

Students and Families:

I have recently accepted the position of Associate Campus Minister at Samford University where I will be ministering to college students. This job opportunity is one I never sought out, but something that the Lord has so clearly opened every door for me to step into. What a joy it has been to serve as a Student Ministry Associate here at FBCO for the past 8 years. First Baptist Opelika is incredibly special, all because our foundation is the Bible and we put Jesus first.

I've had the honor to serve along side some incredible men and women in this season. All of whom have made such a lasting impact on me, and have taught me so much about how ministry is not about us, but all about serving Jesus and feeding His sheep. (John 21:15-17) While I feel like I could say "thank you" forever, I wanted to write a short note to a few groups / people that have made this season of learning and growing so special for me.

Student Ministry Leadership – Every day it blows my mind that there are 150+ men and women who commit to serving FBCO Students on a WEEKLY basis. Life Group leaders: you are my heroes! Thank you for being such an extension of our reach and discipling your students with such consistency. Your commitment has changed the trajectory of our Student Ministry and has given families such an opportunity for their student to be discipled. Wednesday night Well-Come team: you have busted down barriers and created such a safe and joyful place for our students to gather and worship. Your hospitality and love for our students makes a kingdom impact every week! Sunday School leaders: it's not lost on me that your decision to lead students on Sunday mornings is a sacrifice that takes you away from being in your own Sunday School class. Having you on our team is incredibly humbling and so special. Thank you for hosting small group discussions and being committed to teaching God's word to our teenagers. I'm convinced we have FBCO's very best pouring into the next generation of leaders and that we will never know the depth of the impact that you have made. Thank you!

FBCO Families – Thank you for investing in me and loving me so deeply. You have made Auburn and Opelika HOME for me. From inviting me into your homes, including me in your family meals and rhythms, to fiercely covering me in prayer when my own family walked through scary days with serious sickness or post Hurricane Michael. You have loved me as your own and for that, I am forever grateful.

Pastor Jeff – You'll never know how much I appreciate your leadership in my life and the life of our church. Thank you for taking so much time to invest in me, encourage me, listen to me, and value me. You care about our people in such a Spirit filled way. What an honor to have served on your staff in this season!

Spencer – You've taught me so much through your humble spirit and love for others. Your passion for God's Word inspires me to commit to knowing Him deeper and treasure His Word more. I'm so thankful God has called you to lead our Student Ministry. You, Mo, and Charli are everything we need here at FBCO. I can't wait to see how God uses you as a leader in the days ahead!

Sarah Grace – Thank you for carrying the details of our Student Ministry, and thank you for being such a friend to me. Having another gal-pal like you in the office to serve alongside with is so much fun! Watching you serve students as a leader and later become a staff member has been such a full-circle moment for me! I'm so proud of you and so thankful for you.

Owen – Your heart for our students and leaders is incredible. You’re equal parts relational, hard working, creative, fun, and insanely talented! Your work ethic and trustworthiness makes me want to be a better version of myself daily. Over the years I’ve watched your character stay solid, heart for people grow, leadership skills develop, and you become a full-time partner in ministry. Serving alongside someone that I trust deeply as a brother has been a dream, O. I love you and Aleah so much!

Dan – I struck jackpot in getting you as my very first boss 8 years ago. Thank you for taking a chance on me and introducing me to my dream job! You’ve taught me everything I know! Your ability to cast vision, care for people, be detail-oriented, and bring so much fun to any project is unmatched. You were literally created to lead teams...and all of our NextGen ministries are better because of your leadership. Having a spot on your team has been absolutely life-changing for me. Your leadership has made a kingdom impact on literally thousands of people. Your consistency, steadiness, and willingness to say “yes” to where God leads you makes you an incredible leader. Thank you for being the best big brother and best leader to me. I love you, Kelly, Will, and Eliza so much!

FBCO Students – I just love you! Together we have learned what it looks like to walk with Jesus, love Him, and shine in our sphere of influence. Some of my favorite memories from the past 8 years have been watching you embody what it means to “serve wherever we are”, whether that looked like loving on children in Doraville, learning new culture in Alaska, being bold with the Gospel in Memphis, or being flexible through challenges in Miami. Of all the places we’ve traveled to together, I’ll never forget “Love Lee County” week, where you loved on the widows of our church, served our very own Kids Ministry with such energy and passion, and evangelized in our own backyard. It’s always so special getting a front row seat seeing you be the hands and feet of Jesus. Together we have navigated the uncertain days of a pandemic—I’ve watched you overcome hurdles in such a resilient way and trust Jesus through the unknown. From gathering virtually online to showing back up on campus in a parking lot (in masks), we learned that we truly are better together and we need each other in this life. I’ve never seen a collective group of students love each other more than you do. There is such a sense of community within our Student Ministry. My prayer is for that love to only grow deeper and wider as you instill value into all people, and carry a heart posture that welcomes all people in. You all are my little brothers and sisters. I’m so proud of who you are and who you’re becoming. Stay committed to the local church, God’s Word, each other, and know that our purpose in life is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

While saying goodbye to this season at FBCO is heartbreaking to me, I’m choosing to trust Jesus with each step, also believing He will provide for FBCO Students immeasurably more than I could ever ask or imagine Him to. I truly believe with my whole heart that the best days are ahead for our Student Ministry!

Isaiah 26:8 says “Yes, Lord, walking in the way of your truth, we wait for You. Your name and renown are the desire of our hearts.” Please pray for me as I step into this new season serving Samford students, letting this scripture be the theme of my life and service!

With Joy,
Taylor McQueen