



FBC NEWSLETTER



Madelynn Andonie and Zacharia Andonie publicly declaring their faith in Jesus through Baptism on Easter Sunday.

We Belong to One Another

Belonging to God also means we belong to each other. The Bible describes the church as a body, a family - people connected not by circumstance, but by Christ. *“Each member belongs to all the others.”* Romans 12:5

That kind of belonging is something we see lived out in our own church family. Some are just beginning their journey of faith, like Maddie and Zach who were baptized on Easter Sunday. Others, like Richard and Shirley Gawith (see page 2), have walked with Christ through many seasons of joy and trial. And some, like Pastor Joel, have found that God provides a place to belong even far from where their story began (see page 3).

These are three examples that **we belong to one another.**

A Longing to Belong

PASTOR KEVIN HAZELTON

The setting for the 1980s-90s TV sitcom *Cheers* was a basement bar in Boston. The storyline hit home with millions of Americans because it portrayed a place “where everybody knows your name, and they’re always glad you came.”

Cheers wasn’t really about a bar, it was about a longing to belong.

That longing is something we all share. As Christian author Dallas Willard observed, people are meant to be part of something larger than themselves. Our sense of who we are is deeply connected to where, and to whom, we belong.

But that raises an important question:

Where do we truly belong?

We Belong To the Lord

At the deepest level, we are made to belong to God. Saint Augustine famously wrote, “You [God] have formed us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in you.”

There is a longing in every human that cannot be satisfied by success, relationships, or our best efforts. Our greatest longing is ultimately for God Himself.

Through Jesus, God in the flesh, we are forgiven of sin, receiving new life. When we trust in Him as Savior and Lord, we are no longer outsiders looking in. We belong to Him.

As Scripture reminds us: *“For none of us lives for ourselves alone... whether we live or die, **we belong to the Lord.**”* Romans 14:7-8

A Place to Belong

In a world where many feel unknown or disconnected, the church is meant to be a place where people are known, loved, and rooted in Christ.

So where do you belong?

If you are in Christ, you belong to Him: and you belong here, with His people. And if you are still searching, you are warmly invited to come and discover that kind of belonging with us.

First Baptist Church isn’t just a place to attend. **It’s a place to belong.**

**Contact one of the pastors if you have questions about faith in Jesus, baptism, or becoming a member of First Baptist Church.*

Get to Know:

RICHARD & SHIRLEY GAWITH

The Joy of Serving Together

If you have walked through the doors of First Baptist Church, chances are you've shared a smile with us, Richard and Shirley Gawith. For those of you who have seen us around the halls over the years, you know that First Baptist is much more than just a building to us - it is our home. Our journey here began in 1967, the day we were married at this altar. Looking back over nearly six decades, we can see how God has woven our lives into the fabric of this church family through every season of joy and trial.

Early on, we discovered that the heart of our faith was found in serving others. Whether it was through children's ministries, service teams, or outreach, we found that saying "yes" to God's call always led to a deeper blessing. Our mission heart has taken us to:

- **Camp Woody in Alaska** and **Murrow Indian Children's Home** in Oklahoma.
- **Bethel Neighborhood Center** in Kansas City and **Bacone College**.
- Disaster relief with **8 Days of Hope** in Mississippi after Katrina, and Houston after Harvey.

Some of our most cherished memories, however, come from our two trips to Mexico with the adults and youth of our church. There is something life-changing about building an 11x20 ft. house from the ground up for a family in need. In those moments, sweating and working alongside our brothers and sisters in Christ, we truly understood what it means to be the hands and feet of Jesus. We encourage everyone—no matter how long you've been here—to step out in service; you will always receive more than you give.

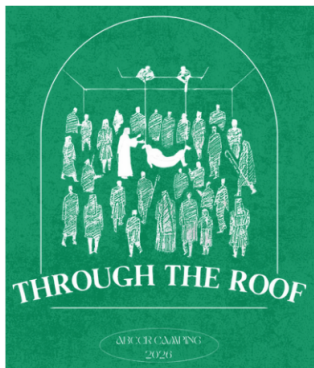
First Baptist has been the setting for our family's greatest milestones. We watched our children, Larry and Lori, be baptized and married here, and we

celebrated Richard's baptism in 2013. But we also know that a church family is most precious when life is hardest. In 2009, when our daughter Lori (who was married to Brian Lamer) was called home to Jesus following a tragic accident, we experienced the true power of this community. We leaned heavily on the love and prayers of Pastor Kevin, Cynthia, and all of you. You carried us when we couldn't carry ourselves, proving that we never walk alone when we are part of this body.

Today, we continue to enjoy the life God has given us. In our "retired" time, Richard is often out fishing or hunting, and I (Shirley) love being in my flower garden or spending time at the lake. We are constantly blessed by our family, which has grown to include three granddaughters, four great-granddaughters, and one great-grandson.

As we look at the faces in our congregation each Sunday, we are simply overwhelmed by God's goodness. He has been so faithful to walk with us through every high and every low. We hope our story serves as a reminder that when you commit your life to serving Him and His people, He will lead you on a journey more rewarding than you could ever imagine.

To Him be glory!



ABCCR 2026 Summer Camps

Deadlines are as early as mid-May and June.

Register your child(ren) at <https://www.abccr.org/abccr-camping>

Let the Finance Office know when you register to receive ½ off fees.

A Place to Belong

PASTOR JOEL ODONDI

For a long time, my mother lived with a lingering worry. From her home in Kenya, she looked across the ocean toward Salina, Kansas, and wondered about the new community I had embraced. She knew the reality of my situation: I was far from the land of my birth, and Eddah and I were the only Africans in our congregation. As a mother, her heart naturally asked the question: **“Joel, do you feel you truly belong there?”** I would always reassure her. I told her about the Family of God, about a church that looked past the color of my skin to the heart of our shared faith. My words silenced her questions, but I knew the doubt still lived in her quiet moments.

Then came the season of her illness and, eventually, her passing. It was in this moment of deep personal trial that our church moved beyond words. In Africa, the process of saying goodbye is often a long one, as families spend weeks or months mobilizing the immense resources required for a burial. The distance between us added a heavy layer of fear to my grief. Would I make it home? How could we afford the journey? But God had already provided the answer through you.

During her struggle for health, it was the individual

members of FBC Salina who ensured she received the tests and care she needed. She went to her rest knowing that my "new family" was standing behind her. When she passed, your love became even more tangible. You did not just offer condolences; you became God's ambassadors. Because of your enormous generosity, the financial barriers, the airfare, the funeral costs, simply melted away.

"Mom, I Told You I Belonged"

My mother had a beautiful funeral. As I stood there, I felt a profound sense of peace. I often find myself wishing I could pick up the phone one last time just to say, "Mom, I told you I belonged." In my mind, I can see her characteristic smile as she responds, "Now I know, Joel. And now I am at peace." While I cannot make that call today, I find comfort knowing I will meet her again at the feet of Jesus. But until then, I want to share what this

experience revealed about us.

This experience revealed something vital about our church. We are a congregation of truly loving and generous people who use our blessings to support noble endeavors. We have proven that we can pass the hardest of tests when we stand together. As we look toward the future, let us build on this foundation. We have the opportunity to focus on what unites us rather than what might divide us. In my darkest hour, I felt a profound sense of belonging; I felt part of a family, and I knew I was never alone. If FBC Salina can be supportive to me and my family, there is nothing that stops us from supporting one another and bearing each other's burdens every single day. Let us continue to be a place where everyone knows, without a doubt, that they truly belong. I felt a belonging that transcended geography and race. I felt part of a family. Thank you, FBC Salina, for not just preaching the Gospel, but for living it out when I needed it most.



LOVE GOD

LOVE OTHERS

MAKE DISCIPLES

The Heartbeat of Our Church: Ministry Updates

PASTOR JOEL ODONDI

Ministry is the lifeblood of First Baptist Church Salina. It is the practical expression of our calling to worship, serve, and fellowship. As we reach out to our neighbors and act as faithful custodians of the resources God has entrusted to us, we see His kingdom move in our very own hallways.

In this season, we have much to celebrate. From the energy of our kids and youth, to the quiet reflection of Lent, God is at work.

Wednesday Nights: A Hub of Hope

Wednesday nights continue to be one of our most vibrant outreach opportunities. Our FBC Kids, led by a team of dedicated volunteers, are doing more than just “babysitting,” they are planting seeds.

Community Impact: We are thrilled to see many children from outside our immediate church family joining us. Word is spreading that FBC is a place to learn the Word of God in an exciting, welcoming environment.

A Family Effort: While the kids are learning, our service team ensures the nursery is fully staffed, allowing parents to dive deep into their own Bible studies.

The Secret Ingredient: A huge thank you to our kitchen volunteers, who serve every meal with a smile and keep us all fueled for ministry.



FBC Salina Youth leading Easter Sunrise Service.

Youth: Deep Roots in the Basement

Our youth are doing more than just playing games, though the competition is fierce. After building relationships during recreation, they head to the basement to grow in Christ through doctrinally sound teaching.

The Word: We recently completed a series on the Sermon on the Mount and the life of Jesus.

Fruit of the Spirit: We are seeing remarkable spiritual growth, evidenced by a deepening commitment to Christian character.

Connection: Our small group discussions and prayer times have become a highlight, allowing students to apply the Gospel to their daily lives and lift one another up.

Behind the Scenes:

Success doesn't happen in a vacuum.

Thank you to our kitchen volunteers, teachers, all leaders, the set-up crew, our door greeters, musicians and the A/V team. You are the hands and feet of this church!

A Season of Prayer and Fasting

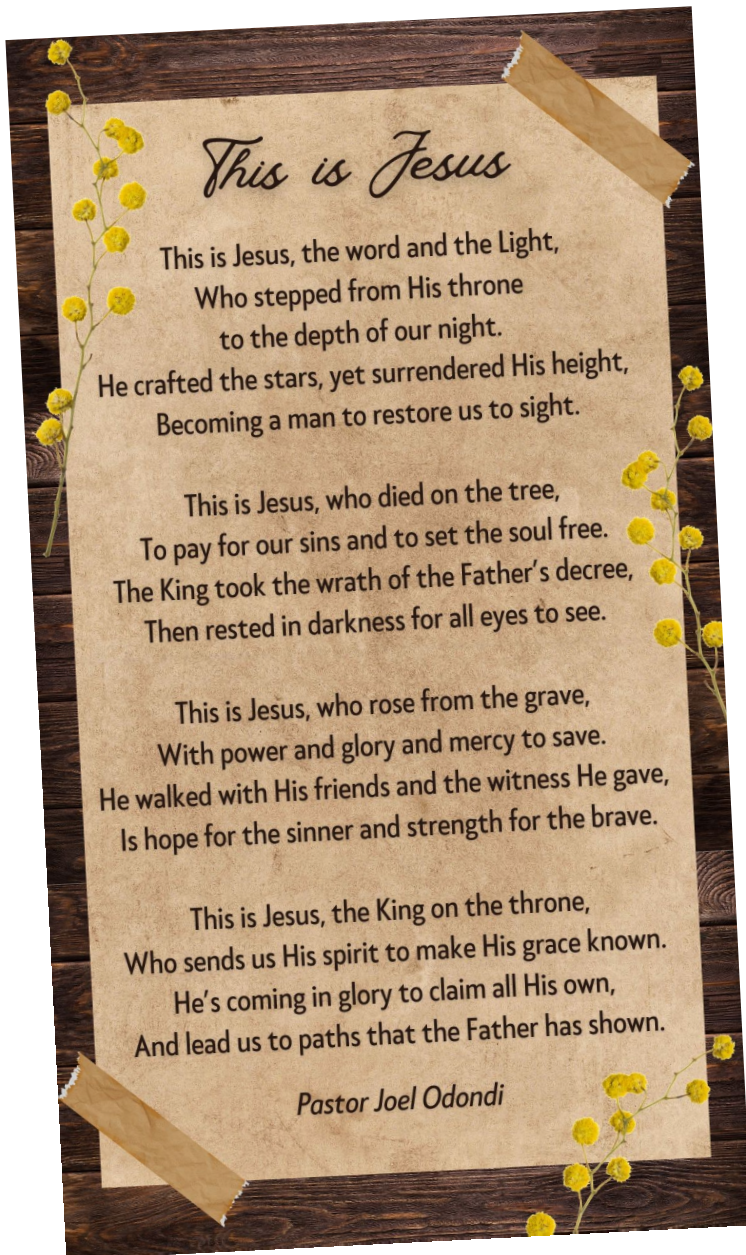
They say a church that prays together, stays together. During Lent, our congregation took the humble opportunity to fast and pray, rededicating ourselves to God's will.

We want to hear from you. What did God speak to your hear during this time? What were your “high moments” or challenges? Please share your testimonies with us so we can feature them in upcoming newsletter and encourage the whole body.

Easter Weekend: From the Table to the Tomb

Easter at FBC Salina was a powerful journey through the Gospel.

The Lord's Supper: We began with a unique meal and communion service during Maundy Thursday. Sitting in a cross-shaped arrangement, we took communion in pairs, confessing to one another, "You are my friend; I will not hurt you." May that spirit of peace stay with us all year.



Sunrise Service: Our youth stepped up with incredible courage, leading us in resurrection songs and scripture readings. Seeing them stand bold for Christ is a true gift to our congregation.

Fellowship: A huge thank you to the Fellowship Team and volunteers for the delicious dinner Maundy Thursday and the scrumptious breakfast that followed Easter Sunrise Service.

The Celebration: During our main service, we rejoice as *Madelynn Andonie* and *Zacharia Andonie* were baptized. Let's continue to pray for them as they begin their walk with Christ.

The Message: Pastor Kevin challenged us from Matthew 11:28-30 to find rest for our weary souls by:

- Stopping Search and find peace with God through Jesus.
- Stopping Striving and find strength in Jesus for today.

The Poem: Pastor Joel shared a moving original poem titled, "This is Jesus!" which beautifully summarized the

fbc salina

Vision Survey Update



The FBC Vision Survey completed in February 2026 revealed both encouraging strengths and important opportunities for growth within our church. The results affirmed that FBC Salina is a relationally strong and biblically grounded church, marked by high levels of trust in pastoral leadership and deep loyalty among its members. These are meaningful, God-honoring qualities, ones we can continue to build on as we faithfully follow Christ together.

At the same time, the survey highlighted areas where we can grow. We currently lack a clearly defined pathway for helping people move toward spiritual maturity and equipping them to make disciples. Additionally, there is a need to create more intentional opportunities for serving beyond our four walls while maintaining the authentic relationships that define our church family.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the FBC Vision Survey. Your input reflects a genuine investment in the health and future of our church. As we prayerfully evaluate these results and take steps to shape our vision in the years ahead, full engagement from the entire FBC Salina family will be essential.

Together, we are the Church. We belong to the Lord and to one another. And together, we can, and will, Love God, Love Others, and Make Disciples.

Scan the QR code or
RSVP at the
Connection Center.



RSVP



fbc salina

— KIDS & YOUTH —

END-OF-YEAR CELEBRATION

Dinner & Program



MAY 6
6 p.m.

Join FBC Salina as we rejoice in our Kids and Youth for their dedication to growing in Christ. They have spent each Wednesday evening during the school year coming together to build their community and learn the value of what it means to:

LOVE GOD | LOVE OTHERS | MAKE DISCIPLES



First Baptist Church | 843 Lewis Ave., Salina, KS 67401

Growing Together: Your Path to Discipleship

Faith isn't meant to be lived alone. At FBC Salina, we believe spiritual growth, accountability, and fellowship happen best in small groups. We encourage every member to plug into at least one of the following studies:

Sunday Mornings 10:30 – 11:30 AM

- Children's Sunday School: (Pre-K through High School) Building a biblical foundation for our youth.
- Adult Sunday School: Deep-dive classes held in the Bible Class and the Library.

Sunday Night Growth Groups for Adults 6:00 PM

- Beyond the Milk: A deeper dive into the morning's sermon.
- Post Encounter: A focused group for spiritual growth and study.

Weekly Wednesday Nights Meal Begins at 5:30 PM

- FBC Kids (Pre-K – 6th): Meets in the Chapel using *The Gospel Project* curriculum.
- FBC Youth (7th – 12th): Meets in the Basement for fellowship and teaching.
- Adult Bible Study: Meets in the Library, currently focusing on how to interpret the Scriptures.

Thursday Bible Study 10:00 AM

- The Library Group: A morning gathering centered on shared testimonies and approved Bible study materials.

Don't just attend,
belong.
Join a group this week to experience the strength of a community growing together in Christ.



JOIN FBC SALINA IN WEARING **RED**
SUNDAY, MAY 24
TO REPRESENT THE HOLY SPIRIT
COMING IN FLAMES

May Sermons

The End is Near... or is it?

We will wrap Jesus' 5th teaching discourse in Matthew, commonly called the Olivet Discourse, with chapters 24-25. These chapters focus on the destruction of the Jewish temple and the second coming of Christ.

Join us in worship as we discover how we live Kingdom lives today as we await the return of Christ.

Sermon Series: Your Kingdom Come

May 3 - Pastor Kevin
Matthew 24: 1-35

May 10 - Pastor Kevin
Matthew 24:36-25:13

May 17 - Pastor Joel
Matthew 25: 14-46

May 24 - Pentecost Sunday
Pastor Kevin
Summary & Application

May 31 - Pastor Joel
2 Chronicles 7:11-22

Upcoming Events

Sunday, May 3—Communion

Noon Congregational Meeting w/ Lunch to Begin
(meal provided)

Wednesday, May 6

6 p.m. Kids & Youth End-Of-Year Celebration w/ Meal

Thursday, May 7—National Day of Prayer

6 p.m. Out of Touch @ Ihop

Sunday, May 10—Mother's Day

Join FBC Salina as we celebrate our mothers during
our worship services.

Sunday, May 24—Pentecost Sunday

Wear red with FBC Salina to represent the Holy
Spirit coming in flames.

Monday, May 25—Memorial Day

Church Office Closed

Find the calendar online at : www.fbcsalina.org/calendar

Join Us in Person

Sundays

Worship at 9 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.
Sunday School at 10:30 a.m.
Praise & Growth Groups at 6 p.m.

Wednesdays

Prayer Group at 9 a.m.
FBC Kids and Youth at 5:30 p.m.
Adult Bible Study at 6:30 p.m.

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