

Faith Speaks

Welcome to 2025, everyone! It's a new year, and surprise, surprise, the theme for our January Newsletter is "New Beginnings." No matter where you're at in life, no matter your age, job, or whatever, life is going to change. Let me offer a few rapid-fire thoughts on some new beginnings you might be facing this year.

1) **A new responsibility** - Maybe this year, God is changing your vocation, or something has fallen into your lap, demanding something new from you. Just 5 months ago, I myself became a father. I am, in a word, terrified! Every day forces me to ask myself, "Am I doing this right? Is my son developing right? Am I forgetting something important?" Whenever we step into uncharted waters - areas of life we have not been tested in before - it can feel as if we are drowning from the start.

Consider for a moment the life of Joseph in Genesis. Of course, Joseph was betrayed multiple times, and so it seems like Joseph is going through one misfortune after another, which he is. But, I find it interesting that wherever Joseph ends up, there is a new responsibility - a new job. He becomes the caretaker of Potiphar's household, then the caretaker of a prison, and then the caretaker of all of Egypt. Each time, the text reminds us that the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success. Now, I'm not

saying that we all have the promise of success, but we do have the promise in scripture that the Lord is **WITH** us, and is **GUIDING** us, and is **SANCTIFYING** us. Whatever new role you're stepping into in 2025, know this ... God put you there. He led you there; he is with you there. Maybe God put you there to be a witness, to learn something, or to just find success and give him praise. Whatever the reason, God is with you, Christian, in this new venture. Have faith!

2) **A new reading of God's word** - Every year, we are presented with that fresh new challenge to try and read God's word more. Perhaps this year, you are eager to finally try and pick up your Bible and really read it, really dig into it. Let me give you my favorite Bible-reading suggestion. Here it is: Remember that the Bible is sixty-six books. Reading the whole Bible is a very noble and awesome goal. Do you know what else is awesome? Just reading and enjoying the entire gospel of John, or just reading Revelation. Who says your Bible reading plan has to be the entire Bible?! Aim small, miss small. Maybe take smaller bites and do a plan that is just one

book. Dig into that book, enjoy it, take notes, and study it. Then, move on to another one. Then, by the end of the year, you won't have failed one Bible reading plan, you'll have finished several. And won't that feel better?

3) **New People** - Perhaps 2025 will be the year of new faces: new co-workers, new church members, new friends, and even new family! If you're a people person, that prospect might excite you. But, if you're not a people person ... uh oh. Proverbs 29:25 warns that the "fear of man lays a snare." Of course, some people we meet can turn out to be foes, but let's be honest; for the most part, the people you meet this year won't be enemies. In fact, everyone you meet this year will be someone made in the image of God, someone God might be bringing into your path so you can bless them, pray for them, and help them. Here is the cure to the fear of man - trust the Creator of Man.

Speaking of new people, I want to introduce you to a new staff member at Faith Presbyterian - Erin Evans!

(Continued on page 2)



January

Church Staff

Pastor

Rev. John Cleveland

Church Administrator

Melinda Hawkins

Music Director

Nancy Lowry

Financial Secretary

Brooke Echols

Treasurer

Ronnie Burch

Social Media Manager

Erin Evans

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2025

Session Members

John Cleveland

Gregg Coniglio

Keith Lovern

Andy Martin

Dan Patterson

Deacons

Randy Cononge

Alan Dennis

Cameron Dennis

Pray that the Lord will bless the preaching and teaching ministry of the church to gather and build up the saints, that God's word will grow and multiply, and that our witness, love, and holiness will increase by the power of the Holy Spirit.

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.

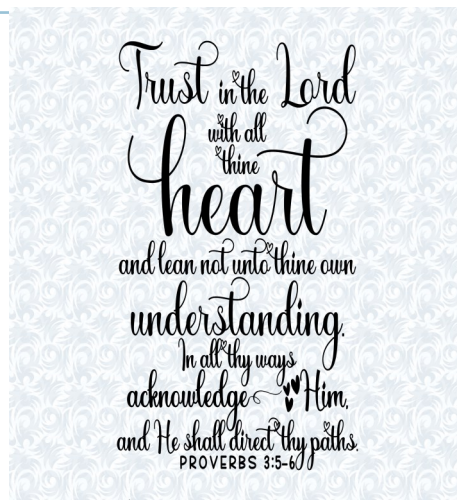
- ◆ **Chris Ober:** continued cancer treatment
- ◆ **Myra Echols:** cancer
- ◆ **Jordan Israel**
- ◆ **Debbie Williams**
- ◆ **Jimmy Ellington**
- ◆ **Mary Ellington**
- ◆ **Bob Brown:** unrelenting pain
- ◆ **Faith Strickland:** emphysema
- ◆ **Bonnie McEachern:** heart failure
- ◆ **Richard Ingram:** chemotherapy
- ◆ **Kathy Rewerts:** torn rotator cuff
- ◆ **Kay Horvath:** In Memory Care Center
- ◆ **Wilson Station EPC in Tennessee**
- ◆ **Children in Foster Care**
- ◆ **Our Shut-Ins**
- ◆ **The Lost**
- ◆ **Our Elders and Deacons**
- ◆ **President Trump and Congress**
- ◆ **Supreme Court**
- ◆ **Persons serving in our Military**
- ◆ **Law Enforcement Officers**

Praise:
 Kyle Brown is doing well recovering from heart attack

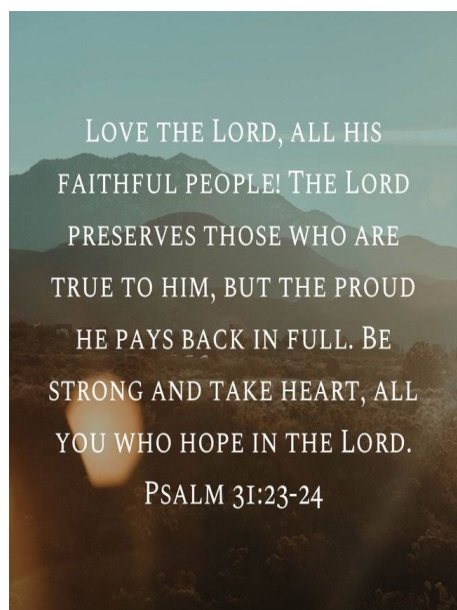
Sympathy:
 Family of BJ Newton

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**
- ◆ **Grady Davidson**



If you have a prayer request or a praise report that you would like to share with the congregation or the Elders you can email them to faithepcrus@gmail.com anytime.



(continued from page 1)
 Erin is going to be joining us at Faith as our Social Media Manager. One of the new challenges of growing a church is figuring out how to tell people about your church. The number one way has been and will always be personal invitations. That's your job, by the way, Faith family. Get out there and invite! But, today, in our fast-paced online world, the second best way to tell people about church is through social media. Erin is an incredibly bright and creative woman with a love for God and a passion for seeing Christians connect. She also has a great understanding of the social media landscape. Expect to see a lot more posts and activity on our Facebook and Instagram pages, as well as a new look and approach to our newsletters. Welcome aboard, Erin!

Faith family, I don't know exactly what God has in store for you in 2025, but I do know this: God loves you and is sovereign over all things. I pray that this year will bring blessings and hope for you and your family. Happy New Year!
Pastor John

thank you

*Thank you to the Faith family for your many prayers and kindnesses as I went through chemo and then surgery. I am slowly getting stronger and continue to work on my stomach issues.
 God Bless You All.
 Jean Bouts*

From the Pastor's Shelf...



“A Time For Confidence: Trusting God in a Post-Christian Society”
 Stephen J. Nichols

It's getting weird out there, right? By "out there," I mean in the world. There's a shifting political landscape, a shifting ethical landscape. More and more Christian celebrities are talking about "deconstructing" their faith. Traditional family values are under attack. It feels like more and more Christians are finding themselves in an increasingly foreign land. This short book by Stephen Nichols provides some simple but sage advice on trusting God in uncertain times. Nichols outlines all the biblical reasons why we don't have to compromise in today's post-Christian society but can have complete confidence in God's word, the gospel, and Christ himself.

“Because of that demonstration of God's power at the cross and at the resurrection, we are His people, we are His lambs. God will gather us up in His arms,” and we can have confidence no matter what because “God will never disappoint”

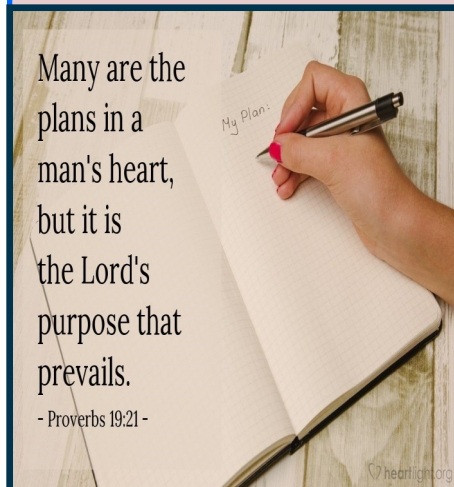
Stephen Nichols
 Reference: “A Time For Confidence: Trusting God in a Post-Christian Society” page 42

Fellowship News



Women's Fun Day

Join us on Thursday, January 23rd From 1:30 to 3:30 for a Women's Fun Day! Come enjoy an afternoon of fun and Christian fellowship. Contact Betty Brown (770-861-3775) for more information.



Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails.

- Proverbs 19:21 -

Girlfriends of Faith
All Ladies of Faith!
Our first meeting of the new year will be Saturday, January 18 at 10:00 a.m.
As usual, it will be a brunch gathering, so bring a brunch item to share and come ready to fellowship with our fellow sisters in Christ.

Women's Bible Study
On Tuesday, January 14th we will begin a Women's morning (10:00 am) and a Women's evening Bible Study (6:30 pm)
Each will study the book of 1 Peter, using study material by Jen Wilkin, "1 Peter, A Living Hope in Christ". There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex and books available for purchase. Any questions may be directed to Pam Fraticelli (am) or Becky Fowler (pm) We will meet every week for the duration of the study. We hope you can join one!

Men's Bible Study
Our Men's Bible Study will resume on Thursday, January 9th at 7:00 pm.
We will begin a study of 1 John.
Contact Gregg Coniglio if you have any questions.

BOOK NOOK

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

The December regular Session meeting was held on Thursday, December 12th, at the church at 5:30 PM.

For the devotion, the Session read Chapter 4 of the Westminster Confession of Faith.

The Session reviewed nominations for Deacons and Elders submitted by the congregation.

TE John Cleveland discussed some new ministry ideas for 2025.

The procedure for serving communion to Children's Church workers was also discussed.

The Session reviewed the land use plan submitted by Land Engineering and determined that phases should be notated on the plan rather than all improvements in one development. Garrett Burch at Land Engineering will be informed of the change.

Prayer needs were discussed and lifted to God.

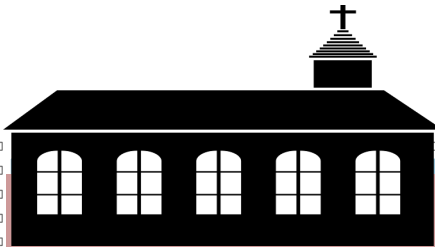
Upcoming Calendar:
Session Budget meeting- January 8, 2025
Congregational Meeting - January 26, 2025

Faith Presbyterian EPC Session

John Cleveland, Moderator
Dan Patterson, Clerk
Gregg Coniglio
Keith Lovern
Andy Martin



We are breaking until Sunday, January 12th at 2:30 - 4:00
Grief Share is a Christ-centered support group for those mourning the loss of a loved one. The program absolutely free and open to all who wish to join and participate. Visit this link below to learn more and register:
<https://www.griefshare.org/groups/247024>
Contact Dody Morris for details.



Calendar

- ◆ January 5 The Lord's Day
- ◆ January 5 Communion
- ◆ January 9 Men's Bible Study
- ◆ January 11 Youth Hangout
- ◆ January 12 The Lord's Day
- ◆ January 12 Grief Share
- ◆ January 14 Ladies am/pm Study
- ◆ January 16 Men's Bible Study
- ◆ January 18 Girlfriends of Faith
- ◆ January 19 The Lord's Day
- ◆ January 19 Grief Share
- ◆ January 21 Ladies am/pm Study
- ◆ January 23 Women's Fun Day
- ◆ January 23 Men's Bible Study
- ◆ January 25 Youth Hangout
- ◆ January 26 The Lord's Day
- ◆ January 26 Congregational Meeting
- ◆ January 26 Grief Share
- ◆ January 28 Ladies am/pm Study
- ◆ January 30 Men's Bible Study



December Financial News

Donations

\$37,615.00

Expenses

\$33,214.41

P.O.P. Fund

\$1,922.00

Mortgage Principal

\$726,992.54

Nothing can be more consoling to the man of God, than the conviction that the Lord who made the world governs the world; and that every event, great and small, prosperous and adverse, is under the absolute disposal of Him who doth all things well, and who regulates all things for the good of his people.

Jerry Bridges

Reference: Transforming Grace, NavPress, 1991, p. 40. Used by permission of NavPress – www.navpress.com. All rights reserved.



Are you a 4th to 12th grader?

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

Our next Hangouts are

Saturday, January 11th and 25th

at 6:00 pm

Bring a friend!

Outreach News

NEED HELP?

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
Randy Cononge
Alan Dennis
Cameron Dennis



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!



Mission of the Month

The Bridge Wellness South

www.thebridgewellness.org

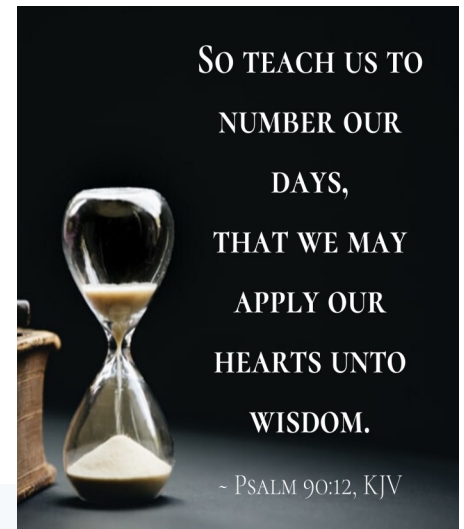
Needs

Baby Care Products
Diapers

*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!*

Resolved:
that every man should live to the glory of God.
Resolved second:
that whether others do this or not I will.

Martin Luther



SO TEACH US TO
NUMBER OUR
DAYS,
THAT WE MAY
APPLY OUR
HEARTS UNTO
WISDOM.

- PSALM 90:12, KJV

You will never be satisfied until you realize that your every desire for more in this life is, in reality, a desire for more of God

Tom Patton

Reference: Right Thinking in a World Gone Wrong, Grace Community Church, 2009, p. 70.

UPDATE FROM JENNY COON

Marhaba,

A ceasefire has now been in effect for nearly a month. There were (and still are) a lot of mixed emotions following the final announcement. Gratitude first and foremost for any cessation in death and destruction and opportunity to start a new chapter, but also a profound sense of grief and sorrow for what the people of Lebanon endured and for a lack of justice/resolution. As I opened our clinic the day after with devotions, we read Jesus' words, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you" and never in my life have I so strongly felt that truly only in His peace can we find any hope. Without any chance to begin to process these events, the fall of the Syrian regime happened in a way that no one could have predicted. I will save thoughts/comments on that event for future correspondence, but this of course had and has a profound impact on my Syrian community here, for Lebanon in general, for me personally and future work in that country, and of course for all Syrians at home and abroad.

I have three stories on my heart from this month to share with you.

You may remember my close friend's husband who had a bad car accident several months ago and has been unable to walk. I have been working with him several nights a week after work but with painstakingly slow progress, inhibited by several complicating factors. Suddenly, at the worship service this past Friday he surprised all of us by suddenly standing up and walking independently,

leaving his crutches behind, to walk down the aisle to take communion! I can not tell you what a miracle this is. He had tears in his eyes as he told me afterwards he was praying silently when the Pastor gave the invitation for communion that he wanted to be able to go on his own. He heard a voice saying "get up and walk" and he did! Now, he still has lots of PT in front of him and immediately returned to his crutches but this is a HUGE encouragement to his mental health and testament to God working in Him.

One of the displaced families from the south that I got to know really well through PT appointments and blanket/food distribution had started to come to church with me. However, they returned to the south immediately after the ceasefire even though their house is technically not livable (no windows/doors from the bombings). But they suddenly called me a week later and said they were in Beirut and had something for me. They showed up with CRATES of bananas, avocados, and oranges from their land. They said "thank you for standing with us in our hour of greatest need."

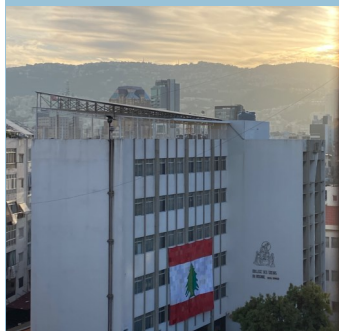
I have talked for a while about a church plant in the north of the country that the Nazarene church has been hoping to start. They finally were able to get permission to rent a building and started officially last month. I was invited by Pastor Andrew to do a special communion service with them and share my testimony. It was surreal to be just a few miles from the border, in a brand new church in a completely unreached/Muslim neighborhood, sharing about how God called me to this region

years ago, in Arabic. I am really excited that this church plant can finally put down some roots and eager to see what God will do through them in the future.

I am grateful for God's protection, for the unity and strength that was forged in my Balassan team these last months, and for the people whose lives we touched. I also know that I will need some time to process and heal in the near future, and I would appreciate your prayers for this.

Merry Christmas and have a blessed New Year! Thank you for your love, support and encouragement!

With gratitude,
Jenny



The sun rising on a new day and hopefully a new chapter for Lebanon



My friend taking his first steps prior to God's miraculous intervention.



Alexandra, my co-director at Balassan and I getting into the Christmas spirit! I was not sure what to do this year as we are all a

bit worn out, but the staff (and patients!) had soooo much fun decorating that I think it was what we all needed.



Happy New Year

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) and the Presbytery of the Southeast (www.epcsoutheast.org).

Our Church Website:
www.FaithMcDonough.com

Church Email:
faithepcrus@gmail.com

Church Phone Number:
770-648-5288

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

*Have you not known?
Have you not heard?
The Lord is the everlasting
God, the Creator of the
ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow
weary; his understanding
is unsearchable.
He gives power to the faint,
and to him who has no
might he increases strength.
Even youths shall faint and
be weary, and young men
shall fall exhausted; but they
who wait for the Lord shall
renew their strength; they
shall mount up with
wings like eagles;
they shall run and not
be weary; they shall walk
and not faint.
Isaiah 40:28-31*



Heidi Glinski	1/04
Susan Jones	1/07
Zohrab Najarian	1/07
Wylene Eason	1/08
Albert Campbell	1/11
Charles Crumbley	1/11
Ethan Echols	1/11
Cameron Dennis	1/13
Billie Miller	1/14
Carolyn Wolowicz	1/17
Tuffy Murray	1/20
Nancy Burch	1/22
Haley Dennis	1/23
Landon Evans	1/24
Gregg Coniglio	1/26
Kathy Hunt	1/28

CHOIR NEWS

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



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 if you have any questions about joining.

January 2025

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

			1	2	3	4
5 Communion 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Fellowship 10:30 Worship	6	7	8	9 7:00 pm Men's Bible Study	10	11 6:00 pm Youth Hangout
12 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Fellowship 10:30 Worship 2:30 Grief Share	13	14 10:00 Ladies Bible Study 6:30 Ladies Bible Study	15	16 7:00 pm Men's Bible Study	17	18 10:00 am Girlfriends Of Faith
19 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Fellowship 10:30 Worship 2:30 Grief Share	20	21 10:00 Ladies Bible Study 6:30 Ladies Bible Study	22	23 1:30—3:30 Women's Fun Day 7:00 pm Men's Bible Study	24	25 6:00 pm Youth Hangout
26 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Fellowship 10:30 Worship 12:00 Congrega- tional Meeting 2:30 Grief Share	27	28 10:00 Ladies Bible Study 6:30 Ladies Bible Study	29	30 7:00 pm Men's Bible Study	31	