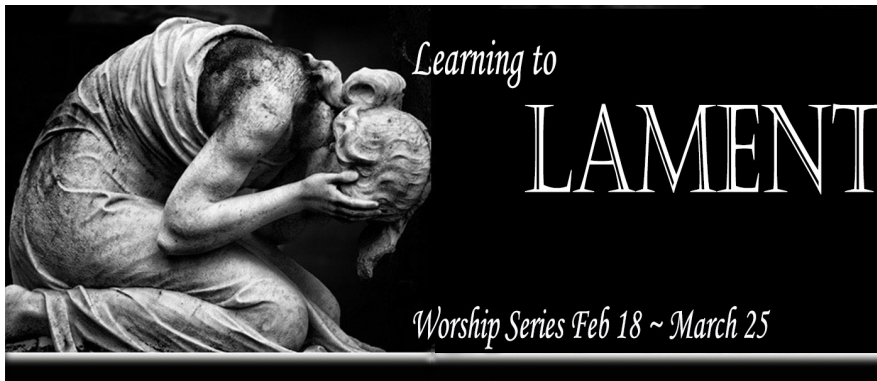


February 21, 2018

the SPIRE

First Baptist Church
columbia



This past Sunday in worship, talking about Learning to Lament was heavy - emotionally intense. You may be thinking, "Five more weeks of this, yikes!" The good news is because of Palm Sunday it is only four more weeks. Despite the intensity of the topic, I think it is important. When life falls apart, we need the spiritual tools for healing to occur, we must be truthful about how we feel and the difficulties of our circumstances. I am not suggesting that you share your pain

with everyone you meet, but I am suggesting that you learn how to express your pain before God and sometimes in Christian community. That is what Lament is all about. The Bible is full of lament as a liturgical response to the reality of suffering. It engages God in the context of pain and trouble.

I also want you to know that if you need to talk about what Lament stirs up within you, I and the other members of our pastoral staff are available. You can contact me at mcentyre@fbc-columbia.org; Associate Pastor Michael McEntyre at mmcentyre@fbc-columbia.org or Pastoral Resident Brittany McDonald Null at bnull@fbc-columbia.org.

~ Pastor Carol McEntyre

Practicing Lament over Comfort Food

Sunday, March 18 at 5:00 pm

We will gather on Sunday, March 18 at 5:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall to share a potluck meal. We are asking you to bring a "comfort food" to share. It could be a food associated with the security of childhood like Mom's chicken soup or an indulgence food like ice cream.

Recently, Michael and I were talking about this event, Practicing Lament over Comfort Food, when my son Nate chimed in and said, "My comfort food is chicken and dumplings." He is 8; I didn't think he knew about comfort food. I was touched that he chose a food that my grandmother, who recently passed away, taught us to make.

~ Pastor Carol McEntyre





Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Hiring Policy

In March, First Baptist will take up our annual offering for Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) Global Missions. As we heard from Keith Holmes and Mary van Rheenen (First Baptist sponsored CBF Field Personnel) last summer, this offering is very important to the ministry that they, and others like them, do. First Baptist has faithfully supported the good work of CBF Field Personnel (as well as our mission's partners within the American Baptist Churches-USA) for twenty-five years.

That being said, I do want to address some of the recent changes within the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Last summer (2017), I was asked to join the Governing Board for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. In 2016, the CBF moderator commissioned an ad-hoc committee to begin the Illumination Project "focused on listening to, reflecting and expressing a range of voices within the Fellowship on matters of human sexuality." This project was directly connected to the growing voices within CBF which were calling on the Fellowship to change its hiring policy. The hiring policy voted on in 2000, banned hiring staff or field personnel who were gay. I accepted the position to the Governing Board not only because I felt that our work on this issue here at First Baptist had prepared me to contribute to this conversation, but also because of how my life and faith have been deeply enriched by the full inclusion of LGBTQ Christians within our faith family. I wanted to make sure that voice and experience was represented at the highest level for this process.

Two weeks ago, the Illumination Project presented their report to the Governing Board, which concluded this almost 18-month process. As you can imagine, in a "denominetwork" of more than 1,800 Baptist churches, the views and beliefs represented within this project varied widely. The report noted that less than 10% of CBF churches have policies/practices of full inclusion. Despite this, throughout the process, I was impressed with the degree of respect and humility expressed. In the end, I was encouraged by the Governing Board's actions, yet at the same time painfully reminded that there is much more work to be done.

I am happy to let you know that on Feb 9th the Governing Board voted to change the CBF Hiring Policy, removing any language of exclusion based on sexual identity. This policy could only be changed by a vote of the Governing Board and I was proud to vote yes for this. Unfortunately, the Governing Board was asked to vote on another item regarding this issue. The other vote was to receive the report from the Illumination Project, which detailed their work and the hiring policy change, but which also included an implementation plan to be carried out by the Executive Director. The implementation plan states that CBF will continue to restrict field personnel and some other key ministerial positions to those "who practice a traditional Christian sexual ethic." (In effect, the new hiring policy opens the door to close to 80% of the employable positions within CBF to Christians in the LGBTQ community. These are positions in every department and in all levels of the organization up to and including 5 of 11 positions on the leadership team. This change also means that openly gay Christians can receive CBF scholarships for seminary, and CBF chaplaincy endorsement. However, it means that around 20% of positions are still restricted not by calling, qualification, or giftedness, but by sexuality.) It is because of this reality that I abstained from voting to receive this report as a way to say that there is still more to be done.

I understand that in a Baptist "denominetwork" with churches located mainly in the south/southwest this work is complex, and I am grateful to CBF leadership for having these difficult discussions, taking action (even if I feel it is incomplete), and striving for unity when there is no uniformity. I also appreciate that by opening the door in part, CBF has allowed for a shift in the conversation. No longer will we be able to talk about excluding people from the LGBTQ community without talking about those who are serving in various areas within the CBF family. This decision put names and faces to adjectives, creating relationships instead of assumptions. In my experience, this is one of the most powerful ways to truly change people's opinions on this matter.

(continued on next page)



Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Hiring Policy (continued)

Second, CBF is clear that its policies are in no way reflective of or binding to the churches within the Fellowship. CBF does not demand that we all agree and is not threatening to part fellowship with anyone who does not accept the same framework they have chosen.

Finally, I think our witness within CBF life is important. Many other churches in CBF are trying to figure out how to have conversations about human sexuality within their church. This week, I received an email and a phone call from pastors who wanted me to share with them the process that we used when we “Widened Our Welcome” a few years ago. Our church can stand in the gap and continue to be a voice for equality in the CBF community.

Next month, First Baptist will still take up our annual offering for Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Global Missions. We recognize that there might be some sorrow in taking up this offering now that the possibility of supporting LGBTQ field personnel is not going to be open for the foreseeable future; at the same time, the same missions are on the field now that were on the field before these votes on February 8. We believe in the work of field personnel like Keith Holmes and Mary van Rheenen, and we know that this offering is a way for us to show that despite our differences, we still support their service to the work of the Kingdom.

Thank you,
Pastor Carol McEntyre

Congratulations

Congratulations to Karlye Jeffries, who was baptized during Traditional Worship on Sunday, February 18.



Elizabeth Myers observes the mystery of baptism.



Karlye prepares to experience her baptism.



PAUSE

A RETREAT FOR COLLEGE-AGED ADULTS

CBF Heartland's College Retreat

Despite the weather, our group had a great weekend at Windermere February 9-11 for our

college retreat. Our students joined with other CBF Heartland partners from around Missouri for a weekend of fun, worship, fellowship, and focus as we learned about the difficult ministry of reconciliation that all of us are called to practice. Special thanks to Michelle Kasmann for her leadership in the weekend as well.

Pictured here are (front) Raquel Kausler, Michelle Kasmann, Lexie Kieffer; (back) Karlye Jeffries, Nick Edgar, Kaitlyn Agan, Michael McEntyre.



First Baptist Adventures

On Tuesday, February 27, you are invited to join First Baptist adventurers for dinner at Addison's at 5 pm, followed by your choice of concerts at 7 pm. You may choose to attend the King's Daughters & Sons Benefit Concert at First Baptist (see separate article for details); or the free concert at Sacred Heart Church, where the MU School of Music's Ars Nova Singers will perform music inspired by artwork from the Museum of Art and Archaeology. Please RSVP for the meal by February 25 to Paula Thomas, Fellowship Coordinator, at PaulaLou52@gmail.com.

Odyssey Chamber Music Series Presents:

M-Odyssey: Scenémagic

with Pre-concert Performance at 6:40pm

M-Odyssey" will continue the 2015 initiative to mentor and give real work experience in music administration to young professionals. One or two outstanding musicians will have the

opportunity to create and produce their own Odyssey concert, with guidance from the Artistic Director and a supervising Board Member. The title

reflects the more modern "MOD" Odyssey for younger directors, while the capitalization pays homage to our state. The performance takes place March 2 at 7 pm.



King's Daughters & Sons Benefit Concert

The Clark-Harrison Circle of King's Daughters and Sons is sponsoring a Benefit Music Concert, "Healthy Smiles for Columbia's Children" in cooperation with Columbia Public Schools on Tuesday, February 27 from 7-9 pm at First Baptist Church. Columbia Public School students will provide music for the concert. Proceeds from this performance support the King's Daughters and Sons Dental Aid program, which is designed to provide dental care for eligible students from Columbia Public Schools.

Donations may be made at the event or sent to: Clark-Harrison KD Circle, PO Box 1843, Columbia MO 65205.



Room at the Inn at First Baptist through March 4

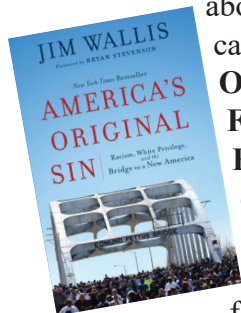
First Baptist is hosting Room at the Inn in the Fellowship Hall each night now through March 4. Guests to the Inn often show up earlier than the 7:00 pm check in time, so for those in the church who have evening events or meetings, remember that a kind smile and hello often go a long way to sharing Christ's love. For those who have volunteered



for a shift, you may park in the back lot and enter through the door to the elevator lobby to enter into the Fellowship Hall to serve. Donations can be dropped off in the church office. RATI has asked for people to no longer bring peanut butter or Ramen noodles but did mention that they could use paper goods and coffee cups. If you have any questions about Room at the Inn or need to speak to someone regarding our time as a host site, please contact Michael McEntyre (mmcentyre@fbc-columbia.org) or Brittany McDonald Null (bnull@fbc-columbia.org).

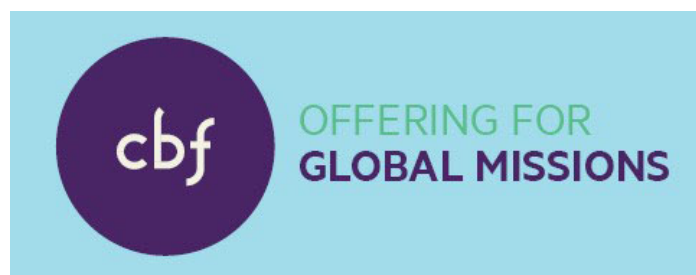
Critical Conversations in Troubled Times

First Baptist, Second Missionary Baptist, and Broadway Christian Churches are participating in a conversation about racism and how faith communities can help bring about grassroots change.



Our next meeting will be Sunday, February 25 at 5 pm at Second Baptist. (Rescheduled from February 11 due to the weather) The book *Racism, White Privilege, and the Bridge to a New America* by Jim Wallis is the basis for discussion. Feel free to purchase

your own copy and join the conversation. No reading is required prior to the meeting on February 25.



First Baptist will support the work of Cooperative Baptist Field Personnel around the world during the month of March by giving to the CBF Offering for Global Missions.

Possible First Baptist Trip July 6- 12 Lakota Reservation- Bridger, South Dakota

First Baptist has been invited to return to the Lakota Reservation in Bridger again this summer. The Serving Team is looking to see if there is enough interest within our church family to make the trip viable. If you are interested in this opportunity, please contact Michael McEntyre at mmcentyre@fbc-columbia.org by March 4.

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Bethany James, Nursery Director
Jason Bell, Custodian

“Return Service Requested”



Palm Sunday - March 25

Palm Sunday is the Christian feast that falls on the Sunday before Easter, commemorating Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. It is a joyous and special day at First Baptist, with palm processions in both services. You are also invited to attend the Downtown Palm Sunday Service in conjunction with the other downtown churches. This special service takes place in the middle of the street on Broadway! We will meet on the front lawn at 10:20 and walk downtown together.



Awakening (9:15 am) and Traditional (11:15 am) worship will meet as usual on Palm Sunday; children are invited to take part in a Palm Sunday procession at the beginning of both worship services. Children will gather at the back of the church and be given palms, and when worship begins they parade down the aisle! Parents, please arrive a few minutes prior to worship so your children can join the fun.

**Save the
Date**

