



Rev. Ronald L. Bowens  
Pastor

# FRIENDSHIP'S VOICE

JANUARY 2026

VOL. 13, ISSUE 1

**“Exhalt the Savior, Equip the Saint, Evangelize the Sinner.”**

*Happy New Year*

# Faith

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## JANUARY CALENDAR

- 4 - New Sunday School and Worship  
Service times go into effect
- 4 - Pete Bowens Fellowship Bowling  
League event
- 7 - Wednesday Night Bible Study begins
- 20 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 23 - Pastor Bowens' Birthday
- 31 - Parent Town Hall

## THEME OF THE MONTH

*Faith*

WRITTEN BY SIS. HYACINTH CHUNG



The secular meaning of Faith by the English Dictionary is considered as complete trust or confidence in someone or something. The words that back up this statement are: Trust, Belief, Confidence, Conviction, Credence, Reliance, Dependence, Optimism, Hopefulness, and Expectation.

Faith is also considered as a strong belief in God or in the doctrines of a religion, based on spiritual apprehension rather than proof. Supporting words can be termed as: Religion, Church, Sect, Denomination, Persuasion, Belief, Ideology, Creed, Teaching, Dogma, and Doctrine.

People of Faith refers to any person who can be delineated or classified by an adherence to a religious tradition or doctrine, as opposed to those who do not publicly identify or in any way espouse a religious path.

Faith is belief in someone or something beyond ourselves. So, to a Christian, it is a belief in God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. We cannot see God, yet we believe in Him. The Bible, which is available to everyone, gives the basis of Faith. Faith by itself means that God forgives sinners through the belief in Jesus as the one who died for us and not by what we do or how we behave.

Belief is centered in Faith; thus, it can be said that belief is the subset of Faith. On the other hand, Faith can be equated to evidence, whereas belief cannot be equated with evidence but can be considered as a substitute for knowledge.

Faith in God means that you trust God with your

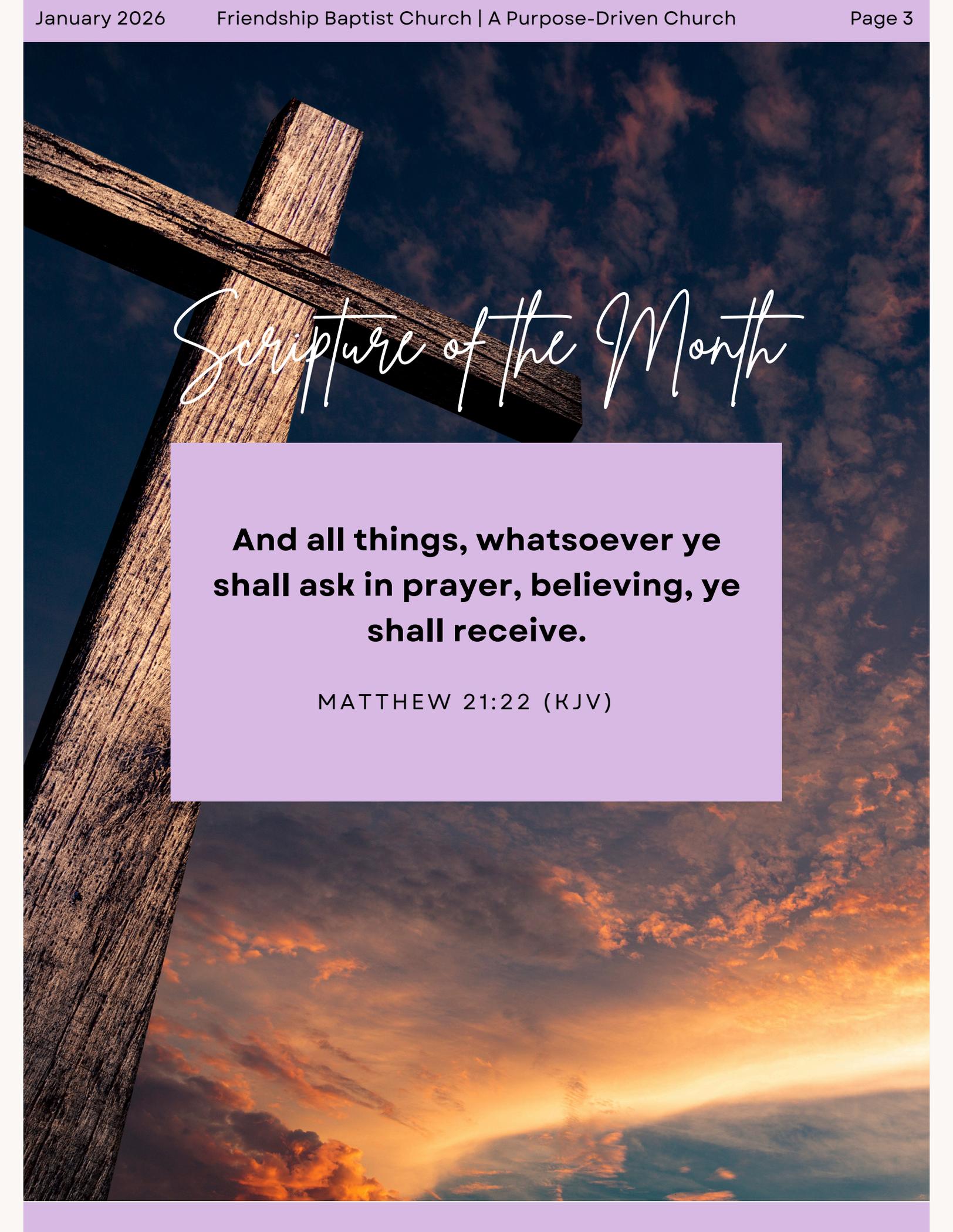
life more than you trust yourself. It means that you trust His timing even when you are running out of patience. It means that you trust His decisions even if you don't like them. It means that you will love Him with all your heart even when you don't understand Him.

Our Faith should be unwavering, so in times when we tend to question God, we still believe in Him. When we are tired of the trials and tests, we can be reassured that He knows what He is doing, so instead of fighting with God, we fight for Him, and instead of complaining of things going wrong, we thank Him for walking us through it.

Faith doesn't change anything around us, but it changes everything within us. Faith helps us to live through pain and darkness. It keeps us going when others are giving up. It gives us hope and teaches us the meaning of life and how to maintain a godly lifestyle.

Faith is not seeing God but knowing He's there; it's not hearing Him but knowing He's listening and doing what is best for us. We are reminded in Hebrews 11:1, "Now Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Faith is the means by which we receive those things we hope for. Neither is faith sight. Faith is the evidence of things not seen. Faith can only operate in the realm of the invisible concerning those things we hope for and do not yet see. Faith cannot exist in the visible realm.

A wooden cross is positioned diagonally across the frame, set against a dramatic sky at sunset or sunrise. The sky is filled with soft, glowing clouds in shades of orange, yellow, and blue. The cross is made of weathered wood, and its vertical post is on the left side of the image, while the horizontal beam extends towards the right.

*Scripture of the Month*

**And all things, whatsoever ye  
shall ask in prayer, believing, ye  
shall receive.**

MATTHEW 21:22 (KJV)

## HYMN OF THE MONTH

# Hold to God's Unchanging Hand

WRITTEN BY JENNIE WILSON

1. Time is filled with swift transi-tion, Naught of earth un-moved can stand,  
 2. Trust in Him who will not leave you, What-so-ev-er years may bring;  
 3. Cov-et not this world's vain riches, That so rap-id-ly de-cay;  
 4. When your journey is com-plet-ed, If to God you have been true,

Build your hopes on things e-ter-nal, Hold to God's un-chang-ing hand!  
 If by earth-ly friends for-sak-en, Still more close-ly to Him cling!  
 Seek to gain the heavn-ly treas-ures, They will nev-er pass a-way!  
 Fair and bright the home in glo-ry, Your en-rap-tured soul will view!

REFRAIN

Hold to God's un-chang-ing hand! Hold to God's un-chang-ing hand!  
 Hold to His hand, Hold to His hand,

*rit. Repeat Refrain softly*

Build your hopes on things e-ter-nal, Hold to God's un-chang-ing hand! A-men.

# New Year, New Goals, New Beginnings

WRITTEN BY SIS. CHRISTINE SMITH



A new year brings more than a new calendar—it brings new opportunities. It's a moment to pause, reflect, and realign our hearts, our priorities, and our purpose. While the world often emphasizes resolutions rooted in self-effort alone, as believers, we understand that true transformation begins with God.

The start of a new year allows us to examine where we have been and prayerfully consider where God is leading us. Some goals may involve growth – strengthening our faith, improving our health, stewarding our resources more wisely, or deepening our relationships.

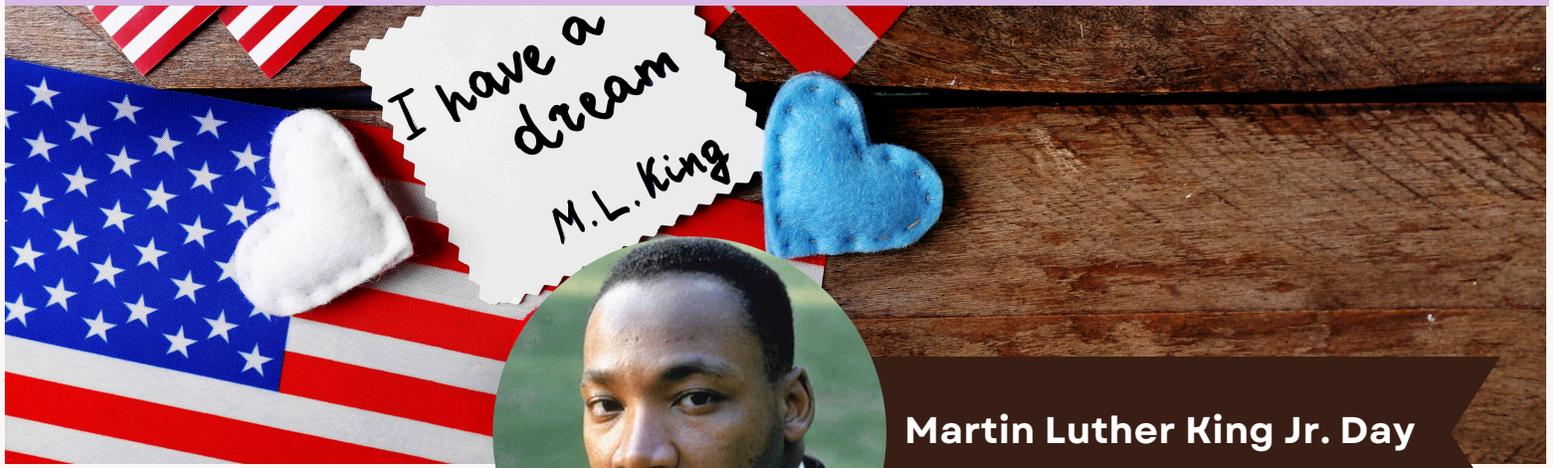
New beginnings remind us that God is not limited by our past. Scripture tells us, *“Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”* – Lamentations 3:22–23 NIV.

Each day, and certainly each year, is marked by fresh mercy and renewed grace.

This season is not about perfection; it is about the path we choose to take. Small, faithful steps taken in obedience can lead to meaningful change over time. When our goals are aligned with God’s will, He provides the strength, wisdom, and perseverance we need to carry them out.

As we step into this new year, let us commit our plans to the Lord, trusting Him to order our steps. Let us set goals that honor God, serve others, and cultivate hearts anchored in faith. No matter what the previous year held—joy or challenges—this new year begins with hope.

May this be a year of renewed faith, purposeful living, and confident trust in the One who makes all things new. *“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!”* – Isaiah 43:18–19 NIV



## Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Martin Luther King Jr. Day honors the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a Baptist minister and civil rights leader who dedicated his life to the fight for racial equality, justice, and love. Rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ, Dr. King championed nonviolence and used his powerful voice to call America to live up to its promise of liberty and justice for all.

After his assassination in 1968, calls to establish a federal holiday in his honor began immediately, led by civil rights leaders and members of the Black community. The movement gained momentum in the 1970s, with activists like Coretta Scott King, his devoted wife, spearheading efforts to enshrine his legacy. In 1983, President Ronald Reagan signed the holiday into law, designating the third Monday in January as a day to honor Dr. King's contributions. The first official celebration was in 1986, but it wasn't until 2000 that all 50 states recognized the day.

Today, Martin Luther King Jr. Day is more than a day off. It's a day of reflection, service, and a call to action for justice and unity. As we honor Dr. King, we remember his dream and recommit ourselves to building the "beloved community."





Happy Birthday, Pastor Bowens! God has blessed you to see another year, and with this, a new day begins. You have been our preacher, teacher, and friend by leading us righteously and preventing us from deviating from God's Word. Your devotion to God and His word, which is settled in heaven, allows us to see His word settled in you!

We thank you for your leadership, your guidance, and most of all your love. You are a rare gem from heaven.

May you continue to be blessed and enjoy pleasures forevermore. May you continue to be refreshed, restored, and renewed in all things from God. May you continue to preach truth and purity.

We will pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to bless our hour of worship, our desire to worship, our bible studies, and our desire to learn more. We can't thank you enough, so we will "Wish You a Happy Birthday!"



*"Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven."*

– Psalm 119:89

# Pray for those on our "Sick and Shut-in" List

AS WELL AS THOSE GRIEVING THE LOSS OF A LOVED ONE



Send them a card, give them a call, visit them. You never know how much it could mean to them.

Mr. William Annan

Sis. Charre Armstrong

Bro. Robert Beal

Bro. Willie Benton

Min. Karen Blacknell

Sis. Sheila Blackwell

Dea. Willie Blake

Bro. Don Bowens

Sis. Liz Bowens

Barbara Williams Brown

Sis. Denise Brown

Sis. Alice Burnes

Bro. Dwayne Bynum

Sherita Caldwell

Breann Caldwell

Dominique Caldwell

Nick Caldwell

The Carmack Family

Sis. Chastity Collier

Sis. Sarah Collins

Sis. Trisha Dawson

Sis. Carolyn Dukes

Bro. Joe Dukes

Sis. Andrea Green

Sis. Ruth Griggs

Sis. Barbara Hall

Sis. Dorothy Hines

Bro. Willie Irvin

Sis. Jennifer Jones

Bro. Patrick Jones

Sis. Quincie Joyner

Ms. Jessie McCall

Sis. Valerie McClendon

Sis. Josephine May

Bro. Will May

Sis. Diane Meeks

Miss. Kaitlyn Miles

Sis. Alice Murphy

Tressa Norwood

Ms. Patricia Ochogu

Bro. Rickie Perry

Bro. Charles Phinizy

The Poe Family

Sis. Carrie Rawls

Sis. Linda Rogers

Sis. Cindy Rollins

Sis. Carrie Royals

Sis. Nilda C Sankitts

Sis. Jacqueline Scott

Sis. Tonya Sellers

Sis. Juanita Semedo

Mr. Claudius Stafford

Bro. Xavier Stephens

Sis. Mabel Thomas

The Wells Family

Bro. Clarence Wilkerson

Rev. Dwight Wilkerson

Sis. Shelby Wilkerson

Sis. Valerie Williams

Sis. Joan Wilson

Sis. Sadie Wilson

Bro. Victor Winston Jr.

Sis. Priscilla Wise

Sis. Dorothy Woods

Sis. Lola Wright

Prayer changes things.

**HIGHLIGHTING BLACK HISTORY**

# Behind the Scenes Women - Supporting Martin Luther King Jr.

WRITTEN BY SIS. DIANE RUSSELL



While Martin Luther King Jr. is widely recognized for his leadership in the Civil Rights Movement, many remarkable women worked alongside him and played pivotal roles behind the scenes.

Figures such as Coretta Scott King, his wife, was a steadfast partner and activist in her own right, continuing to champion racial and economic justice after Dr. King's death and establishing the King Center to preserve his legacy.



Ella Baker served as a vital strategist and organizer, helping to found the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and deeply influencing the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, empowering young activists to find their own voices.



Dorothy Cotton was instrumental as the Education Director at the SCLC, where she developed and led the Citizenship Education Program, teaching thousands of people across the South about their rights and how to organize for change.



Septima Clark, often called the "Mother of the Movement," pioneered literacy and citizenship workshops that enabled countless African Americans to register to vote and become civic leaders. Though their efforts were often less visible, these women's contributions were foundational to the progress and successes of the movement, advancing equality and justice throughout the nation.



# The FBC 2025 Christmas Toy Drive

Led by the Outreach Ministry



# Women's Ministry & Creative Learning Ministry Event



# FBC Annual Christmas Program 2025



Friendship Baptist Church celebrated our annual Christmas Program on the afternoon of December 21st in the Family Life Center. This year's program brought our church family together in a spirit of fellowship and joy as we celebrated the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The sanctuary was filled with excitement, reverence, and heartfelt worship as all generations joined in honoring the true meaning of Christmas.

Our youth opened the program with beautiful recitals that captured the heart of the season, reminding us why we celebrate. Through their sweet words and expressions, they shared the message of hope, love, and a very happy Birthday to Jesus.

The Drama Ministry presented "The Greatest Gift," a powerful reenactment of the miraculous story of Jesus' birth. With talented youth actors and thoughtfully prepared costumes, the dramatization truly came to life, drawing the congregation into the familiar yet awe-inspiring story. The presentation served as a meaningful

reminder of how grateful we are for the greatest gift of all—Jesus.

The program concluded with the entire congregation lifting their voices together in joyful praise, singing "Joy to the World (The Lord Has Come)." Rev. Bowens then closed the program with an encouraging and timely word, sending us into the holiday season uplifted and renewed in faith.

The Drama Ministry extends heartfelt thanks to all the participants and their parents for dedicating their time and talents to this year's program. Special appreciation is also given to all the ministries involved who helped bring this vision to life.

Overall, the Christmas Program was a meaningful expression of faith and fellowship, celebrating the timeless story of Jesus' birth and leaving everyone in attendance encouraged, uplifted, and inspired.

**FBC ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM 2025**



**FBC ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM 2025**



# “Made It Out Alright!”

Written by Sis. Whitney Brown



The year is now 2026, but Award-winning Gospel artist and Pastor, John P. Kee, is the creator of the timeless 2019 Gospel hit, “I Made it Out.” It’s one of my favorite upbeat worship jams, and it never gets old.

Having heard this song a thousand times before, I found myself reflecting on it while my toddler and I were saying our evening prayers recently. As I thanked God for our “haves” and requested our “wants,” the lyrics to the song were swirling around my mind to the point of distraction. As I refocused my thoughts, I realized what God was putting in my spirit: I made it out alright!

As we step into the New Year, the world would have us focus on things like “Bucket Lists” and “Resolutions.” From gym memberships to better jobs, our minds are filled with lists of things we need, want, or “should have” in 2026. However, how much longer would our lists be if we instead recounted all that God already brought us through alright in 2025?

In Deuteronomy 31:8, we’re reminded that God “...will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed (NKJV).” As I write this and as you read this, Friendship family, we are here and we have not been forsaken. This year has not come without its trials and tribulations, but we have made it out alright!

Instead of asking God for more or making personal resolution lists, I challenge us to reflect on all that God has carried us through this past year, and to respond with grateful hearts. New Year’s celebrations may be upon us, but Thanksgiving is every day. For every day that we have breath in our lungs is another day to serve God and celebrate His grace.

“I made it out; I made it out alright!  
I made it out; I made it out alright!  
Thank you because,  
You didn’t leave me nor forsake me...  
I’m still in the fight; I made it out alright!”  
– Pastor John P. Kee, “I Made It Out”



UPCOMING EVENTS

# EFFECTIVE JANUARY 4, 2026

**Sunday  
School**



**Worship  
Service**



**Thank You, Pastor Bowens**

## Wednesday Night

### Bible Study

Starting Jan 7<sup>th</sup>

**KINGDOM PRINCIPLES  
OLD FASHIONED WISDOM & FINANCES  
WITH GOD'S PURPOSE**

7 Week Journey to Align the Mind,  
Spirit, and Finances with God's Purpose

UPCOMING EVENTS

**THE  
Pete Bowens  
Fellowship  
Bowling  
League**

**Individual  
and/or  
2 member  
teams**

**Jan 5th  
@ 5pm**

Stars & Stripes \* 1601 Horizon Parkway \* Buford, GA  
Contacts: Ethel Emery @ 678.362.2177 or Deacon Michael Jerrals @ 770.815.0604

*The VILLAGE: Solutions to the Problems of Detentions/Suspensions, Expulsions,  
and Incarcerations*

**PARENT TOWN HALL**

**SATURDAY  
JANUARY 31  
10 AM - 2 PM**

Friendship Baptist Church Family Life Center  
3375 Church Lane, Duluth, GA 30096

Light Refreshments Provided!

**Guest Panelists will Be Professionals**  
in the Areas of **YOUTH EDUCATION,**  
**CHILD PSYCHOLOGY, MENTAL HEALTH,**  
**LAW ENFORCEMENT, JUVENILE LAW,**  
and **YOUTH MINISTRY**

**TUWANDA RUSH  
WILLIAMS**  
SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE OF GWINNETT COUNTY

**FREE & OPEN TO PARENTS  
& GRANDPARENTS of All  
Youth**

Register by Scanning the QR Code OR Contact Dr. Anthony Williams at 404-429-4684

## UPCOMING EVENTS

# VOLUNTEER RECRUITING NOW IN EFFECT

*Coming Soon* 2026

Grand Re-Opening of the Family Life Center Gym  
and Professional Space

## Volunteer Roles Needed

- Gym Attendants & Monitors
- Fitness Instructors
- Facilitators for Professional Services



## FMI Contact

Dea. Dallis Hairston  
(254) 366-0498

or

Bro. Brandon Owens  
(205) 503-1715

# Jamaica Hurricane Melissa Relief

## WAYS TO ASSIST IN THIS EFFORT:

**\*Volunteer**

**\*Donate Essential Items**

**\*Monetary Donations**

**VISIT:** [fbcduluth.org](http://fbcduluth.org)

**CLICK:** Jamaica Hurricane Melissa Relief

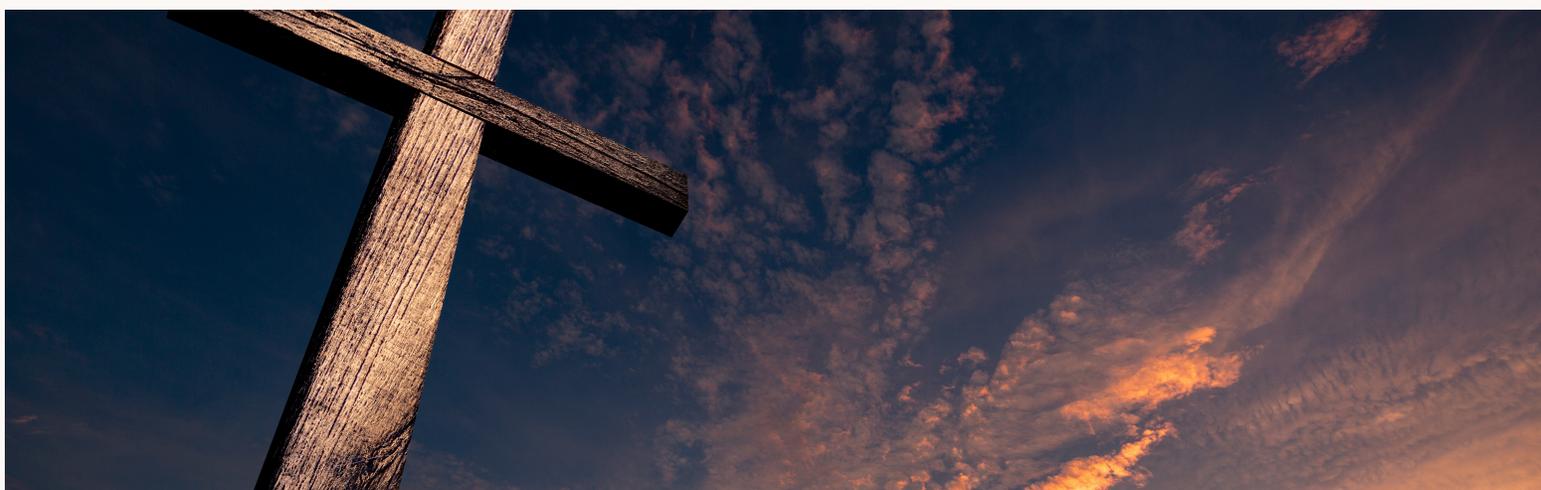
*"Faith is belief in someone or something beyond ourselves."*

Thanks for reading

# Friendship's Voice

Stay tuned for next month's Newsletter!

**The deadline for February Newsletter articles is Friday, January 16th**



## Communications Ministry

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### Assistant Secretary

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### Treasurer

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### Chaplain

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Christine Smith

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### Graphic Designer

DeLauryn Brown

### Photographers

Louie Malone

Shirley Price

### Publisher

Louie Malone

### Reporters/Writers

Latrell Carr

Hyacinth Chung

Jennifer Jones

Diane Russell

Christine Smith

Improvements to FBC's website are ongoing. Feedback can be provided to the

**Communications Ministry** at

tag49llm@aol.com



## A Purpose-Driven Church

Friendly through Fellowship  
 Developed through Discipleship  
 Enlarged through Evangelism  
 Sharing and Caring through Servanthood  
 Stronger through God's Word and True Worship

## Church Address and Contact Information

3375 Church Lane Duluth, GA 30096

Contact: Rita Bowens, Executive Assistant @ 770-497-8227

### Office Hours:

Monday - Thursday 9:00am - 4:00pm

Friday 9:00am - 3:00pm

Email: [fbcduluth@att.net](mailto:fbcduluth@att.net)

Website: [www.fbcduluth.org](http://www.fbcduluth.org)

## Leadership

### FBC ASSOCIATE MINISTERS

Rev. Ken Blacknell

Elder Chris Evans

Rev. Garfield Garner

Rev. Eugene Graves

Min. Shurron Green

Rev. Stanley Jackson

Rev. Artis Johnson

Min. Larry Jones

Rev. Timothy Twyman

Rev. Stanley Williams

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Evg. Geneva Burse

Evg. Valerie A. Montague

Evg. Ruthell Morris

Evg. Kimberly Rogers

Min. Monique Stroman

Min. Barbara Williams