development. We are encouraged by the progress being made and excited to see the pieces coming together as we work toward making this vision a reality.

We are thankful for the continued support, prayers, and patience of our church family throughout this process. We look forward to sharing more updates as the project progresses and remain excited about what the future holds for First Baptist Church of Sweetwater and our community!

Blessings,

Daryl G. West

Chairman - Building Committee

Sweetwater First Baptist Church

303 Wright St, Sweetwater, TN 37874

(423) 271-7181 cell

FBC Missions News

It's Operation Christmas Child Time!!

**Shoeboxes are located on the 2nd & 3rd Floors!*

Please Return Shoeboxes NO Later than November 15th, 2026



Valley Park Community Thanksgiving Meal Thursday, November 19th, 2026

We will need people to help, if you are available, please contact Phil Roy @ 423-337-1212.

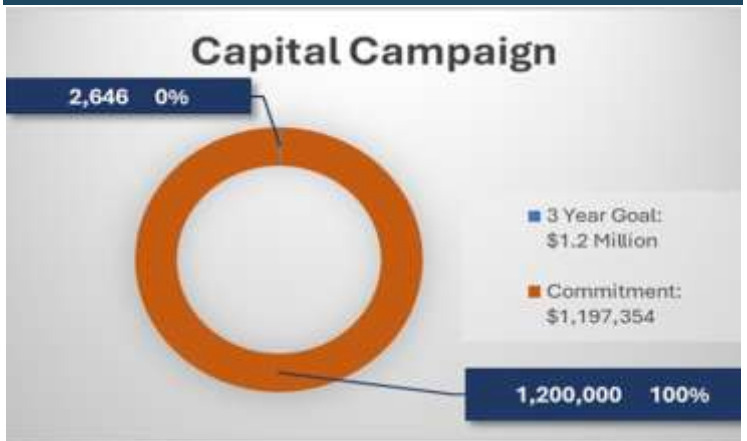
UPCOMING EVENTS
















THANKSGIVING
DESSERT
FUNDRAISER
Made from scratch pies and cakes
Just $10.00 each
100% of the proceeds
benefit the General Fund
Dessert Pre-Order forms need to
be turned in by November 22nd
Questions? Contact
Loretta Napier @ 423-999-0947


Tea Time
Hosted by
Embrace Women's Ministry
On Nov 7th @1pm
Located at Emily York's house,
192 Briarcliff Road
This event is limited to
30 guests.
Scan to Register


Desserts Needed Weekly
for ReNew Recovery
If you would be willing to bring a dessert for ReNew, please sign up at the
Connect Center.
Please have desserts to the church kitchen by 5:30 pm Monday afternoon.
Thank you so for your servant's heart!

SAVE the DATE!



2027 Budget Meeting Plan

- November 1-2027 Budget available in the Church Foyer.
- November 15-Financial Update and discussion of proposed 2027 Budget.
- November 22-Thanksgiving Offering
- December 6-Vote on the 2027 Budget





Parent's Night Out

Friday November 13
6-9pm



Pizza
Cookies
Popcorn

Sign up in the Connect Center or on our private Facebook post.

Donations to help with costs much appreciated.

A basket will be available at registration to drop in a donation. Adults with no children or parents that would like to donate, place in the offering plate or drop by the office labeled P-N-O.



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

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