



**First Baptist Church of Morganton, NC**

**Visioning**  
**Light For A New Decade**  
**2010-2020**

“...COME, LET US WALK  
IN THE LIGHT OF THE LORD.”  
ISAIAH 2: 5

September 2011

Dear First Baptist Church Family,

For over 130 years, First Baptist Church of Morganton has been a living testimony of Christian service to further the Lord's kingdom. To guide our Church's journey well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Visioning Team, in partnership with the ministers, the Deacons, and other lay-leaders, has developed a strategic plan which will shape our church life and ministry together. This plan is offered as a vision for a future based upon our faithfulness to God's purpose for our Church and our belief in His promise that all things are possible when we work together to achieve his mission.

This plan is organized around three broad focus areas: *Transforming Relationships, Sharing Christ through His Church, and Engaging Communities*. We want to deepen our relationship with God, one another, and with our neighbors in ways that cross generations and utilize our unique God-given gifts. We want to become a more inviting and authentic evangelistic church, so more people will profess their faith in Christ and commit to follow his teachings. We want to extend our ministries to include working with other partners in the community to change conditions that often result from poverty, natural disasters, and limited community resources. Prayer is the foundation of everything we do, and we have specifically noted ways to enhance and expand our prayer ministry within the focus areas.

Details about implementation of this plan will come soon and will be available on the Church website. We hope each member will take time to review the plan and look for ways to get involved. Think about how these strategies might provide opportunities for deepening your faith. Most importantly, continue to pray for God's direction as we step forward as First Baptist Church to be a living testimony in today's world.

Your Visioning Team

*Angela Deal, Chair*  
*Lottie Beasley*  
*Chuck Benfield*  
*Stephen Garrison*  
*Kelly Gessner*  
*Bill Hall*  
*Jona Harrell*  
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*Merle Martin*  
*Cheryl Shuffler*  
*Jackie Ward*

## Transforming Relationships

We believe it is essential that we commit to learn more about each other as we learn more about God. We welcome new friends and long-time neighbors alike to unite in passionate worship experiences each time we gather to celebrate God's presence, experience His Word, and remember His grace. We will engage our minds, bodies and spirits in partnership with our ministerial staff to create and participate in various innovative ways to develop our faith. We will intentionally come together across generations, backgrounds and life experiences to learn how God's created diversity can grow strong and deep in our love of Him. We will journey together and come to know more fully our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

## VISIONING PROPOSAL

# Innovative Faith Development

## FOCUS AREA

“We will commit ourselves to Christian growth through a diligent study of the Scriptures and regular prayer.”

First Baptist Church of Morganton  
Church Covenant

## **WITHIN THREE YEARS**

- ⌘ Increase small group study ministry including Sunday School and ministry groups committed to making a difference in the community (mission related).
- ⌘ Develop a spiritual growth ministry for young adults as an entry point for church involvement.
- ⌘ Develop a marriage and family ministry to strengthen spiritual growth of couples and young families.
- ⌘ Train more prayer intercessors to enhance the current prayer ministry.
- ⌘ Provide frequent opportunities for children to put their faith development studies into practice.
- ⌘ Offer more retreat experiences - including couples retreats, family retreats, senior retreats, etc. planned by the Christian Education Ministry in cooperation with other ministries.
- ⌘ Enhance spiritual formation and Christian spirituality through intentional offerings in spiritual disciplines such as through the current Men's Prayer Cookout and Women's Prayer Retreat.
- ⌘ Equip all church facilities with state-of-the-art technology to support use of electronic devices (i.e. laptop computers, electronic tablets, etc.) in small group studies and other faith development activities.
- ⌘ Establish a Christian life-coach ministry to support and sustain Christ-centered growth and development for interested individuals.

## **WITHIN SEVEN YEARS**

- ⌘ Provide a church "bookstore," including online resources, where study materials and inspirational material can be loaned/purchased in support of Christian education studies, small groups, and other spiritual formation experiences.
- ⌘ Develop online faith development experiences as an entry point to church involvement for community members.
- ⌘ Offer off campus Bible study and special interest ministry groups as an entry point to church involvement for community members.
- ⌘ Create a self-sustaining ministry focused on the visual and performing arts.

## **WITHIN TEN YEARS**

- ⌘ Establish a Children's Minister position to focus on spiritual development of children and their families.
- ⌘ Establish a fund within the FBC Endowment for an annual Christian Education event for FBC members and the community.

## VISIONING PROPOSAL

# Passionate

# Worship

## FOCUS AREA

“We will be faithful in worship, gathering with the church family to celebrate God's Presence, to experience His Word, and to remember His grace.”

First Baptist Church of Morganton  
Church Covenant

## **WITHIN THREE YEARS**

- ⌘ Appoint a Lay Worship Team to work with the ministerial staff in designing and leading worship services. Employ a consultant and/or coach to assist in designing culturally relevant worship.
- ⌘ Implement a year-long, church-wide emphasis on understanding and appreciating worship.
- ⌘ Use paid part-time musicians or technicians along with church members to enhance existing church resources for worship experiences.
- ⌘ Make more frequent use of children's choirs, youth choir, soloists, trios, quartets, praise team and ensembles in addition to the chancel choir.
- ⌘ Use a greater variety of instruments more often in worship. Examples: Acoustic guitar, brass, harp, woodwinds, dulcimer, etc.
- ⌘ Redesign the 11:00 a.m. worship service bulletin. *Explore ways to explain and interpret worship elements, especially for guests. (For example: printing the words to the Gloria Patri, printing our version of the Lord's Prayer, etc.)*
- ⌘ Employ a part-time college intern, particularly in the field of music, to work with the church staff in enhancing worship elements to meet intergenerational needs.
- ⌘ Expand the current "Children's Church" program to children in grades one through three.
- ⌘ Offer different worship experiences throughout the year on days and times other than Sunday morning.
- ⌘ Implement creative, broad use of the new Celebrating Grace hymnal as a resource for worship and faith development.
- ⌘ Implement programs for developing and sharing faith stories in worship (see also Evangelism).
- ⌘ Seek ways to make the service more visual.
- ⌘ Use church members in worship in creative and intentional ways best suited to their spiritual gifts.
- ⌘ Plan out special church seasons such as Advent and Lent enough in advance to create quality, attractive brochures with set dates/times of detailed events and opportunities for worship and spiritual growth.

## **WITHIN SEVEN YEARS**

- ✦ Continue to offer different worship experiences throughout the year such as Summerfest outdoor services, a Lenten communion series at days and times other than Sunday morning.
- ✦ We recommend that a yearly “Tapestry of Worship” plan be created along with a promotional brochure and appropriate publicity outlining a wide variety of worship experiences – traditional, contemporary, youth-oriented, liturgical, retreats, etc., offered for that year.
- ✦ Establish an affiliated ministry that meets in an existing community building and “goes out to the people” to teach, worship, and spread God’s Word in the local community.

## **WITHIN TEN YEARS**

- ✦ We recommend that the church have a full-scale, architecturally consulted, remodeling of our sanctuary. This remodeling would be consistent and appropriate with our “New England Meeting House” style design. This might include painting, new carpet, new or refinished flooring, a redesign of the narthex to make it more inviting, enhanced sound system and lighting, professional cameras and recording capacity, etc.

## Sharing Christ Through His Church

We want to reach outside the walls of our church into the community by practicing genuine evangelism. We want to meet people 'where they are' and build relationships that will forge deep friendships and trust, meet needs, and help draw people to Jesus Christ. We will take an active and deliberate approach to reach out to others. We will also be genuine and engaged when people come to visit our church ensuring that they are made welcome in every way. We will tell our stories in compelling ways and using every tool available to share the Good News with our community and world. And, we will encourage one another in love and good works, and through ministries of prayer and presence will share one another's burdens and joys.

VISIONING  
PROPOSAL

# Radical Hospitality

FOCUS AREA

“We will encourage one another in love and good works, and through ministries of prayer and presence will share one another’s burdens and joys.”

First Baptist Church of Morganton  
Church Covenant

## **WITHIN THREE YEARS**

- ⌘ Improve signage throughout the church facilities – especially outside to better inform visitors.
- ⌘ Provide convenient visitor parking spaces in both parking lots.
- ⌘ Provide training on how to be more welcoming to visitors (children, youth, adults).
- ⌘ Create and train a worship service “welcoming team.”
- ⌘ Expand present greeter ministry to include at least two parking lot greeters/helpers/guides every Sunday morning.
- ⌘ Have an informational gift packet from the church for guests upon their first visit.
- ⌘ Develop two information centers – one in the main educational building and another in the Kistler Home Annex hallway, including video kiosk displays. Display a large church congregation photo in the information centers as a “personal welcome” from the congregation.
- ⌘ Provide a quarterly hospitality event – intergenerational event – (e.g. coffee in the parking lot).

VISIONING  
PROPOSAL

Compelling  
Communication

FOCUS AREA

“We will be God’s people wherever we are, living for the glory of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

First Baptist Church of Morganton  
Church Covenant

## **WITHIN THREE YEARS**

- ✦ Redesign church website employing professional designers with intent of being maintained by staff.
- ✦ Use social media for informing community about church events and ministries.
- ✦ Develop “Core Message,” “Mission/Vision,” and “Core Values” statements based on our church covenant for use in media materials.
- ✦ Use more recent photos in all media.
- ✦ Submit frequent articles, PSAs, etc. about church events and ministries to local media.
- ✦ Upgrade audio-visual equipment in church educational areas.
- ✦ Upgrade broadcast media in the sanctuary for TV ministry.
- ✦ Include personal faith experiences, testimonies, and ministry stories in a wider variety of communications. Use art and visual illustrations to help tell those stories and create interest.
- ✦ Upgrade old church information sign in the front yard.
- ✦ Use relevant technology (i.e. texting, email alerts) along with recorded phone calls and printed materials to communicate information with church members. Include a “members only” access page as part of the church website.

VISIONING  
PROPOSAL

# Genuine Evangelism

FOCUS AREA

“We will seek God's help in striving to so live in this community and the world that others may be drawn to our Savior and Lord.”

First Baptist Church of Morganton  
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### **WITHIN THREE YEARS**

- ✦ Provide training for members on how to reach others for Christ using various 'Lifestyle Evangelism' series materials.
- ✦ Incorporate an evangelistic aspect in every church sponsored event.
- ✦ In addition to events such as the "Great Pumpkin Party," hold more special events like old car rallies, women's defense courses, etc. to attract the community and use them for sharing the Gospel.
- ✦ Use local media outlets for evangelism efforts (i.e. CoMPAS cable, ads at movie theaters, etc.).
- ✦ Sponsor special events such as concerts with well-known Christian performers.

### **WITHIN SEVEN YEARS**

- ✦ Establish a training program for telling the Bible orally to the local community by training leaders through the International Orality Network. This is a new approach to sharing the Gospel to cultures that are illiterate or (like our own youth culture) simply increasing influenced more by verbal story than print media.

### **WITHIN TEN YEARS**

- ✦ Establish an evangelism center.
- ✦ Sponsor large scale concert series.

## Engaging Communities

We know that Jesus, risking much, went out into the world to teach, heal, and love. We will do the same. We will move with compassion, determination, and focus into the world, helping people and spreading the love of Christ. We will partner with other organizations and individuals to perform meaningful ministry to help fulfill Jesus' vision of spreading the Gospel to all people. In this effort, we will be responsible stewards of all we are and all we have, giving time, influence, and resources to the support of the church and its ministries. We will strive to help our members and seekers to understand, and grow to practice, the Biblical call to give back to God in acknowledgement of His provision for our every need. We will engage local and world communities in our service to God.

Visioning  
Proposal

# Extravagant Generosity

Focus Area

“We will be responsible stewards of all we are and all we have, giving time, influence, and resources to the support of the church and its ministries.”

First Baptist Church of Morganton  
Church Covenant

## **WITHIN THREE YEARS**

- ⌘ Hold a church-wide “Extravagant Generosity” emphasis using excellent curriculum of the same title.
- ⌘ Use the stair step information previously published to inform members on where they stand in their giving.
- ⌘ Find a way to help members look at giving from a percentage basis – provide a simple worksheet to use – gather information back if they are willing to share with the church anonymously.
- ⌘ Report on the percentage of weeks that giving meets the average budget required.
- ⌘ Report in the Church Week the percentage of gifts received each week as compared to the total family enrollment.
- ⌘ Apart from the budget, design opportunities for specific giving to accomplish required ministries and missions.
- ⌘ Expand “streams of revenue” to supplement budget offerings such as reviewing and increasing fees for use of church facilities and services.
- ⌘ Seek additional resources to educate the importance of tithing.
- ⌘ Use Facebook to encourage and inspire others to give.
- ⌘ Have a regular column in the Church Week on giving.
- ⌘ Review and refine, coordinate and consolidate present extra fundraising activities.
- ⌘ Hold a money management seminar.
- ⌘ Hold estate planning seminars and increase legacy giving.
- ⌘ Structure the finance committee in a different way to provide for greater expertise and continuity year-to-year.

## **WITHIN SEVEN YEARS**

- ⌘ Acknowledging that the church needs to set an example for community in environmental stewardship.
- ⌘ Celebrate environmental stewardship events and activities, such as Earth Day, in practical ways that are Biblically based and theologically grounded.
- ⌘ Recognize that our largest environmental impact is energy usage, and implement improvements to continue our efforts to reduce energy consumption significantly.
- ⌘ Encourage recycling of all waste that is practical, including paper products, plastic, and cans both at church and among our membership at home.
- ⌘ Convert to earth-friendly supplies in our food ministry, at church functions, and in maintenance.

## **WITHIN TEN YEARS**

- ⌘ Create an endowment for support of church staff (i.e. continuing education, benefits, etc.)

VISIONING  
PROPOSAL

Risk-Taking  
MINISTRY & MISSIONS

FOCUS AREA

“We will be a servant church, following the example of our Lord, and will bear witness to His grace in word and in deed.”

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## WITHIN THREE YEARS

- ⊕ Develop ability to comfortably transport members who cannot drive or who no longer drive to and from worship services and other church events.
- ⊕ Expand food distribution ministry to once a quarter, to address community needs.
- ⊕ Create a schedule of brief, creative reports on various church ministries each church conference and possibly in the worship service to increase awareness of all that First Baptist is doing in ministry and missions.
- ⊕ Provide an annual report of ministry and mission ventures.
- ⊕ Establish a “Community Garden Ministry” to outreach to non-church members.
- ⊕ Establish and Train a Disaster Relief Team including a fully prepared disaster relief van.
- ⊕ Sponsor college students either by families or by SS class.
- ⊕ Sponsor military personnel either by families or by SS class.
- ⊕ “Prayer Partner” Ministry with local public schools (including local charter school).
- ⊕ Explore similar “Prayer Partner” ministries with other professions such as medical, business, etc.
- ⊕ Send Listening/Inquiring teams to other churches to find out what ministries and missions activities they are doing.
- ⊕ Dialogue with mission leaders from the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of NC and the Baptist Men and WMU of North Carolina about new directions and opportunities in missions partnering with these organizations.
- ⊕ Reinvigorate our **Women and Men United in Missions** organization.
- ⊕ Evaluate all present local, state, national, and international mission ventures to determine if we need to reduce some and add others.
- ⊕ Ask deacons to evaluate their present deacon team-led structure and determine if teams need to be adjusted, new ones formed, etc.
- ⊕ Redesign most of our present “committee” structure into “ministry teams.”

