



FBC Monthly Encourager

Volume V, No.5 May 2026

FTV Prayer Guide

About This Season

On April 19th, our pastor called First Baptist Church Sweetwater into a season of intentional prayer and fasting. This is not a pause in the vision—it is the most important work we can do before we take the next step together.

For 28 days we are asking every family and every member to bring three specific questions before the Lord:

1. Lord is this vision truly from You?
2. Lord, are we the unified body You intend to finish it?
3. Lord, what is the pathway forward that You are providing?

This calendar offers clear, practical ways to pray through those questions each day, along with a short scripture for reflection.

20-Day Prayer Calendar

Seeking God Together · First Baptist Church Sweetwater
April 27 – May 17, 2026 · Days 9–28

■ Q1: Is this vision from You? Days 9–14
■ Q2: Are we the unified body? Days 15–20
■ Q3: What pathway is God providing? Days 21–26
■ Preparing for May 17th Days 27–28

| | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| 9 <small>Phil 1:6</small> Thank God for evidence already seen — land purchased, ground prepared. Ask Him to confirm what He has begun. | 10 <small>John 10:27</small> Ask God to silence every competing voice. Pray that His will becomes unmistakable to the congregation. | 11 <small>Heb 13:17</small> Pray for your pastor as he seeks clarity and courage to lead faithfully in this season. | 12 <small>Prov 19:21</small> Ask God to remove any vision that is human ambition dressed as His calling. Surrender the outcome to Him. | 13 <small>James 1:5</small> Pray that God's yes or no would become clear — not just to leadership, but to the whole congregation. |
| 14 <small>Isa 46:10</small> Rest in God's sovereignty over this church. Ask Him to move in hearts across the congregation this week. | 15 <small>Phil 2:3–4</small> Ask God to reveal any pride or self-interest in your heart that hinders unity in the body. | 16 <small>Prov 15:22</small> Pray for those carrying unresolved concerns. Ask God to create safe space for honest, grace-filled conversation. | 17 <small>Matt 5:44</small> Pray for those who oppose aspects of the current plan. Ask God to soften hearts — beginning with yours. | 18 <small>Ps 147:3</small> Ask God to heal wounds from the difficult years this church has walked through. Name the pain before Him. |
| 19 <small>John 17:21</small> Pray that unity would come not from pressure or persuasion, but from genuine Spirit-led surrender. | 20 <small>Eph 4:3</small> Ask God to knit the hearts of longtime and newer members together around a shared love for this mission. | 21 <small>Phil 4:19</small> Ask God to show this church the financing pathway He is already preparing — one we cannot yet see. | 22 <small>Prov 11:14</small> Pray for the building committee. Ask God to give them wisdom, unity, and clarity about next steps. | 23 <small>2 Cor 9:7–8</small> Ask God to raise up new givers and new participants in the campaign as a sign of His provision. |
| 24 <small>Luke 1:37</small> Pray that what seems impossible by human calculation would become God's clearest opportunity. | 25 <small>Jer 29:11</small> Ask God to redirect any plans that are human-made rather than Spirit-led. Hold the plan with open hands. | 26 <small>Isa 40:31</small> Pray that the congregation would trust God's provision timeline rather than their own. | 27 <small>Acts 1:14</small> Ask God to prepare every heart for Sunday. Pray for a spirit of unity, surrender, and genuine expectation. | 28 <small>Hab 3:17–18</small> Lay this vision before God one final time. Say: 'Not our will but Yours.' Come ready to say yes. |

"The righteous shall live by his faith." — Habakkuk 2:4 · Sent by Mercy: A Study in Jonah · Pastor Jason Pounds

***Abiding in Christ,
Pastor Jason Pounds***



**First Baptist Church
Sweetwater**

**Wednesday Evenings
from 5:30 -6:30**

**Classes begin May 27th and last
through August 5th**

**Fashioning the hearts and hands of
worshippers today to equip the
leaders of tomorrow!**

Worship Academy is a free ministry offered by the members of the worship ministry at First Baptist Church Sweetwater. We believe strongly in passing our gifts on to the next generation so that children within our church and in the community can take their first steps toward becoming the worship leaders of the future. If you would like to sign your child up for Worship Academy please scan the QR code below. Space is limited in some of the areas of study.

There will be classes for adults during this time as well that will be led by Pastor Jason Pounds and his wife Erica. Join us for a summer of ministry for the entire family!



STUDY TRACKS

Acoustic Guitar: This class is open to rising 7th graders and above. Students will learn their basic chords and strum patterns. We do have a limited number of loaner guitars that we can offer to our students.

Bass Guitar: This class is open to rising 7th graders and above. Students will learn the fretboard and, by the end of the summer, will be able play basic songs in a band environment. We have two loaner bass guitars and amps for the first two student who sign up to use.

Drums: This class is open to rising 5th graders and above. There is very limited space for this class. Students will be able to play basic rhythms to help support the band by the end of the summer. They will be taught to play the drum kit, box drum as well as auxiliary percussion.

Keyboards: This class is open to rising 5th graders and above. It is best suited for students who have some experience playing the piano, but complete beginners can learn as well. Students are taught basic chord formations and how to support the praise band playing underlying pads and held chords.

Vocals: This class is open to rising 3rd graders and above. Students will be taught proper vocal production and will learn how to sing in harmony and learn basic sight reading.

Prodigies: This class is designed to teach basic music skills to young children. This class is open to children ages 4 - second grade. Children will learn how to play rhythms with hand drums and learn to sing melodies using solfège (Do, re, mi...) and play melodies with desktop bells. Classes are taught using the Prodigies website with engaging videos and is a great way to prepare your child for a lifetime of music.

Student Ministry in May

As each month ends, I'm in disbelief with how fast the days pass. As the school year comes to a close one of two things happen:

- 1.) Lives get busy with what they want and need to do in the summer.
- 2.) Lives get SUPER busy with what they want and need to do in the summer.

In those two experiences it is easy for us to place importance and priority on good things, but not THE most important thing we can do... glorifying God by loving Him wholeheartedly and loving others selflessly. Pray that students and our body would, by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, align our minds and hearts to God's.

For His Renown,
Jordan Lopez

Important Upcoming Dates:

- May 2 - High School Graduation Banquet 5:30pm
- May 23-28 Camp Cherokee | Register your student(s) by scanning this QR code:



<https://forms.gle/myrgATww3mBueqc7>



FBC CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRY

Sunday School



How do you keep 12+ 4- and 5-year-olds focused? Ask Ms. Cass. Ms. Cass teaches our PreK/K Sunday School Class, Awana Puggles, and the GA's. She uses a combination of structure, repetition, and a sweet, compassionate, but firm voice! Walk into her SS class and you will find the kids looking up things in their Bibles, singing the books of the Bibles, playing a fun game, and participating in interactive lessons. Our PreK/K kids love her and you will often hear them screaming "Hey Ms. Cass" here or out in town. God blessed us when he sent her to FBC!

Children's Church Helpers

May 3-Janelyse, Lilly, and Ezra
May 10-Zoe, Parker, and Riley
May 17-Ava, Mabry, and Emma
May 24-Kaylee, Everett, and Tennessee
May 31-Reighlynn, Carson, and Eva

Choir Kids

May 6-choir practice in the Sanctuary at regular time on Wednesday night
May 13-The kids will be previewing the Fab Four Fine Arts Camp musical during Wednesday night choir time. Last day of kid's choir for this school year.
The choir kids will perform "Abide" and "Goodbye Yesterday" on **Sunday, May 10**. They will have practice Sunday morning in the Sanctuary at 9:00am.

Mission Friends, GA's, and RA's

May 3-We will meet
May 10-No missions
May 17-We will meet for the last time this school year.
May 30-Fueled by Faith Car Show
The Mission Kids will be working the car show, so make sure your child is signed up for a time slot. The Pinewood Derby race is open to all, so make sure you let us know if a kit is needed. The Mission Kids will receive their cars May 3.

Awanas

May 6-Last night of books for Awana kids.
May 13-Awana award ceremony will be in the Sanctuary at 6:30pm. Everyone is invited to attend.
May 20-Awana Fun Night beginning at 6:15pm There will be hotdogs, chips, cookies, water, and lots of fun treats from the House Hoppers life group.

Coming Up

June 1-5 Sports Camp starting at 9am in our Sanctuary and ending at 3pm in the Methodist gym. Kids must be registered to come.
June 8-12 A group of kids will be going to Lee University for Centri Kid.
June 22-26 Fine Arts Camp starting at 9am to 4pm in the FBC Sanctuary.
June 26 "The Fab 4" Fine Arts Camp performance at 6:00pm for the public.

FBC Missions News

THANK YOU

Operation Inasmuch 2026, was a great day in Sweetwater

6 Churches were represented along with 38 SHS Football Players and members of the Sweetwater Kiwanis Club, with around 150 total participants involved.

There were 20 different projects that were completed:

Sweetwater Area Ministries had a construction project, and also a food collection for them was held at a local grocery store.

There was a lot mulch that was spread at Sweetwater Elementary School and Sweetwater Library, also clean up of grounds at Sweetwater Primary School.

Groups also helped a homeowner with a construction project, another resident had her ramp sealed, another homeowner had trees cut up, and another person had her landscaping cleaned and mulch spread.

Sweetwater High School had the lettering in front of the school repainted again this year.

45 Cards were written to homebound and military members.

Lap Blankets were made for residents in the nursing homes.

25 Casseroles were delivered to our homebound.

Suncatchers were made that will delivered to nursing home residents.

100 backpacks were assembled for the homeless that were given to Fresh Start Ministries.

Sweetwater Living residents had a watercolor painting day.

The younger children had a great day of fun along with the children at Valley Park.

Meals were prepared for all the volunteers.

10,000 Mac & Cheese meals were prepared for the Kiwanis/Key Club that will go in the backpacks for students during the school year.

AGAIN THANK YOU FOR MAKING THIS A BIG DAY IN SWEETWATER

A NOTE FROM YOUR FBC BUILDING COMMITTEE

Building Committee Update for April

April 28, 2026

Dear Beloved Congregation,

Thank you all for all the prayers and fasting as we seek clarity for God's direction, a unified church body, and our next step.

We have reached a monumental transitional point with the building project. After years of researching and working on a site plan for our new campus, we have reached a pinnacle. We now have a compilation of all the information and research gathered into a formative site plan. The site plan has been approved by the city. The price for the grading, storm water runoff/detention, and stabilizing the ground has been identified.

We seek confirmation that the vision that we have defined is from God. We take time to ensure unity in our congregation as well as making sure all questions and concerns are addressed. We also seek direction and timing for our next step. We ask all of you to engage in prayer and fasting to help assist us during this time of reflection.

We humbly ask for your continued prayers—for our Staff, Trustees, Finance Committee, 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 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



UPCOMING EVENTS



Church Office Closure Notice

Please note the office will now be
closed on Fridays starting Friday,
May 8th, 2026.

....

New Office Hours:

Monday - Thursday, 8:30 to 4:30 pm.



Fellowship Meal & Quarterly Business Meeting

Sunday, May 3rd @ 6:30 pm
in the Fellowship Hall.

Bring your favorite finger sandwich and/or a side such as a salad and of course a dessert if you would like!

Please sign-up at the Connect Center.



Art Camp Supplies

Supplies are needed for crafts for art camp. Please save and place in large containers on each level. Cardboard and/or Foamboard 8"x8" at least, buttons, clean lids from glass jars like pickles, clean cylinders like coffee or lemonade cans or oatmeal canister. Thank you for your help!



First Baptist Church Family,

If you have a family member who will be or is attending Carson Newman University during the 2026-2027 School Year, we are now taking request for the Yearly Church Endowment Program. Please submit: Students Full Name, CN Student ID, and Birthdate by the Deadline Date of May 24, 2026, to the Church Office.



2026
SportsCamp
Sweetwater TN



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

04/26/2026

15%



■ 3 Year Goal:
\$1.2 Million

■ Offerings YTD:
\$1,022,310.38

85%

TOGETHER
AT
Wednesday Night
DINNER

FOOD FAMILY FELLOWSHIP FRIENDS FUN

May 6, 2026 Menu

Pot Roast, Potatoes, Carrots, Salad,
Rolls and Butterfinger Cake

Kids Option:
Hamburger & Fries

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

Meals for 1st time Guest are free!



Awana™

May 6 - Final Handbook Night

**May 13 - End of Year Awards
and Celebration**

**(Parents and Friends Invited to
Main Sanctuary)**

May 20 - End the Year Fun Night



MULTITUDES

REV. 7:9-12

CAMP CHEROKEE 2026

In an effort to make Camp Cherokee more accessible for students, the cost of Camp is now \$100 and registration closes May 10th.

To fund students going to Camp, Camp Cherokee t-shirts will be available to be purchased.

***To register for
Camp Cherokee
scan this QR code:***



***If you wish to
purchase a shirt
or make a
donation, scan
this QR code:***



Awana
Because Kids Matter to God.™

Awana
AWARDS CELEBRATION!

FBC Sanctuary
Wednesday, May 13
6:30 PM

Join us for an evening of awards, fun & celebration!

"Because Kids Matter to God"

*** May 7, 2026 ***

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

Prayer Ceremony

1 Chronicles 16:24
GLORIFY GOD
among the nations
SEEKING HIM
in all generations

Monroe County Courthouse Lawn
Thursday, May 7 at 11am



Finish The Vision Building Project

If you have a question you wish to be clarified or answered, please scan the QR code to be linked to the questionnaire.

BRAZIL MISSION FUNDRAISER

Help Spread the Gospel!

Sunday, May 17th

Right After Church



Bounce House



Dunk Booth

Snacks & Treats!

★ Auction!



Come Join & Support Missions

Donations Welcome!



SAVE THE DATE

WOMEN'S MINISTRY BRUNCH & FISHING DAY

AT THE BYERS

A MORNING OF FELLOWSHIP, FOOD & FUN BY THE WATER

Join us for a special morning of connection! Enjoy a delicious brunch followed by fishing together. Poles will be provided if needed.

SATURDAY, JUNE 13TH
8:00-11:00 A.M.

JOIN US

Sign up at the Connect Center



Come for the Cars, Stay for the Message

Fueled by Faith

MISSIONS CAR SHOW

"Let Your Light Shine"



FREE ENTRY | May 30th

Time: 9 AM - 1 PM

303 Wright St,
Sweetwater, TN 37874

† 12:00 PM
RA & GA Pinewood Derby

† Food & Bake Sale

† Trophies Awarded

All Makes – All Models Welcome

Contact Justin Hall: 423-368-0527

All Proceeds Support Foreign Missions



Save the Date

SAVE THE DATE



Men's Ministry Putt Putt Golf Outing

Men & boys of all ages come for a round of Putt Putt Golf and a Shake and fellowship afterward.

Get ready to tee off for faith, fellowship, and friendly competition! Join us for a morning of mini-golf, laughter, and spiritual encouragement designed just for the men and boys of our church.

Event Details

- **Date:** Saturday, July 11, 2026
- **Time:** 10:00 AM
- **Location:** Midway Mini Golf - 2240 Hwy 30 E, Athens, TN, United States, 37303

Why You Should Come

- **Build Brotherhood:** Connect with other men in a relaxed, fun setting
- **Grow in Faith:** Short devotion and prayer before the first putt
- **Refreshments:** Fellowship Shake Afterward

How to RSVP

- Sign Up Sheet in the Vestibule
- Call or text: (423) 271-7181

Fee: \$8 for Golf, \$5 for Large Shake (Per Person)

"As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." – Proverbs 27:17
Come sharpen one another's faith—one putt at a time!
We can't wait to see you on the green! 🏌️

Bring a friend, bring your A-game, and prepare for an evening of faith, fun, and fellowship.

~~~Bring a Friend That Does Not Currently Attend a Church~~~



**Men's Ministry  
Father's Day Golf Outing**

Men & boys of all ages are invited to our annual Father's Day Golf outing.

We are currently on the schedule for 14 – 20 People for this event. More will be added as needed, please sign up as soon as possible to ensure our group stays together. Please put only one name on each line of the sign-up sheet.

We will meet at the church at 8:30 am to carpool to the course or you can meet us there. If you have any questions, or to make a payment, please contact Fred LeMaster (304-264-1775) or Daryl West (423) 271-7181.

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

---

**Event Details**

- **Date:** June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026 | **Tee Time:** 9:30am
- **Location:** 387 Co Rd 603, Athens, TN 37303

**Why You Should Come**

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

**How to RSVP**

- Sign Up Sheet in the Vestibule
- Make Payment to Fred LeMaster or Daryl West

**Fee:** \$30 per Player – Due by May 31<sup>st</sup>.

---

"As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." – Proverbs 27:17  
Come sharpen one another's faith—one swing at a time! 🏌️  
~~~Bring a Friend That Does Not Currently Attend a Church~~~





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**