

the outlook

october 2018

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A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

REFLECTIONS ON BOB WILLIAMSON'S MINISTRY AT FBCD

Written by Matt Snyder
Director of Communications

Like many, Bob's call to ministry was unexpected. While attending First Baptist Church of Athens and nearing the end of his tenure at the University of Georgia (UGA) where he was studying Forestry Resources and Business Administration, Bob felt that "Divine pull" into pastoral ministry.

"I just had this overwhelming sense that I was supposed to be doing something else. Initially, I dismissed it, but eventually I couldn't put it off any longer," he said. "I mentioned it to Margie and my mother, and they both said, 'Yeah, we knew that.'" It was one of those instances where others knew what Bob was ultimately called to do before he did.

Bob's grandfather and uncle were both pastors, and his mother served as school director on a church staff in addition to attending church nearly every Sunday. So, Bob was no stranger to church or ministry.

Through a family friend's guidance, Bob adjusted his studies at UGA and then found his way

to Southern Baptist Theological Seminary where he graduated in 1976.

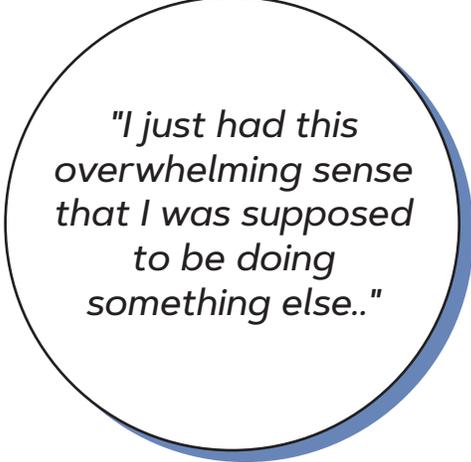
EARLY EXPERIENCE

After graduation, Bob took a job as the Youth Pastor at Bull Street Baptist in Savannah. A few years later, he took over as the Youth and Activities Director at FBC Chamblee before working in education at FBC Conyers for a short season.

Bob ended up at First Baptist Church of Tucker for roughly nine years as their Minister of Education. While things started well, the pastor eventually left, and they entered into a rough interim season.

"It kind of became a defining characteristic of life in ministry for me," he said reflecting on interim seasons. "We lost multiple staff members and I ended up kind of being in charge."

When the new pastor came on and started calling new staff, Bob knew it was time to move on. "The church ended up going in a new direction after that, so I was a little



"I just had this overwhelming sense that I was supposed to be doing something else.."

more open to going somewhere else, and somebody floated my resume toward First Baptist Decatur."

COMING TO FBCD

Bob started at First Baptist Church of Decatur as the Minister of Education and Outreach in the early 1990s. The church was rapidly growing at the time. "At one point, we had four new Sunday School classes start over a six-week period because there were so many people coming." Bob also told of how the church would weekly bring in young adults from Gwinnett County at



Bob Williamson | 2014

the time because so many wanted to attend FBC Decatur.

“And even though there were larger numbers than there are now, it doesn’t necessarily mean there’s less commitment today,” Bob notes. “The DNA of the church is the same: we’re still mission-minded, moderate, open, accepting, caring, and a leader in changes happening in the denomination.”

CHANGES ALONG THE WAY

Reflective of Bob’s prior experience, ministry challenges eventually found their way to FBCD as senior leadership left, budgets became tighter from a collapsing national economy, and tensions arose from within the denomination.

Bob recalls that there was a stability lost along the way when some of the internal structure at FBCD began shifting. As more people left, he took on more responsibilities. “It became a ministry of crisis versus the ministry of priority at that point,” he said.

Eventually, the church began to find its grounding again. “We always had great preachers, even during the interim,” Bob said, indicating that a strong pulpit always helped

maintain a hopeful morale. “In some ways, we’re more prominent and recognized in the [Decatur] community now than other places that have had similar struggles. We were still able to become the ‘front lawn’ of Decatur where so many in the community find connection.”

When asked how he became so involved with the senior adult’s ministry, Bob responded, “[the senior adults] requested it, really, but part of that began because I just knew them. Interims are a little bit stressful, but if you get through it together, it does something for the group.”

There have been other changes and challenges along the way. Bob cites technological improvements and growth as one of those. While technology has changed the way churches can positively communicate with non-church-goers, “we’re still trying to regain a little bit of personal connection outside of it,” he says.

Despite the changes, the church has stayed fairly healthy during Bob’s tenure. “Staff members come and go, but the congregation’s identity has stayed the same. In some ways we may be a little stronger in our

[Baptist] identity because of the challenges along the way.”

MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

The people at First Baptist Decatur and the shared memories are what have made Bob’s ministry experience so valuable. When asked for some of his favorite memories at FBCD, he is quick to jump to community-wide experiences.

“The 150th anniversary celebration was cool.” He led the celebration planning and remembers the church being so full that almost no one else could get into the building.

“We had 650 people packed in the gym for the anniversary luncheon after the service, and I had to turn people away at the door,” he remarked. “I heard about it for weeks! It was such a great experience though.”

In addition to the anniversary celebration, some of Bob’s other highlights include Young at Heart trips to Alaska and Greece, staff retreats, hearing Walter Brueggemann speak, and the evolution of a more recent program, Christmas on Clairemont.

“Our music ministry is at a newer level than it’s probably ever been,” he said. “I’m really proud of our church and its people. We’ve come a long way and have done a lot of good things.”

RETIREMENT PLANS

Now, after 28 years of serving the community at First Baptist Decatur, Bob is looking forward to retirement. When asked what his plans are he replied, “My last day is a Wednesday, so on Thursday I plan to be in the woods.”

An avid outdoorsman and lover of nature, Bob is eager to get back into green spaces. In addition to

planting seedlings on their tree farm, he hopes to revamp his involvement with the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club and spend more intentional time on hiking trails.

“I plan on spending a lot of time with my kids and grandkids, too,” he said. “I have a lot of reading to catch up on and I’m even thinking of picking back up the guitar!” There are also numerous volunteer opportunities in Decatur that have interested Bob over the years, and he hopes to invest some of his energies in making even more of an impact in the local community.

"The DNA of the church is the same: we're still mission-minded, moderate, open, accepting, caring, and a leader in changes happening in the denomination..."

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

When asked about the future of FBCD, Bob remains infectiously hopeful. “There is a sense of stability in the church now, and historically, stability has indicated growth for this church. We have a great opportunity to continue that with the staff we have here.”

And with that growth, Bob hopes the church can draw more people in. “I hope [First Baptist] becomes a center of spirituality for people, a place of support, encouragement, connection – and a place where they can find belonging.”

It has been that place for Bob for almost three decades now, a sanctuary where his faith has not only been tested but refined. “There’s

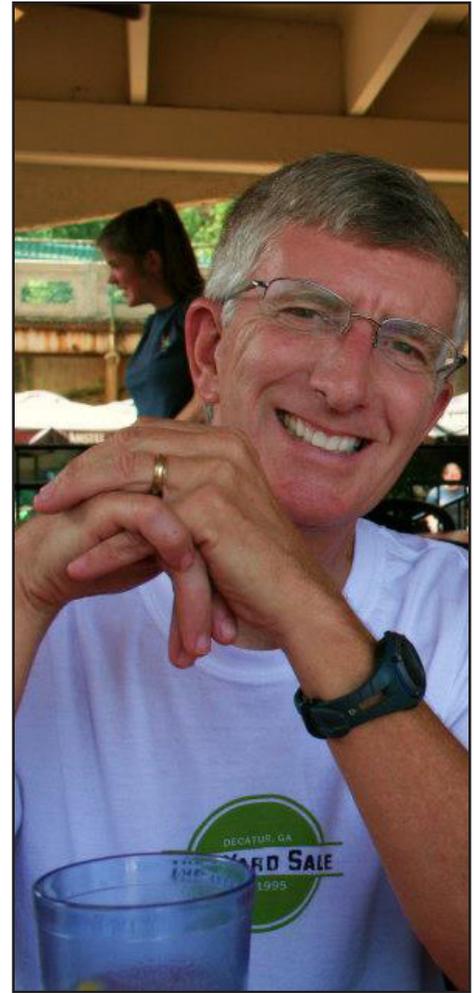
a different kind of depth there now,” he said reflecting on his relationship with God. “It’s easier to see where things are headed now and why. But it’s like any relationship though; it has to be an intentional pursuit.”

LAST DAY

Bob’s last day on staff at FBCD will be Wednesday, October 31, 2018. Like several staff members before him, Bob and Margie will take a few months off from the church before returning. “This is our church home and we don’t ever see that changing.”

Bob’s pastoral leadership and warm compassion has transformed more lives than one could count. His presence and contributions to our ministry staff will be greatly missed.

We love you, Bob! There are not enough words to express our gratitude for your ministry in our community. From the bottom of our hearts: thank you!



JOIN US IN HONORING BOB WILLIAMSON

Sunday, October 28th – All are invited to join us in a special retirement celebration for Bob Williamson in Carreker Hall following worship at 11:15am. Come prepared to share stories of the way Bob has impacted you and to celebrate his life of ministry!

LOVE OFFERING

We are collecting a love offering through the month of October to give to Bob and Margie at his retirement celebration on October 28th. If you would like to contribute a financial gift, you can do so online at fbcdeatur.com/giving or by writing a check to "First Baptist Decatur" and noting "for Bob Williamson" in the memo line. *If you have specific questions regarding giving, please contact the Finance Office at 404-373-1653.*

KIND WORDS FROM OUR FBCD FAMILY



Here are some kinds words several members of our congregation had to say about Bob, his service to the church, and what his friendship has meant over the years.

Do you have something you would like to share? Let Bob know! *You can email him at bwilliamson@fbcdeatur.com.*

And special thanks to: Buck and LaRose Jones, June Gay, Dottie Aiken, and so many others who provided pictures of Bob!

"Bob has had a happy and loving impact on our lives for his 28 years at FBCD. He's been there to help us through sad times and joyous times. He's been with us on YAH trips and functions and has been a friend who can be counted on."
– **Buck and LaRose Jones**

"Bob has been an anchor for all of us through many changes. My Dad would call Bob 'a gentle giant' for he is always there quietly working out situations for the good of all and individuals."
– **June Gay**

"Bob loves God, his family, and people in general. In his quiet and gentle way he has been the glue that has held the church together for many years. Bob also has a dry and droll sense of humor. One of my favorite memories of Bob was when we took a trip to Alaska. My mother was the one who suggested the trip and announced that she wanted (at age 91) to go on a helicopter ride to a glacier. When I told Bob that, he howled with laughter all the way down the hall at church. By the way, Ron and the pilot shoved my mother into the helicopter and they had a ball! Bob exemplifies everything a pastor should be to a congregation. He treats everyone with respect and has infinite patience. He will be sorely missed but we wish him all the best in his retirement."
– **Beth and Ron Withers**



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF DECATUR
PRESENTS

DINNER AND A SHOW!

FEATURING MUSIC BY ROGERS AND HAMMERSTEIN

OCTOBER 27 | 6:00PM



WITH MUSICAL
PERFORMANCES BY
DANIEL SOLBERG AND
FRIENDS!

\$15 per person
\$35 for families of four
(with kids 12 & under)

FOR TICKETS CALL:
404-373-1653
FBCDECATUR.COM

FIRST BAPTIST DECATUR PRESENTS

MOVIE NIGHT ON THE LAWN

FRIDAY, OCT. 5

6:00 GAMES, MUSIC & FUN!
7:30 MOVIE BEGINS!



Join us for our annual Movie on the Lawn! On Friday, October 5 we will be showing the movie "Coco" (rated PG). Join us for a night of fun, food, and film! The event will start at 6:00pm with inflatables, games, and food, and the movie will kick off at 7:30pm.

This year, the "Let's Taco 'Bout It" food truck will have food for sale and the church will be selling concessions that will go to support DDM, a mission partner of FBC Decatur.

DDM (Developmental Disabilities Ministries) is a non-profit Christian organization that provides residential services and support throughout Georgia for adults with developmental disabilities. The mission of DDM is to provide and encourage a continuum of need-based services and Christian ministry for people with developmental disabilities and their families so that each person may realize maximum developmental growth. DDM operates several group homes in the Decatur area and a number of First Baptist Decatur folks have been involved as staff, trustees, and volunteers.

Bring a blanket or a chair and join us for this family favorite event!

Annual FALL FESTIVAL



On Wednesday, October 24, we will again be hosting our annual Fall Festival on the Lawn! Join us for an evening of carnival games, inflatables, face painting and food! We will be coordinating with the farmer's market to have a evening filled with fun for the whole family!

Family-friendly costumes (no elements that could hurt or scare others, please) are welcomed, but not mandatory for the event.

Volunteers are needed to help work the carnival games and to monitor the inflatables. Look for more information in the coming weeks for how you can help make this event a success for the church as we welcome families from all over the community to our front lawn.

We hope to see you on the lawn for this community-wide event!

CBF FELLOWS

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

In worship on September 9th, Josh Speight, Director of CBF Fellows and CBF employee, shared in worship that Pastor Kristen is a now member of the newest Fellows cohort. Josh explained the overall vision of the program, but several of you have asked what kinds of things Kristen will be doing over the next two years. Here are some of the things she will be participating in:

1. Face to Face gatherings: Kristen will gather with her cohort (15 other ministers and six facilitators) five more times over the next two years. Each of these gatherings has a specific focus and will allow Kristen time to process and learn with her cohort. These gatherings take place at various times of the year and in various locations around the US.

2. Minister Encouragement Team: Kristen has also formed a Minister Encouragement Team (MET). They will meet following each of the face-to-face gatherings to help Kristen process some of the things she learned there and find ways to apply what she is learning to the FBC Decatur context. Kristen's MET members are June Gay, Don Hammonds, Lisa Tyler, and Shelley Woodruff.

3. Monthly check-ins: Each month, the cohort will gather in smaller groups virtually and discuss a specific topic. For example, in September the group read Parker Palmer's *Let Your Life Speak* and discussed how this book, which is focused on vocation and calling, applies to their lives now. There will also be time for sharing ministry and life updates.

4. Quarterly check-ins: Each quarter, the entire cohort will gather virtually for a conversation with professionals in various areas. In October, they will connect with a trainer and discuss the topic of "mental well-being." These check-ins are to provide the cohort with tools to support them as they continue in ministry.

5. Coaching calls: For the next two years, Kristen will also be provided with a coach that she will work with. Coaching is different than therapy. The way we describe is that therapy helps you process where you've come from, and coaching helps you navigate where you are going.

We ask that our congregation hold Kristen and her cohort in prayer over the next two years as they work together to become healthier, and therefore even better, ministers! Congratulations, Kristen!



Kristen Koger

Pastor for Children and Families



MORE THAN WE IMAGINE

THE STEWARDSHIP OF GOD'S GIFTS

Dear Members and Friends of First Baptist of Decatur:

God has graciously brought us together on this historic, sacred ground of 308 Clairemont Ave. And we have much in common. We are often less than we would like. But together, by God's grace, we are more than we can imagine. Thankfully, the Bible reminds us that God's most powerful work is accomplished through regular people like you and me.

We have been having "Moments of Christian Stewardship" in worship throughout August and September. In these, several of our members have been sharing stories of how God used people in this church to change their lives. They felt hope instilled, support offered, welcome extended, grace shared, work accomplished and love experienced. Through these speakers, we have been hearing how God moves in mysterious ways, often through the messy, busy, ordinary lives of regular people at First Baptist.

In these testimonials, we have also heard how valuable this church has been to countless other lives over the years. The difference FBCD has made in this community and around the world has truly been more than those earliest members in September of 1868 ever imagined. That was when, as returning refugees from the Battle of Decatur, they humbly solicited money for their first church building from fellow Baptists in Kentucky.

Exactly one hundred and fifty years later, we can never overstate the importance of what you provide when you support this church's ministry in 2018 and into 2019. Sharing your offerings on Sunday mornings or online, you help to shape history and to change lives. You fund mission efforts around the world. You are helping students and children in Decatur learn about Jesus. You are assisting homebound Senior Adults feel connected and loved. You are supporting creative Bible Study. You are facilitating positive community outreach, hospital visitation, vital ministry initiatives for those in need, ministry partnership support, incredible music ministry, worship facilitation, youth and children's programming, and so much more.

Your financial support is essential to the sacred mission of this exciting, vital congregation. Without you, the stories heard on Sundays and the ministries listed here would not be taking place. But with you and with your continued, growing generosity, we can expand what we currently celebrate, and we can become that much closer to fulfilling God's hopes for our future. We are and can be more than we imagine. And with your help, we can take the amazing blessings of our past and present, and become the abundant blessings of God's future.

Also, on behalf of our dedicated Stewardship Team, you will be receiving Pledge Cards in the mail. These same pledge cards will also be available in the pews on Sundays. Please prayerfully consider your support for our mutual ministry in 2019.

Gratefully and with Great Expectations,

David Jordan and Your 2018 FBCD Stewardship Team

(Theron Clark-Stuart, chair; Jenny McCurdy, Christina Vanzant, Beth Withers, Joe Wright)



David Jordan
Senior Pastor



GOT A ROCKING CHAIR? WE'D LOVE IF YOU'D CONSIDER DONATING IT!

If you have attended our Fresh Start service lately, you may have noticed that there have been some infants that are staying in the worship service. We **LOVE** that families are worshipping together!

We also want to continue to be a church that welcomes children and families to our worship services *well*. **So we are looking for TWO (2) rocking chairs that will be for our parents with little ones.**

If you have a rocking chair that you would be willing to donate, please contact Pastor Kristen at kkoger@fbcdccatur.com. Thanks!



HEALTH AND WELLNESS NEW OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to Restorative Yoga (Mondays, 3:30pm) and a Walking Group (M/F 12:00pm), we have a few more opportunities within our Health & Wellness program this month:

EXPLORING TAI JI (CHI)

Tai Ji is a slow meditative form of movement, which promotes good health by increasing relaxation, decreasing stress, improving balance, coordination, and reducing blood pressure. Since it is a weight-bearing exercise, it helps to reduce the effects of osteoporosis. It has been beneficial for people with conditions such as arthritis, MS, fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, and hypertension, to name only a few. No equipment or special clothing is necessary. Good supporting shoes and loose fitting clothing are recommended.

Margaret Randolph, a gifted and experienced Tai Ji instructor, will be offering **an orientation class on Thursday, October 18th at 5:00pm in the Dance Studio.**

A HEALTHY TASTE OF FALL

Visit the Decatur Farmers Market every Wednesday (4-7pm) and Saturday (9am-1pm) in October for a free "Healthy Taste of Fall." The market chef will prepare a healthy fall dish for you to taste and be available to answer any of your healthy cooking questions! Look for the green tent that says "Chef Demonstration" next to the "Information Booth."

The first 20 people at each market who tells the chef that they are members of FBCD will receive a \$5 coupon to spend at the market!

If you are interested in participating in any of the above exercises/programs (or introducing a new one), please contact Dilshad Premji at dpremji@fbcdccatur.com

To learn more about Health & Wellness at FBCD, visit: fbcdccatur.com/health



WEDNESDAY NIGHTS AT FBCD

Our Wednesday night programming continues with a new learning opportunity on October 3rd at 6:30pm. The “Wednesday Night Collective” is a community gathering of varied interests and passions which all, in their own respects, reflect the creativity and beauty of God.

Here is a list of upcoming opportunities within the Wednesday Night Collective:

- *Three Ways of Seeing the Sun: Enlarging Your Faith in an Age of Science* (Paul Wallace)
- *Financial Peace University* (led by the Matt Visser; *began September 12th*)
- *FBCD Kids* (Kristen Koger)
- *FBCD Youth* (Kelsey Lewis)
- *Sanctuary Choir* (Kathryn Hartgrove)
- *Yoga* (Jotholyn Mason)

More information about these offerings can be found on our website at fbcdecatour.com/wednesday

UPCOMING SERMONS

Here is a glimpse at the sermon schedule for the month of October. Dr. David Jordan will be sharing these messages at 8:45am and 11:15am on Sundays, unless otherwise noted.

October 7, 2018

A Contrast in Covenants

COMBINED WORSHIP at 10:30am

October 14, 2018

The Eye of the Needle

Mark 10:17-31

October 21, 2018

Jockeying for Greatness

Mark 10:35-45

October 28, 2018

Crowd Psychology and Jesus

Mark 10:46-52

Miss a sermon? No worries! You can listen online by visiting fbcdecatour.com/sermons-online

SUBSCRIBE:

You can also subscribe to our sermons podcast in iTunes, Spotify, and Stitcher. Simply search "FBC Decatur GA" and click subscribe!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE LATEST NEWS, EVENTS, AND UPDATES FROM THE FBCD COMMUNITY

Flu Shot Clinic

October 2nd from 10:00am to 1:00pm in the church parlor // FBCD is hosting a Flu Shot Clinic for our members and the local Decatur community.

David Clark-Stuart, Pharm.D., will be on site administering flu vaccinations. Most insurances will be accepted, including Medicare, or \$25 cash. While no appointment is necessary, please RSVP on the sign-up sheets located throughout Carreker Hall or by calling the front office. Thanks!

Combined Worship - World Communion Sunday

On Sunday, October 7th we'll be having a combined worship service in the Sanctuary at 10:30am. Sunday School classes will meet at 9:15am. We're doing this in celebration of World Communion Sunday. We hope you join us!

BBQ Dinner Fundraiser for First School and First Camp

Do you want an easy Friday night dinner that contributes to a good cause? Then have we got the treat for you! Preorders are now being accepted for BBQ Dinners "To Go," an annual fundraiser that collects funds for the First School and First Camp scholarship fund. **Orders will be available for pickup on Friday, October 12th from 4:00-7:00pm.** To learn more about ordering, visit fbcdecatgur.com/news

2019 M.A.P. Vote

The 2019 Ministry Action Plan (M.A.P.) was mailed out to members the first week of October. The congregation will vote on the 2019 M.A.P. on Sunday, October 14th.

Women on Mission

The Women on Mission meets for their monthly meeting on **Tuesday, October 16th** beginning at 10:30am in S-216. Pastor Kelsey Lewis will be sharing.

Young Professionals Community Group

The YoPro Community Group will be meeting on October 11th and 25th from 7:30-9:00pm. The group is for those who are in their professional studies or the earlier parts of their career journeys. *If you know*

anybody interested, have them contact Matt Snyder at msnyder@fbcdecatgur.com

First School Tour

Any parents interested in First School are invited to an informational tour on Tuesday, October 23rd at 8:00am. No registration is necessary!

Young at Heart Apple Trip

YAH's annual trip to Mercier's Orchard is on Thursday, October 24th from 8:30am-5:30pm. You can sign up by calling the church office at 404-373-1653. Meals along the way are not included.

Handbell Choir Forming

Have you wanted to participate in the music program but was not sure how? Here is your chance! In anticipation of the Advent season, a bell choir is being formed. *Please contact Kathryn Hartgrove at khartgrove@fbcdecatgur.com*

SAVE THE DATES:

Save these dates on your calendar for the months of November and December!

- Missional Christmas Market - Nov. 4th
- Veterans Dinner and Program - Nov. 7th
- Gratitude Sunday - Nov. 18th
- Ovations Concert - Nov. 18th
- Combined Advent Worship Services - Sunday, Dec. 2nd through Dec. 30th
- Christmas on Clairemont - Dec. 16th

For more a continuously updated list of announcements, visit fbcdecatgur.com/announcer

FBCD Meals Together

Oct. 2018 - Join us for dinner on Wednesday nights from 5:30-6:15pm. Meals are \$7 per person.

Wednesday, October 3rd

Meat Loaf, Potatoes Au Gratin, Cooked Cabbage, Yeast Roll, and Cherry Pie

Wednesday, October 10th

General Tso's Chicken, Yellow Rice, Stir Fry Vegetables, Salad Bar, Yeast Roll, and Pineapple Upside Down Cake

Wednesday, October 17th

Pot Roast w/ Carrots, White Rice, Lima Beans, Salad Bar, Yeast Roll, and Lemon Cake

Wednesday, October 24th (FALL FESTIVAL!)

Fall Festival-Style Food served on the front lawn.

Wednesday, October 31st

Homestyle Chicken Tenders, Potato Salad, Green Beans, Salad Bar, Yeast Rolls, and Apple Pie



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
OF DECATUR

WEEKEND CONTACTS

To reach a staff member for weekend pastoral emergencies, please call one of the numbers below.

Pastor on Call:

Bob Williamson: 770-633-4651
Kristen Koger: 757-729-4736

Deacon on Call:

October 1 - 7
– Jim Harrison
October 8 - 14
– June Gay
October 15 - 21
– Charlie Hunter
October 22 - 28
– Jenny McCurdy
October 29 - November 4
– Chris Faulkner

GENERAL CONTACT

Main Office: 404-373-1653
First School: 404-370-7688
Activities: 404-373-2442
Website: fbcdecatur.com
Email: fbcd@fbcdecatur.com

308 Clairemont Avenue
Decatur, GA 30030

OFFICE SCHEDULE

Regular Office Hours:
Monday-Thursday, 9:00am-5:00pm
Friday, 9:00am-12:00pm

GIVE ONLINE

Want to give your financial gift online? Scan the QR code or visit fbcdecatur.com/giving

