

Preach The Word



be ready
in season and
out of season;
reprove, rebuke,
and exhort, with
great patience
and instruction.

2 Timothy 4:2

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Rev. Dr. J. Alexander Leaston, Pastor

Email: pastoral@fccra.org

Rev. Donald R. Ingram, Sr., Pastor Emeritus

2410 Creech Rd

Raleigh, NC 27610

Office Telephone 919-832-4704

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VISION STATEMENT: *The disciples of First Congregational Church vision is to obediently follow the Lord Jesus becoming more Christ-like in character and effective in ministry to others. By the power of the Holy Spirit we pray to reach, reconcile and restore lives to Jesus Christ by proclaiming the glorious Gospel of the Kingdom. Our vision will be realized when we have reached Christ-like maturity, the Gospel has been proclaimed in all the world, and the Kingdom of God has been fully established in the new age.*

MISSION STATEMENT: *The mission of First Congregational Church is to obey Christ's command to seek and save the lost; to preach and teach the Word of God; to make and empower disciples through increasing and promoting our love for God and His word; to help meet the needs of human kind by "loving God with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our minds, so that it will mold and fashion our lives, and to love our neighbor as ourselves."*



Pastoral Installation Sunday Service

First Congregational Church



Pastor
Rev. Dr. J. Alexander Leaston

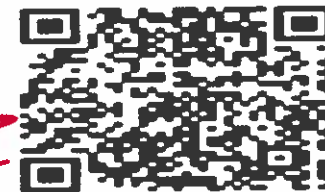
Guest Speaker
Rev. Dr. Nichole R. Drakeford
First Baptist Church
Vauxhall, NJ



WELCOME
TO CHURCH
YOU BELONG HERE

@ FCC_Raleigh

We warmly encourage all
visitors to scan the
QR Code
and share their name and
contact information so
Rev. Leaston
can personally reach out
and connect with you.



Thank you
for attending our
SERVICE
God Bless you

November 23, 2025

11:00 am

Glorious Worship Service

Worship Leader—Rev. Dr. J. Alexander Leaston

• INTROIT Mrs. Monica K. Jones
Sanctuary Choir Organist

• CALL TO
WORSHIP **Rev. Dr. J. Alexander Leaston**

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

• GLORIA PATRI Congregation in Unison
OPENING SELECTION "Natsha"

Almighty God, source of all wisdom and grace, we gather in Your presence with joyful hearts, thanking You for the installation of our new pastor. We thank You for guiding us through this season of transition and for bringing us together as a community of faith. Father, pour out Your Holy Spirit upon Your servant whom You have called to shepherd this congregation. Grant him wisdom, compassion, and strength. May he speak Your truth with clarity, lead with humility, and serve with a loving heart. Strengthen him for every challenge, uphold him in times of trial, and fill him with joy in service. In Jesus' name, Amen.

***Denotes to stand**

HOLY SCRIPTURE Rev. Carolyn Ingram
Psalm 29:1-11

MORNING PRAYER Rev. Dr. J. Alexander Leaston

CHORAL RESPONSE Congregation in Unison
"Thank You Lord"

OFFERTORY PRAYER Rev. Dr. J. Alexander Leaston

RECEIVING OF
TITHES & OFFERINGS Ushers

• DOXOLOGY Congregation in Unison

WELCOME & RECOGNITION, OF VISITORS
ANNOUNCEMENTS

&
INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKER
Rev. J. Alexander Leaston

MUSICAL SELECTIONS
BY
"Natasha"

MESSAGE Rev. Dr. Nicole Drakeford
First Baptist Church of Vauxhall
Vauxhall, NJ

CALL TO
DISCIPLESHIP Rev. Dr. J. Alexander Leaston

• THE BENEDICTION Rev. Dr. J. Alexander Leaston

ALL are cordially invited to remain after the service for a delicious repast. We look forward to sharing this special time of celebration, fellowship, and good food together with you.

***Denotes to stand**

Challenging Times

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)

"Lord, fill our hearts with hope during these challenging times. Let this hope overflow into our lives and those around us. We know that no matter what we go through, you have promised to never leave us or forsake us.

Help us to encourage others as they go through during these difficult times. Protect those who are living in fear right now of their lives and even rights being taken away from them. Place a hedge of protection over children and families who are innocent in some cases. Father, you have said that we can trust in you with all our heart and lean not to our own understanding and we thank you for that.

Lord, fill everyone's heart with hope during these challenging times. May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace as we trust in You. (Romans 15:13)

"The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped; therefore, my heart exults, and with my song I praise Him." Psalm 28:7.

Thank you Father that you are a shield around us and we thank you for it. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen

FCC Prayer Ministry – Sister Annie Holloway

Intercessory prayer Listing

Mrs. Patricia Avery,

**Mr. Todd Freeman, Mrs. Jessie Freeman,
Deaconess Lossie Hackett, Mr. Edward Hinton,
Deacon Donzell Hunter, Mrs. Yvonne Johnson,
Mrs. Amella Judd, Mrs. Cheryl Laws,
Mrs. Irene Marks, Deaconess Natalie Perkins,
Mr. Jesse Reynolds, Deaconess Beatrice Todd**

Ms. Mary Allen, (Sister of Brother Crinndie Allen)

Mr. David Bradley, (Brother of Deaconess Victoria Walker)

Mr. James Cox, (Father of Mr. Jesse Reynolds)

Mr. Donald Freeman, Jr. (Son of Mr. Donald Freeman, Sr.)

Ms. Barbara Gall Hall (Friend of Jarvis Richardson)

**Mr. Mrs. Howard & Jackle Haywood,
(Coworker of Mrs. Doris McKoy)**

Mrs. Mary Johnson, (Sister of Mrs. Lillian McNeill)

Dr. Nikki Johnson, (Friend of Mrs. Lillian McNeill)

Mr. Marvin King (Brother-in-law Mrs. Annie Holloway)

Ms. Annette Malone, (Sister of Mrs. Paulette Hicks)

Mr. Raymond Perkins (Brother of Deacon Grady Perkins)

Mr. John Poole, (Brother of Mrs. Cheryl Dendy)

Ms. Tanisha Snead (Cousin of Mr. Jarvis Richardson)

Miss Peyton Todd

(Granddaughter of Deaconess Beatrice Todd)

Reverend Dr. Nicole R. Drakeford
Senior Pastor
First Baptist Church
of Vauxhall, NJ

***On the 19th day of
Women's History Month 2023,
Rev. Dr. Nichole R. Drakeford
was called to become
the eighth
and first female
Senior Pastor I
n the 117-year history of the
First Baptist Church..***



Affectionately known as Rev. Nikki within the church and community, her love for First Baptist Church grew quickly when she arrived to complete a unit of supervised ministry with a concentration in preaching and worship under the tutelage of her spiritual father, the late Rev. Dr. Marion J. Franklin, Jr. After much prayer and counsel, she joined First Baptist Church on July 25, 2010. Pastor Franklin and the First Baptist Church summoned an Ordaining Council which ordained her on January 22, 2012.

Prior to joining First Baptist, Rev. Nikki was a member of Sharon Baptist Church in New Brunswick, NJ. She was very actively involved in the church since the age of seven and continued as she matured in the Lord.

Her desire and passion to lead people to Christ was evident as she started the young adult ministry (Y.A.M.), praise and worship team (Anointed Praise), and taught Commitment Classes, a contemporary Bible study. On January 28, 2007, the Sharon Baptist Church licensed her to ministry.

In May 2016, Rev. Nikki earned the Doctor of Ministry degree from Virginia Union University where her dissertation was entitled, "Change without Chaos: Beginning Conversations and Transition for Pastoral Succession in the African American Baptist Church." Dr. Nikki obtained the Master of Divinity degree from New Brunswick Theological Seminary where she was awarded the Rev. James Eelman Award for excellence in preaching. She also attended Morgan State University in Baltimore, MD graduating with her Bachelor of Science in Information Systems and Sciences.

While at Morgan State, she was a member of the Bear Battalion, ROTC program which commissioned her into the US Army in May 2000. Lieutenant Colonel Drakeford retired with 22 years of service in the fall of 2022 to honor a promise she made to God. LTC Drakeford is presently in charge of the JROTC program at Hillside High School in NJ.

Humbled that God would call her to do His ministry, she takes great comfort in Jeremiah 29:11: 'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.' Dr. Nikki remains excited about preaching God's Word, loving & pastoring the people of God, and waits in great anticipation of what is yet to come.

Our Christmas Miracle

A True Story

That special time of the year in December when we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ is approaching fast. Please mark your calendars to attend and support a drama presentation of "The Christmas Miracle"; to be featured during the regular Sunday School hour on Sunday, December 14, 2025, @ 9:00 a.m. There will be reflections to remind us of the story behind the songs and a nativity scene to remind us of the humble beginnings of Jesus' life. Please plan to attend.

*Sunday School Superintendent, Ms. Norma Hodge
Assistant Sunday School Superintendent, Mr. Linwood Dun
Coordinators: Organist Monica Keele-Jones and Deaconess Linda Allen*

CHURCH CALENDAR

TO: All Ministry Leaders

In preparation for 2026 Church Calendar, you are urgently requested to submit information regarding your ministry's planned activities for the 2026.

*Please check your email inbox for the necessary forms and ensure they are completed and returned to the Church Clerk by **December 15, 2025.***

Your prompt attention to this matter is greatly appreciated.

Love Christmas Tree Project (Angel Tree)



The Youth Ministry is sponsoring the Love Christmas Tree Project (Angel Tree). This project is designed to give children of an incarcerated parent(s) a little something extra during the holiday season.

We are only sponsoring youths whose parent(s) are incarcerated. A total of seventeen families (39 youths are listed) for the project.

If you or your organization wish to participate (sponsor a youth(s)) please contact William Walker, Youth Director: 919-270-1595, wwalk@bellsouth.net.

If you would like to make a monetary donation: Place check or monies in a tithing envelope and denote "Angel Tree" in the memo, write "Angel Tree" on your tithing envelope.

Please make monetary donations no later than December 14, 2025.

*More information will be forthcoming.
Thanking you in advance!*

Youth Ministry Director, William Walker



May your
Thanksgiving
be full of peace, love, and joy.

Notes from today's sermon
November 23, 2025
Rev. Dr. Nicole Drakeford

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