

ANNUAL REPORT

AUGUST 1, 2022 - JULY 31, 2023





PASTORAL REPORT

History is being made around us every day. We recently passed the 22nd year since September 11, 2001. For those of us who have a memory of life before September 11, 2001, we can tell the story of the change those attacks brought to the whole world. Now, we are experiencing another shift. The coronavirus pandemic catapulted us into a new phase in society, one that is different but not outside the reach of the hope of the gospel! The world is increasingly dark and longing for meaning and purpose, and amid this dark world, the Lord calls his church to let our light shine before men and women, boys and girls, so that they may see our good works and give glory to God. In the midst of this cultural moment, God is doing a new thing in the life of our church.

As you can see from this report, we are in a season of growth, but what is the growth for? As I answer that question, I cannot help but hear God say, to whom much is given, much is required. God is calling First Baptist Starkville to more!

During days needing good news, God calls our church to live sent. Live sent means simply following Jesus and inviting others to come along. Such a movement means we must follow Jesus, and then, inevitably, from that overflow of a life following Jesus, we will invite others to follow us as we follow him.

We have identified one distraction holding us back from reaching the potential God is calling us towards. At the time of this report, we owe \$1.65 million in debt to our children's building. There was a time in our church when we did not have a children's building. Since completing the construction of our children's building, we have seen the Lord bless the investment through increasing our ministry to children, which is the reason we spent the money and built the building in the first place. Our loan is up for renegotiation at the end of 2025. Given this economy, we want to avoid the renegotiation of the loan. If we pay the debt off early, we can free ourselves from looking back and lean more into God's call for First Baptist Starkville. Let's leave behind the debt so that we can live sent! Please consider joining us to see the debt retired early.

Our community is growing, and as our community grows, the opportunities to live sent grow. As you can see from this legacy report, we are experiencing a period of growth. Attendance is up. Baptisms are up. God is moving. We are leaning into the wind as God calls us to more. And as we lean, we are listening. Listening means we are hearing God's call, and I pray that as you listen to God, you will hear him tell you to live sent.

Dr. Andy Brown

GROWTH

**Our ministry starts at First Baptist Starkville.
How did we grow during 2023?**

- Baptisms: **28**
- New Members: **72**
- Reported First Time Guests: **122**
- Baby Dedications: **8**
- New Births: **21**

Weekly Average Attendance

- Children (Preschool - 6th Grade): **158**
- Students (7th - 12th Grade): **90**
- College: **100**
- Adult Community Groups: **386**
- Worship Services (Physical & Online): **881**



MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Beginning Total Membership (08/01/22)	3,579
Resident	2,432
New Members:	
Baptism	28
Statement.....	14
Letter	58
Letters To Be Granted	(40)
Erasures.....	(17)
Total Resident Members (07/31/23).....	2,475
Non-Resident Members (07/31/23).....	1,147
Letters To Be Granted	(0)
Erasures.....	(0)
Total Non-Resident Members (07/31/23).....	1,147
Ending Total Membership (07/31/23)	3,622



INVESTMENT

God has blessed First Baptist Starkville immensely. Here are some (but not all) of the ways we served our community in 2023

SPIRITUAL INVESTMENT

Community Events

- VBS 2023 Attendance: Over **70** volunteers served nearly **255** Preschool - 6th Graders from our church and community!
- Connect Camp 2023 Attendance: We partnered with Connect Camps to host a new day camp in Starkville for **157** campers. We had **6** campers make decisions to follow Christ!
- D-Now 2023 Attendance: We had **164** students attend our D-Now weekend!
- Fall & Spring Break in Starkville: We had a team of college students host outreach events in Starkville to connect with International students. Altogether, we had over **50** students with **12** different countries represented.

Community Programs

- Benevolence Fund: Through regular benevolence offerings and designated gifts, we're able to maintain a benevolence fund to help those in need in our community. Because of your giving, we're able to help individuals from the community who come to the church in search of aid to pay their light bill.
- Casserole Kitchen: Members of Community Groups at First Baptist collaborate with local churches to provide a free meal three times a week at the Parish Hall of the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer in Starkville.
- Souperbowl Food Drive: We held our annual food drive to gather non-perishable food and raise money to donate to food pantries around Starkville.
- Starkville Public Schools Field Days: Blaire Johnston took some of our children's ministry volunteers and our Starkville Institute residents to help with the field days at a few of the schools around Starkville.

INVESTMENT

God has blessed First Baptist Starkville immensely. How did we steward our resources in 2023?

PHYSICAL INVESTMENT

Renovations & Improvements

- Sanctuary Renovation Phase IV: **\$201,580.00**

Does not include the following: pew cushions, choir chairs, foyer furniture, men's foyer bathroom

Debt Paid on the Children's Building: **\$692,309**

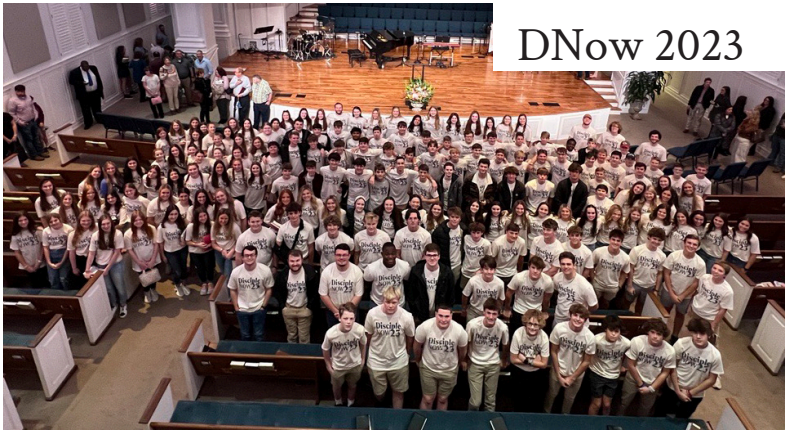
- Regular Payments: **\$426,103**
- Principal Only From Designated Gifts: **\$192,310**
- Additional principal paid from budget: **\$73,896**



Christmas 2022



DNow 2023



HAPPY EASTER!

Easter



Easter 2023



SHS Field Days 2023



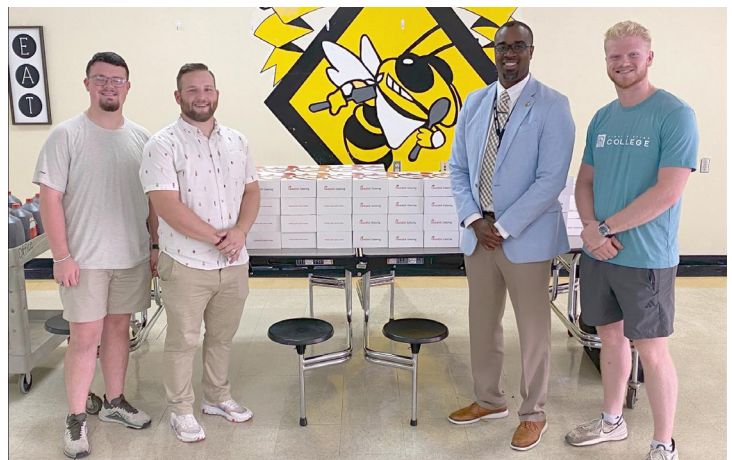
Connect Camp



VBS 2023



Teacher Appreciation



LIVE SENT

Weekend Services Volunteer Teams

Volunteers serve on Sundays throughout the year to support the ministry of First Baptist Starkville. The numbers below represent the total number of volunteers working year-round, not necessarily the number of volunteers serving on a given Sunday.

- **Preschool Through Youth: 268**
- **College Through Senior Adults: 56**
- **Special Needs: 20**
- **Guest Services: 72**
- **Choir, Band & Orchestra: 109**
- **Technology & Communications: 31**

Thank you to the 556 volunteers that serve at First Baptist Starkville!



LIVE SENT INITIATIVES

CHURCH PLANTING **\$41,000**

We have missions partners planting churches and spreading the Gospel all over the world. Our largest church planting partner, FMM (For All Mankind Movement), is located in South Asia. We have other partners in New Orleans, Victoria, the Middle East, and the Philippines.

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION **\$12,200**

We have two missions partners providing education. One partner in Kenya is focused on theological education while the other operates a humanitarian gospel-focused school in Rwanda.

MINISTERIAL SCHOLARSHIPS **\$5,000**

We've established a designated fund to provide scholarships to individuals planning to attend a Southern Baptist seminary. We intend to grow this scholarship fund through designated gifts over the coming years.

FIRST STEPS CLINIC PARTNERSHIP **\$20,000**

We've established a designated fund providing CLC daycare scholarships to mothers-in-need that have been helped by the First Steps Clinic (formerly the Starkville Pregnancy Care Center). **As of August 2023, we have sponsored one baby through this partnership.**

INSTITUTE RESIDENCY PROGRAM **\$40,000**

The Starkville Institute Residency is a two-year program designed to give students seriously considering a seminary education an in-depth, specialized survey into their desired field of ministry.

TOTAL LIVE SENT INITIATIVES **\$118,200**

MISSIONS

Marks, MS Trip

Blaire Johnston took a team to work with our mission partner, Reclaimed, over Spring Break.

- Mission Trip Members: **42**
- Professions of faith: **3**

Trial Farm, Belize Trip

Stevie Franks took a team of youth and adults to serve with our mission partner, Praying Pelicans.

- Mission Trip Members: **40**
- Professions of faith: **3**

Victoria, British Columbia Trip

Nathan Taylor returned to Canada with a team to serve with our mission partner, Canvas Church.

- Mission Trip Members: **32**

South Asia Trip

Pastor Andy Brown and Nathan Taylor took a small team to partner with FMM in South Asia.

- Mission Trip Members: **8**
- Professions of faith: **193**

Money Budgeted for Missions: \$22,800

Domestic & International Missions Partners:

- Reclaimed Project: Marks, MS
- Global Gates: Houston, TX
- Mission First: Jackson, MS
- Praying Pelican: Belize
- Ashley Austin (Canvas Church): Victoria, British Columbia
- Jonathan & Bethany Sharp: Lisbon, Portugal
- Chris Bushby (Hagari Rwanda Ministry): Rwanda, Africa
- Special Partners: South Asia & Middle East
- Leroy and Sharon Brewer: Southeast Asia
- Lew and Brandi Johnson: Kenya
- James and Brittany Riggins: The Philippines
- For All Mankind Movement: South Asia
- Andrew and Mary Margaret Hanna: New Orleans, LA

Marks, MS



Trial Farm, Belize



Victoria, BC



South Asia



GIVING

First Baptist Starkville was blessed in 2023 and we blessed others.

Giving from First Baptist (Through July 2023)

- Cooperative Program: **\$321,122.49**
First Baptist Starkville commits to giving 10% of the tithes & offerings we receive to the Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program. The Cooperative Program is the unified way that Southern Baptists across the nation support their respective state convention and the Southern Baptist Convention missions and ministries.
- Lottie Moon Christmas Offering: **\$191,548.53**
- Annie Armstrong Easter Offering: **\$41,430.44**
- Benevolence Fund: **\$36,687.00**
- Chris Bushby Rwanda, Africa: **\$28,802.00**
- Baptist Student Union (MSU): **\$24,466.70**
- Margaret Lackey State Missions (September 2022): **\$12,553.89**
- Golden Triangle Association: **\$12,333.30**
- Ashley Austin Victoria, BC: **\$7,200.00**
- Donations to Local Food Pantries: **\$2,819.87**
- Baptist Children's Village: **\$900.00**
- CWJC: **\$100.00**

Giving to First Baptist (Through July 2023)

- Tithes & Offerings **\$3,212,577.81**





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REPORTS

LEGACY SUNDAY