

Congregational Profile

First Baptist Church of Williams

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First Baptist Church of Williams



"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on a stand and it gives light. In the same way let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." – Matthew 5:14

"Touching lives by sharing the love of Jesus."





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WELCOME!

An Open Letter from the Pastor Search Committee

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

First Baptist Church of Williams is searching for the next pastor to lead our congregation as we continue to serve and grow in the Williams Community of Jacksonville, Alabama. Working with the Center for Healthy Churches, Dr. Bill Owen, and transitional Pastor, Dr. Mark Wilbanks, we recently engaged in four Congregational Conversations. We recently enjoyed a church-wide Reconciliation Service to address our past and to ask God for forgiveness as well as a church family in a spirited effort to move our church forward.

The following profile delineates our history, who we are today, and our aspirations for the future. We are seeking a pastor who will preach and teach from biblical scripture. We are the hands and feet of Christ as we serve in our community, and our pastor will lead the congregation to engage in local, regional, and international missions. We strive to live up to our mission statement, “Touching Lives by Sharing the Love of Jesus!” We aspire to grow as a congregation, attracting new members who desire to develop spiritually and serve as disciples of Christ.

We humbly consider ourselves to be a loving and welcoming church. We have a gifted, capable church staff and an engaged congregation with strong lay leadership. Our next pastor will be a servant leader capable of maximizing the use of their spiritual gifts in collaboration with those provided by God to the staff and congregation.

We hope this congregational profile leads you to get to know who we are. While you pray about this opportunity for leadership and service in His name, let us encourage you to read the following pages to explore the scope of our congregation’s story.

First Baptist Church of Williams Pastor Search Committee

Committee Members:

Alan Boozer

Rhonda Duncan

Lynn Edwards, Chairman

Jake Green

Kate Hamby

Peggy McAlister

Matt Whitaker



Pastor Profile

We are actively seeking the next Pastor to lead our congregation at FBC Williams. We are a rural Baptist community of Christ followers with a gifted ministry staff and a loving congregation. We seek a pastor who will come alongside us as we discern together God's mission for our church.

Our aspirations for our next Pastor include someone who...

- Shows the love of Christ in their personal life and interactions with others
- Responds to the Holy Spirit and feels God's call to lead our church
- Displays effective biblical preaching and teaching in the spirit of Christ
- Leads and makes decisions, while always remaining mindful of the input, perspective and concerns of the congregation
- Consistently seeks to extend their own spiritual growth
- Considers beneficial change while respecting traditions
- Engages congregation in missions and outreach

We commit to our next Pastor that we will...

- Love the individual, their family, and their call to lead our congregation
- Work collaboratively so that all have a voice, a hand, and a heart in the church
- Work together in faithful ministry to be the hands and feet of Christ to grow the church and its impact on community
- Be the light of the world in both local and global missions as we seek to honor the Great Commission

Our trust is that our search is a Spirit-led process through which God will work through all parties involved to bring together our next Pastor and our congregation in a celebration of new opportunities for spiritual growth through diverse ministry opportunities.



WHO WE ARE

History

The First Baptist Church of Williams has worshiped in our community for over 160 years. Our church was organized in 1850 under the name of Ohatchee Baptist Church #2. The name was changed to First Baptist of Williams in the early 1960's. The present sanctuary was built in 1970. A new Fellowship Center was completed in 1992. The sanctuary was renovated in 1994, and a daycare was opened in 1997. Because we continue to grow, we are currently implementing a new Long Range Vision Plan to better serve our community. Our new facility includes a multipurpose room for athletic events and meals. We have a stage, new kitchen and senior adult room, and the upstairs area houses a suite for ministry to our youth. This area includes a stage, lounge and classrooms. We also have a prayer room and a new library. Finally, our old fellowship center has been remodeled into a state of the art Daycare Ministry Center. It is exciting to be a part of what God is doing at Williams. We invite you to come see for yourself.

Core Values

Core Values express the heart of our identity as members of the First Baptist Church of Williams. They speak about our heritage and help us understand what we wish always to be as a church under God's leadership.

1. We value our relationship with Jesus Christ, who is the head of our church, the clearest revelation of God, and the cornerstone of our faith.
2. We value the Bible as the inspired word of God, and we look to the Bible as the foundation of our faith and practice.
3. We value the traditions of our Baptist heritage, including believer's baptism, the autonomy of the local church, the priesthood of the believer, the freedom of religion, and the right to interpret scripture under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.
4. We value unity in Christ, the spirit of Christian fellowship, and the caring friendships among our church family.
5. We value the equality of all persons in the church believing God can use both men and women of all ages for God's Kingdom work.

6. We value being a missions-minded church whose primary mission partnership is with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.
7. We value worship and prayer that honor God and inspire our congregation to grow closer to God.
8. We value being a community church that is open and willing to serve our neighbors.
9. We value making genuine disciples who follow the example of Christ.
10. We value leaders who are called by God, who demonstrate passion in their faith, and who are responsive to God's vision for our church.
11. We value sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with others as a way of life.
12. We value generosity as a principal characteristic of our commitment to God.

Staff

Interim Pastor:

Mark Wilbanks



First Baptist Williams is pleased to announce Dr. Mark Wilbanks has been called to service as Interim Pastor. Mark has a long history of service in ministry as a Senior Pastor and minister to students and youth. He most recently served as Senior Pastor at Wieuca Road Baptist in Atlanta. Dr. Wilbanks is a graduate of University of Georgia, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Mark and his wife Kimberly currently live in the Birmingham area.

Minister to Families:

Nikki Haynes



Nikki has served the youth and children at First Baptist Church of Williams since 2001. She has lived in the Williams Community for most of her life. Nikki graduated from Jacksonville State University in 2003 with a degree in Fine Arts. In May of 2019, she received a Masters of Arts in Christian Ministries from McAfee School of Theology. Nikki works with children with special services at Pleasant Valley Elementary. In her spare time, she enjoys watercolor, photography, reading, watching period dramas, and snuggling with her old, grouchy cat, Rosa.

Music Directors:

Pat & Lynelle Barker



Pat and Lynelle Barker have been involved with church music from their earliest memories. Both were music majors at Jacksonville State University with one majoring in performance, and the other in education. Lynelle graduated with a bachelor's degree in education and a masters in administration. Pat has travelled full-time singing gospel music while also leading revivals. Pat and Lynelle count it a privilege and blessing to be able to minister together at The First Baptist Church of Williams.

Church Secretary:

Peggy Green



Peggy has been with the church since June 1999. She is originally from Hokes Bluff and graduated from Hokes Bluff High School. Peggy is married to Denis Green. They have three children: Allen, Ann and Ginny. They also have five grandchildren: Jessica, Justus, Madilynn, Kale and Skylar and two great-grandchildren: Kaylie and Brayden. Peggy enjoys reading, photography and collecting cookbooks. Her favorite Bible verse is Philippians 4:13.

Senior Adult Coordinator/Custodian: Mike Duncan



Mike has been director of the Senior Adult Ministry since January 2004. In April 2004, he accepted the position of church custodian. Also, for many years Mike has been in charge of the audio in the church. He is a Jacksonville native and graduated from Jacksonville State University. Mike is married to the former Sharhonda Green, a retired school teacher at Pleasant Valley High School. They have two children: Michael Jr. and Emily. His favorite Bible verses are Ecclesiastes 3:1-8.

Daycare Director:

LeAnne Hamby



LeAnne Hamby has served as Daycare Director since January 2020. She has over 25 years of childcare experience. Together with our wonderful teachers, she is committed to creating a supportive, nurturing, and encouraging environment for our children and their families.

LeAnne is married to Darren Hamby, a teacher and coach at Pleasant Valley High School. She is a proud mom of two children – Will, soon to be married to Caden Crosby, and Kate. LeAnne enjoys spending time with her friends and family and going to the lake.

Facilities

Partnerships

- Alabama Cooperative Baptist Fellowship/Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
- Jacksonville Christian Outreach Center
- Jacksonville State University Baptist Christian Ministry
- Our Father's Arms/Our Father's Arms International
- McAfee School of Theology
- Various Missionaries

WHERE WE LIVE

Jacksonville

When Chief Ladiga signed the Cusseta Treaty in 1832, relinquishing the Creeks' territory in northeast Alabama, he granted permission to select land in Benton County, later known as Calhoun. Jacksonville became the first county seat of Benton County in 1833 and remained the seat until 1899 when records were moved to Anniston.

Also in 1834, Jacksonville began its storied history in education when the town reserved a one-acre square for a schoolhouse. Over the years, the school went through countless changes, developing from the Jacksonville Academy into Jacksonville State Teachers College. Today, known as Jacksonville State University, it is one of Alabama's most prestigious institutions of higher education, also known as "the friendliest campus in the south."

Nestled in the foothills of the Appalachians, Jacksonville truly lives up to its nickname - the Gem of the Hills. It beckons to many. Come for a visit, and then prepare to make yourself at home!

Economy

Calhoun County is the most populous and progressive county in East Alabama. Located in the Anniston-Oxford-Jacksonville MSA, the population in Calhoun County makes the community one of the most populated counties in the state. The county is located sixty miles east of Birmingham and ninety miles west of Atlanta on I-20. Calhoun County has more than 150 companies in its industrial database and is a regional source for commercial, professional, medical, educational, and retail services.

Households and Income

 Median Age
38.7

 Total Households
45,764

Average Household Size 2.44
Median Household Income \$39,962
Per Capita Income \$20,881

Source: U.S. Census

Educational Attainment



Less than 9th grade	7.5%
9-12 grade no diploma	14 %
High School GED	33.7%
Some College no degree	21.8%
Associates Degree	6.5%
Bachelors Degree	9.7%
Graduate or professional	6.1%

● Population & Demographics

Calhoun County (115,916)	
Anniston	22,810
Oxford	20,903
Jacksonville	12,826
Piedmont	4,789
Weaver	2,864
Ohatchee	1,284
Hobson City	732

● Cost of Living

Calhoun County is cheaper than the US average. 17.2% of the population is estimated to live below the poverty line, and at schools in Calhoun County, 57% of students are eligible to participate in the federal free and reduced price meal program.

COST OF LIVING	Calhoun	Alabama	USA
Overall	79.6	82.3	100
Groceries	94.4	94.4	100
Healthcare	103	102.2	100
Housing	47.2	55.9	100
Median Home Cost	\$109,209	\$129,300	\$231,200
Utilities	102.5	101.2	100
Transportation	84.4	85.9	100
Miscellaneous (restaurants, clothing & entertainment)	94.7	94.5	100

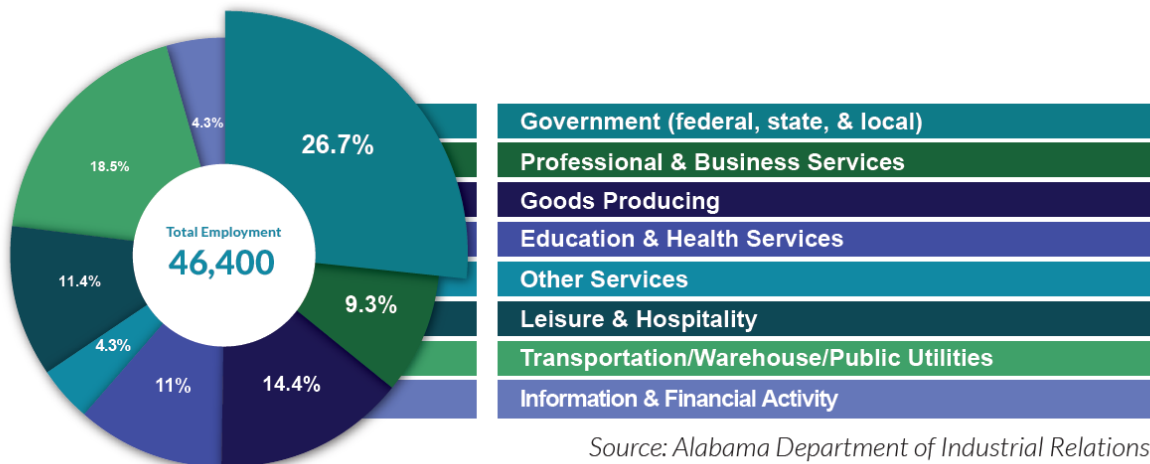
Job Opportunities

• Top 10 Largest Employers

Anniston Army Depot	4,300
Honda Manufacturing of Alabama	4,000
N.E. AL Regional Medical Center	1,685
Calhoun County School System	1,400
Jacksonville State University	1,108
Homeland Security	850
New Flyer of America	765
Oxford City School System	536
Federal-Mogul Corporation	450
Bridgewater Interiors LLC	415



Full-Time & Part-Time Employment by Industry



Source: Alabama Department of Industrial Relations



Education/Schools

With schools in Calhoun County promoting parental and community involvement, all schools work with the goal of achieving educational excellence.

Parents, who wish to send their children to public schools, have access to five systems. The largest public school system is Calhoun County, with 17 elementary and high schools and the Career Technical Center. Within the county, there are also Oxford City Schools, Anniston City Schools, Jacksonville City Schools, and Piedmont City Schools. Parents, who would like to send their children to a private school, have the option of using The Donoho School, a college-preparatory day school for grades pre-k through 12.

Several Christian schools are located within the county: Faith Christian in Golden Springs, Cornerstone Christian Academy, Trinity Christian School, Jacksonville Christian Academy, and Sacred Heart Catholic School.

The Learning Tree in Piedmont offers special education for school-age students of unspecified grade placement.


Those seeking higher education also have many options. Jacksonville State University offers 95 academic programs and concentrations, including bachelor's, master's, post-baccalaureate, doctoral and advanced certificate programs. More than 40 online programs are also offered. Gadsden State Community College offers basic studies for one and two year degrees in more than 50 areas of study.

Health/Medical Info

Calhoun County is home to the RMC Health System with two hospitals, but there are numerous urgent care facilities and many other health-related businesses and organizations. With more than 1,600 employees, 300+ volunteers and 200 physicians who represent a full range of medical specialties, Northeast Alabama Regional Medical Center provides state-of-the-art healthcare to our communities. RMC is accredited by the American College of Surgeons' Commission on Cancer (CoC), is an associate of the UAB Health System Community Cancer Network, is recognized as a Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Alabama Blue Distinction Center+ for Orthopedic® and Maternity Care®, and is the first Baby-Friendly birthing facility in Alabama.

As a part of the RMC Health System, Stringfellow Memorial Hospital in Anniston provides comprehensive acute care in-patient services, 24-hour emergency care, general and specialized surgical services including laparoscopic and laser surgery, same day outpatient surgery and procedures, a full-service rehabilitation department, and diagnostic testing procedures including MRI and CT scanning.

Those seeking health-care services on all levels will find assistance in Calhoun County. From pediatric services to assisted living facilities and hospice care, Calhoun County is home to these as well as urgent care, surgery centers, physical



therapy, and various clinics. One will also find several health clubs in Calhoun County with programs for all levels.

Quality of Life

Calhoun County is home to recreational programs for the whole family, one of a kind dining experiences, specialty shops, and municipal and county governments.

All of these make Calhoun County, Alabama a great place to live, work, and visit.

● Recreation

The area's natural beauty has made it the ultimate haven for recreation. Surrounded by the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains & Talladega National Forest, the area offers breathtaking scenery year round, miles of hiking trails, bird watching, picnicking, swimming, hunting, fishing, camping, biking, or photographic scenery.

Golfers can hit the links at Silver Lakes, one of the 10 courses making up the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail. Other popular area courses include Anniston Country Club, Cane Creek, Indian Oaks, Pine Hill, & Cider Ridge.

Things to See & Do

- Chief Ladiga Trail
- Coldwater Mountain Biking Trail
- McClellan Trails
- Choccolocco Park
- Terrapin Creek
- Pinhoti Hiking Trail
- Big Wills Creek
- Cheaha State Park
- Cherokee Rock Village
- Little River Canyon



● Culture

The county offers an abundance of cultural opportunities for people of all ages, including museums, theater, symphony, opera, ballet, and much more.

With spectator sports galore, one can enjoy a variety of sporting events. JSU is home to 17 intercollegiate athletic teams. To satisfy race fans, the Talladega Superspeedway is not far away. The track is known as the fastest, most competitive motorsports venue in the world.

Things to See & Do

- The Berman Museum of World History
- The Anniston Museum of Natural History
- Freedom Riders National Monument & Civil Rights Heritage Trail
- Janney Furnace
- Church of St. Michael and All Angels
- Oxford Performing Arts Center

Annual Events:

- Black Heritage Festival
- Noble Street Festival
- Coldwater Fat Tire Fest
- Freedom Festival
- Oxford Fest
- Cheaha Challenge
- Ladiga Half Marathon
- Spirit on Mountain Street
- Woodstock Road Race 5K



HOW WE DO CHURCH

Worship

Our Sunday worship is guided by biblical teaching that allows its members to learn and grow in their relationship with Christ. The music at Williams is a good mix of the new and old which is generally played on the piano and/or keyboard. The church enjoys the playing and singing of hymns with a mix of praise and worship music with a track. We have two very dedicated choir directors and a choir that helps lead Sunday morning worship. Sunday service often involves scripture reading, call to worship, responsive readings, The Lord's Supper, Baptism, music led by the praise team and/or choir, preaching, and a time of response to what/where God may be leading an individual. We observe seasons of the Christian calendar including Advent and Lent. We bring worship in the form of tithes and offerings each Sunday. Williams is a loving congregation willing to do and go as God leads. Christ is the reason our Church was founded in 1850, and he is the reason we continue worshipping and reaching out today.

Ministries


Children's Ministries

FBC Williams seeks to lead children into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and to guide them as active participants in worship and mission activities. This is accomplished through the teaching of God's word and encouraging participation in worship and service.

Our children's discipleship activities include Sunday School, Wednesday night Bible study, and summer VBS with various service projects throughout the year. Kids love to have fun and so does FBC Williams! There are fun monthly and special activities such as art camps, a Back-to-School Bash, Fall Festival, Christmas parties, and Easter events.

Youth Group

When children advance to seventh grade, they advance to the Youth Group. Fun activities for youth are planned monthly while participation in Bible Study during



Sunday School and on Sunday evenings is strongly encouraged. FBC Williams is actively involved in the local high school activities, in which many of our students participate, such as sports programs and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA).

Biblical Education

FBC Williams is on a life long journey with Christ seeking to become more like him throughout our lives. All ages are welcome in one of our many Sunday School classes and at Wednesday evening Bible Study. In addition to these options, there are other Bible Study classes available throughout the week.

Senior Adult Ministries

The senior adults of FBC Williams, age 55+, are very active and enjoy fellowship. These special people are always ready and willing to pray, share Godly wisdom, and lend a hand to neighbors in need. They know how to have fun as well. Every other Thursday night is game night with food and fun, and in the fall, a trip to the Ellijay, Georgia's apple orchards is a guarantee.

Daycare

A daycare ministry was established at FBC Williams in August of 1997 and incorporated in 2003. Governed by a Board of Directors, the FBC Williams Daycare provides daily childcare services for children ages 6 weeks through 4 years and has a Before-and-After school program for school-age children in Kindergarten through 4th grade. The daycare seeks to extend the ministry of the church by providing care, education, and development for each child. With excellent facilities and staff, the daycare strives to meet each child's individual needs in the areas of social, emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual development.

Missions

Mission support is an integral part of how we demonstrate the love of Christ to others. At FBC Williams, we believe in the commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves; we believe God calls us to share locally, regionally, and globally through missions. At FBC Williams our motto is "Touching others by sharing the love of Jesus." God has blessed us therefore we are to use what he has given to help others so that they also may be a light.



Missions Giving


Funds given for missions are categorized in three ways.

- **Locally Designated Funds** --- This financial assistance program is funded through designated money and special offerings taken up throughout the year. We provide assistance to our neighbors who need help with food, utilities, Christmas, building, and any other needs.
- **Locally Budgeted Funds** --- Each quarter our church makes financial contributions to local nonprofit organizations who are helping the neediest in our community, including Our Father's Arms, Jacksonville Christian Outreach Center, JSU Baptist Campus Ministries, Crisis and Benevolence, Websters Chapel Volunteer Fire Department, and various others throughout the year.
- **Globally Budgeted Missions** --- Each quarter our church makes financial contributions globally to help with spreading God's love and the gospel around the world, including Our Father's Arms International, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Mission Fund, Missionaries that are actively deployed, McAfee School of Theology and other initiatives throughout the year.

Church Missions

There are many missions locally and globally that FBC Williams is associated with.

- **Monthly Community Food Distribution:** On the last Friday of each month, we distribute food to those in the community that are in need through pick-up or delivery from the church parking lot.
- **Blessing Bags for Students:** Students in the local elementary school that are in need of food are given a bag of food each Friday to take home for the weekend. Food items include breakfast items, snack items, and meal items.
- **Family Christmas Assistance:** Each Christmas we partner with the local elementary and high school, along with other local churches, to help provide families help with Christmas for their children.
- **Christmas Fund:** FBC Williams cares for our member widows and widowers each Christmas by providing fruit baskets.
- **Crisis and Benevolence:** FBC Williams cares for members of the church and the community that have lost loved ones or who are in other crisis situations by providing a meal and other assistance as available.

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- **Brotherhood:** Assistance is provided to those in the community that may need help with building, cleaning, painting, bill payment, or other support.
 - **Jacksonville Christian Outreach Center (JCOC):** The JCOC provides many forms of assistance to low to no income individuals living in the 36265 zip code. FBC Williams partners with the JCOC to help provide food, clothing, and other items of need throughout the year.
 - **Jacksonville State University (JSU) Baptist Campus Ministries (BCM):** FBC Williams provides financial support quarterly to the JSU BCM to help the organization reach students for Christ on campus. Funds support Mission trips, worship and bible studies, and other needs of the BCM.
 - **Our Father's Arms (OFA):** Founded in 1996, OFA is a locally based ministry that provides homes of healing and opportunity for individuals and families in crisis both in the southeast United States and internationally. FBC Williams supports this mission with regular financial donations.
 - **Websters Chapel Volunteer Fire Department:** FBC Williams is fortunate to have an excellent local volunteer fire department and is happy to provide financial assistance to them.
 - **Actively Deployed Missionaries:** FBC Williams provides financial support to the following missionaries currently serving in various locations: Jade and Shelah Acker, Eddie and Macarena Aldape, Jon and Tanya Parks, and Jessica Hearne.

Leadership & Organization

FBC Williams is governed under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we value leaders who are called by God, who demonstrate passion in their faith, and who are responsive to God's vision for our church. Peer elected member leadership of the church works alongside the ministerial and other staff to ensure FBC Williams maintains an active ministry. The laity leadership of the church consists of Committees, Ministry Teams, a Church Council, Church Officers, and Deacons.



Committees

Committees handle the administrative requirements of the church, who make policy and/or decisions crucial to the overall organizational structure of the church. There are five standing committees:

- Constitution, Bylaws, Policies and Procedures Committee
- Daycare Administrative Committee
- Finance and Stewardship Committee
- Nominating Committee
- Personnel Committee

Ministry Teams

Ministry teams are critical to the everyday work of the church and can be active or inactive for any given year as determined by the Nominating Committee. Examples are:

- Audio/Video Ministry Team
- Children's Ministry Team
- Global and Local Missions Ministry Team
- Greeter Ministry Team
- Safety Ministry Team
- Youth Ministry Team

Church Council

Presided over by the Pastor, the Church Council is composed of all chairpersons from committees and active ministry teams and all ministers of the church. The church council leads planning, coordinating, conducting and evaluating the ministries and programs of the church through the setting and monitoring of church goals and objectives.



Church Officers

The FBC Williams administrator, trustees, and a treasurer are the church officers along with the ministerial staff and church secretary. The officers develop ministry plans to submit to the Church Council.

Deacons

At FBC Williams, the Deacons are the heart of the church. They are New Testament servants to the pastor, staff, and members of the church, leading the church mission to care for the church families and the community. FBC Williams maintains one active deacon for every 12-15 member families. These active deacons serve a three-year term with one-third being elected by the members each year. When an active deacon completes the three-year term, they become inactive until selected to again serve on the active deacon board. The church recognizes that some ordained deacons can reach a time when they no longer choose to serve on the active board because of age or health; however, they have faithfully served the church as deacons in years past. The active deacon board will bestow the title of "Deacon Emeritus" to these individuals.



WHAT'S NEXT?

Missions/Community Outreach

FBC Williams reflects the love of Christ through community engagement and ministry.

We proactively seek and serve those in need. Each individual participates in at least one mission activity each year, coordinating with our neighbors to meet the needs of the community.

Fellowship

FBC Williams is a church with an atmosphere of friendliness and enthusiasm fueled by the love of Christ, where all backgrounds, ages, and life experiences are welcome.

Relationships are built through quarterly social interaction opportunities (such as game nights, musical events, and congregational conversations). We extend Christ's love through the community and partner with others in building a life of fellowship with God.

Discipleship

FBCW is on a life long journey with Christ. We are becoming more like Christ through biblical teaching, preaching, and connection groups.

We welcome questions, challenge assumptions and apply learned lessons in all areas of life.

Vision Story (Created in approximately 2010):

- *The following is an inspiring story describing what our church might be like in the next ten years. It is written from a perspective of faith and is based on the blessings and leadings of God as well as our congregation's desire to carry out*



the necessary actions to live into our vision story. The vision story is a goal that helps guide us as we move into the future.


Life is good for people at the First Baptist Church of Williams. The church is located at 5579 Nisbet Lake Road just five and a half miles northwest of the Jacksonville State University campus. Williams, a prominent local church, is known for its personal relationships with one another and with God.

Williams has remained true to its heritage. They are not reactive, but consistent in following God's leadership. In 1988, the first women deacons, Hilda Dean Norton and Peggy Hamby, were elected by the church. Many Baptist churches believe women are not qualified to be deacons, and they disagreed with Williams. When the church took this progressive step, the congregation not only turned the other cheek to accusations, but also turned proactively to an even closer walk with God. Under the lordship of Jesus Christ, this is a multi-generational church for all people.

Williams has long been known as a community church involved in the very fabric of lives of people who live in the shadow of its steeple. Hospitality is a good word to use when thinking about Williams. A saying here is that the church "serves without selfish motive, expecting nothing in return." A Christian Ministry Center, built nearly ten years ago, continues to give flexibility to the ways the church can serve its community. The church likes to be the center of its community, whether as a gathering place to participate in an aerobics class, to play dominoes and talk in the morning around a pot of coffee, or youth and children to enjoy activities like fifth quarter fellowships after football games. In the past ten years, however, we have become a regional church. Like the mustard seed of Jesus' parable, Williams has become a home for many kinds of birds by stretching out its branches to serve others near and far.

What many people report about Williams is the sense of dynamic worship they experience. Employing a blended style of worship, people are inspired to a deeper devotion to God and stronger kinship within the church body. In fact, you can sense a fierce loyalty to one another demonstrated by practical acts of caring. One member said, "It's like the song says, 'There's a sweet, sweet spirit in this place.'" Another said, "When I have a need, I know the church will help me."

Ten years ago, the church vision team pointed to generosity as one of the core values or characteristics of the people here. The church is still generous.




In partnership with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, they support missionaries around the world who work with the neediest people groups. They also share with others in their own backyard, reaching out to those in a subdivision down the road and at the nursing home in Jacksonville. These church members seek to be the presence of Christ.

Williams has a diverse and dedicated staff. Ministerial staff members traditionally have a history of long-term service at Williams. They, like so many others, put down roots in this church. However, this is a church led by its membership. Williams has a large number of dedicated lay leaders who serve on ministry teams and committees where their passion and calling meet real life needs. A high percentage of the members at Williams are involved in meaningful ministry.

Many people say what they value most about Williams is the attention given to people. One member said, "From the moment you walk in you feel like you are somebody." People matter here. The church helps people recognize and develop their God-given gifts. At Williams, you know people care. When you have a need, they offer help. If you need to talk, they listen. One member said, "It feels like a family reunion." In fact, one of the things you notice most about Williams is how much the people enjoy each other's company. The fellowship is more than on the surface. One member said, "This is a place of true, genuine friendships where you can truly let your hair down."

This is a God-church seeking to follow the Lord's leadership. Steady progression of faith instead of flash-in-the-pan ministry has marked this church. They have an on-going commitment to follow Christ and strive to develop the most important of all relationships, their walk with God. This is a church known for its steps of faith including building projects, calling full time ministers, and expanding service opportunities. They are not afraid to take risks for God's kingdom work. One member said Williams is "always looking to the horizon for God's next plan." Over time, men's and women's ministries working together have helped families and individuals discover Christian fellowship and purpose. Small groups gather weekly to offer support, study the Bible, and develop closeness.

Williams provides training and opportunities to exercise gifts God has given each person. In fact, this church puts much emphasis on mission involvement. Equipped, called, and ready, mission teams disperse for all kinds of needs, including the use of a disaster response trailer. College



students are often involved in on-going discipleship and fellowship ministries, serving as summer missionaries through a partnership with the CBF. Annual mission trips often include families joining together for short-term projects close to home, abroad and across the southeast, Williams is a church engaged in seeking its full kingdom potential.

The First Baptist Church of Williams has “open doors and open hearts”. Anyone is welcome, and once you attend Williams, you will understand how this is true.