



FBC Monthly Encourager

Volume IV, No. 9 September 2025

The Golden Rule and the Narrow Gate

Matthew 7:12-14

"So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few."

In Matthew 7:12–14, Jesus brings His Sermon on the Mount toward its conclusion with both a guiding principle for daily living and a sobering reminder about eternity. These verses hold together the Christian ethic and the Christian hope, reminding us that the gospel is not merely about how we live in this world but also about the eternal destiny that awaits us.

Living Out the Golden Rule (v. 12)

Jesus summarizes the moral teaching of the Law and the Prophets in one simple, yet profound command: *"Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them."* This is not mere courtesy or social niceness; it is a Christ-centered ethic of love.

Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone (Ephesians 2:8–9). Yet, the new birth produces new fruit. The one who has been transformed by Christ will live differently. Loving others as we wish to be loved is evidence of a heart that has been changed by the gospel.

In practice, this means treating our family members with patience, our neighbors with kindness, our coworkers with honesty, and even our enemies with grace. This command exposes our selfishness and drives us back to the cross, where Christ perfectly lived out what He preached. "16 By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers" (1 John 3:16).

The Wide Gate and the Narrow Gate (vv. 13–14)

After calling us to love, Jesus immediately warns us of two paths. The wide gate is easy, accommodating, and popular—but it leads to destruction. The narrow gate is hard, costly, and unpopular—but it leads to life.

This is a call to decision. The gospel confronts us with a choice: Will we follow the broad, world-pleasing way that ignores Christ, or will we repent, believe, and follow Him on the narrow road of discipleship that He teaches us about in the Sermon on the Mount?

Jesus is not one of many ways—He is *the way, the truth, and the life* (John 14:6). To enter the narrow gate is to trust Christ alone for salvation, confess Him as Lord, and commit to following Him even when the path is difficult.

A Word of Warning and a Word of Hope

The warning is clear: many will choose the broad way that leads to destruction. The world offers comfort, popularity, and ease, but at the cost of eternal separation from God.

But the hope is also clear: though the narrow way is hard, it leads to life—life abundant in Christ now, and life eternal in the presence of God forever. For those who enter through Christ, there is joy unspeakable and full of glory (1 Peter 1:8).

*Abiding in Christ,
Pastor Jason Pounds*

Senior Adult

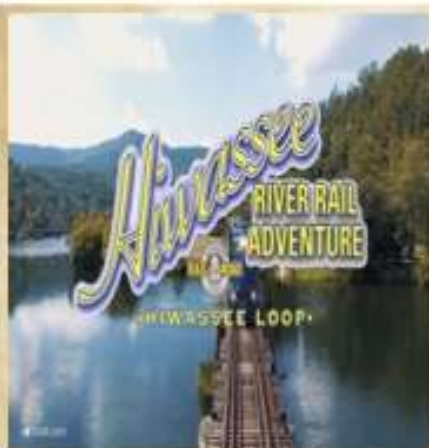


What's the Buzz?



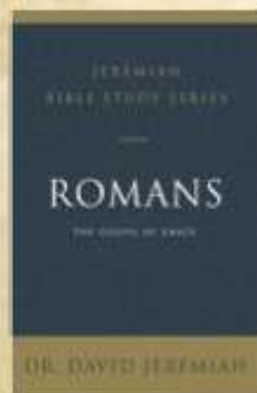
Saturday, September 6th

We will have a hop on the bus night out to the Farmhouse Restaurant in Etowah on Saturday, September 6th. Let's do our best to fill up the bus and enjoy a great night of fellowship, food and Gospel music. The Big Creek Singers will be the featured that night. Please contact Angie in the church office to let us know you would like to reserve a spot on the bus!



Thursday, October 23

The senior adult ministry will be enjoying a train ride on the Hiwassee Loop to see the beautiful Fall colors. We will depart the church campus at 11:30 and have lunch in Etowah before getting on the train at 1:30. The train returns around 6:00 PM. Cost for the trip is \$50 per person. I would like to order the tickets for this trip by the end of July as the Fall dates fill up very quickly. This trip is a wonderful fellowship opportunity and is a very relaxing journey down the Hiwassee river gorge.



Romans Bible Study

Our characters Bible study wraps up on Wednesday, September 17th. We will begin a brand new 12 week Bible study in the book of Romans. Join us around the table in the fellowship hall each Wednesday at 11:00 as Dr. David Jeremiah guides us through this powerful book in the New Testament. Call the church office to let us know you need a book. Cost for the book is \$10.00.

Worship MINISTRY



The Drive for 35....we are soooo close!

I am happy to report that when all choir members are present we have 35 members currently on role in the choir. It would be great to have closer to 40 or more on roll so that on Sundays we will routinely have 30 or more singing every Sunday. Some of our members are college students that are away most of the time during the school year. If you have a heart of worship and are blessed with a singing voice we need you in the choir! Our choir is a multi-generational choir...which means all ages are welcome to join! When we gather for worship each week, I want our congregation to look up

and see all ages represented in the choir. I absolutely love it when I am directing the choir on Sundays and I can look up and see families worshipping and serving together in the choir. There are not many ministries in the church where the entire family can serve together on a regular basis. The choir practices every Sunday afternoon at from 5:00 to 6:00 in the choir room across from the church office. Child care is provided during that time and the RA's meet during that time as well if you have older children that are not musically inclined. It is an exciting time in the life of our church! I am thrilled that the choir is coming back strong and our children's choir is booming! We have just begun working on Christmas music in the adult and children's choirs. This music is very accessible for all ability levels. Please come and use your gifts to help the choir fill our sanctuary with music that honors the Lord and lifts our spirits as we worship together each week!

In Christ,

Pastor Todd



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Children's activities have started back! 😊 Come join, if you haven't already.



Children's Missions are from 5:00-5:45pm on Sunday nights.



PreK/K Prodigies Choir is from 5:45-6:15pm and 1st-5th Kid's Choir is from 5:30-6:15pm on Wednesday nights.



Awana Clubs are from 6:15-7:30pm on Wednesdays.



Yes, everything is digital.

The Children's Department seems to have gone crazy with QR codes and special messaging. We have been moving to make communication activity specific, so you are not overwhelmed with messages that do not apply to you or that you get all the responses to. Thank you for being patient with our growing process.



3rd-5th Sunday School, Children's Church, and Awana Classroom

An enormous thank you to all of the volunteers who have helped transform this classroom into a bigger and more functional space for our growing group of kids!!



Trunk or Treat

Trunk or Treat is just 2 months away. Candy donation boxes will go out the last of September. It is not too early to be thinking of a theme for your vehicle. We will be doing the Biblical scenes again, but we also have lots of cool props from prior performances. If you have an idea, come see me and let's make it happen.



College Kiddos

We have a lot of young adults that moved away from home for the first time this year. I am sure they would love to receive a card, letter, or care package from their FBC family. If you would like a list of addresses, please let me know and I will get that for you.

*Serving our Father with you,
Trish Wheeler*

FBC Missions News

The following members of First Baptist Sweetwater will be on a mission trip to the Amazon, September 13th - 20th.

Phillip and Lauren Palmer

Karen Burke

Todd Colbert

Fred LeMasters

Libby Lennox

Kellie Wheeler

Please pray for these as they are making preparations to go, and also for the week they will be on their trip.



Phil Roy

Mission Director

A NOTE FROM YOUR FBC BUILDING COMMITTEE

Building Committee Update

August 25, 2025

Dear Beloved Congregation,

This past month, we've been diligently working on selecting a civil engineering partner for our building project. After carefully reviewing multiple proposals, we have narrowed it down to one candidate. We are currently in the due diligence phase, checking references and asking follow-up questions. We anticipate holding a kickoff meeting with our selected civil engineer within the next month.

Additionally, we have received a revised diagrammatic design for our buildings, based on the feedback we provided on the initial draft. We are now in the process of coordinating a meeting to review and finalize this design.

We humbly ask for your continued prayers—for our Staff, Trustees, and Building Committee—as we seek God's will for our church and community. Please pray for us as the Spirit leads, and especially for **wisdom, love, unity, clarity, and a deep desire to follow God's will and timing** in every step of this journey.

Stay tuned for more updates, and let's 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

08/24/2025



54%

■ 3 Year Goal:
\$1.2 Million

■ Offerings YTD:
\$649,529.83



Deacon Nominees for 2025/2026



Brian Bean



Tony Carroll



Stephen Powers



Josh Ramsey



Gabe Russell



New Tuesday Morning Women's Study

Tuesday, September 9th, 2025
@ 10:30 am

We will be studying Jennifer Rothschild's new study on Heaven. Dispel myths and media-influenced images of heaven to gain a biblical understanding! Please sign-up at the Connect Center.





Men's Ministry Camping Trip

October 10 - 11, 2025

Come and bring the boys for a time of fellowship, games, and fun on our new property. We will begin setting up Friday afternoon and plan on departure Saturday afternoon. Bring your tents or small RV, chairs, and outdoor games. Porta Potty's will be onsite. Signup in the Vestibule.



Sunday, September 21, 2025
@ Noon following Morning
Worship in the Fellowship Hall

Please RSVP by September 15th to
the Church Office (423-337-3533)
if you would like to attend.



Desserts Needed!



FOR RENEW RECOVERY MONDAY NIGHTS AT 6:00 PM, **PLEASE**
HAVE DESSERTS TO CHURCH BY 5:30 PM. PLEASE SIGN-UP AT
THE CONNECT CENTER. ANY QUESTIONS, CONTACT LORETTA
NAPIER @ 423-999-0947.

Thank you!



Volunteers needed

Kitchen dishwashing volunteers needed on Wednesdays.

Volunteers must be 18 years old or older.

Please sign-up at the Connect Center for **SOME** or **EVERY** Wednesday!

Shifts needed:

3:00-5:00 pm

&

5:00-6:30 pm

Please call Loretta @ 423-999-0947 or sign up at the Connect Center.



Awana™

August 27 - Club Color Night
(Blue for Puggles/Cubbies,
Red for Sparks, and
Green for T&T)

September 10 - Patriotic Night
(Wear red, white & blue)


**September 17 - Inside Out &
Backwards Night**


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:** October 18, 2025

 **Time:** 10:00 am


 **Location:** Iron Mountain Sporting Clays - 410 Hardin Rd, Kodak, TN 37764

 **Cost:** \$0.50 per Clay, Golf Cart \$25, Shotgun Rental \$20, Box Shells \$13

 **Register by:** October 3, 2025

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!



Contact Information for Our College Students:

Abbey Barr-TWU
224 Allen Rd.
Sweetwater TN 37874

Ava Fitch-TWU
109 Dove Acres Dr.
Sweetwater, TN 37874

Andrew Hadorn- Pellissippi State
310 Guffey Rd.
Sweetwater TN 37874

Bailey Harrison-Tennessee Tech
1000 N. Dixie Ave.
Campus Box #9796
Cookeville TN 38505

Gray Hicks
1971 University Blvd.
Flames Box 209294
Lynchburg, VA 24515
(Gray s attending Liberty University)

Kylee Hicks
169 Julius Ave. #1
Pikeville, KY 41501
(Kylee is attending University of
Pikeville)

Zoe Hughes-ETSU
906 W. Watauga Ave.
Apt. 412
Johnson City TN 37604

Alanna King-ETSU
906 W. Watauga Ave.
Apt. 412
Johnson City TN 37604

Jenna Knight-Cleveland State
414 Cleveland Rd.
Sweetwater TN 37874

Jude Knight- Cleveland State
418 Cleveland Rd.
Sweetwater TN 37874

Ryan Littleton-TWU
206 Christianburg Rd.
Sweetwater TN 37874
Lindsey Ottinger- Cleveland State
386 W Toomey Ln
Madisonville TN 37354

Kaley Ramsey-Roane State
124 Snyder Dr.
Sweetwater TN 37874

Ashlynn Roy-TWU
307 Dogwood Trl
Sweetwater TN 37874

Jason Shaw-University of Tenn.
2521 Kingston Pike, Apt. 909
Knoxville, TN 37919

Madisyn Vestal-UTC
UC Foundation
Apt UCF-5310
718 McCallie Ave.
Chattanooga TN 37403

***Please remember these and all
students in your prayers!**





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**