



Rev. Bart Dalton



FBC Student Ministry

Minister of Students

A process began over 3 months ago where God began to gently lead me in a new direction. It is clear to me now that God is leading me and my family to Richmond, VA where I will be the lead Minister of Youth there. This process has been filled with several highs and lows, but God has provided several tender suggestions for me and Marianne and now we are both clear that this is the right decision. I have been in conversation with John throughout this process, and then with the rest of the church staff – who are also affirming Marianne and me in this direction.

Please hear me, I have never sought to move or wanted to leave Easley, this calling came to us out of the blue. We are not and have not ever been, in any way, dissatisfied with our time here at First Baptist Easley. Our time at First Baptist Church Easley has been rich beyond words. From the first time we came to meet the search team, and every day since then, Marianne and I have enjoyed worshipping with you, working and serving with you, playing and living with you. When we came to you, we were very empty in so many ways – now we are filled with love to the point that it runs over in everything we do! I laugh when I remember a conversation with Marianne after one particularly hard day at church about a year after we came here. Marianne said, “Bart – even a bad day in Easley is better than a good day at some other places we’ve served.” That’s been so true throughout the years.

First Easley is a place that is overflowing with God’s love. When we first moved to Easley we didn’t have a place to live. First Easley provided us with a free temporary home, and a free place to keep all our stuff. When we found a home, First Easley showed up in force and helped us move the boxes into the house, then started unpacking for us and putting away dishes, hooking up our appliances, and even making our beds. Years later, When Marianne was very sick while she was pregnant with Robbie and we needed to get to the hospital as fast as possible, First Easley showed up and scooped up Joey and we never had to worry where he was or how he was doing. First Baptist also showed up and put Robbie’s room together for us when we were still in the hospital. There’s so much love here that even the grade-school aged children give my kids high-fives when they pass in the hall.

If there’s a limit to the love the church will show the youth ministry, I have not discovered it. When we said we needed a bigger budget, you said, “yes”. When we asked for a new youth room, you said, “Here you go”. When we need money for trips, you fill the gym or restaurant with people ready to give. When we need leaders for Sunday School, trips, special Bible studies – you’re always ready to serve.

I was shocked when Richmond contacted me, I was not looking to move, had not sent out my resume, and could not imagine moving my family away from Easley. When I went to Richmond for my initial interview, I walked in with my head held high, a smile on my face, and no butterflies in my stomach – I was a man with nothing to lose (should the interview go poorly.) I didn’t even dress up for

the interview. They told me later that they said of me, “Well, he didn’t *over dress* for the interview.” During our first conversation, I spent so much time bragging on First Easley that at the end of the interview a woman asked me, “Are you even interested in considering our church??” They could tell that I have been so happy here. I’ve spoken so highly about the people here, that there’s even a few people in Richmond that want to call and have some of you pray for them.

Even though I will no longer be your Minister to Students, I will always be your friend. I’m not scared that we’ll lose touch with you. With facebook, email, texting and cell phones we will only be a few button-pushes away. I’m not scared that I won’t be able to do the job there – I’ve learned so many good lessons here in Easley about how to love, how to listen, and how to serve. My only fear is that we won’t experience the same type of love that we have in Easley.

God is already preparing the one who will follow me to lead the youth here in Easley, and I will bless your new Minister of Students with my whole heart. I am confident that he or she will experience the same love that Marianne and I have at First Easley.

We love you all dearly, and there’s so much more that we need to say. My last Sunday is July 18, and my last day in the office is July 23. We look forward to the time we have left, to the conversations that will happen, and the love that we’ll continue to share through the years.

On the Horizon



July



9-12th grade KY Mission Trip – July 10-16



Breakfast Schedule for Youth

- July 4** Greg & Becky Ford
- July 11** Chantz & Lisa Fowler
Lynn Foxx
- July 18** Todd & Sydney Garrett
Rob & Cindy Gaut
- July 25** Sarah Gibson

