



DEEPER





DEEPER

**CONNECTION.COMMUNITY.COMMITMENT.COMMISSION.**

Wayne and Amy


# BRAY



“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

**MATTHEW 28:19-20**





**SOCIAL** storms surround us as the culture attempts to redefine faith and morality. Christians are confused, wondering how to respond to the changing winds of society. Some run and hide from the danger, choosing isolation over confrontation. Others respond in fear, which inevitably leads to aggression. Still, more are blown back and forth by the winds of public opinion. Sadly, their faith is not rooted in the Word of God.

So, how should we respond? First, we must resist the temptation to selfishly turn inward in isolation, but we must also remember that our church's first priority is not to simply grow bigger. Instead, God is leading us to Grow Deeper.

**IMAGINE** with me, the resurrected Jesus, now standing on a mountain in Galilee overlooking the Sea. Preparing for his departure, the Savior proceeds to give final instructions to his closest followers. These words, from Matthew 28:19-20, have become all too familiar: Jesus said, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

**OUR CHURCH** is not just praying for a season of spiritual improvement. We are seeking God for a lasting strategy of Disciple Making. We don't want to just Reach, we want to Teach people across the Upstate to love and live for Jesus. We are Growing Deeper!

**Wayne Bray**  
Lead Pastor





# **SPIRITUAL FORMATION TEAM**

**CONNECTIONS  
DISCIPLESHIP  
EVANGELISM**

As we seek to go Deeper, we recognize it is going to take a lot of hard work and intentional effort. We created The Spiritual Formation Team to focus on helping every member of our church take their next step with Jesus! We want to help connect people to Jesus and to our church, help them grow in their walk with Christ, and then help others live on mission for Jesus.



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**STEPHEN WILLIAMS** *Executive Pastor of Disciple-Making*  
Stephen oversees the Spiritual Formation Team and makes sure that Upstate Church is accomplishing the mission to make more disciples who can go into the Upstate and help connect more people to Jesus.

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**DALLAS WILSON** *Spiritual Formation Team Leader*  
Dallas oversees the Spiritual Formation Process at our church to make sure that everyone can see their next step on the journey and that each part of the path is connected and easily identifiable.

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**COREY WATSON** *Evangelism Director*  
Corey equips those in our church to take Jesus with them into the world outside the walls of their Sunday morning campus!

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**WILL BRAY** *Discipleship Director*  
Will oversees all discipleship and group efforts at Upstate Church and helps members and guests plug into the body of Christ as we seek to double the number of people in biblical community across all campuses.

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**DUSTIN DOZIER** *Connections Director*  
Dustin oversees the Connections Teams at all of our campuses. Additionally, Dustin oversees the process of following up with guests and helping people connect with the church through baptism and Getting to Know You Events.

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**LYNDA WATSON** *Spiritual Formation Coordinator*  
Lynda assists every member of the spiritual formation team and helps each ministry work together for people to take a next step in growing deeper.

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**CONNECTION**  
**WITH**  
**CHRIST**





Deep inside the heart of man is a longing to connect. We tend to search for this connection through people like friends or family, things like talents and abilities, or maybe even our careers. These connections define who we are and who we are becoming. But what if the most important connection we pursued was our relationship with Christ?

The reality is that we cannot connect people to Jesus until we're connected to Jesus ourselves. At First Baptist Simpsonville | Upstate Church we say it all the time, "We exist to see people in the Upstate CONNECT with Jesus to change their world."

Therefore, over the next 24 months, our prayer is that you will join us in committing to connect with Jesus like never before. We want to see Jesus in the center of every home of Upstate Church. Are you committed to being "daily devoted to Jesus"? How is your prayer life? Are you making it a priority to spend personal time with Jesus outside of Sunday morning? We will focus for the next two years to help each other grow in the areas of spiritual devotion, spiritual discipline, and spiritual health.

Let's grow deeper!





# COMMUNITY WITH BELIEVERS





We can't grow deeper with Jesus in isolation. God made us for community and he gave us the local church because we need each other. We aren't only growing deeper in our individual relationships with Jesus but we're drawing closer to Jesus as we draw closer together in community with other believers. Community matters because it points us to Jesus, helps us to study God's Word, and sends us out on mission together.

Growing deeper in community is going to take a great investment from all of us. We all have next steps to take. We need to start new groups, train new leaders, and help our current groups grow in accountability and vulnerability. Growing deeper in biblical community is going to require more than organizational expansion; we need each other! That's why we'll focus so much on strengthening and expanding Upstate Groups. This is the primary way that you can get plugged into community at our church. Groups are where we begin to experience true belonging, personal accountability, and spiritual care. Don't miss your chance to grow deeper with people who care about you. It won't be the same without you!





# COMMITMENT TO THE MISSION





A decision of commitment stirs up all types of responses. In most cases, it is a negative response, maybe fear, uncertainty, or selfishness. When we are asked to commit, it requires us to release our grip on something of value. Shouldn't we commit to things of priority and eternal impact? When you commit to give financially, it requires releasing the grip you have on your bank account. You may commit to go on a mission trip which requires you to let go of a comfortable routine.

The Christian life requires commitment to a unique set of values. Jesus' call for those who desire to follow Him into a deeper relationship is one of wholesale commitment to things of eternal value. Jim Elliott once said, "he is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." What we commit to give, financially to the church and in service to others, is a reflection of what we value most.

In the gospel of Matthew, a parable is told of a man who finds a treasure in another man's field. He immediately runs home and liquidates everything he has in order to purchase the field. Why the overwhelming desire to sell all he had? The treasure he found was far more valuable than anything he previously owned. He determined that everything he had could not compare to the treasure he found.

We go deeper in our commitment to Christ when He is our greatest treasure. He is worthy of it all. Going deeper with Jesus requires a growing desire to give in all areas of life: financially, with our time, and with the gifts God has given.

A photograph of a woman with long blonde hair, wearing a yellow t-shirt, kneeling on a tiled floor and reading a colorful children's book to a group of young children. The children are sitting around her, looking at the book. The scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter. The book has illustrations of a nativity scene and the title 'The Nativity'.

# COMMISSION TO THE LOST





Jesus is clear in His commission to the world, both in Matt. 28 and Acts 1, that if a person really knows Him, they will be a disciple-making disciple. There are no exclusions or excuses given for the Christian not to participate. Therefore, the 21st century believer is called to live out and share the gospel regularly.

What does it look like for a Christ-follower at FBS|UC looking to grow deeper? We want to be people who are growing deeper and making disciples. This means we will pray for gospel connections, seek gospel conversations, and give gospel invitations. The Upstate of South Carolina is filled with 1.5 million people whose lives are hanging in the balance. Are you praying for them? Are you seeking to engage them in conversations about Jesus? Are you inviting them into this community of faith where they may find the hope you have in Jesus?

What does this look like for us specifically? Over the next two years we will make 72,000 gospel connections. We will start 24,000 gospel conversations, and we are hoping to see 500 new Christians follow the Lord in believer's baptisms. How does this happen? We don't just want to be a church that makes disciples; we want to grow deeper by becoming a church full of disciple-makers.

# EXPECTED OUTCOMES & COMMITMENT CARD

Our God-sized goal is simple. We hope to see Jesus in the center of every home in the Upstate of South Carolina. That’s never going to happen until we see Jesus in the center of every home of Upstate Church. How will we accomplish this? Let’s grow Deeper together. It will take each of us!

These are our expected outcomes in the areas of Connection, Community, Commitment, and Commission.

**CONNECTION** - See 2,000 Committed to Daily Scripture Reading & Prayer

**COMMUNITY** - Increase Adult Groups Attendance to Over 2,000 Weekly

**COMMITMENT** - \$1,000,000 invested in Missions through Upstate Groups

**COMMISSION** - 72,000 Gospel Connections and 24,000 Gospel Conversations leading to 500 Baptisms

**\$19,800,000**

**DEEPER INITIATIVE 24-MONTH COMMITMENT**

NUMBER OF GIFTS	AMOUNT OF EACH GIFT	TOTALS
1	750,000	750,000
2	500,000	1,000,000
8	150,000	1,200,000
13	100,000	1,300,000
18	80,000	1,440,000
20	65,000	1,300,000
30	50,000	1,500,000
40	40,000	1,600,000
60	30,000	1,800,000
70	20,000	1,400,000
80	15,000	1,200,000
201	10,000	2,010,000
200	8,000	1,600,000
200	5,000	1,000,000
200	2,000	400,000
300	1,000	300,000
		<b>19,800,000</b>

**“ WE HOPE TO SEE JESUS IN THE CENTER OF EVERY HOME IN THE UPSTATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA. ”**

I am ready to grow DEEPER in connection, that is, my personal relationship to Christ, by intentionally reading the Word and spending time in study and prayer.

I am willing to grow DEEPER in community, that is, my relationship with other believers, by creating a new rhythm of relational care and accountability.

I will make a commitment to grow DEEPER in the areas of serving others and sacrificial giving, following the example of Christ and His sacrifice on the cross.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ My/Our New Annual Giving for the next 24 months of 2024-2025 (see chart)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ My/Our one time financial gift above New Annual Giving

I will grow DEEPER in my commission to the world by making monthly connections with people in my daily activity, starting a gospel conversation with someone quarterly, and praying that God would use me to lead at least one person to faith in Christ and believer's baptism in the next 24 months.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

This financial amount is your commitment to give and can change at any time. Your financial gifts and commitments are always kept in complete confidence.



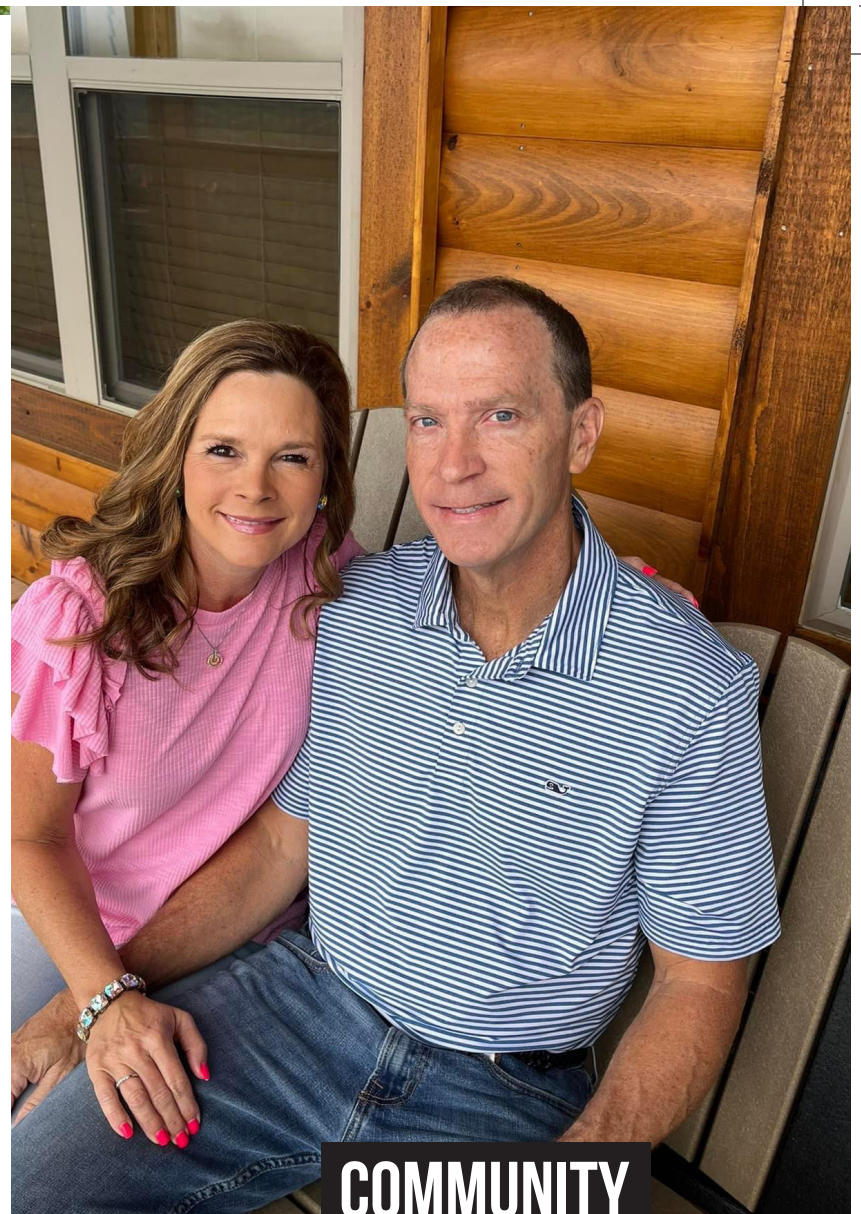


**CONNECTION**

# COURTNEY ARNDT

A deeper Connection with Christ happens when you find a connection with your local church. Connection with a church community hadn't really happened before Courtney came to First Baptist Simpsonville | Upstate Church. She had a hard time plugging in and finding a church community that felt like home. However, when she stepped through the doors at Upstate Church, a sense of belonging became apparent. She has been a member now for over a year and a half and feels beyond blessed to call Upstate Church Five Forks home. When Courtney started getting involved, she prayed that God would show her where a need was and where God wanted to use her. The Connections Team was where she landed, and has been serving twice a month for the past year. She also plugged into a small group that meets every Monday night and is well-attended by people that have made small group a priority. With new campuses being started, this community now represents 3 different campuses of Upstate Church. The group has a unique opportunity to hear the same content and passage, but each pastor's own input and reflection. With discipleship groups launching this fall, Courtney has been able to connect deeper with a small group of ladies. These 4 women provide wisdom and insight from their life stages - mothers, grandmothers, and all-around women who strive to be like Jesus every day. God continues to show Courtney that when she Connects to Him and cares for His people, she is rewarded in more ways than she can count.





COMMUNITY

# ANDY NELSON & BILL SIMS

Growing Deeper in Community reaps rewards far beyond the present. Andy Nelson and Bill Sims have been involved with Upstate Students for many years and have invested in one particular group since they were in 6th grade. These young men were bringers to their group, bringing students from Hillcrest, Woodmont, and Southside Christian. Simple things such as being consistent group leaders and sending daily verses played a larger part than they even knew. When Jacob Calvert was a senior, Bill overheard him saying how a leader had sent the group daily verses, and Jacob eventually began meditating on those verses throughout the day. It started to change Jacob's life and started to make him go deeper in his walk with the Lord. A simple, consistent effort had a long-lasting effect. As the boys grew, they began serving, and many of them have been instrumental parts of our campuses. To see them now, growing into Godly men who aren't spouting Sunday School answers is amazing. Bill and Andy have been able to see how the boys have grown from being knuckleheaded kids to being young men full of Christ, finding their path, and seeing where everything they do is centered around God. These young men, now in college, are asking those bigger questions - What am I being called to do? Where do I go from here for You, Lord? It's a journey that Bill and Andy will always treasure.





**COMMITMENT**

## **DALE AND MELISSA BARNARD**

Commitment is not just for the easy times, it's for all the time. About 13 years ago, Dale and Melissa Barnard began searching for a church home when they re-engaged with their faith. At First Baptist Simpsonville | Upstate Church, they've found great satisfaction through their commitment to serving and giving. As leaders of a small group, they've seen their group give of their time, talents, and resources. Their group is inspirational with their commitment to give back by serving at the Greer Soup Kitchen and helping out those in the community and their group. Through their journey of giving and serving, they have found God to be faithful. When Dale resigned from his job in May and took the summer off to destress, he spent the season without a job and God provided. The Barnards continued to give through this season, possibly even more than before! Melissa also saw changes in Dale, and without the stress, God brought back the man Melissa knew. Not only did God provide financially through the summer, but he listened and provided what their hearts needed. Now, he's blessed Dale with a new job, and life is back on track after the detour. Growing deeper in their commitment got them through the season, and will continue to see them through.





## COMMISSION LOGAN MOORE

Knowing God's Commission of making disciples of all nations, Logan shines the light of Jesus onto his football team by staying considerate, loving, and committed to his team. Logan is a student at Hillcrest High School and is part of Student Leadership at First Baptist Simpsonville | Upstate Church. He got his call to ministry while on the SERVE mission trip to Houma, Louisiana. Feeling the weight of the call has led to some pretty amazing opportunities with his team.

Knowing his teammates would spend eternity somewhere, Logan saw the opportunity to share the love of Christ with them through his actions and words. God blessed him with these strong relationships and he was able to grow closer with his teammates to start the work God had set before him. Logan began to pray with his teammates and bring them to church every chance he got. He wanted them to know Who and What the answer is to all their struggles - **Jesus**. Logan says it's the love of God that motivates him. 1 John 4:19 says, "We love because He first loved us." Logan wants his teammates to know that they are loved, not only by him but by Jesus, too. Through the mission field of sports, Logan has met people from different home lives and beliefs. Some of them have never felt true love, the love that lasts for eternity and never fails, and that's the love of God. Logan wants the people he sees every day to know about God's love.

Commitment takes sacrifice. One day a coach asked Logan, "What's your 'Why' for being out here? What's your 'Why' for sacrificing your time to play football?" Logan immediately answered, "I want these guys to know Jesus." That's Logan's commitment to the team and coaches - helping them learn more and more about the Lord's love each day.

Staying considerate, loving, and committed to his team can be hard, according to Logan, but knowing what can come out of it motivates him every day to continue in his Commission. To continue making disciples of all nations.



# **SERMON** WEEK 1

## **CONNECTION WITH CHRIST**

We will only grow deeper as a church as we grow deeper as individual Christ-followers. The foundation of the DEEPER initiative is a challenge for every member of our congregation to grow deeper in his/her relationship with Jesus Christ. Growing deeper with Jesus happens as we get more intentional about our personal connection with him. In John 15, Christ tells us that the secret to the Christian life is for us to seek to live every moment connected to and abiding in him.

### **HOW ARE YOU STAYING CONNECTED TO CHRIST?**

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# SERMON WEEK 2

## COMMITMENT TO THE MISSION

The mission of God is no small task. It's the most important, yet unfinished work in human history. Regardless of your background and/or experience, God is calling you to grow deeper. You may be a doctor, lawyer, plumber, teacher, or stay-at-home mom. We all have this in common. Our most important calling in life is the work of God's mission. The depth of our growth in connection to Christ, His community, and His commission, will be dependent on the depth of our personal commitment to His call to surrender. Deeper means that we are committed to the mission above everything else. We are willing to give up everything, willing to lose anything, willing to go anywhere for the mission of God.

## HOW COMMITTED ARE YOU?

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# SERMON WEEK 3

## COMMUNITY WITH BELIEVERS

Jesus Christ offers us a radically different understanding of what it means to be a part of a Christian community. Christian community is more than church attendance once a week. Christian community is more than a causal association with other people who have the same beliefs as you. Deeper means that we are moving away from the minimum expectations, and we are embracing our longing for belonging. We acknowledge our need for personal accountability and relationships that provide true spiritual care for our souls. We need each other.

**DEEPER MEANS WE DON'T JUST WANT TO  
*GO TO CHURCH.* DEEPER MEANS THAT WE  
WANT TO *BE THE CHURCH.***

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# SERMON WEEK 4

## COMMISSION TO THE WORLD

Deeper means that we are doing more than building a church. Deeper means that we are building disciples. We are aiming to make disciples who leave the church building on Sundays and go into the world prepared to change the Upstate with the good news of Jesus Christ. Deeper means that we are serious about sharing our faith, serious about seeing people come to know Christ, serious about seeing people follow the Lord in believer's baptism, and serious about seeing them take Jesus to the world around them.

**WE DON'T JUST WANT TO BE A CHURCH THAT MAKES DISCIPLES; WE WANT TO BE A CHURCH FULL OF DISCIPLE-MAKERS.**

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