



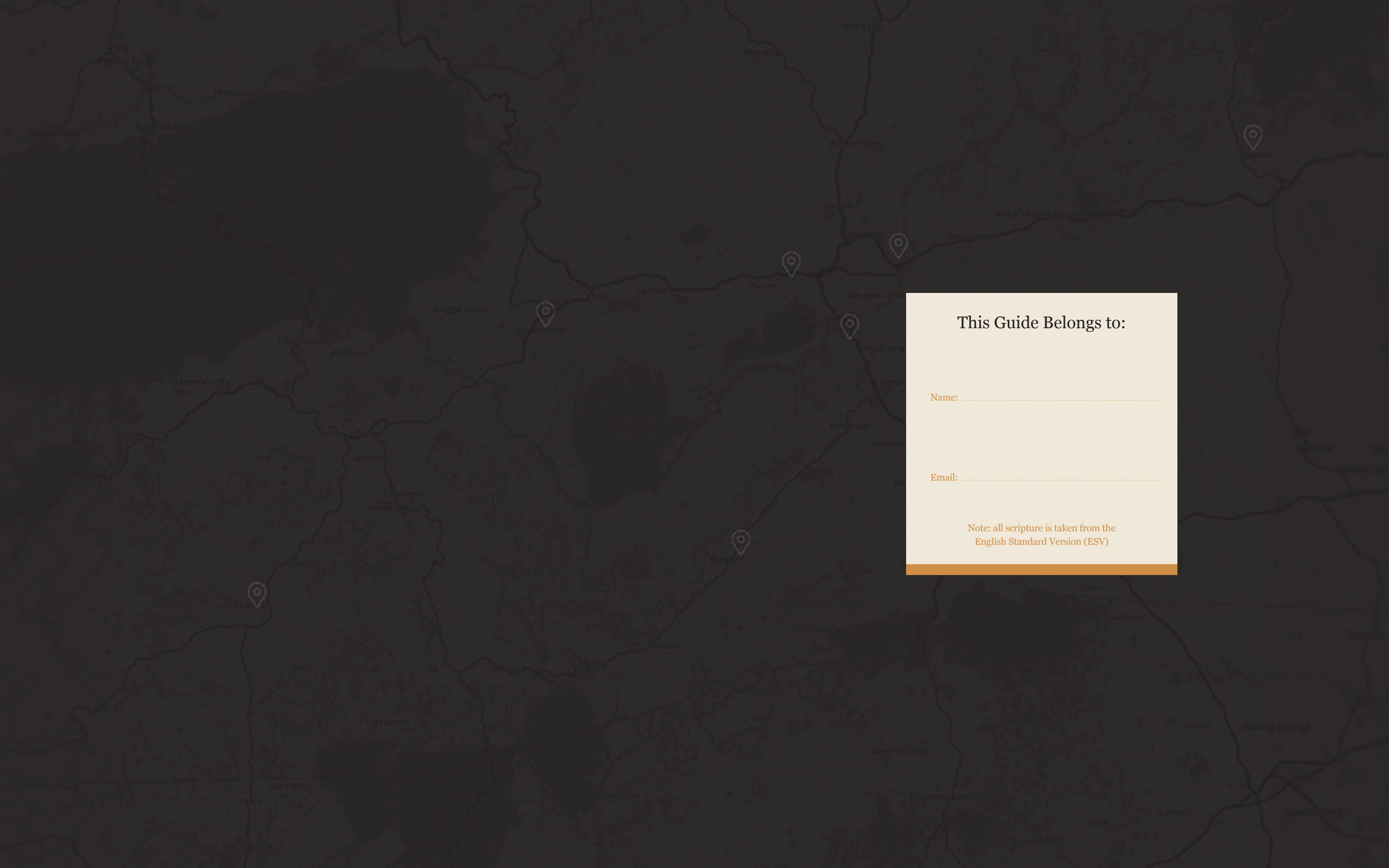
First

Before all things



Brookshire that would come to fruition in the establishment of First Baptist Church. Whatever the motivating force, court records record that on February 23, 1888 J.M. Brookshire and wife, Lula M. Brookshire, being desirous of having a Baptist church erected at Asheville Junction, N.C. to be known as the Fern Hill Baptist. This land was described as being located on the south side of the Swannanoa River and near the Asheville Junction depot of the Western North Carolina Railroad. It consisted of 1/4 acre "on the western side of the Buncombe Turnpike road leading from Asheville to Hendersonville, " and was to be held in special trust by the trustees of First Baptist Church and conveyed to the trustees of Fern Hill Baptist Church at Asheville Junction upon the





This Guide Belongs to:

Name:

Email:

Note: all scripture is taken from the
English Standard Version (ESV)

Contents

- 5 A Note from Pastor Bruce
- 6 History of Biltmore Church
- 12 Where We Are Today
- 18 Where We Are Moving
- 22 Our Goals
- 34 Giver Discipleship Journey
- 38 Our Commitment
- 44 What's Next
- 48 First Series Guide

A Note from Pastor Bruce



"And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together..." These words from Colossians 1 are the foundation for FIRST, and as we step into this two-year journey together, I believe God is inviting us into a defining moment.

For generations, faithful men and women have chosen to acknowledge Jesus and His mission above personal preference, comfort, and convenience. Because of their obedience, thousands of lives have been changed through the ministry of our church. Today, it is our turn to carry that legacy forward.

We believe God is calling us to become a people who acknowledge Jesus first in every area of life. People who offer Him our first and our best. People who ask what it would look like for our homes, our resources, our schedules, our relationships, and our church if Jesus was truly before all things.

Faithful disciples making disciples. More room for more people to encounter Jesus. Greater gospel impact across Western North Carolina and around the world.

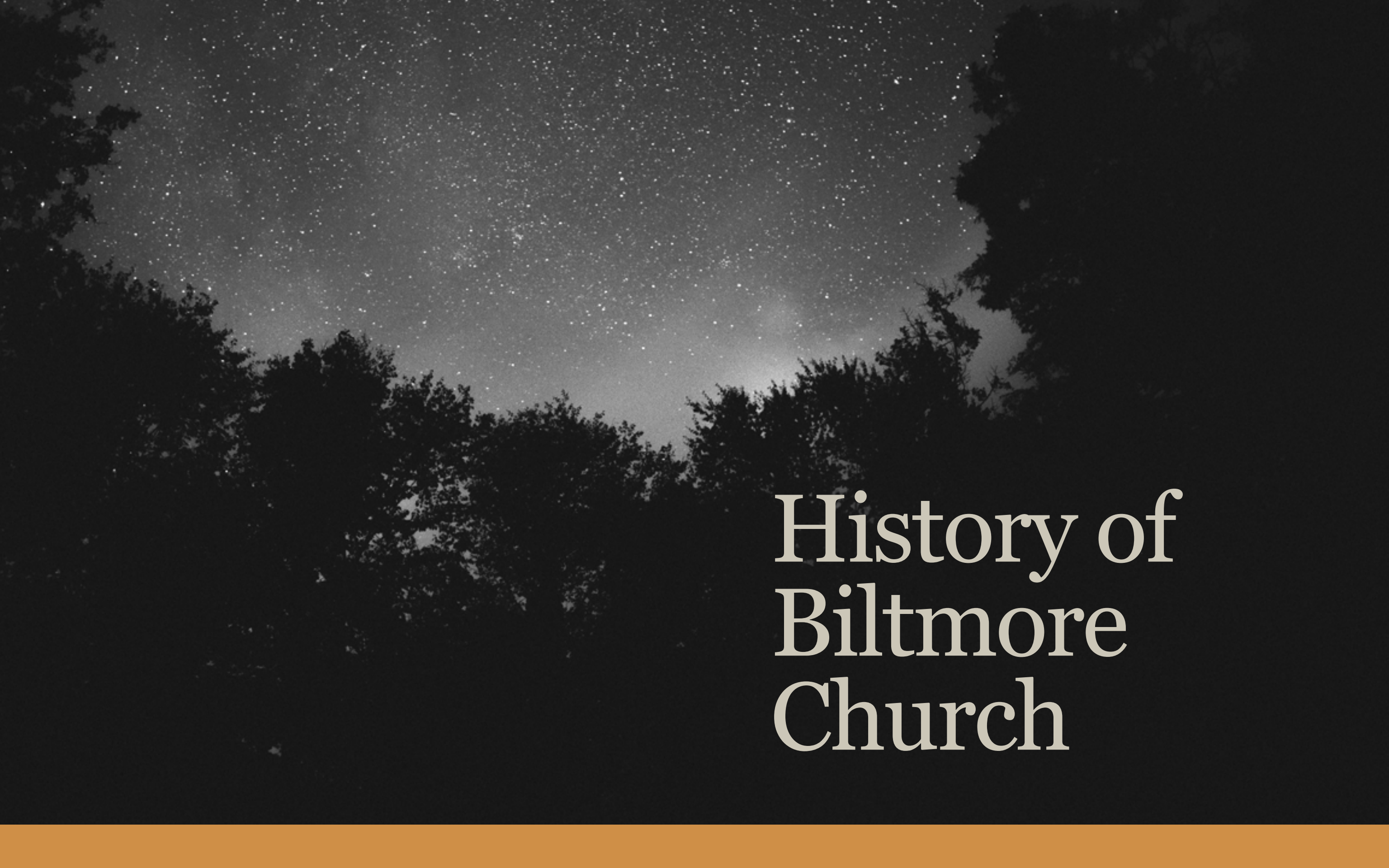
Together, we are stepping forward in faith, trusting God to do what only He can do. We are praying for transformed lives, stronger families, thriving communities, and thousands more people to surrender their lives to Christ and be baptized.

The primary goal of FIRST is not a financial one. It is 100% engagement. Our prayer is that every person would take their next step of obedience and discover what it means to acknowledge Jesus first and before all things.

And while we are believing God to accomplish incredible things through this journey, I am convinced the greatest work He wants to do is in us. Because FIRST is more than an initiative. It is an invitation to trust God more deeply, follow Him more closely, and join Him in His work as we make disciples, make room, and make a greater impact for His glory.

Pastor Bruce Frank

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pastor Bruce". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

A black and white photograph of a night sky. The Milky Way galaxy is visible as a bright, hazy band of light stretching across the upper half of the frame. Numerous individual stars are scattered throughout the sky. In the foreground, the dark silhouettes of trees and foliage frame the bottom and sides of the image, creating a sense of looking up from a wooded area.

History of Biltmore Church

Our History

We stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us.



1889

Twenty-five people gathered to establish Fern Hill Baptist Church on land that is now part of the Biltmore Estate.



1902

George Vanderbilt built a new church building on Summit Street, and Fern Hill became Biltmore Baptist Church. For the next 60 years, the church stood as a historic anchor in the community of Biltmore Village.



1962

The church relocated to a larger facility on Hendersonville Road in Asheville.



1992

In what proved to be a defining moment for the congregation, around sixty members gathered in a gym and committed to setting aside their personal preferences for the sake of reaching people with the gospel. This foundational decision helped shape the trajectory of the church known today.



2000

Biltmore moved to a brand-new facility situated on anonymously donated land in Arden.



2008

Pastor Bruce Frank joined Biltmore Baptist as the Lead Pastor.



2012

As the church grew, it made a strategic decision to go to where the people were, rather than expecting people to come to them. This approach encouraged people to stay where they were, serve where they lived, and be the church in their own communities. Biltmore took this step by launching the East Asheville Campus at Asheville Christian Academy.



2013

The Franklin Campus launched at the Smoky Mountain Center for the Performing Arts.



2015

The Hendersonville Campus was launched in Flat Rock, NC.



2015

Biltmore Church began a partnership with Compassion International, connecting our church with children and local churches around the world to help release children from poverty in Jesus' name.



2016

Deaverview Baptist Church was adopted into the Biltmore family and officially launched as the West Asheville Campus.



2018

Biltmore Church en Español began to effectively reach Spanish-speaking neighbors throughout Western North Carolina.



2021

Brevard Community Church became a part of the Biltmore Church family and launched as the Brevard Campus.



2025

The Waynesville Campus launched in Haywood County, NC, along with a new community gathering in Marion.

Where We Are Today

God has brought us a long way, and before we look toward what may be ahead, it is worth remembering how He is already at work among us.

Biltmore Church is one church meeting in many locations across Western North Carolina. Every week, thousands of people gather to worship Jesus, hear God's Word, find biblical community, serve others, and take their next steps as disciples.

God has entrusted our church with more people, more opportunities, and more responsibility than ever before. We celebrate growth not because bigger is the goal, but because every number represents another neighbor, family member, friend, or coworker who has an opportunity to hear the gospel, know Jesus, and become a disciple who makes disciples.



10,500

Weekly Worship Attendance

Projected for 2026



686

Baptisms

Took Place in 2025



20,437

Average Online
Attendance

2026 YTD



\$22.4M

2026 Ministry Budget

The Power of More Adult Disciples

If we had stopped seeking to make more disciples ten years ago, the impact of Biltmore Church today would be roughly half of what it is now.

Because more adults have been reached, discipled, and sent, more children and students are being discipled, more vulnerable children are being sponsored, more churches are being planted, and more resources are being invested in gospel ministry locally and around the world.

Weekly Worship Attendance



Baptisms



The impact multiplies.

Every additional disciple has the potential to influence a family, serve a neighbor, disciple the next generation, live generously, and help carry the gospel farther.

That is the power of more adult disciples: as disciples make disciples, more people are reached and more ministry becomes possible.

Online Attendance



Budget

In millions (rounded to the nearest \$0.1M)



The Power of 100 More Adult Disciples

- 100 More Compassion Children Sponsored*
- 20 More WNC Kids Discipled Weekly
- 10 More WNC Students Discipled Weekly
- \$75,000 More “Reach Out” Funds Annually**
- 1 Church Plant Partner

*Based on projected amount of children sponsored as of May 2026
**Based on 2026 budget

The Power of 2,000 More Adult Disciples

- 2,000 More Compassion Children Sponsored*
- 400 More WNC Kids Discipled Weekly
- 200 More WNC Students Discipled Weekly
- \$1,500,000 More “Reach Out” Funds Annually**
- 20 Church Plant Partners

*Based on projected amount of children sponsored as of May 2026
**Based on 2026 budget





Where We
Are Moving



It's Not New. It's Just Our Turn.

For more than 135 years, God has used ordinary people at Biltmore Church who were willing to trust Him with what came next.

Again and again, generations before us faced moments when following Jesus meant acknowledging His mission above personal preference, comfort, and convenience.

In 1992, sixty people gathered in a gym and made that kind of decision together. They committed to set aside their preferences for the sake of reaching people with the gospel. Much of what we experience today stands on the other side of their faith and obedience.

Now it is our turn.

God has entrusted our church with more people, more campuses, more ministry opportunities, and greater influence across Western North Carolina. We believe those blessings come with responsibility.

FIRST is our response to this moment.

For the next two years, we are asking what it would look like to acknowledge Jesus first in every area of life—to offer Him our first and our best and place everything He has entrusted to us under His leadership.

We believe God is calling us to step forward together so that we can:

Make disciples.

Make room.

Make a greater impact.

Not simply so Biltmore Church becomes larger, but so more people know Jesus, more disciples make disciples, and the gospel goes farther than any one of us could take it alone.

Jesus First. Before All Things.





Our Goals

Primary Goal

100% Engagement

What will God do in us?

The primary goal of FIRST is discipleship.

Our prayer is that every person who calls Biltmore Church home would take a meaningful next step in following Jesus and discover what it looks like to acknowledge Him first and before all things.

FIRST is about becoming a people increasingly formed by Christ and surrendered to Him in every area of life: our homes, relationships, time, work, abilities, decisions, possessions, resources, and future. The goal is faithful obedience as each person responds to how God is leading them.

FIRST is an invitation for every person to ask:

What would it look like to acknowledge Jesus first in my life, my home, and my church?

Secondary Goal

\$75 Million Over Two Years

If the primary goal of FIRST is accomplished, if our church increasingly acknowledges Jesus first and before all things, we believe one natural result will be greater generosity.

As God's people grow in surrender and obedience, we can expect additional financial resources to be entrusted to our church. We want to be prepared to steward those resources faithfully, intentionally, and with a clear plan for how they can advance the mission God has given us.

Together, we are trusting God to provide \$75 million over two years to sustain the ministry He has already entrusted to us and pursue the additional opportunities He has placed before us.

Jesus FIRST to:

Make Disciples — \$26M

Make Room — \$24M

Make Greater Impact — \$25M

Pillar 1

Jesus FIRST to: Make Disciples

\$26M

We are committed to continuing to faithfully steward the ministries, people, environments, and resources God has already entrusted to us so that more people can know Jesus and grow as His disciples.

By investing in children and families, deepening biblical community, cultivating meaningful worship environments, and equipping disciples to make disciples, we want to help people follow Jesus in every area of life.

More Disciples Who Make Disciples

Jesus did not call us simply to attend church. He called us to follow Him and help others follow Him.

We want every person to grow as a faithful disciple who knows God's Word, lives on mission, serves others, shares the gospel, and helps someone else take their next step toward Jesus.

During FIRST we will continue to strengthen the ministries, leaders, tools, and discipleship pathways that help people move from simply participating in church to actively making disciples wherever God sends them.

Partner With Children and Families

We want to help families build a biblical foundation that lasts for generations.

We will continue investing in the environments, leaders, and resources that help children and students know Jesus, understand God's Word, build meaningful relationships, and grow into adults who faithfully follow Him.

We also want to equip parents to embrace their God-given role as the primary disciplers of their children so that following Jesus becomes part of everyday life at home.

Deepen Biblical Community

Following Jesus was never intended to be done alone.

We want more people experiencing authentic biblical community where Scripture is opened, prayer is practiced, burdens are carried, questions can be asked, and people encourage one another toward obedience.

FIRST will help us create more opportunities for people in every age and stage of life to build relationships centered on Jesus and His Word.

Cultivate Impactful Worship Environments

Every week, people walk through the doors of our campuses carrying different stories, questions, burdens, and needs.

We want to faithfully steward environments across Biltmore Church where people can gather around God's Word, worship Jesus passionately, respond to the gospel, and take meaningful next steps as disciples.

Our goal is not simply to create excellent spaces. It is to create environments that help remove distractions and point people toward Jesus.



Pillar 2

Jesus FIRST to: Make Room

\$24M

See 2,000 People in WNC Surrender to Christ

Our prayer is to see more than 2,000 people across Western North Carolina surrender their lives to Jesus and follow Him in baptism.

Every space we improve, every barrier we remove, and every new ministry opportunity we pursue ultimately serves one purpose: helping more people encounter Jesus and become His disciples.

Expand Capacity Where Needed

Nearly all of our campuses are approaching one or more practical limits in areas such as parking, traffic flow, lobby space, kids ministry, and worship environments.

FIRST will allow us to address these barriers strategically so they do not become an obstacle to ministry.

We want to make wise improvements where they are needed most so that our campuses can continue welcoming people, serving families, and creating room for future disciples.

Strengthen Next-Generation Environments

Kids and students are not simply the church of tomorrow. They are part of the church today.

We want to create safe, welcoming, engaging environments where the next generation can hear God's Word, build trusted relationships, worship Jesus, and grow in their faith.

FIRST will also allow us to strengthen security and update next-generation environments across campuses where improvements are needed.

Launch New Campuses

For years, Biltmore Church has chosen to take the church closer to people rather than expecting everyone to come to one location.

We have identified communities across Western North Carolina where new campuses can both provide needed relief and additional capacity for existing campuses and bring the gospel and biblical community closer to people who do not currently have a Biltmore Church campus in their area.



Sneak a peek!
Scan for the
latest renderings.



Jesus FIRST to: Make Greater Impact

\$25M

Jesus has called His Church to carry the gospel across the street and around the world.

Through FIRST, we will expand our ability to serve communities, care for people who are vulnerable or overlooked, develop gospel leaders, plant churches, strengthen local partnerships, and support the advance of the gospel among unreached people and places.

We want to meet real needs while never losing sight of the greatest need any person has: the hope of Jesus Christ.

Care for the “Least of These”

Jesus consistently moved toward people who were hurting, vulnerable, and overlooked.

We want to do the same.

FIRST will allow us to expand gospel-centered efforts that care for real physical, relational, and spiritual needs, including ministry to people affected by incarceration, kids, students, and families navigating foster care and adoption, and neighbors experiencing food insecurity.

Our goal is not simply to meet a temporary need, but to serve people with dignity while pointing them toward the lasting hope found in Jesus.

Expanded Prison Ministry

We will expand Christ-centered prison and re-entry ministry through partnerships like JumpStart, providing discipleship, mentoring, support, and connection to the local church.

With 49% of those leaving prison rearrested within two years, we will work to help change that trajectory through the hope of the gospel and the strength of biblical community.

We want people leaving prison to encounter more than a second chance. We want them to encounter Jesus.

Adoption + Foster Care Scholarship Fund

Across North Carolina, more than 11,000 children are in foster care, while only about 5,500 licensed foster homes are available—and the number of foster homes has declined by roughly 25% since the pandemic.

We will help families across Western North Carolina step into foster care and adoption by providing practical support, biblical community, and financial assistance to help offset the significant costs that can come with adoption.

FIRST will allow us to care for vulnerable children and families in tangible ways while pointing them toward the lasting hope of Jesus.

Combat Food Scarcity

Across Western North Carolina, 1 in 5 residents struggles with food insecurity, more than 100,000 of our neighbors rely on food assistance each month, and many of the households receiving support include children.

Through FIRST, we will strengthen partnerships that provide nutritious food and practical support to families across our region. As we meet these needs, we want to build relationships, share the hope of Jesus, and demonstrate the love of Christ in tangible ways.

Equip Church Planters, Residents + Outpost Hosts

The gospel advances as disciples are loved and sent.

We want to identify, develop, and invest in leaders who can carry the gospel into new communities through church planting, ministry residencies, and new methods of local church ministry.

FIRST will allow us to strengthen the pipeline of leaders who are prepared to serve the Church and help establish gospel-centered communities in places where greater ministry presence is needed.

Outposts

Across Western North Carolina, many communities are separated by mountains, distance, and long drives. Some towns may be far from a Biltmore Church campus, and in some places, people may have limited access to a strong, gospel-centered church community.

Outposts help us take the church beyond our campuses and into the communities where people already live. Through local gatherings centered on biblical teaching, worship, prayer, relationships, and mission, Outposts create a way for people to experience meaningful church community without distance being a barrier.

Our vision is to see the gospel take root in more towns across Western North Carolina by equipping people to gather locally, grow as disciples, serve their neighbors, and remain deeply connected to the mission and community of Biltmore Church.

Potential outpost locations:

Banner Elk	Highlands
Beech Mountain	Hot Springs
Blowing Rock	Mars Hill
Burnsville	Newland
Cashiers	Robbinsville
Cherokee	Rutherfordton
Columbus	Saluda

FIRST will help us identify and equip leaders who are ready to host and lead these communities as God opens doors. **Text Outposts to 28282**

Advance the Gospel Globally

The mission Jesus gave His Church extends far beyond Western North Carolina.

We want to continue partnering with trusted missionaries, churches, and ministries who are taking the gospel to people and places where access to biblical teaching, local church community, and gospel witness remains limited.

Through FIRST, we will strengthen global partnerships, support efforts among unreached people groups, equip leaders, and help send people from Biltmore Church to participate personally in God’s mission around the world.

Increase Local Community Impact

God has placed each Biltmore campus in a specific community for a reason.

We want our neighbors, schools, ministry partners, and communities to experience the love of Jesus because His Church is present.

FIRST will strengthen our ability to partner with organizations already doing meaningful work throughout Western North Carolina and respond to needs with love, generosity, service, and the hope of the gospel.

Local & International Partners





Giver Discipleship Journey

Giver Discipleship Journey

This tool is designed to help you move money from being an idol to money being a tool for God's kingdom. The journey focuses on the condition of our hearts, further transforming us into the likeness of Christ.

Each step of the journey represents growth in a lifestyle of generosity and sacrifice.

Initial Giver

An Initial Giver is someone who decides to give for the first time out of response to God’s Word.

This is someone who decides to give in faith and trusts God with the gift. This person begins to experience the joy of putting Jesus’ words into action.

Matthew 7:24

Consistent Giver

A Consistent Giver is someone who decides to give on a consistent basis as an exercise in the discipline of giving.

For some, this may mean setting up a recurring gift. For others, it may simply mean intentionally developing a regular rhythm of generosity.

A Consistent Giver experiences the joy of growing in this grace.

2 Corinthians 8:7

Priority Giver

A Priority Giver is someone who understands the preeminence of Christ and that He is before all things—that all things were created by Him, through Him, and for Him.

This giver places such a significant priority on generosity that giving begins to shape spending and saving habits, rather than spending and saving determining what is left to give.

A Priority Giver experiences the freedom of serving one Master and declaring that Jesus is first.

Matthew 6:19–24
Colossians 1:15–20

Surrendered Giver

A Surrendered Giver is someone who recognizes that Christ surrendered His whole self for us in love and desires to surrender his or her whole self to Him in return.

This giver begins to recognize that generosity is not only changing how they spend and save—it is changing them.

A Surrendered Giver also looks at what is not being given and asks:

Is this surrendered too?

That question begins to shape the use of everything God has entrusted to them—not only money, but possessions, time, abilities, opportunities, and other resources.

Ephesians 5:1–2

Eternal Giver

An Eternal Giver is someone who sees the eternal impact of generosity on people, not simply the immediate programs and ministries it supports.

This giver has been captivated by the truth that as we are led to do good, to be generous, and willing to share, we begin to take hold of the life that is truly life.

That eternal perspective encourages continual growth.

An Eternal Giver increasingly makes decisions about giving, saving, major purchases, relationships, service, and the use of resources based on how those decisions can make an eternal impact.

1 Timothy 6:18–19



Our Commitment



What is a One Fund Initiative?

For many years, Biltmore Church has practiced a unified approach to generosity through our General Fund. Rather than asking people to designate each gift to a particular ministry, campus, or area of the church, we give together and steward those resources through an annual budget that supports the full ministry of Biltmore Church.

FIRST builds on that same approach.

In the past, churches have often funded ongoing ministry through one budget while creating separate giving campaigns for things like new facilities, campus expansion, or special missions opportunities. During FIRST, we are bringing those priorities together. Our regular ministry, future opportunities, capital projects, and expanded missions efforts will be stewarded as part of one unified financial plan.

This does not change the accountability or budgeting process of our church. Each year, a budget is prepared, reviewed by our Finance Team, and presented to the church for approval in accordance with our established governance process. The congregation adopts the annual budget, and church leadership then stewards those resources within that approved framework as we pursue the mission and vision God has entrusted to Biltmore Church.

Why does this matter? Because we do not see the ministry happening today and the opportunities in front of us tomorrow as competing priorities. They are all part of the same mission: Glorifying God by making disciples of Jesus who reach up, reach in, and reach out.

That is why FIRST is not simply a fundraising campaign. It is a discipleship initiative calling each of us to acknowledge God first and respond faithfully to His leadership in every area of our lives, including our generosity.

Throughout these two years, every gift to Biltmore Church will help advance that one mission through one fund and one unified budget: making disciples, creating room for more people to experience the gospel, and expanding our impact throughout Western North Carolina and beyond.

One mission. One fund. One church faithfully stewarding what God provides as we acknowledge God first.

Before all things

We’ve included a copy of the commitment card in this book so you may begin to pray about your financial involvement and what that will mean for your journey with God over these next two years. Please take time to think and pray through this and discuss it with your family. We look forward to coming together as a church family to make our commitments on Sunday, November 15th.

God, I acknowledge You first...

\$

What I/we would normally give in a year (regular giving, camp scholarships, mission trip sponsorships, etc.)

+\$

My/Our expanded annual generosity as part of the FIRST initiative

=\$

x 2 years

\$

Gifts from my/our stored resources

+\$

My/Our total two-year FIRST commitment

\$

December 2026 - December 2028

Name:

Email:

Phone:

Campus:

Address:

Looking for a little practical encouragement? Take a few minutes to watch this pastoral message.

Scan the QR code to watch.



Two-Year Gift Chart

As you pray and consider how God would have you give through this initiative, use this gift chart as a discipleship tool to help you take your next step toward giving your first and best to make a greater impact throughout Western North Carolina and around the world.

GIFTS NEEDED	TWO-YEAR GIFT LEVEL	ANNUAL GIFT	MONTHLY GIFT	GIFT LEVEL TOTAL
1	\$5,000,000	\$2,500,000	\$208,333	\$5,000,000
2	\$2,500,000	\$1,250,000	\$104,167	\$5,000,000
3	\$1,000,000	\$500,000	\$41,667	\$3,000,000
4	\$750,000	\$375,000	\$31,250	\$3,000,000
5	\$500,000	\$250,000	\$20,833	\$2,500,000
8	\$350,000	\$175,000	\$14,583	\$2,800,000
15	\$250,000	\$125,000	\$10,417	\$3,750,000
30	\$150,000	\$75,000	\$6,250	\$4,500,000
45	\$100,000	\$50,000	\$4,167	\$4,500,000
75	\$75,000	\$37,500	\$3,125	\$5,625,000
90	\$50,000	\$25,000	\$2,083	\$4,500,000
125	\$35,000	\$17,500	\$1,458	\$4,375,000
200	\$25,000	\$12,500	\$1,042	\$5,000,000
375	\$15,000	\$7,500	\$625	\$5,625,000
300	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$417	\$3,000,000
650	\$7,500	\$3,750	\$313	\$4,875,000
850	\$5,000	\$2,500	\$208	\$4,250,000
MANY	\$2,500	\$1,250	\$104	\$3,700,000
TOTAL GIFT GOAL				\$75,000,000



What's Next

What's Next

Join us for the next steps of FIRST as we continue moving toward commitment together—offering Jesus our first and our best.

Pray

Ask what it would look like for Jesus to be first in your life, home, and church.

Give

Respond in obedience and faith by giving your first and best.

Grow

Commit to taking steps as a disciple of Jesus.

Engage

Step fully into this journey with our church.

Important Dates

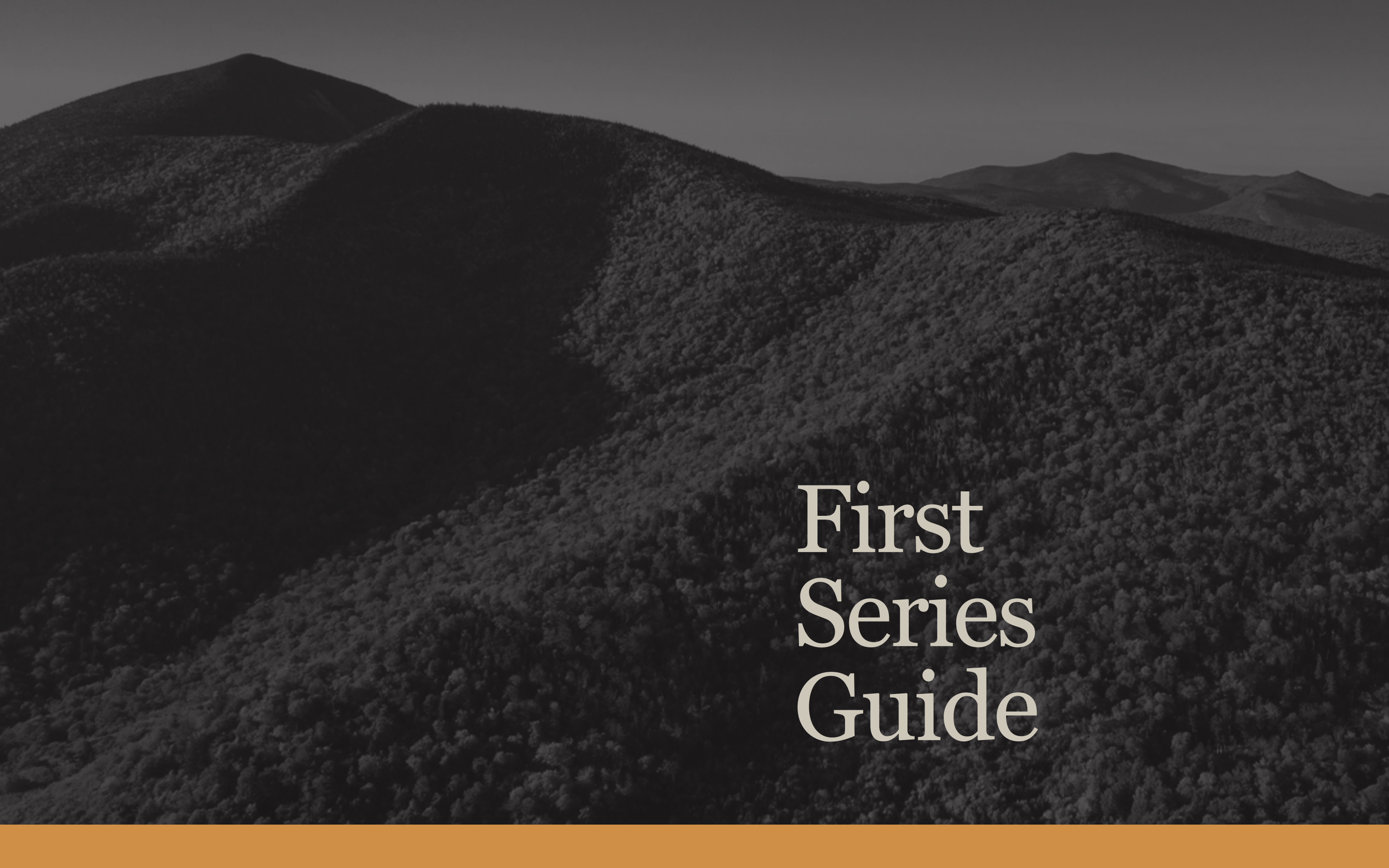
🕒 Advance Commitment Night

Sunday, November 8th
6:15 PM
@ The Arden Campus

🕒 Commitment Sunday

Sunday, November 15th
9 AM & 11 AM
@ All Locations





First Series Guide

How to use this Guide

For the next five weeks, we're asking **everyone who calls Biltmore Church home to be part of FIRST**. The goal is 100% engagement.

Each part of this guide is designed to work together as we hear from God's Word, spend time with Him on our own, talk about what He is teaching us with others, and respond in obedience.

1. Come to church each week.

Bring this guide with you to church and use the Message Notes pages to follow along with the sermon and write down what God shows you.

2. Spend time with God on your own.

Sometime during the week, complete the Personal Devotion. Each devotion will take you to another passage of Scripture that helps you go deeper into what we're learning together.

3. Talk about it with other people.

Everything you need for your discussion is included in the Series Group Guide.

Already meeting with a Connect Group? You're all set! Bring your guide with you to your group meeting.

Doing FIRST with friends or family over the next 5 weeks? Let us know who's in your group so we can encourage you along the way!

Gather Together

You can also text
TOGETHER to **28282**.



Need people to go through FIRST with? We'd love to help you find a group.

Find a Group

You can also text
GROUP to **28282**.



4. Respond to what God shows you.

Every group guide ends with an opportunity to identify a specific next step and pray about it together. Pay attention to what God is showing you and follow through in obedience.

Keep the conversation going at home. Tell your family what God is showing you, and ask what He is showing them too. **FIRST** is something your whole family can participate in together.

Middle and high school students can use this guide themselves. Encourage them to bring it to church, take notes during the message, complete the Personal Devotion, and talk about what they're learning at home. **Biltmore Kids** will also be coming alongside your grade schooler to understand these foundational truths.

Parents, let your kids hear what God is teaching you too. Talk about your next steps. Let them hear you wrestle with obedience, generosity, mission, and what it means for Jesus to be first. Ask what stood out to them and what God may be asking them to do.

Our kids are capable of thinking deeply about the things of God. They are challenged every day to learn, grow, think, practice, and work hard. We want to invite them to bring that same kind of engagement to their faith. Help them lean in, ask questions, and discover what following Jesus looks like in their own lives.

For five weeks, let's give God our full attention + see what He does in us and through us as we seek Him first together.

Week 1

Colossians 1:15–20

Colossians 1:15–20

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. ¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Before all things

Seek First

What are the things you think about before you get out of bed in the morning?

Our lives are full of things that need our attention. And sometimes, without us realizing it, the things we're thinking about most begin to determine how we spend our time, make our decisions, and what we do with what we've been given.

“Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all” (Matthew 6:32).

“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

When He is first, everything else finds its rightful place. When “all the things” become what we seek first, we start asking those things to give us what only Jesus can. Good things were never meant to carry the weight of being first.

There is no part of your life that is better off outside the leadership of Jesus. Give Him all of it.

Jesus says to seek His kingdom first and trust Him with “all these things.” What are the things filling your life right now? Think about your relationships, work, finances, responsibilities, plans, needs, and worries. Write down what comes to mind.

Look back at what you wrote. Where does Jesus fit among those things? Are there areas where you seek Him first and others you tend to manage on your own?

What would it look like for Jesus to have first place in all these things? Choose one area you've been holding onto control and write a simple prayer giving Him all authority there.

Colossians 1:15–20

Check In + Connect

- Share one high and low from your week.
- If you had to give a zero-prep presentation right now, what would you teach us?

Read Together

- Have a group member read *Colossians 1:15–20* aloud.
- Which description of Jesus in this passage stands out to you most, and why?

Look Closer

- Read verses 16–17 again and make a list together of everything Paul says is true about Jesus and “**all things**.” What do these statements show us about why Jesus is in a category all His own?
- Paul says all things were created “through him and for him” (v. 16). What does it mean for something to be created for Jesus? How does that help us understand the purpose of our own lives?

We often talk about making Jesus our first priority. But Paul uses a different word in verse 18: **preeminent**. A priority is one important thing among other important things. **What’s the difference between Jesus being first on your list and recognizing everything on your list belongs to Him?**

Follow Him

- If Jesus is preeminent, **what should determine the decisions a follower of Jesus makes?** What does this look like practically?
- It’s possible to live like Jesus is important without living like He’s preeminent. What are some ways our preferences or plans can take priority over what Jesus wants? **How can partial obedience limit what God wants to do in and through our lives?**
- Verse 18 specifically calls Jesus “**the head of the body, the church**.” If Jesus is the head of His church, **what does Scripture show us should matter most to His church?** What should we value, prioritize, and be willing to do because He is the head?

Next Step

- Think about the different areas of your life. **Where is it easiest for you to let Jesus lead? Where are you more likely to grasp for control?**
- Is there anything you already know Jesus is asking you to do that you’ve delayed, avoided, or only partially obeyed? **What specific step of obedience can you take this week?**
- What part of your future feels hardest to hold with open hands before Jesus? Look back at Colossians 1:15–20. **What truth about who Jesus is helps you trust Him with what you can’t control?**

Pray Together

- Take a minute to pray on your own. Ask God to show you what needs to change for Jesus to be first in every area of your life. Then complete this sentence:*
- Because Jesus is first, I will:**

Share your answer with the group. Then pray together:

- Praise Jesus** for who He is and His authority over all things.
- Ask God** to show you where something else has been given too much importance or authority in your life.
- Pray for courage** to fully obey Jesus wherever He leads.

Week 2

Genesis 6:5–8

Genesis 6:5–8

⁵ The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶ And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. ⁷ So the Lord said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.”

⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

Mission First

If you've been around our church for any length of time, you've probably heard these words: **"You are loved, and you are sent."**

You are loved. What a gift! We have been loved by God, saved by His grace, and welcomed into His family.

Making disciples of all nations can sound like a big assignment, and it is! But we have to remember all nations are still made up of individual people. They are real people with names and stories. People who live in our homes, sit beside us at work, and go to school with us. All nations include both those who live across the street and those who live on the other side of the world.

Someone taught you who Jesus is and what He did for you. Someone brought you to church. Someone answered your questions. Someone prayed for you. Someone opened the Bible with you. Someone loved you enough to help you take another step toward Jesus.

When Jesus is first, what matters to Him matters to us. And He has made it abundantly clear that people matter to Him.

You are part of His church, and you don't need a title, a platform, or a ministry position to make disciples. Learn their story. Pray for them by name. Invite them into your life. Talk about what Jesus is teaching you. Ask how you can pray for them. Open Scripture together. Invite them to church. **You are already somewhere God can use you, surrounded by people He loves.**

Wherever our part takes us, we go with this promise from Jesus: **“And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”**

You are loved, and you are sent.

Who did God use to help you know and follow Jesus? What did they do that made a difference in your life?

Jesus said to make disciples of “**all nations.**” How could you participate in reaching people beyond your immediate circle through the church? Consider how God might be asking you to **pray, give, serve, or go.**

Series Group Guide

Genesis 6:5–8

Check In + Connect

Share one high and low from your week.

What’s something you love introducing other people to?
(could be a restaurant, movie, hobby, place, product, etc.)

Read Together

Have a group member read *Genesis 6:5–8* aloud.

What stands out to you most about the contrast between verses 5–7 and verse 8?

Look Closer

Verse 5 describes both people’s actions and the “**thoughts of [their] hearts.**” What does this show us about how sin affects us at the heart level? **Why does changing our behavior alone never solve our deepest problem?**

What do verses 5–7 teach us about the seriousness of sin and how God sees it? What do both God’s grief and judgment over sin show us about what sin deserves?

Verse 8 says, “**But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.**” After everything we’ve just seen about humanity’s sin and God’s judgment, what makes God’s favor toward Noah such good news? **What does this teach us about God’s grace?**

Follow Him

Noah received God’s favor before he was given an assignment. **How should receiving God’s grace influence the way we respond when He invites us to participate in His work?** What changes when obedience flows from gratitude instead of obligation?

As we heard in this week’s message, the ark God told Noah to build was meant to extend beyond his own rescue. **How should God’s heart for people who still need salvation affect the way we think about the purpose and priorities of the church?**

God has given His church a mission to take the good news of Jesus to **our families, our communities, and the nations.**

What opportunities do we have to participate in that mission in each of those places? What can make us overlook the part God has given us to play?

Next Step

Who is someone you have watched build their life around helping others know Jesus? What stands out to you about the way they live?

We can care deeply about God’s mission and still fill our lives in ways that leave little room for us to participate in it. **What is one thing you can put on your calendar, change in your routine, or begin doing that would create more margin for God to use you in someone else’s life?**

Think about your family, your community, and the nations. **Which of those is easiest for you to overlook when you think about your part in God’s mission?** What could greater intentionality there look like?

Pray Together

Take a minute to pray on your own. Ask God to show you where His mission needs to have greater priority in your life. Then complete this sentence:

Because God’s mission comes first, I will:

Share your answer with the group. Then pray together:

Thank God for the grace you have received through Jesus.

Ask God to use our church to bring the good news of Jesus to our families, communities, and the nations.

Pray for courage to follow through on the specific ways He is asking you to participate in His mission.

Week 3

2 Corinthians 8:1–9

2 Corinthians 8:1–9

¹ We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, ² for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. ³ For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord,⁴ begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— ⁵ and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us. ⁶ Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete among you this act of grace. ⁷ But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also. ⁸ I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. ⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

Give First

How much would you need to have before you felt like you had enough to be generous?

In these verses, Paul shares he knew what it was like to have plenty and what it was like to go without. In verse 12, he reveals **“the secret”** of living in both abundance and need: **“I can do all things through him who strengthens me”** (v. 13).

But confidence that **Jesus is enough** will free us to hold what we have with open hands. We can trust Him to provide what we need and be generous with what He has given us.

Also, did you catch how Paul describes their giving?
Partnership.

Paul also wanted them to understand that something was happening through their generosity beyond meeting

Finally, he describes their gift as **“a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God”** (v. 18). Think about that. Money they sent to meet a practical need became an offering that pleased God. **Their generosity was worship.**

It's important that we don't miss all God was able to do through their generosity. The Philippians didn't go everywhere Paul went. They didn't preach as many sermons or meet as many people. But through their generosity, they were participating in gospel work happening far beyond where they lived.

He sees the missionary who is sent. The church that is planted. The conversation where someone hears the gospel. The person who meets Jesus because His people gave so the good news could go farther.

Your generosity can go places you never will.

What tends to make you feel like you need “a little more” before you can be generous? How does Paul’s contentment in verses 11–13 challenge that?

As you think about what God is doing through His church, **what would you be excited for your generosity to help make possible**, even if you never get to see the full impact yourself?

Series Group Guide

2 Corinthians 8:1–9

Check In + Connect

Share one high and low from your week.

If someone handed you \$1,000 with one rule that you couldn’t spend it on yourself, what would you do with it?

Read Together

Have a group member read 2 Corinthians 8:1–9 aloud.

What stands out to you most about the Macedonians and the way they gave?

Look Closer

The Macedonians were experiencing “extreme poverty,” yet they gave with “abundance of joy,” “beyond their means,” and “of their own accord.” What surprises you about how they gave? What compelled them to be so generous when they didn’t have much?

Verse 5 says “they gave themselves first to the Lord.” How would you describe the life of someone who gives themselves first to the Lord? How does giving yourself to the Lord first change the way you see everything else?

In verse 9, Paul brings the conversation back to Jesus and what He gave for us. Why do you think Paul points them to the gospel? How does remembering what Jesus gave for us change the way we think about what we’re willing to give?

Follow Him

As we grow in our relationship with Jesus, generosity should grow in us too. What does growing generosity look like over the course of someone’s life? What could keep that growth from happening?

The Macedonians gave themselves “first to the Lord.” What are some things we can “give ourselves to” that make it harder to live generously with what God has given us? How does the way we use what we have reveal what really comes first for us?

The Macedonians gave willingly and even begged for the opportunity to participate. What kind of heart initiates opportunities to be generous without needing to be asked? How do we become that kind of person?

Next Step

Think about your generosity a year or two ago compared to today. Where have you grown? Where do you want to keep growing?

For some of us, the next step is to begin giving. For others, it’s to give consistently. And for others, God may be leading us to grow in sacrificial generosity. Which of those best describes your next step right now, and what do you need to do to follow through in obedience? What do you need to believe about God in order to take that step with confidence?

Pray Together

Take a minute to pray on your own. Ask God to show you what giving yourself fully to Him should change about the way you give. Then complete this sentence:

Because I have given myself first to the Lord, I will:

Share your answer with the group. Then pray together:

Thank God for the generosity He has shown you.

Ask God to help you give yourself fully to Him first.

Pray for growth in generosity as you grow in Christ.

Week 4

2 Corinthians 9:6–15

2 Corinthians 9:6–15

⁶ The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. ⁹ As it is written,

“He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor;
his righteousness endures forever.”

¹⁰ He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹ You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. ¹² For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. ¹³ By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others, ¹⁴ while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. ¹⁵ Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!

Share First

When you think about everything God has given you, what do you assume it's for?

So much of what we already have can become a way to bless someone else.

There are things we desire from God. We pray for provision. We ask for opportunities. We desire good things for ourselves and the people we love, and God invites us to bring all of that to Him.

Keep that in mind as you read verses 24–25, because Solomon gives us both a promise and a warning about generosity.

It would be easy to read that and start doing the math: If I give this, what will God give me back? **But that's when desire can turn into expectation** and we start believing our generosity should guarantee a certain response from God.

we can trust there is real blessing in generosity **but we let God define what that richness looks like.**

We all probably know some version of that feeling. We get the thing we wanted, and before long, there's something else we want. We make more money, but we find new ways to spend it. We get more space, and we buy more things to fill it.

Then Solomon shows us why giving can satisfy us in a way that having more never will: **“Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.”**

And while you're refreshing someone else, God refreshes you too.

That's part of what Solomon is describing. **Generosity does something in us as God uses what we give to bless someone else.**

Is there something you've been asking God for that has started to feel like something you expect Him to give you? How can you keep bringing that desire before God without deciding what His answer should be?

When have you experienced the joy of giving something you had to someone else?
What could you share this week that might refresh someone else?

Series Group Guide

2 Corinthians 9:6–15

Check In + Connect

Share one high and low from your week.

What’s something you always like to have on hand, just in case? (Maybe it’s snacks, cash, a phone charger, Band-Aids, an umbrella, or something you always keep in your purse or car.)

Read Together

Have a group member read 2 Corinthians 9:6–15 aloud.

What stands out to you most about generosity in this passage?

Look Closer

Verse 7 says to give “not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” What makes cheerful giving different from simply giving? Why do you think these verses are more about our attitude toward giving than the amount we give?

Notice the words in verse 8: “all grace,” “all sufficiency,” “all things,” “all times,” and “every good work.” What do these words teach us about God’s ability to provide? How can knowing this give us confidence to live generously?

Follow the movement from God supplying the seed in verse 10 to people giving thanks to God in verse 15. What does God accomplish through the generosity in between?

Follow Him

Verse 10 describes God as the one who “supplies seed to the sower” and then “multiplies your seed for sowing.” The seed God supplies is meant to be sown. What has God given us that can be put to work for His purposes? What does it look like to “sow” what He gives us?

Verse 11 says God enriches us “to be generous in every way.” What can make us want to be generous but unable to respond when an opportunity comes? How can we arrange our lives now so we have the freedom to be generous when the opportunities arise?

Think about a time when someone was generous to you and it made you grateful to God. What is it about generosity

that can turn someone’s attention toward God? How does that change the way we view what’s at stake when we have the opportunity to be generous?

Next Step

Think about the generosity step you’re taking right now. What helps you give cheerfully and remember that generosity is a privilege?

Where do you think we can be tempted to underestimate what God can do through our generosity? What does this passage help us understand about the reach of our generosity?

Based on this passage, what can we ask God to accomplish through our generosity? How would praying this way change the way we give?

Pray Together

Take a minute to pray on your own. Ask God to show you how to prepare now to be generous when an opportunity comes. Then complete this sentence:

To be ready to share what God has given me, I will:

Share your answer with the group. Then pray together:

Thank God for everything He has provided and for the privilege of getting to share it.

Ask God to use your generosity to meet needs and bring Him glory.

Pray for readiness to recognize opportunities to be generous and respond with joy when they come.

Week 5

Matthew 25:14–30

Matthew 25:14–30

¹⁴ “For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. ¹⁵ To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶ He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. ¹⁷ So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. ¹⁸ But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹ Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.’ ²¹ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ ²² And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.’ ²³ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ ²⁴ He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, ²⁵ so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.’ ²⁶ But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? ²⁷ Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest.’ ²⁸ So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. ²⁹ For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. ³⁰ And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

Eternity First

What felt like a really big deal last year that barely crosses your mind now?

Time has a way of changing our perspective. And in these verses, God gives us an even bigger view: **eternity**.

We feel that toll in a lot of ways. Our bodies age, people disappoint us, things we love change or end, and hard seasons exhaust our energy and force us to fight for joy.

It takes this perspective to understand the weight of verse 17. Let's be honest, suffering can feel anything but "light" while we're living through it.

That is, until God gives us something bigger to measure it against.

These verses take all the things that feel heavy in your life right now and place them beside “an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.”

Everything looks different when we compare it with eternity.

All the things we can see right now are temporary, and everything we cannot see is eternal. It's easy to forget what we cannot see, but eternity is every bit as real as

So much of what gets our attention every day has an expiration date. The money we earn. The things we buy. The homes we live in and the cars we drive. The accomplishments we chase. The comfort we protect. Even the plans we care deeply about.

And eternity gives us a question that can help:

When I stand before the Lord, will this matter?

That question can change the way we make decisions about our money, our time, what we hold onto with white knuckles, what we're willing to sacrifice, and ultimately, the legacy we want our lives to leave.

Because there are things we can invest in right now that will matter forever.

Helping someone know and follow Jesus matters forever.

Raising children to love God matters forever.

Making disciples matters forever.

Giving so the gospel can go farther matters forever.

Using what God has given us to serve His purposes matters forever.

Fixing our eyes on eternity helps us spend our temporary lives on what matters most.

This also gives us some freedom when obedience feels costly. When eternity is in view, we don't have to spend our lives protecting what we can't keep forever.

If you can trust God with eternity, you can trust Him with today.

What feels really important to you right now? When you ask, “*When I stand before the Lord, will this matter?*” how does that change the way you see it?

What are you investing your life in right now that will matter forever? Is there anything you want to give more of your time, attention, or resources to?

Where is obedience feeling costly right now? How does remembering that you can trust God with eternity help you trust Him with today?

Matthew 25:14–30.

Check In + Connect

Share one high and low from your week.

What’s something people know they can always count on you for? *(being loudest at the game, having good snacks, finding cheap deals, planning the trip, remembering birthdays, etc.)*

Read Together

Have a group member read *Matthew 25:14–30* aloud.

What stands out to you about each servant’s response to what the master gives him?

Look Closer

The master “*entrusted*” his property to the servants, giving each a different amount “according to his ability.” Everything they received still belonged to him. **What does this show us about how we should view what God has given us? What does that include beyond money?**

The first two servants were given different amounts and had different results, yet both heard the same words: “*Well done, good and faithful servant.*” Why do you think both servants receive the same praise? How can this help us when we’re tempted to compare what we’ve been given with someone else?

The third servant’s fear was rooted in what he believed about his master. **How does our view of God affect what we’re willing to do with what He has given us?**

Follow Him

The third servant didn’t lose what he was given, but he buried it. **What are some ways we can “bury” what God has entrusted to us? What can keep us from using what God gives us for His purposes?**

Verse 16 says the first servant went “*at once*” and put what he had received to work. **Why can we be tempted to delay something we already know God wants us to do? What does immediate obedience require us to believe about God?**

Verse 19 says the master returned and “settled accounts” with

his servants. **One day, we will stand before Jesus, and the way we used what He entrusted to us will matter. How should that reality affect the way we live today?**

Next Step

What has God entrusted to you that you want to be more faithful with? What would it look like to take that responsibility seriously?

The master describes the first two servants as “*good and faithful*” and the third as “*wicked and lazy.*” **Where are you tempted to settle for doing nothing wrong instead of actively doing something with what God has given you?** What is one step you could take toward goodness and faithfulness?

The way we use what God has entrusted to us reveals whose kingdom we’re building. **Where might God be asking you to make an adjustment so your life more clearly reflects His kingdom?**

Pray Together

Take a minute to pray on your own. Ask God to show you what faithfulness looks like with everything He has entrusted to you. Then complete this sentence:

Because I want to be found faithful when I stand before Jesus, I will:

Share your answer with the group. Then pray together:

Thank God for everything He has entrusted to you and the privilege of using it for His kingdom.

Ask God to give our church an eternal perspective that keeps His mission at the center of how we use what He has given us.

Pray for courage to faithfully act on what God is asking you to do, trusting Him with whatever obedience requires.

 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

Colossians 1:18



 BILTMORE CHURCH

first.biltmorechurch.com

