

November 27, 2013

First Baptist Laurens Church Family,

One of the wonderful aspects of our life together at First Baptist Church Laurens is our desire to be attentive to the individual wants and wishes of our members. As you likely know, our congregation is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) but is also associated with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF). This is because many of our members feel deeply connected to the SBC while others feel more at home in the missions and ministry of the CBF. As a result, rather than forcing our people to choose between one entity or the other, we have maintained a relationship with both. This is true not only in terms of our congregation's involvement with both groups, but, it is also true in terms of our giving to both groups. What this means is that you as an individual or family have the right to choose whether you want to individually support the ministry of the SBC *or* CBF with the portion of your tithes and offerings that go to the work of Baptists outside of our church and local community.

As a result, our lay and ministerial leadership feels that it is important that we remind you of this right every few years in order to give you a period to declare which group you want your monies to support. So, as you prepare for the new year and as you evaluate your giving to our church, we would encourage you as individuals and families to reflect on which group (SBC or CBF) that you prefer for that portion of your weekly tithe to support. If you are happy with the group you currently support, then there is nothing you need to do. But, if you are unsure which group you support or if you want to make a change, please simply call or email Brenda Garrett in our church office and she will be glad to assist you.

All undeclared funds will be divided at the same percentage rates as our declared funds. In other words, if 70% of our membership want their funds to support the SBC and 30% desire their funds to benefit CBF then all undesignated funds will be divided as this same rate.

Finally, we are certain that many of you may have questions about the SBC, CBF and the use of these funds. To that end, we want to be helpful. We would encourage you to join us for our general 2014 Budget Discussion on Sunday morning, December 15 at which time we would be glad to answer any questions you have related to our support of the SBC, CBF or regarding the budget in general.

Again, allowing all of our people to have a significant role in the life of the church and in the use of our financial resources is a hallmark of what it means to be a Baptist. We hope that you will join us in exercising your freedom to express your desires as to how you want your resources to be used.

With gratitude for your generosity to our Church & the Greater Work of Baptists,

Rickey Letson, Senior Pastor

Jim Bryan, Chair, Fellowship of Deacons

Kevin Franklin, Chair, Finance Committee