



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH FAIRDALE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2025



Next month, our church will be celebrating our 109th anniversary. Every year, we mark this occasion with Homecoming Sunday. It is always such a meaningful time to reflect on how God has worked in our church over the last year, as well as how he has worked through our church in the Fairdale community for the last century. We have several special events planned for our Homecoming celebration that you will not want to miss.

Sunday morning, our Homecoming celebration will commence with our 10:45 worship service. We will sing, pray, give, and thank God for his faithfulness to our church as we share highlights from our church's history.

We will also have the privilege of hearing from Steve Thompson as our guest preacher. Steve and his wife Carol have been serving in Ecuador since 1988. They work in areas of church planting and leadership development in the central mountain and central jungle regions. The Thompsons work alongside Ecuadorian pastors and ministry leaders in a church planting network through ministry camps/training centers. One of these centers, Camp Chacauco, is the location our church sends a team to every summer. We hope everyone will make a special effort to be here on Homecoming Sunday to hear about the work that God is doing in Ecuador through Steve and Carol's dedicated ministry.

After the service, we will continue our celebration with a meal and fellowship. Lunch will be served in the basement and everyone is encouraged to bring a dessert to share. There will be various outdoor activities for kids and adults, board games, and the History Room will be open for viewing.

HomecomingWeekend is always a wonderful time of remembering and celebrating God's work in our church. It is also the perfect opportunity to spend time with those who have been a part of our church in the past, reconnect with our church family, and get to know new faces. We hope that everyone will make it a priority to be a part of this special weekend at FBC Fairdale!

Technically Speaking: Parenting in an Online World

Matt McBroom | Pastor

Over the last 10 years or so I have had countless conversations with parents about kids and the use of technology. Technology has changed a significant amount over the years but the conversations have generally revolve around the same concerns. How much screen time should we allow our children to have? Should they be allowed to have a TV in their room? When should they be allowed to have their own cell phone? What should we do about internet access? What are reasonable limits for gaming? These are just some of the questions that parents ask themselves as they try to set realistic and reasonable boundaries for their children's use of technology. While there are tons of fun and educational ways for our kids to use technology, there are just as many threats. Parents must remain vigilant in order to guide and guard their kids in their use of technology.

One specific area of concern is the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and AI created content. There are some really amazing things that can be done with AI. If you spend any time on the internet you have likely seen AI generated images and videos. Lots of people have used AI tools from Google, Microsoft, ChatGPT, or Grok at some point to answer a question, create an image, or write a church newsletter article (only kidding). As with all technology there are drawbacks and potentially harmful effects that can be experienced from its use and misuse. AI creates a unique set of challenges as it is being embedded into applications and toys that are aimed at children. There are companies that are now making AI companion applications and toys for children as young as 3 years of age. These toys don't just have a set of scripted responses to questions so they can mimic conversation. They have access to the internet so they

are able to have a more open dialogue and use the internet to retrieve information and return answers as part of an interaction. This has the potential to be useful and entertaining but it also has the potential to be damaging and dangerous.

Parents should give serious thought to who and what are being given access to their children. When I was little my parents had conversations with me about "stranger danger". The primary threat back then was from our direct interactions with people we did not know. People seeking to take advantage of kids and harm them needed direct access. Parents today have that same challenge but they also face "stranger danger" that comes in the form of an online AI companion or a plush toy with a cute face and a funny voice that can gain access to the kids from a world away. My advice to parents is to limit the exposure that your children have to the open internet, especially when they are young. Be involved. Don't just hand them a tablet or phone and allow them to watch videos or play games unmonitored. Be aware. Parents need to know what games and apps their children are using. Understanding that even games that look harmless (like Roblox) can be potentially harmful due to the fact that child predators can exploit features like in-game chat capabilities to interact with kids. Be present. Don't outsource your job as a parent to a device. Parenting requires lots of time, energy, and patience but investing in your relationship with your children. Spend time with them, play games with them, talk to them, answer their questions, let them talk about things that are going on in their world and yours, and allow them to share their thoughts with you. Ultimately, it is being actively engaged with your kids and being aware of the dangers that exist in their use of technology.

The Wisdom of a Messy Life

Mary Catherine Anderson | Director of Nursery

If you're like me, with our church's Bible reading plan, you've been reading a lot of Proverbs lately. The regular input of God's wisdom into my mind and soul has been so challenging and encouraging to me. I have enjoyed conversations that have come up with my family about what different proverbs mean and how they might apply to our daily lives. One proverb that strikes me every time I read it is Proverbs 14:4 ***"Where there are no oxen, the manger is clean, but abundant crops come by the strength of the ox."***

When we first read this proverb with the girls this summer, I mentioned that it has always been one of my favorites, and they were confused as to why. Our family doesn't even own a pet or have a chicken coop in our backyard, much less do we have to worry about cleaning up an oxen manger! This led to some good discussion about what wisdom for our modern day lives we might glean from this verse.

One area where I have felt the wisdom of this proverb is in my home. I am someone who functions best in a neat, tidy environment. I love the feeling of clean counters, vacuumed carpet, and folded blankets. But right now, as I sit writing this in my living room, there are socks on the floor, headphones on the coffee table, and cardboard that needs to be taken to recycling. This isn't to say that my family doesn't clean up after themselves; we all work together to keep things in order. But in the midst of the busy-ness of living life, there is literally no way to keep everything neat and tidy all at once, at all times. The bits and pieces strewn about are evidence of life - evidence of the oxen. If there was no one else here, the house might be cleaner,

but it would be devoid of the love and encouragement that comes from my family.

Another area where I've seen the wisdom of this proverb is in the area of relationships. Our relationships - whether it is in marriage, parenting, family, friendship or even church membership - can be sources of great strength, collaboration, productivity, encouragement and fun! But along with those good things,, we have to deal with some messy things. There may be conflict, insecurity, inequality, or clashes of personality. Sometimes it may feel easier to just avoid people all together. But this proverb helps show that the work of maintaining relationships through accountability, hard conversations, and repentance and forgiveness is worth it for the reward of strong, stable connections.

There are so many areas of life where this proverb might be applicable. I would encourage you to think about what might be difficult or messy in your own life, and take some time to reflect on how it can lead to abundance. What things do you wish you didn't have to deal with, and how would your life be less rewarding if you didn't have to do the hard work of tending to it? Above all be reminded that while we are never promised comfort or ease in this life, we can turn to Jesus with all those burdens.

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Matthew 11:28-30