

December 2, 2020

the SPIRE

First Baptist Church
columbia



THOSE WHO DREAM

DEC 18
6:30 PM

A SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE AND GRIEF

Blue Christmas Service

Friday, December 18, 6:30-7:30 pm

In a normal year, Christmas can be a painful time. The anguish of broken relationships, the first Christmas without a loved one or the weariness of ill health can make us feel alone in the midst of celebration. This year, we have the added grief of over 270,000 Americans and 1.5 million people worldwide who have died from COVID-19.

Due to the Pandemic, we may not celebrate with extended family in the same way. Though the Christmas season is often marked with expressions of excitement and joy, we want to recognize that for many, this season evokes a lot of pain and grief, particularly this year. We need space and time to acknowledge our sadness and lament; we need to know and see that we are not alone and hold space for healing and hope.

For these reasons, we are offering a special Blue Christmas service on Friday, December 18 at 6:30pm via Zoom. Join us in sharing prayers, scripture, and music that acknowledges God's presence is with those who mourn, now and always.



Word from the Pastor

Pastoral Care Internship

I am excited to announce that in January, Jon Ludwig will begin a pastoral care internship at First Baptist and will serve with us through April. A few years ago, our church was blessed with the opportunity to have a Pastoral Resident. During that time, we embraced the role of a “teaching congregation” and jumped at the chance to be a place where future ministers can learn on the job by serving in our church. Jon is interested in pursuing a career in hospital chaplaincy and may eventually seek endorsement through the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a credential he will need to work in a hospital as a chaplain. We have the opportunity to be part of his journey by providing this internship and hopefully in the future ordaining him to the gospel ministry! Many congregations cannot remember the last time someone from their church sensed a call to ministry and followed that call to ordination. I am grateful that we get to be part of the work that God is doing in Jon’s life. As part of his internship, Jon will help to provide pastoral care and spiritual support for the First Baptist Community. Jon speaks about the work he will be doing below:

“My name is Jon Ludwig, and I am a regular attendee of First Baptist. I graduated from Fuller Seminary in 2014 and have since worked in ministry, been a stay-at-home parent, and volunteered as a chaplain at University Hospital. I am interested in taking the next step in my career and am looking into pursuing residencies in hospital chaplaincy. As part of the preparation process, it is my hope to work with Pastor Carol and First Baptist Church to seek ordination to the position of chaplain and endorsement by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. In talking over what this might look like, the idea arose of a pastoral care internship where I would spend ten hours a week providing spiritual care and support to the congregation during the upcoming winter. My duties will include making phone calls to the congregation, hosting Zoom meetings on various topics of spiritual care, posting videos to the church’s social media, and writing monthly articles for the Spire. Under the guidance and supervision of Pastor Carol, I will be available to listen and offer prayer and support to the members of our church community, no matter what this winter brings. It is my hope to gain additional knowledge and experience of First Baptist Columbia and the Baptist tradition, but most of all to develop and foster new and stronger relationships with all of you. I look forward to this opportunity and appreciate the chance to learn and grow alongside this wonderful community of faith.”





Winter Bible Study

Reading Mark's Revolutionary Gospel



with Dr. Hulitt Gloer



Winter Bible Study

In January, we invite you to join us for Winter Bible Study via Zoom! This 6-week course is designed for people who want to dig deeper in their Bible study and grow in their understanding of scripture. Dr. Hulitt Gloer will be leading the course entitled "Reading Mark's Revolutionary Gospel." Knowing what Jesus said and did has never been more important than in the days in which we are now living. The Gospel of Mark tells of Jesus' revolutionary life and message and we will examine it together. The class is perfect for laity who want to study the Bible at a more scholarly level, but you do not have to be a scholar to join. The course is designed for any and all who desire a greater understanding of the Bible. The only prerequisite is a love for the Bible.

Dr. Hulitt Gloer is Emeritus Professor of Preaching and Christian Scriptures at Truett Theological Seminary, Baylor University and taught at Truett when Pastors Michael and Carol McEntyre were students there.

You have the opportunity to let us know if you are interested in participating in Winter Bible Study and to weigh in on what day and time it will be held by taking a short survey at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CYFL8PR>

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 5:00 pm on the Front Lawn

The Christmas Eve Worship is one of the most beloved services of our church year. The service includes beautiful music, a reading of the Christmas story from scripture and a candlelight benediction as we sing silent night. This year, we wanted to continue these beloved traditions and meet in person, in the safest way possible, for this sacred gathering. Therefore, on December 24, bundle up and join us on the front lawn at 5:00 pm for Christmas Eve Worship. The length of the service will vary depending on the weather, but we look forward to continuing our tradition of worshipping together on Christmas Eve.





Treasurer's Report

In these unusual times the members, supporters and leadership of First Baptist Church are to be commended. From the standpoint of donations, both pledged and unpledged, we are doing exceptionally well. Pledged donations are strong and will likely end the year very close to the amount that was budgeted. Unpledged donations, while somewhat behind expectations because of the suspension of in-person Worship services, will not make budget but the shortfall is less than was expected. Thanks to all that have been faithful and generous in their giving.

I am pleased to report that, pending final approval, the Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan that the church was granted as part of the Corona Virus Stimulus Package will be forgiven. That money enabled us to sustain our church and Children's Development Center staff for May through mid-July. Those funds will more than make up any deficit in donations and will allow us to advance the church's agenda in the coming months.

Also this year we were able to completely repair our parking lot with funds the church had set aside for that purpose.

While it is difficult to predict the future, especially the effect of the continuing pandemic, the leadership of the church are working diligently to continue the good work of First Baptist. With their leadership and your continued assistance and generosity we will be able to accomplish our mission. Thank you.

-Ken Hammann, *Treasurer*



Annual Business Meeting - January 24 at 1:00 pm via Zoom

We will hold our Annual Business Meeting on January 24 at 1:00 pm via Zoom following the Sunday Online Service. If you'd like to visit with other members, we will begin the Zoom meeting 15 minutes early!



Pledge Drive 2021

By taking the time to fill out your pledge card and send it in, you let us know that this community is an important part of your life and you commit to support the ministry of the church in the coming year. It's not too late to turn in a card! You can go to our website at fbc-columbia.org for an online pledge card. Click on the link at the top of the page that says "Online Pledge Card 2021."



Setting an Advent Intention

In her book, *Faithful Families for Advent and Christmas*, Traci Smith encourages people to set an Advent Intention. She writes, "Spiritual Practice is not just 'accidental.' If your Advent season is to be a time when connection, family time, and spiritual practice are the focus, it will happen because you and your family have made it a priority." Although Advent has already started, I do not think it is too late to pause and think about how you would like the season to look. Would you like to intentionally cultivate a space for rest? Would you like to set aside one day for family time? Maybe there is an advent word that could be your guide?

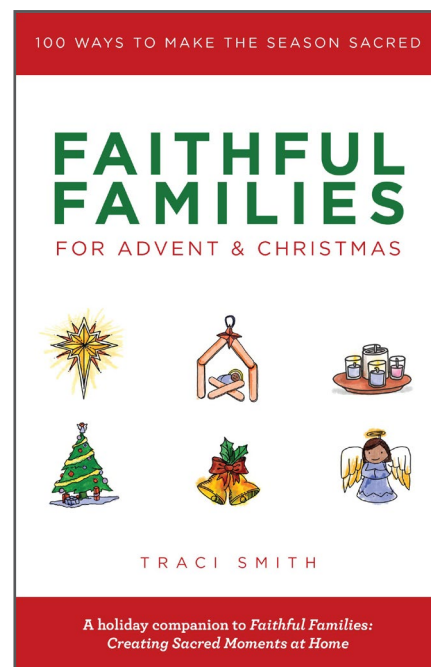
This year for my Advent intention, I am focusing on the Advent value each week brings. Each day before going to bed, I ask where I saw hope, peace, joy, or love that day. My hope is to cultivate these values within myself but also to spot them throughout the day. Further, each Sunday during worship, these values are highlighted during children's time.

Advent intentions will look different for everyone, but here are a few examples Traci Smith offers:

- This Advent, we will focus on the Advent values of hope, peace, love, and joy.
- We will not be overscheduled this Advent, but instead, we will take time for one another.
- Every Sunday evening during Advent, we will do a spiritual practice together.
- Advent will be a time of peace and quiet for your family, not noise and hustle.

Brittany McDonald-Null

Excerpted from *Faithful Families for Advent and Christmas: 100 Prayers, Practices and Lessons to make the Season Sacred* by Traci Smith (Chalice Press: 2020, All Rights Reserved).





Advent Worship Series

November 29-January 3

Psalms 126 says, "When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream." What does it look like to live as those who dream? The prophets, the psalmists, John the Baptist, Mary, Elizabeth, Joseph, Simeon, Anna, the shepherds and the Magi—they were all dreamers. They received, discovered, and responded to God's dreams for the world.



In Advent, we step into the mystery and awe of God's dreams and pray they shape our reality. *Those Who Dream* is our theme for Advent; for the dreamers in all of us—those who dream of a deeper connection with God and those who dream of a better world. It's for those who dream of comfort and for those who have given up on their dreams. It's for those whose dreams have been crushed and for those who show us that dreams take time. Join us this Advent as we dream alongside prophets and angels, Mary and the Magi. Join us as we seek and sow God's dreams for our world.

January Worship Series

Jesus, Why So Mysterious?

Throughout the gospels, Jesus is often secretive about his identity. Like in Mark chapter 8 when Jesus, "sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone about him." What benefit could come from Jesus's hiddenness? He often answers questions with questions and uses metaphors and parables to teach. Why risk being misunderstood? If the message is so important, why give it in a veiled way? In January, we will begin a sermon series called *Jesus, Why So Mysterious?* Join us for worship, as we explore the launch of Jesus' public ministry and wonder why he was at times so secretive about his identity.

**JESUS,
WHY SO
MYSTERIOUS?**

*new sermon series
this January*





Unwrapping Advent: Counting Down to Christmas Book by Book

Advent is a season of waiting and anticipation. Every evening at 6 pm throughout the season of Advent, Pastor Brittany will unwrap a book to read as we await the coming of Christ. The videos will be released on our private Facebook group and remain available until Epiphany. Some of these books will center around the Advent values of hope, peace, joy, and love, while others of these books will just be silly holiday books. We look forward to virtually gathering around the Christmas tree as we unwrap the gifts of Advent.



FIRST KIDS PRESENTS

Hot Chocolate Delivery and Gratitude
Practice with Pastor Brittany

Traveling Gratitude Cafe

The season of Gratitude is not over! Pastor Brittany has added dates to the signup and hopes to keep the cafe traveling all December long! And the news keeps getting better, the cafe's age limitations have been removed, and is open to all.

Simply email Brittany for a link, then signup for a spot and indicate if you would prefer hot chocolate, apple cider, or tea. Be prepared to bundle up and social distance as we continue to practice gratitude throughout December.



VAC Holiday Program



Support the VAC Holiday Program

This year's support for the VAC Holiday Program will be a bit different. In light of the pandemic, we will not be asking our church family to choose individual gifts to shop for and drop off at the church. Instead, VAC has asked that we purchase gift cards that they

will distribute to families. To do this, we are asking you to donate funds directly to the church either by check (put VAC Program in the memo line) or on our webpage using the Missions Offering link on the Online Giving page specifically for this opportunity.

While we will miss the fun of strolling down the toy aisle at Christmas to purchase just the right gift, we understand the need to change the way we support this incredible ministry during the pandemic. We are grateful VAC found a way to continue this opportunity, despite the logistical challenges it involves. Included here are some of the people who will be blessed by your gifts and the hopes they have for this Christmas. If you wish to donate, please be sure your contribution arrives at the church, either by mail or online, by Wednesday, December 9. Blessings on your holiday season.



Abbas is 18 and is asking for a watch, earbuds, school supplies, and new shirts and pants this Christmas.

Hussein is 17 and is asking for school supplies, earbuds, a bike and helmet, cologne, and clothing this Christmas.



Narjis is a 15-year-old who is asking for makeup and nail polish, exercise equipment, jewelry, a black shoulder bag, and clothing this Christmas.

13-year-old Ali is asking for a bike and helmet, board games, earbuds, and a new coat and shoes this Christmas.



Alhasan is 11 years old and would like a TSV gaming joystick, headset, soccer ball, headphones, school supplies, and new boots and gloves for Christmas.

VAC Holiday Program



Fatmah is a 10-year-old girl who would like art supplies, barbies, doctor toys, an instant camera, nail polish, and new clothes this Christmas.

Bager is 5 and loves all things spiderman and is asking for Legos, a bike with training wheels, outdoor toys, and a spiderman shirt, costume, and mask for Christmas.



Asinat is a 4-year-old girl who wants princess toys, a rocking horse, a big dry erase board, doctor toys, and sparkly hair clips this Christmas.

Zahraa is a 3-year-old girl who would like a baby doll, a keyboard with headphones (for her parent's sake), outdoor toys, and a big dry erase board this Christmas.



Parents, Mohammed and Zainab, are asking for cleaning supplies, towels and wash clothes, dishes, pots and pans, first aid supplies, face masks, and a full length mirror for Christmas.

Cheyenne is a spunky 6-year-old girl who wants a bicycle and helmet, Frozen toys, movies, snow boots, twin bed sheets, and some new shampoo for Christmas.



Jacolyn is a 3-year-old girl who is asking for a doll house, developmental games and activities, toys from the Trolls movie, storage for clothes, new sheets, and some socks this Christmas.

Grandmother Alice, mom Natasha, and dad Christopher are hoping for some new pots and pans, Queen sheets, a space heater and electric blankets, toiletries, and laundry pods this Christmas.



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

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December 2, 2020



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the SPIRE

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