

FIRST FAMILY FOCUS

JANUARY 2026



FOLLOWING JESUS IN BOSSIER: A NOTE FROM THE PASTOR

Rev. Donnie Wilkinson,
Senior Pastor

Looking Back, Looking Ahead

The beginning of a new year has a way of inviting a particular kind of faithfulness—not just remembering where we've been or imagining where we might go, but asking what faithfulness looks like **here and now**, in the time and place we've been given.

As I reflect on our first six months together at First United Methodist Church of Bossier City, a few moments rise immediately to the surface.

On Christmas Eve, our sanctuary was filled—nearly 400 people gathered, candles glowing, voices lifted as we sang *Silent Night*. It was one of those moments when the room itself seemed to hold its breath, when light pressed gently against darkness and hope felt tangible.

Just days earlier, on December 21, the longest night of the year, we gathered for our first Yoga Church. About thirty people from our congregation and the wider community came together to bend and breathe, to quiet their bodies and open their hearts, to create space to encounter Christ in Scripture and at the Table. One participant shared with me afterward, with tears in her eyes, that it was one of the most holy experiences she had ever had.

Different scale. Same Spirit.

What struck me in those moments was not just their beauty, but their difference—how the same Spirit met people in very different ways, shaped by the realities of their lives right now.

That same pattern repeated itself throughout Advent and Christmas. Our Home for Christmas gathering filled the Fellowship Hall with families from Barksdale Air Force Base and our First Friends preschool. At one point, a young airwoman stepped up to the microphone during karaoke and delivered a stunning rendition of *The Christmas Song*. For a moment, strangers became neighbors. A church became a living room.

And at Rusheon Middle School, something subtle but significant shifted. When we began the Donut Drop in October, many students kept their distance. By December, they were running toward us. That kind of trust doesn't happen overnight. It happens through presence, consistency, and care.

As I've reflected on these moments, I've realized something important. I didn't bring God with me to First Bossier. God was already here.

Like Jacob waking from his dream at Bethel, I've found myself thinking, "Surely the Lord is in this place—and I did not know it." What I've discovered is a congregation with deep roots of welcome, generosity, and service—roots planted long before I arrived, now stirring again for a new season.

That work, renewing the life of our community by helping people become fully alive in Christ, is both beautiful and demanding. It requires honesty as well as hope, especially when it comes to our shared life and resources. **(Continued inside.)**



TOGETHER THIS CHRISTMAS

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR STAFF AT OFFICE@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG



BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR STAFF AT OFFICE@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG

ANNIVERSARIES

Brad & Carol Smith
Randy & Elaine Cox(57)
Mike & Sherrie Yorba
Russ & Sasha Toms

BIRTHDAYS

Tracy Beckett	1/2	Tammy Sullwold	1/12
Kareen Wilson	1/2	Matt Halbrook	1/13
Pam Vallery	1/3	Sherry Herbst	1/15
Donna Ihle	1/4	Adam Hines	1/16
Mike Seal	1/4	Kenneth Hill	1/18
David Tyrone	1/4	Cameron Morgan	1/18
Ted Groh	1/6	Jeannette Bange	1/20
Margaret Anne Boone	1/7	Patti Daniel	1/22
Tony Cheatham	1/7	Heidi Mooney	1/22
Ronda Smyth	1/7	Thomas Morgan	1/22
Harry Solomon	1/8	Morgan Bentley	1/25
Amy Cain	1/10	James Mooney	1/26
Maribeth Sherman	1/12	George Herbst	1/28
		Phyllis Carmack	1/28
		Joyce McGann	1/29
		Glenda Williams	1/30
		Nell Carpenter	1/31
		Parker Self	1/31
		Henry Stevens	1/31

BIRTHDAYS

1/5	Tammy Sullwold	1/12
1/24	Matt Halbrook	1/13
1/25	Sherry Herbst	1/15
1/25	Adam Hines	1/16

CHECK OUT OUR CHURCH APP

- Register & pay for events
- Check-in for service/events
- Church Calendar
- Giving/Offering



FIRST FRIENDS CHRISTIAN LEARNING CENTER

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT SHANNON KELLEY AT SKELLEY@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG



As we welcome January, we are excited to begin a new year filled with growth, learning, and joyful moments with the children. This month we will focus on re-establishing routines, strengthening friendships, and helping our little learners feel confident and secure after the holiday break. January is a wonderful time for fresh beginnings, winter-themed fun, and practicing kindness as we grow together. We look forward to a great year ahead! May 2026 be filled with all things wonderful and blessings beyond measure!

A DAY IN THE LIFE

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR STAFF AT OFFICE@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG

FUMC BOSSIER



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT ELISA HINES AT CHILDREN@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG

Happy New Year, First Families! As we begin 2025, we're kicking things off with opportunities to serve, connect, and grow together as a church family.

Bowling for Soup - Canned Food Drive

This month, we're gathering canned soup and other nonperishable foods to support local families in need. It's a fun, simple way for our kids to learn about generosity and helping others—because even small acts of kindness can make a big difference! Bring your donations throughout the month and help us strike out hunger in our community!

The Breakfast Club

We're excited to launch a brand-new monthly gathering called The Breakfast Club! This group is for families with children to come together for a potluck-style brunch, good conversation, and fun fellowship. Bring your favorite breakfast dish to share and enjoy connecting with other families in our church.

Kids January Challenge:

Can you memorize Galatians 6:9 this month?

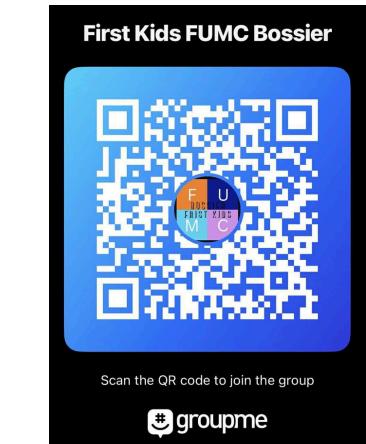
"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

Each month, our Kids Challenge will focus on a Scripture verse that connects with our current mission or ministry theme—helping kids hide God's Word in their hearts while learning how to serve, love, and live out their faith!

Love and Blessings,
Elisa



STAY UP TO DATE WITH
PARENT INFORMATION
ON GROUP ME →

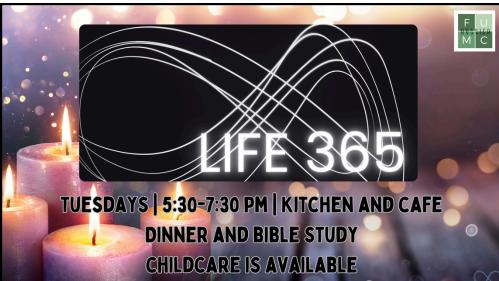


www.fumcbossier.org



GET CONNECTED TO A SMALL COMMUNITY

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR STAFF AT OFFICE@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG

**LIFE 365**

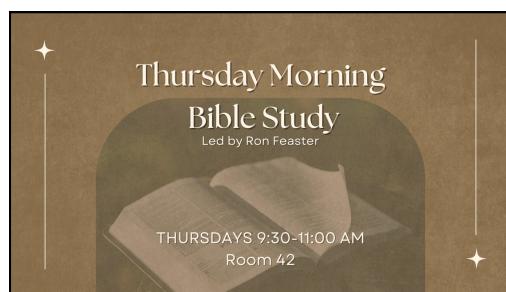
TUESDAYS | 5:30-7:30 PM | KITCHEN AND CAFE
DINNER AND BIBLE STUDY
CHILDCARE IS AVAILABLE

LIFE 365

Tuesday Nights - 5:30-7:30 PM - Kitchen and Cafe
Life 365 is a Christ-centered community where people of all ages grow in faith, support one another, and live out God's love every day of the year.

**The Good and Beautiful****THE GOOD AND BEAUTIFUL BIBLE STUDY**

Wednesday Nights - 6:00-7:00 PM - Midyett Room
The Good and Beautiful Bible Study continues.

**Thursday Morning****Bible Study**

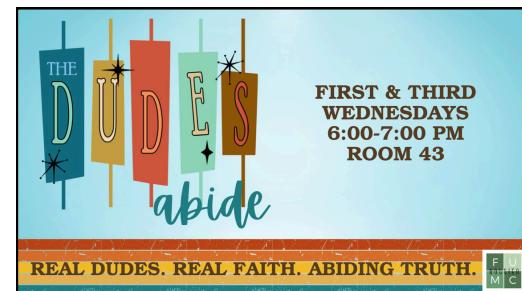
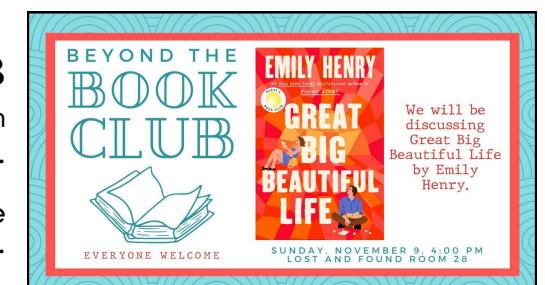
Led by Ron Feaster

THURSDAYS 9:30-11:00 AM
Room 42**THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY**

Thursdays at 9:30am- Mary Ewing Room
Study is led by Ron Feaster.

BEYOND THE BOOK CLUB

TBA at 4:00pm - Lost and Found Room
We will be discussing *Great Big Beautiful Life* by Emily Henry.
Everyone is welcome!
Our November meeting was postponed. A new meeting date will be announced soon.



FIRST & THIRD
WEDNESDAYS
6:00-7:00 PM
ROOM 43

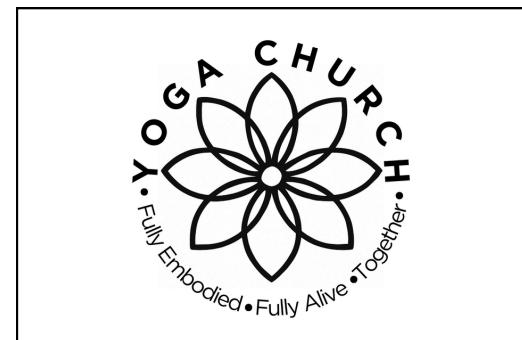
REAL DUDES. REAL FAITH. ABIDING TRUTH. FUMC

THE DUDE'S ABIDE-MEN'S GROUP

First and Third Wednesdays 6:00-7:00 PM Room 43
The Dudes Abide is a group of men and dads devoted to abiding in Christ, growing in God's Word, and encouraging one another to live authentic, Spirit-led lives.

**THE SWEET SHUFFLE**

Fourth Friday- 6:00-8:00 PM Fellowship Hall
January 23- We are back! We can't wait to play some games and eat some treats! Everyone welcome.

**YOGA CHURCH**

Third Sunday- 4:00-5:30 PM - Fellowship Hall
NEW! A worship service that blends breath and body with Scripture and Holy Communion. Yoga Church is designed to help us prepare our whole selves-- body, mind and spirit-- to encounter Christ in the reading of the Gospel and in the bread and cup.
If you long for a quiet, embodied, contemplative space... If you desire to feel more fully alive in God's presence... If you're simply curious... we would love for you to join.
Please, bring a yoga mat and a water bottle.

www.fumcbossier.org

MISSIONS THAT MATTER

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR STAFF AT OFFICE@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG

MAGNOLIA MANOR MISSIONS

We will serve communion on the First Monday of the month, January 5.



WOMEN IN MISSION

January 20- 10:00 AM- Room 49

We meet on the third Tuesday of each month. Come join us if you would like to help with our Mission Projects.



THE GRIT & GRACE MISSION TEAM

January 20- 5:00 PM- Mary Ewing Room

We meet on the third Tuesday of each month. Come join us if you would like to help with our Mission Projects. Everyone Welcome!

MILITARY FAMILIES MINISTRY

Our mission is to serve those who serve, reflecting Christ's love through community, care, and connection.



SOUPER SATURDAY

January 31- 8:00 AM - FUMC BOSSIER KITCHEN

Come pack meals or deliver meals to the home bound & those who receive meals on wheels. We provide meals the last Saturday of each month.

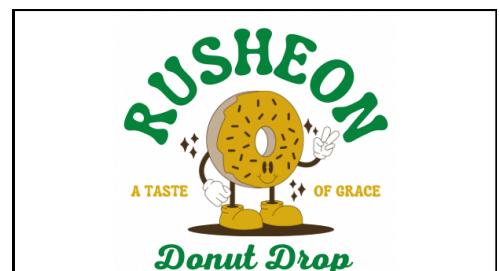


HELPING HANDS FOOD PANTRY

Open Monday-Thursday 9:00-11:30 AM

Helping Hands Food Pantry -Through generosity, compassion, and service, Helping Hands helps to ensure that no one in our community goes hungry.

We are looking for Volunteers. If interested contact Kiersten Whelby.



RUSHEON DONUT DROP

Tuesdays- 7:20 AM - Following the Bossier School Calendar

Every week we gather at Rusheon's crosswalk to greet students with a smile—and a free donut! It's our way of offering a taste of grace to kids as they start their day. With a quick hello, a word of encouragement, and a sugary treat on the go, this ministry helps brighten mornings, build connections, and remind students that they are seen, valued, and supported—one donut at a time.

YOUTH MINISTRY

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT SARAH MCCURLEY AT SMCCURLEY@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG

HAPPY 2026!

2025 was an amazing year for our students. It was full of worship, belly laughs, growth, service, and getting to know each other and God more. We are so excited for all 2026 has in store for us! Thank you to our church family for always supporting and loving our teenagers!



I want them to be encouraged and knit together by strong ties of love. I want them to have complete confidence that they understand God's mysterious plan which is Christ Jesus himself.
Colossians 2:2



YOUTH MEAL TRAIN

LOOKING FOR MEALS EVERY SUNDAY NIGHT TO FEED BETWEEN 15-20 PEOPLE. CONTACT SARAH FOR MORE INFO!

Thank you so much to all who fed our students last year! Our dates for 2026 through May are NOW available! Reach out to Sarah for more info on how to sign up for the meal train.

JANUARY YOUTH NIGHTS



STAY UP TO DATE WITH FUMC BOSSIER YOUTH TEXTS

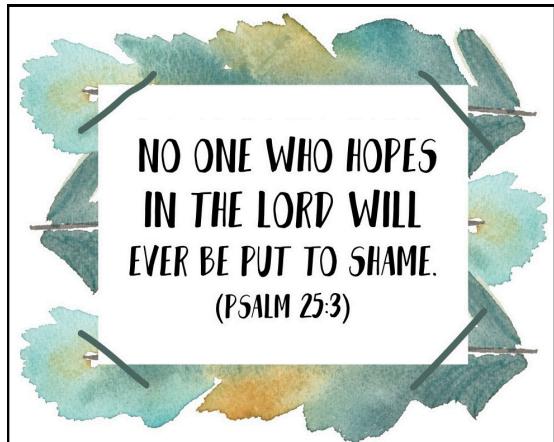
Text @2020fumcy to 81010 - students

Text @2020fumcp to 81010 - parents



A WORD FROM THE PRAYER ROOM

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR STAFF AT OFFICE@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG



We have just experienced a wonderful period of love, joy and good will. Hope also played a strong role. We experienced all this and more as we welcomed the birthday of Jesus, our Hope for all eternity. Is it possible to hold on to those good feelings as we enter the new year?

Hope—Pause a moment and consider what it means to you. Anticipation, dreams, trust, actions, love, brightness? I could not but think of the coming of Epiphany. Some christian groups honor January 6 each year as we honor the three kings who traveled long and far to pay tribute to our Blessed Jesus. Surely hope was strong within them.

The Old Testament does not dwell on the idea of hope so much, but it has its fulfillment in Jesus' time on earth. Our hope lies in the fact that we must always look ahead, not back as we grow in wisdom and knowledge of what Jesus means to us, how Jesus became man to show us His love is real, ever present and it is eternal.

Our church is entering a new period which also leads us to prayerfully seek paths we need to follow. Hope as well as trust, love, joy, actions, etc. god sent Jesus, His Son, to the world at His time to bring new life to the world. As we reflect on the good feelings experienced during advent, may we strive to become more aware of our own hope to be more like the One who loves us best.

THE CHURCH MOUSE

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR STAFF AT OFFICE@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG

Happy New Year! It certainly has been very quiet around here after all the events during the Christmas season. The Cantata filled the air with beautiful voices singing glorious seasonal songs. The eyes of the small children watching the lit candles is a sight that brings delight to your heart. **2026** is here! Many people talk about "a New Year's resolution"....something they plan to do to change their life in a good way. I wonder how many accomplish their plan during the year. Here are some thoughts to ponder as you think about the start of a New Year.

"In the New Year, never forget to thank your past years because they enabled you to reach today! Without the stairs of the past, you cannot arrive at the future!" — Mehmet Murat Ildan

"As the old year retires and a new one is born, we commit into the hands of our Creator the happenings of the past year and ask for direction and guidance in the new one. May He grant us His grace, His tranquility and His wisdom!" —Peggy Toney Horton

"Year's end is neither an end nor a beginning but a going on, with all the wisdom that experience can instill in us." —Hal Borland

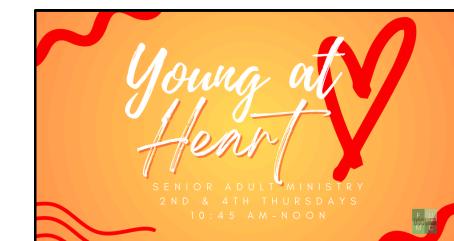
Church Mouse plans to be more careful with so many activities happening, especially in the kitchen.

Happy New Year,
Church Mouse



SENIOR ADULT MINISTRIES

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR STAFF AT OFFICE@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG



YOUNG-AT-HEART

2ND THURSDAYS EACH MONTH- 10:30 AM-FELLOWSHIP HALL
January 8- Lunch, drinks and dessert provided. Cost is \$5.00.
Call the church office to make your reservation.

SILVER FOXES FITNESS

Mondays and Fridays 10:00 AM-Fellowship Hall
Join our Silver Foxes for a Chair Exercise Class.



CHURCHWIDE EVENTS

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR STAFF AT OFFICE@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG



YOGA CHURCH

If you long for a quiet, embodied, contemplative space... If you desire to feel more fully alive in God's presence... If you're simply curious... we would love for you to join.

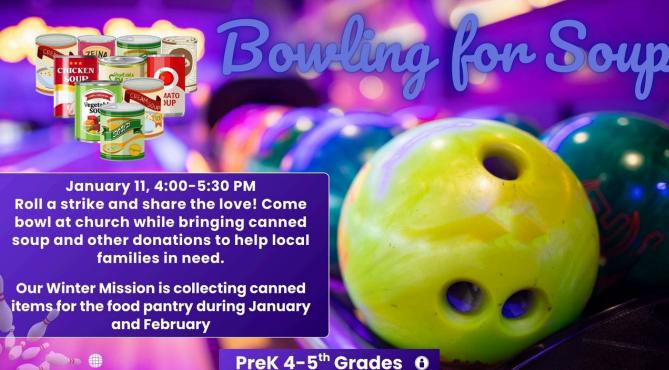
Sunday, January 18 at 4 PM
in the Fellowship Hall
Please, bring a yoga mat and a water bottle.
Childcare is available.

THE BREAKFAST CLUB

THIRD SATURDAYS | 9:00-11:00 AM | FELLOWSHIP HALL JAN 17TH 9AM
POTLUCK BREAKFAST

ARE YOU A FIRST-TIME PARENT OR RAISING KIDS AND LONGING FOR MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY WITH OTHERS IN THE SAME SEASON? JOIN US FOR BREAKFAST AND CONNECTION! WE'RE BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF FAMILIES WHO GROW TOGETHER, SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER, AND RAISE CHILDREN TO BECOME LEADERS AND WORLD CHANGERS. LET'S SHARE LIFE—ONE SATURDAY MORNING BREAKFAST AND COFFEE AT A TIME.

OPEN TO EVERYONE



Bowling for Soup

January 11, 4:00-5:30 PM
Roll a strike and share the love! Come bowl at church while bringing canned soup and other donations to help local families in need.

Our Winter Mission is collecting canned items for the food pantry during January and February

PreK 4-5th Grades



The Centenary Choir will present a concert in the main sanctuary, followed by a reception in the fellowship hall.

January 7
7:00 pm

FUMC FUN FACTS

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR STAFF AT OFFICE@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG

Keeping with the spirit of the season, here are a few lighthearted fun facts inspired by church life and the New Year!

- Coffee has become one of the most common modern "ministries" in churches ☕🍩❤️ So go hang out in the cafe and
- The church calendar actually starts in Advent, not January—so the church gets a "new year" before everyone else 🕯️🌟 JUL 17
- God shows up even when the bulletin has a typo 😅🙏📝

These little moments remind us that church life is made up of both meaningful traditions and everyday joy. At FUMC Bossier, faith, fellowship, and devotion have shaped our story—and we look forward to how each of us will continue to add to it in the days ahead.

STIRRING THE SPIRIT

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR STAFF AT OFFICE@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG

Sweet Potato Hash

Yield: Serves 6

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 45 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 lb ground breakfast sausage
- 1 onion, diced
- 4 medium-size sweet potatoes, diced
- 2 tsp thyme
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1-1½ tsp salt, to taste
- 1-2 tbsp oil or butter (if needed)
-



Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. In a large oven-safe skillet, cook sausage and onions together over medium heat until sausage is browned. Remove mixture to a bowl.
3. If the pan is dry, add oil or butter. Add sweet potatoes and seasonings. Sauté about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until potatoes begin to brown.
4. Add sausage and onions back to the pan with the potatoes and stir to combine.
5. Transfer to the oven and bake for about 30 minutes, or until potatoes are tender.

Notes

- To add eggs: Remove hash from oven after 20 minutes. Make small wells and crack eggs on top. Return to oven for about 10 minutes, or until eggs are set.
- If you don't have an oven-safe pan, transfer the hash to a baking sheet to finish cooking.

Recipe submissions for Stirring the Spirit: Drop off at the church office for Elisa or email children@fumcbossier.org

CONTINUED FROM COVER

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR STAFF AT OFFICE@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG

Part of serving faithfully in this season is telling the truth about what it takes to be a church that is present and engaged in today's world.

All of the ministries we are starting and strengthening are made possible through the generosity of God's people. Our financial position today is stronger than it was six months ago, thanks in part to the sale of the Mayfair Street parsonage and the steady earnings from our endowment funds at the Methodist Foundation of Louisiana. Expenses are being carefully managed.

And still, the reality is that many of the church's fixed costs—insurance, utilities, facilities maintenance—have risen sharply over the last several years. We are absorbing those increases while striving to do more with less in the ministries most central to our mission. I am deeply grateful to everyone who has supported Light the Day, helping cover the daily cost of operating a seven-day-a-week church. Many have increased their giving, and that generosity matters more than you know.

In the year ahead, we will also begin exploring thoughtful, mission-aligned ways of making better use of our campus as potential sources of revenue—an increasingly necessary step for churches who intend to serve their communities fully in this season.

Looking forward, I am filled with hope.

I look forward to deepening our relationships with military families as we grow into what it truly means to be a "Blue Star Church"—a place of community, care, and a home away from home for those stationed at Barksdale. I look forward to taking the next step in our outreach to students at Rusheon Middle School by relaunching an after-school program adapted to the real needs of today's families. I am eager to see how Yoga Church continues to create space for those who might never connect with a traditional church experience. And I am especially excited for the launch of Table of Grace, our dinner church ministry, as we move from charity to community—sharing meals, stories, and the love of Jesus with our neighbors.

Again and again, I find myself asking what it means for us to be faithful in the time we've been given.

As I think about all of this, I keep returning to an old Methodist hymn: "A Charge to Keep I Have." It reminds us that faithfulness is not about preserving the past unchanged, but about responding, again and again, to the call of God in the present moment. The second verse names our shared calling as clearly as anything I know:

To serve the present age,
my calling to fulfill,
O may it all my pow'rs engage
to do my Master's will!

As we begin this new year together, my prayer is simple: that we would look back with gratitude, look ahead with courage, and move forward together—serving the present age, fully alive in Christ.

Grace and peace,
Donnie

FAITHFUL FAVORITES

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR STAFF AT OFFICE@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG

Each month, we highlight a podcast, book, song, or other resource to encourage reflection, growth, and connection in your faith journey. Whether it's music that uplifts, a book that inspires, or a podcast that sparks conversation, our monthly pick is chosen to nourish your spirit and spark meaningful moments in your life. To start off the new year, Sarah Bowers has selected this month's pick.

For January, Sarah chose two songs—one choral and one praise—to help guide us into this next chapter.

Let My Love Be Heard by Jake Runestad is a beautiful choral song asking angels to carry our grief and personal pleas to God in difficult times and ask that our "love be heard whispering in your wings". The piece has become an anthem for those grieving. I personally find it meditative and the message focusing on the things we need as we enter a new chapter and leave behind our hardships.

God Ain't Finished Yet by Emerson Day is an upbeat song about God working through us. We are entering a new year of continuing to trust in God's plan.

"I woke up and I'm breathing again.
So, God ain't finished."

Together, these songs hold space for both reflection and hope—grief and joy—as we begin anew.



Let My Love
Be Heard



God Ain't
Finished Yet

FIRST FAMILY FOCUS NEWSLETTER

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR STAFF AT OFFICE@FUMCBOSSIER.ORG

Our monthly newsletter is a collaboration by all members of our church staff. If you notice any discrepancies please let us know so we can address them.

If your group or class has anything for the newsletter or bulletin you can turn it in at the office or email it to office@fumcbossier.org

Photos, information, recipes, etc. can also be sent to the office as well.

Please, make sure to submit all information for the newsletter by the **20th of the month** to ensure it is included in the upcoming month's issue.

Thank you!