

September 30, 2020

the SPIRE



First Baptist Church
columbia



Practicing Presence

2020 has been a rough year with the global pandemic, the reality of racism, and climate change, which is leading to massive natural disasters. All of this can feel overwhelming. Plus, as we move closer to the election, the national news may grow more discouraging and frustrating. Certainly, we live in a time of complex and alarming challenges, but we cannot allow ourselves to be held hostage by fear or to be paralyzed into inaction. If we despair, what good does that do anyone?

So, we turn from despair and fear toward Jesus and his message of hope, believing that the world can be different. We continue to work for change planting seeds of goodness, love, peace, and justice everywhere we can. We also recognize that to continue the work of the Kingdom, bringing about God's dream for the world, we have to remember to put our own oxygen masks on first! We must take care of ourselves and center ourselves in the presence of God.

One of the ways we do this is by connecting with God through a regular practice of prayer. Prayer takes many forms, but at its core, prayer is being in the presence of God. Beginning October 11, we will be talking about and practicing different forms of prayer during online and outdoor worship; the worship series is entitled *Practicing Presence*. It is a reminder to center ourselves in God's love and care. Prayer isn't withdrawing from the problems of the world; instead, prayer equips us to face the challenges with power from on high.

Prayer Guides and Boxes

As part of the *Practicing Presence* series, we put together a prayer box for each First Baptist family. The prayer box includes a booklet of prayers for personal use, a simple kit for making your own prayer beads, a finger labyrinth, and a candle. You may pick up your prayer box on October 11 following in person worship or from 4:00-4:30 pm by driving through the church parking lot.

Sanctuary Open for Prayer

Beginning October 12, the Sanctuary will be open for prayer and personal reflection on Mondays from 9 am-5 pm. One person or family at a time may sign up for a 30-minute time slot by contacting the church office at churchinfo@fbc-columbia.org





Word from the Pastor

Covenant Groups for Winter Months

Throughout COVID, many of us have taken solace in the outdoors. Nature has this way of easing our anxiety and lifting our spirits. Wendell Berry's poem, *The Peace of Wild Things*, speaks to the comfort we find in the natural world. In addition to this healing balm nature provides, many people have been gathering outdoors with friends, which is seen as a safer way to be together during this time. As the leaves on the trees begin to change colors and the weather cools down, I have been thinking about the coming winter and what kind of impact it will have on our collective well-being.

On Sunday during my sermon, I talked about the rise in depression and anxiety due to the pandemic. A recent study from the Kaiser Family Foundation reveals that "More than one in three adults in the U.S. have reported symptoms of anxiety or depressive during the pandemic. In comparison, from January to June 2019, one in ten adults reported symptoms of anxiety or depression." This is a significant increase and I worry about how winter will impact us all. As we move toward winter and we can't gather outdoors, I want to encourage you to think about creating a covenant group, a small group of people who will commit to help each other get through the long winter months. A group that will commit to texts, phone calls, online gatherings and in-person gatherings if you feel comfortable. If you plan to gather indoors, perhaps choose people who are taking the same precautions that you are regarding COVID and commit to maintain those precautions in the coming months. We can get through this together.

The Peace of Wild Things

*When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water,
and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief.
I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light.
For a time I rest in the grace of the world,
and am free.*

-Wendell Berry

Carla McIntyre



Christian Mindfulness

Sunday Evenings at 5pm, beginning November 1

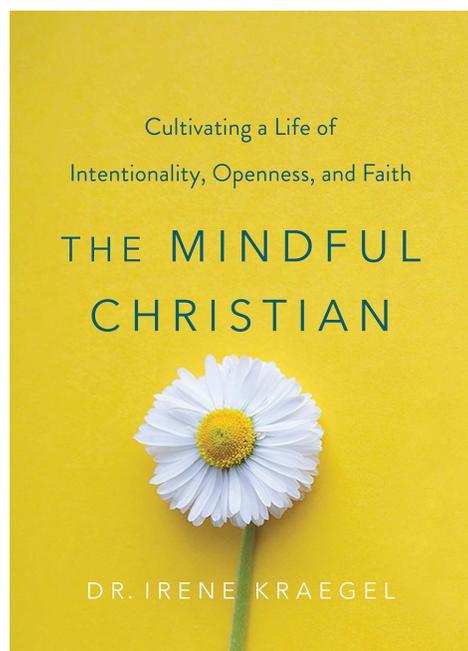
2020 is a bit different, but thanks to technology, we are still planning our annual Sheppard Lecture. Beginning Sunday, November 1 at 5:00 pm, Dr. Irene Kraegel is going to be with us via Zoom for 4 workshops called *Present to God: Christian Mindfulness Worship*.

Dr. Irene Kraegel's book, *The Mindful Christian*, defines mindfulness in several different ways. One definition she gives is "Mindfulness is the act of showing up, of being present for the life that God has given us." Grounded in Biblical theology, mindfulness theory, and clinical psychology, this series of four workshops, which Irene Kraegel will present, provides practical mindfulness experience that will equip participants to manage unpleasant emotions effectively and to fully engage with the life God has provided. The workshop is created to be down-to-earth in tone, engaging both the hearts and minds of participants - a great gift to people looking for mental health tools that can be applied within their journey of Christian discipleship.

Sessions include information-sharing, guided practice, and group discussion as appropriate. *The Mindful Christian* book is recommended (but not required) for participants as a workshop accompaniment. Each session will include time for connecting as a group at the beginning as well as debriefing at the end. Options will be given throughout for different types of engagement with the practices (including different physical positions).



*Irene Kraegel, PsyD, is a clinical psychologist and director of the Center for Counseling and Wellness at Calvin University. She writes at TheMindfulChristian.com and is the author of the book *The Mindful Christian: Cultivating a Life of Intentionality, Openness, and Faith*. Irene lives in Grand Rapids, MI, with her husband and son.*



SESSION ONE

Title: Renewal of the Mind

Topic: Christian mindfulness defined

Practice: body scan practice

SESSION TWO

Title: God in the Present

Topic: what's in a moment?

Practice: sitting practice

SESSION THREE

Title: Learning Contentment

Topic: judgment & acceptance

Practice: movement practice

SESSION FOUR

Title: Clothed in Compassion

Topic: compassion for self & others

Practice: lovingkindness/blessing practice



Women's Devotional & Sharing Hour

FRIDAYS ON ZOOM

Women's Devotional & Sharing Hour

Zoom in each Friday from 12:15 - 1:15 pm

The women's devotional group is using the devotional book *Jesus Calling* by Sarah Young. We loosely use the format of Lectio Divina which would read scripture, meditate, pray and contemplate its message not as a theological analysis but as an opening of our hearts and minds to increased closeness with Christ and each other. We discuss the devotions as they speak to us individually and collectively. Joys and gratitude are lifted in prayer as well as needs and concerns. We end each week with the reading of Psalm 46:10, Be still and know that I am God.

All interested women are invited to join us over your lunch hour each Friday. For more information call Donna Ostercamp at 823-2077 or Betty Felts at 442-6650 or 239-5237. Meeting number and password will be provided.



Autumn Changes to Worship Times

Outdoor worship has been a gift giving us a safe way to meet in-person. We want to continue gathering on the front lawn as long as possible but recognize that the weather is already beginning to cool off. To account for this, the Church Council has made the decision to move the Outdoor Worship Service to 11:15 am beginning Sunday, October 11. Hopefully, this will allow us to continue meeting for several more weeks. The Online Worship Service will be recorded and broadcasted at 9:15 am, but you can still watch at 11:15 am as usual.

First Baptist Musicians Fellowship this Sunday!

All choir members and musicians are invited to gather on the church lawn this Sunday, October 4th, at 2:00 pm for socially distanced (and masked) fellowship.





First Kids Small Groups

I am excited to announce the First Kids plans for the month of October. It has been a while since we have gathered in-person to sing songs, learn about Jesus, and grow in God's love together. During October, First Kids will be kicking off *The Beatitudes* series in social-distanced style. Small gatherings will take place by age group in order to help maintain social distancing protocols and to best craft curriculum and experiences to each age groups' needs.

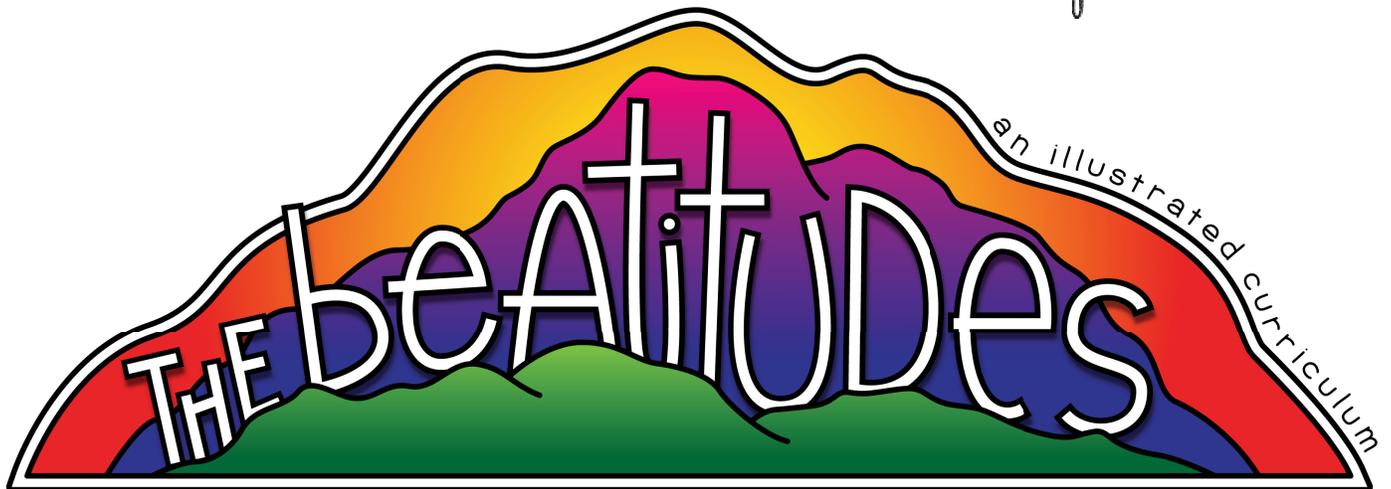
First Kids Gatherings will take place on the Front Lawn of the church on Sundays from 4:00-4:50 pm. Each Sunday, a different age group will meet. The schedule is as follows:

- October 4 - Pre-K through Kindergarten
- October 11 - 1st and 2nd graders
- October 18 - 3rd through 5th graders
- October 25 - First Families Trunk-or-Treat (all ages)

Children over two will be asked to wear a mask to the best of their ability while participating in First Kids events. If your child does not have a mask, one will be provided. Restrooms will be available, but we do encourage bathroom use before attending First Kids. Activities will be hands on and may involve paint. We advise sending children in clothes that can get messy.

If you have any questions about these gatherings, do not hesitate to ask. I look forward to seeing you all in the near future. Note: even though I'll be wearing a mask, you can trust I'll be smiling underneath.

Brittany McDonald-Null



The Beatitudes: An Illustrated Curriculum is a twelve-session, verse-by-verse study of the Beatitudes from the Gospel of Matthew! This study explores Jesus' timeless teaching through art, reflection, and discussion. This passage is full of wisdom that will enrich families and our church by exploring Jesus' vision of God's inclusive kingdom, observing how Jesus turned expectations and traditional beliefs about being blessed upside down, and imagining ways to live into the promises of Jesus' Beatitudes. The curriculum is design to be online and can easily make that transition in the cold weather months.

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Ministerial Staff:

Carol McEntyre, Senior Pastor
mcentyre@fbc-columbia.org
Michael McEntyre, Pastor of Youth, Missions
& Administration
mmcentyre@fbc-columbia.org
Brittany McDonald Null, Pastor of Families &
Spiritual Formation
bnull@fbc-columbia.org

Music Staff:

Colleen Ostercamp, Organist
gostercamp@gmail.com
Shelby Myers, Awakening Praise Band Director
smyers@fbc-columbia.org
Amy Johns, Music Director-Traditional
ajohns@fbc-columbia.org

Support Staff:

Susan Goudie, Administrative Assistant
churchinfo@fbc-columbia.org
Brenda Rice, Project Coordinator
brice@fbc-columbia.org
Bethany James, Nursery Director
Mike Ide, Custodian

"Return Service Requested"



Trunk or Treat - October 25 at 4:00 pm

Join us in the First Baptist Parking Lot for an inaugural (and hopefully only) social distanced Trunk-or-Treat! The pandemic has added a new layer to Halloween, and First Families wants to provide a fun and safe way for the young and young at heart to dress up and indulge on the much anticipated Halloween candy.

In order to maintain social distancing, cars will be spaced throughout the parking lot to provide adequate distance and children will be asked to move in family units in between cars. For a new level of excitement, we are thrilled to introduce the Golden Pumpkin! The Golden Pumpkin will be awarded to the car that can most creatively deliver their candy from 6 feet away. We look forward to seeing your fun costumes and creative ways to minister to our families this season!

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