

Founders Day Presentation Summary

The New Bluffton Worship – February 8, 2026

The New Bluffton Worship gathered after the 10:30 a.m. service for a special Founders Day presentation, beginning with prayer led by Board Chair **Jeff S. Jones**. The purpose of the gathering was to celebrate God’s faithfulness, update the congregation on the life of the church, highlight ministry teams, and share exciting news about future growth.

1. Honoring the Past & Introducing the 2026 Board

Jeff opened by reflecting on the tradition of offering a “State of the Church” each year. He thanked outgoing board members **Rob Houston** and **Tina Browning** for their three years of foundational leadership during the church’s earliest and most uncertain season.

Rob shared stories of joining the church in early 2020, navigating the pandemic, and stepping into leadership during the separation from St. Andrew By-The-Sea. He emphasized:

- The congregation’s remarkable commitment to staying together
- The collective effort required to establish independent operations
- The blessing of financial stability during a fragile time

New and continuing board members were introduced, including:

- **Kay Hallman** (continuing, absent)
- **Jay Vierling** (new Board member, business and efficiency background)
- **Phyllis Brodie** (new Board member, recognized for decades of church leadership and administrative experience)
- **Mike Schultheis** (Treasurer and longest-serving board member)

Phyllis shared her story of 40+ years in ministry, her role in the early Bluffton ministry center, and her sense of God’s timing in joining the board.

2. Financial Report – 2025 Review & 2026 Outlook

Treasurer **Mike** presented a transparent and encouraging financial overview:

2025 Highlights

- Giving covered expenses in **only 5 months**, and each of those months included a **special gift**.

- **December alone accounted for 45%** of total annual giving.
- A significant gift from a donor who has never attended in person played a major role in meeting the budget.
- This pattern—steady base giving supplemented by large year-end gifts—has been consistent since the church’s founding.
- The budget ended the year with about a \$210,000 surplus due to the special giving in December.

Current Financial Position

- The church maintains a strong cash position.
- Over half of funds are **designated** (Christmas Blessings, Building Fund, outreach, etc.) and cannot be used for general operations.
- The church remains financially healthy, but dependent on both regular giving and special gifts.

2026 Budget -\$618,314

- The budget increased by **\$76,000**, driven by inflation, rent, utilities, insurance, ministry expansion, and needed maintenance.
- Approximately **70–80%** of the budget is fixed costs.
- Leadership is committed to responsible stewardship and transparency.

Jeff also read a heartfelt letter sent to the year-end major donor, expressing gratitude and acknowledging the impact of their generosity on the church’s mission.

3. Ministry Team Panel

To strengthen communication and visibility, team leaders shared updates about their ministries:

Growth Team – Larry Money Penny

- Focuses on both **numerical growth** and **spiritual discipleship**.
- Website, Google presence, and digital outreach have expanded significantly.
- A survey revealed the #1 way people find the church: **personal invitation**.
- The team sees every member as part of the growth mission.

Care Team – Shelly Hudson

- Provides prayer, cards, meals, rides, and support for members facing illness or hardship.
- Works closely with Daniel and Monica to identify needs.
- Always welcoming volunteers for meals, cards, and transportation.

Hospitality Team – Doe Seaquist

- Creates a warm, welcoming environment through food, beverages, and fellowship.
- Emphasizes cleanliness, presentation, and community-building.
- Recognized Chef Mike & Shirley Sigler, and many volunteers for their behind-the-scenes work.

Facilities – Jeff Jones

- Oversees repairs, maintenance, and building needs.
- Brings decades of experience and a practical, hands-on approach.

Serve Team – Kevin O'Brien

- Leads community outreach, including **Christmas Blessings**, **Easter Blessings**, and school partnerships.
- 2025 Christmas Blessings served **66 families** and **225 children**, totaling **\$20,000** in gifts.
- Plans for 2026 include expanded outreach and major fundraisers (Oyster Roast, Lowcountry Boil, Oktoberfest, Christmas Eve Under the Stars).

Greeters & Women's Ministry – Laurie Jones (not present)

- Greeters embody Hebrews 13:2, welcoming newcomers with warmth.
 - Women's Ministry continues to grow under Laurie's leadership, with gratitude to key volunteers like **Sue Yearwood**.
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4. Pastors' Report – Daniel & Monica

Daniel and Monica shared updates on church growth, staff development, and an exciting new opportunity:

Church Growth

- The 9:00 a.m. service now averages **50–60 people**.
- The 10:30 a.m. service is consistently **full**, with ~130 people present on Founders Day.
- The church continues to see strong momentum and new members (14 joined today)

Major Announcement: New Space Secured

- The church has successfully secured a lease for **the building next door (Suite 101)** effective Feb. 1
- This opens the door for a **three-phase renovation plan**:
 1. Renovate the new space
 2. Renovate the Family Ministry building (104)
 3. Renovate the main worship space

This expansion will:

- Increase seating capacity
- Improve children's ministry space
- Provide offices
- Update bathrooms
- Support future staff growth

An open house and detailed plans will be shared soon.

Staff Updates

- **John Brewster** now leads worship and is thriving in the role, incorporating new musicians and strengthening the team.
- **Mary** continues to lead children's ministry while also supporting administration, communications, and website updates.
- **BJ** is expanding youth ministry and leveraging his deep community connections to reach unchurched students.

5. Closing

The presentation ended with:

- A reminder of the church's blessings and unity
- Recognition of the founding signatures from February 9, 2023
- A call to gratitude and continued boldness
- A circle of prayer led by Monica, emphasizing the desire to be a **prayer-driven church** in 2026