



First Baptist Church

JEFFERSON CITY TENNESSEE

Breaking down barriers to proclaim the love of Christ.

THE MESSENGER

FEBRUARY 2026

“Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.” These words from Genesis 3:19 are spoken as the sign of the cross is made on our foreheads with ashes as we begin our Lenten journey. We would do well to consider what these words mean to us, not only as individuals, but as a community as well. Our culture has made an industry of care for one’s remains, the dust to which we return, though when these words were first spoken/written, there were few means for keeping ones remains eternally separated from the remains of others – that is to say that there were no columbaria or concrete vaults, and caves (much less pyramids) were hard to come by for the average person.



And so the dust/dirt/soil/earth to which people returned would be common, in a sense. Over the course of generations, this common dirt would be shared by plant roots or water systems, connecting people in death, even as they had been connected in life. There is something beautiful about this way of thinking about dirt, and it begs the question, “what does this suggest about how we might undertake the journey of Lent?”

It is common during Lent for persons to fast from some excess in their life and/or take up some new practice, each with the goal of drawing nearer to God. Such practices are good and important. They help to shape persons and serve as a kind of course correction on one’s journey with God.

If the dust from which we came and the dust to which we shall return are common dust, might we also benefit from a less individualized journey through Lent? What would it look like to consider excesses as a community? What are new practices to which this community could commit for a season in order that our communal journey might draw us nearer to God?

As each of us considers how we might walk the path of Lent this year and what commitments we might make therein, let us also consider (and share with one another) how the season of Lent might be a season we engage as a community.

HYMN HIGHLIGHT

By Nenette Measels, Minister of Music and Worship

*Then he said to them all, "If any wish to come after me, let them deny themselves and **take up** their **cross** daily and follow me. Luke 9:23*

Lent is the 40-day period leading up to Easter, (excluding Sundays) that starts on Ash Wednesday, February 18, and ends on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter. The primary purpose of Lent is to be a time of personal reflection to prepare your heart and mind—a season of repentance, not a feeling of shame but an awareness that sin separates us from God. These days should always lead us toward gratitude for Jesus' sacrifice on Good Friday and His resurrection on Easter. The text of the anthem, "The Lenten Path," by Ruth E. Schram (CCLI #120972), speaks of the journey we are challenged to take:

The Lenten path may take me
somewhere I do not want to go.
Right to the foot of Calvary,
away from all the comforts that I know and love.
But I must follow the steps of Jesus,
and journey to the cross,
Remembering the pain, the hunger, the loss.

When I think of what I'm giving up,
bring me to my knees.
When I think I've sacrificed so much,
bring me to my knees.
In every action of self-denial,
remind me, Lord, to pray.
And lead me, Lord, along the Lenten path each day.

The Lenten path reminds me
of hours You spent in earnest prayer;
resistance to temptation,
unwavering commitment to prepare Your heart.
Now I must follow the steps of Jesus,
and journey to the cross,
remembering the pain, the hunger, the loss.

The Lenten path may take me to Calvary.
But I must follow Jesus.
I must follow.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Summary of Operational Budget Income & Expense through January 2025

Items of Interest

- **Online Giving** is simple and convenient, and you do not have to set up a Realm account to give online. Visit: <https://onrealm.org/fbcjeff/give/now> to initiate an online gift today!
- **Designated Benevolence Fund total** (as of 1/31/2026) = \$44,110.63

	October	November	December	January
Income	\$42,232.87	\$52,496.78	\$33,983.58	\$20,853.81
Expenses	\$32,709.54	\$24,481.16	\$34,392.01	\$36,571.72
Net	\$9,523.33	\$28,015.62	(\$408.43)	(\$15,717.91)
YTD	\$9,610.98	\$37,626.50	\$37,218.17	(\$15,717.91)

ATTENDANCE

SUNDAY	BIBLE STUDY	IN-PERSON WORSHIP
January 4	20	85
January 11	25	82
January 18	22	70
January 25	19	0

DEACONS & MINISTER OF THE WEEK

- February 1:** Merci Rowlett/Peggy Dalton/Major Treadway
February 8: Susan Garber/Betty Watkins/Chad Hartsock
February 15: Carolyn Blevins/Karen Smith/Nenette Measels
February 22: Cary Bible/Jim Wilson/Major Treadway

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

By Bethany Davenport, Chair, Children and Youth Committee

Valentine

BINGO

to raise money for kids and chaperones
attending Passport Kids Camp this summer!

Wednesday, February 11th, 6:00 pm
FBC Fellowship Hall

\$10 per adult (max 5 cards)
Kids play free (max 1 card)

Join us for fun, fellowship, and PRIZES!



Do you have a
3rd-6th grader?

Join First Jeff Kids at...

PASSPORT*kids*sm



Where: Lees-McRae College
Banner Elk, NC

When: June 29-July 2, 2026

Cost: \$410 per camper*

Interested? Questions?
Contact Bethany Davenport
(865) 475-3826

*We aim to fundraise most of this cost.
Scholarships are also available.



STUDENT MINISTRY

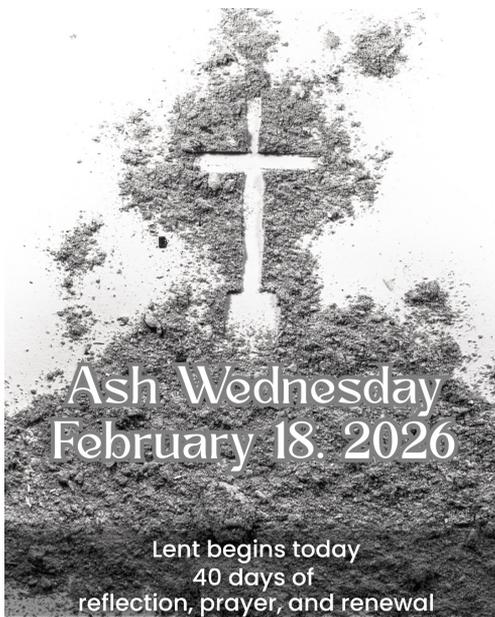
Chad Hartsock, Minister for Students

On January 16-18, our youth group travelled to Huntsville, Alabama for Winter Youth Summit. This youth conference is a bi-annual event co-hosted by CBF of Alabama, Tennessee, and Georgia, and it is always a favorite event for our students. Students were able to experience multiple worship services, lots of games and activities, some crafts, and plenty of time together as a group. The majority of our group is very young right now, and these kinds of weekends together are significant for building relationships that will carry our students through the next several years. The theme of the weekend was "Known", and students learned about how they are both seen and valued by God and by those around them, and they were encouraged to value others. It was a fun and meaningful weekend for our students!





The three new deacons elected for 2026 are, Cary Bible, Jean Love, and Merci Rowlett. Cary and Merci were ordained on January 7, 2026. Jean has previously served as a deacon. We are deeply grateful for their willingness to serve, and they are sure to be a blessing to all.



SUNDAY WORSHIP TIMES

9:30am Sunday Bible Studies
10:45am Worship Service

CONTACT INFO

(865) 475-3826; (865) 262-9026 (Fax)
Church Office Hours:
Monday-Thursday, 8:30am to 4:30pm

Find us at www.fbcjeff.org or follow us online on *Facebook* and *YouTube*

STAFF

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The Messenger (ISSN 766010) is published monthly by First Baptist Church, 1610 Russell Ave., Jefferson City, TN 37760-2299. Periodicals Postage Paid at Jefferson City, TN POSTMASTER. Send address change to *The Messenger*, 1610 Russell Ave., Jefferson City, TN 37760-2299.