



Word & Way



2025 Associational Missionary Report

“This has been a great year filled with ministry advancement on many fronts within Friendship Baptist Association. We had the busiest summer in terms of almost every week being utilized for camps.”

(pgs. 2-3)

Upcoming Events

(pg. 5)

AIM Mentor Training

(pg. 5)

God Came Down Christmas Worship Event

(pg. 5)



2025 Associate Missionary Intern Report

“The good news is that God is not surprised by our current circumstances and challenges, and His desire and mission to seek and to save the lost and sanctify those who belong to Him has not and will not wane, and will be accomplished.”

(pgs. 6-7)

Still Building: Dining Hall Improvements

“The most recent round of updates to the Dining Hall makes the building safer and more accessible for all.”

(pg. 4)



2024-2026 Emphasis

Associational Missionary Report

Shared at 167th Annual Meeting on Sept. 21, 2025

Praise God for His work in our Association this past year:

Friendship Camp was used nearly every week of summer, impacting hundreds of lives, including a new FBA camp—Ignite333 Worship and Arts Camp.

Advancing in Ministry is growing:

- Record number of Level 1 Missionaries
- Georgia Baptist Bible Institute attendance continues to rise
- Several GBBi students are close to completing their Certificate of Ministry Leadership
- A second FBA church has applied to host an AIM internship

A new church was launched in Buena Vista.

Ministry Advancement on Many Fronts:

This has been a great year filled with ministry advancement on many fronts within Friendship Baptist Association. We had the busiest summer in terms of almost every week being utilized for camps. We also were blessed with the largest number of AIM 1 missionaries we have ever had, which was vital to our camps success. We've also seen a record attendance in our GBBi classes as several students near the completion of a Certificate of Ministry Leadership. Through camps and Calling Out the Called, we've seen more individuals announcing a call to ministry. Several churches without pastors have called pastors while others have lost pastors. Training for the Pastor Search process and Church Revitalization has been completed in several churches. A second church within the association has applied to be an AIM Church and requested a grant to set up their pastoral internship program. The application and grant have both been approved and we hope to have a candidate in place by the end of the year. A new church was launched this year and is growing as it continues to develop leaders and add ministries to impact its community. Construction at Friendship Camp continues around the Dining Hall, and when it's complete, I believe you will be amazed at the improvement. The first ever Worship and Music camp was held this year, and a wealth of learning (for campers and leaders) took place, and plans to make it bigger and better are already being formulated. Well, the list could go on, but I think you get the idea.

Ministry Support is Absolutely Critical:

Without a great staff working hard throughout the year, none of this would have been possible. If we did not have the support and resources provided by our churches, we could not have had the necessary staff nor the tools, supplies and budget needed to get the job done. I'm so grateful to all the leaders who are serving on the various committees and councils who have worked so hard this year, as well as all the Officers and leaders who have invested valuable time, energy, and talents into positioning the association to be relevant to the needs of our member churches and to fulfill God's Great Commission mandate to call out and equip leaders. What the Lord is doing in our midst as He calls us to join Him, is well beyond the scope or ability of any "one man" or "one church" show. It

takes all of us doing our part! We need all of our churches to strongly support the work of the association through participation in meetings, serving as leaders in our camps, and giving to the budget. And here's a great question: What do you get out of it? Glad you asked! More than anything, I want our churches to realize that when they support the association, they may well be investing in their next pastor, worship leader, next generation/youth leader, or children's leader. Mission dollars and people resources are precious, and I want every church to know that they are getting their greatest value for their investment.

Dr. Buck Kinney, Mr. Colten Cannady, Mrs. Janet Stoops (and Lauren's assistance at key points) have done a great job and have multitasked over and over again. To these folks, along with our officers and other leaders, please

We currently have 8 churches without pastors. It's becoming more difficult for small, rural, and vi-vocational churches to find pastors.

express your thanks for a job well done.

Looking Down the Road:

We currently have 8 churches without pastors, and I believe that it is only going to become more difficult for small, rural, and bi-vocational churches to find pastors. Churches currently seeking a pastor will tell you that they are getting very few resumes for their advertised positions, and the few resumes that they typically get are from candidates that are far from ideal in their training, background and experience. If the church finds a good candidate who is willing to pastor the church, often it comes with this stipu-

As we follow God's plan to call out and equip leaders in this association, we are seeing the wider application of AIM as an alternative pathway for our churches to find pastors and other staff members.

lation—"My family and I will continue to live in our current home, so I will be commuting an hour each way to conduct church services." Usually this also means that the small church will not be seeing their pastor's wife or family as they often opt to remain in a church close to home where they already have friends. In most cases, this is a losing proposition for the local church. They will experience a continued decline to the point that they begin to ask themselves, "How much longer can we continue like this? Is there anyone who can help us?"

What we are facing is much more systemic than we have been willing to admit. Look at it this way, If God told us to operate a factory that was supposed to produce pastors and other trained leaders who are ready to pour their heart and soul into any opportunity to serve Christ and His church, I believe that long ago we would have been looking for the **big red button** that would stop the production lines so that we could **fix the factory**. But for too long now we have been rolling along hoping that things will get better. On the other side of the fence, the process by which we search for and call leaders into our churches should be analyzed to determine if it's still effective and relevant for this day and time. As we follow God's plan to call out and equip leaders in this association, we are seeing the wider application of AIM as an alternative pathway for our churches to find pastors and other staff members, who for the most part

“

*Look at it this way, If God told us to operate a factory that was supposed to produce pastors and other trained leaders who are ready to pour their heart and soul into any opportunity to serve Christ and His church, I believe that long ago we would have been looking for the **big red button** that would stop the production lines so that we could **fix the factory**. But for too long now we have been rolling along hoping that things will get better.*

already have jobs and live within the association. I believe we will see a day in FBA when AIM will provide a significant percentage of new pastors and staff members, and our staff will be called upon to help other associations to develop their own AIM programs.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your Associational Missionary!

-Charles Stoops



Still Building: Dining Hall Improvements

Hello everyone! I want to give an update regarding the ongoing project at the Dining Hall. A lot of changes have taken place that are making the building a more valuable asset for our churches to use!

A few years ago, it was determined that the area around the Dining Hall was unsafe and insufficient for the needs of the facility. There was insufficient outdoor lighting, no designated parking areas to speak of, and the ditches along the road posed a tripping hazard. Your Camp Development Committee saw this deficiency and set out to remedy it.

Before the project began, the property just up the hill from the building was not being utilized. It had been an undeveloped area with a dirt path and a few scattered trees. That area was developed in 2024 to become a gravel parking lot with water drainage, lighting, electrical access, and has a concrete sidewalk that is now tied into the building. This gave us a place to safely park multiple vehicles and ease of access to the building day and night.

The most recent round of updates to the Dining Hall makes the building safer and more accessible for all. Two handicap accessible parking spots have been created just in front of the building. A retaining wall was constructed that runs greater than the length of the building. This wall created room for a concrete driveway to be installed along the side of the building, allowing access to a portico that is finishing construction as I write this article. This portico creates a sheltered area for our guests to use when it is raining. What has been an

existing window in the Dining Hall will soon be replaced by a doorway connecting to the new portico.

The Dining Hall is one of the most utilized buildings at the Camp. Though it used to be one of the harder buildings to get to for those with walking difficulties, now with all of the new concrete driveways, sidewalks, parking areas, and lighting, it should prove now to be the most convenient and accessible buildings on the property.

The project is not yet complete, but we hope to be wrapping it up shortly. Come and see the progress!

Many thanks to you all for your prayers and support all year long! Thanks also to you who make these things possible by your support of the Together We Build Friendship Fund!

-Colten Cannady



UPCOMING EVENTS

November 2025 Focus on Christian Compassion	
1	Mentor Training Ellaville BC @ 10 AM Lunch served
2	Day of Prayer for Persecuted Church
5	Minister's Prayer Plains BC @ 10 AM
9	Orphans & Widows Sunday
9-11	GBMB Annual Meeting FBC, Atlanta
12	Minister's Prayer Time Pleasant Grove @ 10 AM
19	Minister's Prayer Time Cedar Valley BC Office @ 10 AM
26-27	FBA Office closed for Thanksgiving
30-12/7	Week of Prayer for International Missions and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering
December 2025 Focus on International Missions	
1-7	Week of Prayer for International Missions and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering
6	Associational Christmas Worship Event Central BC @ 6 PM
9	Pastors/Wives Christmas Banquet Friendship Camp @ 6:30 PM
24-1/1	FBA Office closed for Christmas & New Year's Holiday
Holidays FBA Meetings & Events GBMB/SBC Dates	

Advancing in Ministry

Mentor Training

Ellaville Baptist Church
Saturday, November 1, 2025
10 AM — 12:30 PM
Session 1: General Mentoring Training
Session 2: Ministry Specific Mentoring
Lunch Following Session #2

FRIENDSHIP BAPTIST ASSOCIATION PRESENTS

God Came Down

A Christmas Worship Event

Come and celebrate with the combined choirs of area churches as we worship the birth of our Savior.

6pm

December 6 - Central Baptist Church
190 Upper River Road, Americus, Ga

December 7 - Whitewater Baptist Church
1955 GA-128, Oglethorpe, GA

for more information go to
friendshipbaptistassociation.org
(229) 937-2350 or (229) 924 4092

January 2026 Focus on Christian Discipleship	
1	New Year's Day FBA Office Closed
4 - 11	January Bible Study Week
7	Minister's Prayer Time Plains BC @ 10 AM
13	Ephesians 4:12 Leadership Development Council FBA Office @ 10 AM
13	Act 1:8 Missions Council FBA Office @ 6:30 PM
14	Minister's Prayer Time Central BC @ 10 AM
15	Camp Development Meeting Friendship Camp @ 6 PM
18	Sanctity of Life Sunday
20	Friendship Council FBA Office @ 11:30 AM; Lunch Served
21	Minister's Prayer Time Whitewater BC @ 10 AM
28	Minister's Prayer Time FBC, Butler @ 10 AM
29	Summer Camps Planning FBA Office @ 6 PM

**Please pray for our
Churches without
Pastors**

Cheek Memorial BC
Eastside BC
Ebenezer BC
FBC, Montezuma
Ideal BC
New Life BC
Oglethorpe BC
Smithville BC



2025 Associate Missionary Intern Report

**Shared at 167th Annual Meeting on
Sept. 21, 2025**

The church today is measured through nearly every possible metric. One statistic that you hear frequently within the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), and which is useful to us in the Friendship Baptist Association, expresses the current understanding of church size. According to these statistics:

- 88% of all SBC churches average less than 200 in Sunday worship attendance.
- 45% of all SBC churches average less than 50 in Sunday worship attendance.

Thus, in the SBC churches under 200 in Sunday worship attendance are no longer considered “small churches,” they are considered “normative-sized” churches. Therefore, nearly all of the churches in the Friendship Baptist Association are “normative-sized” churches, and many help to make up the 45% of SBC churches that have less than 50 in Sunday worship attendance.

The good news is that God is not surprised by our current circumstances and challenges, and His desire and mission to seek and to save the lost and sanctify those who belong to Him has not and will not wane, and will be accomplished.

All this is to say that while we should all have the goal of seeing our churches grow, our ultimate goal should be church health, and church health and church size are not necessarily synonymous. However, to experience church health, regardless of size, we must first acknowledge the challenges that face us.

We live in an age of rapid secularization of society that has impacted the size and health of the church in all areas. But rural churches exist in rural communities that face unique challenges. Rural communities have experienced a reduction in population through out-migration for over 80 years, specifically of “working-aged” individuals and families, which has created older, smaller, and less economically viable communities.

As a result, these communities more frequently contain older, smaller, less viable churches that have greater difficulty in se-

How is God leading us to address these issues in our association, and how can you be a part of what He is doing?

curing pastoral leadership. That is the “bad news.”

The good news is that God is not surprised by our current circumstances and challenges, and His desire and mission to seek and to save the lost and sanctify those who belong to Him has not and will not wane, and will be accomplished. So, how is God lead-

Our GBBi program has grown to over 20 students, and we are the only program in the state that offers 2 classes per semester.

ing us to address these issues in our association, and how can you be a part of what He is doing?

Calling Out the Called Report

Our three-year emphasis on “**Calling Out the Called**” is about to enter its third year. This initiative challenged associational churches to plan services, preach messages, and create cultures that encouraged their congregants, who God might be calling into vocational ministry, to respond obediently. Many churches might be discouraged from participating because their congregations might be older, or they may feel like they know everyone, and there will not be any interest. But God knows better than we do, and He has responded over the first two years by leading numerous people to respond.

Just recently, pastor Marty Dillon shared that when Pleasant Grove Baptist Church scheduled its service, he was not sure how it would turn out. However, on the day of the service, a young man who had visited previously but had not been in attendance or engaged for quite some time, “just happened” to attend. God stirred his heart, he responded to the call, and is actively engaged and growing. There

are many other similar success stories, but there are more to come! We need 16 more churches to host a “Calling Out the Called” service this coming year to meet our goal. Will you be one of those 16 churches, set your date, and let us know?

AIM Growth

Our A.I.M. 2-4 program, or Advancing In Ministry, supports your “**Calling Out the Called**” efforts. A.I.M. 2 is for those who are validating their ministry call. A.I.M. 3 is for those who have validated their ministry call and are trying to discern the area of ministry to which they are called. And A.I.M. 4 is for those who have validated their call, know their area of ministry calling, and are discerning what church God would have them serve in.

We facilitate A.I.M. 2-4 through education in our Georgia Baptist Bible Institute (GBBI) program offered at the FBA office through Brewton-Parker Christian University and Temple Baptist Theological Seminary, through mentorships, and through

Mentors are a critical resource for developing future leaders

church internships, where those in the program have opportunities to learn, grow, and find their place.

Our GBBi program has grown to over 20 students, and we are the only program in the state that offers 2 classes per semester. These classes are not just for current and future pastors. They are also equipping Deacons, Sunday School teachers, men’s and women’s ministry leaders, and other volunteers by growing them in Christ to strengthen and equip others in the church. We currently offer a track of classes to earn a certificate in ministry leadership, and we will be adding another track of courses for a certificate in biblical studies. You can grow

Our first AIM Mentor Training is planned for **November 1st**. If you are a seasoned pastoral leader, worship leader, or next-gen leader, will you join us?

personally, be equipped to grow others, bless your church, and the association by taking part in one or more of our classes.

Mentors are a critical resource for developing future leaders. As such, we felt mentors would be a critical part of our A.I.M. program. However, when we scanned the field of mentoring for resources, we discovered that the unique resources we needed did not exist.

Mentor Training Program

Therefore, our Ephesians 4:12 Council has created a mentor framework to help unify our mentors to guide, support, and develop those who respond to the ministry call. It has been a very edifying exercise, and our first mentor training is planned for November 1st. If you are a seasoned pastoral leader, worship leader, or next-gen leader, you can help by volunteering to mentor and participating in our training.

All of these programs are designed to raise up and equip pastoral leaders from our area, and give them the tools they need to lead our rural churches and association forward towards a healthy future. But our ambition is actually kingdom-sized. We are developing and conducting our work here in Friendship Baptist Association in such a way that we hope to make it available to any rural church in any rural area to be used to revitalize, equip, and strengthen rural churches to reach their communities everywhere.

-Dr. Buck Kinney

Friendship Baptist Association
504 E. Oglethorpe Street
Ellaville, GA 31806

Return Service Requested

Come by our office:
Monday– Thursday, 8:00 am—5:00 pm
Closed on Friday

Call us at:
Phone: 229-937-2350
Fax: 229-937-2351

Email the Associational Missionary:
FriendshipDOM@windstream.net

Email the Ministry Assistant:
FBA@windstream.net

Check out our websites:
www.FriendshipBaptistAssociation.org
www.FriendshipCamps.com

Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit 27
Ellaville GA 31806

Together We Build Friendship



2025 Beginning Balance	\$ 67,673.08
Gifts Received	\$ 33,353.52
Expenses	\$ 0.00
Balance as of 10/22/2025	\$ 101,026.60



Scan. Pay. Go.

Please consider an end-of-year gift to the *Together We Build Friendship Fund*.
An envelope has been provided for your convenience.

Remember you can make donations *In Honor of* or *In Memory of* someone. Just make checks payable to "Friendship Baptist Association" and on the memo line write "TWBF" Include a note specifying who and why, including acknowledgements to be sent to family, etc. We'll also print it in the next issue of the Word & Way.