

The Vision for 2026  
Written by Rev. R. Brady Henderson

On January 17th of 1781 the Battle of Cowpens took place in the upstate of South Carolina during the American Revolution. There were 1,000 British troops present that day for the battle and 1,500 American soldiers (including Continental Army Regulars and local militia). Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton led the Tories that day and was quite confident and cocky considering he had received intelligence about the movement of the Patriots in Cowpens. As has been said a lot recently with the 250th anniversary of our nation's birth coming this year (2026), the war was indeed won in the South. You can argue that it was indeed won in South Carolina. Thanks to South Carolina native Revolutionary War Generals Francis Marion, Thomas Sumter, and Thomas Pickney, General Cornwallis was forced to spend much more time in the South (especially South Carolina), than he anticipated (per his personal diaries). He had his eye on ending this civil war and defeating General Washington up in Virginia. But he was forced to fight battles in the South due to the resilience of local militias. This gave Washington much needed time to get ready for the end of the war, with the help of Marquis De Lafayette and the French.

At the Battle of Cowpens, General Daniel Morgan, who was in command, decided to fake a retreat. At the beginning of the Battle the British army came in full capacity over the large hill that still remains in Cowpens today. The Patriots began to fall back to make the British believe they were retreating. Then, from a smaller hill came the Militia men, mostly from South Carolina, to come and attack the British. That day ended in 850 casualties for England and only 150 for the American cause. It has been recorded through history that not only was Daniel Morgan a brilliant military tactician, but he could encourage and ignite his men brilliantly. It has been passed down that during the Battle of Cowpens he shouted, 'Charge on' and 'Advance on', as his men surged forward to defeat the British, and change the tide of the American Revolution, sending Cornwallis to the hills of western North Carolina. As FBCG enters into 2026, I want to echo Morgan's words, 'Advance'. 2025 was an amazing year in the life of our Church. God did some incredible things. But we've got to keep going. We can't retreat now! We've got to advance. Sure, like the soldiers that day at the Battle of Cowpens we have some impressive 'battle victories' in our past. We've seen God save lost souls, build His Church, and send people out to fulfill the great commission. But guess what, we've got to advance. I truly believe that there is even more that our great God wants to do through the work and ministry of FBCG. Our 2026 word of the year is 'Advance'. This upcoming year I will be preaching through the first letter that the Apostle Paul wrote to the Church at Corinth. 1st Corinthians 4:20 says this, 'For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power.' The only way that we as a Church can advance, is in the power of God. Which was what the Apostle Paul was alluding to. In 1st Corinthians chapter 4 Paul is discussing the potential power of the ministry of the Apostles in the divided Church that was the Corinthian Church. Very clearly in verse 20, we see that Paul essentially says, 'talk is cheap'. Within context, Paul was speaking of some of the arrogant members of the Church at Corinth that talked constantly but did not do much for the Kingdom of God (see verse 19). That kind of tactic on the spiritual battlefield that we are on will do not much against our opponent, Satan. What can defeat him? The power of our God.

As we advance in 2026 we must rely on the power of God. Our own words cannot save people, but God Himself. Our own character or wits will not produce a better witness for Christ, only God can do that as we lean into Him. Our dollars, dedication and determination cannot build our building across the street. Only the power of God can. As we advance, let's remember we can only do so in and through the power of our great God.

On Sunday January 4th I'll be casting the vision for this upcoming year for our Church. As a Church we have to advance the Gospel even further, advance our personal witness further, and continue to advance our building program even further for the future generations of our Church and community. Let's advance!

I hope you all know how much Hannah and I truly love and appreciate each of you. To us you are not 'Church members', but family members.

Sincerely,  
Pastor Brady & First Lady, Hannah Henderson

First Baptist Church  
Gaston



CHRISTMAS EVE  
AT FIRST  
5 PM



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Firstbaptistgaston.org



First Baptist Church of Gaston



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**First Baptist Church of Gaston**  
**Wednesday, December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025**  
**Christmas Eve, at First Baptist**

**Welcome and Baptism**

Rev. R. Brady Henderson

**Worship Through Song**

‘Silent Night’

**Reading of Scripture & Sermon: Luke 2:1-21**

Associate Pastor, Rev. Steve Kittrell

**Praise Team**

‘Light of the World’

**Message Through Music, The Word, and Candles**

Rev. R. Brady Henderson

**Depart in the Joy of the Lord**

Good evening, Church Family, Friends, and Visitors,

We gather tonight to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ that occurred over 2,000 years ago. As you know, Christmas Eve is very important to so many people but sometimes, for all the wrong reasons. Some folks love Christmas Eve for the Family they get to see and spend time with, as well as the food that they get to eat. Some folks, especially our precious children, are expectedly waiting for Santa and other gifts.

But, tonight, as we enter into this time of worship we get to celebrate Baptism, the Birth of our Lord, and the Blossoming of so many NEW believers in Christ who are now a part of the Family of God, and our Church.

We have not had a ‘Christmas Eve’ Service during my time as your Pastor here at FBC Gaston. But this year, we are doing it based on the leading of the Lord. I am very excited. When I grew up, every year I attended two Christmas Eve Services at Fairview Baptist Church, in Greer South Carolina. One at 5 PM and one at 11 PM. I would run the sound board, pass out bulletins, greet folks, read Scripture, and sing during these services. They were the highlight of my years growing up. I hope, by starting this tradition that they might also become a highlight of your life as we celebrate the Birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

As we begin this service tonight, I want you to think on one phrase, ‘Till He appeared and the Soul felt it’s worth’.

Once Jesus appeared, through the virgin birth, we can all find our worth in and through the resurrected Christ. Now, let’s worship Him!