

pastor's perspective



This past Summer a deacon-led task force was appointed to draft a Ministerial Sabbatical Policy for our church. The task force took seriously their assignment and submitted to the church an **Interim Sabbatical Policy for the Senior Pastor**. You adopted the sabbatical policy during the church conference in November. The Personnel Committee will use this initial policy in the future as a template for a Ministerial Sabbatical Policy for all full-time ministerial staff to be included in the Church Personnel Policies. I am most grateful to Ernest King, who chaired this task force, for his passion, commitment, and research in developing the sabbatical policy. I'm also grateful to committee members Jimmy Ford, Curt Fenley, and Jerry Merriman. **Thus, during the first months of the new year I will "try out" the sabbatical plan.**

The concept of a sabbatical is rooted in the biblical concept of Sabbath which God modeled in Genesis 2 and commanded in Exodus 20. Sabbaticals have often been used in church and academia to provide a time of rest, recovery, renewal, refreshment, and re-education. Many businesses are now providing paid sabbaticals for employees as well. The approved policy is available in the church office if you desire to read it in its entirety.

My sabbatical will be spent with a few weeks of rest and retreat out of town with Aurelia. In addition, I will take some days alone in spiritual retreat and attend a pastors' conference. I also will dedicate time to church-wide planning for 2024-2025. During my absence Walker and the staff will stand in the gap and do an amazing job! I met with the staff and believe we have developed a good plan to not miss a beat. Walker and Truett will share the preaching responsibilities, and I have asked Truett Seminary Dean, Dr. Todd Still, to preach on two Sundays as well. Walker and staff will provide pastoral care and administration during the 10 weeks I am out.

Aurelia and I are looking forward to this time as we renew, rest, and reflect. After 41 years of ministry and beginning my 8th year at FBC – Lufkin, a sabbatical is probably needed and appreciated. If this process makes you a little anxious, well, I feel your apprehension. As a bit of a "type A, micro manager, maybe controlling pastor"...this is a stretch, but that is okay. Our church, staff, deacons, committee members, teachers, volunteers, all of you, are simply the best and will excel during these days of sabbatical. Thanks again church family for caring for your pastor and staff. I do not share often enough nor boldly enough how proud I am to be your pastor and to do life and ministry with each of you in this incredible community. Oh, by the way, I'll be back! Don't think I'll be totally out of the loop. I'll remain in contact with the church and our staff.

As the 2023 church year ends and the new year is dawning, I challenge you to renew your commitment to the Lord and to the church. May the new year be a reminder of God's grace, love, faithfulness, and forgiveness. Thanks be to God for each of these gifts and the greatest gift of life abundant and eternal in Jesus!

Pastor Mark

Christmas Eve

Morning Worship
10:30 a.m.
(No Bible Study)

**Carols, Candles,
& Communion**
5:30 p.m.

Holiday Hours

Church Office Closed

*Dec 21 - 26

*Dec 29 at noon

*Jan 1

YEAR-END CONTRIBUTIONS

Must be received in the office by 12:00pm on 12/29 or in the mail POSTMARKED by 12/30. You may also give in the Sunday offering at church 12/31. Anything received Jan. 1 goes toward the new year.



SAVE THE DATE

Feb 3 // 9 am-1 pm

Women's Retreat
with
Erin Cuccio

Hosted by FBC GRACE Women's Ministry
More info to come.

Deacons for the month of December

Chuck Crowson
936-635-6892 (cell)

Hall Henderson
936-465-2240 (cell)

David Perkins
936-635-0659 (cell)

**NO
SUNDAY
MORNING
BIBLE
STUDY**

Dec 24 or 31

BIG & LIL CHILL WINTER RETREATS

@ CAMP CHO-YEH

FEB 10-12 // \$125 PER CAMPER



YOUTH GRADES 7-12
REGISTER AT [FBCLUFKIN.ORG/YOUTH](https://fbclufkin.org/youth)



KIDS GRADES 3-6
REGISTER AT [FBCLUFKIN.ORG/CHILDREN](https://fbclufkin.org/children)

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS

RETURN JANUARY 17

DINNER AT 5:30
ADULT, YOUTH, CHILDREN'S CLASSES AT 6:15

memorials & honorariums

Memorial and Honorarium Gifts
have been given to the following
Funds & Ministries of FBC:

Building Fund
In Memory of:
Michelle Hughey
Barbara Parker
Roy Cates
Chris Sanders

FBC Missions Fund
In Memory of:
J.L. Beard
Edwin Aldredge
Angela Aldredge

Music Ministry
In Honor of:
Matt Lowe

Preschool Ministry
In Honor of:
Bob Sowell

Organ Repair Fund
In Memory of:
J.L. Beard
Michelle Hughey

Year-End Giving

All year end gifts must be received in the church office by noon on Friday, December 29 or in the offering at church Sunday, December 31. All offerings and tithes received after December 31 will be reflected in 2024 giving unless postmarked by December 30, 2023. (Reminder Dec. 31 is a Sunday. You cannot have it postmarked for the 31st.)

Online Giving Available:
fbclufkin.org/give-online

Text to Give
Text any AMOUNT to
(936) 209-5079

(936) 634-3386 / www.fbclufkin.org

new members



Sylvie Baker



Nealee Vines



Emma Jane Luce



Hailey Williams

Sympathy to

Janelle Glass in the loss of her sister, Barbara Parker.
Pat Colmer in the loss of her daughter, Michelle Hughey.
The family of Robbie Parkman.

Church Office Hours

M - Th: 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Closed during the lunch hour
(12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.)
Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Financial Report Year to Date

Budget Needs	\$1,539,437.50
Budget Receipts	\$1,620,038.58
Building Fund	\$189,947.00
Other Designations	\$118,956.49
Other Receipts	\$132,211.03

Staff

Mark Newton, Senior Pastor
Katie Baker,
Minister to Preschool & Children
John Lassitter,
Minister of Music
Walker McWilliams,
Associate Pastor/ Minister of Missions
Truett Newton
Minister to Students



firstconnection
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