

# Faith Speaks

So, here's a fun Pastor John fact ... I got baptized so I could get a job. Okay, let me explain. Here's what happened. A few days after I graduated college, I got a call from a Reformed Baptist church offering me a job. I sat and interviewed with the pastor. He was a super nice guy. And like a good Baptist pastor, he asked me before the end of the meal, "So when were you baptized?" I had to scratch my head. "Umm, to be honest, I've never been baptized." His eyes went wide. "Well, that's something you'll have to remedy if you want this job."

I know! How does a guy who's been saved for almost ten years not get baptized?! Truthfully, it just never came up. I had been saved in a Presbyterian Church, and at the time, there wasn't a lot of emphasis placed on getting baptized as a believer because so many people in the church had been baptized as children.

So I don't leave you in suspense, I did get baptized in the Weeki Wachee River on Easter morning 2009. And yes, I got the job. But, in the days leading up to getting dunked in the river, I had to pray and wrestle with the question, "Why am I getting baptized?" That's a really important question. "Why do we get baptized?" What's the purpose

of this admittedly strange practice of getting wet while people watch, pray, and cheer?

As cryptic and mysterious as baptism can seem, the illustrations painted for us in scripture help flesh out the purpose of baptism. (i) **CLEANSING FROM SIN:** Acts 22:16 – "*Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.*" This is perhaps the most obvious motif expressed in the ritual of baptism. Obviously, when water is poured over the head or the head dunked in the water, washing is happening. (ii) **BEING UNITED TO CHRIST:** Romans 6:3-4 – "*Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*" Jesus was buried just as a person is dunked into the water, and Jesus was risen just as a person rises from the water.

There are more illustrations we could look at, but those will suffice. So, we're getting closer to answering the question, "Why do

we get baptized?" But we must be super careful when applying these answers to that question. For example, let's take the first reason – cleansing from sin. There are three ways we could phrase this. First, we could say: "We get baptized **SO THAT** we can be cleansed from our sins." Whoa! That can't be right. Only the blood of Jesus cleanses us from our sins, not water, not some ritual. No. Let's try again. How about, "We get baptized because we **HAVE BEEN** cleansed from our sins." This is probably the most common view. In this view, we would be saying that baptism is an announcement to those watching of what God has already done to me. The problem there is that we also baptize children. Some would argue that this is the reason we shouldn't baptize children. (Continued on page 2)



## Church Staff

### Pastor

Rev. John Cleveland

### Church Administrator

Melinda Hawkins

### Music Director

Nancy Lowry

### Financial Secretary

Brooke Echols

### Treasurer

Ronnie Burch

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## 2023

### Session Members

John Cleveland  
Gregg Coniglio  
Keith Lovern  
Dan Patterson  
Mark Watts

### Deacons

Jimmy Brock  
Alan Dennis  
Cameron Dennis  
Zohrab Najarian

Ask the Lord to strengthen us with the Holy Spirit for counsel, wisdom, understanding, and the fear of the Lord, that we may share in our Savior's life and grace.

For the following, pray for health, comfort and fellowship with God during a period of sickness, that the Lord will give them faith, patience, joy and submission to his will.

- ♦ **Myra Echols:** cancer
- ♦ **Miles Pass:** 5y/o with leukemia
- ♦ **Jordan Israel:** brain surgery 9/26
- ♦ **Bob & Ellen Brown:** healing and patience
- ♦ **Kay Horvath:** In Memory Care Center
- ♦ **Malcolm McEachern:** hip replacement 9/05
- ♦ **Sandra Williams:** loss of daughter, Natalie, and having hip replacement
- ♦ **Russ Miller:** recovery from thyroid surgery
- ♦ **Donna Criger:** Corticobasal Degeneration
- ♦ **Wilson Station EPC in Tennessee**
- ♦ **Children in Foster Care**
- ♦ **Our Shut-Ins**
- ♦ **The Lost**
- ♦ **Our Elders and Deacons**
- ♦ **President Biden and Congress**
- ♦ **Supreme Court**
- ♦ **Persons serving in our Military**
- ♦ **Law Enforcement Officers**
- ♦ **Emergency Responders**
- ♦ **Our Nation**

Please pray for our missionaries:

- ♦ Phil and Diane Thrash
- ♦ Gary and Jackie Burnett
- ♦ Santosh John
- ♦ Keith and Rachel Keller
- ♦ Jeff & Veronique Kim
- ♦ Jenny Coon
- ♦ Mike Rasmussen

## MEMBERSHIP class



*New Members Information Class*  
*Sunday, September 17th at 12:30 pm*  
*Lunch provided*  
*Sign-up Sheet in the Narthex*

*One Body  
 One Spirit  
 One Hope  
 One Lord  
 One Faith  
 One Baptism  
 One God and Father of all  
 who is over all and  
 through all and in all  
 Ephesians 4:4-6*

**If you have a prayer request or a praise report that you would like to have included in the next newsletter, please email them to: [faithepcrus@gmail.com](mailto:faithepcrus@gmail.com) by Friday, September 29th. This would include any NEW or OLD requests that you would like to have included. This section is renewed monthly.**

Romans 6:4  
 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.



(Continued from page 1)

But, then, why did Israel circumcise children who had not yet experienced God's forgiveness and grace at eight days old? See, there's something else going on here. Let's try one more phrasing: "We get baptized **IN ORDER TO PROCLAIM** what Jesus did to cleanse us from our sins."

You see, this is what I realized as I was heading toward the Weeki Wachee River. I wasn't saving myself by getting dunked that day. I wasn't shining a light on something that happened to me almost ten years ago. No, as I was lowered down into that crisp spring water and then lifted up, I was, at that moment, giving everyone (and myself) a visual gospel. I was proclaiming to everyone: "This is what Jesus Christ has done for all those that believe on him. His cleansing blood was shed. He was buried and risen." You see, this is why we refer to baptism as a **SIGN**. Signs point to things, but they are not the things they point to. And what is baptism pointing to? It's not pointing to just MY faith—more than that, baptism points to the work of Christ.

There is so much more to say about this wonderful sacrament. Please keep a lookout on our Facebook and YouTube pages this month. I'll be posting several "Pastor Chat" videos about baptism. And hey, if you're a believer and you've never been baptized, don't be like me! Rise and be baptized! Come chat with me or an Elder at Faith anytime.

God bless!  
*Pastor John*

## From the Pastor's Shelf...



**“Baptism:  
Answers to  
Common  
Questions”  
-Guy M.  
Richard**

There's no point in pretending that baptism is some super simple concept. It's a sacrament handed down by Christ with very little practical instruction. It's a practice that was surrounded by debate before the Bible was even finished! (see: 1 Cor. 1:10-17) But, mind you, the fact that baptism can be confusing does not mean it's unimportant. It just means we need to search the scriptures for answers. For my money, I haven't found a book that examines baptism as carefully and with as much of a biblical lens as Guy Richard's little book. It's practical and thorough but doesn't get lost in the weeds, and it has a great scripture index at the back.

**Super helpful.  
Worth having!**



## the Hangout

Are you a 4th to 12th grader?

You don't want to miss out on the fun and excitement of our hangouts!

Our next hangouts

September 2nd

and 15th

at 6:00 pm

Bring a friend!

## Fellowship News

### **Girlfriends in Faith**

**We will have a planning meeting on Saturday, September 23rd at 10:00 am.**

**Everyone is invited! A light breakfast will be provided.**

### **Men's Book Study**

**Our Men's Bible Study meets on Thursday's at 7:00 pm. We are studying 1 Corinthians.**

**This is a wonderful opportunity to gather with other men around God's Word, fellowship, and prayer. Contact Mark Watts for more information.**

### **Ladies Bible Study**

**Our Ladies Bible study meets on Tuesdays at 6:30 pm. We are doing a study of Psalm 31-60, "Wait". Contact Sara Cleveland if you have any questions.**

**Please join us! We will not meet on the 19th but will meet again on the 26th.**

## BOOK NOOK

Check out the bookshelf in the Narthex. We have excellent books available for your Christian growth.



The August regular Session Meeting was held on Thursday, August 3rd, at the church. The Session discussed the reading of chapters 7 through 12 of "Gentle and Lowly."

Final preparations for the upcoming Homecoming Service on August 6th were discussed. The church will provide barbecue, hot dogs, and hamburgers, and members will bring side dishes.

The Session approved the proposal by Dody Morris to lead a financial class at Faith. There will be a sign-up sheet for those interested in attending.

Home fellowship groups were discussed, and the sign-up sheets will be posted, and meetings will begin in September.

The Elders will meet quarterly outside of the regular Session meetings for prayer time for specific needs. The first meeting will be on August 17th at the church.

There was a discussion of the next Presbytery meeting to be held in Knoxville, TN, on October 6th and 7th at Community Evangelistic Church, and some of the Elders will attend.

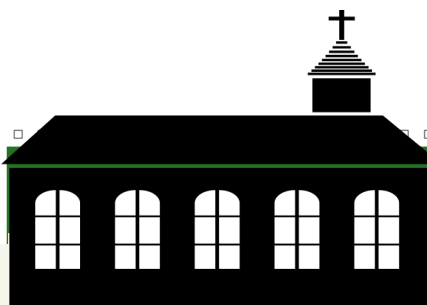
A trip to Israel that was presented by Dody Morris was discussed. There will be an informational meeting for those interested.

The Session discussed the role of Deacons in assisting the Kitchen Committee during the setup and breakdown of meals at the church.

The Session reviewed the congregation's care needs and prayed for each need.

The next Session meeting will be September 7th at 5:30 PM.

John Cleveland, Moderator  
Dan Patterson, Clerk  
Gregg Coniglio  
Keith Lovern  
Mark Watts



## Calendar

- ◆ September 2 Youth Hangout
- ◆ September 3 The Lord's Day
- ◆ September 3 Communion
- ◆ September 5 Ladies Study
- ◆ September 7 Men's Study
- ◆ September 10 The Lord's Day
- ◆ September 12 Ladies Study
- ◆ September 14 Men's Study
- ◆ September 16 Youth Hangout
- ◆ September 17 The Lord's Day
- ◆ September 17 New Members
- ◆ September 21 Men's Study
- ◆ September 24 The Lord's Day
- ◆ September 26 Ladies Study
- ◆ September 28 Men's Study



## August 2023 Financial News

**Donations:**

**\$19,524.00**

**Expenses:**

**\$24,341.13**

**P.O.P. Fund:**

**\$1,500.00**

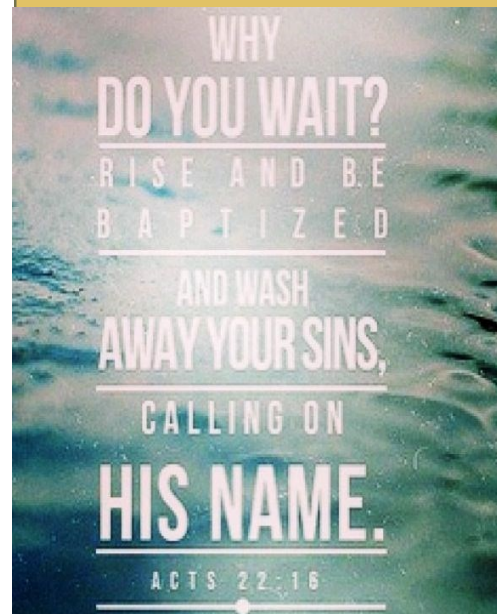
**Mortgage Principal:**

**\$785,925.61**

*We are baptized into (not merely in) the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. When faith grasps the significance of baptism it dawns on us that we have been given the privilege of all privileges – fellowship with God. We are His, and He is ours – forever! His grace does not cleanse us from sin simply for its own sake, but to fit us for His company throughout the whole of our lives. So baptism announces to us the overwhelmingly great privilege of fellowship with the triune covenant-making and covenant-keeping God. And because baptism symbolizes this, it calls us to a new life-style marked by ongoing repentance and faith.*

**Sinclair Ferguson**

Reference: Healthy Christian Growth, by Permission of the Banner of Truth Trust, Carlisle, PA. 1991, p. 14.



## Outreach News

If you have a need that arises, or know of anyone that is in need, please reach out to our Deacons for assistance. They have the ability to reach out to the congregation on your behalf as well as physically meet your needs, or they can point you in the right direction for help.

### Deacons of Faith

Jimmy Brock  
Alan Dennis  
Cameron Dennis  
Zohrab Najarian

### Children's Sunday School

We have Sunday School classes for all ages!  
We are in need of teachers!  
Contact Susan Jones if you are interested in serving the children of Faith!



## September Mission of the Month

### Georgia Right to Life

[www.grtl.org](http://www.grtl.org)

### Needs

10" and 6" paper plates,  
large paper bowls,  
paper towels,  
toilet paper,  
plastic cold cups,  
plastic utensils,  
paper napkins,  
facial tissue

*Please place your items in the mission box in the back of the sanctuary.*

*Thank you for always giving so generously to those in need!*



### Volunteers Needed For Fellowship Time!

If you would like to provide refreshments, there is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board by the kitchen.  
Speak to a Deacon if you have any questions!



We would love for you to join one of our Home Fellowship Groups.

Our groups are designed to help you grow in your faith and connect with other believers in a more intimate setting.

We believe that life is better together and we would love for you to take part!

Our groups meet on different days and at various locations and times. We have groups for all ages and stages of life, so there is something for everyone.

Check out the sign-up sheets in the Narthex for more information or contact Pastor John or Melinda at 770-648-5288

or email us at [faithepcrus@gmail.com](mailto:faithepcrus@gmail.com).

We look forward to hearing from you soon!

## UPDATE FROM JENNY COON

Marhaba!

It was such a joy to have my brother visit me from the States this month. It was a whirlwind he described as "enjoyable, busy, and encouraging." After 6 days of experiencing all that makes Lebanon wonderful (mountains, sea, food, hospitality), a taste of what makes it challenging (food poisoning, heat and humidity without electricity...), and seeing ministry firsthand through home visits, clinics, and even preaching at church, his time was coming to an end. Yet I felt God put on my heart to visit one of the first patients I had treated. She is of Druze background and she and her brother are the only believers in her family. Although she has been very ill with significant cardiorespiratory distress, that had not stopped her from begging me to bring my brother so she could meet him. I quickly regretted my decision when we arrived and her husband was there. I generally avoid him due to the way he talks with me and he is always causing problems. Half of what he said was not appropriate to translate and as the visit came to an end I was internally questioning myself if I had heard God wrong. My brother asked to pray for them before he left and proceeded to pray for a few minutes in English, but forgot to give me a chance to translate. When we looked up at the end of the prayer, her husband was weeping. His wife was

just as startled as I was. I did not know this man was capable of shedding any tears. It took him a minute to get his composure and then he looked straight at my brother and said to me that was the first time he ever heard someone pray for him from his heart and he felt that he had been touched by God. I was speechless. How many times have I seen God's spirit move and yet every time I am in awe. This man has seen his wife's life change before his very eyes, has seen her faith grow, has heard the gospel many times and yet God chose to use a last minute visit from someone half way around the world in a language he doesn't know to open his heart. Pray for this man, that God would continue the work He has started in him.

Thank you for your prayers for Jackline and her family. She is continuing to recover and was even able to attend a church youth group event last week.

Thank you for your continued generosity towards giving to at risk families and patients at the clinic. Your generosity helps us keep the clinic doors open which creates opportunities for people like Jackline and for families of patients like the story above. The link below takes you to where you can give directly to this ministry.

<https://facebook.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=f44e60c448a6bf63824f2266a&id=42ddf58b2a&e=2b3fe63896>

With gratitude,  
**Jenny**



My brother preaching a sermon at my church during his visit!



I finally was able to climb Mt. Hermon which has been on my "bucket list" for a while! (Psalm 133)



A huge blessing this past month has been the bond that is forming between my Balassan clinic team. The new staff has been wonderful, and after a very challenging season, Nisrine (the director) and I are working well together.





To the glory of God, Faith Presbyterian Church has been called together to faithfully proclaim the Gospel, to make and equip disciples for Christ, and to advance God's Kingdom in our families, community, and world.



Faith Presbyterian Church is a congregation of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church ([www.epc.org](http://www.epc.org)) and the Presbytery of the Southeast ([www.epcsoutheast.org](http://www.epcsoutheast.org)).

**Our Church Website:**  
[www.FaithMcDonough.com](http://www.FaithMcDonough.com)

**Church Email:**  
[faithepcrus@gmail.com](mailto:faithepcrus@gmail.com)

**Church Phone Number:**  
770-648-5288

**Mailing Address:**  
**Faith Presbyterian Church EPC**  
**1185 East Lake Road**  
**McDonough, GA 30252**



*About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family.*

*Acts 16:25-33*

## **CHOIR NEWS**

If you would like to join our choir, contact Nancy Lowry! We would love for you to join us!

## **HAPPY SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS!**



Leah Harper	9/02
Aiden Echols	9/04
Eva Anderson	9/05
Suzy Skelton	9/05
Alan Dennis	9/06
Teresa Harvey	9/06
Terry Clotfelter	9/07
Keith Billings	9/09
Elliott Glinski	9/09
Dorothy Toal	9/11
Ann Herndon	9/12
Ken Foshee	9/14
Jake Skelton	9/14
Paula Anderson	9/15
Kayla Billings	9/16
Alaina Harper	9/18
Beth Burer	9/18
Michael McClendon	9/19
Joy Brock	9/24
Gerald Gilbert	9/26

## **CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

If you are interested in joining Faith Presbyterian Church (EPC), you may do so by a profession of your faith in Jesus Christ, by a re-affirmation of your faith, or by a transfer of your membership from another church. Please speak with the an Elder concerning your desire. Next Informational Class, Sunday, September 17th at 12:30 pm. Lunch Provided.

# September 2023

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

					1	2  <i>Youth Hangout 6:00 pm</i>
3 <b>Communion</b> 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Fellowship 10:30 Worship	4	5  6:30 Ladies Bible Study	6	7  7:00 Men's Bible Study	8	9
10 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Fellowship 10:30 Worship	11	12  6:30 Ladies Bible Study	13	14  7:00 Men's Bible Study	15	16  <i>Youth Hangout 6:00 pm</i>
17 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Fellowship 10:30 Worship  12:30 New Members Class	18	19	20	21  7:00 Men's Bible Study	22	23
24 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Fellowship 10:30 Worship	25	26  6:30 Ladies Bible Study	27	28  7:00 Men's Bible Study	29	30