



HEART • SOUL • MIND • STRENGTH

**First Baptist**

L A U R E N S

CHURCH PROFILE

## From the Pastor Search Committee:

In the spring of 2021, just as our church began to emerge from Covid-19 restrictions, our pastor of ten years, Rev. Rickey Letson, announced that he would be leaving our congregation to take a role in the leadership of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship as [Congregational Stewardship Officer](#). While disheartened by the loss of our minister and friend and by the timing of this move, we knew the impact Rickey could have in this role and realized that this position would allow Rickey and his family to return to their native Alabama near extended family.

Beginning in June, our committee began by telling our stories of faith and what brought each of us to First Baptist Laurens, a sharing continued in each Sunday's worship service in a series called "One Family, One Mission: Stories from the Heart of Our Faith." Each week, members shared their stories of faith at First Baptist -- stories of love and support and shared beliefs and community worship.

Having spent the summer finding unity of purpose and consulting representatives of both the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and the South Carolina Baptist Convention on "best practices," our group contracted the Center for Healthy Churches (CHC) to assist in our search, a decision made easier as our deacons hired Rev. Dr. David Hull as our transition pastor. Dr. Hull, who had served as senior pastor of our church from the mid-1980s to early 1990s, became our CHC consultant as well, leading us through training as a committee and guiding our congregation in a series of "congregational conversations" to help our church and this committee understand what defines us as a church and what traits define the minister we seek.

This church profile reflects this study and the important elements of our church and our community that we want to share with potential candidates. We believe that this process, steeped in prayer, will lead us to the person God is even now preparing to join us in ministry. We ask you to join us in prayer for your role in this process as we move forward.

Faithfully,

David Corley, Chair; Kay Henderson, Vice Chair; Sonya Croker, Secretary; Michael Buhrmaster, Bo Carlay, Heather Coggins, Jim Cothran, Craig Little, Meg Turner

[FBCLaurensPastorSearch@gmail.com](mailto:FBCLaurensPastorSearch@gmail.com)

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## History

The First Baptist Church of Laurens was first organized February 16, 1834, under the name Laurensville Baptist Church, taking the name from the little village of Laurensville. The charter membership consisted of sixteen.

During the first fifty years of its history, years that might well be described as its infancy, the church experienced many trials. Indeed, its struggles were so serious that they threatened its very existence from time to time.

Although the church had been organized in 1834, the first house of worship was not built until 1850. Prior to the building of the church house, the Presbyterian congregation permitted the Laurensville Baptists to use their building. Dedication services were held in the first Laurensville Baptist church edifice on Sunday, November 16, 1851.

The story of the little church established in 1834 by a handful of Baptists in the Laurensville village is a narrative of undying courage. Twice reconstituted, in 1851 and again in 1876, for more than forty years the church offered little hope of ever becoming a strong church. The Southern Baptist Convention Domestic Board at different times gave financial aid in order that the church might survive.

In 1880 the church began to show signs of growth. Ten or twelve years later a new

church house arose on the corner of West Main and Church Streets, south and east of the original building. In either 1909 or 1910 the second church building was remodeled and enlarged.

In 1902 the official name of the Laurens church became "First Baptist Church" because the Laurens Mill Village had built a Baptist Church in 1898 to be known as Second Baptist Church. The First Baptist membership grew from 23 in 1880 to 264 in 1907.

In 1956 plans were made for the erection of a third sanctuary, which was completed just prior to Easter Sunday in 1958. In 1971 the Easterby Chapel was added to the facilities on West Main Street. With an ever-growing membership, the need for a family life center was apparent. The Family Life Center of First Baptist Church was dedicated August 23, 1992.

Today the congregation continues to occupy the third sanctuary. Recent renovations to the sanctuary, Cooper Building (office, Sunday School, and Bobo Hall event space), Family Life Center, youth, and children's facilities leave First Baptist ready to continue its mission.

All information taken from First Baptist Church Laurens, S.C., Historical Sketch 1934-1959 and First Baptist Church Laurens, South Carolina, A Sesquicentennial History 1834-1984.

# Pastor Profile

“HEALTHY”

“VIBRANT”

“ONE BIG FAMILY”

“WELCOMING”

“ACCEPTING OF OTHERS”

“OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL AGES”

“STRONG CHILDREN’S, YOUTH AND MUSIC MINISTRIES”

“FINANCIALLY STABLE, DEBT FREE, GREAT FACILITIES”

“POSITIONED TO ATTRACT FROM A GROWING COMMUNITY”

First Baptist Church, Laurens, SC, is “A church in the Baptist tradition, bringing joy to the heart of God and Christ to the heart of Laurens and the world.” Since 1834, the members of First Baptist Church Laurens (FBCL) have sought to love God with heart, soul, mind and strength and to love our neighbors, both in Laurens and throughout the world, as ourselves.

First meeting in the building of their Presbyterian neighbors, FBCL sits today on the corner of Church and West Main streets, situated between First Presbyterian Church and First United Methodist Church and a stone’s throw from the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany. From this location in the center of a row of churches, in the middle of the “Bible Belt,” in the county seat of Laurens County, in the heart of upstate South Carolina, at the intersection of two major interstates (I-385 and I-26), between the mountains of the Blue Ridge and the beaches of the Grand Strand, FBCL embraces a rich history, a vibrant present, and an exciting future of ministry and service.

The [history](#) of FBCL reveals a community of believers with a resilient determination to spread the love of Christ. From early struggles that saw the fledgling congregation dissolve and reorganize more than once, the church found its place on West Main with the other “downtown churches” in 1880, a relationship that remains strong with ecumenical gatherings of these congregations for Lenten and other studies.

A dually affiliated congregation, FBCL supports the ordination of women, both as lay and ministerial leaders, divides its missions giving, and participates in programs of both the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and the Southern Baptist Convention. Independent in the Baptist tradition of the autonomy of the local congregation, our members represent a diversity of Biblical, theological and ethical viewpoints, united in worship, discipleship and fellowship.

A commitment to missions defines FBCL. Martha Franks, missionary to China (1925-1966) who was imprisoned by the Japanese during World War II, was a member of our congregation, and her example and zeal led, in part, to our church’s commitment to support foreign missions and the Martha Franks Baptist Retirement Community, which is located

a block from our church and continues “Miss Martha’s” vision of a home for retired Baptist missionaries and ministers. FBCL members have served recently as full-time missionaries in Alaska and Madagascar and on medical mission teams in locations around the world. FBCL sends teams yearly to Allendale, SC, as part of the [Together For Hope](#) mission of the CBF, and until the recent dangers sent yearly teams to Haiti.

With one Sunday morning worship service, FBCL honors the traditions of its past while offering “opportunities for all ages.” When the time comes for a children’s sermon, the children running to the front sound like a “thundering herd,” and their eager answers and precocious questioning delight our older members. A blend of traditional hymns with contemporary praise and worship music reaches a congregation that is diverse in age and membership length. Music offerings for all ages — from children’s and youth choir and handbells; to adult choir and handbells; to guest musicians and special events — make music a significant factor in the worship, outreach and fellowship of our community. Members rank our music ministry as one of the programs that make our church unique.

Our members seek sermons that are “sound Biblical teaching” from a “personable, caring, approachable minister” who is “accepting of all people” and “relates to all age groups.” Our members want to be challenged to “grow in knowledge of God.” Our church seeks a minister who “nurtures spiritual growth” and “challenges us to live more faithfully” by “delivering and preparing effective sermons” and “providing administrative leadership” that “enables and empowers our current ministerial staff.”

Traditional Sunday School classes and Wednesday night scripture studies, men’s and women’s group studies, book studies on Sunday nights, Book Club, Bible studies for youth, and Kids On Mission groups for children provide discipleship studies in different forms for all ages. Our members value spiritual growth through worship and discipleship, and list our children’s and youth programs as unique aspects of our church.

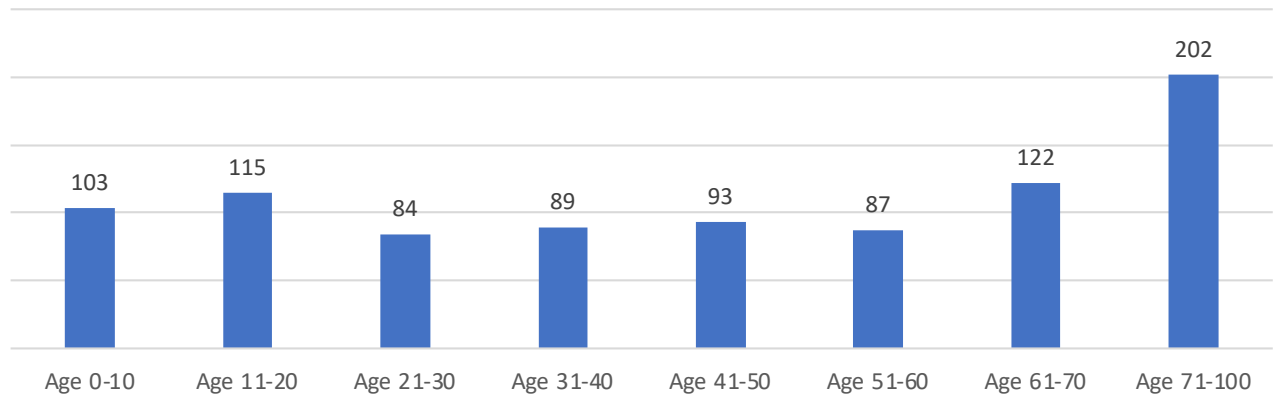
Fifth Quarters after home football games and free car washes for members of the Martha Franks Retirement Community highlight the combination of outreach, ministry and service that defines our youth programs. Two annual retreats (winter and summer) and a separate retreat for middle school students transitioning from children’s to youth ministry anchor our youth programs. Weekly Sunday morning, Sunday night and Wednesday night gatherings keep our youth engaged and involved in the larger church mission. Combined with recreation ministry offerings such as paint ball, Wiffle Ball, Ultimate Frisbee, and trips to professional sporting events, our youth immerse themselves in God’s word and God’s church.

Situated in the middle of the middle of the middle, FBCL stands out. With a diverse membership that has remained stable, with tremendous giving that has remained constant and finds us debt free, with newly renovated youth, children’s and study spaces, with a staff that loves and is beloved, with unique ministries, unique opportunities, and a unique history, FBCL now seeks to find the future for which God is preparing us. We seek a leader who combines a love of God with a love of people. We seek a minister for the unique needs of our congregation – a congregation that serves a unique God in a unique place.

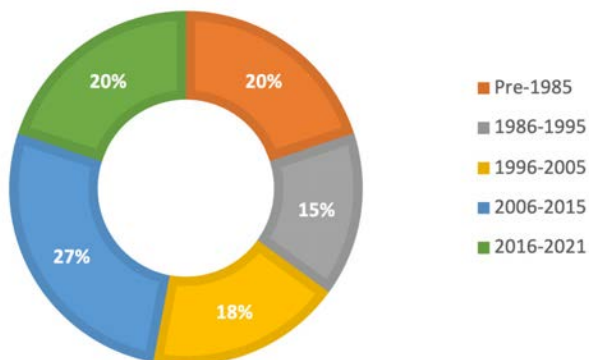
# Who We Are

FBCL currently has 743 members with a resident membership of 641

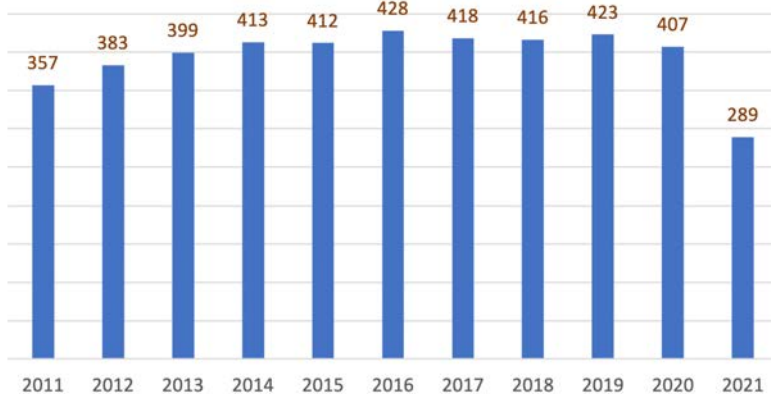
Ages of Sunday School / Church Members



When Did Our Members Join?



Worship Attendance





# Capital Campaign 2018-2021

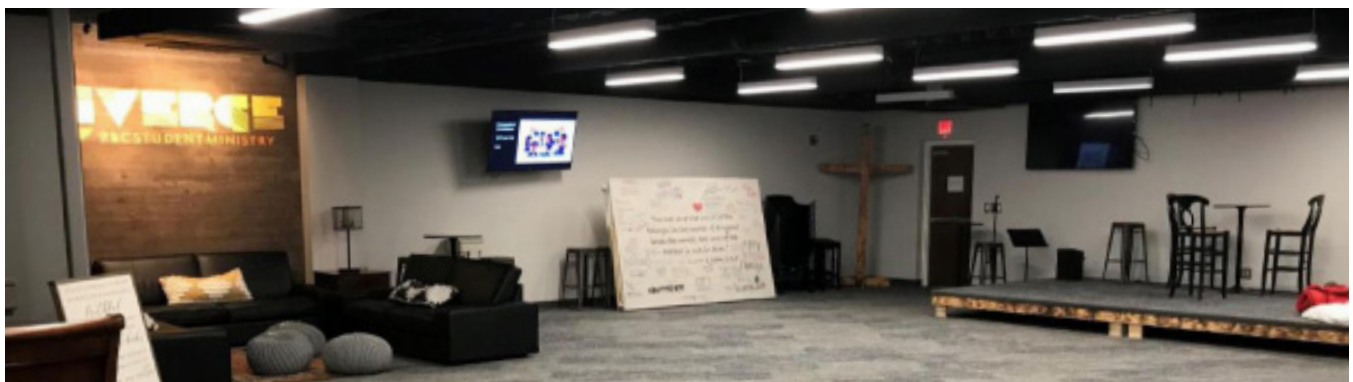
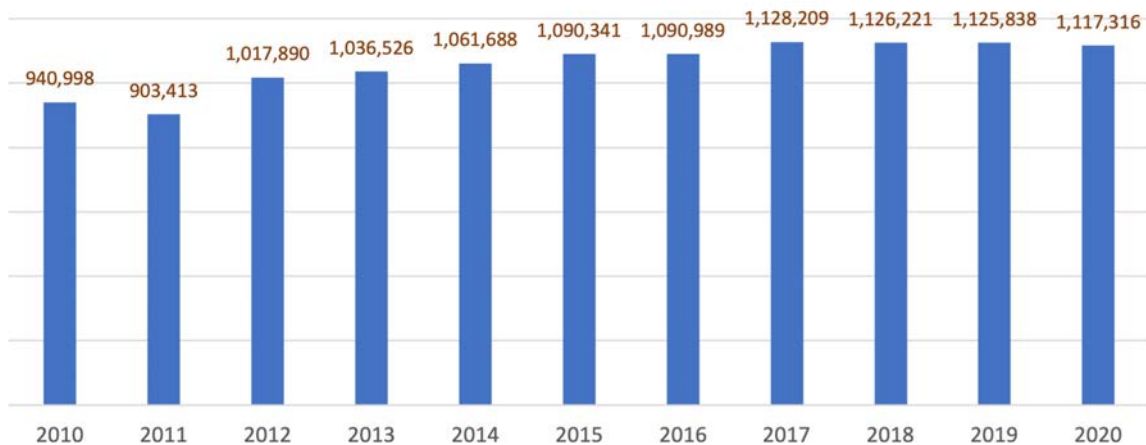
Goal: \$1.75 million

Given to the Campaign: \$1,802,734.60

Expenses for the project: \$1,748,856.40

Projects to renovate buildings for ministries are completed debt free

Annual Budget Giving







## Ministry Opportunities





# Youth Ministry

The Youth Ministry at FBCL exists to connect students to Christ, the church and their communities. Our hope is to see the students of Laurens grow in their faith, claim it as their own and put it into practice through service to the church and others. Through worship, discipleship and missions, we seek to help students find their places in the story of God's redemptive work in the world and find where they can be a part of making the Kingdom of God known on Earth.



## Weekly Schedule:

### Sunday

- Sunday School  
(88 on roll, average 2021 attendance of 35-50)  
Students meet in age-specific small groups for a time of Bible study, fellowship and prayer. The focus of this time is reminding students of the stories of faith that they learned as children and helping them see the relevance of those stories to their lives and how scripture can be applied to modern situations.
- Middle and High School Handbells  
(Average 2020 attendance of 20-30 middle schoolers and 15-25 high schoolers)
- Combined Youth Choir  
(Average 2019 attendance of 45-50)
- Sunday Night Youth  
(Average 2020-21 attendance of 50-60 students)  
A time of fellowship and discipleship, students eat a light supper together and then spend time growing together through games, prayer and conversations about growing faith.

### Wednesday

- Worship on Wednesdays  
(Average 2021 attendance of 30-40)  
A large-group time of worship, prayer and messages focused on the application of faith to life

### Other Activities:

- Winter Retreat  
(2021 attendance of 65)  
A time of fellowship, discipleship and worship for the full group

- CENTRIFUGE Summer Camp  
(2021 Attendance of 52 students)  
Recreation and worship-based camp experience
- Middle School Retreat  
Fall retreat focused on welcoming new sixth graders into the ministry, giving middle schoolers space to explore their faith without the pressures of the full-group setting, and giving older students the opportunity to lead in worship and small group activities

### Other Events

- Fifth Quarters
- Local Missions Projects
- Pool Parties
- Quick Trips (anything from Sonic for ice cream to Carowinds)







Vacation Bible School 2021

## Children's Ministry

FBCL offers Kids on Missions for children beginning at the age of two all the way through fifth grade. We meet together weekly, divided into age-appropriate classes, and teach through activities and stories that provide children with a meaningful learning experience that helps them to develop a missional lifestyle. We use a curriculum called Form (preschool) and Spark (elementary), provided by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, that focuses on different field personnel serving around our world. We also participate in local, national, and global mission projects throughout the year. Average preschool attendance each week (two to five-year-olds) is approximately 30 children. Average elementary attendance each week (first through fifth grade) is approximately 60 children.

Throughout the year, our Children's Ministry offers a variety of activities for children of all ages. Below is a list of many of the opportunities that are consistent throughout the year. Of course, many more "pop-ups" are included in the mix.

- Vacation Bible School
- Birthday Party for Jesus
- Father/Son Retreat to Camp McCall (Baptist camp for boys in Upstate SC)
- Christmas Musical
- PassportKids! Camp
- Parents' Night Out
- Bibles for rising first graders
- Easter Egg Hunt
- Flashlight Egg Hunt
- Trunk or Treat
- Fine Arts Institute
- Taste & See Kits (Covid-specific activity)
- Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Packing
- Backpack Sunday





## Kindergarten

FBCL offers a half-day kindergarten program for children 18 months to four years old. We strive to help each child grow spiritually, mentally, socially, physically and emotionally in a caring, Christian environment. Teachers use age-appropriate lessons and resources, and encourage children to interact with the classroom environment through home living, blocks, art, music, language, math, science and manipulatives. Our staff works hard to make sure that the foundations are in place to give children skills needed as more challenging and difficult work presents itself. Each spring, our children present for families and friends in a Music & Art Program. We currently have ten teachers on staff, and our student enrollment for the 2021-22 school year is 51 students. Church members and community members make up our enrollment.



# Sunday School

Our Sunday School ministry consists of twenty-nine classes and serves preschoolers through senior adults. Prior to the Covid pandemic, our enrollment was 742, and our average attendance was 326 (January 2018-March 15, 2020).

With the onset of Covid in 2020, all our in-person services were suspended from March 15, 2020 to April 18, 2021. During this period, our children's Sunday School utilized online curriculum while our youth and adult classes met via Zoom. In addition, we also provided weekly broadcasts of Sunday School lessons through our local radio station.

Since our return to in-person Sunday School on April 18, 2021, our enrollment now stands at 727, and our average attendance from April 18 to September 26 is 252.

## Children's Sunday School

FBCL offers Sunday School for children of all ages. Our babies and one year olds are taught how much God loves them from their first days with us as infants. We begin sharing Bible stories with our youngest, who learn through listening to fun, engaging Bible songs during our time together. Our two year olds through fifth graders, while in their own age-specific classrooms, are learning from The Gospel Project curriculum provided by Lifeway. Our children are on a three-year journey through the Bible, and by the time they promote to our youth ministry as sixth graders, they will have covered the entirety of the Bible two-and-a-half times. The curriculum is taught on an age-appropriate level, and as children grow older, the depth grows with them.







## Fine Arts Institute

The Fine Arts Institute of FBCL is an outreach program of our children's and music ministries that provides a week-long immersive exposure to a variety of art endeavors. Past institutes have offered piano, organ, handbell, painting, drama, dance, and other art classes for beginners and intermediates. Offerings in sewing, carpentry, and other less traditional arts and crafts round out a program that draws both members and the community to our church for this summer favorite.







## Senior Adults

Our senior adults, who have been given the name CWA (Comfortable With Age), meet monthly for a time of fellowship. Each month they have lunch together and enjoy a speaker or an entertainer. The senior adults take several day trips each season, maybe to pick apples or to visit a museum. In addition to day trips, this group takes several one or two-night trips to conferences, retreats or to special destinations.

Wednesday Morning Bible Study  
 Monthly Meetings (Lunch and Speaker/Entertainer)  
 Every Other Month Day Trip  
 Extended Trips (two-three times a year)

25-35 Senior Adults  
 30-40 Senior Adults  
 15-25 Senior Adults  
 15-25 Senior Adults







## Martha Franks Baptist Retirement Community

A ministry of the South Carolina Baptist Ministries for the Aging, [The Martha Franks Baptist Retirement Community](#) offers living options from independent living to skilled nursing care. Only a block from FBCL and the culmination of the vision of Martha Franks — Laurens resident, FBCL member and missionary to China — Martha Franks Retirement Community enjoys a close relationship with FBCL. Many of the independent residents of Martha Franks join our church, and FBCL offers monthly chapels, pickups for services, and other outreach to Martha Franks residents.





# Music

## Preschool Choirs 20-25 Children

Our preschool choirs are led by talented and creative teachers who are committed to sharing God's love with every child through His gift of music. Children learn basics of music, including movement, instruments and singing skills, combined with scripture, Bible stories and music fundamentals.



## First-Fifth Grade Choirs 50-60 Children

Our graded choirs are also led by talented and dedicated leaders who teach music fundamentals along with singing skills, scripture and Bible stories. These children usually learn a musical to perform either at Christmas or in the spring. We also go Christmas caroling to our local nursing homes and retirement homes every December.





## Youth Choir 40-50 Youth

Our youth choir is a vibrant and exciting group of sixth through twelfth graders. Our youth have the opportunity to learn contemporary music, traditional music, as well as some classical music to which they would ordinarily not have been exposed. Our youth choir participates in two youth choir festivals during the year. In March, we attend Festival by the Sea, which is sponsored by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. In June we attend a festival called SonPower, which combines music and missions for youth choirs throughout the United States.



## Adult Choir 40-50 Adults

The heart of our music ministry is our adult choir, which leads the congregation in worship each Sunday morning. The adult choir sings a wide variety of anthems, including hymn arrangements, contemporary pieces, gospel music and American spirituals. The adult choir prays each week that God will give them sincere hearts, minds and voices as they seek to lead others in worship.



## Senior Adult Choir 30-40 Senior Adults

The senior adult choir meets at the Martha Franks Baptist Retirement Center just up the street from us, and the choir includes residents from the retirement center. They enjoy this fellowship opportunity and sing several concerts throughout the year.

**First-Third Grade Handbell Choir**      25 Children

**Fourth-Fifth Grade Handbell Choir**      25 Children

Our children's handbell choirs meet on Tuesday afternoons in conjunction with Kids on Missions. While the first through third graders are in Kids on Missions, the fourth through fifth graders are in handbell practice, and then we rotate so that both groups have Kids on Missions and handbells every Tuesday afternoon. Our children's handbell choirs lead in worship as often as possible because we want our children to realize that they can make important contributions when we worship God, no matter what age they are.

**Middle School Handbell Choir**      30 Youth

**High School Handbell Choir**      20 Youth

Our middle school and high school handbell choirs rotate, with one choir meeting one Sunday afternoon and the other choir meeting the following Sunday afternoon. Our youth enjoy the teamwork that comes with playing handbells as well as realizing that they make important contributions to our worship services when they lead us in worship.

**Adult Handbell Choir**      15 Adults

Our adult handbell choir meets on Monday evenings from 6:00-7:00. The members of this group enjoy the camaraderie that they share as well as leading in worship as often as possible.







## Recreation

Taking cues from the fact that the root of the word “recreation” is also found in words like “retreat” and “renew,” the Recreation Ministry at FBCL exists to provide spaces for retreat from the stresses of the world and to renew our souls in the midst of our busyness. This mission covers a variety of activities from traditional sports-based programs to video game tournaments, dance lessons and painting classes.



### Summer 2021 Recreation Events:

- Summer Wiffle Ball League
- “Paintly Fun” family painting party
- Nature hike
- Madden 21 video game tournament
- Family tubing trip
- Greenville Drive baseball game

### Regular Recreation Opportunities:

- Walking track (open daily)
- Golf fellowship (bi-monthly March-September)
- Basketball, volleyball, and pickleball (Currently by request; hopefully regularly scheduled nights will resume in 2022.)

### Other Recreation Events:

- Ping-Pong tournament
- Dominoes games
- Paintball
- Cornhole tournament
- Shag lessons
- Ceramics class



## Missions

FBCL has a long history of strong support for missions. We support various mission efforts through financial gifts, time and prayer. Examples of our local mission activities include the homebound ministry to our shut-ins, aid to the [Good Shepherd Free Medical Clinic](#) and participation in [Habitat for Humanity](#) projects. The Backpack Program is one of our most important local missions, providing weekend nutrition for food-insecure children at a local Title I school. Purchasing the food for the backpacks receives church-wide support, and Sunday School classes pack the food weekly. Our Handyman Ministry has built several wheelchair ramps for both church members and non-members. FBCL has also been instrumental in the establishment and ongoing support of [Family Promise](#) — a national program to address family homelessness. Most significant is the provision of a building on our campus to serve as the local office for Laurens County's Family Promise. Sunday School classes often engage in projects for the Laurens Memorial Home, Hanson Circle, Safe Home and [AMI Kids](#).

On the state level we have provided volunteers for disaster relief. For many years we have sponsored weekend spring and fall trips to Allendale, the poorest county in South Carolina, to work on various construction projects. In Laurens we are blessed to have the [Martha Franks Retirement Community](#). Martha Franks Retirement Community is one of only two Baptist Ministries for the Aging facilities in the state. Many Martha Franks residents are members of our church and contribute greatly. This relationship also offers FBCL many opportunities for service to the residents.

Members with gifts in many areas have joined together on mission trips to Haiti, Alaska, Romania, Nigeria and other countries around the world.

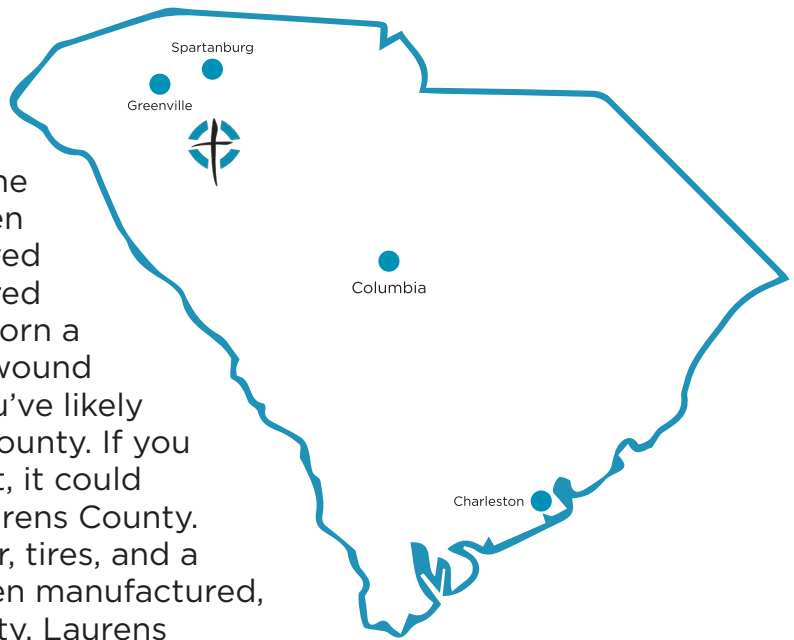




# Laurens

## Industry

If you've put a self-adhesive stamp on a letter, written your name on a "Hello My Name Is" label, eaten with a plastic knife and fork, received a package in a cardboard box, stored something in a plastic container, worn a cap and gown, put peroxide on a wound or watered a plant with a hose, you've likely used a product made in Laurens County. If you bought that product from Walmart, it could easily have been shipped from Laurens County. If your car has a catalytic converter, tires, and a transmission, those could have been manufactured, tested or shipped in Laurens County. Laurens County boasts diverse manufacturing and distribution companies, including recognized names such as Walmart, Michelin, Sterilite and ZF Transmissions and some not-so-well-known but equally vital automotive, packaging, distribution and other industries.



## Location

A short drive from Greenville (33 miles), Spartanburg (31 miles), and Columbia (71 miles), at the intersection of Interstates 26 and 385, Laurens County also boasts small-town living with easy access to city amenities. "Statistically, Laurens County is recognized among the fastest-growing counties in the Upstate" ([Laurens County Chamber of Commerce](#)). Despite the pandemic, the city of Laurens is currently experiencing growth with new restaurants, shops and housing development announcements coming almost weekly.

## The Square

Major renovations to the county courthouse (the center of Laurens' town square), the Laurens County Museum and three [downtown buildings](#) showcase a renewed interest and investment in our [city](#). [The Coffee Roost](#), Laurens' local coffee shop, moved this past year to the renovated [Midtown Building](#) and began hosting musicians and other special events. [Main Street Laurens'](#) Finally Friday brought weekly entertainment to the Main Street Stage, and [Squealin' on the Square](#) attracted barbecue aficionados to the city's weekend competition and festival. [The Laurens County Museum](#) celebrated its move to the renovated historic Witherspoon Building, opening new exhibits and event space.

Laurens' local movie theater has recently gained new life as [Presbyterian College](#) from our neighboring community [purchased the property](#) to house its new esports team and other events. Located in neighboring Clinton, SC, Presbyterian College, [Thornwell Home and School for Children](#), and the [Presbyterian Home](#) offer ministry partnerships and enhance the county's educational and retirement offerings.

## Recreation

Home to [Musgrove Mill State Historic Site and Park](#), [Lake Rabon](#) recreation area, [Lake Greenwood](#), hiking trails and parks, Laurens offers a variety of recreational opportunities. And with Greenville only a short drive away, professional [soccer](#), [baseball](#), and [hockey](#) become convenient activities.

## Education

Laurens County also offers a range of educational opportunities. Two public school districts serve the children of the county, [District 55](#) serving the Laurens area and [District 56](#) serving the Clinton area. [Laurens Academy](#) offers a private educational alternative, and two public charter schools serve the county's students ([Thornwell](#) and [Summit](#) charter schools in Clinton). [Presbyterian College](#) in Clinton is a four-year private liberal arts college, founded in 1880, and [The University of South Carolina](#) and [Piedmont Technical College](#) both offer satellites in Laurens County.

For business, leisure or daily activities, Laurens, SC, offers residents life in the heart of the Upstate.





# Ministry Team



**Adair Rogers**  
**Minister of Music and Senior Adults**

Adair begins her 27th year of service at FBCL in 2022. She is a native of Virginia but spent most of her growing up years in Clinton, SC, where her father served as the pastor of First Baptist Church, Clinton. She is a graduate of Furman University (BA in Music Education) and Erskine Theological Seminary (Master of Church Music). Adair is passionate about helping children (and adults) develop and use their God-given gifts, especially in the area of music. She and her husband, Alex, have been married for 38 years, and they are the proud parents of two adult children — Dean, a graduate of Clemson University, who lives with his wife, Chelsea, and their daughter, Everly, in Boulder, CO, and Ali, also a Clemson graduate, who lives with her husband, Wills, and their son, Noah, in Greenville, SC. Adair enjoys cooking, sewing and especially enjoys planning fellowship opportunities for her church family. Contact Adair at [adair@fbclaurens.org](mailto:adair@fbclaurens.org).



**Tommy Cox**  
**Minister of Education**

Tommy has served on staff at FBCL for 24 years. He is a native of Laurens and is a graduate of Presbyterian College (BS in Psychology). Prior to his current position, he served as Minister of Youth and Recreation at FBCL for 15 years. His experience also includes serving 13 years as a Prevention/Education Consultant with the SC Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services, directing many leadership and community development projects at the state and local levels. Tommy enjoys all aspects of ministry, but he particularly enjoys leadership development and small-groups ministry. Tommy and his wife Kena, who is a teacher in Laurens District 55, have been married for 33 years. They have two daughters Kelsey, who lives with her husband, Gabriel, in Powdersville, SC, and Kailey, who is an interior designer in Greenville, SC. Tommy enjoys spending time with his grandson, Walker, as well as playing golf, watching college football, and spending time with family and friends. Contact Tommy at [tommy@fbclaurens.org](mailto:tommy@fbclaurens.org).



**Elizabeth Franklin**  
**Director of Children's Ministry**

Elizabeth is a native of Laurens and a 2002 graduate of the University of South Carolina. Upon graduation, she worked five years as a Paralegal and managed the real estate department of a law firm in Greenville, SC. Elizabeth became a stay-at-home mom after the birth of her first child. She has devoted much of her time volunteering, and in 2010, joined the kindergarten staff of FBCL. In 2013, she became the Director of Children's Ministry. Having grown up in this church, Elizabeth has a special love and passion for children and is excited to be a part of the church that has been so instrumental in her own spiritual growth. Elizabeth and her husband, Kevin, have been married for 18 years and have two children, Brock and Marett. Elizabeth is very active in the community and serves on numerous committees and boards. In her free time, Elizabeth enjoys spending time with her family and friends, traveling, and cheering for the Gamecocks at Williams-Brice Stadium. Contact Elizabeth at [elizabeth@fbclaurens.org](mailto:elizabeth@fbclaurens.org).



**Andrew Corley**  
**Minister of Students and Recreation**

Andrew began serving as Minister of Students and Recreation in October of 2020. A native of Laurens and product of FBCL, Andrew is a graduate of Presbyterian College (BA in History and Religion and Philosophy) and Gardner-Webb School of Divinity (MDiv, Pastoral Studies). Prior to returning to Laurens, Andrew served churches in North Carolina, most recently as Pastor of Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Grover, NC. Andrew and his wife, Meghan, a third-grade teacher, have two children — Davis and Abigail. In the brief windows of free time those two allow, Andrew enjoys Charlotte Hornets basketball, professional wrestling, music (listening and playing) and reading. Contact Andrew at [andrew@fbclaurens.org](mailto:andrew@fbclaurens.org).

## Support Staff



**Tana Adams**  
**Ministry Assistant and Desktop Publisher**

Tana began her 20th year as Ministry Assistant at FBCL in 2021. Having grown up in this church, she values the examples set by older generations and appreciates the energy and fresh ideas of new members. Biggest perk of her job — opportunities that allow her to put her creative abilities to use. Tana has three adult children and five grandchildren of whom she is very proud. Empty nesting has its rewards, as Tana now has time to volunteer, work with women's ministries and pursue her hobbies. Contact Tana at [tana@fbclaurens.org](mailto:tana@fbclaurens.org).



**Dale Calvert**  
**Building Superintendent**

Dale was born and raised in Cross Anchor, SC. He began working at FBCL in August 2018. Dale is one of our building superintendents and sees his job as his ministry. When asked what he likes most about working at FBCL, he is quick to say, "The people and the environment."



**Lucy Crowder**  
**Financial Secretary**

Lucy was born and raised in Laurens and married her high school sweetheart. She and her husband have two sons and two adult grandchildren. Lucy was the AVP of Loan Compliance at The Palmetto Bank when she retired from banking after 31 years and started to work for First United Methodist Church, Laurens, in 2011. Now, she works for both First Methodist and FBCL as their Financial Secretary. Contact Lucy at [lucy@fbclaurens.org](mailto:lucy@fbclaurens.org).





### **Mary Beth Kennedy** **FBCL Kindergarten Director**

Mary Beth was born and raised in Laurens, SC. She graduated from Laurens High School and Samford University (Religion) in Birmingham, Alabama. After graduation, Mary Beth worked in Laurens nursing homes as an activity director. Many wonderful years were spent working with the elderly and helping to brighten their days. Mary Beth is married to Price Kennedy, and they have two beautiful daughters, Julia and Mary Frances. After being a stay-at-home mom for several years, Mary Beth joined the staff at FBCL Kindergarten in 2011. She has worked in all areas of the kindergarten program. In 2020, Mary Beth became director and continues to teach in the classroom. Mary Beth loves spending her mornings with the precious children in our kindergarten program as well as with the amazing staff. She sees the kindergarten program not only as an educational foundation, but a ministry to families and their children. Mary Beth enjoys sharing the love of God with children through scripture, music and daily lessons. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her family and friends. She also loves traveling to Pigeon Forge, TN, and Beaufort, SC. Contact Mary Beth at [kindergarten@fbclaurens.org](mailto:kindergarten@fbclaurens.org).



### **Thomas Little** **Building Superintendent**

Thomas was born in Mt. Vernon, New York, but has called Laurens home since he was two months old. Thomas started working at FBCL in October 2018 and is one of our building superintendents. He not only helps keep our building clean, he keeps us organized. He loves everything about this job, including the children and their voices that fill the hallways. When Thomas isn't working, he can be found watching sports, especially when the South Carolina Gamecocks are playing.



### **Emily Reynolds** **Receptionist/Church Administrator**

Emily joined the FBCL staff in March of 2018; however, she's no stranger to working in a church. A 1999 graduate of Wofford College (BA in Finance), Emily entered the working world as a Portfolio Performance Analyst at Merrill Lynch. After a successful 14-year career, life threw her a few inconvenient interruptions, including a breast cancer diagnosis. Looking for less stress, she took a leap of faith, left the corporate world and began working at her church in Columbia as the Director of Handshakes and Hugs. She spent the majority of her time connecting folks in the congregation to others within the church and community. While she loved her city life in Columbia, Emily now calls Laurens home with her husband, Seth, and four step-daughters, Haley, Emily, Anna Nance, and Ellen. When she is not fulfilling her FBCL administrative duties, Emily enjoys reading, writing, cooking, and gardening. Contact Emily at [emily@fbclaurens.org](mailto:emily@fbclaurens.org).